

Insights into the Challenges and Strategies of United Nations Conference Interpreters: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

In United Nations (UN) conferences, the role of simultaneous interpreters becomes crucial. This research investigates the strategies employed to address both technical and non-technical challenges faced by simultaneous interpreters in UN conferences. The study aims to explain the procedures and processes involved in simultaneous interpreting, as well as identify the encountered challenges (rooted in experience). This qualitative research employs the conversation analysis proposed by Silverman (2019). Primary data sources consist of the experiences of six interpreters: representing English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese. Data collection methods encompass observation, transcription, and note-taking, including annotations. Data analysis reveals a range of technical and non-technical factors. Among the technical factors are speed and the use of specific terminology, with instances found in the experiences of English interpreter Paul Pottingen, Spanish interpreter Maria Carolina López Uribe, Arabic interpreter Soumiya Lahlao, French interpreter Sergio Escamilla, and Russian interpreter Olga Znamenshchikova. However, Chinese interpreter Xunyu Emielic Hung shared no technical challenges. Non-technical factors encompass feelings of fear, nervousness, and pressure. These emotions are shared among all interpreters except the Spanish interpreter. Significantly, technical difficulties can exacerbate non-technical challenges. Therefore, addressing these issues requires interpreters to strategize ways to enhance of their linguistic understanding, cross-cultural communication proficiency, and the overall quality of their experience in simultaneous interpreting.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, interpreter, language obstacle, simultaneous interpreting

1. Introduction

Translation and interpreting have rapidly advanced in tandem with the development of this globalization. Globalization and international relationships have positioned written and oral translators strategically and significantly as communication bridges between different parties. From a professional perspective, translators or interpreters function as experts in intercultural communication, acting as mediators and bridging the gap between individuals, cultures, and viewpoints (Köksal & Yürük, 2020). Professional interpreters often need to study complex subjects such as medicine, law, and social work, delving into areas that are typically limited to specialized professionals. They require both language fluency and a deep understanding of these fields to ensure accurate and effective communication in critical situations (Drugan, 2017). Their significance lies in preserving nuanced meanings and facilitating effective communication in various contexts such as legal proceedings, business negotiations, and healthcare consultations. These experts ensure legal accuracy by navigating complex terminology in legal settings, fostering inclusivity by allowing individuals from different linguistic backgrounds to participate fully in activities, and supporting global business interactions. Moreover, interpreters contribute to healthcare access by facilitating communication between healthcare professionals and patients with language barriers. Their cultural sensitivity is pivotal in adapting language choices to avoid miscommunication or offense. In emergencies and crises, interpreters are crucial for disseminating accurate information across language divides.

Interpreting involves the transfer of a message from a talk to a target language in real time. The interpreter utilizes all available linguistic elements to achieve this. The thoughts or messages of the speaker are orally conveyed with meticulous attention to various languages, rhythm, intonation, rhetoric, and the speaker's body language. The process of simultaneous interpreting can be viewed as a complex equation comprising four essential elements: listening, analysis, short-term memory retention, and the production and coordination of these elements (Babcock et al., 2017). Consequently, simultaneous interpreters are consistently required to push the boundaries of their cognitive abilities, overcoming the inherent limitations of their processing capacity each time they interpret. Failure to do so may lead to various interpreting errors, including additions, omissions, generalizations, and substitutions.

Given the scarcity of individuals proficient in two or three foreign languages, interpreters play a crucial role across various domains. Based on information from Preply (2024) it is projected that approximately 43% of individuals can communicate in two languages, while an additional 17% can speak multiple languages. This indicates that over half of the global population possesses the skill to use more than a single language fluently. However, becoming an interpreter is no small feat, particularly in simultaneous interpreting. This form of

interpretation demands a comprehensive grasp of interpretation theory, a profound understanding of diverse cultures, extensive experience, quick thinking abilities, a robust memory, adept note-taking skills, and unwavering concentration.

Simultaneous interpreting is a demanding profession that requires interpreters to employ their utmost concentration not only for listening, comprehending, and retaining information but also for accurately conveying the same message in the target language (Desmet et al., 2018). Simultaneous interpretation stands out as one of the most challenging language services. The simultaneous interpreter must possess exceptional quick-thinking abilities and a high level of proficiency in both languages they are working with. Consequently, simultaneous interpretation ranks among the most mentally taxing tasks, particularly for those engaged in language-related work. This form of interpreting operates without pauses between the spoken message and its interpretation, requiring interpreters to work collaboratively. They can alternately convey the interpreted content in 15-minute intervals while maintaining accuracy. The presence of interpreting equipment is crucial, mainly when rapid message turnaround is essential for accommodating larger audiences. The interpreting profession is gaining prominence in contemporary times, offering promising prospects. Alongside the promise, interpreter incomes have also taken center stage. Earnings vary based on individual capabilities and experience, but these figures encourage individuals to pursue this line of work.

