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**SOUTH AFRICAN INTERPRETERS WORKING INTO THEIR SECONDARY
LANGUAGES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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STUDENT DECLARATION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Abbreviation	Explanation
ASL	American Sign Language
AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology
DET	Department of Education and Training
EMs	Gile's Effort Models
EVS	Ear-Voice Span
NGT	Dutch–Sign Language of the Netherlands
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
SASL	South African Sign Language
SLI	Sign Language Interpretation
SLI	Spoken Language Interpreting
SLN	Sign Language of the Netherlands
SSD	Sign Supported Dutch
SL	Source Language
SLA	Second Language
ST	Source Text
RP	Received Pronunciation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It begins with the background on interpreters in South Africa who work with English as their target language, despite it being their secondary language which implies that English is either their second, third or fourth language. It explores both sign language interpreters and those working with spoken languages, highlighting challenges and similarities encountered in each context. It also outlines the research problem, rationale, aim of the study, research questions, and a summary of the chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND

This study explores the experiences of interpreters in South Africa who work with English as their target language while considering it as a secondary language. The country's transition to a democratic society in 1994 marked a significant shift from two official languages, Afrikaans and English, to eleven. The recent recognition of South African Sign Language as an official language further underscores the commitment to inclusivity within this multilingual and multicultural context (GCIS, 2023). This evolution reflects an important movement towards valuing previously marginalised indigenous languages, empowering diverse linguistic communities, and enhancing the role of interpreters in facilitating communication across these languages. However, the increased demand for interpretation services also highlights the unique challenges interpreters face when conveying messages into English as their secondary language.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research addresses the myriad challenges interpreters encounter while navigating the complexities of interpreting from one secondary language to another within South Africa's dynamic multilingual landscape. Existing literature predominantly emphasises interpreters in Western contexts, where balanced bilingualism is considered ideal and free from directionality (Wang and Napier,

2015:519). In Western European contexts, first-language interpreting is the most preferred direction of interpreting (Dose, 2017:68). However, this differs from the situation in South Africa, where interpreters often work in environments where English is not their first language but rather a second, third, or even fourth language. Additionally, many sign language interpreters, including myself, acquire sign language as a secondary language and second modality. This presents distinct challenges, particularly given that sign language functions as a visual and spatial language, separate from spoken languages.

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for this study lies in the rich linguistic diversity of South Africa, where interpreters play a vital role in bridging communication gaps. Identifying the challenges faced by interpreters can inform the development of targeted strategies to improve interpretation services and promote inclusivity within a multicultural society. By exploring the experiences of interpreters, this study aims to illuminate broader socio-linguistic dynamics and raise awareness of linguistic barriers that individuals encounter. Ultimately, the findings of this research could influence policy, enhance training programmes, and establish professional standards for interpreters, fostering improved communication across South Africa's diverse linguistic landscape.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive examination of the linguistic challenges interpreters face while working with both spoken and sign language into English as their secondary language. This includes issues related to syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. By identifying and analysing the specific difficulties experienced by interpreters, this study seeks to deepen an understanding of the complexities inherent in interpreting practices within varied linguistic settings. This analysis will encompass interpreters' strategies for overcoming language barriers, and their efforts to establish trust and rapport with clients. Ultimately, the research aspires to contribute to the development of best practices for interpreters and

enhance the understanding of the complex linguistic landscape that they navigate daily.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What challenges do interpreters encounter when reformulating messages into English as their secondary language in the South African context?
- Are there similarities and differences among the challenges faced by interpreters working with sign language and those working with spoken language?
- What strategies do both spoken and sign language interpreters utilise to effectively interpret into English as their secondary language?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- Identify and analyse the linguistic challenges encountered by interpreters when reformulating messages into English as their secondary language.
- Compare the challenges and similarities experienced by interpreters working with sign language and those working with spoken language within the South African context.
- Understand the strategies employed by both sign language and spoken language interpreters to effectively interpret into English as their secondary language.
- Provide recommendations for interpreter training programmes and practices based on the findings to enhance the proficiency and effectiveness of interpreters working with English as their secondary language in South African.

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter outlined the scope of the study, introduced the main objectives and research questions. It provided background on interpreting into English as a secondary language in South Africa by highlighting the country's linguistic diversity and the challenges faced by interpreters. This chapter concluded with an outline of the study's methodology and theoretical framework by focusing on Gile's Effort Models (EMs) to analyse cognitive demands during the interpreting process.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review presented an overview of existing research on interpreting, specifically focusing on cognitive load, linguistic challenges, and interpreting strategies. It explored various models of interpretation, including Gile's Effort Models, and examined challenges faced by interpreters, such as language complexity, emotional strain, and memory management. This chapter also reviewed studies on spoken language interpreters and sign language interpreters and compared their distinct experiences and strategies. Lastly, the review highlighted the need for more research on interpreting in multilingual and high-stress environments like South Africa.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter described the qualitative research approach used to gather data. A narrative framework was adopted to explore the subjective experiences of both spoken language and sign language interpreters. Data were collected through purposive sampling, targeting interpreters with specific language combinations, including isiZulu, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and South African Sign Language (SASL). Interviews were conducted with interpreters who worked into English as their secondary language. This chapter also explained the use of Gile's Effort Models as the theoretical framework to analyse the cognitive and emotional challenges faced by interpreters.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews with interpreters, focusing on the challenges they face when interpreting into English as a secondary language. It

identified key themes related to cognitive load, emotional strain, and interpreting strategies. This chapter also highlighted different strategies used by spoken language and sign language interpreters to manage cognitive demands, such as summarising, paraphrasing, and note-taking. It also revealed emotional challenges like nervousness, stress, and the pressure of interpreting for live audiences. This chapter further discussed the similarities and differences between challenges faced by spoken and sign language interpreters, emphasising the unique sensory and cognitive demands of sign language interpretation.

Chapter 5: Research Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the findings in relation to the study's objectives and research questions. It examined the cognitive, emotional, and linguistic challenges faced by both types of interpreters. In this final chapter, the study's main findings were summarised, emphasising the cognitive and emotional demands faced by interpreters working into English as a secondary language in South Africa. This chapter concluded with recommendations for improving interpreter training and practice, such as the need for stress management, teamwork, preparation, and research. The chapter also suggested further research into the cognitive load and interpreting strategies in multilingual contexts, with a particular focus on sign language interpreters and their unique challenges.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter sets the foundation for the study by outlining the key issues surrounding interpreting into English as a secondary language in South Africa. It highlights the challenges faced by interpreters, the significance of the study, and the questions guiding the research. By providing a structured overview, this chapter prepares the reader for the detailed analysis that follows in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of the literature on the impact of directionality in interpreting. The focus is on South African interpreters who work into English as their target language, despite English being a secondary language for them, that is, their second, third, or even fourth language. It explores both sign language interpreters and those working with spoken languages, highlighting challenges and similarities encountered in each context. Additionally, this chapter investigates the strategies employed by interpreters whether working with sign language or spoken languages to effectively render messages into English as their secondary language.

There are various methodologies for conducting a literature review, as outlined by Chukwuere (2023:74-82), including narrative review, systematic literature review, scoping review, critical literature review, and mixed methods review. Butina (2015:190) defines the narrative approach as a form of inquiry that focuses on human experiences and results in narrative data. Examples of such inquiries include interviews that elicit personal stories, oral histories, and written autobiographies or biographies. Narrative research is both descriptive and explanatory (Sandelowski, 1991:163). Furthermore, narrative analyses compel scholars to initially focus on what is directly presented to them.

This study employs a narrative literature review to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by interpreters and the strategies they use to overcome them within South Africa's interpreting landscape. By examining South Africa's multilingual environment, this review will highlight the importance of accommodating all South African 12 official languages. It will begin by exploring the legal framework surrounding language rights and access to interpreting and translation services, emphasising key legislation and policies.

2.2 MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: BACKGROUND

Ngcobo (2012:182) notes that South Africa reached a historic turning point in April 1994 when, for the first time, black citizens were granted the right to vote, marking the end of apartheid-era political exclusion. This development signified a broader democratic transition in which political power was extended to the majority population, and the country began to embody the principles of equality, freedom, and social progress. The shift not only transformed the political landscape but also had significant implications for language policy. As part of the constitutional negotiations held at Kempton Park in 1993, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) proposed a language clause that was later adopted in the interim Constitution of 1994. Consequently, the new democratic government officially recognised eleven languages, including several indigenous ones, as part of its commitment to linguistic and cultural inclusivity.

This achievement came after significant milestones, such as the fight against the 'Bantu Education' system and the Soweto uprising in 1976 (Keim, 2003:19). The year 1954 marked the first year of the introduction of Bantu Education (Zungu, 1977:206). Furthermore, Webb, Lafon and Pare (2010:275) explain Bantu languages as languages spoken by Black learners. "Bantu Education" system is a product of apartheid, provided under-resourced and stigmatised education for Black learners, particularly in rural and township schools. These schools were controlled by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Bantustan authorities. One significant challenge for Black learners has been the strong preference for English as the medium of instruction, despite English often being their second or third language, leading to poor academic performance due to limited proficiency. However, township schools have seen more exposure to English compared to rural areas in recent years (Webb et al, 2010:275).

According to Ndlovu (2006:327), 'The Soweto Uprising' was triggered by the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools by the Department of Bantu Education in 1976. Before this, students in Soweto schools were taught in their mother tongue at junior primary level and transitioned to English in 1975. This revolt was caused by the introduction of Afrikaans which meant that students had to switch to two 'foreign' language English and Afrikaans within two years. Many students, already multilingual in indigenous African languages, faced significant

challenges adapting, as both English and Afrikaans were often their fourth or fifth languages. This shift disrupted their learning, with many resorting to rote memorisation due to the disconnect between the languages imposed and their mother tongues.

Ndlovu (2006: 327) maintains that the epistemological implications were profound, as changing the language of instruction altered the conceptual understanding students had developed in their native languages. After the uprising, Bantu Education Minister M.C. Botha acknowledged that imposing Afrikaans at primary school level was detrimental to educational development, recognising that concept formation is best achieved through instruction in a student's native language. Furthermore, Ngcobo (2012:182) contends that this movement aimed to challenge the dominance of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction and promote linguistic diversity and inclusion.

The Eiselen Commission, as highlighted by Keim (2003:19), significantly influenced the education of black children in South Africa. It recommended that learners become proficient in their mother tongue and either English or Afrikaans. Led by Dr. Werner Eiselen, the commission shaped apartheid education policies, promoting the idea that Africans should only receive limited vocational training, restricting their opportunities to menial labor. This reinforced the Nationalist Party's apartheid agenda of racial segregation and white supremacy. The commission's work culminated in the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which institutionalised these discriminatory educational practices (Zungu, 1977:206).

In South Africa, race has been a crucial social factor, especially due to the legacy of apartheid, which enforced racial segregation and inequality. Treiman (2005:2-5) points out that South Africa's population has been categorised into four racial groups: Whites, Asians, Coloureds, and Blacks. These categories significantly shaped people's socio-economic status and opportunities. These were some of the racial groups: Whites, who constituted 11% of the population, were economically dominant during apartheid. This group was divided into Afrikaners, who held political power and were the architects of apartheid, and English-speaking Whites, who controlled business and industry. Both groups benefited from apartheid's structures of privilege, though some English-speaking Whites opposed the regime (Treiman, 2005:2-5).

Since South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, one of the significant milestones has been the shift from two official languages, Afrikaans and English, to recognising eleven official languages. This change, reported by Wallach (2000:199), was part of the African National Congress-led government's effort to empower previously marginalised linguistic communities and to reflect the diverse linguistic landscape of the country. With over 98% of the population speaking one of these official languages, the new policy marked a departure from the previous two-language system that predominantly served the white minority. Section 6 of the 1996 Constitution provides a legal framework to support multilingualism and promotes the use of all eleven official languages in government communications while encouraging respect for linguistic diversity. Recently, the South African Sign Language was added as the 12th official language, reinforcing the country's commitment to inclusivity (StatSA, 2022).

This expansion of official languages has had a significant impact on interpreting services in South Africa, particularly in public institutions. With the recognition of eleven (and now twelve) official languages, interpreting services have become a vital component of facilitating communication in governmental, judicial, and healthcare settings. This shift aligns with efforts to ensure that no single language dominates, as outlined by (Finlayson and Madiba, 2010:45; Hlengwa-Selepe, 2020:14). They maintain that interpreting services are critical in promoting equal access and representation for linguistic communities, especially those previously excluded from official discourse. Furthermore, the promotion of multilingualism through interpreting also reflects a broader national commitment to linguistic rights, ensuring that language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a resource for cultural preservation and social cohesion.

2.3 MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE STATUS QUO

According to Hlengwa-Selepe (2020:14), Section 30 of the South African Constitution guarantees the right for everyone to use the language of their choice and to participate in their cultural life. To promote indigenous languages in official government communication, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology (DACST) facilitated the drafting of legislation that mandated each

government department to use at least four official languages in written communications. A proposed rotational system categorized the 11 official languages into four clusters: Nguni (Ndebele, Swati, Xhosa, Zulu), Sotho (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana), English/Afrikaans, and Tshivenda/Xitsonga. This approach ensures that no single language dominates, particularly in oral communication contexts (Finlayson and Madiba, 2010:45; Hlengwa-Selepe, 2020:14).

While the Constitution emphasises respecting and promoting indigenous languages to ensure all citizens can exercise their linguistic and cultural rights, English still tends to dominate in public and private sectors due to its economic advantages (Marback, 2002:363; Desai, 2001:326). To fully uphold language rights, it is important to view language both as a right and as a resource, recognising its cultural and social significance beyond mere economic considerations (Marback, 2002:360). Multilingualism in South Africa is an integral part of governance and public administration. In South Africa government departments and institutions are required to provide services and information in multiple languages to ensure accessibility and inclusivity (Lesch and Grove, 2018:251).

Challenges such as inadequate translation and interpretation services, inconsistent language policy implementation, and limited language proficiency among public officials must be addressed to promote effective communication and citizen engagement. Wallmach (2000:201) observed that Afrikaans continued to be promoted alongside English as an official language, while African languages remained marginalised, with limited teaching and underdeveloped technical vocabularies. This led to skepticism about the feasibility of a genuinely multilingual policy in post-apartheid South Africa, despite its rich linguistic diversity.

Simultaneous interpreting, formally introduced at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996, was still emerging during the late 1990s (Wallmach, 2000:201). However, it has since developed into a well-established practice in the country. Today, simultaneous interpreting services are provided in the national parliament and, according to Lesch and Grove (2018:251), in regional legislatures of at least five provinces. This number may have increased in recent years, although updated verification is required. Additionally, these services are used in Pan South African

Language Board meetings, annual general meetings where languages such as Afrikaans or Zulu are spoken, metropolitan councils, pension fund meetings, trade union gatherings, and some university Senate and Council meetings. Wallmach (2000:202) notes that the demand for simultaneous interpreting has grown significantly over time.

Further, simultaneous interpreters now handle a wider range of topics at international conferences and meetings due to changing market demands. This increased variety presents new challenges to the quality of interpreting, which has become a growing concern for interpreters, trainers, conference participants, and scholars (Fantinuoli, 2017:25). According to Desai (2001:326), the South African Constitution mandates that all official languages must enjoy "parity of esteem" and be "treated equitably." This principle ensures that no official language is given preferential treatment over others, promoting equal respect and consideration for each language. To support and monitor language policy, and to develop African languages, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) has been established. This board plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting linguistic diversity in South Africa (Desai, 2001:326)

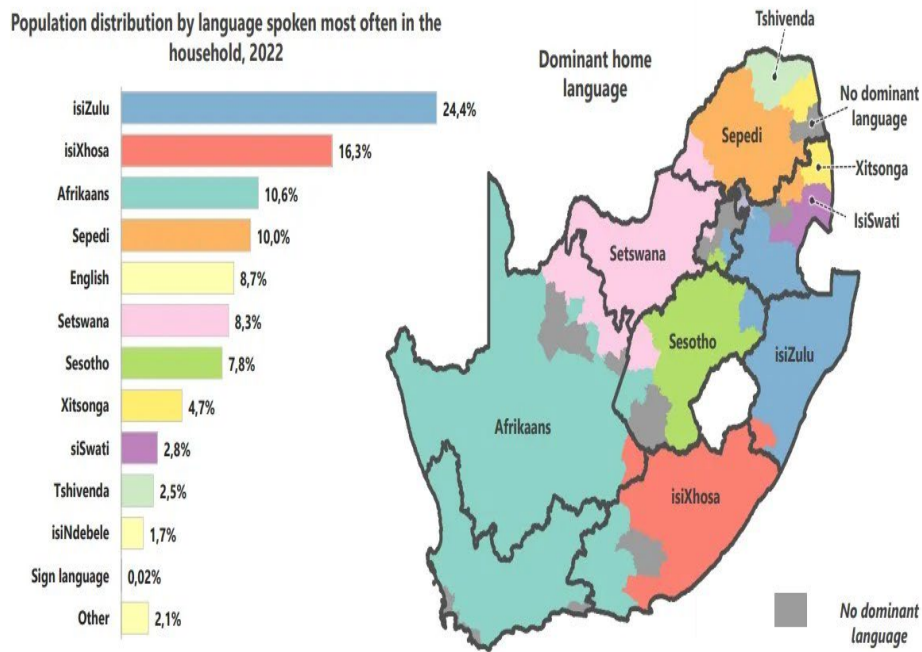


Figure 1: Census (2022) Population distribution by language spoken most often in the household.

In South Africa, while English holds the status of the primary language of business and is often viewed as the dominant language on a global scale, it is not the most spoken language within the country (Hlengwa-Selepe, 2020:4). As shown by recent data from Figure 1 above, only 8.7% of South Africans use English as their main language of communication, reflecting its limited use as a home language despite its prevalence in official and business contexts. Most of the population speaks other languages such as Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, and Siswati, with Afrikaans being the third most spoken language at 10.06% of the population. Furthermore, the 2022 Stats SA census reveals that sign language, which was recently recognised as the 12th official language, is used by only 0.02% of the population. This disparity highlights the unique linguistic landscape of South Africa, where English, though dominant in certain sectors, does not reflect the linguistic realities of the broader population (Hlengwa-Selepe, 2020:4).

