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THE IMPACT OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN
ENGLISH SPEAKER'S ACCENT ON THE QUALITY
OF INTERPRETATION

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. De la R.', on a light blue background.

Signature

10 August 2023
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother Mrs. Béatrice Ngabidi Bekada who left this world in June 2021. She was the wind beneath my wings and would have been proud to see me add this academic achievement to my record.

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ABSTRACT

As one of the three cognitive activities of interpreting, listening comprehension is key for ensuring quality in interpretation (Kamel, 2015). Listening comprehension requires a deliberate effort of hearing and comprehending the produced utterance by a speaker (Gile, 1995), and can, therefore, be affected by several variables, including the speaker's accent.

Besides other difficulties involved in interpreting, this study focuses on challenges related to listening to and understanding an accented Black South African English (BSAE) speech. It is assumed that a heavily accented speech by a Black South African English speaker will pose a challenge to an interpreter with no or little exposure to the specific variation of BSAE which, consequently, might impact performance and quality.

This study seeks to investigate if an accented BSAE, might affect the quality of interpretation, and if so, to what extent. The questions raised here are addressed by comparing the level of accuracy and completeness of interpretation provided by two groups of professional interpreters with French (first language) and English (second language) as their language combinations. Interpretations into French by 13 participants of a video recorded speech, and the transcription of the same, read with a Standard British English accent were recorded. Thereafter, participants' outputs were evaluated. This data including a questionnaire, was analysed using the mixed methods approach to test the hypothesis.

The results suggest that the strong BSAE accent influenced the rendition of the message, as participants of the experimental group did not perform as well as those of the control group. The questionnaire elicited that accent and related factors, such as phonemics and prosody, represented the greatest challenge during the interpreting process. The study finally presents the strategies proposed and used by participants to mitigate accent impact on the process of interpreting and the quality of the output.

Key words: accent, Black South African English, quality of interpretation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research problem	1
Research questions	2
Research aim	2
Research rationale	3
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Introduction	5
Definition, modes, and norms in interpreting	5
2.1.1 Definition	5
2.1.2 Modes of interpreting.....	5
2.1.3 Norms in interpreting	6
Interpreting process.....	9
2.1.4 Listening comprehension.....	9
2.1.5 Variables affecting listening comprehension	10
2.1.6 Analysis or processing.....	13
2.1.7 Production	14
South African linguistic landscape	14
2.1.8 English in South Africa	15
2.1.9 BSAE roots and user profile	15
2.1.10 Is BSAE a distinct variety of English?	16
Characteristics of BSAE accent.....	18
2.1.11 The origins of BSAE	18
2.1.12 Variables of BSAE.....	19
Quality in interpreting.....	25
2.1.13 Assessing quality in interpreting: content vs form	26
2.1.14 Interpreting quality assessment criteria	28
Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Theoretical framework	31
3.3 Methodology	32
3.3.1 Research method.....	33
3.3.2 Participants	34
3.3.3 Sampling procedure.....	34
3.3.4 Ethical considerations.....	35
3.3.5 Data collection	36
3.4 Conclusion	37

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	38
4.1 Introduction	38
4.2 Interpretation output analysis	38
4.3 A comparative analysis of a transcribed excerpt	43
4.4 Analysis of responses to the questionnaire	59
4.4.1 Participants' profiles	59
4.4.2 Participants' perception of accents in the speeches	60
4.5 Strategies applied by participants	64
4.6 Findings and conclusions	65
4.6.1 Findings	65
4.6.2 Conclusions	67
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION and recommendations	68
Introduction	68
5.1 Study limitations.....	68
Participants sample size.....	68
Data collection	68
5.2 Study replicability and recommendations	69
5.3 Conclusion	70
REFERENCES	71
APPENDICES	75
Appendix 1: Ethics Clearance Certificate	76
Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire	77
Appendix 3: information Sheet.....	80
Appendix 4: Participant's consent form	82
Appendix 5: Permission letter to use APRM official database of interpreters	83
Appendix 6: Transcription of source speech	84
Appendix 7: Evaluation rubric.....	88

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: Group A evaluation results</i>	40
<i>Table 2: Evaluator's breakdown and comments of Group A performance</i>	41
<i>Table 3: Group B evaluation results</i>	42
<i>Table 4: Evaluator's breakdown and comments of Group B performance</i>	43
<i>Table 5: Years of experience as a professional interpreter</i>	60
<i>Table 6: Level of education of the respondents</i>	60
<i>Table 7: Years of experience in interpreting BSAE</i>	61
<i>Table 8: Extent of familiarity with the speaker's accent</i>	61
<i>Table 9: Level of difficulty understanding the speech</i>	61
<i>Table 10: The extent to which the speaker's accent affected respondents' output</i>	62
<i>Table 11: General difficulties encountered while interpreting the speaker</i>	63
<i>Table 12: The extent to which PHONEMICS affected the speaker's accent</i>	63
<i>Table 13: The extent to which PROSODY affected the speaker's accent</i>	63

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
BSAE	Black South African English
CI	Consecutive Interpretation
COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
ESL	English as a second language
EU	European Union
RSI	Remote simultaneous interpreting
SATI	South African Translators' Institute
SI	Simultaneous Interpreting
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
ST	Source text
TT	Target text
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One of the consequences of the rise and expansion of the British Empire (1815-1914), and later, of globalisation is the English language spreading and becoming a global lingua franca. English is used among speakers whose first language is not English, but who have English as the only medium of communication (Tieber, 2017, p. 41). Beside Great Britain, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, where English – with other languages – is spoken as the mother tongue, where English is learned, studied, and used as a foreign language in a several countries, including India, China, etc. However, for most of the Commonwealth, English is considered a second language, which in most cases enjoys the status of an official language (Tieber, 2017). This is the case for African English-speaking countries, including South Africa (de Klerk, 1999, p. 311).

The 2011 Census statistics presented by Brand South Africa, the “Official Custodian of South Africa Brand,” indicate that the black population in South Africa represents the majority of the country’s total population with 79.2%. South Africa has 11 official languages, including English, which is considered the lingua franca of the country, as it is spoken and understood almost by all at different levels (Brand South Africa, 2002). The 2011 Census also indicates that despite being a common language in the country, only 9.6% of the population in South Africa use English as their home language.

Research has shown that as a foreign language or a second language, English in South Africa is impacted by the individual speaker’s mother tongue (e.g. IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, among others), and the phonetic system of the mother tongue often influences the speech of most speakers, including Black South Africans (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 4). This study assumes that when interpreted, this variation of English, also called “Black South African English” (BSAE) accent, constitutes a challenge to the interpreter and negatively affects interpretation quality, especially if it is not familiar to the interpreter.

Research problem

The interpreting process includes listening comprehension, analysis, and production phases. These three cognitive, complex, and intertwined activities contribute to quality interpretation (Kamel, 2015). However, the listening comprehension phase determines

the success of the other two phases and of the entire interpreting process. Indeed, listening comprehension requires a deliberate effort of hearing and comprehending the produced utterance by a speaker (Gile, 1995). Therefore, listening comprehension can be affected by several variables, such as the speed at which the speech is delivered, its' level of technicality, the density of the content, the quality of the sound, and the accent of the speaker. In this study, only the speaker's accent will be investigated.

Since English is a global lingua franca, various English accents exist due to linguistic transfers from the speakers' mother tongue, and "a number of proficiency levels and intercultural differences." Therefore, it becomes impossible for the interpreter using English only as a working language to prepare for all eventualities to the point of becoming familiar with all English variations and safe from any unpleasant surprises (Albl-Mikasa, 2014, pp. 811-812). Excluding any other difficulties in interpreting, this study will focus on challenges related to listening to and understanding a speaker with a strong BSAE accent. It is, therefore, assumed that a heavily accented speech by a BSAE speaker will pose a challenge to any interpreter with no or little exposure to that specific variation of English, which, consequently, may impact the quality of interpretation.

Research questions

"How does BSAE accent affect the performance of an interpreter with little or no exposure to such accent?" is the main question investigated in this study.

The secondary research question pertains to the extent to which an accented BSAE speech affects the quality of interpretation.

Research aim

The main purpose of this study is to investigate a possible impact of BSAE speaker's accent and the extent of such impact on interpretation quality. Therefore, an experiment is carried out to compare the levels of accuracy and completeness of the rendition of two groups – control and experimental – of English-to-French professional interpreters interpreting a speaker of BSAE to determine the impact the speaker's accent has on the quality of their interpretation.

Research rationale

As a verbal communication process, interpreting involves a sender and a receiver of a message, the interpreter being the mediator or channel of communication. All these three actors can hail from distinct geographical, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In a conference setting where interpretation services are provided, the speaker's accent may be of no or minor importance to members of the audience who have little or no knowledge of the language spoken, their only source of information being the interpreter.

On the other hand, the language produced by a speaker, especially its accent, is of paramount importance to the interpreter, especially if such accent is new to the interpreter, as he or she needs to understand and decode the message before recoding and transmitting it to the target audience. As the process of interpreting relies on three stages (listening comprehension, processing, and production), the interpreter must understand the speaker's message to convey it appropriately to the target audience via the target language.

In the first stage, listening comprehension can be affected by factors like speed of speech, sound quality of speech, and speaker accent, which can be mild or strong. Indeed, speaker accent has been shown to affect the listening comprehension stage of the interpreting process, and thus undermines the successful interpretation of the intended message. Lin, Chang and Kuo (2013) identify phonemics and prosody (including accent) as two important linguistic elements that constitute the message of a spoken text. They conclude that

“phonemic deviations may [...] give rise to misinterpretation at word level, [while] deviated prosody may [...] fail to reflect the underlying syntactic structures and semantic functions within the source text (ST), resulting in miscommunication on the receiving end, i.e., misinterpretation by the interpreter” (Lin, et al., 2013, p. 31).

Where miscommunication occurs due to accent challenges, undesirable consequences can also occur; for example, tension among speakers, improper decision-making,

among others (Lin, et al., 2013). Scholars, including (Grabbi, 2010), (Durbán, 2018), (Mazzetti, 1999) (Lin, et al., 2013) have widely discussed the impact of accent on professional interpreting from both the client's and the interpreter's perspective. Others like (Klerk, 1999), (Lanham, 1996), and (Meierkord, 2005) have established the existence of a variety of South African "Englishes," including BSAE. However, there seems to be an important gap: the lack of a comparative studies on how professional interpreters, for whom English is the second language and French the first working language, perceive and cope with BSAE accent. Filling this gap is what this study aims to achieve, through an empirical comparative study of French interpretation of an English speech by a Black South African speaker with a strong accent.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Some definitions, modes and norms of interpretation are explored in this chapter, with a focus on the interpreting process and factors likely to influence the quality of interpretation, including accent. The chapter also examines the linguistic landscape in South Africa, and a few characteristics of BSAE accent.

Definition, modes, and norms in interpreting

2.1.1 Definition

Nolan (2005) defines interpretation as the art of a language professional, called interpreter, who “helps speakers to discharge their duty to make themselves understood and helps listeners to satisfy their need to understand what is being said” (Nolan, 2005, p. 2). The interpreter is called to listen to a spoken message delivered in the original language and to render it orally into another language, either simultaneously as the speaker proceeds or consecutively.

According to Pöchhacker (2004), interpreting is a type of translational activity, which is characterized by its “immediacy” and occasionally performed for persons willing to undertake communication from one language to another and from one culture to a different culture. Based on the criteria of ephemeral utterance of the original message and its immediate rendition in the target language, “interpreting is a form of Translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language” (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 11). Besides the presentation and rendition dimensions, Pöchhacker (2004) completes his definition by adding the elements of meaning, effect, and culture. Interpreting, therefore, becomes an exercise consisting of producing utterances considered to be of a similar meaning or to have similar effects as a previous utterance made in another language and culture.

Because it is about verbal or textual and interpersonal communication, interpreting is considered as an “interdiscipline” whose study requires a variety of approaches such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociocultural communication, etc. (Wang, 2018).

2.1.2 Modes of interpreting

The practice of interpretation is done following two main patterns referred to as interpreting modes: the consecutive and the simultaneous interpreting.

Consecutive interpreting

The consecutive mode of interpretation follows a two-step process where interpretation comes after the original speech by the speaker. This involves understanding the source speech and rendering it in a different language (Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 191). In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter must support his/her memory with notetaking when the statements are too long to memorize, which somehow facilitates the rendition of the message in the language of the audience. (Albl-Mikasa, 2002, p. 257).

Simultaneous interpreting

In his *Dictionary of translation and interpreting*, Mason (2018) defines simultaneous interpreting as a continuous verbal translation of a speech served to a group of people at a conference setting by a professional called interpreter speaking from a booth, while the audience is listening through headphones (Mason, 2018). From a cognitive perspective, the simultaneous interpreter “has to listen to and comprehend the input utterance in one language, keep it in working memory until it has been recoded and can be produced in the other language..., all of this at the same time” (Christoffels & de Groot, 2005, p. 3). The interpreting process, be it consecutive or simultaneous, involves three complex and overlapping cognitive activities (Kamel, 2015).

Whether done simultaneously or consecutively, interpreting can be carried out in different settings, conditions and circumstances. This justifies the existence of different types of interpreting, including conference, court, dialogue, liaison, media, medical, community, public service, sign-language interpreting, and more. Each type of interpreting is done following a minimum set of rules, which can be referred to as norms.

2.1.3 Norms in interpreting

To determine or appreciate the quality of interpretation, it is important to take into consideration the concept of “norms,” which is a useful element in investigating quality in simultaneous interpreting (Garzone, 2002). No matter the language combination, certain norms are to be observed by the interpreter for their output to be of acceptable quality. Norms of translation and interpreting have been a subject of extensive studies. In general, norms are “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations” (Garzone, 2015, p.

281), citing Toury (2012: 63). It can, therefore, be understood that norms will vary depending on the context and the profession (Prunk & Setton, 2015, p. 274). In the field of interpreting, Antonini (2015) makes a distinction between professional and “non-professional” interpreting, the latter referring to “interpreting and linguistic mediation activities performed by people who have had no formal training and who are often not remunerated for their work as interpreters” (Antonini, 2015, p. 277). Such activity is out of the scope of this study as all participating interpreters have had some formal training in the field of interpreting and live of their trade.