Becoming an interpreter is not an endeavor that everyone can easily undertake, as highlighted by Bhakti (2016). The role of an interpreter is multifaceted, and interpreting is far from being as simple as it may seem. Technical challenges, such as a deficiency of specialized vocabulary in a particular field, can pose significant obstacles for novice interpreters. Additionally, technical issues like problems with sound systems, microphones, or faulty headsets can impede clear communication between the speaker and the interpreter. Insufficient experience can also hinder an interpreter's ability to convey sentences in the target language fluidly.

The challenges in the simultaneous interpreting process are crucial to analyze for several reasons. For instance, a lack of understanding of specialized vocabulary in specific fields can result in the inaccurate information delivery, leading to misinterpretation (Aldukhayel, 2023). In professional contexts, the accuracy of information is paramount. Additionally, technical challenges, such as audio systems or devices issues, can disrupt the entire communication process (Saeed et al., 2023). Experience-related challenges, such as the lack of experience, can make it difficult for novice interpreters to deliver sentences fluently. Linguistic understanding is another critical aspect; without solid knowledge in this area, interpreters will struggle to handle the complexity of language in the simultaneous interpreting process (AlDayel & Alotaibi, 2024). In addition, the role of working memory in simultaneous interpretation is also vital in maintaining the smoothness and accuracy of the interpretation (Xing & Yang, 2023).

This research aims to equip interpreter practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of linguistic knowledge, which includes phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. Such knowledge is indispensable for interpreters, especially in simultaneous interpreting, where interpreters employ various linguistic elements. Analyzing the source texts focusing on grammatical, reference, and connotation meanings is essential in simultaneous interpreting. Grammatical meaning entails extracting the main idea in a grammatically clear structure, notably the subject and its activity. The interpreter's role extends beyond oral rendition; it involves transforming the speaker's thoughts into written form while being attuned to language variety, rhythm, intonation, rhetoric, and the speaker's body language.

Several previous studies indicate the role of working memory in simultaneous interpreting, as demonstrated by Injoque-Ricle et al. (2015), Macnamara and Conway (2016), and Wang (2016). Furthermore, research by Al Zahran (2021) and Woesler (2021) highlight various challenges interpreters face. Notably, there is a gap in research regarding the comprehensive study of conference interpreters' challenges. Therefore, this study analyzes the challenges faced by conference interpreters, specifically at the UN. The information for this study is gleaned from an audiovisual video recording available on *YouTube* ("Interpretation at Work"; UN Geneva). The aspiration is that this study will formulate innovative approaches that benefit interpreter practitioners and students of interpretation.

The present study deepens the understanding of the challenges faced by simultaneous interpreters. Previous research by Injoque-Ricle et al. (2015), Macnamara and Conway (2016), and Wang (2016) has demonstrated the importance of working memory in simultaneous interpreting, which impacts interpreter performance and provides deep insights into the challenges faced by interpreters, particularly in UN conferences. Al Zahran's (2021) research on structural challenges in English-to-Arabic simultaneous interpreting is also relevant to this study, as the syntactic differences between the source and target languages present specific challenges in simultaneous interpretation. This previous study also offers insights into how interpreters handle the complexity of sentence structures, which is an integral part of the current study. Furthermore, research by Wang et al. (2023) focusing on expertise differences in cognitive interpreting through eye-tracking shows that experienced interpreters are more efficient in terms of time, accuracy, and cognitive effort compared to less experienced ones. This study is relevant to the current research as it demonstrates that expertise and experience significantly influence interpreter performance at conferences.

Several aspects are addressed in this study that contribute to the field of simultaneous interpretation. Previous research has explored aspects such as the role of working memory and structural challenges in language pairs. At the same time, this study offers an analysis of the challenges faced by conference interpreters. This enhances understanding of the complexity of simultaneous interpretation. Additionally, this research specifically focuses explicitly on conference interpretation at the UN, a context not covered in previous studies. Unlike previous theoretical or experimental data research, this study uses audiovisual data from real-life settings. Ultimately, this study integrates cognitive aspects with linguistic challenges, bridging the gap between these two fields and enriching insights into interpreter

performance and training.