2.4 MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: DEBATES ON THE STATUS QUO

The current debate on multilingualism in South Africa resonates deeply with the country's linguistic landscape, where English, despite being dominant in official and

business contexts, is not the most spoken language. Mbirimi-Hungwe (2023:3), challenge the conventional understanding of multilingualism that focuses solely on counting the number of languages spoken. She advocates for a more dynamic approach that recognises the fluid and context-dependent nature of language practices among multilingual individuals. This perspective is particularly relevant in South Africa, where most of the population communicates in languages other than English, such as Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, and Siswati.

Furthermore, Mbirimi-Hungwe (2023:3) highlights the importance of examining the diverse language practices of African multilinguals, regardless of their formal education. This perspective fosters a greater understanding of the complexity and richness inherent in multilingual language repertoires, which are often undervalued when multilingualism is reduced to the mere ability to use multiple languages sequentially or simultaneously. The prevalence of English in research and official contexts frequently results in a limited view of multilingualism, failing to fully reflect the lived experiences of South Africans who navigate multiple languages in their daily lives.

Dhokotera (2021:1) advocates for the promotion of multiple languages through translanguaging, challenging the prevailing monolingual bias. She critiques the tendency to reduce multilingualism to a simple numerical count of languages, arguing instead for a more nuanced understanding that considers the cultural and contextual dynamics of language use, particularly in Global South contexts. This perspective disrupts conventional frameworks by viewing multilingualism as fluid and situated rather than fixed or hierarchical. She also points out that multilingualism is often interpreted as a mere listing of distinct languages, which in practice leads to "multiple monolingualism" a rigid separation of languages rather than their integrated use. Emphasising the South African context, Dhokotera (2021:1) stresses the need to acknowledge the diverse identities and linguistic behaviours of multilingual individuals, where English, though dominant, constitutes only one element of a far more complex and vibrant linguistic landscape.

2.4.1 Bilingualism

Grosjean (2014:573) disputes common misconceptions about bilingualism, such as

the idea that bilinguals must be equally fluent in both languages, learn them in childhood, and speak without an accent. Most bilinguals use two or more languages regularly but often do not reach native-level fluency in both. Researchers have shifted away from defining bilingualism solely based on fluency, instead emphasising regular language use as the primary criterion (Grosjean, 2014:573-575).

2.4.2 Native speaker vs Mother tongue

Chimbganda (2005:19), defines a "native speaker" as someone who naturally thinks, dreams, and counts in their childhood language, which remains dominant even if other languages become significant. Additionally, Yadav (2014:573) defines mother tongue as also known as the native or first language, is the language a person learns from birth or during a critical period when language acquisition is closely tied to age. This language becomes fundamental to one's social identity and is often used as the primary medium for learning in school and society.

In Yadav's study, one of the participants named Christine Senfuma, a wife and a mother, describes mother tongue as the language a person learns as a child at home, typically from their parents (Yadav, 2014: 573). She further points out that children raised in bilingual households may have more than one mother tongue. Another example is from a participant named Allen Kaziro, who is a secondary school teacher and mother of two, who argued that that mother tongue can be defined as a language in which a person is as fluent as any other native speaker of that language. However, this criterion is inadequate for defining a "native speaker" of English. People can perform these functions in a new language community with limited proficiency. According to Krashen's "affective filter hypothesis" in Krashen (2002:7), personality factors influence this ability, making these cognitive functions unreliable indicators of native speaker status, as they can develop in languages learned later in life.

Chimbganda (2005:28) argues that bilinguals' language competence should be assessed based on their entire linguistic repertoire, rather than as a simple combination of two monolingual proficiencies. Along similar lines, Yadav (2014:573) supports prioritising teachers who speak learners' mother tongues, as their first language knowledge can effectively facilitate second language acquisition. These insights are particularly relevant to interpreters in Africa, where linguistic

diversity and the need to navigate multiple languages and dialects are commonplace. The view that bilingual competence encompasses the ability to manage and integrate diverse linguistic skills underscores the importance of evaluating interpreters holistically, rather than focusing on isolated language proficiency (Chimbganda, 2005:28).

2.4.3 Challenges of Mother Tongue vs. Second Language Learning in South Africa

Howie, Venter, and Van Staden (2008:2), and Yadav (2014:574) elaborate that the transition that South African students experience from learning in their mother tongue to being taught in English parallels the experience of interpreters who must continuously adapt their language skills to convey meaning accurately in a language that is not their own. Like students who face obstacles in achieving proficiency due to this abrupt transition, interpreters might also struggle with the nuances and complexities of English, particularly when it is their second language (Yadav, 2014: 574).

Just as teachers according to Howie et al (2008:2) resort to code-switching to bridge comprehension gaps, interpreters might find themselves balancing between languages to ensure accurate and effective communication. Furthermore, though Language interference may be experienced for the non-native speaker this is not viewed negatively as if the first language is getting on the way of the second language skills, but it is because of the performer falling back on old knowledge (Krashen, 2002:7). Language interference is explained by Krashen (2002:7) as an interference from the use of the first language as an utterance initiator. This dual-language context, whether in education or interpretation, can impact the effectiveness of the communication process. For interpreters, the challenge lies not only in accurately translating the content but also in managing the linguistic and cultural nuances that come with interpreting into English as a second language.

2.4.4 Native speaker in the context of English language and expectations

The concept of a "native speaker" in the context of English language use is often tied to the notion of "standard" English, a prestige variety characterised by specific

vocabulary and grammar rather than pronunciation (Chimbganda, 2005:26). As defined by Parkinson (2003: 250), "standard" English is typically a minority variety within a country but is widely understood and considered an ideal to strive for. This variety, also known as Received Pronunciation (RP) or "the Queen's English," has been propagated through education, media, and its use in legal, commercial, and literary contexts. However, this standardisation creates challenges when considering the diverse ways English is spoken globally. Hymes' definition of language as a "variable system," as cited by Chimbganda (2005:25), suggests that English, in its many forms whether Cockney, Jamaican, or Liberian English may not always be mutually intelligible among its speakers.

Consequently, Suliman (2014:357) argues that the goal of learning English is not to achieve the fluency of a native speaker, but rather to ensure clear communication among international English speakers and within one's own community. The primary objective is that the message is effectively conveyed and understood. In the context of globalisation, English plays a crucial role as a key tool for communication. An advantage of spoken language is that it permits speakers to think as they talk, allowing for natural pauses, hesitations, and self-corrections, as noted by Brown by Suliman (2014:360).

Overall, this raises questions about the validity of defining someone as a "native speaker" based solely on their use of a standard variety, given that mutual intelligibility does not necessarily equate to speaking the same language. The concept of mutual intelligibility is also highlighted by Lebesse (2015:69) and Suliman (2014:360). This debate is particularly relevant in the context of interpreters in South Africa, who often interpret into English as a secondary language. Furthermore, the emphasis on "standard" English as the benchmark for proficiency can create additional pressures for interpreters working in a multilingual environment where English is not their primary language. Understanding and navigating these various English dialects and varieties is crucial for effective interpretation, further complicating the role of interpreters who must not only translate but also bridge gaps between different versions of the language (Lebesse, 2015:69: Suliman, 2014:360).

2.4.5 Linguistic difference between Sign language and Spoken language

The differences between spoken and sign languages are highlighted by Perniss, Pfau and Steinbach (2007:5), underscoring the distinct challenges interpreters face when working with these two modalities. Spoken languages rely on phonological elements such as consonants or vowels (a, e, i, o, u) that are oral, while sign languages are constructed through the same consonants or vowels that are referred to as parameters like handshape, location, movement, non-manual features, and palm orientation. These elements form the phonological foundation of sign languages, which are visually rather than audibly articulated, engaging in various body parts and neutral space. Furthermore, Perniss et al. (2007:5) demonstrate the difference in modality-specific differences extend to morphology and syntax, further distinguishing spoken from sign languages. For interpreters, this means navigating not only different linguistic systems but also the unique ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed.

2.4.6 Comparison between Sign Language and Spoken language Interpreters

Research comparing sign language and spoken language identifies both convergences and divergences. Sign languages exhibit structural differences with spoken languages. Sign languages involve two large articulators such as two hands moving in the signing space or touching the body whereas spoken language uses small movements of the tongue and vocal tract (Emmorey, Mehta and Grabowski 2007:202). It also demonstrates the unique perceptual and production mechanisms of sign languages versus spoken languages influence language processing in a distinct way (Emmorey et al, 2007:202).

Furthermore, Metzger (2006:264) notes that earlier research has drawn comparisons between sign and spoken language interpretation. Traditionally, spoken language interpreters have worked in high-profile environments, such as conferences, whereas sign language interpretation (SLI) has been more common in community and conversational settings. Napier (2011:60) further emphasises that sign language interpreting is regarded as a social practice within the broader field of interpreting and translation studies, positioning it at the forefront of community interpreting practices. Additionally, Metzger (2006:264), points out that spoken language

interpreters often enjoy greater prestige, likely due to the prestigious nature of their typical work environments. In contrast, sign language interpreters have frequently encountered linguistic prejudices or misconceptions regarding the status of signed languages as fully developed linguistic systems (Metzger, 2006:264). For instance, SL interpreters working in consecutive mode must utilise their hands and eyes linguistically, which can affect their ability to engage in note-taking practices commonly employed by spoken language interpreters (Metzger, 2006:264). Although few spoken language interpreters (SLIs) work in educational settings overall, many are employed in primary and secondary schools. In the global South, as the number of deaf schools decreases, more deaf students are receiving their primary education in spoken language classrooms, sometimes with the assistance of SLIs (De Meulder and Haualand, 2021:25).

2.4.7 Unimodal Bilinguals vs. Bimodal Bilinguals interpreting

In the context of multilingualism in South Africa, the distinction between unimodal and bimodal bilinguals is crucial for understanding the unique challenges and strategies involved in interpretation. Williams, Darcy, and Newman (2015:129) note that traditional research has largely focused on monolingual individuals or spoken language interpreters learning a different spoken language, known as unimodal bilingualism. However, recent studies have shifted towards examining bimodal bilinguals (Bontempo, 2014:113) who navigate between spoken and sign languages. Bimodal bilingualism explores how language is articulated across these two modalities. As Williams et al. (2015:129) explain, “sign languages use a visual-manual modality, whereas spoken languages use the auditory-oral modality.” In addition, Schönström and Holmström (2022:1) further define bimodal bilinguals as hearing individuals who acquired spoken language as their first language (L1) and are now learning sign language as their second language (L2) using a different modality. This dual-modality acquisition presents unique challenges and opportunities for interpreters, affecting their cognitive processes and interpreting strategies.

Bimodal bilingualism, involving both spoken and sign language, has attracted increasing scholarly attention for its implications in language acquisition, processing,

brain function, and cognitive development (Tang, 2016:259). It entails managing two distinct grammatical systems across different modalities, auditory-oral and visual-gestural, offering a unique lens through which to examine the cognitive effects of multilingualism. Unlike unimodal bilinguals, who use the same auditory-oral channel for both languages, bimodal bilinguals engage separate sensory systems. Sign languages operate within a spatial framework, using hand and facial movements within a defined sign-space to convey grammatical meaning, setting them apart from spoken languages (Shook and Marian, 2010:2, 5).

It is worth noting the differences that interpreters are working in between unimodal and bimodal bilinguals as it is essential for developing effective interpreting practices. Unimodal bilinguals, who work within a single modality (spoken language), face different challenges compared to bimodal bilinguals, who must manage the cognitive and linguistic demands of two distinct modalities. This distinction significantly impacts how interpreters process and convey information, influencing the quality and accuracy of their interpretations (William et al, 2015:129).

2.4.8 The Bilingual-Bicultural Model

Interpreters, whether operating in unimodal or bimodal settings, must be both bilingual and bicultural. As Lebesse (2015:69) points out, their role involves bridging not only languages but also cultures. To interpret effectively, they need to understand regional and dialectal variations, nonverbal cues, attitudes toward time, and culturally specific forms of address. The concept of biculturalism, in this context, refers to active involvement in multiple cultures adapting behaviors, internalising values, and blending cultural elements. This view aligns with Grosjean's (2014:575) discussion, drawing on Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2007), who describe bicultural individuals as capable of fluidly switching between cultural norms and behaviors depending on the context.

Overall, the multilingual landscape of South Africa, underpinned by a robust constitutional framework, reflects the nation's commitment to linguistic diversity and inclusivity. While significant progress has been made in recognising and promoting eleven official languages, recently expanded to twelve with the inclusion of Sign

Language and the practical implementation of these policies remains complex and challenging. Efforts such as simultaneous interpreting have advanced the accessibility of information across multiple languages, yet the dominance of English, driven by its economic advantages, continues to overshadow the full realisation of multilingualism. Furthermore, the ongoing debate highlights the need for a more dynamic and context-sensitive understanding of multilingualism that goes beyond simple language counts, acknowledging the fluid and intricate language practices of South Africans. Furthermore, the evaluation of language competence and cultural competence in a multilingual context must account for the holistic linguistic repertoires individuals navigate, rather than isolating proficiency in individual languages. While South Africa has laid a strong foundation for multilingualism, ongoing efforts are needed to overcome challenges in policy implementation, ensuring that all languages are respected, protected, and promoted in both governance and public life.

2.5 DEFINING INTERPRETING

Lee (2009:35) defines interpreting as a process that involves mediating communicative interactions between different language communities, acting as a bridge for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. Arguing that the interpreter seeks linguistic and cultural equivalents to ensure that speakers from different backgrounds receive the same message as intended by the original utterances. However, Horváth (2019:44) states that this process necessitates proficiency in the languages and a deep understanding of the respective cultures (Lee, 2009: 35). Lebes (2015:64), opines that interpreters are seen as facilitators of cross-cultural communication and co-constructors of interactions. They play an active role in bridging language and cultural gaps, ensuring effective communication and mutual understanding between speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (lee, 2009: 36).

Furthermore, Horváth (2019: 38) defines interpreter's role is to receive the message, then perceive it and understand it and then decode and encode the message to the receiver.

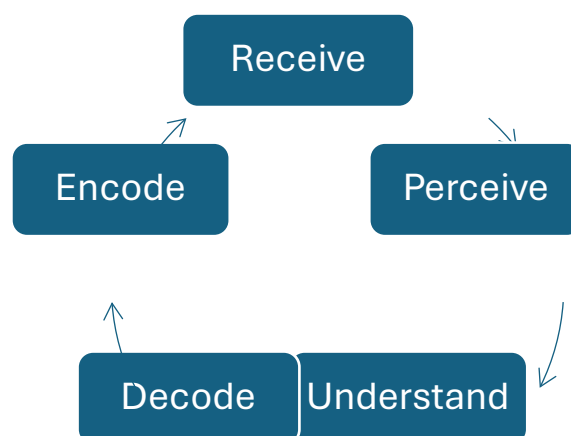


Figure 2: Process of interpreting

Figure 2 illustrates Horváth's (2019: 38) perspective on the role of interpreters. According to Figure 2, the interpreter first receives the message during the listening stage, then perceives and comprehends what is being communicated. Following this, the interpreter decodes the message, which involves understanding and determining what is essential for translation into the target language. Finally, the interpreter encodes the message by rendering it into the target language. This process is continuous and iterative, reflecting the dynamic nature of interpreting as the interpreter consistently interacts with the material.

Chmiel et al. (2016:205) argue that interpreters experience the time lag, or delay, between when the original statement that is made and when the interpreter delivers the equivalent in the target language, also known as the EVS (Ear-Voice Span) or decalage. This processing time is a crucial aspect of simultaneous interpreting to comprehend and to produce the text in the target language. Interpreting can be performed in either simultaneous or consecutive mode. Simultaneous interpretation, according to Russel (2005: 136), involves translating into the target language in real-time as the source language is being delivered. In contrast, consecutive interpretation entails translating after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas and paused, allowing the interpreter to convey the information.

Furthermore, Tzou et al. (2017:632) define interpreting as a field of professional translation, which may involve spoken, written, or sign language communication where a message is originally conveyed in one language, known as the source language (SL), and must ultimately be rephrased, and conveyed in a different

language, referred to as the target language (TL). While interpreting can be seen as transferring a message from one language to another, the exact nature of this transfer is whether it should emphasise as preserving the structure or the meaning. In tackling this matter, Isham (1985:112) elaborates that successful interpreting involves three stages of interpreting in the target language which identify what needs to be relayed, searching for equivalents in the target language and producing them. The fourth aspect that is crucial in interpreting is context. Isham (1985:112) claims that context is a tool that assists interpreters to fill up gaps when they have background information.

2.5.1 Dynamics of Interpreting

Interpreters in South African contexts face numerous challenges when reformulating messages into English as a second language. These include the lack of culturally appropriate interpreting models, leading to potential misinterpretation of metaphorical language (Lebese, 2015:68). In legislative settings, difficulties arise from technical discourse, fast-paced speeches, and limited development of technical registers in local languages (Wallmach, 2000:202) demonstrate interpreters working in the unidirectional nature of interpreting from Afrikaans and isiXhosa into English. These members who are not proficient in English may be unable to assess whether their message has been accurately conveyed.

2.5.2 What is Reformulation

Meurant et al. (2022: 322) argue that reformulation is language practice, whether in prepared or spontaneous speech. In a narrow sense, reformulation is confined to 'paraphrastic reformulation,' which establishes a semantic equivalence between two statements. Paraphrastic reformulation is typically introduced by markers such as "that is," "in other words," "put another way," and "namely." The second statement retains the original meaning and serves to clarify it by expressing it differently.

However, other scholars view it in a broader way. They view it as conceptions of reformulation include 'non-paraphrastic' types, introduced by markers such as "in fact," "in reality," and "actually." These markers indicate a reinterpretation of the initial statement. Non-paraphrastic reformulations may narrow, expand, adjust,

specify, define, correct, or modify various aspects of the first expression, and they can provide a new perspective on what was previously (Meurant et al, 2022: 325). People often rephrase a previously stated idea in a different way. The study of reformulation started in the 1980s amongst other things is the central focus was around language and meaning (Meurant et al, 2022: 325).