Gile (1999) notes that in professional interpreting, “norms can be a tool for explaining the strategies interpreters deploy to address cognitive constraints and overload” (Garzone, 2015, p. 282).

Examples of such norms are given by Harris (1989), including the “true interpreter” norm, or norm of the “honest spokesperson.” It is the equivalent of the Garzone’s fidelity or linguistic output norm, where the interpreter “reproduces the source speech accurately and completely, with no personal alterations” (Garzone, 2015, p. 282).

Expanding on Jones’ (1998) view on the notion of fidelity, Koumba (2014, 18) states that:

The conference interpreter must be able to provide an exact and faithful reproduction of the original discourse. Deviation from the letter of the original is permissible only if it enhances the audience’s understanding of the speaker’s meaning. Additional information should be provided only if it is indispensable to bridge cultural gaps referred above: it should in no way involve the interpreter’s adding their own point of view to that of the speaker (Koumba, 2014, p. 18).

In this study, fidelity is relevant as the rendition by participants of the original speech in the target text will be assessed to see if and how the speaker’s accent would have affected their listening comprehension.

Another norm relating to output is that the interpreter is expected to use the first person

as if they were the original speaker. Garzone (2015) adds that “users accept the inevitable “voice/personality dislocation” between interpreter and orator, together with the uncertainties, faults, and infelicities, which are tolerated in interpreted texts but would be less acceptable in written translation)” (Garzone, 2002, p. 282).

Directionality is another norm which is prescribed and widely observed by some scholars and interpreting practitioners, especially in conference interpreting (Koumba, 2014). By virtue of the norm of directionality, interpreters should “translate” into their first or main working language. It is worth noting that interpretation scholars and lecturers, and interpreting professionals have divided opinions as to the best direction to interpret into, one’s A or B language (Koumba, 2014). On the one hand, supporters of the traditional ideology believe that an interpreter must only interpret into his or her native language. Bartłomiejczyk (2004), Donovan (2002), and Chang & Schallert (2007) are of this view, which is also advocated by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), where practitioners believe satisfactory target language interpretation can only be produced by an interpreter working in their first language.

On the other hand, a new generation of interpreting practitioners are of the view that it has become difficult to observe the directionality norm in certain settings. According to Harris (1989) cited by (Garzone, 2002, p. 282), this precept is nowadays only applied in international organizations “and no longer systematically, due to the high number of language combinations to be covered, e.g., in EU institutions.” Koumba (2014) holds that interpreting into one’s B language is becoming more and more accepted, though “reluctantly,” not necessarily because of quality, but out of necessity as an option imposed by circumstances depending on the market situation, and also because of increased demand from conferences organizers to employ interpreters capable of working in both their A and B languages.

The translational norms categorized by Toury in “preliminary norms,” “initial norms” and “operational norms,” and integrated by Garzone (2015) are also applicable to interpreting. Preliminary norms have to do with the decision to provide interpreting services for a certain event or encounter, and the choice of mode. The initial norm is part of the norms “governing performance and the choice between an approach aiming at ‘adequacy’ (i.e., leaning heavily towards the original), and one aiming at

‘acceptability’, more relating to the target language and culture norms (Garzone, 2015, p. 282).” Operational norms concern the set of decisions or strategies adopted by the interpreter during the interpreting process (Koumba, 2014). They determine the link existing between the source speech and the resulting the translated text, “in terms of omissions, additions, and other manipulations (“matricial norms”) and, above all, the actual formulation of the target text (“textual-linguistic norms”)” (Garzone, 2015, p. 282). To a certain extent, norms are considered a tool used to explain strategies deployed by interpreters to overcome cognitive constraints and saturation (Garzone, 2015) citing Gile (1999). They are useful in investigating quality in simultaneous interpreting according to Garzone (2002).

Investigating the concept of norms into institutional interpretation, (Ndirangu, 2016) concluded that interpreters working for institutions must apply the same rules used to guide, control and regulate the practice of interpretation called norms of interpretation as promoted by AIIC. Sy (2018) notes, following a study of interpreting norms within the context of the Islamic Development Bank, that interpreters were not subjected to specific norms in interpreting Islamic finance. Therefore, she concludes that “The concept of norms and institutional interpreting norms is obviously a vague concept to the different stakeholders, although it is embedded in their expectancy of quality and accuracy of the output” (Sy, 2018, p. 105).

No matter the type of interpreting or the norms applied, the process of interpreting includes listening comprehension, analysis (with note taking in the case of consecutive interpreting) or storing in short-term memory (in simultaneous interpreting), and production phases.

Interpreting process

2.1.4 Listening comprehension

Also referred to as “listening and analysis effort model” by Gile (1995) in his Effort Model, listening comprehension is one of the cognitive efforts required in all modes of interpreting (consecutive and simultaneous), and in sight translation. It involves understanding the speaker’s original message and immediately analysing its content. The listening phase includes the conscious effort of hearing and comprehending the produced utterance by a speaker. For example, if a speaker is fast in presenting a

specialized or technical topic with a lot of data, or if the sound quality is poor or they are using an unusual accent, then the interpreter will have to put more effort in listening and understanding the message. Moreover, in the case of consecutive interpreting, the interpreter, in this same phase, must take notes to help him or her remember the message (Kamel, 2015).

2.1.5 Variables affecting listening comprehension

In his *Dictionary of translation and interpretation* Mason (2018) presents the three modes of listening, which an interpreter may apply from time to time. These include listening as a reporter (to memorize and repeat what one has heard), listening as a recapitulatory (to subsequently give an account of the story in one's words), and listening as a responder (to reply after listening using one's own terms). To complete these functions, the interpreter should not only pay attention to the speaker, but also needs to demonstrate language fluency and proficiency, as well as a solid general knowledge, because the knowledge of two languages is the minimum prerequisite for the development of interpreting skills (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 167). This means that the interpreter must master both the language used by the speaker and the target language. Listening comprehension may be impacted by several input variables, such as speech speed, information density of the message, sound quality, and accent. All these variables, which are external to and difficult to control by the interpreter can affect his or her performance and undermine the quality of interpretation. However, in the context of this study, after a brief overview of the other variables, accent (foreign accent in particular) will be discussed in more depth.

Speech speed

According to Pöchhacker (2011), delivery rate of the source speech is one of the factors that influence interpreter performance the most. "First and foremost among the input factors that may jeopardize professional performance are the rate and mode of delivery of the original speech" (Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 196). He recalls that 100 to 120 words per minute is the ideal speech delivery rate recommended by AIIC in the mid-1960's and confirmed by subsequent empirical studies for simultaneous interpreting. Beyond that speed, the interpreter's ear-voice span and pausing begin to increase while the level of accuracy of interpretation decreases (Pöchhacker, 2011).

In an analysis of the nexus between speech delivery speed and strategy use, (Anyele, 2014) found that the choice of coping strategies by an interpreter is always determined

by the delivery speed of the speaker. She notes that most identified coping strategies are used for all delivery speeds (fast, average, slow) at various frequencies, and that speech speed is not the only variable that determines the use of such strategies. Citing Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002, Anyele (2014) further classifies interpreting strategies in two categories: meaning-based and form-based strategies, with a focus on strategies aimed at coping with speech delivery speed.

Information density

The density and complexity of information contained in the source message is one of the stressors in interpreting, and one that is likely to hinder comprehension and ultimately affect interpreter performance. Accounting for density and complexity are such linguistic parameters as lexical level, lexical density (sentence length and word length), numbers, proper names, cultural terms, creative language and humour (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 139). Interpreting numbers, for example, is considered “a common and complex problem trigger” and one of the variables responsible for errors in simultaneous interpreting (Frittella, 2019, p. 79).

Sound quality

In consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, both of which deal with spoken language, sound quality appears to be a critical determining factor for the success of interpreting (Pöchhacker, 2004). While sound challenges can be easily mitigated in consecutive interpreting when performed face-to-face with no technical equipment involved, the issue may be very alarming for the interpreter in simultaneous mode where electro-acoustic transmission systems are used. Quality in interpreting has become an acute issue in the recent past with the use of teleconferencing and remote simultaneous interpreting.

Accent

Simply put, accent is how an individual sounds when speaking a given language. In linguistics and sociolinguistics, accent is a way of pronunciation specific to a particular region, ethnic or social group (Cheung, 2015). Durbán (2018: 7) identifies “two types of accents: the foreign accent, which is predominant in second language learners (L2), and the native accent - the way a group of people or community speak their native language, whether it be because of geographic location or social status” (Durbán, 2018, p. 7). This position agrees with Cheung (2015) who argues that the risk posed by non-native accents or unfamiliar native accent to interpreting is a consequence of the

generalized use of English at international conferences.

According to Grabbi (2010: 9), “linguistic accent” differs from foreign accent. She supports that “linguistic accent is the prosodic phenomenon that sets certain syllables apart from the rest of the word and certain words apart from the rest of the sentence using emphasis” (Grabbi, 2010, p. 9). This definition brings out the aspects of phonemes and prosody in determining accent. This is concurred by Lin, Chang & Kuo (2013), who assert that accent in general, and foreign accent, in particular, involves both phonemic deviations and prosodic deviations.

While she agrees with Durbán (2018) that foreign accent is the way people pronounce sounds in a given language, Grabbi (2010) further holds that foreign accents of a language differ from the native version of that language due to the unique linguistic system (phonetics, phonology and prosody) they use, which differ from that of the native language. This means that a foreign accent does not necessarily refer to a different country, but to a different linguistic system (Grabbi, 2010).

As speech sound recognition depends on the prior linguistic competence of the listener, any deviation from acoustic and phonetic patterns that are familiar to the interpreter is likely to make listening comprehension more difficult for them (Pöschhacker, 2004). Lin, et al. (2013) are more exhaustive when analysing the nexus between non-native English and listening comprehension. In their empirical study examining which between phonemics and prosody (both being a part of accent) hinders listening comprehension the most, they conclude that “both phonemics and prosody were significant in deteriorating accuracy, but prosody had a stronger effect..., and when prosody no longer reflects sentence structure and intended focuses, interpreters may need to dedicate more effort to parsing and finding out messages from context” (Lin, et al., 2013, p. 41) in reference to Daniel Gile’s effort model.

This conclusion corroborates Mazzetti’s (1999) findings that both segmental (phonemics) and supra-segmental (prosody) elements of speech can pose significant challenges to interpreters if presented with deviations. In her empirical study, Mazzetti (1999) investigated if and the extent to which source-text deviations can possibly affect listening comprehension as well as the quality of the ensuing interpretation. Mazzetti

indeed identified unusual speaker accent as the factor that stresses interpreters the most in source text presentation (Mazzetti, 1999). Her study was on a speech of a non-native speaker. The impacts of segmental and prosodic deviations were measured by assessing the semantic accuracy of the rendition by the interpreter in the target language after a simultaneous interpreting exercise. It is important, therefore, to investigate further the impact of deviated phonemics and prosody on listening comprehension. Foreign accent seems to be one of the interpreter's nightmares when English is used as the lingua franca at international conferences. Albl-Mikasa (2013) notes that "challenges that interpreters face when they interpret non-native speakers include having to grasp foreign accents and recover unfamiliar expressions, [...] resolve unorthodox syntactic structures and compensate for the lack of pragmatic fluency" (Tieber, 2017, p. 41). Durbán (2018) is persuaded that when non-native speakers use a language, they tend to transfer into it features of their native language, including phonemes, stress, rhythm, and intonation. This is what Durbán (2018) refers to as "interlinguistic influences", whereby an "interlanguage" becomes an idiolect developed by a second language learner while maintaining features of their mother tongue, which they use to speak or to write (Durbán, 2018, p. 11).

Speakers using an acquired (foreign) language may carry over the phonetic patterns of their native language, giving rise to a non-native or "foreign" accent, which is often understood to involve not only pronunciation (i.e. phonetic substitutions, deletions and distortions), but also non-native stress, rhythm and intonation (Cheung, 2015, p. 32).

However, it takes some more learning and mastery of the acquired language to refine such interlanguage features (Durbán, 2018).

2.1.6 Analysis or processing

The analysis phase is also termed by Gile (1995) the "Memory effort" (short-term memory for SI and medium-term memory for CI). During this stage, the interpreter undertakes a deliberate mental effort to decode the source message, putting into play all linguistic and para-linguistic resources available to him or her. This is where

interpreting becomes a communicative process.

At the stage of listening and analysis, the interpreter needs to not only absorb what the speaker has said (verbal information), but also perceive how the speaker has said it when making sense of the source speech. Through aural perception, the interpreter needs to make sense of the pauses, stress, intonation, speed, prosody, articulation, fluency, or hesitation in the speech (paraverbal information) (Wang, 2018, p. 155).

2.1.7 Production

Production or rendition of the received message into the target language is the ultimate phase of the interpreting process. This is the mental effort made by an interpreter to re-express the content and intent of the message received in one language (source language) into another language (target language). Obviously, this last stage is very much dependent on the first two phases, mostly the first phase involving hearing and understanding the source message. In fact, in the event that the initial message is only partially perceived due to one of the listening conditions presented as the determining factors of the quality of interpretation – density of information, speed of speech, quality of sound (Christoffels & de Groot, 2005, p. 23), and accent –, one can expect a poor quality of interpreting output.

According to Daniel Gile’s “tightrope hypothesis” or effort model, the total amount of the capacity required to process a message must be equal to, or less than the cognitive capacity available to the interpreter (Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 192). In other words, the available processing capacity or energy, which is 100% for each interpreter, should be distributed among the three efforts (four if the “coordination effort” is taken into account); i.e. 30% for listening comprehension, 30% for analysis or processing, 30% for production and 10% for output control or coordination (Gile, 2002).

South African linguistic landscape

South Africa Constitution of 1997 recognizes 12 official languages in the country. These are home languages to the population and include Afrikaans (13.5%), English (9.6%), Ndebele (2.1%), Sotho (7.6%), Sotho sa Leboa (9.1%), Swati (2.5%), Tsonga

(4.5%), Tswana (8.0%), Venda (2.4%), Xhosa (16%), and Zulu (22.7%) (Brand South Africa, 2002). On 3rd May 2023, the National Assembly of South Africa approved an amendment of the Constitution of 1996 to include South African Sign Language (SASL) as the 12th official language.