2. Strategies of Interpreting

Simultaneous interpretation involves a complex cognitive process where interpreters must quickly and accurately convey spoken information from one language to another in real-time. Interpreters use various strategies such as addition, paraphrasing, compression, omission, segmentation, and restructuring (Agung et al., 2023). Experienced simultaneous interpreters often employ a simplified vocabulary approach to reduce cognitive load, as reflected in the lexical features of the translated texts (Liu & Dou, 2023).

In high-pressure conference events, interpreters must perform their tasks well, maintaining accuracy and fluency. Hashem and Youssef (2024) highlight the importance of strategies such as "providing parallel information" and "paraphrasing" to maintain accuracy in translating complex speeches, especially in contexts involving technical content. Meanwhile, Anafo et al. (2024) show that interpreters can use strategies such as code-mixing, omitting details, and seeking clarification through intervention to overcome linguistic challenges. Gu and Tipton (2020) emphasize the role of self-referentiality in the interpretation process, which can help maintain accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, interpreters may need to slightly shift their ideology in the interpretation process, where the traditional norms of impartiality and loyalty to the speaker must be upheld by interpreters (Gao, 2022).

This study applies the principles of conversation analysis, adopting the procedures proposed by Silverman (2019). Conversation analysis, first introduced by Sacks et al. (1974), provides a robust framework for analyzing the complexities of interaction, which is particularly suitable for understanding strategies in simultaneous interpretation. The main principles of conversation analysis include sequential analysis, role and identity construction, and outcome-oriented analysis. Conversation analysis emphasizes sequences of related talk. This involves analyzing how interpreters manage the flow of conversation, including turn-taking and the coordination of speaking and listening activities. Conversation analysis investigates how interpreters assume specific roles or identities through what they convey. In the context of simultaneous interpretation, it can reveal how interpreters position themselves as mediators, clarifiers, or communication facilitators.

Meanwhile, two supporting stages of conversation analysis are inductive exploration and variation analysis. Inductive analysis allows data to guide the identification of challenges and strategies faced and employed by interpreters without initial hypotheses. Variation analysis, on the other hand, examines how identified phenomena vary among interpreters with different language pairs or specific settings within UN conferences.

3. Aspects of Challenges

The immediacy of simultaneous interpretation demands quick responses and the ability to switch between languages within tight time constraints (Agung et al., 2023). Proficiency in simultaneous interpretation is developed through structured training to achieve high accuracy (Wang et al., 2023). Interpreters must orally translate what speakers say at varying speeds, adding to the challenges they face (Trisnawati & Netta, 2020). The complexities of simultaneous interpretation are further emphasized in interpreters' strategies to transform intertextual expressions in real time (Hashem & Youssef, 2024).

Several technical aspects, including equipment reliability, sound quality, and synchronization issues, influence the quality of simultaneous interpretation. Equipment reliability enables interpreters to perform their tasks efficiently (Tyczewski et al., 2022). Precise and high-quality sound transmission is also necessary for interpreters to hear and interpret speech accurately (Amelina et al., 2022). Additionally, poor synchronization, such as time delays, can significantly affect the accuracy of interpretation (Chen et al., 2022).

Research shows interpreters' cognition and psychological factors can influence interpreter skill acquisition (Lu et al., 2023). Emotional factors such as stress and anxiety significantly influence and hinder interpreter performance (Mahyub-Rayaa & Baya-Essayahi, 2021; Walczyński, 2021). Fear of making mistakes or being unable to keep up with the pace of interpretation can increase nervousness and pressure during interpretation sessions. Previous research indicates that interpretation can be influenced by factors such as working conditions and the content's nature (De Boe et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the complexity of terminology in simultaneous interpretation processes requires interpreters to have a high level of proficiency in the languages related to the discussed subject matter, necessitating comprehensive training programs to equip them with the skills to overcome these difficulties (AlDayel & Alotaibi, 2024). Additionally, linguistic challenges in interpretation can extend to specialized areas such as law, medical science, finance, and economics, where interpreters must grasp the terminological issues and nuances specific to each field (Anafo et al., 2024).