2.5.3 Formulation and Reformulation

Svennevig (2023:251) explains that the terms "formulation" and "reformulation" are used differently across studies. He employs "formulate" in a broad sense, whereas in conversation analysis, formulation specifically refers to summarising the core meaning of prior talk. This process, also described as reformulation cited in Svennevig (2023:251), involves rephrasing an idea while preserving its original meaning. More precisely, reformulation is defined as a type of self-initiated repair, where a speaker replaces one expression with another without changing the intended message. To provide clarity, researchers distinguish between self-reformulation, rephrasing one's own speech, and other reformulation and summarising someone else's speech.

2.5.4 Significance of reformulation: Key communication strategy

Chiang and Mi (2011:136) emphasise the significance of reformulation as a key communication strategy in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and interpreting studies. Reformulation involves making modifications to an earlier or incomplete utterance, (Chiang and Mi, 2011:136; Meurant et al., 2022: 325), often in interactions between native and non-native speakers (NS–NNS), to improve clarity and communication. This practice ranges from rewording individual words to rephrasing entire sentences (Svennevig, 2023:250), demonstrating the speaker's awareness of language as they adapt their message to suit the interlocutor's needs (Chiang and Mi, 2011:136).

In the context of interpreting into English as a second language in South Africa, reformulation is particularly relevant when interpreters encounter linguistic or cultural challenges. Interpreters, both in spoken and sign languages, frequently employ strategies such as paraphrasing, rephrasing, and message restructuring. These

strategies reflect their language awareness, aligning with Chiang and Mi's (2011:138) concept of interlanguage reformulation, where speakers consciously modify their output for more effective communication.

In addition, reformulation in interpreting is part of a wider set of communication strategies, such as message simplification and self-correction, as discussed by Chiang and Mi (2011:138). These strategies allow interpreters to navigate the complexities of multilingual communication, demonstrating interlanguage awareness as they work to ensure fluency and accuracy in their interpretations. Reformulation, therefore, serves as a crucial tool in managing the cognitive and linguistic challenges faced by interpreters working into their second language, particularly in a multilingual and multicultural context like South Africa. According to Lontou (2012:21), restructuring and reformulation are key techniques used to alleviate the cognitive strain placed on an interpreter's working memory due to syntactic and semantic differences between the source and target languages. These techniques encompass a range of strategies, including rephrasing, paraphrasing, restructuring, message replacement, message abandonment, message reduction, interpretive summarising, and self-monitoring for accuracy.

2.5.5 Reformulation: Paraphrasing

Chmiel, Lijewska, Szarkowska, and Dutka (2018:727) describe paraphrasing as a form of intralingual translation, like rewording that involves conveying the same meaning using different words. In respeaking contexts, strategies such as condensation and reduction are commonly used to cope with challenges like information overload, rapid speech, and overlapping dialogue. These strategies may involve using shorter synonyms, omitting non-essential segments, or simplifying sentence structures. Furthermore, comparative studies indicate that while paraphrasing and translation require similar linguistic processing, interlingual translation tends to place greater cognitive demands on the interpreter (Chmiel et al., 2018:727).

The quality of interpreting and paraphrasing has been found to be comparable, indicating that interpreters and translators frequently engage in restructuring and rephrasing when producing target texts (Tzou et al., 2017: 632). Moreover, working

memory influences every aspect of simultaneous interpretation, including the comprehension and analysis of the source language, the reformulation into the target language, as well as storage, production, and overall control during the process (Tzou et al., 2017:634).

2.5.6 Sign language interpreter

In relation to sign language, Majoro (2021:18) observes that the World Federation of the Deaf (1993) states that sign language interpreting involves translating speech for the Deaf community and interpreting signs for hearing people. This means it transmits messages between the Deaf and hearing communities, with interpreters using both speech and sign language. (Majoro, 2021:18), explains that interpreting enables individuals who do not share a common language to communicate through a bilingual interpreter. Consequently, sign language interpreting services are often used to enable Deaf learners to access classroom discourse. According to Ntoaduro et al. (2023:106), interpreting demands swift, well-informed decision-making and the skill to convey complex ideas, cultural references, and humor from one language to another.

2.5.7 Spoken Language Interpreters

Spoken language interpreters, particularly when interpreting into English as a secondary language, face several challenges, According to Murtiningsih and Ardillillah (2021:225), interpreters struggle with finding the right vocabulary to accurately convey messages and handling diverse accents, which can complicate interpretation. A deep understanding of both the language and its cultural context is crucial to prevent misinterpretations, but linguistic limitations, especially in vocabulary, can obstruct effective communication.

2.6 Directionality in Interpreting

Directionality in interpreting is a significant topic within the field, particularly concerning whether interpreters perform better when working from their second language (L2) into their first language (L1) or vice versa. This section delves into the challenges, impacts, preferences, and patterns of directionality, focusing on both

spoken and sign language interpreting. It also examines these aspects within the specific context of South Africa.

2.6.1 Impact and Preference of Directionality

Nicodemus and Emmorey (2015:1) define directionality in interpreting as the impact of the direction in which interpretation occurs, specifically whether the interpreter is rendering a message from a second, non-dominant language (L2) into their native language (L1) or from their native language into their second language. A key debate among interpreting professionals' centers on whether interpretations are of higher quality when delivered into the interpreter's native language (L1) or a second language (L2). Research on interpreting directionality reveals distinct preferences between spoken and sign language interpreters.

While spoken language interpreters generally favour working from their L2 into their L1, sign language interpreters tend to prefer interpreting from their L1 (spoken language) into their L2 (signed language). This preference is particularly strong among novice bimodal interpreters. However, performance studies indicate that novice sign language interpreters perform better when interpreting into their L1, while expert interpreters demonstrate comparable proficiency in both directions. Nicodemus and Emmorey's (2015:1) study found that expert interpreters were more accurate than novice.

For an example, a Netherlands' study conducted by Van Dijk et al.'s (2011:48-52) demonstrates the impact of directionality. The study shows that, among experienced sign language interpreters, the quality of interpretations from sign language of the Netherlands (SLN) to Dutch was lower compared to interpretations in the Dutch-to-SLN and Dutch-to-Sign Supported Dutch (SSD) directions. The study suggested that interpreting from SLN to Dutch might pose greater challenges due to interpreters having less experience in this direction. Consequently, their comprehension of SLN may not be as automatised, rendering it more susceptible to the high cognitive demands of interpreting. Another proposed explanation focused on the linguistic aspects, suggesting that the lexical and grammatical variety in SLN might be more extensive than that of spoken Dutch. This disparity in complexity could contribute to the difficulty in comprehending SLN and subsequently affect the quality of

interpretation.

2.6.2 Interpreting from Sign Language into Spoken Language

De Meulder et al. (2018:10) observe that interpreting from a sign language into a spoken language is often seen as the "elephant in the room" because it is frequently considered a significant challenge by interpreters, who view it as their weakest skill. Though there is an advantage of using spoken language that permits speakers to think as they talk, allowing for natural pauses, hesitations, and self-corrections, as noted by Suliman (2014:360). In a study by Haug et al. (2017: 18), Deaf leaders mentioned that high-quality interpretations from sign language into spoken language are crucial. The study also shows that Deaf leaders prioritise this ability when choosing interpreter. However, trusting interpreters can be difficult since Deaf leaders usually lack a real-time method to monitor their interpretations, despite their ability to read and write in the spoken language (Haug et al., 2017:13). The last challenge is that there is little research on interpreting from sign language into spoken language (De Meulder et al., 2018:10).

2.6.3 Directionality Patterns in Signed Language and Spoken language Interpreters

Several factors likely contribute to the distinct directionality preferences observed in sign and spoken language interpreting. These factors include modality differences between sign and spoken languages, the unique linguistic features of sign languages, and interpreters' self-perceived skills in their working languages. Nicodemus et al. (2023:100) highlight a historical preference among educators and practitioners of spoken language interpreting for working from one's second language (L2) into their first language (L1). This preference stems from the belief that such directionality ensures high-quality and natural interpretations (Nicodemus et al., 2023:100). Studies consistently support the view that spoken language interpreters produce superior interpretations when working into their dominant language. Influenced by these findings, organisations like the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) have advocated for L2-to-L1 interpreting as the standard for simultaneous conference interpreting Nicodemus et al. (2023:100) solidifying this approach as the norm in monologic spoken language interpreting contexts.

In contrast, research on sign language interpreting reveals a different trend. Sign language interpreters often prefer interpreting from their L1 (spoken language) into their L2 (sign language). This preference has been noted anecdotally across various language pairs, such as English to American Sign Language (ASL) (Nicodemus, 2008), Dutch to Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) (van den Bogaerde, 2010; Crasborn, 2006), and English to Australian Sign Language (Auslan) (Nicodemus et al 2023:100).

Metzger (2006:264) further argues that there is a distinction between spoken language interpretation (SLI) and sign language interpretation (SLI) in terms of the modality of languages involved, the core of their work remains quite similar. As a result, the fundamental task of conveying the meaning of one person's message in a different language, along with the interpreter's responsibility to understand, process, and reformulate source utterances into the target language, remains consistent across both types of interpretation. Furthermore, interpreters, whether in spoken or sign language, work in various countries worldwide and in diverse settings, including both community and conference interpreting contexts.

Van Dijk et al. (2011:48) emphasise that in interpreting, comprehension of the source language is crucial, as any misunderstanding at this stage cannot be recovered later in the process. They further argue that interpreters tend to understand the source message more easily when it is delivered in their dominant language (L1), which often results in higher-quality output when interpreting from L1 into L2. However, despite this observation, empirical evidence on the impact of directionality in interpreting remains inconclusive. Some studies suggest that L2-to-L1 interpretations may have higher quality compared to L1-to-L2 interpretations (Chang, 2005:4). On the other hand, Lin et al (2018:2), found that interpreting into a non-dominant language often results in higher-quality interpretations. This approach offers advantages, as better comprehension of the source text can minimise the loss of critical information and reduce the likelihood of misinterpretations, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the interpretation. Conversely, other studies have not found clear directionality effects in interpreting, and some have even observed opposite results (Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002:607-608).

2.6.4 Directionality Preference: Working into the A-languages

Interpreters often show a preference for working into their A-language (native language) due to its cognitive advantages, such as faster lexical access, higher anticipation potential, and better memory retention of input (Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul, 2024:41). These benefits reduce some linguistic challenges, particularly with vocabulary selection and comprehension. However, when interpreters need to work into their B-language (a non-native language), as in many multilingual settings like the European Union, these advantages diminish, making the process more cognitively demanding.

Linking this to the linguistic challenges discussed by Murtiningsih and Ardlillah (2021:225), when interpreters work into their B-language, they may struggle more with finding the right vocabulary, handling accents, and ensuring cultural accuracy. The lack of linguistic competence in their non-native language, especially in vocabulary, can hinder their ability to fully understand and accurately convey meaning. Additionally, the challenges of notetaking and processing dense information, as highlighted by Liu, Luo and Wang (2023:1-12), become even more pronounced when working into a B-language, where the cognitive load is higher.

2.7 CHALLENGES OF INTERPRETATION

Interpretation, whether in sign or spoken language, presents a myriad of challenges. These challenges can be broadly categorised into linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal domains. Each of these aspects impacts the effectiveness of communication between the interpreter and the client, influencing the overall success of the interpreted event. One critical area that requires in-depth understanding is the perception and trust of clients in interpreters.

2.7.1 Linguistic challenges

There are many structural differences that are observed by (LaVigne et al., 2003:875). One of them demonstrate the difference between American Sign language (ASL) and English due to ASL being a visual language and English being an auditory one. But the most significant difference between them is their vocabulary. Arguably, ASL can

fully express a wide range of ideas, but its expression will not resemble that of English. ASL can convey the concepts behind technical English, but the way these concepts are expressed in each language will be vastly different (LaVigne et al., 2003:875).

One of the linguistic challenges is the availability of vocabulary. Due to the lack of available vocabulary, Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:44) argue that interpreters may experience false starts, particularly at the word level, which indicate problems with lexical search during speech production. One of the challenges encountered by interpreters is deciding how to interpret idiomatic expressions, because they must decide on whether they must choose between rendering the interpreting as an equivalent image, a paraphrase, or a literal equivalent (Tzou et al., 2017:634).

2.7.2 Disfluencies in interpreting

Camille and Defrancq (2019:266) define disfluencies as instances that interrupt the smooth flow of speech without contributing new information. However, the literature reveals ongoing debates about what constitutes a disfluency, with significant variation in how these elements are identified and classified. A common distinction is made between repair and non-repair disfluencies. A study cited by the authors explains that repairs involve interruptions in speech followed by attempts to correct or replace a previous segment. Building on this distinction, Camille and Defrancq (2019:266) outline a classification that includes single-token disfluencies and structured disfluencies. The former, which do not involve repair, encompass elements such as filled pauses (e.g., “uh,” “uhm”), intra-word pauses, and the lengthening of sounds associated with hesitation.

However, Camille and Defrancq (2019:266) caution that not all silent pauses should be interpreted as disfluencies; some are complex in nature, functioning as rhetorical tools or strategies to preserve prosodic structure. In this context, certain disfluencies are structured and involve repair processes such as repetitions, deletions, substitutions, and insertions. The authors also identify a subset of easily recognisable disfluencies, including false starts, filled pauses, silent pauses both within and between words and sound lengthenings. While filled pauses, silent pauses, and lengthenings are classified as non-repair disfluencies, false starts fall under repair

disfluencies (Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul, 2024:38).

The occurrence of disfluencies is often linked to the limited capacity of working memory. Since working memory can only store a finite amount of information needed to carry out tasks, disfluencies are more likely to emerge when cognitive demands exceed this capacity (Camille and Defrancq, 2019:267). Moreover, the authors highlight that disfluencies are influenced by several factors that contribute to cognitive load, including the delivery rate, language pair, sentence length (particularly syntactic complexity), and lexical density (Camille and Defrancq, 2019:269). These elements collectively increase processing demands, making interpreters more prone to disfluencies under pressure.

2.7.3 Vocabulary challenges between Sign language and spoken language

There are many structural differences observed between sign languages and spoken languages. LaVigne et al. (2003:875) demonstrate this by comparing American Sign Language (ASL) with English, noting that ASL is a visual language while English is auditory. The most significant difference between them is their vocabulary. While ASL can fully express a wide range of ideas, its expression will not resemble that of English, particularly when it comes to technical concepts, which are conveyed in vastly different ways (LaVigne et al., 2003:875).

Research on interpreting between sign and spoken languages identifies various linguistic challenges. Differences in vocabulary size and the presence of fewer cognates in sign languages can lead to more frequent errors and omissions during interpretation (Swabey et al., 2016:37). This issue is particularly notable when comparing American Sign Language (ASL) interpretations to spoken language interpretations. Sign language interpreters face difficulties with terminology, foreign loanwords, and proper names, especially in news contexts (Bidoli and Sala, 2011:207). In addition, most sign language interpreters globally are not native English speakers. However, they are still required to meet the growing need for interpreting between English and their national sign languages (Turner et al., 2021:7). Overall, Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:44) argue that due to this lack of available vocabulary, interpreters may experience false starts, particularly at the word level, which indicates problems with lexical search during speech production.

2.7.4 Challenges of equivalence: Sign language and spoken language Interpreters

Equivalence presents significant challenges in interpreting and translating across different languages. Anaphoric pronominal references, for instance, can be particularly tricky to translate naturally into the target language, often necessitating techniques such as repetition or lexical additions (Prihantoro, 2017:2). Anaphoric pronominal references are instances where pronouns refer to a noun or noun phrase mentioned earlier in the text or conversation.

Equivalence assumes a degree of sameness, likeness, or similarity and requires a specific set of qualities for comparison. Translators and interpreters encounter difficulties in finding equivalent terms for specialised vocabulary, especially with the fast pace of global innovation. The biggest challenge with equivalence is its precise definition. While it suggests equal value, in translation, it does not mean perfect symmetry or identical meaning. Instead, it refers to a relevant similarity between the source and target texts (Rędzioch-Korkuz, 2023:41).

Panou (2013:2) discusses Baker's perspective on the translation process, emphasising the importance of individual words. According to Baker, translators initially focus on words as single units to identify appropriate equivalents in the target language (TL), noting that a "word" is a complex term with varying meanings across languages. She also addresses grammatical equivalence, which refers to the difficulty of finding equivalent terms due to the diversity of grammatical categories across languages. Building on this, Panou (2013:2) highlights how differences in grammatical structures such as number, voice, person, gender, tense, and aspect can significantly impact the conveyed meaning.

Textual equivalence, in this context, concerns the cohesion and clarity achieved between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), while pragmatic equivalence involves implied meanings (implicature) rather than literal interpretations. The translator's core objective is to render the source language (SL) message in a way that is both accessible and comprehensible to the target audience. However, perfect equivalence between languages remains a theoretical assumption rather than a practical reality. In a similar manner, Lebesse (2015:69) argues that interpreters must

be both bilingual and bicultural to navigate these challenges effectively. This includes an awareness of dialectal and regional variations, nonverbal cues, differing attitudes toward time, and diverse forms of personal address elements deeply embedded in cultural context.

2.7.5 The Critical Role of Time in Interpreting: Challenges and Implications

LaVigne et al. (2003:876) emphasise that time is a critical factor in the interpreting process, which can present significant challenges for interpreters. This time aspect can be divided into two segments: first, the conversion time necessary for accurately processing and understanding the source message, and second, the expression time required to effectively convey the interpreted message. Adequate time is essential for interpreters to process what is being said and to make the informed judgments needed for accurate interpretation. Insufficient time in either segment can lead to errors, ultimately affecting the interpreter's ability to build trust with clients and to deliver precise communication in both signed and spoken language contexts.

2.7.6 The Role of Trust in Sign and Spoken Language Interpreting

Napier (2011:61) highlights that sign language interpreters often face challenges in building trust with clients due to their status as "outsiders" to the Deaf community. Trust, although implicit, plays a crucial role in the success of interpreted events, and an interpreter's attitude can significantly affect client rapport. Despite its importance, little research has explored sign language interpreting from a narrative or linguistic perspective, emphasising the need to involve both interpreters and consumers in research (Haug et al, 2017:3).