In fact, most South African nationals can speak more than one official language, including English, which is commonly used in official and commercial public life. Zulu appears to be the country's other lingua franca. In addition to the official languages, other languages mentioned in the Constitution and spoken in South Africa include, Arabic, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrews, Hindi, Khoi, Nama, Portuguese, San, Sanskrit, Sign-language, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu. These languages are spread across the country following linguistic groupings and clans.

2.1.8 English in South Africa

Meierkord (2005) describes English as a national lingua franca in South Africa where it is used as a home language, a second language, a language-shift variety, and a foreign language. Meierkord holds that though English is spoken as a mother tongue mainly by the descendants of British settlers, it has become the first language for other local communities, such as Black and coloured South Africans, for whom English is now considered a second language. English in South Africa is either learned at school or acquired through informal contacts with different speakers.

The 2011 census revealed that English is spoken by approximately 4,892,623 South African citizens, that is, 9.6% of the population. These figures, however, do not represent the number of English mother tongue speakers, but include the Blacks and Coloured families whose languages have shifted over time from their native African languages and from Afrikaans (Meierkord, 2005).

2.1.9 BSAE roots and user profile

De Klerk (1999) traces the roots of English, and BSAE in particular, as far back as the early 1800s as a result of colonialism, when the language was imposed on the local populations who already had their indigenous languages. English thus became desirable because of the powers (military, economic and cultural) it conferred to the colonial masters, and because it gave access to social and economic advancement to the colonized local people. Later, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 under the Apartheid system made matters even worse. By virtue of this system, Black people were to receive

education in their mother tongues, and did not have access to native English, save in a few missionary schools (de Klerk, 1999). So, despite the undeniable benefits of acquiring early literacy in one's mother tongue, the forbidden status of English made it even more desirable as it was considered by many to guaranty social and economic success in society, unlike indigenous languages that were regarded as useless. Unfortunately, the change in the education policy later after the 1976 Soweto uprising and the ensuing increased access to English did not prevent BSAE from suffering a negative impact in its development. Thus, de Klerk (1999: 312) notes that:

[T]he long-term effects of under-funding, overcrowding and teacher incompetence, combined with limited contact with native English speakers, led to characteristic patterns of pronunciation and syntax becoming entrenched as norms of spoken BSAE, with resultant reduced levels of comprehensibility (de Klerk, 1999, p. 312).

2.1.10 Is BSAE a distinct variety of English?

Meierkord (2005) considers BSAE as the variety of English used by Black South Africans. She holds that this variety of English, however, is heterogeneous and varies based on the mother tongue and competence of the speaker. It is “the variety of English commonly used by mother-tongue speakers of South Africa's indigenous African languages in areas where English is not the language of the majority” (de Klerk, 1999, p. 311). Examining whether BSAE is a distinct English language variety or just a dialect, among other issues, de Klerk (1999) makes a clear difference between BSAE and “standard English,” the latter being the English mastered by “the privileged few,” and the former the language of the masses who have not been able to improve their English by reason of the “national decline in educational infrastructure.” This, however, is to be distinguished from pronunciation patterns used even by the most educated Black South Africans, and which are tinted with local, African languages and confer BSAE a typical accent, according to Lanham (1996), which is of interest in this study regarding interpreting. Meierkord (2005), however, notes that some features that were previously claimed to characterize BSAE at large are not specific to BSAE, but are also found in “standard English.”

Nwaila (1996) argued earlier that it is not appropriate to use the term “Black English” in South Africa because such a variety of English has not been established in the country. This conclusion resulted from the finding that 64% of his respondents (teachers, inspectors, subject advisors, college students and native pupils) indicated that they had never heard of a variety of English called “Black English” in South Africa. The researcher claims that the opinion that there is a BSAE is a “powerful” one that has become “conventionally listed,” and which is found in “influential circles.”

If Nwaila (1996) doubts the existence of varieties of English in South Africa he, however, admits “English used by most South African blacks is characterised by the persistence of peculiar forms and usages that are basically found at the basilectal level. However, pronunciation is probably the most prominent and remarkable feature of ESL” (Nwaila, 1996, p. 111), in other words accent. According to him, if this so-called variety of English is understood by other English users, then there is no need to dwell on such “negligible regional or community peculiarities” as accent, pronunciation, etc. How well this variety of English is understood by other users of English is the issue, especially for the interpreter who may not be familiar with such deviations.

Instead of the concept of “Black English”, Nwaila advocates for the use of the term “Educated South African black English,” which is nothing but Standard English, excluding accent, and cannot be considered (yet) as a new variety of English, unless it is institutionalized as is British and American English. This opinion is, however, opposed by most of the studies carried out on English as a second language (ESL) in relation to interpreting, which show English spoken by ESL users as a lingua franca poses a major problem to interpreters and the quality of interpretation.

Lanham (1996) is of the view that South African English accent is not a specific accent per say, as one would talk of an Australian English accent. Instead, there are as many accents or “variables of English” as there are groups of native speakers of English who settled in the country in the course of history, and ethnic groups where English is used as a second or a foreign language. He, therefore, identifies Black South Africans as “the largest body of English users in South Africa with their own distinctive accent” (Lanham, 1996, p. 2). Lanham also argues that even the pronunciation of BSAE varies in pronunciation, ranging from an almost native accent used by a small minority to a

pattern that is shadowed by indigenous languages. This latter end of the continuum is where challenges arise in interpreting.

Characteristics of BSAE accent

As a national lingua franca, English in South Africa is used as a second language, a language-shift variety, and as a foreign language (Meierkord, 2005). BSAE is mainly characterized by its accent, which is the result of direct transfer from local language pronunciation into a pronunciation that is common to almost all African English languages, and which is used by most black South Africans (Lanham, 1996, p. 2). As such, it may not be surprising that conference interpreters would face challenges in interpreting BSAE speakers who have a strong accent. In such circumstances, interpreters would need additional cognitive capacities to understand the unusual accent and cope with new language structures and expressions, which Tieber (2017) believes are difficult to process because they are derived and strongly influenced by the speaker's first language. In addition to pronunciation, which forms part of a deviated accent, the interpreter of BSAE may also face challenges in speed of speech and references to local realities, such as proper nouns of places, persons, among others. Also remarkable is the phenomenon of code switching where a speaker (including high profile personalities) mixes English with one of the many vernacular languages (de Klerk, 1999), assuming that most if not all South Africans would understand. In each case, the non-South African interpreter will have to find and apply the right strategy to cope with the situation.

2.1.11 The origins of BSAE

BSAE, a colonial heritage that dates to the early 1800s, was introduced by the ruling classes in a country that already had its own numerous indigenous languages (de Klerk, 1999). Unfortunately, people did not freely choose to adopt English, but were forced to learn it as the language that conferred military, economic and cultural power, and guarantee social advancement to those who used it (de Klerk 1999).

As English became the must-have evil for the majority of the Black community in South Africa around the early twentieth century, according to de Klerk (1999), this group was not privileged enough, except for the few lucky ones, to receive the standard form of English through education. Still, according to de Klerk (1999), things became even worse when apartheid was instituted in 1948, and with the adoption of the Bantu

Education Act of 1953, which “imposed mother-tongue instruction up to the highest possible level for black pupils” [and] “effectively denied black pupils access to native English speakers, except in the few remaining mission schools” (de Klerk, 1999, p. 312). The situation was only reversed after the 1976 Soweto tragic uprising, as access to English language increased. However, this change seems to have occurred too late and only had little impact on the development of a BSAE language.

2.1.12 Variables of BSAE

Several elements characterize accent and help to differentiate various accents. A variable is the variation associated with speech characteristics (lexicon, phonetics, syntax) “present in different degrees of prominence in different idiolects (the speech patterns of individuals)” (Lanham, 1996, pp. 2-3). It is worth mentioning from the onset that in South Africa, there is more than one South African English accent, but several accents characterize the English spoken in the country, which in part is due to the diversity of “origins of groups of native English speakers who came to Africa at different times, and in part a consequence of the variety of mother tongues of the different ethnic groups who today use English so extensively that they must be included in the English-using community” (Lanham, 1996, p. 1).

In this regard, one can rightly agree with Lanham (1996) who categorizes the South African varieties of English in terms of variables. He, therefore, distinguishes the Cape English of British origin, the Cape English of Dutch origin, the Natal English, the South African Indian English, the General South African English, the Afrikaans English, and the African English. He cites English spoken by the Coloured community as a version of Afrikaans English, which forms its basis, though its pronunciation pattern stands out and is readily recognizable in South Africa.

Reis Esteves (2009) identifies social variation as one of the characteristics present in South African English. She has divided this variation in three different groups: the “Cultivated” (reserved for the higher class and close to Received Pronunciation); the “General” (for the middle class); and finally, the “Broad English” (reserved for the working class). These three linguistic variation groups are found in South Africa at large and among the Black South African Community in particular. So, the variables applicable to “standard” British English are relevant for South African English, and can

also characterize BSAE, while recognizing, however, that such a variety of English cannot be homogenous given the many native languages that are likely to have influenced the development of what is referred to as BSAE. In this regard, de Klerk (2003a: 465), cited by Meierkord (2005: 4-5), emphatically observes that:

while BSAE includes all South Africans who speak a Bantu language as first language and who probably learned English from BSAE-speaking teachers, there are in fact 9 different official indigenous Bantu languages in South Africa, and although these form 4 clusters or groups (Sotho, Nguni, etc.) whose members share some characteristics, the language groups themselves differ quite significantly. [...] To lump all these Englishes together as BSAE from the start would, I believe, be unwise, since linguists would run the risk of overlooking any salient differences which might exist between them (Meierkord, 2005, pp. 4-5).

However, for the purpose of this study, variables that characterize BSAE accent and that differentiate this accent from others will be discussed as applying to one linguistic entity. One of such variables is the lexicon.

Lexicon

According to Reis Esteves (2009), BSAE, like other varieties of English in South Africa, has borrowed words from indigenous languages existing in the country as this has always been the primary way of formation and enrichment of a language vocabulary. “South African English has adopted numerous influences from many of the local indigenous African languages, such as the Khoi which contributed the click sounds to the Xhosa language, and to English such words as “gnu” or “eina” (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 4).

There are words that have been adopted in South African English and that are used by all linguistic communities, including Black South Africans. These include: “Biltong” (dried meat); “braai” (barbecue) to grill spiced meat; “mealies” (an ear of maize), which is processed in maize flour and can be subsequently turned into “pap” (a porridge made

from “mealie”). Some words with political connotations have entered the international “standard variety” of English and used worldwide. Such include “Apartheid”, “Madiba”, Nelson Mandela’s clan name or nickname, and “Townships,” the suburbs where black South Africans were forced to live during the apartheid era (Reis Esteves, 2009). Garage in South Africa is not only the mechanics’ workshop or where one would park a car at home, but also a petrol filling station. Robots are not really the products of robotics, but traffic lights.

There is also “code-mixing,” whereby a speaker uses several linguistic resources to express themselves, mixing local words with Standard English words, which in an indication and acceptance of a new variety of English (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 5) citing Bragg (2003: 308).

The same goes with the use of question tags. If standard English uses “isn’t”, “don’t”, “aren’t”, “didn’t”, “weren’t” to express a question tag, in South Africa this has been reduced to “isn’t?”, usually sounding as “is it?”. So, one would say: “Joan is coming, isn’t?” to mean, “Joan is coming, isn’t she?” (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 6). Worse still, in informal settings and in spoken language, the expression “ne?” is used to obtain acquiescence from one’s interlocutor. So, it is not surprising that one would frequently hear such constructions like, “Get ready, we are leaving in 20 minutes, “ne?” where “OK?” would be commonly used in English.

Accent

As discussed above, accent is the specific way a person will sound when using a language or a way of pronunciation specific to a particular region, ethnic or social group. In fact, accent involves phonemics and prosody, two important, but different components that help to understand a message in a spoken text.

- **Phonemics**

Phonemics, including pronunciation, which is situated at the segmental level, may mean phonemes or language sounds that can serve to identify and differentiate words as units of meaning. Therefore, any deviation at phonemic level may lead to misinterpretation at word level (Lin, et al., 2013). Psycholinguistic theories assume that “one’s knowledge of a word includes “phonological, syntactic, morphological, and

semantic' dimensions" (Lin, et al., 2013, p. 35). They further suggest that retrieval of words stored in long-term memory may be difficult in case of any deviations from the phonological clues previously stored in the spoken source text, as it is assumed that when a word is stored in long-term memory, so is the phonological representation of the word, making possible the retrieval of the word from the memory. Furthermore, as speakers of English as a second language tend to "substitute English phonemes that do not exist in their native language with ones that exist, the resulting deviation may thus hinder word recognition (i.e. meaning retrieval) by the listener" (Lin, et al., 2013, p. 35) and the interpreter, too.

Lanham (1996) observes that English pronunciation among Black South Africans in the 1990s was diverse, ranging from nearly native English pronunciation to a pattern characterized by almost all African English norms. Lanham, however, indicates that although "Many intermediate versions exist, [...] the majority of idiolects present the characterising variables [...] which are drawn from a central core of African English pronunciation norms, being the variables most likely to mark even highly competent African English" (Lanham, 1996, p. 7). This view is shared by Meierkord (2005) who categorizes the BSAE English variations under "basilect," "mesolect" and "acrolect" - terms known to have been developed in creole studies. Meierkord (2005: 5) contents that "The basilect is taken to describe the form of English spoken by people who have little contact with L1-English and who have received no or only little formal education. The acrolect, in contrast, is the form of English used by educated speakers, which, however, shows slight differences from the L1-English spoken in the region" (Meierkord, 2005, p. 5). The mesolectal variety of BSAE comprises the majority of intermediate idiolects presenting the main African English pronunciation norms (Lanham, 1996).

Reis Esteves (2009) identifies several distinctive features among vowels, which distinguish South African English pronunciation. The most predominant of such features is what she calls the "kit-bit split," where kit [kɪt] does not rhyme with bit [bɪt] (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 6). Reis Esteves also observes the very common deviation in pronunciation of the sound /æ/, which is slightly raised in the 'General' and 'Cultivated' South African English pronunciation (for example in *trap*). In Broad varieties of

English, it usually becomes [ɛ] (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 6).” A typical example for this is the pronunciation of “South Africa”, which becomes “South Efrica.”