4. Method

This research employs a conversation analysis method proposed by Silverman (2019). Within the context of conversation analysis, three stages exist: recognizing patterns of interconnected dialogue, scrutinizing the roles adopted by speakers, and searching for specific objectives within the discourse. Conversation analysis revolves around elucidating individuals' techniques in generating organized social exchanges. This methodology was grounded in the insights gained from the experiences and challenges shared by six UN interpreters. The data collected for this study was sourced from recorded video content from *YouTube* ("Interpretation at Work"; UN Geneva; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13j4CA8DmQk>), which was observed, transcribed, and noted in English (running texts). The primary objective was to understand the conveyed message by each of the six interpreters: Paul Pottingen (English), Maria Carolina López Uribe (Spanish), Soumiya Lahlao (Arabic), Sergio Escamilla (French), Olga Znamenshchikova (Russian), and Xunyu Emielic Hung (Chinese). The selection of these six interpreters is not a sampling technique but a comprehensive choice, as the video features all interpreters

representing the official languages of UN conferences: English, Spanish, Arabic, French, Russian, and Chinese.

The data collection proceeded through several stages: observation, transcription, and notes and annotations. Observation involved watching and noting the behaviors of interpreters as they shared their experiences as UN conference interpreters. Transcription involved converting the spoken language from video recordings into written English text to examine the textual representation of spoken discourse and directly observe language use and discourse structure. It was during the transcription stage that the notes and annotations were involved.

The data analysis was conducted in several stages using the transcriptions obtained in the data collection phase. Initially, segmentation and theme identification were performed by dividing the video conversation transcripts into discourse units, followed by identifying technical and non-technical challenges faced by each interpreter. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted to explore how interpreters described their experiences, strategies, and challenges, which could also derive from the implied meanings in their narratives. Finally, reflections and interpretations of these findings were carried out by linking them to relevant theories or concepts.

5. Results

Table 1 shows technical and non-technical problems faced by UN interpreters. The most significant challenges these interpreters face come in technical aspects, namely speed, while the non-technical ones include nervousness and pressure.

Table 1. Challenging aspects faced by UN interpreters

Transcribed Interview	Interpretation	Challenging Aspects	
		Technical	Non-Technical
<p>English interpreter Paul Pottingen: <i>Sometimes I got nervous. I tried to anticipate who is the first to speak, and when he finished, I tried to accelerate, and I needed a good feeling. Everything must be continuous along a soft mood. I was very tired of concentrating fully. I would like to experience the highest speed, tired of concentrating, and be in a position of a real challenge.</i></p>	<p>Pottingen provides insight into the dynamics of his interpreting experiences. He describes his strategies, such as anticipation and maintaining a continuous flow, to navigate the interpretation challenges. Pottingen's emphasis on "soft mood" and "good feeling" suggests that he aims for a smooth and seamless conversational rhythm. His mention of being tired from concentration and the desire for high-speed challenges reflects the intense cognitive demands and his aspiration for growth.</p>	Speed	Nervousness
<p>Spanish interpreter Maria Carolina López Uribe: <i>I have to admit that at times we have been faced with situations that made us very nervous, where we feared that we would be personally attacked, even though the UN is neutral, and we are not there to take sides but to observe.</i></p>	<p>López Uribe discusses the emotional aspects of interpreting. Her fear of personal attacks in a neutral setting like the UN underscores the emotional risks interpreters take. She highlights the importance of maintaining neutrality, emphasizing that the interpreters are observers rather than participants. López Uribe's reference to being "proud—really proud" of every mission conveys a strong sense of identity and commitment to her role.</p>	Speed	-
<p>Arabic interpreter Soumiya Lahlao: <i>Pressure at headquarters is one thing: speed; the difficulty of the subject, etc. But stress in the field is different. We are not the heart of things. You learn a lot, and I am proud—really proud—of every mission. If we compare working into an A or B language, there is no doubt a difference. It is more difficult working into the B language. The real difficulty is the fact that we are the link between the speaker in the room and all our colleagues. The colleagues in other booths depend on us to be able to transmit messages to the room. As interpreters, we must be aware that the aim is not to excel in one meeting, ten meetings, or a hundred meetings. The aim is to maintain the same level of good performance in all meetings throughout their professional life, to the extent possible. Luckily, I still get butterflies in my stomach. This adrenaline is the energy that drives us forward, aiming for the best and for excellence as much as possible.</i></p>	<p>Lahlao's interview delves into the emotional and cognitive aspects of interpretation. Her acknowledgment of nerves and stress reveals the emotional challenges interpreters face. Her analogy comparing interpreters to actors highlights the performative nature of their role. Lahlao's focus on "converting energy" underscores the importance of emotional management and adapting stress into motivation for effective performance.</p>	Speed	Fearful, Nervousness, Pressure