Trust issues, as noted by Lesch and Grové (2018: 251) and Napier (2011:61), are common in both Deaf and hearing communities, influenced by the interpreter's community status, professionalism, linguistic skills, and familiarity with the client. In many cases, individuals prefer interpreters from their own networks, such as family and friends, to ensure trust and competence. This concern extends to spoken language interpreters, as seen in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature, where users expressed difficulty in assessing the quality of interpreting, reinforcing the importance of trust in interpreting services (Lesch and Grové, 2018:251).

2.7.8 Voice-Over Challenges in the Deaf Community and the Designated Interpreter Model

In the Deaf community, voice-over challenges for interpreters are often linked to the misrepresentation of a Deaf individual's personality or intent. Research indicates that when interpreters fail to accurately convey tone or meaning, particularly in professional settings, misunderstandings can occur among hearing individuals (De Meulder, Napier, and Stone, 2018:8). Such misperceptions may stem from factors like gender mismatches between the Deaf person and the interpreter or confusion about who is speaking, potentially leading to mistrust or incorrect assumptions regarding the Deaf person's character, intentions, or intelligence. These challenges underscore the critical need for skilled interpretation to ensure accurate and respectful voicing of the Deaf client's message.

Furthermore, the authors note that inconsistent levels of interpreter proficiency can exacerbate these issues, especially when working with Deaf professionals such as academics. To address this, *the designated interpreter model* was introduced. This approach promotes sustained collaboration between a Deaf professional and a consistent interpreter, fostering mutual understanding and trust. Over time, interpreters become more attuned to the client's signing style, cognitive patterns, and expressive preferences, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretation. This model illustrates how a deeper, ongoing interpreter-client relationship can significantly improve the quality of voice-over interpretation in Deaf-hearing interactions (De Meulder et al., 2018:8).

2.8 STRATEGIES USED BY INTERPRETERS

2.8.1 Omissions as a strategy

Omissions in interpreting, particularly in sign language and simultaneous interpreting, are not always indicative of errors but can be strategic choices made by interpreters to enhance clarity and audience comprehension. Napier and Barker (2004:372) argue that omissions by sign language interpreters can stem from deliberate linguistic strategies rather than mistakes. Similarly, studies by Eraslan (2020:102) suggest that omissions in simultaneous interpreting may result from non-

native English accents and are often linked to the interpreter's performance and self-perception. To add, Eraslan (2020:100), considers omission as a technique that interpreters use when they faced with interpreting challenges such as: speed delivery of the text, high density of information strong accents, incorrect grammar and lexical usage.

Additionally, Jie (2023:92) identifies three types of omissions in Chinese-to-English consecutive interpreting: those due to inadequate knowledge, misallocation of energy, and conscious strategic decisions. While some omissions occur because of errors such as a lack of linguistic and cultural competence or inadequate preparation, others are intentional strategies to improve focus and coherence. Barghout et al. (2015:311) found that professional interpreters might omit non-essential information as a coping strategy when faced with high speech speeds. Barik (1973), cited in Barghout et al. (2015:311), categories omissions into types such as skipping, comprehension, delay, and compounding omissions, noting that some result from the interpreter's difficulty in coping. Overall, these studies highlight omission as a complex but potentially effective technique in interpreting, influenced by factors like accent, language direction, interpreter experience, and speech speed. Jie (2023:92) further emphasises that while omissions can lead to information loss, they can also make interpretations more focused and effective. With experience and better preparation, interpreters can use omissions more strategically to optimise performance.

2.8.2 The importance of notetaking: strategy in consecutive interpreting

Liu, Luo, and Wang (2023:1-12) emphasises the importance of notetaking as a tool to aid memory, which directly impacts interpretation accuracy. Challenges such as missing key information, inconsistent abbreviations, unclear logic, and inadequate notes for dense information are common issues, particularly for student interpreters. These note-taking challenges are especially relevant for interpreters working into English as a second language, where precision and the retention of key details are essential for accurate interpretation.

2.8.3 Adequate preparation as a tool to reduce cognitive load

Preparation is a vital strategy for interpreters, both in spoken and sign language, to ensure effective and accurate interpretation. As emphasized by Fantinuoli (2017:26), preparation not only helps bridge linguistic and extralinguistic gaps but also reduces the cognitive load during interpreting by allowing interpreters to anticipate and familiarise themselves with the subject matter in advance. This is particularly important when interpreters work with specialists who have deep knowledge of a field that might be unfamiliar to them, leading to potential knowledge gaps.

According to Chmiel, Lijewska, Szarkowska, and Dutka (2018:727), interpreters must thoroughly prepare by familiarising themselves with relevant terminology. One essential strategy in interpreting, particularly in conference settings, is paraphrasing. This technique involves simplifying verbal expressions, converting complex sentences into more straightforward forms, and generalising lists. Professional interpreters use paraphrasing as a strategic approach or reformulation, enabling them to convey the meaning of the source text when an exact equivalent is unavailable, express ideas more concisely, or interpret idiomatic expressions (Chmiel et al., 2018:727). Furthermore, Chmiel et al. (2018:727) identify three key tasks involved in an interpreter's performance: interpreting, paraphrasing, and shadowing. For sign language interpreters, especially those working with Deaf learners in educational contexts, preparation is even more crucial due to the added complexities of working with both linguistic and cultural differences.

Fantinuoli (2017:26) proposal of a computer-assisted approach to conference preparation offers a potential solution to streamline this process, making it more efficient and less time-consuming. This approach could be particularly beneficial for sign language interpreters who need to prepare not only linguistically but also contextually, ensuring they are equipped to handle the specialised content they will interpret. Various methods, such as focusing on terminology, acquiring extralinguistic knowledge, or using reference materials, are employed by interpreters to prepare effectively, as noted by (Chmiel et al, 2018:2018). In both spoken and sign language interpreting, thorough preparation is a key strategy that enhances the interpreter's ability to deliver accurate and effective communication.

Preparation is widely acknowledged as a critical strategy in simultaneous interpreting, benefiting both professional interpreters and students (Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015:1). Research demonstrates that advance preparation not only enhances interpretation accuracy but also reduces ear-voice span, which suggests improved processing capacity (Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015:15). By addressing knowledge gaps and reducing cognitive load before the interpreting task, interpreters are better equipped to manage its complexities, whether interpreting into English as a secondary language or handling the specific challenges of sign language interpretation. Effective preparation allows interpreters to integrate specialised terminology within a broader thematic framework, thereby improving their ability to deliver accurate and contextually appropriate interpretations (Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015:15).

2.8.4 CONCLUSION

Interpreting across languages, whether spoken or sign, entails navigating a complex interplay of linguistic, cognitive, and contextual challenges. Structural and vocabulary differences between languages like American Sign Language and English pose significant hurdles, while disfluencies often reflect underlying cognitive load issues. Strategies such as omissions, thorough preparation, and repetition are vital in addressing these challenges and enhancing interpretation quality. Moreover, building trust with clients, particularly in signed language contexts, is crucial for effective communication. Understanding and addressing these multifaceted challenges can lead to more accurate and reliable interpretations, ultimately improving the success of the interpreted events.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework and research methodology employed in this study. Grounded in Gile's Effort Model, the first section outlines the cognitive processes involved in both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, with particular attention to multilingual and multicultural contexts. The second section describes the research strategies adopted to conduct the study.

3.2 EFFORT MODEL IN INTERPRETING

Gile (1999:154) mentions that in the early 1980s, a new set of models emerged, shifting the focus from merely describing the simultaneous interpreting process to addressing the errors and omissions that interpreters both simultaneous and consecutive exhibit. These discrepancies could not simply be blamed on inadequate linguistic skills, a lack of extralinguistic knowledge, or poor conditions in delivering the source text. These models, termed "Effort Models" (Gile (1995), categorise the interpreting process into three distinct "Efforts", these are:

- L: The Listening and Analysis Effort, which focuses on how the energy and concentration required from the interpreter as they receive the information plus the scrutiny involved in the processing of the data.
- P: The Production Effort, which includes speech production in simultaneous interpreting and note-taking during the initial stage of consecutive interpreting when the interpreter is listening but has not yet begun to interpret.
- M: The Short-term Memory Effort, responsible for managing memory tasks from when a speech segment is first heard until it is either reformulated in the target language or forgotten.

In addition, Wang (2022:431) explains that Giles Effort Model in interpreting is based on two key ideas. First, it suggests that interpreting tasks demand a significant amount of infinite mental energy. Second, it argues that interpreting often consumes nearly all this available mental capacity. As a result, when mental resources are stretched too thin, the quality of the interpretation tends to decline. Other scholars such as

Pöchhacker (2015:135) add that the role of the Effort Models in interpreting focused on cognitive effort. Gile (1995) also highlights that the Effort Models focused on operational constraints rather than information-processing flow.

The foundations of Gile's Effort Models rested on the assumption that there is an intrinsic difficulty in interpreting, which lies in the cognitive tasks involved. Thus, the approach in question focuses on explaining this difficulty inherent in the interpreting process in a way that should facilitate the selection and development of strategies and tactics toward better interpreting performance (Gumul, 2018:18).

3.2.1 Components of the Effort Model

Gile's Effort Model in Wang (2022:431) breaks down simultaneous interpreting into several cognitive operations:

- Analysis Effort (L): This includes all processes aimed at understanding the source language, from sound analysis to word identification and final meaning interpretation notes that, while the interpreter may not need to understand every detail, a basic understanding of each sentence's logic is crucial.
- Production Effort (P): The production effort involves transforming the interpreted message into the target language. It begins with forming a mental representation of the message, continues through speech planning, and ends with delivering the output. Self-monitoring and corrections may occur during this phase.
- Memory Effort (M): The memory effort relates to short-term storage of interpreted segments and memory management during the process, Tzou et al (2011:214) emphasise that this task places significant demand on short-term memory, with the interpreter needing to recall information while processing new content. Additionally, they suggest that working memory influences every aspect of simultaneous interpretation, including the comprehension and analysis of the source language, the reformulation into the target language, and storage, production, and overall control during the process.
- Coordination Effort in (C): Wang (2022:431), demonstrates that one more Effort was added which is Coordination Effort. It involves managing the

cognitive load across all tasks. It stresses that attentional resources are required to coordinate listening, memory, and speech production effectively to avoid overload and errors.

3.2.2 Adaptation of the Effort Model for Signed Language Interpreting

Gile's Effort Model explained in Gile (2021:18) was adapted for sign language interpreting by renaming the "Listening" effort to "Reception" (R), because signed language interpreters must process visual input rather than auditory cues. When interpreting from signed language to spoken language, interpreters must consider additional factors, such as physical positioning for optimal reception of visual cues and online monitoring to ensure communication accuracy (Gile, 2021:18). This adaptation highlights the cognitive complexity involved in interpreting between different modalities.

3.3 APPLICATION OF GILE'S EFFORT MODEL IN THE STUDY

This study uses Gile's Effort Model to explore the cognitive demands of interpreting between isiZulu, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and the South African Sign Language into English. By examining how interpreters navigate linguistic and cognitive challenges, the Effort Model serves as a conceptual framework to assess how memory, coordination, and processing demands influence interpreting outcomes.

According to Gile (2021:18), the framework emphasises the need to manage multiple concurrent tasks, including listening, memory storage, and speech production, under high pressure. These demands are heightened when working in a secondary language, making the analysis of interpreters' strategies for coping with cognitive load essential to understanding their experiences in multilingual South Africa.

Overall, this conceptual framework establishes a foundation for understanding the impact of cognitive efforts on interpreter performance, guiding the analysis of the linguistic and strategic choices interpreters make under high cognitive demands. To achieve the study's objectives, a structured research methodology will be employed. This structured research methodology will utilise qualitative data collection methods to explore the experiences of interpreters interpreting between isiZulu, Sesotho,

Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and South African Sign Language (SASL) into English. Through interviews and observations, the research will delve into the cognitive challenges faced by interpreters and the strategies they use to manage these demands. This methodology will be closely aligned with Gile's Effort Model. This will be achieved by facilitating a thorough examination of how various cognitive efforts influence interpreting performance in practical settings. The following section will detail the specific research design and methods utilised in this study:

3.2 METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, ethical considerations and limitations used to examine the challenges interpreters face when interpreting into English as their secondary language in South Africa's multilingual context. It describes the qualitative research approach grounded in a narrative framework, which is ideal for exploring the complex and subjective experiences of both spoken and sign language interpreters. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the linguistic and cognitive challenges interpreters encounter, and the strategies they use to address these challenges (Pöchhacker, 2015:135).

3.2.2 Research Design

A research design is fundamentally a well-organised plan developed to tackle a scientific issue, serving as a framework for the investigation and outlining a comprehensive strategy to systematically address various research aspects (Indu and Vidhukumar, 2020:64). Choosing an appropriate research design is vital, as it significantly influences the approach taken to resolve the research question (Singh, 2014:1). Furthermore, Indu and Vidhukumar (2020:64) state that research designs can be categorised into qualitative or quantitative types, with further divisions into experimental and non-experimental categories.

In this study, the focus is on a qualitative research design. This design specifically employs a non-experimental data collection method. This choice aligns with the aim

of exploring the subjective experiences of interpreters and understanding the cognitive challenges they face in their work. The following section details specific methodologies utilised in this qualitative approach, highlighting how they contribute to addressing the research objectives:

3.2.3 Qualitative Study

According to Mohajan (2018:2), qualitative research is an approach that uses various methods to investigate and comprehend complex phenomena, often emphasising the subjective experiences and meanings individuals or groups attach to their social realities. This study employs semi-structured interviews to gather detailed insights into participants' experiences with their interpreting practice. Given that qualitative research is a type of social action emphasising how people perceive and interpret their experiences to grasp social reality (Mohajan, 2018:2), interpreters will be asked to reflect on their experiences and share the strategies they have used to overcome challenges in their interpreting work. Ohman (2005:274), supports the idea that qualitative research is an investigative approach aimed at understanding social human issues by drawing on various distinct methodological traditions.

It focuses on individuals lived experiences as expressed in thoughts, ideas, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions, and it primarily examines human behaviour and interaction. Ames et al. (2019:1) further note that when conducted effectively, qualitative research offers a deep understanding of complex phenomena by concentrating on the experiences and perceptions of participants while also considering contextual factors. Moreover, Ohman (2005:273) highlights that the goal of qualitative methodology is to generate new knowledge based on participants' beliefs and experiences, rather than relying on pre-defined, testable hypotheses. Therefore, this study adopts this method to invite interpreters to reflect on their work, share the challenges they have encountered, and discuss how they addressed those challenges, with the aim of understanding different perspectives and uncovering self-awareness among interpreters. In addition, data collection in this study is driven by the aim of identifying the challenges interpreters face when reformulating messages into English as their second language within the South African context. This includes examining the similarities and differences encountered by both sign language and

spoken language interpreters, and the strategies they employ to effectively interpret into English. Considering these research questions, I carefully considered various methods for collecting data that would best capture the experiences and insights of interpreters in this multilingual landscape. This thoughtful approach ensures that the gathered data will provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in interpreting within South Africa's diverse linguistic environment.

3.2.4 Types of Data Collection

In qualitative research designs, a variety of strategies can be employed to gather rich and meaningful data. Mohajan (2018:2), highlights an extensive range of methods, including logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case studies, open-ended interviews, participant observation, counselling, therapy, grounded theory, biography, comparative methods, introspection, casuistry, focus groups, literary criticism, meditation practice, historical research, and more. Each of these methods offers unique insights and approaches to understanding complex phenomena.

Among these strategies, interviews are particularly prevalent in qualitative research. Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012:3), points out that interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, each serving distinct purposes in the data collection process. On one hand, structured interviews, resembling a questionnaire format, often yield more superficial responses, while semi-structured interviews include predetermined topics with prompts that guide the conversation, balancing direction with flexibility. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, cover broad topics and allow participants to lead the discussion, providing deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives.

For this study, I utilised semi-structured interviews to capture the nuances of interpreters' experiences and strategies in navigating the cognitive challenges they face. This approach is used to facilitate a meaningful dialogue, allowing participants to share their insights while still providing the necessary structure to address the research questions effectively.

3.2.4.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, or online, typically lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. These interviews are recorded for transcription. Transcription can take up to ten times the interview length (e.g., a 1-hour interview may require 10 hours to transcribe). Individual interviews are particularly valuable for exploring experiences or opinions in depth (Petty et al., 2012:3).

For this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom, with follow-ups made via WhatsApp and email. A self-reflection exercise was also completed by each participant. This multi-modal approach provided comprehensive insights into the interpreters' experiences, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in interpreting into English as a second language.

Additionally, the primary data collection method in this study was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences while maintaining flexibility to probe further into relevant areas. Most interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom, leveraging its video and audio features for interactive discussions. For participants who preferred other methods or lacked Zoom access, WhatsApp and telephone calls were used, offering voice or text-based communication. Telephone calls were recorded using Zoom.

Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview focused on the linguistic challenges interpreters face and the strategies they employed when working into English as a second language. The semi-structured format, guided by key questions, allowed for deviations based on participants' responses, facilitating a natural flow and deeper insights. Follow-up communication via email and WhatsApp allowed participants to clarify or expand on their answers. Voice messages were transcribed, while text responses were forwarded to the researcher's email for record-keeping. Email follow-ups were particularly useful for gathering detailed examples requiring reflection.

Besides, interview recordings were transcribed using Microsoft Office tools. I listened to the transcription repeatedly to ensure accuracy and to capture non-verbal

cues. The transcriptions were then cleaned to maintain focus on content while preserving the integrity of participants' responses. This flexible approach to data collection ensured depth and accuracy in capturing the interpreters' experiences (Stuckey, 2015:8).

3.2.4.2 Self-reflection after action

In my study, self-reflection played a crucial role, and participants were required to review videos of their previous work prior to the interviews as part of a structured reflective process. This approach was inspired by Pietrzak (2019:420), who emphasised the importance of reflection for gaining knowledge, rather than merely engaging in the act of translation itself. Dewey's theory suggests that learning is deepened through reflection on experiences rather than through translation as an automatic skill.

Further, incorporating Schön's model of reflective practice, in Pietrzak (2019:420), I applied the three primary processes of reflection in my study: knowledge-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. Knowledge-in-action refers to the tacit knowledge applied during the task; reflection-in-action takes place while the task is being performed; and reflection-on-action involves reflecting on the task after it is completed.