Consonants also have their distinctive features, especially for the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/. Speakers, for example, tend to pronounce the /t/ and /d/ sounds by bringing the tongue against the upper teeth (Reis Esteves, 2009, p. 7). So, the word “to” will sound more like “tsou”.

- Prosody

While phonemics determines the recognition of words, prosody helps in conveying the intended message. Prosody, which occurs at the “suprasegmental” level, has to do with syllables, and more specifically with intonation, stress, and rhythm. Therefore, when prosody is deviated, it may “fail to reflect the underlying syntactic structures and semantic functions within the source text, resulting in miscommunication on the receiving end, i.e., misinterpretation by the interpreter” (Lin, et al., 2013, pp. 30-31). Listening comprehension is determined by the structure and importance of the message expressed in the source speech. These are determined by prosody, which is composed of three elements: intonation; stress; and rhythm (Lin, et al., 2013).

- Intonation

From the listener’s perspective, intonation serves to determine the structure of an utterance. It reflects the grammatical functions of parts of speech, and conveys the speaker’s emotions and attitudes, for example indifference, enthusiasm, irony, humour, and so forth. It also helps to determine sentence type (whether declarative, interrogative, or other) and sentence completion, that is, whether the speaker has come to the end of their point or idea. Speaking of the BSAE accent, Lanham (1996) points out that “intonation remains the main characterizing feature which is not derived from English or Afrikaans. It is, in sound, the sustained high pitch of terminal syllables in assertions as well as questions” (Lanham, 1996, p. 7).

In any event, pitch variation should be neither “overly narrow” (which may make the speaker appear “perfunctory”), nor exaggerated, lest the speaker sounds “pretentious” (Lin, et al., 2013). Pignataro & Velardi (2015: 131) argue that voice intonation is also important to maintain the cohesion of the intended message as the result of the

relationship between the way the message is expressed (wording), and the way in which it is uttered (sounding). “It is the intonation, the relationship between *wordings* and *soundings*, that sometimes makes it possible to infer the meaning of a message in which the meaning of each single word has not been fully understood” Straniero Sergio (2007: 300) cited by (Pignataro & Velardi, 2015, p. 131).

- Word stress

Stress appears both at word and sentence level. It serves the same function at the sentence level as rhythm (discussed in the next paragraph). At word level, stress carries the syntactic function and meaning of the word. In English, word stress is expressed in three degrees: it can be strong, medial or weak, “the difference between stress and unstressed syllables being greater, and the rules for assigning word stress more complex than in most other languages” (Lin, et al., 2013, p. 35). Common stress factors encountered by non-native English speakers include overgeneralizing their first language stress pattern, and especially reversing the stressing order of some words, resulting in a change in the grammatical function. For example, “*record*” (to *re'cord* and a *'record*); “*insult*” (to *in'sult* and an *'insult*); “*rebel*” to *re'bel* and a *'rebel*.

- Sentence stress and rhythm

Stress at sentence level has the same crucial function as sentence rhythm, that of avoiding misunderstanding. In fact, stresses together with pauses give rhythm to spoken language. English is a stress-timed language, which has an influence on the rhythm (Lin, et al., 2013). This means, the length of an utterance is not determined by the number of syllables – as it would in a syllable-timed language – but by the number of stresses, which implies a variation in syllable length. Individuals who use English as a second language are less likely to observe variation in stress and in syllable duration between stressed and unstressed elements, than native users of the language. While appropriate pausing is necessary to reflect sentence structure, non-native speakers of English may pause more frequently and within grammatical boundaries (Lin, et al., 2013).

(Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 196) believes that “The issue of prosodic and other deviations has become particularly acute in international conference settings where English is used

by many participants as a lingua franca, more often than not with interference from their first language”. If the term ‘foreign accent’ is generally considered by interpreters as a major source of stress in their profession, the phenomenon goes beyond deviation from the standard way of pronouncing individual words and extends to the syntactic and lexical levels of discourse Pöchhacker (2011). It is, therefore, assumed that as a second language used by the majority of South Africans, BSAE is no exception.

Quality in interpreting

Quality is a major concern and a challenge in the training of interpreters, the professional practice of interpreting, and in interpreting research (Pöchhacker, 2015). Yet, it is considered such a complex and multifaceted concept that some scholars find it difficult, if not impossible, to define. According to Zwischenberger (2010: 128),

The concept of quality involves many different variables and perspectives so that it may be very difficult and maybe even impossible to ever find one uniform working definition of interpreting quality applicable to all kinds of interpreting situations and all the viewpoints involved. It always needs to be specified for whom, how and under which circumstances quality is investigated (Zwischenberger, 2010, p. 128).

Quality mostly refers to the interpreter’s performance as an output in real time of a message uttered in an original text into a target language for the benefit of the intended audience. Rather than being elusive as it has been for decades, the concept of quality in interpreting by essence involves several dimensions that allow to have a diversity of views of the concept of quality (Pöchhacker, 2015). It means that quality in interpreting is considered from a variety of perspectives, including interpretation as an autonomous text and as a text that is in relation with the original, interpreters’ perception of quality, users’ expectations and perceptions, and employers’ expectations and perceptions of quality of interpretation (Dal Fovo, 2015). Citing Pöchhacker (1995: 234), Pignataro & Velardi (2015: 129) assume:

that the purpose of interpreting is determined by the target culture of its recipients and that the target text must “make sense” in the specific

communicative context and culture: the “skopos derives from the assignment, from the circumstances, from the requirements and ulterior motives [...] of the client (Pignataro & Velardi, 2015, p. 129).

Moreover, interpretation is said to be of good quality when it successfully achieves its communicative functions among the parties involved in the communication process in a specific context Diriker (2004) cited by Koumba (2014). At the cognitive level, Gile (1991:198), cited by Koumba (2014), is of the view that the interests as well as the intentions of the speaker should be fully represented by the interpreter. Interpretation must align with the original with regard to both content and form, even to the point of producing on the target audience the effects that the original speech has on its audience. In this regard, Kurz (2001) states that:

What our listeners receive through their earphones should produce the same effect on them as the original speech does on the speaker’s audience. It should have the same cognitive content and be presented with equal clarity and precision in the same type of language. Its language and oratory quality should be at least on the same level as that of the original speech, if not better, given that we are professional communicators (Kurz, 2001, p. 395).

2.1.13 Assessing quality in interpreting: content vs form

Quality is a complex, multifaceted and sometimes contradictory concept as seen above. When it comes to interpreting, it may depend on the modes of interpreting, and on the aim and the theoretical approach of a given study (Grbic, 2015). Quality in interpreting can, therefore, apply to a material product, such as a recording or a transcription of an interpretation, to a “mental process, for instance when an interpreter’s output is analysed with regard to the use of certain strategies; or to social actions, as in the analysis of interpreter-mediated face-to-face interaction or of an entire conference event as hypertext” (Grbic, 2015, p. 334). As a service to a customer, quality can be investigated externally from the user expectation, or internally as what an organisation or institution normally considers its culture for quality (Grbic, 2015).

Referring specifically to media interpretation, Pignataro & Velardi (2015) content that the norm of quality in interpreting has more to do with form than content because of the pragmatic nature of the context where it is performed, that is, the media. Here the entertainment function has pre-eminence on the information function, and interpreters are not for the accuracy of their interpretation, but for their capacity to convince their audience (Pignataro & Velardi, 2015).

Many, on the other hand, including scholars and professional interpreters, believe that meaning consistency is the most important criterion to be considered when assessing the quality of a piece of interpretation (Guo, 2013). In considering the criteria to be used in such an assessment, Guo, echoing Pöchhacker (2004), suggests that fidelity, accuracy and completeness should be considered while assessing if the source language meaning has been conveyed into the target text while adopting a “language-bound and a concept-bound analysis” (Guo, 2013, p. 57).

Another school of thought is of the view that quality interpreting must be accurate both in terms of content and form and be able to transfer all major types of meaning, namely ideational, textual and interpersonal meanings Guo (2013). This view is supported by Jean Herbert (1952) and Pöchhacker (2015) who believe that the task of interpreting amounts to “rendering the original speech as accurately as possible, retaining as far as possible the same style” (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 34), while Gile (1983) considers quality as a “weighted sum of informational content and presentation (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 35).” As to whether pre-eminence should be given to one rather than to the other dimension, Pöchhacker advises that account should be taken of the context in which the interpreting exercise is carried out, participants’ professional background, as well as the purpose and the nature of the meeting. In fact, different listeners of the same speech in the same situation may have different expectations. That is why, while ensuring consistency with the original message is important, one should also bear in mind the context and the audience for which interpretation is provided (Kurz, 2001). Therefore, citing Jean Herbert (1952), Kurz (2001) holds that:

It is quite clear that in a diplomatic conference the greatest attention should be paid to all the nuances of words, while in a gathering of scholars, technical accuracy will have greater importance; in a literary and artistic gathering, elegance of speech; and in a political assembly, forcefulness of expression.

Similarly, the style and tone cannot be the same in a small group of three or four sitting around a table, in a committee room with a membership of twenty or fifty, and at a large public meeting where many thousands are gathered (Kurz, 2001, p. 395).

Grbic (2015: 335) recalls that “Pöchhacker (2001) proposes an ‘onion’ model of superimposed standards of quality, involving “accurate rendition of source, adequate target language expression, equivalent intended effect and successful communicative interaction” (Grbic, 2015, p. 335). This view is shared by Collados Ais and Gile 2002: 312 cited by (Pignataro & Velardi, 2015, p. 130), who support that “Quality can be seen as the juxtaposition of a set of characteristics of several components of the interpreter's discourse, such as informational fidelity, linguistic correctness, quality of prosody, quality of voice” (the researcher's translation). In essence, good interpretation is when the output message is consistent with the original utterance, while the duty of an interpreter is to ensure accuracy and faithfulness of the target text (Koumba, 2014).

2.1.14 Interpreting quality assessment criteria

To assess interpreter performance, the South African Translator's Institute (SATI) uses a transfer competency and language competency rubric. This assessment is based on such criteria as “meaning transfer skills,” “application of interpreting mode,” “interaction management skill,” and “rhetorical skill” as far as transfer competency is concerned. For language competency, the assessment is based on the criterion of “language proficiency enabling meaning transfer.” SATI assessment rubric gives a description of the levels of performance for each criterion using a rating scale of five bands, Band 1 being the highest level and Band 5 the lowest level of performance. A band is assigned for each criterion depending on the interpreter's performance.

To earn Band 1 for the “meaning transfer skill” criterion (which is considered in this study) in a monologue simultaneous interpreting task, for example, an interpreter is

required to interpret the intent and content of the message with accuracy and no unjustified distortions, omissions and insertions, and to prove his ability and skill to resolve all problems relating to meaning transfer.

For Band 2 the interpreter must interpret the intent and content of the message with few minor unjustified insertions, omissions, and/or distortions. He or she must above all demonstrates ability and skill to resolve appropriately meaning transfer issues. Angelelli (2009) proposes the following criteria to assess translation ability, which can be applied in rubric assessment of interpreters: “effective meaning-based interpreting”, “situational appropriateness”, grammar and language use, style, register, goals, among others. Each criterion is assessed using a scale of 1-4 where the highest performance is “Proficient” with a score of 4, while the lowest performance is “Beginning” with a score of 1. The other intermediate performances are “Competent” with a score of 3 and “Developing” with a score of 2. The minimum total score required for accreditation being 12.

Taking the example of “Effective meaning-based interpreting” criteria, which is applicable for study, the interpreter to be considered “proficient,” is expected to provide a meaning-based interpretation, with limited or no influence of the source language, and including most details and all major topics from the source speech. For an interpreter to be graded “competent,” their interpreting must be “primarily meaning based.” It may contain a few instances of influence from the source text, but this should not deter the message significantly. Moreover, the major topics must be reflected in the message with a significant number of details.

In a study investigating the perception of quality in interpretation from the service provider’s perspective, that is, by other interpreters, Zwischenberger (2010) counts logical cohesion, sense consistency with original, and completeness among the “content-related criteria” used to assess interpreters. These, according to her, are distinct from the criteria that are related to the form, including correct grammar, correct terminology, and appropriate style (Zwischenberger, 2010, p. 135). They are also to be distinguished from “delivery-related criteria,” which include fluency, intonation, pleasant voice, synchronicity, and native accent (Zwischenberger, 2010).

As indicated above, only content-related criteria will be considered in analysing the data collected for this research (see evaluation rubric in Appendix 6).

Conclusion

Scholars agree on the fact that the end function of the interpreting activity is to bridge gaps between languages and cultures, while different approaches may be adopted to study and understand the process of interpreting. While it can be done simultaneously or consecutively, there is a variety of types of interpreting depending on the setting and conditions, with several factors involved in the process, which are likely to influence the quality of the rendition, for example, the speaker's accent, in this case BSAE accent. This chapter has examined the linguistic landscape in South Africa, and some characteristics of BSAE accent. The following chapter discusses the methodology and the theoretical framework adopted for this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

By its very nature, research in interpreting studies is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary social activity, which is carried out based on a very dynamic theory and a variety of approaches, concerning various aspects of spoken and sign language translation involving different modes and a variety of settings (Bartłomiejczyk, 2013). This chapter investigates the theories and the methodology applied to determine the impact that the accent of a BSAE speaker has on the quality of interpreter's output.

3.2 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework encompasses all approaches applied in a research process and is concerned with what data is collected, where, why and how it is collected, as well as how the data collected is analysed. The current study is experimental research, which is one of the two components of empirical research theory, identified by Bartłomiejczyk (2013), the other component being observational research. Observational research analyses existing material, both source and target texts, from a real-life interpreted event. It has the advantage of providing authentic data with reliable interpreting processes (Bartłomiejczyk, 2013). The main challenge faced by researchers engaging in observation, is "access to authentic interpreting data" (Bartłomiejczyk, 2013, p. 3).

Experimental research, on the other hand, is a scientific explanatory approach based on isolating one factor or construct referred to as an "independent variable" (accent in this study) and measuring its effect on another, which will be the dependent variable (in this case the quality of interpreter's output), while controlling the conditions (Liu, 2015). Liu adds that experimental research in interpreting can be considered "pre-experiments," or "quasi-experiments" as opposed to "true experiment" because the researcher is not always be in a position to manipulate independent variables or assign participants randomly as required in true experiment.