Transcribed Interview	Interpretation	Challenging Aspects	
		Technical	Non-Technical
<p>French interpreter Sergio Escamilla: <i>I think there are difficulties inherent to the work of an interpreter at the UN Geneva. In part, because speeches are often read at a very high speed, which necessitates a new approach to the work. The difficulty lies in how to manage stress, and that is exactly the way to describe it. It is not a case of making the stress disappear. I think we are in a profession in which stage fright is a significant factor, just as it is for actors. It comes down to converting an energy that could be paralyzing and very negative into something that is positive and stimulating.</i></p>	<p>Escamilla's interview focuses on the unique challenges of interpreting at the UN Geneva. He discusses the impact of speed and technical terminology on interpretation. His exploration of stress management and comparing interpreters to actors emphasizes the emotional and performative dimensions of their role. Escamilla's perspective on turning stress into positive energy underlines the adaptability and resilience required for practical interpretation.</p>	Speed	Pressure
<p>Russian interpreter Olga Znamenshchikova: <i>I feel a burden of responsibility because at the UN, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of interpretation. So I feel nervous each time a meeting starts. But that said, I am also experiencing quite a thrill. You have to deal with a huge amount of technical terms, which means that quality interpretation takes thorough preparation and study of a subject. That said, I was pleasantly surprised by the opportunity to go on different missions around the world.</i></p>	<p>Znamenshchikova highlights the responsibility and pride that come with interpreting at the UN. Her nervousness before meetings demonstrates the emotional intensity of the task. She discusses the necessity of preparing for technical terms and the challenges of interpreting in both directions. Her emphasis on "building up abilities" echoes the gradual development of skills and knowledge.</p>	Specific Terms	Nervousness and Pressure
<p>Chinese interpreter Xunyu Emielic Hung: <i>It is indeed highly stressful to work for the UN. The meetings are either politically highly sensitive or highly technical. Some of them can be both sensitive and technical simultaneously. On top of all that, a lot of the meetings are webcast live, which also piles on the pressure. Interpreters in the Chinese booth work all the time when the speaker uses a foreign language. We work into Chinese. We interpret into the foreign language. In the latter cases, we face double pressure, for our output is directly used by the audience but also serves as the source material for other booths. To work into other languages, we should responsibly assist our colleagues, which is also a kind of pressure. I have participated to keep up the effort and use every day and every month to build up the abilities. As we often say, one bite will not make you very full. This is true in terms of language ability, personality, or everyone's knowledge of the subjects. They all take time to develop.</i></p>	<p>Hung's interview sheds light on the high-stress levels faced by interpreters at the UN. She describes the combination of political sensitivity and technicality in meetings, highlighting the complexity of their work. Her discussion of dual roles—working in both Chinese and foreign languages—illustrates the intricate nature of their contributions. Hung's emphasis on steady effort and development resonates with the gradual growth of proficiency and experience.</p>	-	Fearful, Nervousness, Pressure

6. Discussion

Simultaneous interpreting differs from other forms of interpretation, namely consecutive and liaison interpreting. Simultaneous interpreting is prevalent in significant events such as international conferences. Diverging from consecutive interpreting, the most prominent feature of simultaneous interpreting is the absence of pauses. Interpreters endeavor to relay messages concurrently with the speaker without interruption. While the level of difficulty associated with simultaneous interpreting is considerably high and exhausting, this endeavor is immensely prestigious and a source of pride. Drawing from interpreter experiences in this study, simultaneous interpreting mandates an exceptionally high skill level. It is undoubtedly a complex role, demanding simultaneous and instantaneous translation, carrying extraordinary pressure, demanding intense concentration, and necessitating the selection of the most suitable words to achieve accurate conveyance.

The findings identify challenges interpreters face in technical aspects, namely speed and specific terms, while the non-technical challenges include nervousness, fearfulness, and pressure. Rosendo and Galvan (2019) demonstrate that speed in interpreting is one of the challenges interpreters must face. AlDayel and Alotaibi (2024) revealed that the challenges faced in simultaneous interpreting include interpreting specialized terms. In addition, Ana (2018) found that nervousness is the most frequently encountered challenge by interpreters. Furthermore, factors causing anxiety in interpretation, such as the fear of making mistakes or not keeping up with the speaker, also pose challenges for simultaneous interpreters (Ferdowsi & Razmi, 2024). The fear of misinterpretation can exacerbate anxiety levels during interpretation sessions (Kavcioglu et al., 2021). Additionally, because of the pressure to quickly and accurately translate a speaker's words, often without the chance to edit or revise, interpreters experience pressure (Gile & Napier, 2020).