Pietrzak (2019:416-417) argues that reflecting during translation tasks enhances awareness of the translator's decisions and actions, fostering a better understanding of the overall process. Retrospective reflection enables individuals to evaluate their performance, roles, and learning outcomes, often highlighting discrepancies between their expectations and actual practice. In line with Pietrzak's framework, my study emphasised reflection-on-action and reflection after the action. This emphasis focused on how participants assessed their performance in the videos and their interpretations of the experience.

3.2.5 Sampling

Bhardwaj (2019:157) explains that in research, a sample refers to a subset of individuals, objects, or items selected from a larger population for the purpose of

measurement. Sampling is conducted to obtain precise results. The following is a summary of the different types of sampling methods outlined by Bhardwaj (2019:157-162):

The probability Sampling includes:

- Simple Random Sampling: Every individual has an equal chance of selection
- Stratified Sampling: population divided into subgroups, random sampling within each.
- Systematic Sampling: Selecting every individual from a list.
- Cluster Sampling: Population divided into clusters; random clusters selected.
- Stage Sampling-Sampling is done in stages (clusters, then individuals).

The Non-Probability Sampling Includes:

- Convenience Sampling: Selection based on availability.
- Purposive (Judgmental) Sampling: Researcher selects based on specific criteria.
- Snowball Sampling: Participants refer to other participants.
- Quota Sampling: Ensures representation of certain groups, but non-random selection within.
- Theoretical Sampling: Sampling based on emerging theory (used in grounded theory).

3.2.6 Purposive sampling as an approach

The study adopts a purposive sampling approach to select interpreters based on their relevance to the research objectives, as explained by Benoot, Hannes, and Bilsen (2016:2), who emphasise the method's goal of gaining deep insights rather than generalising. Ames et al. (2019: 2) outline a three-step framework that focuses on choosing rich data sources from diverse settings aligned with the study's goals. Palinkas et al. (2015:534) highlight the importance of selecting individuals capable of reflecting clearly on their experiences to ensure meaningful data collection.

Purposive sampling allows researchers to select cases that help explore patterns, focusing on information-rich participants rather than exhausting all possibilities (Benoot et al., 2016:2). For this study, the goal is to investigate and compare the challenges faced by spoken and sign language interpreters when interpreting into English as their secondary language in South Africa's multilingual context.

To achieve this, the study targeted spoken language interpreters with greater experience in simultaneous or consecutive interpreting involving isiZulu (Nguni), Sesotho (Sotho), Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. For sign language interpreters, the primary selection criterion was experience in simultaneous interpreting, which is more common in sign language settings. These were interpreters who work into English, even though sign language is not their native language. These interpreters were selected through a review of their work on YouTube and parliamentary hearings, ensuring they aligned with the study's objectives. Additionally, purposive sampling with maximum variation was employed to capture a wide range of experiences from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This approach ensures that the study explores the full spectrum of interpreting challenges in South Africa and facilitates comparison between spoken and sign language interpreters.

Below is summary of the participants, their gender, languages that they were asked to reflect on.

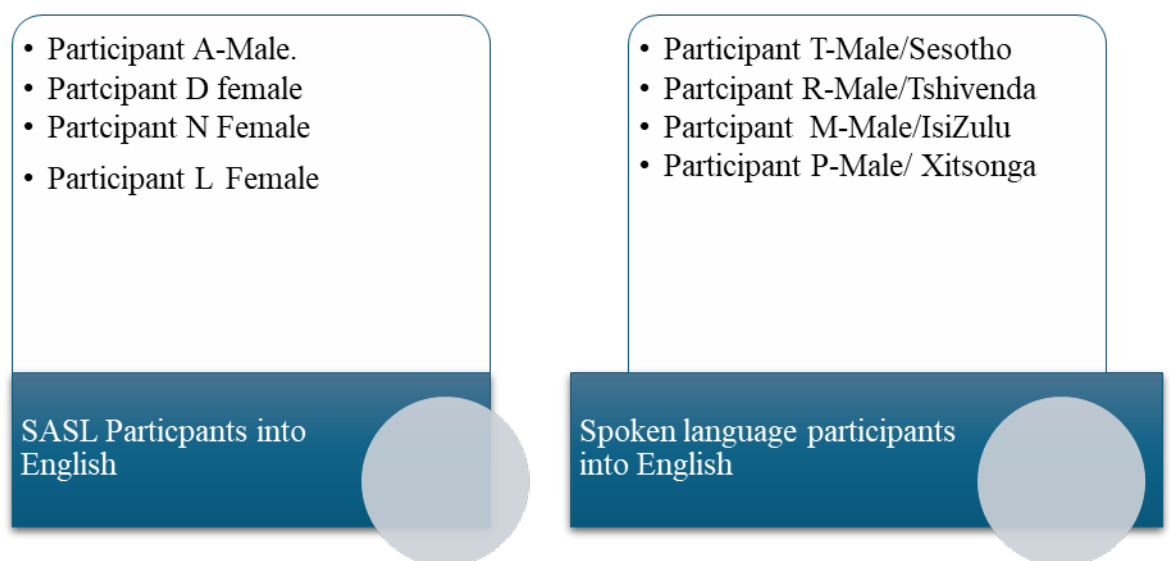


Figure 3: Demographics of the participants

3.2.7 Participant Selection Criteria

The selection of participants for this study, based on their work available on YouTube and parliamentary hearings videos, aligns with this approach, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences that enhance the study's overall depth and quality. It includes interpreters with varying levels of experience, different language pairs, and different types of interpreting modalities. This diversity is crucial for understanding the full range of linguistic challenges interpreters face, further enriching the data collection process; and for this reason, choices influencing the selection of interpreters to participate in the study are explained.

3.2.7.1 Sign Language Interpreters

A total of eight participants were selected for the study. The selection of the four sign language interpreters was guided by specific criteria: participants were required to demonstrate proficiency in both South African Sign Language (SASL) and English, with English being their secondary language. They also needed to have a minimum of five years' professional experience interpreting into English across various settings. To reflect the multicultural context in which SASL is used, interpreters were selected to represent a diversity of cultural backgrounds within South Africa. Preference was given to interpreters with accessible work samples, such as YouTube videos or recordings from parliamentary hearings, to enable the evaluation of their interpreting style and the challenges they encounter.

3.2.7.2 Spoken Language Interpreters

The four spoken language interpreters were selected from four distinct South African language groups. This selection of four languages in this study aligns with the government's approach to multilingual communication. The proposed legislation by DACST groups the 11 official languages into four clusters, ensuring inclusivity while maintaining practicality (Finlayson and Madiba, 2002:45). Similarly, this study draws from these clusters by focusing on isiZulu (Nguni group), Sesotho (Sotho group), Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. While Tshivenda and Xitsonga do not belong to the Nguni or Sotho language families and are not mutually intelligible with them, their inclusion allows the study to capture a broader range of linguistic and cultural

diversity within the official languages. Afrikaans, although an official language and widely spoken, was not included in this study due to the focus on African languages and the need to examine interpreting into English as a secondary language in multilingual African contexts. Additionally, a rotational sampling system was employed to ensure manageable yet representative coverage of the linguistic landscape. This approach allows for a balanced yet manageable analysis of interpreting challenges while reflecting the broader linguistic landscape of the country. Interpreters were required to be fluent in both their native language and the English language, with English as their second language, and to have at least five years of experience interpreting from their native languages into English in various contexts. The selection aimed to ensure representation from different language families, capturing the unique challenges and strategies employed by interpreters from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis processes in qualitative research involve systematically examining and interpreting textual or visual data to uncover meaningful patterns, themes, and insights. According to Griffe (2005: 36), coding means reading the transcript until certain themes become apparent. Data analysis processes involve, among others, preparation of the data, familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes (Griffe, 2005:36). In this study, interview transcriptions were completed using online applications from Microsoft Office. I used NVIVO to identify themes from the interpreters' reflections and interview responses, paying close attention to the challenges they face and the strategies they use in their work. By comparing insights from both spoken and sign language interpreters, I aim to uncover both the commonalities and differences in the obstacles they encounter.

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

I took special care to address the ethical considerations in this study to ensure the protection and respect of all participants, especially given the sensitive nature of their professional experiences and the use of digital platforms for data collection. Informed

consent was a cornerstone of this process, ensuring that ethical standards were maintained throughout. As Arifin (2018:30) and Hannes and Parylo (2014:256) point out, consent must be given voluntarily, with participants fully understanding what's being asked of them, and they must be capable of providing consent.

Before agreeing to participate, all individuals were thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, methods, and potential risks. The process was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any time without consequence. Information sheets and consent forms were emailed to participants, outlining the study's scope, data collection methods (via WhatsApp and email), and how the data would be used. Each participant was required to electronically sign the consent forms before interviews took place. To prioritise confidentiality, I removed identifying details from transcripts, assigned pseudonyms, and stored all digital files on password-protected devices. In reporting the findings, I generalised case descriptions to protect participants' identities. I also obtained explicit consent for recording interviews conducted via Zoom with all recordings securely stored and set to be deleted once the study concludes. Extra steps, such as enabling end-to-end encryption on WhatsApp and preventing third-party recordings on Zoom, ensured participants' privacy and security. Throughout the study, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any point, preserving their autonomy. I made sure to approach the interview questions with cultural sensitivity, respecting the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of each interpreter.

3.3.2 Credibility of the Study

Credibility is crucial in research because it establishes the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, ensuring that the results genuinely reflect the participants' perspectives and the phenomena being studied. Holloway and Wheeler (2002), along with Macnee and McCabe (2008), cited in Anney (2014:276), emphasise that credibility involves ensuring that the findings truly represent the data collected, without distortion. It's about making sure the methods used are appropriate and the results accurately convey what participants intended to communicate. Anney (2014:276), reinforce this idea, stressing that credibility hinges on how well the findings align with the participants' original viewpoints.

In my study, I have taken care to stay true to what participants communicated, avoiding bias or misinterpretation, and ensuring credibility meant employing rigorous research methods, including thorough data collection and analysis, while also incorporating practices like member checking where participants reviewed the findings to confirm their accuracy. Further, triangulation strengthened credibility by using multiple data sources and methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participant's experiences (Noble and Heale, 2019:67).

For my research, triangulation involved combining semi-structured interviews, follow-up emails, and WhatsApp communications to give a fuller picture of the interpreters' reflections. This approach not only validated the data but also allowed for a cross-check of information from different angles. Zoom interviews, which focused on oral self-reflection, along with WhatsApp responses, captured a broad range of responses, minimising any potential bias that could arise from using a single method. The semi-structured interviews were particularly useful in gathering rich, nuanced data, contributing to the overall credibility of the study's findings.

3.3.3 Limitations

While the small sample size of eight participants in this study limits the generalisability of the findings, it's important to note that the experiences of all interpreters working into English as a second language in South Africa may not be fully captured. Even though I used purposive sampling to gather a range of perspectives, there remains a possibility of selection bias due to my subjective choices during participant selection. Additionally, relying on self-reported data carries inherent biases, as participants might emphasise or downplay certain aspects of their experiences.

Additionally, Archibald et al. (2019: 5) point out that while Zoom is often favoured for data collection because of its convenience, it does have limitations. Connectivity issues can cause delays in audio and video transmission, which may have affected the flow and quality of the data I collected. Platforms like WhatsApp and email, though useful for flexibility, also have technical limitations that could have influenced the openness and depth of participants' communication, especially depending on their comfort level with these tools.

The context-specific nature of the study means that its findings may not be applicable to interpreters in other linguistic or cultural settings. Furthermore, without longitudinal data, it's hard to explore how interpreters' experiences and strategies might evolve over time. Despite these limitations, this research still offers valuable insights into the linguistic challenges and strategies interpreters face in South Africa, enriching our understanding of interpreting in multilingual contexts.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This theoretical frameworks and methodology chapter set the stage for understanding the intricate interplay between linguistic, cognitive, and cultural elements that shape the experiences of interpreters working into English as a secondary language. By grounding the research in relevant theories, such as sociolinguistics and cognitive load theory, I emphasised the importance of context, language structure, and mental processing in interpreting tasks. These theoretical lenses helped highlight the complex nature of the work interpreters do, especially in South Africa's multilingual landscape. The qualitative research approach, particularly through a narrative framework, allowed me to deeply explore interpreters' personal experiences, capturing the nuances of the challenges they face and the strategies they employ. The decision to use purposive data collection methods, including interviews and video analysis in a self-reflective manner, was intentional. I wanted to ensure that the collected data were rich and highly relevant, drawing from both spoken and sign language interpreters.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of the data on challenges encountered by interpreters working into English as their secondary language. It examines the difficulties faced by interpreters and explores the strategies they employ to manage these challenges effectively. The analysis considers both simultaneous and consecutive modes of interpreting, offering a nuanced understanding of the cognitive and linguistic demands involved. Furthermore, it highlights the similarities and differences in challenges experienced by spoken language interpreters and South African Sign Language (SASL) interpreters. This approach aligns with the study's objectives, providing insights into the distinct and shared experiences of interpreters within South Africa's multilingual and multicultural landscape.

4.2 OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The researcher asked the interpreters to conduct a self-reflection after action when interpreting into English as a secondary language. This is supported by Pietrzak (2019:419-420), who highlights that learners do not directly acquire knowledge from the act of translating itself, but rather from reflecting on their experiences. This method was applied on interpreters. They were asked to look at and reflect on their old recordings. The findings are presented below on how interpreters evaluated their interpreting performance.

Below is **table 1** on how SASL Participants evaluated their overall performance.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Overall Performance</i>
Participant A	My overall performance wasn't that great. it was a bit of a challenge.
Participant D	I would say I really struggled with the voiceover, and it came across. So yeah, I struggled.

Participant L	I think I could have done better. The English part—because I feel like it was very casual,
Participant N	Mentally I was struggling because I was nervous in terms of making sure that I get the message across,

Table 1: Overall performance for SASL Interpreters

Table 1 demonstrates that most SASL interpreters working into English were not happy with their performance. It is indicating that this was impacted by many factors, such as connectivity, whereas another participant mentioned that they struggled with the voiceover. This aligns with Pietrzak (2019:416-420) who states that retrospective reflection enables individuals to evaluate their performance, roles, and learning outcomes, often highlighting discrepancies between their expectations and actual practice. In **Table 1**, interpreters were able to evaluate their performance, roles and learning outcomes. Some of the factors that they observed are external factors such as weak connectivity issues, omissions that were not international, while participant N noticed the casual register in their speech. Participant N also mentioned that mentioned that they struggled mentally.

Table 2 below shows an overall evaluation on how spoken language interpreters assessed their work after viewing their recordings. Most interpreters rated their interpreting as good, although they acknowledged it was not flawless.

Participants	Self-Performance Rating
Participants M	OK, I think it is good in that I have captured all three main aspects. I've identified 3 main aspects on this chunk of speech.
Participants R	Good.
Participants P	Overall, I would say I performed well that day.
Participants T	I'd say it wasn't perfect, but overall, it was good

Table 2 Overall performance of Spoken language Interpreters

While sign language interpreters were critical on their performance and indicated challenges and struggles, spoken language on the **Table 2** above indicates that they were happy with their overall performance, mostly indicating that it was good. While the spoken language participant acknowledged that it was not perfect, they still maintained that it was good.

4.3 CHALLENGES REFORMULATING MESSAGES INTO ENGLISH

Chiang and Mi (2011:136) highlight the importance of reformulation as a critical communication strategy in both Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and interpreting studies. This strategy entails adjusting or refining a previous or unfinished statement (Chiang & Mi, 2011:136; Meurant et al., 2022:325), commonly used in exchanges between native and non-native speakers (NS–NNS) to enhance clarity and effective communication. Nicodemus and Emmorey (2015:1) define directionality in interpreting as the effect of interpreting direction, whether from a second language (L2) into the interpreter's native language (L1) or from their native language into a second language. This section covers different challenges that are experienced by participants when reformulating (interpreting) messages from one of the African languages and SASL into English as a secondary language.

4.3.1 Realities of language dynamics amongst interpreters

South Africa's multilingual context shapes the work of interpreters, who navigate diverse language dynamics and backgrounds. Grosjean (2014:573) dispels myths that bilinguals must have equal fluency, acquire both languages in childhood, and speak without an accent. Instead, most bilinguals frequently use multiple languages without necessarily achieving native-level fluency in all of them, with researchers now prioritising regular language use over fluency alone. Similarly, Mbirimi-Hungwe (2023:3) highlights the importance of examining the varied language practices of African multilinguals beyond formal education, recognising the depth and complexity of their multilingual repertoires beyond simple language proficiency.

Extract 1a below is an example of language dynamics of South African interpreters.

I'll tell you why? I grew up in a Xhosa/Tswana household. My mother was from Botswana who spoke pure Tswana, and I was schooled in Setswana until matric (passed it with an A). My dad, whilst he was Mosotho (because his dad was), he was raised in the Eastern Cape by his Xhosa mom, and he was as Xhosa as they come. His father died when he was little, so he never was in touch with his Sesotho side. I grew up speaking both languages, being strong in Setswana. Due to the area, I grew up in and my religious affiliation, I learnt Sesotho, Sepedi and IsiZulu. I took a conscious effort to learn Sesotho and IsiZulu. I am proficient in both, to a point that I can argue that I am stronger in them than my household languages i.e. Tswana and Xhosa. I also learnt English and Afrikaans in school. Which one is my which one.

IsiZulu is my second language. My first language is Sesotho and then Setswana and IsiNdebele.

I was raised by AmaNdebele family and studied isiZulu and Sesotho interchanging, both languages at primary to high school. I was exposed to multilingualism at a very early age, having stayed in Hammanskraal and Soshanguve, both are multilingual areas. I did Sesotho for the first three grades and then IsiZulu up to grade 9, and back to Sesotho until matric. It's a confusing identity, paternal - Motswana, maternal Mosotho. I have interpreted into Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, and also from IsiSwati into English, (one way only, I understand IsiSwati, but my spoken language not so good.