So, considering Liu's definition, the current study on the influence of BSAE speaker's accent on the quality of interpretation, can be considered a quasi-experiment following the empirical research theory. A limited number of participants – professional French

A-English B interpreters are requested to interpret a real-life recorded speech by a Black South African personality. The experiment is a simulation of remote simultaneous interpreting exercise, and the recorded target texts are evaluated and analysed.

As pointed out by Bartłomiejczyk (2013), in an experimental interpreting study, data are collected through participants who are requested to interpret the same source text in very similar conditions, which is an advantage. The main criticism against this method is that experiments are not carried out in real-life situations, thus lacking “ecological validity” (Bartłomiejczyk, 2013, p. 2). However, with the advent of remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) which is widely used nowadays, this design as applied in this study has become very relevant as participants are required to interpret a recorded video speech in conditions similar to reality.

Another criticism against experimental research in interpreting is the use of interpretation students or bilingual non-interpreters instead of professional interpreters as participants, which poses the problem of “population validity” and makes difficult the generalization of research findings to the target population, that is, professional interpreters (Liu, 2015). Again, this other criticism is addressed in the current study as participants are professional interpreters. It is worth admitting, however, other common shortcomings proper to this method, which may constitute an obstacle to achieving population validity. These are the sample size and the randomness of its selection from the target population. Indeed, our sample is limited to 13 participants and convenience sampling was used to select them. Except for the language combination, which they have in common, that is French A-English B, participants’ profiles differ in age, professional experience, and training background, among others (see section 4.4.1 on participants’ profile).

3.3 Methodology

Given that interpreters interpret for speakers of different backgrounds and professions in different settings and using different modes, “this professional dimension of interpreting distinguishes the field of interpreting studies from other fields in the humanities.” It is a multifaceted activity that “inevitably leads to similarly multifaceted

and multidisciplinary modes of enquiry, or research methodologies” (Napier & Hale, 2015, p. 257).

Approaches to perceive, describe, and explain interpreting processes and practices as an intertextual and intercultural transposition are numerous and varied. For several years now, more and more empirical studies are dedicated to interpreting and more focus is on the nature of the research methods used. According to Napier & Hale (2015), the term methodology refers to “the overall approaches to the research process as a whole and is concerned with why certain data are collected, what, where and how data are collected, and how these data are analysed” (Napier & Hale, 2015, p. 257).

Citing the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies*, Ricoy & Napier (2017) identified no less than 21 interpreting research methods. A methodology for a research project in interpreting can either follow a single approach or be flexible to combine different approaches in the form of a “mixed-method approach” (Napier & Hale, 2015). In other words, whether corpus-based, cognitive, ethnographic, linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic or other, all research approaches to interpreting studies are either qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both. Such combination is referred to as “mixed methods research.” Napier & Hale (2015) observe that “investigations of a more theoretical, philosophical nature have not been prominent in interpreting studies; rather, most research on interpreting has been data-based, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches” (Napier & Hale, 2015, p. 258).

In a nutshell, quantitative studies follow a paradigm where hypotheses are deduced from existing theories based on previous studies. On the other hand, qualitative studies are more inductive, allowing general questions to bring about more complex solutions giving a description and an interpretation of the problems, while data allow to induce new findings and theories (Napier & Hale, 2015). This study uses the mixed-methods methodology to address the complexity of the processes and practices involved in interpreting an accented BSAE speech into French.

3.3.1 Research method

The mixed-methods approach to research is described by Hild (2015: 262) as “an integrative form of inquiry in which the researcher collects and analyses data and

integrates the findings using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or project” (Hild, 2015, p. 262). This research method is, therefore, considered by its advocates as an alternative to pure qualitative or quantitative approaches, which enables researchers to explore processes and measure the outcomes in a way that would lead to a more comprehensive treatment of the issue under study and produce more credible and comprehensive results than a mono-method research can accomplish (Babaii, 2012).

The one quantitative method adopted for this study is survey research, as part of the required information is gathered from a sample of a population – a number of French-speaking professional interpreters – requested to inform a pre-designed questionnaire. For this research, the qualitative approach is used through a case study in which the interpreter performance is the focus. Participants are expected to interpret a recorded real-life speech by a BSAE speaker, and the quality of their output is subsequently assessed by an interpreting lecturer.

3.3.2 Participants

The sampling framework for this study is a population of professional interpreters with French as their mother tongue or first working language (French A), while English is their B-language. The participants are trained, practicing and experienced professionals. The sample comprises freelance interpreters from Africa. The study uses a total sample of 13 participants picked from the official database of freelance interpreters available at the Continental Secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

3.3.3 Sampling procedure

The APRM official database of freelance interpreters was obtained from the Head of the Conference Management Unit of the APRM, who is the author of this study. Then, convenient sampling was used where participants were contacted personally, and their individual consent requested to participate in the study. As the database provides information about the permanent address of each interpreter in addition to their country of origin, the sample was constituted in such a way that it contains interpreters based in South Africa or in the Southern Africa region, irrespective of their countries of origin, and others from other regions of the continent.

For practical reasons relating to collecting and analysing data, a sample of 13 participating interpreters was targeted, of which eight are based out of South Africa and the other five based and working locally.

APRM is an entity of the African Union based in Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Its primary mandate to promote policies, practices and standards that contribute to economic growth, political stability, economic regional and continental integration, and sustainable development through experience and best practices sharing. APRM deals with economic governance and management, political governance and democracy, socio-economic governance, corporate governance, and State resilience to shocks and disasters. APRM membership is constituted of almost all African Union member states. The Mechanism has a very database of translators and interpreters for all AU working languages, including more than 30 French A-English B freelance interpreters from all over Africa. Using this database made it possible to have interpreters based in South Africa and those operating from other parts of the continent. It is assumed that the former group enjoys greater exposure to, and experience in interpreting BSAE accent, while the latter are less likely to interpret BSAE accent.

In addition to interpreters, another individual is participating in the study to read, and audio record the transcription of the original speech using Standard British English accent. Two interpreting lecturers from two university institutions are participating in the study as evaluators of the interpreters' output. One lecturer is requested to evaluate interpretation of the original source text, while the second evaluator evaluates participants who have interpreted the transcribed source text, read with a neutral or British Received Pronunciation (RP) accent.

3.3.4 Ethical considerations

3.3.4.1 Participants' consent and anonymity

All necessary measures were taken to obtain participants' consent, respect their rights and preserve their anonymity by keeping all private information confidential. An information form was provided to all participants, including the evaluator and the reader of the transcription, explaining the nature of the study, thus allowing them to give their informed, free consent (see appendix 3). A consent form was also sent to all

participants, inviting them to participate voluntarily in the study (see appendix 4). They were informed of the possibility to freely terminate their participation at any given point of the project. A link to the survey questionnaire (see Appendix 2), and the video or the audio recordings of the original or the transcribed speech were sent to participants. The evaluator was also provided with the same recording in addition to the audio files of participants' interpretations. An anonymous code name was assigned to each participant for the sake of confidentiality.

3.3.4.2 Citations and plagiarism

A list of references of all consulted sources is provided and any source other than the author of this study has been recognised either, as a citation or otherwise indicated.

3.3.5 Data collection

The main data collected for the study is a recording of interpretation by participants of a speech in English delivered real time by a Black South African with an accent. The speech is a ten-minute excerpt of a briefing to the media by former Kwazulu Natal Premier, Mr. Sihle Zikalala, following the 2021 Local Government Elections (see appendix 6). At the time of the event where the speech was delivered, the speaker was a high-profile public figure; he is a highly educated personality, whose accent cannot, therefore, be attributed to lack of education or inadequate level of English. As a high-level Cabinet member, he regularly gave public speeches with good chances of being interpreted.

Two main groups of participants were formed: the experimental group (Group A) was requested to interpret the source speech with the original BSAE accent, while Group B (or control group) had to interpret the transcribed source speech read with a neutral or British RP accent. Each group comprised some interpreters based in South Africa and others working from other countries. A YouTube link to the excerpt of the speech, and the audio file of the transcribed speech were sent to individual participants, depending on their respective groups.

Given the difficulty to gather all participants for an online working session – these are

all freelance professional interpreters who are frequently engaged in assignments – each participant was requested to interpret the video or the audio-recording at their earliest convenience, to record themselves and to return the audio file of their interpretation to the researcher. They were, however, requested to do it at the first go, as would be the case in a real-life situation. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that this instruction was respected, which constitutes a limitation to this study.

A meaning-based rubric evaluation was done by an evaluator – an interpreting lecturer – with focus on accuracy and fidelity, and completeness of the interpretation into the target language. It is assumed that these criteria are the best indicators of the quality of listening comprehension.

In addition to the interpretations, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted as a secondary data-gathering tool. A questionnaire designed to inform different aspects of the study was to be filled in by participants. The questionnaire informs about participants' experience, their familiarity or exposure to the speaker's accent, their experience in interpreting BSAE, their perception or level of understanding of the speaker's accent and speech, whether accent was part of the challenges encountered, strategies used to mitigate the challenges, recommendations, etc. The questionnaire was loaded online onto a Google form and a link sent to participants, together with the speech to be interpreted. Participants were clearly requested to fill in the questionnaire immediately, and only after interpreting the speech, while their impressions and perception of the speech and the accent were still vivid in their minds.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the methodology and the theoretical framework adopted to determine the impact of BSAE speaker's accent on the quality of interpreting. Experimental research, one of the two components of empirical research theory, identified by Bartłomiejczyk (2013), was applied in collecting and analysing the data. The mixed-methods approach to research (both quantitative and qualitative) was the methodology used through a case study focusing on interpreter performance, and an online questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The following section of the study is focused on analysing the data collected from participants both through the questionnaire and the assessment made by an evaluator of the participants' interpretation of a video recording of former Premier of Kwazulu Natal Province in South Africa, Mr. Sihle Zikalala.

Globally, the data collected is analysed using a comparative approach at two levels. Regarding the interpretation outputs, the analysis is mostly qualitative based on an evaluation of participants' performance. The performance of interpreters of the original speech or S1 will be compared to the performance of participants who interpreted the transcribed speech or S2. Then a comparison will be made within each group of the outputs of interpreters who lived and worked out of South Africa to the output of interpreters who lived and worked in the country.

Concerning the data from the questionnaire, analysis will be globally quantitative. This will help, for example, to determine the number and percentage of participants with the least or the highest experience, those who are familiar with BSAE accent, those with experience in interpreting BSAE accent, the strategies they used to cope with the unusual or difficult accent, and more.

As the questionnaire was administered using Google Forms, the results were generated automatically through the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Finally, the strategies applied by participants to cope with the challenges will be visited.

4.2 Interpretation output analysis

Bühler (2006) designed a list of 16 items that could be used as criteria to measure and assess the quality of an interpretation. These include pleasant voice, native accent, fluency of delivery, sense consistency with original message, completeness of interpretation, correct grammatical usage, preparation, endurance (Collados Aís & Becerra, 2015).

In the context of this study, an evaluation rubric was used to assess the target speech, focusing on sense consistency with the original as the commonly agreed criterion to

assess the quality of interpreting (Kahane, 2000). The analysis, therefore, concerned solely the final product, that is, the interpreter's rendition as a text compared to the source text, focusing on **message accuracy** and **completeness** of interpretation to see if the meaning of the source text is contained in the target message (Guo, 2013). It is assumed that these two criteria are most likely to be affected by poor listening comprehension of the speech by the interpreter.

Accuracy

As previously mentioned, interpreting requires that the interpreter perfectly understands the meaning of the speaker's message before they can re-express it in the target language. Moreover, Koumba (2014) notes that "the accuracy norm is appropriate for simultaneous interpreting (SI) as a way for the interpreter to communicate the full meaning of the source-text content without changing the initial intent of the speaker" (Koumba, 2014, p. 55).

Completeness

Completeness has to do with text-based analysis with consideration of errors, such as, omissions or interference of the source language. So described, completeness of information is difficult to distinguish from accuracy in the process of interpreting. Some do suggest that the two criteria should be combined under the broader concept of meaning transfer (Collados Aís & Becerra, 2015). For this study however, accuracy and completeness will be considered and analysed separately.

Table 1: Group A evaluation results

Rating	Criteria/Description	Criteria/Description	Group A participants						
	Accuracy	Completeness	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
5–Exceeds expectation on delivery (90-100)	- Interprets the content and intent of the source message accurately and transfers all elements of meaning. - Can resolve all meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains all main topics and details from the source text with no unjustified omissions.							
4–Meets expectations (70-89)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message almost accurately and transfers most elements of meaning. - Can resolve most meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains most topics and details from the source text with a few instances of minor unjustified omissions.	75			70			77
3–Approaches expectations (60-69)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with an average level of accuracy, leaving out some minor and/or major elements of meaning. - Shows some ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Several topics and minor and/or major details from the source text are omitted from the interpretation.							
2–Below expectations (50-59)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with little accuracy, leaving out most elements of. - Shows limited ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains a great number of unjustified minor and/or major omissions.		55				50	
1–Unsatisfactory (20-49)	- No or very limited accuracy in the interpretation of content and intent of the message; almost all elements of meaning in are omitted. - No ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Excessive instances of unjustified omissions of main topics and important details are omitted.			25		25		

Table 2: Evaluator's breakdown and comments of Group A performance

Participants	Accuracy (60%)	Completeness (40%)	Total score	Comments
A1	45	30	75	Slumpy start. Active listening. Good processing of SL. Some problems in the yellow section, but the Interpreter perfectly managed through.
A2	30	25	55	Many omissions. Hesitations. Interpreter seemed not to understand parts of SL certainly due to poor listening. Some misinterpretations. False meaning.
A3	15	10	25	Interpreter struggling with SL. This definitely affected his/her rendering. All this ended into a disconnected and scattered speech, unfinished / interrupted sentences. Speech failing to make sense towards the end of the exercise.
A4	40	30	70	Interpreter seemed to have resorted to “literal interpreting” with little processing of SL. Hence the slumpy language observed at some points. Few misinterpretations and false meaning. The “word for word” tactics helped the Interpreter to keep track and pace of SL.
A5	15	10	25	Poor understanding of SL reflected in unassuming and hesitant voice of Interpreter. Spotty speech. Unfinished /interrupted sentences. Interpreter delivery seems disconnected from SL as Interpreter sometimes gets lost and finds it difficult to keep trace and track.
A6	30	20	50	Lots of omissions. Poor delivery certainly resulting from poor listening and grasping of SL. Some misinterpretations and false meaning. All this made Interpreter to lose out a great deal of SL content and message.
A7	46	31	77	Despite a few omissions, Interpreter managed to keep track and pace with SL message. Good overall performance.