In the realm of interpretation, various dynamics and experiences come into play. Interpreters often utilize various strategies to navigate the challenges they encounter during their work. These strategies can include anticipating the direction of the conversation and maintaining a steady flow of interpretation to ensure effective communication. One noteworthy aspect is the emphasis on creating a positive and comfortable atmosphere during interpretation. This involves using a tone of voice and delivery style that fosters a smooth and seamless conversational rhythm. This rhythmic flow is essential to prevent disruptions or misunderstandings and maintain the natural communication pace.

However, interpreting is not without its demands. The cognitive effort required for interpretation can be substantial, leading to fatigue and mental strain (Smith et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2020). The interpreter's ability to concentrate and process information rapidly is tested. This demonstrates the significant intellectual and psychological commitment involved in the role. In pursuing professional growth, interpreters often seek challenges that push their limits. This might involve tackling high-speed situations where quick thinking and response are crucial. Aspiring interpreters strive to enhance their skills and expand their capabilities, aiming to provide top-quality interpretations even in the most demanding circumstances. In other words, interpreting is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a combination of strategies, a focus on maintaining a positive atmosphere, and a willingness to embrace challenges.

Interpreting research uncovers a captivating interaction among language, culture, and feelings. An intriguing conversation delves into the emotional aspects that interpreters frequently confront. These experts function as linguistic connectors, aiding communication between individuals using distinct languages. Nevertheless, the emotional impact of this responsibility should not be downplayed. Consider the scenario of a skilled interpreter working in a setting as seemingly impartial as the UN. Despite the veneer of neutrality, interpreters like the one mentioned experience genuine emotional challenges. Surprisingly, these challenges are not solely rooted in linguistic complexities but also in the realm of personal security and psychological well-being (Mercer, 2018).

Intriguingly, interpreters may find themselves in situations where translating words goes beyond a simple linguistic task. It transforms into a delicate balancing act between the exchange of information and the emotional weight of those words. The interpreter becomes a conduit for conveying information accurately and transmitting the emotional nuances embedded in the dialogue. An underlying fear of personal attacks is one of the emotional aspects that interpreters might grapple with. The possibility of facing criticism or hostility due to their role can create emotional strain. This might be particularly pronounced in settings like international diplomacy, where contentious issues can ignite strong emotions and interpreters inadvertently become targets for frustration or blame.

To navigate these emotional minefields, interpreters must maintain an impeccable level of neutrality (Ayan, 2021). This neutrality serves as a protective shield against becoming emotionally embroiled in the discussions they translate. The interpreter is an observer, a mediator who faithfully transmits words and emotions without personal involvement. It is like being a linguistic ghost in the dialogue, enabling the parties involved to communicate while remaining detached. Interestingly, this emotional journey for interpreters is not devoid of its own set of rewards. A sense of identity and commitment often accompanies this challenging role. The interpreter becomes a crucial bridge enabling communication across linguistic and cultural divides, which carries a deep sense of pride. This pride is not just a token sentiment; it is a testament to the interpreter's dedication to their role and their belief in the importance of their contribution. In essence, the emotional facets of interpreting add a layer of complexity to an already intricate profession. The ability to navigate these complexities while remaining true to the core principles of neutrality and accuracy distinguishes exceptional interpreters. Their role goes beyond mere translation; it involves careful navigation through cultural subtleties, linguistic intricacies, and emotional undercurrents. As the interpreter stands on the bridge, they carry words and the weight of emotions and identities that span the linguistic gap.

In addition to the aspects mentioned before, a complex interplay of emotional and cognitive elements dramatically influences the quality and effectiveness of the interpreter's work. A recent interview with an experienced interpreter sheds light on these often-overlooked aspects of the profession. One of the most striking insights from the interview is the interpreter's candid acknowledgment of the emotional roller coaster they often find themselves on. Like anyone facing high-stakes situations, interpreters are not immune to nerves and stress. This revelation humanizes the profession, reminding us that even experts can grapple with emotions when faced with challenging tasks. It is a reminder that interpreting is not just a mechanical process but involves the interpreter's whole being.

Drawing parallels between interpreters and actors, the interviewee draws attention to the performative nature of interpretation. Just as actors embody different characters on stage, interpreters step into the shoes of the speakers they are translating for. This analogy highlights the level of immersion required for adequate interpretation. Interpreters are not mere conduits of words; they are conduits of emotions, intentions, and nuances, tasked with capturing the essence of a message and transmitting it faithfully to the target audience. Perhaps one of the most intriguing concepts introduced in the interview is "converting energy." This concept underscores the interpreter's role as an emotional alchemist, capable of transforming the stress and nervous energy that often accompany the job into motivation and drive for superior performance. It is an approach that transforms potential obstacles into sources of strength. Therefore, interpreters can elevate their performance and turn challenges into opportunities for growth.