Extract 1a highlights the language background of interpreters. It also shows what these interpreters may encounter when reformulating messages from African spoken languages and South African Sign Language (SASL) into English as a secondary language. **This extract 1a** also reflects the broader South African multilingual experience, where linguistic identity extends beyond family roots to encompass languages acquired through community and education. This diverse linguistic background allows interpreters to navigate multiple languages, embodying the intricate, layered identity of African multilinguals.

4.3.2 Impact of Directionality

Directionality in interpreting refers to interpreters' preference for working into their A-language (native language) due to its cognitive advantages, such as faster lexical access, greater anticipation potential, and better memory retention of input (Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul, 2024:41). For instance, most sign language interpreters work from spoken language into sign language, but challenges arise when they must interpret from sign language into spoken language. Similarly, in spoken language conference interpreting, international bodies such as the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and other institutions have traditionally favoured simultaneous interpreting from L2 to L1 (Nicodemus et al., 2023:100). This is also evident in what the interpreters encountered as challenges.

***Extract 1b** “It is not a language that was spoken at home, so there are certain words and phrases that I still need to **recall** in my head to construct.”*

***Extract 1c** ‘I had difficulty finding equivalents, as I’ve mentioned earlier. **Perhaps this is due to English being a second language.**’*

***Extract 1d** Since English is my second (or possibly third) language, there may be moments where finding the right words or **expressions in English takes extra time or effort**, which could slightly slow down my interpretation and impact my fluency.*

***Extract 1e** Mind you English is my third or fourth language. It’s not something that’s on my tongue.*

The above extracts show an example of impact of directionality when working into B language or second language, showing difficulty in finding a correct equivalence, terminology. It also shows that participants need extra effort and time to find certain words in English. These align with the study by Chmiel (2016:270) and Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:41) that demonstrates that when interpreter work into their A languages, they have cognitive advantage whereas when working into the B language there is a slower lexical access, less anticipation.

4.3.3 Linguistics and Cultural nuances experienced: Spoken Language Interpreters

Cultural nuances and linguistic challenges experienced by spoken language interpreters and sign language interpreters influence their interpretation accuracy, decision-making, and ability to effectively convey meaning across languages and contexts. There is difference in the language modality, spoken language relies on phonological elements such as consonants and vowels, while sign languages are constructed through parameters like handshape, location, movement, non-manual features, and palm orientation, further difference is in the morphology and syntax, (Perniss et al, 2007:5)

Further, there are many structural differences that are observed by LaVigne et al. (2003:875), one of them demonstrate the difference between American Sign language (ASL) and English due to ASL being a visual language and English being an auditory one. But the most significant difference between them is their vocabulary. Arguably, ASL can fully express a wide range of ideas, but its expression will not resemble that of English. ASL can convey the concepts behind technical English, but the way these concepts are expressed in each language will be vastly different (LaVigne et al., 2003:875). Though this example is from American sign language, it also applies to South African Sign Languages (SASL).

The following **table 3** shows the linguistic and cultural challenges faced by SASL interpreters.

Sign language participants	Linguistic and cultural challenges
Participant D	The linguistic challenges were not particularly for English. It was more the signs. English words that would be most appropriate to use for specific signs would you say equivalent? Yeah, equivalent. You know, you're looking for a specific word for that sign and it's not coming the next one, cultural competence.

Participant L	I feel like the client wasn't English based, so I was literally going from sign language to Zulu in my head, because I could visualise them having the conversation in Zulu, and then to English. I think it was more about bringing across the culture. Linguistically, I was searching for words. I think I leaned toward Black culture.. I tried to bring out those nuances by reacting in an African manner as opposed to an English manner.
Participant N	I had to emphasise my signing and my facial expressions because I had to be more body than the signs. It's the first time that I had to interpret for them. her dialects..
Participant A	getting the right terms at the right time. Sometimes I would understand the message, but then I struggle to find the correct terminology When one is using sign name and then you are not familiar with. For example, In the target culture there are no sign names. Reference in terms of pointing to things,

Table 3: Linguistic and Cultural Challenges of SASL Interpreters.

The above table shows that interpreters working from SASL into English have a challenge when looking for proper English equivalence. This is also supported by Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:44), who state that due to the lack of available vocabulary, interpreters may experience false starts, particularly at the word level, which indicate problems with lexical search during speech production. Participant D indicates that they would look for specific words, but it is no easy to find them. They say: ***‘You know, you're looking for a specific word for that sign and it's not coming.’***

Participant L was also going through the same challenge, but they used their language repertoire. They assert *“So, I was literally going from sign language to Zulu in my head, because I could visualize them having the conversation in Zulu.”* Other

examples of cultural dynamics in sign language are from Participant N and A. *I had to overemphasise my body language.* ‘*In the target culture there are no sign names*’ ‘*Reference in terms of pointing to things*. These examples are the linguistic and cultural elements that are prevalent in sign language. This is because it’s a visual language and the language is in space, on the face, facial expressions, mouthing, pointing of things forms part of the language.

Table 4 below captures linguistic and cultural challenges faced by spoken language interpreters.

Spoken language	Linguistic and cultural challenges
Participant M	Generally, I think that there are like for instance there are situations where sometimes source language speakers use language which is derogatory language. The meaning of that direction. I'm black and I'm interpreting for a black person and he or is she saying this in this formal environment.
Participant R	I think is the nouns..For “Bakoma” means council for Herdman?.. I didn’t have the direct word.. ‘I struggled to find an equivalent term in English. The main challenge is knowing the idiom in Xitsonga but not having a direct English equivalent. I was unsure and used filler words like “Ahh” and “Mm-hmm.”
Participant P	...when interpreting for older people, is their speaking style—like repetition. When translating idioms without a known English equivalent, In one hearing, an elderly speaker referred to "Vakhegula Vakhegula," which is widely known in Limpopo as a grannies' soccer team.
Participant T	‘Matla’ In Sesotho it makes sense but in English when you take it you wonder if I should have said this? If I say ‘power’,

	The main challenge is knowing the idiom in Xitsonga but not having a direct English equivalent.
--	--

Table 4 linguistic and cultural challenges of spoken language interpreters

Table 4 above shows the linguistic and cultural challenges experienced by spoken language interpreters. One of the prevalent challenges highlighted is lack of terminology and lack of equivalence of African idioms into English. Examples of terminology that were given by participant are ‘**loadshedding**’, ‘**Matla**’ translated as ‘**Power**’ instead of energy in the context of electricity. When translating the soccer name *Vakhegula Vakhegula*, the participant mentions that they had to decide on how to deal with the translation. They mention that they maintained the name of the soccer team when interpreting into English for the target audience to understand what it is.

Another challenge was the use of nouns in African language that are not translatable in English. For example, ‘*Where to say community councils? For “**Bakoma**” means council for Herdman.. I didn’t have the direct word. I struggled to find an equivalent term in English. I ultimately used “community council,” but this does not fully capture the specific meaning*’. Participant P mentions that the use of acronyms can cause difficulties. Whereas Participant T mentions that too much code-switching could create confusion in the speaker’s mind. They might be confused of which language they interpret from and into. The use of filler words such as “**aah, um**’ were used by participants when they were not sure of the equivalence (Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul, 2024:44).

4.3.4 Equivalents in interpreting Idioms and Proverbs

According to Ntwana (2005:10), concept of dynamic equivalence, effective translation relies on achieving an “equivalent effect,” where the target audience’s response to the translation mirrors the source audience’s reaction to the original text. This principle suggests that a translator should aim to convey the intended meaning in a way that resonates similarly with the new audience. Additionally, this is echoed by Tzou et al (2017:634), noting the challenges encountered by interpreters is deciding how to interpret idioms expressions, because they must decide on whether they must choose between rendering the interpreting as an equivalent image, a paraphrase, or a literal equivalent.

Extract 2a *When translating idioms without a known English equivalent, I would convey the meaning instead. However, this can sometimes fall short of conveying the full essence, especially compared to knowing the exact equivalent in English. I often use a more descriptive approach to convey the intended meaning.*

The participant in **Extract 2a** above expresses that they are unable to achieve this equivalent effect when they cannot find a direct English equivalent for an idiom from the source language. In these cases, they resort to conveying the general meaning, often through a more descriptive approach, but feel this approach can fall short of capturing the idiom's full essence. This highlights a common challenge interpreters face in aligning meaning and effect when direct linguistic equivalents are unavailable.

Interpreting involves reformulation of source text into the target text. According to Liontou (2012: 21), restructuring and reformulation are techniques used to reduce the strain on an interpreter's working memory caused by the syntactic and semantic differences between the source language and the target language. One of the linguistic challenges is the availability of vocabulary. Due to the lack of available vocabulary, Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:44) argue that interpreters may experience false starts, particularly at the word level, which indicate problems with lexical

The following **Extract 3a** demonstrate challenges of terminology:

Extract 3 A
<i>"Bakoma"—it means "council for herdsmen, "but it does not fully convey the specific meaning</i> <i>Also finding the correct terminology for figurative speech</i> <i>getting the right terms at the right time.</i> <i>For example, when she talked about the COVID period and communication. I was really looking for the right vocabulary</i> <i>The main challenge is knowing the idiom in Xitsonga but not having a direct English equivalent.</i> <i>You know, you're looking for a specific word for that sign search during speech production.</i>

In *Extract 3A*, participants reveal specific challenges in finding accurate English terminology for culturally nuanced terms and figurative language. For example, terms like “Bakoma,” meaning “council for herdsman” in Tshivenda, lack precise English equivalents, forcing interpreters to provide only a general meaning. Likewise, Participant L discussed the difficulty of choosing between “mask” or “PPE” to describe face-covering during COVID-19, ultimately using “Masks are a barrier to communication” while questioning its adequacy.

The **figure 4** below further illustrates the challenges of terminology amongst interpreters

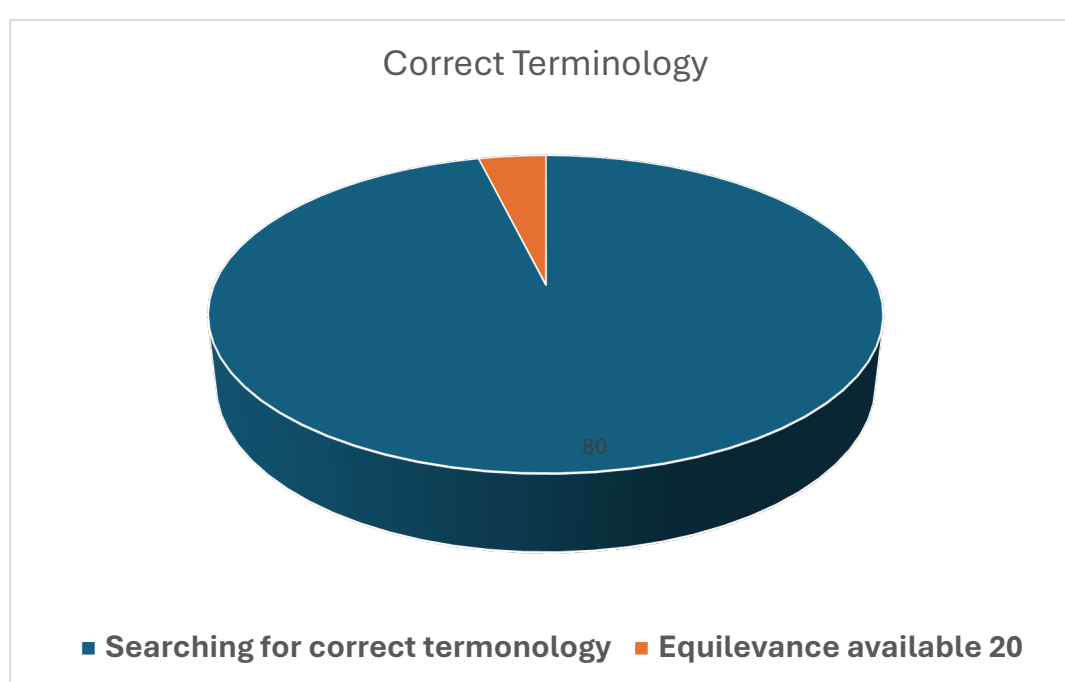


Figure 4: Challenges of correct Terminology

Figure 4 shows that 80% of interpreters reported struggles with equivalent terminologies, particularly in specialised contexts. Participant T described difficulties with translating "*Matla*" from Sesotho, which means “**capacity**” but could be interpreted as either “**power**” or “**capacity**” in English. These cases highlight interpreters’ frequent need to adapt or simplify language when culturally or technically specific terms are unavailable, underscoring the complexity of achieving dynamic equivalence in multilingual interpreting.

4.3.5 Pace and Density

Pace and density of signers and speakers is defined by Gumul and Łyda (2007: 166), as the rate at which speakers present information, which remains beyond the interpreter's control, significantly affects every aspect of the simultaneous interpreting (SI) process.

***Participant D** states 'I would say I really struggled with the voiceover, and it came across. I was too behind with my Lag time...I think they were in sign language mostly because I think I was struggling with some of the signs and because she was signing too fast... you couldn't really anticipate what she was going to say because it was too fast.. I used a lot of summaries. I summarised some information, but I also omitted, and I realised now that there was a lot of omission.*

***Participant L** I feel like her signing was super-fast. It was very difficult to follow her. Even though I was speaking quickly, she was ahead of me by 3-4 sentences. In general, I think the **main idea** of what she was saying was conveyed, but it wasn't word-for-word interpretation. I just felt like I was constantly behind her, and she kept going.*

Two out of four sign language interpreters identified the fast pace of some signers as a major challenge. Participant D mentioned that fast signers made it difficult to anticipate content, and the information density was overwhelming when interpreting from sign language to spoken language. Participant L described the signer as “super-fast” and found it hard to keep up, often being 3-4 sentences behind, despite speaking quickly themselves. Even after notifying the signer, the pace remained unchanged. This highlights the complexity of simultaneous interpreting, where interpreters must divide their attention between understanding the input and producing an accurate output. While sign language interpreters generally work in simultaneous mode without the acoustic interference present in spoken language interpreting, they still need strong receptive skills to comprehend and accurately convey the signed message into spoken language. This aligns with Gumul and Łyda (2007: 166) assertion that the pace of the speaker or the signer can impact all aspects of interpreting

4.3.6 Pacing of Spoken language interpreters

According to Gumul and Łyda (2007: 167), during the later phase of reformulation, the interpreter is free to perform at his or her own pace. The participant determines the pace in which they want to speak. The following are extracts on what spoken language participants view pace impacting on their performance to reformulate the messages into English:

Extract 4a

Participant T *“I had to adjust my pace accordingly. I’ve noticed that some speakers prefer a faster pace from their interpreters, while others prefer a slower one. However, **being close also means you don’t get a break**, especially with speakers who pace and express a lot of emotions. Although some people have highlighted this as one of my strengths, one area I know I could improve on is breathing techniques and **stretching my processing time**. Although I get positive feedback on my pacing, this can be speaker dependent.*

Participant P *My main challenge is when a speaker talks for a long stretch, as I’m still working on improving my long-term memory. I prefer when the speaker pauses after a sentence, giving me time to interpret before moving on to the next one. This makes it easier since I’m still **building my long-term memory**.*

Extract 4a is aligned with Gumul and Łyda (2007: 167) who note that during the last stage of reformulation, interpreters are free to set their own pace. Spoken language interpreters, however, often need to adjust their pace based on the speaker’s preferred speed. **Participant T** highlights the importance of aligning their pace with the speaker's, observing that while some prefer faster interpretation, others favour a slower pace, which is a matter of personal preference rather than correctness. **Participant T** also mentions that being physically close to the speaker helps in conveying the speaker’s emotions effectively, especially in public settings where the audience watches both. Despite receiving positive feedback on pacing, **Participant**

T feels a need to improve breathing techniques and extend processing time for better adaptability.

Similarly, **Participant P** points out the challenge of interpreting for speakers who use long, unbroken sentences, which strains their long-term memory. **Participant P** prefers interpreting sentence by sentence, with pauses in between, allowing more manageable chunks. This illustrates that interpreter, while sometimes free to choose their pace, must adapt to the speaker's style and use strategies like pacing adjustments and breathing techniques to enhance interpretation accuracy and emotional conveyance.

4.3.7 Errors and Omissions

Omissions, as noted by Napier and Barker (2004:372), are not always indicative of errors; rather, they can be a deliberate strategy by interpreters to enhance clarity and audience comprehension. Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:44) further elaborate that errors and significant omissions can also impact the coherence of the interpretation. Swabey et al. (2016:37) add that limited vocabulary in sign languages, along with fewer cognates, may increase the likelihood of errors and omissions.