It is observed that no participant of Group A exceeded expectation; three participants met expectations with scores of 70%, 75% and 77%, respectively; two participants scored below expectations with 50% and 55%, respectively, while two participants' performance was unsatisfactory with 25% each. It is worth noting that of the three participants who met expectations, one, that is A1, was based out of South Africa. Of the two participants who scored the lowest one was based in South Africa and the other worked from out of the country. Likewise, the two participants whose scores were below expectations with 50% and 55%, respectively, one lived in South Africa and the other away from South Africa. One can, therefore, conclude at this stage that the geographical location and exposure to the BSAE accent may not have had much impact on the performance of the participants. Moreover, it can be argued that exposure to an accent does not depend on where the interpreter lives or work from, RSI making it

possible nowadays to interpret a wide variety of accent from any location. This may explain why some participants of Group A managed to score as much or even better than their group mates.

Table 3: Group B evaluation results

Rating	Criteria/Description	Criteria/Description	Group B participants					
	Accuracy	Completeness	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
5–Exceeds expectation on delivery (90-100)	- Interprets the content and intent of the source message accurately and transfers all elements of meaning. - Can resolve all meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains all main topics and details from the source text with no unjustified omissions.			90		90	
4–Meets expectations (70-89)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message almost accurately and transfers most elements of meaning. - Can resolve most meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains most topics and details from the source text with a few instances of minor unjustified omissions.	70			70		85
3–Approaches expectations (60-69)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with an average level of accuracy, leaving out some minor and/or major elements of meaning. - Shows some ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Several topics and minor and/or major details from the source text are omitted from the interpretation.						
2–Below expectations (50-59)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with little accuracy, leaving out most elements of. - Shows limited ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains a great number of unjustified minor and/or major omissions.		50				
1–Unsatisfactory (20-49)	- No or very limited accuracy in the interpretation of content and intent of the message; almost all elements of meaning in are omitted. - No ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Excessive instances of unjustified omissions of main topics and important details are omitted.						

Table 4: Evaluator's breakdown and comments of Group B performance

Participants	Accuracy (60%)	Completeness (40%)	Total score	Comments
B1	45	25	70	Good start. But Interpreter seems losing steam from middle towards the end of speech, he/she however managed to sail through.
B2	30	20	50	Interpreter struggling from beginning. Some misinterpretations and poor grasping of SL message leading to poor delivery. Lots of omissions.
B3	55	35	90	Though the Interpreter recording stopped before the end of the SL speech, his performance for the excerpt interpreted was outstanding. Excellent listening skills. Good processing of SL message. Accurate message delivery, good mastery of TL expressions.
B4	40	30	70	A few omissions and misinterpretations due to poor listening. But overall message still acceptable.
B5	55	35	90	Active listening. Excellent processing of SL message. Good mastery of TL expressions. Accurate delivery.
B6	50	35	85	Active listening. Good grasping of SL message. Good processing of SL message that helped Interpreter catch up with some omissions.

Group B results reveal that five of the six participants (83%) met expectations with scores ranging from 70% to 90%, two of them having exceeded expectations with 90% each. Only one participant's performance was below expectations with 50%. Like Group A, this group was composed of participants living in South Africa as well as participants working from abroad. This being the control group where participants had to interpret the experimental speech read with a neutral or RP accent, one can rightly conclude, when comparing the results of both groups, that accent must have impacted the performance of participants.

4.3 A comparative analysis of a transcribed excerpt

In addition to evaluator's results, the interpretation of an excerpt supposedly containing a considerable number of accent challenges was transcribed for each participant in both groups and a comparative analysis done of Group A results (original BSAE accented speech) with Group B results (neutral accented speech) to establish the scope of the

impact that accent would have had on the quality of the interpretation. This is done for both accuracy and completeness criteria.

The transcription of the original source speech excerpt to be analysed reads as follows:

Original Source text (ST): As per the requirement of the Municipal Structures Act, we have a plan in place to ensure that all municipalities meet the legal deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days after the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). While we plan to do our best to support and facilitate a smooth transition, we are by no means underestimating the challenges that may arise in the hung municipalities. We trust that parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political fears and tricks that may end up paralysing municipalities and hamper the delivery of services. No one should drop the baton, for it is the very same lives of our people that we seek to develop and improve.

Group A Interpretation analysis considering the criteria of accuracy and completeness

Target text (TT) by A1: *S'agissant de la loi portant conseil municipal, on va veiller à ce que les délais soient respectés selon les 14 jours qui suivent la publication des résultats par le Ministre de la culture. Nous ferons de notre mieux pour faciliter la nouvelle transition. Nous ne sous-estimons pas non plus les difficultés qui vont survenir dans les différentes municipalités. Nous pensons que les partis vont continuer à travailler ensemble et qu'ils vont éviter les calculs politiques qui vont finir par paralyser les municipalités et empêcher la prestation des services. Personne ne doit laisser tomber le combat parce que nous cherchons à développer la vie de nos populations.*

Back translation of AI's output:

[With regard to the Municipal council Act, we will ensure that the deadlines are respected, according to the 14 days following the publication of the results by the Minister of Culture. We will do our best to facilitate the new transition. We also do not underestimate the challenges that will arise in the different municipalities. We believe that the parties will continue to work together and that they will avoid political

backbiting that will end up paralysing the municipalities and preventing the delivery of services. No one should give up the fight because we are trying to develop the lives of our people.]

Analysis

In this excerpt, participant A1 shows a good degree of meaning accuracy in her/his interpretation; except for a few cases where the source text meaning is not exactly reflected in the target speech. For instance, “**Municipal Structures Act**” is rendered by “*loi portant conseil municipal*” (“*Municipal Council Act*”), with the idea of “structure” missing. One could assume that the word “structure” in the sentence is pronounced in such a way that it is not easily picked up by the listener, who may hear the words “Municipal” and “Act.” However, of the seven participants in Group A, only three (42.88%) omitted the word “structure” in their interpretation, while four managed to interpret it.

Comparing with Group B interpretations where the text was read in a neutral British accent, one observes that the element of meaning relating to “structure” was rendered or omitted in the same proportion, that is, three of the six interpreters (50%) have it in their output, and the other three (50%) have it omitted.

We can, therefore, conclude that the omission of this element is not so much due to the impact of the speakers accent.

Another element of meaning that was not accurately interpreted or is missing in A1’s rendition is that the law requires municipalities to “**reconstitute themselves**” within 14 days after the Gazetting of the elections results. A1 simply speaks of respecting the deadline without indicating what for. What could explain this omission? Looking at the speeches of all participants in both Group A and Group B, only A1 has missed this element of meaning. This cannot therefore be blamed on the speaker’s accent, but probably on the interpreter’s lack of attention.

Another case of inaccurate interpreting is that of “**the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of COGTA,**” which the interpreter renders by “*la publication des résultats par le Ministre de la culture*” (“the publication of the results by the Minister of Culture”). This interpretation does not contain the element of “Gazetting” but talks of the publication of elections results in general in the sense of announcement. Also, it talks of COGTA as the Minister of Culture. This mistake can be explained by the fact

that the interpreter is not familiar with the South African public administration environment and does not know what COGTA is, even though it has been spelled out in the speech as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. This assumption can be supported by the fact that of the seven participants in group A, only two had this acronym right, one rendered it by “Minister of Culture,” one by “Minister of Justice, while the other three simply omitted it. The two participants who had it right are based in South Africa; the two who rendered it wrongly (by Minister of Culture and Minister of Justice) are based out South Africa; and of the three who omitted it, there are two who work from South Africa and the third one from abroad.

When compared with the outputs of the control Group B, we note that all participants rendered one or both elements – Gazetting and COGTA – in their interpretation. Only one participant, that is, B4 mentioned neither COGTA nor the “gazetting” element. However, the word promulgation used contains the meaning of “official publication,” which can cover the “Gazetting” element. Therefore, it can be concluded that the way these elements of meaning were articulated may have affected to a certain extent the listening, comprehension, and processing stages of the interpreting process, hence their omission or inaccurate rendering.

The last element of meaning to be examined in this first interpreted excerpt regarding accuracy and/or completeness is the term **“hung municipalities.”** In South Africa, a “hung” constituency is one that, after an election, does not have an outright winner (party of individual candidate) to run the constituency, but must go through negotiations and party alliances to constitute a majority. Although this concept may not be known to the interpreters, not even those who live and work in South Africa, the context is clear enough to help one navigate through without necessarily translating the term “hung municipality.” The challenge, however, is that the way the term is pronounced by the speaker makes it even worse to guess. In terms of comparison, A1 and A2 rendered it by “different/various municipalities,” which is not accurate; A3 and A5 omitted it altogether; A6 rendered it by “some municipalities,” while A7 talks of “all municipalities.” A4 is the only participant who had the meaning right by talking of “municipalities without a majority.” A4 being one of the four participants in this group who live in South Africa, it cannot be said that her interpretation is accurate because of her familiarity with the environment. Also, only two of the seven participants omitted

the term, which shows that most participants must have heard the word, but were likely deceived by the pronunciation, in other words accent.

Moreover, when compared with the control group (Group B), B1, B2 and B5 skilfully avoided the word “hung” and simply talked of “municipalities;” B3 and B4 used the context to translate not the words in the phrase, but the meaning. B3 talks of “the municipalities concerned” and B4 says “these municipalities,” with reference to those municipalities with no majority and which need to be co-governed. So, given the diversity of results in both groups, it can rightly be concluded that the speaker’s accent must have had an impact on the interpreters’ listening-comprehension, and consequently on their rendition of this element of meaning.

TT by A2: *Tel que dispose la loi régissant les communes, nous allons nous assurer que le délai soit respecté dans la mise en place des conseils municipaux. Il s’agit d’un délai de 14 jours après publication des résultats par le Ministre de la justice. Nous prenons toutes les mesures qui sont nécessaires pour faciliter une transition harmonieuse, mais nous sommes toutefois conscients des défis qui pourraient se poser au niveau des différentes municipalités, et nous continuons à exhorter les uns et les autres à renoncer à la haine politique qui pourrait paralyser les communes et à la fin empêcher que les services ne soient offerts, parce que nous faisons tout cela dans l’intérêt de nos populations.*

Back translation of A2’s output:

[As provided for in the law governing municipalities, we will ensure that the deadline for setting up municipal councils is respected. This is a period of 14 days after the publication of the results by the Minister of Justice. We are taking all the necessary measures to facilitate a smooth transition, but we are aware of the challenges that could arise at the level of the various municipalities, and we continue to urge everyone to renounce political hatred that could paralyse the municipalities and, ultimately, prevent service delivery, because we are doing all this in the interest of our people.]

Analysis

Analyses and comments made for A1's output concerning the rendition of "**Municipal Structures Act**," "**the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of COGTA**," and "**hung municipalities**" apply in extenso to the performance of A2. Unlike A1, A2 managed, though inaccurately, to render the meaning of the need for municipalities to "**reconstitute themselves**" by "setting up municipal councils." So, the conclusions about A1 can be applied for A2 as well.

Another element of meaning that was dropped altogether by A2 is the one relating to "**No one should drop the baton.**" This idiomatic expression means to play one's part or role to the end, to not give up or not let the team down. If A1 was close to the meaning by saying, "No one should give up the fight," it is not the case for the other participants in Group A. A3 interpreted it by "No one should give up on this project" (still, there is lack of accuracy as it is not about a project); A4 and A7 seem to have heard the phrase very well, but they give a literal translation of it: "*Personne ne devrait laisser tomber le bâton.*" Although when back translated it reads exactly "No one should drop the baton," a native French speaker will never say that, and anyone listening to you would hardly understand what you mean. One of the best ways to say it would be: "Chacun doit continuer à jouer sa partition." A5 is completely out of the picture; the interpreter omitted the entire last sentence of the text. A6 also omitted this portion of the speech although they picked up only the very last bit about "our people that we want to improve and develop." Overall, only A5 was unable to say anything about this expression. The other interpreters seem to have heard it but may not have had enough time to process it to extract the exact meaning or render it using a proper equivalent idiomatic expression in French.

Compared to Group B outputs, we note that only B1 and B2 did not transfer the meaning of this expression accurately, while the other four participants had it right. This, therefore, suggests that the speaker's accent may have had an impact on the comprehension and the rendition of the expression.

TT by A3: *Et pour ce qui est des exigences des structures municipales qui sont en place, nous nous assurons que tout est en place pour que le délai qui leur est imposé pour qu'ils puissent se reconstituer avant les résultats des élections. Au moment où*

nous planifions pour faciliter cette transition, nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis qui se présentent. Nous avons confiance que les partis vont continuer à travailler et éviter les problèmes politiques qui pourraient finir par paralyser les municipalités et les services. Personne ne devrait abandonner ce projet, parce qu'il est de notre intérêt et de notre population qui est de s'assurer qu'elle soit développée.

Back translation of A3's output:

[In terms of the requirements of the municipal structures that are in place, we are making sure that everything is in place so that the timeframe that is imposed on them to reconstitute themselves before the election results. As we plan to facilitate this transition, we do not underestimate the challenges that lie ahead. We trust that the parties will continue to work and avoid political problems that could end up paralysing municipalities and services. No one should give up on this project, because it is in our interest and in the interest of our people to ensure that it is developed.]

Analysis

In addition to the comments mentioned in the previous analysis above concerning this participant, there are several other elements of meaning that can be considered specifically in this excerpt of A3's interpretation in terms of accuracy and completeness.