In a broader sense, the interview highlights the multidimensionality of interpretation. It is not just about language proficiency and technical accuracy but also about managing emotions, connecting with speakers, and adapting to the dynamic communication environment. The emotional and cognitive aspects discussed in the interview provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interpreter's role and the challenges they navigate. The interview with the interpreter offers a window into the often-hidden emotional and cognitive dimensions of interpretation. It shows us that interpretation is not just a mechanical task but a profoundly human pursuit that

requires emotional intelligence, adaptability, and the ability to turn pressure into a driving force. This deeper understanding enriches our appreciation for the intricate art of interpretation and the skilled professionals who excel in this complex field.

Interpreting at international organizations like the UN presents a set of unique challenges and demands a high level of skill and adaptability. Interpreters in such settings are crucial in facilitating effective communication among participants who speak different languages. Their work involves translating spoken words from one language to another in real-time, ensuring that the intended message and nuances are accurately conveyed. This task goes beyond mere language proficiency; it requires a deep understanding of the cultural, political, and technical context of the discussions. One of the primary challenges interpreters face is the speed at which conversations unfold. Meetings at international organizations often involve rapid exchanges of ideas and arguments. Interpreters must keep up with the pace of these discussions, accurately rendering complex sentences and concepts without sacrificing accuracy. This demand for speed highlights the need for exceptional cognitive processing and quick thinking, as interpreters must process information on the fly and deliver accurate translations almost instantaneously.

Technical terminology is another critical aspect of interpretation in these settings. Discussions at international organizations like the UN often revolve around specialized fields such as diplomacy, law, economics, and science. Interpreters must be well-versed in the relevant technical jargon of each subject area to ensure that accurate translations are provided. The challenge lies in understanding the terminology and conveying its precise meaning in the target language. Beyond the technical aspects, interpreting also involves emotional and performative dimensions. Interpreters are often compared to actors because they must convey the words, emotions, and intentions behind them. Practical interpretation requires linguistic accuracy and the ability to capture the tone, emphasis, and nuances of the speaker's delivery. This performance aspect highlights the need for interpreters to be skilled communicators and empathetic listeners, capable of holistically capturing the speaker's intended message. Given the demanding nature of their work, stress management is crucial for interpreters (Cooper & Cooper, 1983). The pressure of real-time translation and the responsibility of accurately conveying critical information can lead to high-stress levels. Interpreters must develop strategies to manage stress and maintain composure during intense discussions. Some professionals emphasize the importance of turning stress into positive energy, harnessing the adrenaline to enhance their performance rather than letting it hinder them.

In the context of interpreting at the UN, there is a notable focus on the weighty responsibility and sense of accompanying the role. This reflects the understanding that interpreters at such a significant international platform are vital role in facilitating communication and understanding among delegates who speak different languages. One aspect that stands out is the personal apprehension or nervousness that some interpreters might experience before important meetings. This emotional response underscores the high stakes of their job. The intricate nature of the discussions at the UN, often involving complex diplomatic, political, and technical topics, amplifies the pressure on interpreters to convey accurate meanings in real-time.

A critical point is the importance of detailed preparation, mainly when dealing with technical terminology. The diversity of subjects discussed at the UN means that interpreters must familiarize themselves with specialized vocabulary to ensure accurate interpretation. The challenge of accurately conveying complex concepts from one language to another while maintaining the intended nuance and meaning becomes evident. Interpreting at the UN also comes with the unique challenge of working in both directions—interpreting from the speaker's language to the listener's and vice versa. This two-way interpretation requires exceptional linguistic skills and quick cognitive processing to capture the essence of what is being said and express it fluently in the target language.

A recurring theme is the idea of "building up abilities." This concept encapsulates the gradual and continuous process of honing interpretation skills and expanding knowledge over time. Like any other skill, becoming proficient in interpretation takes dedicated effort, experience, and ongoing learning. This notion also aligns with the notion that interpreters evolve and grow in their roles, adapting to various challenges and refining their abilities with each new encounter. In other words, interpreting at the UN is not only about language skills but also about shouldering the responsibility of facilitating communication on a global stage. The emotional intensity, preparation for technical jargon, challenges of bidirectional interpretation, and the gradual development of abilities all come together to paint a comprehensive picture of the intricate and impactful work interpreters undertake in this context.