The following are examples of omissions used as an intentional and unintentional strategy by participants:

- Participant A I also used omission as well. I omitted segments that I thought were not that important to the whole thing that I could omit but still try and get the message across.
- Participant D but I also omitted, and I realised now that there was a lot of omission. I'm saying I did omit a few things, so I pick up on the important information and the important concept and voice that instead of, like voicing everything word for word.
- Participant L In general, I think the main idea of what she was saying was conveyed, As an interpreter, you don't omit information on purpose, but you have to weigh things as you go. the omissions were not intentional. They were more improvisational... Everything had to be summarised and shortened

- Participant N Then I dropped information. I think on the two minutes and 30 seconds. When she was talking about E-deaf and DeafSA. She also spoke about the education sector. I couldn't understand if she was saying DeafSA and E-deaf.
- Participant M- In my interpreting because of Omission. Yeah, there is an aspect which I omitted. And because I was writing as the speaker was speaking... It's an aspect which I omitted Yeah.
- Participant R -Yes, there was some omission. I can't recall a specific example, but it happened when I couldn't provide the exact English word. Still, I conveyed the main idea... they were part of the interpretation strategies I used.
- Participant T listening carefully and isolating key points is crucial. interpreting can sometimes be about "cut and paste"

This is a summary of the omissions used by Interpreters

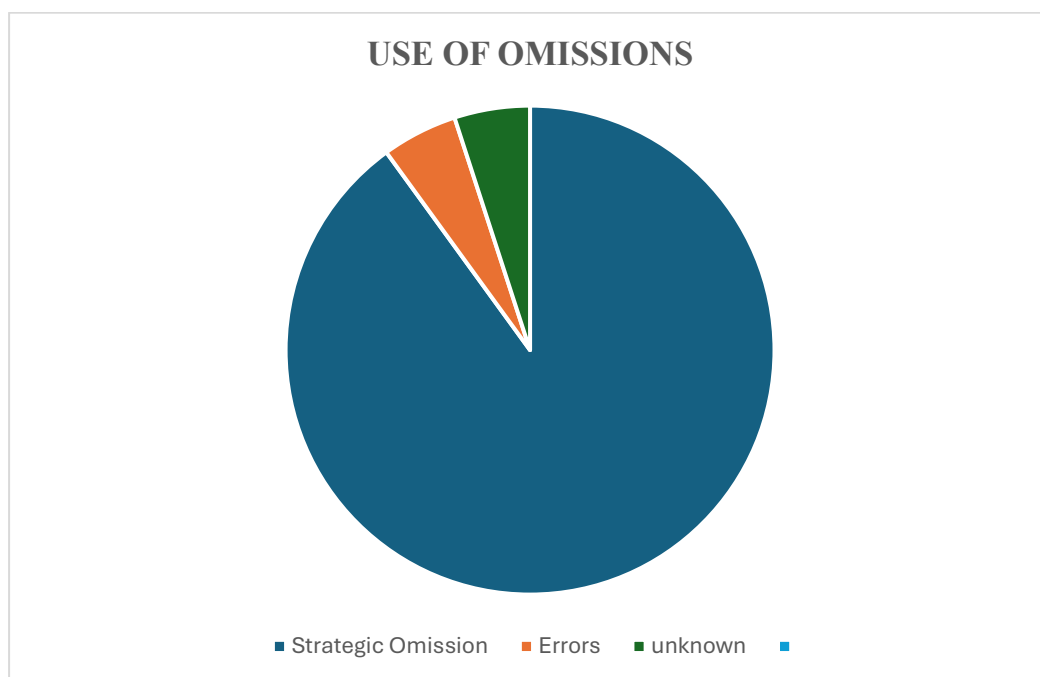


Figure 5: Use of Omissions by Interpreters

In **Figure 5**, participants commonly identified omissions and errors as significant interpreting challenges. Many omissions were intentional, used to highlight key points, which aligns with Barghout et al. (2015:311), who noted that professional interpreters often omit non-essential details to manage high speech speeds. Barghout

et al. (2015:311), categorised omissions as skipping, comprehension-related, delay-based, and compounding, some arising from interpreters' difficulty in coping. These findings echo Napier and Barker (2004:372), with participants mentioning omissions to prioritise essential points. Additionally, comprehension issues and non-native English accents also influenced omissions, as noted by Eraslan (2020:102). Jie (2023) further supports the idea that, with experience, interpreters can strategically use omissions to enhance focus and interpretation effectiveness.

4.3.8 Register

Within the deaf community, interpreters face significant voice-over challenges, especially concerning the potential misrepresentation of a deaf person's personality or intent. Studies indicate that when interpreters fail to accurately convey the tone or intent of a deaf individual, particularly in professional settings it can lead to misunderstandings, misrepresentation, and even negative consequences for the deaf person's credibility. Hearing individuals may develop misperceptions about the deaf person (De Meulder, Napier, and Stone, 2018: 8).

***Participant L:** The register could have been a little more formal, and I understand she was telling her story, etc., but I don't know that English speakers are generally very animated in their voices. **I completely matched her facial expressions with my voice.** That's another thing, **because that's her personality, her style, and her energy.** So, how do I make the register more formal without losing her personality?*

Participant L shared that the register of a translation could benefit from a slightly more formal tone, though she understood that the individual was telling a personal story. She reflected on the challenge of balancing this formality with the need to convey the person's energy and personality: "I completely matched her facial expressions with my voice... that's her personality, her style, her energy. So, how do I make the register more formal without losing her personality?" Participants noted that there were instances when they successfully captured both the signer's message and their expressive style and emotions. However, they also expressed concerns over their English word choices, wondering if the level of formality was appropriate. They recognised the need to convey the signer's expressions while contemplating how to

translate these in a way that preserved both the formality required in English and the unique voice of the signer. (De Meulder, Napier and Stone, 2018: 8).

Hale (1997:41), define linguistic theory as a set of meanings associated with a specific context, shaped by elements of field, mode, and tenor. Because register reflects a unique configuration of meanings, it also includes specific lexical, grammatical, and phonological elements that convey these meanings. Additionally, certain registers contain unique markers, distinctive words, grammatical structures, or sounds, that signal to participants the nature of the communication. For instance, phrases like "once upon a time" indicate the beginning of a traditional story, serving as an indexical feature of that register.

4.3.9 Impact of Speaker and Signer Styles on Interpretation

Trust issues, as noted by Napier (2011:61), are common in both deaf and hearing communities, influenced by the interpreter's community status, professionalism, linguistic skills, and familiarity with the client. Interpreters serve different clients, and this can have an impact on how they reformulate their messages. The table shows the types of clients or audiences that interpreters serve, and challenges experienced.

Types of clients	Challenges experienced
Style of speakers	<i>Participant P</i> - Use of jokes, idioms, repetition, code-switching speaker, pace of speaker
Style of signers/ Deaf clients	Participant L & N - I feel like the client wasn't English based, She was born hearing which means that most of the time she voices, Her signing was a bit light. ker on public presentation
Corrections	Participant M -I accept correction, I tend to revisit it and rephrase to clarify.
Consult with client	Participant P -consult with clients regarding unfamiliar idioms and proverbs Participant T -to tell people how to speak
Client familiarity	Participant L - I didn't struggle to understand the Deaf person. I completely understood... I was comfortable with the reception
Unfamiliar with the client	Participant N - It was the first time that I saw Miss SA and it was the first time that I interpreted for her
Users' consideration on interpreters	Participant A - Again, you would think that if you are interpreting for an event which is hosted by a deaf

	community, things will be a bit easier in terms of being mindful
Manage speaker	I might signal the speaker to stop and let me interpret.

Table 5: Types of audience and challenges experienced

Trust issues, as highlighted by Napier (2011:61), are common in both deaf and hearing communities and are influenced by factors such as the interpreter's community status, professionalism, linguistic skills, and familiarity with the client. Participant T shared that they feel most effective when close to the speaker, as it helps them convey the speaker's emotions, although this approach can be exhausting and sometimes frowned upon. Participants noted that interpreting for different clients can vary in difficulty depending on factors like speaker or signer styles and audience familiarity. Familiarity with the signer was emphasised as crucial for comprehension, especially for sign language interpreters. Spoken language interpreters discussed strategies for dealing with such challenges, like accepting corrections and recording unfamiliar idioms. One participant also mentioned managing long speeches by asking for pauses, while another expressed frustration with events led by deaf individuals that do not properly account for the role of interpreters.

4.3.10 Disfluency Factors and Cognitive Load

Camille and Defrancq (2019:269) identify that disfluencies in interpreting can stem from several factors, including delivery rate, language complexity, and lexical density, all of which elevate cognitive load. Additionally, Gumul (2024:44) finds that interpreting into a primary (A) language reduces hesitation, suggesting that familiarity with the language decreases cognitive strain.

The following are the example of Emotional challenges faced by Participants:

1. **Participant L** "I felt nervousness, anxiety, and stress at one point..***I found myself breathing too hard*** at times, feeling like I was lagging far behind
2. **Participant N** "I was a bit nervous that she might not be able to understand the way I sign." My nerves, if I can come down a bit. Sometimes if you're nervous working on live TV.

3. **Participant M** *I had such emotions because of the sensitivity of the welcome between the subject matter, which was and discussion at life Esidemini, and it was also after noting that emotional impact on my colleagues and having to relieve a colleague who has who broke down, who started crying and I felt for her, and I also felt affected.*
4. **Participant P** *There is always some pressure, but we usually work in pairs at these public hearings. This setup really helps reduce the pressure...I stay calm throughout.*
5. **Participant T** *There wasn't much stress beyond the typical pressure of interpreting. Preparation and teamwork helped, as working with colleagues is motivating.*
6. **Participant R** *I stayed calm and reminded myself that I was just a conveyor of information, not the focus.*
7. **Participant A** *I learned that **interpreting online**, especially sign language, is not an easy thing, especially when the connectivity is not of good quality Who's listening? Psychologically, knowing that you've got someone that is there to support you.*
8. **Participant D** *You know the **observer effect** when you know people are watching and listening to you, and **there's lots of pressure on a platform** like that where you know your **performance will be scrutinised**. People in the field will make mention of your mistakes.*

From the above extracts, numerous themes surfaced on how interpreters manage their emotional and cognitive demands. The following is the summary of coping mechanisms used by interpreters: Preparation emerges as a crucial strategy which helps to reduce the cognitive demands, as it enables interpreters to anticipate content and bridge linguistic gaps (Fantinuoli, 2017:26). Insufficient preparation however intensifies stress and can negatively impact interpretation quality, especially in complex, multilingual settings.

The Effort Model by Gile (2021:18) emphasises the finite nature of interpreters' mental resources, noting that interpretation requires a vast amount of mental energy, often reaching the limits of interpreters' capacity. When resources are stretched thin, interpretation quality tends to suffer, underscoring the importance of efficient

memory management and stress management strategies. This is highlighted by some participants who opted to omit certain things due to the rate and speech of the signer. Pace and density of signers and speakers are defined by Gumul and Łyda (2007: 166), as the rate at which speakers present information, which remains beyond the interpreter's control, significantly affects every aspect of the simultaneous interpreting (SI) process. Interpreters in this study describe experiencing a range of emotions, from nervousness and performance anxiety to physical manifestations of stress. Many felt the "observer effect," a heightened awareness of being evaluated by viewers or colleagues, which amplified pressure and sometimes led to overthinking or hesitations. Interpreting sensitive or emotional content also increased the emotional toll, particularly in live settings. Supportive teamwork and the practice of taking turns were noted as helpful in reducing cognitive and emotional strain, especially in public hearings. For sign language interpreters, online platforms added unique challenges due to connectivity issues, which impacted their ability to perform effectively and maintain visual clarity.

4.3.11 Conclusion

This section highlighted the complexities of interpreting, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Factors like speech pace, speaker styles, trust, and client familiarity are crucial to an interpreter's effectiveness. Both sign language and spoken language interpreters face challenges in ensuring clarity and accuracy. They must also navigate language features like idioms and the dynamics of public settings. Familiarity with the speaker or signer is important but not always possible, which adds difficulty in comprehension and interpretation. Strategies like staying close to the speaker, accepting corrections, and managing speech delivery show how interpreters must adapt for effective communication. These insights reveal the cognitive, linguistic, and professional challenges interpreters face, particularly in high-pressure environments like public hearings. They highlight the need for continuous support and recognition of interpreters' roles.

4.4 STRATEGIES USED BY INTERPRETERS

According to Trisnawati and Nett (2020:65), defines interpreting strategies as methods that help interpreters address challenges and prevent problems during the interpreting process. These strategies are seen as "potential" solutions, which are problem-oriented and generally assist in the interpreter's task. Furthermore, they outline a set of "coping tactics" categorised into three main types: comprehension, preventive, and reformulation tactics. spoken language interpreters use various coping strategies, as demonstrated by the following participants:

Participant R *I couldn't translate word-for-word, as that would lose meaning. So, I used strategies like summarising, omitting, and adding information as needed... When I interpret consecutively, I take brief notes in shorthand instead of writing full words.*

Participant M *paraphrasing technique as well as the coining technique. Paraphrasing allows the interpreter to use the loan word and then explain the concept and meaning. coining is when the interpreter has that privilege if the interpreter can coin during that moment to coin it, which they interpreting project the exact semantics in its fullness, opt for this technique-the paraphrasing technique.*

Participant P *Interjecting while the speaker is talking is one strategy... I often use paraphrasing to cover the entire speech or to summarise what the speaker said in Tsonga into English. Summarising works well, but sometimes key points are missed. For example, there's the idiom "don't count your chickens before they hatch." Elders often use many idioms in everyday speech, and if I come across one without an equivalent during a meeting, I make sure to write it down. Later, I research or ask others for an equivalent in English, then add it to my list...*

Participant T *Preparation is essential, especially for technical sessions.... I research beforehand or consult experts to better understand the terminology... I should focus on breathing techniques. Sometimes we're instructed to summarise, and other times it's a more in-depth, word-for-word translation. stretching my processing time. I tend to revisit it and rephrase to clarify.*

Participant R *I couldn't translate word-for-word, as that would lose meaning. So, I used strategies like summarising, omitting, and adding information as needed..., I take brief notes in shorthand instead of writing full words. This ensures accuracy*

when I interpret once the speaker finishes. For longer segments, I rely on shorthand to remember key points... paraphrasing technique as well as the coining technique.

4.4.1 A summary of strategies used by spoken language interpreters

1. Paraphrasing
2. Coining of terms
3. Summarise
4. Write down proverbs
5. Consult the colleagues/clients
6. Research
7. Consult with experts
8. Preparation
9. Word for word translation
10. Processing time
11. Repetition.

The strategies spoken language interpreters employ reveal the complex cognitive and linguistic demands of interpreting into English as a secondary language in multilingual contexts. The interpreters' approaches demonstrate an adaptive skill set aligning with Chiang and Mi's (2011:138), balancing accuracy with the need for efficient processing under time constraints. For instance, summarising, omitting, and adding details allow interpreters to convey the speaker's intent rather than focusing solely on a literal translation which may be less effective due to structural and idiomatic differences across languages. Liontou (2012: 21) is in support of this, by stating that restructuring and reformulation techniques are used to reduce the strain on an interpreter's working memory caused by the syntactic and semantic difficulties. Preparation and note-taking also emerge as critical coping strategies.

These strategies suggest that to interpret effectively, spoken language interpreting relies not only on linguistic knowledge but also on emotional resilience, adaptability, and proactive communication, allowing interpreters to meet high cognitive and contextual demands in a multilingual setting.

4.4.2 Strategies Used by SASL Participants

Participant A In that segment I used chunking. **Chunking up** in most cases because of the fast pace, I applied a bit of lag time to try and understand and **chunk down**... and I also used omission as well. I omitted segments that I thought were not that important

Participant D used a lot of summaries. **I summarised** some information, **but I also omitted**. Using my lag time was one of the prominent strategies that you might have seen there. The use of lag time I overused my lag time. **Background knowledge**

Participant L I decided to focus on **summarising** instead of trying to convey everything she said... I had to rely heavily on my **working memory** to catch the most critical points. Everything had to be summarised and shortened. I made **a conscious decision to omit** certain details when necessary.

Participant N I had to also lip-read her because she mouths a lot. Having that background information helped me to be able to render more accurate interpretation... **Knowing the subject** because I have been exposed to Miss Deaf. **Also, I was not familiar with her** but when we were **mouthed and trying to meet each other halfway**

4.4.3 Summary of strategies used by sign language Participants

1. Chunking up/chunking down
2. Lag-time
3. Summary
4. Background knowledge
5. Omission
6. Working memory
7. Familiar with subject matter
8. Mouthing/lip reading.

Interpreting from sign language into spoken English presents unique challenges, particularly due to cognitive and sensory demands. Unlike spoken language interpreters, sign language interpreters often have limited visual input and must manage clarity issues and fast-paced signing. Techniques like restructuring and reformulation,

including chunking, summarising, and intentional omission, help reduce cognitive load and maintain coherence (Liontou, 2012:21). Lag time, though valuable, can be challenging, as it offers brief moments for formulation, but it can create a risk of falling behind. Participants D and L highlighted issues with the pace and density of sign language, where they couldn't use preventive tactics like adjusting the Ear-Voice span. This aligns with Giles strategy, cited in Trisnawati and Nett (2020:65). They resorted to summarising, omitting details, and managing pressure in real-time. Both participants leaned heavily on reformulation strategies, such as summarisation and chunking, and used language-specific tactics like mouthing and lip-reading for additional cues. As Fantinuoli (2017:26) emphasises, preparation and practice are crucial, particularly when interpreting into spoken English, which is less common for these interpreters. Contextual knowledge, background familiarity, and lip-reading are essential for accuracy. Overall, these strategies highlight the complex nature of sign language interpretation, demanding adaptability, memory skills, and thorough preparation.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This section emphasised the complexities of interpreting in multilingual and multicultural contexts, where factors like speech pace, speaker styles, trust, and client familiarity play a crucial role in an interpreter's effectiveness. It is concluded that both sign language and spoken language interpreters face challenges in ensuring clarity and accuracy while navigating language features like idioms and the dynamics of public settings. Familiarity with the speaker or the signer, though helpful, is not always possible, complicating comprehension and interpretation. It is also concluded that interpreters must adapt by staying close to the speaker, accepting corrections, and managing speech delivery. These strategies reflect the cognitive, linguistic, and professional challenges interpreters face, especially in high-pressure environments like public hearings. Both spoken and sign language interpreters use a range of tactics, such as summarising, paraphrasing, note-taking, chunking, and lip-reading, to manage cognitive and sensory demands. These strategies emphasise the need for preparation, contextual knowledge, and flexibility, highlighting the adaptive nature of interpreting and the importance of ongoing support and recognition for interpreters.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's main findings, recommendations, and overall conclusions. The first section addresses each research question, aligning the findings with the study's objectives. The second section offers a summary conclusion, synthesising key insights. The third section provides recommendations to inform future research and interpreting practices. Together, these sections summarise the study's contributions and implications.

5.2 FINDINGS

The primary question guiding this study compares the challenges faced by spoken and sign language interpreters when reformulating messages into English as their secondary language in South Africa. This question was divided into three parts; each aligned with the study's objectives. Each part was examined in detail, and a summary of the research findings aligned with the research objectives are provided below.

5.2.1 What challenges do interpreters encounter when reformulating messages into English as their secondary language

In the interviews, several questions were posed at the interpreter after they reviewed their work under the first theme on how they evaluated their work. Most sign language interpreters were very critical and indicated they are not happy with their performance. One of the things they mentioned is that they struggled, while spoken language admitted that though their performance was not perfect, they felt they did well. Overall, several challenges were indicated by most participants that are linked in the reformulation of messages into the second or third language. A prevalent challenge that was mentioned is the searching for vocabulary that is not readily available. This aligns with the Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul (2024:41) who

demonstrate that interpreters working into their first language have faster lexical access and reduce the cognitive demands.