Concerning the **“legal deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days after the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of COGTA,”** the interpreter talks of the reconstitution “before the elections results,” which is the opposite. **Talking about “the challenges that may arise in the hung municipalities,”** the interpreter simplistically talks of “the challenges that lie ahead.” A3's interpretation of this excerpt is typical of an interpreter faced with listening and comprehension challenges, who desperately tries to cope by omitting chunks of the text and making the most of the bits that they can catch until they get to the end of the speech. Commenting on A5's output the evaluator had this to say:

“Poor understanding of SL reflected in unassuming and hesitant voice of

Interpreter. Spotty speech. Unfinished /interrupted sentences. Interpreter delivery seems disconnected from SL as Interpreter sometimes gets lost and finds it difficult to keep trace and track.”

No participant in Group B has shown such level of inaccuracy and incompleteness of interpretation.

TT by A4: *Selon les exigences de la loi sur les structures municipales, nous voulons que toutes les municipalités respectent les exigences, c'est-à-dire qu'elles doivent se reconstituer elles-mêmes en deux semaines, 14 jours par le Ministre de COGTA. Bien que nous voulions faire tout le meilleur pour assurer une transition fluide, nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis dans les municipalités sans majorité. Nous voulons assurer les municipalités et éviter qu'il y ait des problèmes politiques qui finissent par paralyser les municipalités et entraver la prestation de services. Personne ne devrait laisser tomber le bâton, parce que c'est la vie même de nos populations que nous voulons respecter et développer.*

Back translation of A4's output:

[According to the requirements of the Municipal Structures Act, we want all municipalities to comply with the requirements, that is, they must reconstitute themselves within two weeks, or 14 days by the Minister of COGTA. While we want to do our best to ensure a smooth transition, we do not underestimate the challenges in municipalities without a majority. We want to ensure municipalities and avoid political problems that end up paralysing municipalities and hindering service delivery. No one should drop the baton, because it is the very lives of our people that we want to respect and develop.]

Analysis

Two major instances of inaccuracy and incompleteness are worth highlighting in this output of participant A4, in addition to what has been mentioned earlier. These amount to “misinterpretation” and “false meaning” as noted by the evaluator. The first instance is the interpretation of the legal requirement that municipalities should reconstitute themselves within 14 days after the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of

COGTA. The interpreter rendered it by "...they [municipalities] **must reconstitute themselves within two weeks, or 14 days by the Minister of COGTA.,**" which is false meaning and even contradictory. The second instance is the interpretation of "**We trust that parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political fears and tricks,**" which the interpreter rendered by: "**We want to ensure municipalities and avoid political problems.**" This is both inaccurate and incomplete in terms of meaning transfer. A comparison with the interpretations by Group B participants shows that no one interpreter missed these two segments of the speech as shown below.

B1:

...that all municipalities meet the deadline to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the results by the Minister of COGTA.

We believe that the parties will continue to work together to avoid problems...

B2:

... that the municipalities deal with the deadlines so that they can reconstitute themselves in four days after the announcement of the results by COGTA.

We are confident that parties will continue to avoid political activities...

B3:

... that all municipalities meet the legal deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the election results in the Official Gazette by the Minister of COGTA.

We are convinced that political parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political acts...

B4:

... that all municipalities meet the deadlines for reconstituting themselves 14 days after the results are announced.

We hope that we will continue to persuade ourselves to avoid problems...

B5:

... that all municipalities comply with the deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the results in the Official Gazette.

We trust that the parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political concerns and anything...

B6:

...that all municipalities meet the deadlines, which require them to reconstitute within 14 days of the publication of the election results by the Minister of COGTA.

We are confident that the parties will continue to work together to avoid political fears and pitfalls...

This is, therefore, a clear indication that the speaker's accent must have had some influence on the way these portions of the speech were apprehended by interpreters, and consequently on their rendition of the same in the target language.

TT by A5: En ce qui concerne la loi sur les structures municipales, toutes les municipalités doivent se reconstituer de façon légale, c'est-à-dire 45 jours après les résultats des élections. Nous ferons le maximum pour faciliter une transition calme. Il y a plusieurs défis à relever dans les municipalités. Nous continuons à nous persuader les uns les autres que les municipalités ne vont pas pouvoir toujours donner les services promis.

Back translation of A5's output

[With regard to the law on municipal structures, all municipalities must reconstitute themselves legally, that is, 45 days after the election results. We will do our utmost to facilitate a smooth transition. There are several challenges in the municipalities. We continue to convince one another that the municipalities will not always be able to deliver the promised services.]

Analysis

A5's interpretation is a perfect reflection of inaccuracy and incompleteness of meaning transfer or interpretation.

Inaccuracy:

"14 days" is rendered by "45 days."

Challenges that may arise in hung municipalities not underestimated: *“There are several challenges in the municipalities.”*

We trust that parties will continue to persuade each other: *“We continue to convince one another....”*

...to avoid political fears and tricks that may end up paralysing municipalities and hamper the delivery of services: *“that the municipalities will not always be able to deliver the promised services.”*

Incompleteness (omissions):

Gazetting by the Minister of COGTA (omitted)

Challenges that may arise in hung municipalities not underestimated (omitted)

No one should drop the baton, for it is the very same lives of our people which we seek to develop and improve (omitted).

The evaluator’s comments summarise this in the most accurate way:

“Poor understanding of SL reflected in unassuming and hesitant voice of Interpreter. Spotty speech. Unfinished /interrupted sentences. Interpreter delivery seems disconnected from SL as Interpreter sometimes gets lost and finds it difficult to keep trace and track,” resulting to a 25% overall score.

Such an output can only be the result of poor understanding of the source text, for which speaker’s accent is very likely one of the reasons. No participant of the control group did score so low.

TT by A6: *Selon la loi de la municipalité, nous voulons nous assurer que tous les délais soient respectés, le délai de 14 jours pour la reconstitution des conseils municipaux. Pendant que nous voulons faire de notre mieux pour soutenir une transition sans encombre, nous ne négligeons pas les défis au niveau de certaines municipalités et nous espérons que les partis vont continuer à travailler ensemble et éviter les provocations qui vont paralyser les municipalités et affecter la prestation de services, parce que c’est nos populations que nous voulons améliorer et développer.*

Back translation of A6’s output:

[According to the law of the municipality, we want to ensure that all deadlines are met, the 14-day deadline for the reconstitution of municipal councils. While we want to do our best to support a smooth transition, we are not underestimating the

challenges at the level of some municipalities and we hope that the parties will continue to work together and avoid provocations that will paralyse municipalities and affect service delivery, because it is our people that we want to improve and develop.]

Analysis

Overall, A6 maintained a degree of accuracy and completeness in this portion of the speech. There are some instances of inaccurate transfer of meaning; for example, the interpretation of “the Municipal structures Act,” which the interpreter rendered by “the law of the municipality;” “we have a plan in place to ensure that all municipalities meet the legal deadline” is interpreted as “we want to ensure that all deadlines are met.” Regarding completeness, the interpreter omitted the “Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of COGTA,” as well as the call that “no one should drop the baton.” The average score of 50% given by the evaluator for both criteria is quite deserved for this portion of the text. With this score, one cannot say with certainty whether accent had any impact on the interpreter’s performance, except themselves.

Target text by A7:

En ce qui concerne les structures des municipalités, la loi exige que toutes les municipalités répondent au délai pour se reconstituer dans les 14 jours après la publication des résultats des élections par le ministère de COGTA. Nous envisageons de faire notre mieux pour soutenir et faciliter la transition en douceur, mais il ne faut pas sous-estimer les défis qui vont se poser dans toutes les municipalités. Les partis vont continuer à se persuader et éviter les marasmes politiques qui risqueraient de paralyser les municipalités et la prestation de services. Personne ne peut laisser tomber le bâton, parce que c’est dans ce cadre que nous devons veiller à ce que notre peuple se développe.

Back translation of A7’s output:

[With regard to municipal structures, the law requires that all municipalities meet the deadline for reconstituting themselves within 14 days of the publication of the election results by the Ministry of COGTA. We intend to do our best to support and facilitate a smooth transition, but we should not underestimate the challenges that will arise in all municipalities. The parties will continue to persuade one another and

avoid political turmoil that could paralyse municipalities and service delivery. No one can drop the baton, because that is how we must ensure that our people develop.]

Analysis

A7's rendition of this excerpt can be considered an excellent piece of interpretation in terms of completeness of meaning transfer, for it contains almost all main topics and details from the source text with no unjustified omissions. Concerning the accuracy criteria, a few missed elements of meaning can be pointed out, such as, the interpretation of "**the challenges that may arise in the hung municipalities**" by "**the challenges that will arise in all municipalities.**" Here the probability is translated into a certainty and "**the hung municipality,**" which is a specific category of municipalities, is translated into "**all municipalities.**" Lastly, the idiomatic expression "**no one should drop the baton**" is translated word for word in French (**personne ne peut laisser tomber le bâton**), which does not make any sense in Molière's language. The evaluator scored A7's interpretation 77% (meets expectations), the highest score in Group A, which means accent did not have a great impact on the interpreter's output. It is noted A7 is one of the interpreters who live and work in South Africa. He could be among the 46.7% who indicated that BSAE accent was familiar to them, and among the 33.3% who indicated having 15-20 years of experience interpreting BASE accent.

Transcriptions of Group B interpretations

This transcription is given not for analysis, but for text-based comparison purposes as done above.

TT by B1: *En tant qu'exigence de la loi, nous avons un plan qui a été élaboré pour nous assurer que toutes les collectivités respectent les délais qui demandent de se reconstituer dans les 14 jours après les résultats publiés par le Ministre COGTA. Au moment où nous nous apprêtons à soutenir cette transition sans heurt, nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis qui menacent les municipalités. Nous pensons que les partis vont continuer à travailler ensemble pour éviter les problèmes qui, en fin de compte, vont paralyser les collectivités et entraver la prestation des services. Donc, personne ne doit être un vainqueur, ça c'est le souhait de notre pays et nous voulons améliorer la situation de nos populations.*

Back translation of B1's output:

[As a requirement of the law, we have a plan in place to ensure that all municipalities meet the deadline to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the results by the Minister of COGTA. As we move to support this smooth transition, we do not underestimate the challenges facing municipalities. We believe that the parties will continue to work together to avoid problems that will, ultimately, paralyse the municipalities and hamper service delivery. So, no one should be a winner, that is the wish of our country, and we want to improve the situation of our people.]

Target text by B2:

Selon la loi sur les municipalités, nous avons un plan pour s'assurer à ce que les municipalités s'occupent des dates butoirs pour qu'ils puissent se reconstituer dans quatre jours après la déclaration des résultats par COGTA. Même si nous parlons de transition politique, on ne sous-estime pas les défis qui pourraient surgir au niveau des municipalités. Nous avons confiance que les partis vont continuer à éviter les activités politiques pour paralyser les municipalités et empêcher la mise en place des services. Il ne faut pas pousser le bouton, parce que c'est la vie de nos peuples mêmes qu'on cherche à améliorer.

Back translation of B2's output:

[According to the Municipalities Act, we have a plan to make sure that the municipalities deal with the deadlines so that they can reconstitute themselves in four days after the announcement of the results by COGTA. As we talk about political transition, we do not underestimate the challenges that could arise at the level of municipalities. We are confident that parties will continue to avoid political activities to paralyse the municipalities and prevent the provision of services. We must not push the button, because it is the lives of our people that we are trying to improve.]

Target text by B3:

Conformément aux exigences de la Loi sur les structures municipales, nous avons un plan pour nous assurer que toutes les municipalités respectent le délai légal, qui les oblige à se reconstituer dans les 14 jours suivant la publication des résultats des élections dans le Journal officiel par le ministre de COGTA. Bien que nous voulions faire de notre mieux pour soutenir et faciliter une transition sans heurts, nous ne sous-

estimons en aucun cas les défis qui pourraient survenir dans les municipalités concernées. Nous sommes convaincus que les partis politiques continueront à se persuader mutuellement d'éviter les actes politiques qui pourraient paralyser les municipalités et entraver la prestation des services. Personne ne doit abandonner le combat, car c'est la vie même de nos concitoyens que nous cherchons à développer et à améliorer.

Back translation of B3's output

[As required by the Municipal Structures Act, we have a plan to ensure that all municipalities meet the legal deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the election results in the Official Gazette by the Minister of COGTA. While we want to do our best to support and facilitate a smooth transition, we do not underestimate the challenges that may arise in the municipalities concerned. We are convinced that political parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political acts that could paralyse municipalities and hamper service delivery. No one should give up the fight, because it is the very lives of our citizens that we seek to develop and improve.]

Target text by B4:

Nous avons mis en place un plan pour veiller à ce que toutes les municipalités respectent les délais qui leur demandent de se reconstituer 14 jours après la promulgation des résultats. Nous faisons de notre mieux pour faciliter ce processus et nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis qui peuvent se poser dans lesdites municipalités. Nous espérons que nous allons continuer à nous persuader à éviter les problèmes qui peuvent finir par paralyser les municipalités et empêcher la fourniture des services. Personne ne doit laisser tomber la bataille car nous voulons développer et améliorer la vie de nos populations.

Back translation of B4's output:

[We have a plan in place to ensure that all municipalities meet the deadlines for reconstituting themselves 14 days after the results are announced. We are doing our best to facilitate this process and we do not underestimate the challenges that may arise in these municipalities. We hope that we will continue to persuade ourselves to avoid problems that may end up paralysing the municipalities and preventing the

delivery of services. No one should give up the battle as we want to develop and improve the lives of our people.]

Target text by B5:

Comme l'exige la loi sur les structures municipales, nous comptons veiller à ce que toutes les municipalités observent les délais impartis, qui exigent qu'elles se reconstituent dans les 14 jours suivant la publication au Journal officiel des résultats. Nous comptons faire de notre mieux pour soutenir et faciliter une bonne transition, mais nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis qui peuvent se dresser devant les municipalités. Nous avons confiance que les partis continueront à se persuader pour éviter les inquiétudes politiques et tout ce qui peut finir par paralyser les municipalités et entraver la prestation des services. Personne ne devrait abandonner, car il s'agit justement de la vie de nos populations que nous cherchons à développer et à améliorer.

Back translation of B5's output:

[As required by the Municipal Structures Act, we will ensure that all municipalities comply with the deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days of the publication of the results in the Official Gazette. We intend to do our best to support and facilitate a smooth transition, but we do not underestimate the challenges that municipalities may face. We trust that the parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political concerns and anything that may end up paralysing municipalities and hindering service delivery. No one should give up, because it is the lives of our people that we seek to develop and improve.]