The interview analyzed in this study provides significant perspectives into the world of interpreters who play a crucial role in facilitating communication between diplomats, representatives, and officials from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Interpreters often work under immense pressure due to the sensitive nature of the topics being discussed and the technical complexity involved in accurately conveying complex ideas and nuanced statements. One of the key takeaways from the interview is the dual nature of an interpreter's role. They must translate spoken words between languages and navigate the intricate landscape of political diplomacy. This requires linguistic proficiency and a deep understanding of the cultural and political contexts that frame discussions. The interview stresses how interpreters at the UN must not only possess exceptional language skills but also a heightened awareness of global affairs.

The discussion also highlights the unique challenge faced by interpreters who work between their native language and foreign languages. This dynamic places them in great responsibility, as they must maintain accuracy and clarity while shifting between languages. This interview highlights the intellectual acumen and mental agility required to excel in such a demanding role. Another noteworthy aspect emphasized in the interview is the importance of consistent effort and professional development. The interpreter's journey is depicted as one of gradual growth, marked by accumulated proficiency and experience. This resonates with the broader theme of skill development and expertise in any field. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by interpreters align with the idea that true mastery is a product

of continuous learning and refinement.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The exploration of simultaneous interpreting experiences within the UN reveals commonalities and variations in technical and non-technical challenges. The technical difficulties encompass speed and the interpretation of technical terminology. It is worth noting that technical issues may cascade into non-technical problems. Among the non-technical challenges faced by interpreters are feelings of fear, nervousness, and pressure. In addressing these intricacies, the interpreters' strategy for quality improvement emphasizes three crucial components: a comprehensive understanding of linguistic principles, proficiency in cross-cultural communication, and a commitment to consistent training. This strategy aims to enhance the ease and effectiveness of simultaneous interpreting practice for interpreter practitioners. Acknowledging the significance of linguistic understanding, cross-cultural sensitivity, and quality experience in simultaneous interpreting, it is evident that these factors play a pivotal role in achieving successful performance within the UN. Furthermore, the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of language, culture, experiences, mindsets, procedures, customs, and habits across various countries underscores interpreters' need to remain aware and adaptable. The understanding that language is dynamic and subject to evolution reinforces the importance of interpreters' continued vigilance and adaptability.

Professional interpreters must possess a repertoire of strategic skills, including accuracy, agility, quick thinking, and rapid translation from source language to target language that is not only prompt but also appropriate and precise. Mastery of language, both in breadth and depth, and a nuanced understanding of diverse linguistic contexts further enhance their capabilities. Significantly, interpreters must grasp the intricacies of cross-cultural communication, a vital strategy when navigating the complexities of language transfer. This strategic approach is paramount when interpreters encounter challenges during simultaneous interpreting. Cross-cultural communication enhances their professional abilities and bolsters self-confidence, augments the quality of service provided, solidifies their reputation, instills faith in their linguistic prowess, and contributes to expanding their client base and recurrent business, particularly in interpreting services.

This study of interpreting holds the potential to greatly enrich students' knowledge and principles, particularly in the realm of simultaneous interpreting practice. This focus centers on comprehending and conveying messages in multiple foreign languages orally, while adeptly listening to speakers. Interpreting stands as one of the most significant professions globally. Whether as a seminar or a conference interpreter, each day brings new narratives, often involving communication with influential figures that can impact the world's affairs. A single mistake by an interpreter can wield substantial influence on international political and business arenas.

The field of translation and interpreting studies allows students an opportunity to engage in a study that cultivates a highly skilled and trained workforce. It requires proficiency in multiple languages and demands extensive knowledge, exceptional intellectual acumen, swift information processing, and substantial experience. Such attributes are essential to this profession and are known for their prestige and potential for substantial income. Consequently, this research aims to support and guide students in enhancing their knowledge, experience, and interpreting practice abilities. Additionally, it aims to clarify the distinction between translation and interpreting. Overall, this research promises extensive benefits for interpreter practitioners, particularly students, and the linguistics study program. This research aspires to offer valuable solutions and contributions to the broader public, especially within simultaneous interpreting. As interpreting practitioners often engage in tasks such as conferences, presentations, and other activities that necessitate bilingual proficiency, interpreting services are integral to education, business, tourism, and related fields. Given the increasing need for foreign languages, interpreting is a promising field in contemporary times. This demand extends beyond English to encompass languages like Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and German.

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Authors' contributions

SMN and Prof. SL were responsible for study conceptualization, data curation, and formal analysis. SMN and Prof. DD conducted the investigation, developed the methodology, and validated the study. SMN drafted the original manuscript. Prof. SL, Prof. DD, and UM revised the manuscript. UM was responsible for formal analysis and validation. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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.

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 are available.

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