In the interview, several challenges were expressed. The following is the challenges found in the research:

5.2.2 Linguistic Challenges and Adaptation in Interpreting

Interpreting between African languages, South African Sign Language (SASL), and English presents complex linguistic challenges. These stem from the absence of direct equivalents, the intricacy of idiomatic expressions, and the cultural nuances inherent in multilingual contexts. Similarly, Prihantoro (2017:2) highlighted the challenges of equivalences in interpreting.

5.2.3 Terminological Gaps and Cultural References

One of the primary challenges faced by spoken language interpreters is the lack of direct English equivalents for African terminology. Words like “*Matla*” (Sesotho for "power") and “*Bakoma*” (council for herdsman) require interpreters to approximate meanings. Similarly, contemporary terms such as “*loadshedding*” necessitate improvisation to convey the intended concept effectively. Cultural references add another layer of complexity. For example, culturally specific terms like “*Vakhegula Vakhegula*,” a soccer team for grandmothers, demand additional explanation to ensure clarity for non-native audiences.

In addition, SASL interpreters navigate similar challenges, relying on exaggerated body language, facial expressions, and hand movements to convey culturally embedded meanings. These techniques are particularly important in live settings or televised interpretations, where visual and spatial cues enhance understanding. The adaptation of expressions from African cultural contexts into English further illustrates the challenge of maintaining cultural integrity while achieving comprehensibility, (Perniss et al., 2007:5).

5.2.4 Idiomatic Expressions and Dynamic Equivalence

Idiomatic expressions and proverbs pose significant hurdles due to their deep cultural embedding. Many African idioms lack direct English translations, forcing interpreters to paraphrase or describe their meanings. This process, while necessary, often results in a loss of cultural nuance. The concept of dynamic equivalence emphasises the need to evoke a response in the target audience that mirrors the source audience's reaction (Panou, 2013:2). However, interpreters frequently struggle to achieve this equivalent effect when idioms lack suitable English counterparts. In practice, interpreters employ various approaches to manage these challenges. Some rely on descriptive paraphrasing, while others attempt to substitute culturally resonant terms. Although these strategies aim to bridge linguistic gaps, they can dilute the depth and richness of the original expressions.

5.2.5 Cognitive Load and Processing Demands

The cognitive demands of interpreting in a multilingual environment further compound these challenges. Frequent code-switching between African languages and English intensifies mental processing, often resulting in delays, filler words, or false starts as interpreters search for appropriate terms. For SASL interpreters, the visual and spatial nature of the language adds unique complexities. Referential signs, such as specific "sign names," often require additional context or fingerspelling, which can delay interpretation and increase cognitive strain (Perniss et al., 2007:5).

5.2.6 Pace and Density in Sign Language and Spoken Language Interpreting

The structural differences highlighted by LaVigne et al. (2003:875) between American Sign Language (ASL) and English present notable challenges for interpreters. As a visual language, ASL significantly differs from English, which is auditory in nature. These differences become particularly pronounced during fast-paced signing, where interpreters may struggle to keep up, often resorting to summarisation or omission of details to maintain fluency (LaVigne et al., 2003). This aligns with Gile's perspective in (Wang, 2022:431) that interpreting is mentally demanding, and limited control over the signer's pace further increases the complexity, frequently resulting in the loss of detailed information.

Although spoken language interpreters generally have some degree of control over the pacing of their interpretation, challenges arise when speakers maintain rapid or uninterrupted speech. In such cases, interpreters must rely on techniques such as controlled breathing and close alignment with the speaker's tone and rhythm. The absence of pauses in speech further intensifies memory strain, underscoring the necessity of adaptable pacing strategies to manage these cognitive and emotional demands effectively (Camille and Defrancq, 2019:269).

5.2.7 Intentional vs. Unintentional Omissions

To manage the cognitive demands and still perform, interpreters often use omissions both as a deliberate strategy and as an unintentional response to challenging conditions. Intentional omissions allow interpreters to focus on conveying essential points, improving clarity and aiding audience comprehension (Napier and Barker, 2004:372). However, unintentional omissions, often due to vocabulary limitations or non-native accents, and may lead to coherence gaps (Bartłomiejczyk and Gumul, 2024; Swabey et al., 2016). To address this challenge, interpreters can benefit from targeted training in vocabulary expansion and accent comprehension to reduce unintentional omissions. Additionally, strategies such as real-time monitoring, preparation with subject-specific terminology, and collaboration with speakers can help minimise coherence gaps. Using team interpreting in high-demand settings may also alleviate cognitive overload, allowing for more accurate and complete interpretations (Fantinuoli, 2017:26).

5.2.8 The following are the participant Strategies and Experiences

Participants used omissions as a strategy to manage the cognitive demands of interpreting into English as a second language. Most focused on retaining the core message by omitting non-essential or irrelevant details. Some, like Participant D, worried about excessive omissions, while others, like Participant L, improvised under pressure or in unfamiliar settings. Challenges with specific terms, such as proper nouns and technical references, led to unintentional omissions for Participant N. Overall, the approach varied, but all prioritised clarity and message integrity, often simplifying content to ease cognitive load.

5.2.9 Voice-Over and Register Challenges

Interpreters must balance maintaining linguistic formality with accurately conveying the signer's personality, style, and emotions. For instance, Participant L faced difficulty adjusting the register to a more formal tone while maintaining the signer's unique energy and expressions. Participant L explained, *"I completely matched her facial expressions with my voice... that's her personality, her style, her energy. So, how do I make the register more formal without losing her personality?"* Similarly, De Meulder et al. (2018: 8) states that deaf community and interpreters face significant voice-over challenges, especially concerning the potential misrepresentation of a deaf person's personality or intent.

5.2.10 Impact of Speaker and Signer Styles on Interpretation

Some speakers have unique styles, such as using humour, idioms, or speaking at different paces. For example, Participant P showed struggled with a speaker who used code-switching and a fast-speaking pace, which required the interpreter to adjust their pace accordingly.

Signer Style: Participant L and Participant N noted difficulties with signers who were not English-based or used lighter signing styles, which made it challenging to convey the full meaning.

Further, Participant M acknowledged the importance of accepting corrections and revising interpretations for clarity, while Participant P consulted clients about unfamiliar idioms to ensure accurate translation.

Familiarity with the client greatly affects the interpreter's comfort and accuracy. This aligns Lesch and Grové (2018) and Napier (2011) who argue that trust issues and familiarity are prevalent in deaf communities. The model of De Meulder et al. (2018: 8) is evident that the importance of building and developing a deeper relationship between interpreter and client can overcome many of the voice-over challenges that arise in deaf-hearing interactions. Participant L expressed no difficulty interpreting for a familiar deaf client, whereas Participant N faced challenges interpreting for a new client, emphasising the importance of interpreter-client rapport in successful interpretation. Interpreters often need to manage the pace at which speakers or signers

communicate. Participant P mentioned that sometimes they needed to signal speakers to pause to allow time for accurate interpretation. This demonstrates the importance of cooperation in a successful interpretation.

This is one of the examples from the Findings:

Participant L's experience illustrates how interpreters must adapt their delivery style to the speaker's personality and communication needs. They said, *"I completely matched her facial expressions with my voice... that's her personality, her style, her energy. So, how do I make the register more formal without losing her personality?"* This highlights the delicate balance between formal language use and preserving the signer's expressive traits.

5.2.11 Disfluency Factors and Cognitive Load

The findings reveal that interpreters face significant emotional and cognitive strain due to factors like language complexity, delivery rate, and lack of preparation, all of which increase cognitive load. In South Africa's multilingual setting, diverse languages and dialects heighten these challenges (Gile, 2021:18). Participants reported anxiety, stress, and physical symptoms, such as breathing difficulties and lagging during interpretation. Coping mechanisms included preparation, teamwork, and peer support. Some interpreters, like Participant P and Participant T, used team collaboration to ease pressure, while others, like Participant A, found reassurance in having support from colleagues during high-stress moments. Challenges also arose when interpreting remotely or live, with participants highlighting the added anxiety of being observed and judged, as noted by Participant D, who described the "observer effect" leading to overthinking. Despite these challenges, strategies such as staying calm and maintaining perspective helped some manage their emotional and cognitive load effectively.

Overall, the linguistic challenges faced by interpreters highlight the intricate balance required to navigate multilingual and multicultural contexts. The absence of direct equivalents, the demands of idiomatic translation, and the cognitive load of real-time interpretation underscore the complexity of this work. Effective strategies and

ongoing refinement of interpreting practices are essential to ensure both accuracy and cultural resonance in diverse interpreting settings.

5.3 Are there any similarities and differences among challenges faced by interpreters working with sign language and spoken language interpreters?

Both sign language interpreters and spoken language interpreters faced both similarities and differences, as highlighted by the participants. The following are the findings observed from the study regarding the similarities and differences of challenges faced by spoken language and sign language interpreters:

5.3.1 Similarities in the Cognitive Load and Stress Management

The study reveals that both spoken and sign language interpreters experience significant cognitive load, particularly under stressful conditions like live TV or technical sessions. Both groups rely on strategies to manage this load, such as summarising, omitting details, and paraphrasing to ensure that the core message is conveyed without overwhelming memory. For Example, participants in both groups mentioned feeling nervous or stressed. Participant L from spoken language interpreting said, *“I felt nervousness, anxiety, and stress.”* While Participant D from sign language interpreting used lag-time to manage pressure but overused it, affecting the clarity of the interpretation.

5.3.2 The Need for Preparation and Use of Reformulation Strategies

Both groups emphasised the importance of preparation, especially when dealing with technical content or unfamiliar subjects. Research, consulting experts, and consulting colleagues were common strategies used to bridge knowledge gaps (Chmiel et al, 2018). In one of the responses, Participant T (spoken language) highlighted the importance of preparation for technical sessions, such as interpreting for a lie detector test, while Participant A (sign language) used background knowledge and practice to improve accuracy.

Both types of interpreters rely on reformulation techniques to convey the message effectively, especially when literal translation is not possible. This includes

summarising and paraphrasing the message to ensure it aligns with the audience's understanding and context. Participant R (spoken language) mentioned that they use summarising and paraphrasing strategies and Participant L (sign language) summarised content when interpreting, despite the challenges of the fast-paced nature of the assignment.

5.3.3 Differences in the Sensory and Visual Demands

Sign language interpreters face additional sensory challenges because they rely on visual input to interpret, whereas spoken language interpreters depend on auditory input. This visual dependency creates unique challenges like clarity of the signs, environmental factors (e.g., poor video quality), and the need to lip-read or rely on mouthing for accuracy. Participant N (sign language) highlighted the importance of lip-reading as a crucial cue for understanding the speaker's intent. I find this particularly significant, as it underscores the additional visual processing required in sign language interpreting, further adding to the cognitive demands of the task (Camille and Defrancq, 2019:269).

5.3.4 Speed and Pace of Interpretation

Sign language interpreters often face the added challenge of fast-paced signers and the limited time available for processing the information. As a result, strategies like chunking, lag-time, and omission are used more frequently to manage these situations. Spoken language interpreters may face speed issues but have the option to adjust their pacing through verbal cues and pauses. For example, Participant A (sign language) used chunking and lag-time to deal with fast-paced interpretations, while Participant P (spoken language) used of interjection and requesting pauses to manage the speaker's pace. This finding highlights how sign language interpreters rely more on strategies like chunking and lag-time to manage rapid exchanges, while spoken language interpreters can use verbal cues and pauses to regulate pacing (Trisnawati and Nett, 2020:65).

5.3.5 Language-Specific Strategies (Modalities)

Spoken language interpreters often deal with language complexity and lexical density in different ways. They may focus on word-for-word translations, especially when the language structure allows it, while sign language interpreters use more visual strategies to convey meaning, such as mouthing or restructuring signs. Spoken language interpreters used coinage for creating terms during interpretation, while Participant D (sign language) used lag-time to process the information in a manner appropriate to the visual and spatial nature of sign language.

While both groups share common challenges in managing cognitive load, stress, and the need for preparation, sign language interpreters face additional visual and sensory demands that necessitate specific strategies like lip-reading and chunking. On the other hand, spoken language interpreters often deal with language complexity and lexical issues, requiring strategies such as paraphrasing, summarising, and coining terms. These differences highlight the distinct nature of the interpreting process in each modality.

5.4 What strategies do interpreters, both spoken and sign language, utilise to effectively interpret into English their secondary language?

The findings on strategies used by interpreters reveal a variety of techniques employed to address cognitive and linguistic challenges in both spoken and sign language interpretation. These strategies are designed to help interpreters manage the complexities of multilingual contexts and high-pressure situations. The findings highlighted the following key strategies amongst spoken language and sign language interpreters:

5.4.1 Key strategies of Spoken Language Interpreters include:

- Paraphrasing: Rewording content to maintain meaning without a literal translation
- Coining: Creating new terms to express concepts that lack direct equivalents.
- Summarising: Condensing lengthy speech to capture the main points.
- Omission: Leaving out less important information to preserve focus.

- Note-taking: Using shorthand to remember key points
- Consultation: Discussing difficult terms or concepts with colleagues or experts.
- Preparation: Researching technical or culturally specific terms before interpreting.
- Processing Time: Managing the interpreter's mental load by adjusting the pace.
- Repetition: Repeating information to ensure clarity and accuracy.

5.4.2 Key strategies of South African Sign Language Interpreters include:

- Chunking: Breaking down the content into smaller, manageable segments.
- Lag-time: Delaying the interpretation slightly to process information.
- Summarising: Condensing content to capture key points
- Omission: Excluding non-critical information to simplify interpretation.
- Background Knowledge: Drawing on prior knowledge to improve accuracy.
- Mouthing/Lip-reading: Using visual cues from the speaker to improve interpretation.

Overall, the study reveals that both spoken and sign language interpreters use a combination of reformulation, preparation, and cognitive techniques to manage the challenges they face. These strategies demonstrate their adaptability and the need for strong linguistic, cognitive, and emotional skills in high-stress, multilingual environments. Interpersonal strategies, such as consulting with speakers and taking breaks, also highlight the importance of teamwork and communication in effective interpreting.

5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study's findings align closely with its objectives, highlighting the challenges interpreters face when working into English as a secondary language in South Africa's multilingual context. Both spoken and sign language interpreters encounter significant cognitive, linguistic, and emotional pressures, which demand adaptability and effective strategies.

The study highlighted the cognitive, linguistic, and emotional challenges faced by both spoken and sign language interpreters. Key findings include:

- **Challenges:** High cognitive load, stress, and the complexity of linguistic structures and idiomatic expressions. sign language interpreters face additional visual and sensory demands.
- **Strategies:** Interpreters use summarising, paraphrasing, and preparation to manage demands. Techniques like chunking, lag-time, and notetaking are critical for managing high-pressure environments.
- **Differences:** While both groups share common challenges, sign language interpreters face unique visual and spatial complexities.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study suggests several improvements for interpreter training and practice:

- Increase real-world practice opportunities.
- Incorporate stress management and emotional resilience in training.
- Promote teamwork and collaboration.
- Enhance preparation methods for technical and culturally specific content.
- Focus on language-specific strategies and integrate technology to ease cognitive demands.
- Conduct further research on cognitive load and multilingual strategies.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The research underscores the significant demands on interpreters working into English as a secondary language and the need for tailored training to enhance their accuracy, efficiency, and resilience. By addressing these challenges through targeted strategies and ongoing research, the interpreting profession can be better equipped to meet the demands of South Africa's dynamic and multilingual environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



SCHOOL OF Literature, Language and Media ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SLLM-TRAN-4

PROJECT TITLE South African interpreters working into their Secondary Languages: Challenges and Opportunities

INVESTIGATOR Mpho Teme

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT SLLM/Translation

DATE CONSIDERED 21 June 2024

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE Approved

RISK LEVEL Minimal risk

EXPIRY DATE 21 June 2025

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 28 June 2024 **CHAIRPERSON** Prof. Anette Horn

A. Horn

cc: Supervisor : Dr. Celimpilo Dladla

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet



Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Mpho Teme. I am a master's student in the department of translation and interpreting at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr Celimpilo Dlala. I am conducting a research study about spoken language and sign language interpreters working into English as the target language in the South African Context. 'Linguistic challenges faced by spoken language and sign language interpreters in South Africa when interpreting into second/ non-native language: Comparative study'.

I am inviting you to take part in an interview session where you will view your recorded work and self-reflect on it. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 30-45 minutes. The research activity will take place at Wits main campus or online platforms such as Ms Teams or Zoom at your convenient time.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview activity. This data will be stored in google drive with secured password for a period of 10 years. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on. This data will only be used for educational and research purposes.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research is that some of the questions asked may make you feel sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview and continue another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Mpho Teme

Researcher:
Mpho Teme, mpheleme@wits.ac.za

Supervisor:

Appendix 3: Participant Consent forms



10 June 2024
Student number: 787586

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the research: South African interpreters working into their Secondary Languages: Challenges and Opportunities

Name of researcher: Mpho Teme

I..... agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I consent to be interviewed	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous and confidential.	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report.	YES	NO
I consent that the interview chats may be exported in text format as presented in the live or zoom or Ms teams recordings.	YES	NO



Appendix 4 Interview
Questionnaire.pdf

Appendix 4: Interview Questionnaire

Participant Questionnaire

Overall Performance

How would you evaluate your overall performance in this interpreting session?
Were there any specific moments where you felt particularly effective or struggled?

Linguistic Challenges

What linguistic challenges did you encounter during the interpretation?
Can you identify any areas where your language proficiency impacted your ability to convey meaning accurately?

Cultural Competence

How did you navigate cultural differences between the source and target languages?
Were there any cultural references or nuances that were challenging to interpret?

Interpreting Strategies

What strategies did you use to overcome difficult segments in the interpretation?
Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies employed. Which ones worked well, and which ones could be improved?

Accuracy and Completeness

Were there any instances where you felt uncertain about the accuracy or completeness of your interpretation?

How did you handle ambiguities or gaps in meaning?

Omissions and Errors

Did you notice any omissions or errors in your interpretation?
Were those omissions intentional?
How do you plan to address or learn from these mistakes?

Emotional and Psychological Responses

Appendix 5: Participants responses



Appendix 5
Participants Response