Target text by B6:

Pour ce qui est des exigences de la loi sur les structures, nous avons tout fait pour nous assurer que toutes les municipalités respectent les délais, délais qui leur demandent de se reconstituer 14 jours après la publication des résultats de l'élection par le Ministre de COGTA. Alors que nous faisons de notre mieux pour faciliter une transition souple, nous ne sous-estimons pas les défis qui pourraient se présenter dans le futur. Nous sommes sûrs que les partis vont continuer à travailler ensemble pour éviter les peurs politiques et les pièges qui pourraient paralyser les municipalités et mettre à mal la fourniture des services. Personne ne devrait jeter l'éponge, parce que ce sont les vies de nos peuples que nous voulons améliorer.

Back translation of B6's output:

[As regards the requirements of the Structures Act, we have done our utmost to ensure that all municipalities meet the deadlines, which require them to reconstitute within 14 days of the publication of the election results by the Minister of COGTA. While we are doing our best to facilitate a smooth transition, we do not underestimate the challenges that may arise in the future. We are confident that the parties will continue to work together to avoid political fears and pitfalls that could paralyse municipalities and undermine service delivery. No one should give up, because it is the lives of our people that we want to improve.]

The analysis in this section clearly shows that Group B participants performed much better in interpreting this paragraph than participants of the experimental group. Very few instances of inaccuracy and incompleteness were observed. This analysis corroborates fully the results of the assessment by the evaluator and largely points to the fact that accent of the original speaker must have impacted the interpreters' performance.

4.4 Analysis of responses to the questionnaire

It is important to note from the outset the discrepancy between the number of participants who took part in the interpreting experiment and those who filled in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). A total of 18 interpreters were requested to participate in the study by receiving both the recorded speech to be interpreted and the Google Form link for the online questionnaire. Although it was clearly indicated that the two exercises were linked and that they had to carry out the interpretation experiment before completing the questionnaire, only 13 interpreters did take the experiment while 17 filled in the online questionnaire. However, for the sake of credibility, the data from each source is analysed separately as collected. In this section, only the data from the questionnaire is processed as collected, with the assumption that those who informed the questionnaire had at least listened to the speech, either original or transcribed.

4.4.1 Participants' profiles

All the 17 participants (100%) indicated that they were professional interpreters, six (35.3%) of them had over 20 years of experience, four (23.5%) had between 16 and 20 years, five (23.5%) had between 11 and 15 years of experience in the interpreting profession. Concerning their level of education, 13 participants (76.5%) were holders

of a Master's degree, and two (11.8%) had a PhD. High level of education combined with long years of experience could be considered as a guarantee of competence for interpreters.

Table 5: Years of experience as a professional interpreter

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent (%)
1 – 5	1	5.9
11 – 15	5	29.4
16 – 20	4	23.5
6 – 10	1	5.9
Over 20 years	6	35.3
	17	100.0

Table 6: Level of education of the respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent (%)
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	1	5.9
Honour's Degree/Post-graduate degree	1	5.9
Master's degree or equivalent	13	76.5
PhD.	2	11.8
	17	100.0

4.4.2 Participants' perception of accents in the speeches

Concerning accents in both the original and transcribed speeches, most of the participants (47.1%) who answered the questionnaire indicated having little experience (0-5 years) interpreting BSAE accent, while 29.4% of them said they had 15-20 years of experience dealing with the accent. Moreover, 23.5% of the participants indicated that the speaker's accent was very familiar to them, while 41.2% said the speaker's accent was quite familiar. This is in stark contrast with the 29.4% who indicated earlier having a long experience in interpreting BSAE accent. This could be explained by the fact that the same questionnaire was administered to both groups. It is likely, therefore, that these figures concern all participants of the control group in addition to the 29.4%

of Group A participants who had experience in interpreting BSAE accent. Another explanation could be that those participants who lived in South Africa, though being familiar with everyday BSAE accent, were not necessarily involved in interpreting this accent in conferences. This could be why some of them in the experimental group did not perform so well – A5 scored 25% and A6 50% only.

Table 7: Years of experience in interpreting BSAE

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent (%)
0 - 5 years	8	47.1
11 - 15 years	2	11.8
15 - 20 years	5	29.4
6 - 10 years	2	11.8
	17	100.0

Table 8: Extent of familiarity with the speaker's accent

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent (%)
Completely new	1	5.8
Quite familiar	7	41.2
Unfamiliar	5	29.4
Very familiar	4	23.5
	17	100.0

Moreover, respondents were requested to rate their understanding of the speaker's speech in general on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being very easy and 10 very difficult. Again, the question was addressed indiscriminately to participants of both groups. According to the responses obtained, the results show that eight of the 17 respondents rated the speech as difficult to understand, with their responses ranging from 6 to 10.

Table 9: Level of difficulty understanding the speech

Level of difficulty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	2	1	4	1	1	1	4	2	0	1
Percentage (%)	11.8	5.9	23.5	5.9	5.9	5.9	23.5	11.8	0	5.9

In a bid to further investigate the impact that the speaker's accent may have had on the performance of the respondents, the researcher asked participants to describe their level of understanding of the speaker's accent on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 10 (very difficult). It is surprising to note that the responses of nine participants were situated between 1 and 3, meaning understanding the speaker was easy to them. However, when broken down, one realises that these nine responses were likely those of three of the four participants of the experimental group who lived in South Africa and to whom BSAE accent was very familiar, and of the six participants of the control group. Only four respondents indicated that the speaker's accent was difficult to understand, their responses ranging from 7 to 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. The four respondents very likely include the three participants of the experimental group who lived out of South Africa and who must have struggled to understand the speaker due to his accent.

Likewise, four participants (23.5%) declared that the speaker's accent strongly affected their performance, while eight participants (47.1%) said their output was moderately affected by the accent.

Table 10: The extent to which the speaker's accent affected respondents' output

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent (%)
Moderately	8	47.1
Not at all	2	11.8
Slightly	3	17.6
Strongly	4	23.5
	17	100.0

Furthermore, when asked to name all the difficulties encountered while interpreting the speaker, five respondents (33.3%) mentioned the speaker's accent, while 80% cited information density, including numbers and proper nouns). Interestingly, one respondent said having encountered no difficulties, while three participants indicated that all suggested difficulties constituted a challenge to them, including speech speed, information density, sound quality, and speaker's accent.

Table 11: General difficulties encountered while interpreting the speaker

Variables likely to affect interpreter's output	Frequency	Percent (%)
Speech speed	7	46.7
Information density (numbers, proper nouns, etc.	12	80
Sound quality	5	33.3
Speaker's accent	5	33.3
None of the above	1	6.7
All the above	3	20

Digging a little deeper into the determining factors of accent, namely phonemics and prosody, the researcher asked participants which elements of these two factors were most affected by the speaker's accent. Phonology under phonemics was rated by 57.1% of the respondents as being the most affected, while intonation and rhythm were mentioned in the same proportion (57.1%) under prosody. One respondent specified that the speaker "lacked phonemic awareness and fluency," one said the speech "lacked intonation and stress," while another indicated that he/she "had to focus more to get the meaning out of the speech."

Table 12: The extent to which PHONEMICS affected the speaker's accent

Phonemics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Phonology	5	35.7
Syntax	5	35.7
Morphology	3	21.4
Semantics	8	57.1

Table 13: The extent to which PROSODY affected the speaker's accent

Prosody	Frequency	Percent (%)
Intonation	8	57.1
Word stress	7	50
Sentence stress	3	21.4
Rhythm	8	57.1

When finally asked whether they would have performed better if they were to interpret the same speech read with a neutral accent, 86.7% of participants indicated they certainly would, 6.7% said they would not, and another 6.7% said they did not know.

4.5 Strategies applied by participants

Strategies in simultaneous interpreting are, according to Kalina (2015), “potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (Kalina, 2015, p. 402). In the same line, Kohn, K., & Kalina, S. (1996), paraphrased by Koumba (2014), consider strategies in simultaneous interpreting as techniques used by interpreters to overcome challenges emanating from the interpreting exercise, including the fact that the interpreter enjoys no semantic autonomy. So, the interpreter uses strategies as a result of his/her cognitive effort to achieve the expected communication during the processing phase of interpreting (Koumba, 2014, p. 64). Pöchhacker (2011) upholds that while a number of strategies have been described concerning specific processing challenges, such as, fast speed delivery rate and difference in structures between the source and target languages, no strategy has proven effective in coping with accent, which is the result of phonemic and prosodic deviations. However, some strategies applied to cope with an unusual accent may fall under what Pöchhacker (2004) earlier referred to as process-oriented or source-text-related strategies, as opposed to product-oriented strategies, were used by participants in this study.

Transcoding, which involves word-for-word translation, was used by some participants as seen above in the analysis of an excerpt. Kalina (1995) recommends this strategy in “rendering numbers, names, and lists of items. It is an emergency strategy if the interpreter fails to fully understand the source text and relies on its surface structure rather than semantic content” (Kalina, 2015, p. 403).

Reformulation was also mentioned by respondents as one of the strategies they applied to overcome challenges encountered when interpreting the speech. According to Kalina (1995), reformulation may be done by “replacing an element by a general one, paraphrasing, calque... or reconstructing a segment from context.” Some participants in this study even went to the extent of applying “last resort tactics” by omitting whole segments (Kalina, 2015, p. 404).

Other comprehension or source-text related strategies, including **ear-voice span** (also referred to as time lag), were used and mentioned by respondents. Without naming it, one respondent indicated that they had “to stop and listen before interpreting.” Another one called it a “slight ‘recul’ to wait for him [the speaker] to finish a thought or sentence” before interpreting. Some said they resorted to “**guessing**” the meaning from the context, while others practiced “**lip reading**” to make sense of utterances. **Segmentation** or sentence spitting was also used, whereby “long speech segments are summarised and rendered in more concise wording, often by means of generalization and deletion operations” (Kalina, 2015, p. 405).

4.6 Findings and conclusions

4.6.1 Findings

The data analysed in this section was collected through an online questionnaire and an evaluation of the results from an interpreting experiment where participants interpreted a video recorded speech by the former Premier of Kwazulu Natal Province in South Africa, Mr. Sihle Zikalala.

Globally, a comparative approach was used to analyse the data collected. A qualitative analysis of the interpretation outputs by participants was carried out at two levels. First, the analysis of the evaluator’s assessment of the entire speech excerpt revealed that participants of the control group, who interpreted the transcribed speech with a neutral or RP accent, performed much better than participants of the experimental group. According to the evaluator’s assessment report, two of the six participants of the control group exceeded expectations with a general score of 90% on both accuracy and completeness criteria. Three participants met expectations with scores of 70% for the first two and 85% the third participants, respectively. On the other hand, according to the considering accuracy and completeness criteria, only three participants of the seven interpreters who participated in the study in the experimental group met expectations with 70%, 75% and 77%, respectively. Two participants’ performance was below expectations with 50% and 55%, respectively, while the other two performed very poorly with only 25% each. Based on these results, one can rightly conclude that the accent of the speaker had an impact on the performance of the interpreting participants.

Furthermore, statistics showed that of the three participants who met expectations in

the experimental group, one was based out of South Africa; and of the two participants who scored the lowest, one was based in South Africa and the other worked from abroad. Likewise, the two participants who scored below expectations with 50% and 55%, respectively, lived one in South Africa and the other, abroad. It can, therefore, be concluded that the geographical location and exposure to the BSAE accent did not have much impact on the performance of the participants. This can be explained by RSI, which makes it possible nowadays to interpret a wide variety of accents from any location in the world.

The second level of analysis of the participants' output was carried out on the transcription of a paragraph, which was considered as containing major pronunciation challenges. The results once again showed that in many cases, participants of the control group had fewer instances of inaccurate or incomplete transfer of meaning in their interpretation of the sample paragraph analysed. It was also observed that participants in either group, be they residents in South Africa or professionals working in other parts of the continent, all faced challenges other than accent, such as, speed and information density. The only area where geographical location was an advantage to participants living in South Africa was the rendering of proper nouns and names of institutions proper to South Africa.

Regarding strategies applied to overcome or mitigate the challenges posed by the speech, including accent, participants mentioned transcoding, reformulation, ear-voice span, guessing, lip-reading and segmentation.

The evaluation rubric for all participants' outputs, the targeted analysis of a sample paragraph interpretation by participants, and the online survey results all point to the fact that the speaker's accent had a significant impact on the interpreters' performance. However, it was not clearly established that exposure to BSAE accent helped participants who lived in South Africa perform better than those from abroad. In fact, participants of both categories encountered the same challenges, except for proper nouns and names. Moreover, some participants from abroad performed as well or even better than some who lived in South Africa, probably because with the development of RSI, interpreters get more and more exposed to a variety of accents. Therefore, coping well with an accent becomes more of a personal endeavour, acquired skills, and

interpreter competence, regardless of one's country or city of residence, and depends on the capacity of the interpreter to apply coping strategies, some of which were recommended by participants in this study.

4.6.2 Conclusions

The data analysis was carried out at three levels. First, the results of the interpreting experiment assessment by an evaluator were analysed using accuracy and completeness criteria. Second, an excerpt of the speaker's speech was transcribed in a paragraph and the output transcribed for each participant of both the experimental and control groups. The rendered interpretation outputs were analysed using the same accuracy and completeness criteria and compared with the results from the evaluator's report. Third, the responses collected from participants through the questionnaire were analysed to shed light on the participants' perception of the speeches, both the speech delivered by the original speaker and the version transcribed and delivered with a neutral British accent.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This last section of the study focuses on the limitations of the study, its replicability, recommendations, and the general conclusion.

5.1 Study limitations

Participants sample size

The population validity of the study may be questioned due to the size of the sample: 13 participants who were selected randomly from the target population. It could be argued that the findings of the study with such a limited sample would hardly be generalised as an accurate representation of the population of interpreters. However, the option of having professional interpreters as participants in the study, knowing that not many interpreters will accept to participate in such an experiment, aimed at ensuring population validity even with a limited number of participants. It is worth mentioning that 18 interpreters were contacted individually; first on the phone, then via email once they had accepted to participate. However, 17 of them responded to the online survey, which normally was subject to participation in the experiment; and only 13 eventually participated in the experiment.

Data collection

To collect secondary data, the same questionnaire was administered to both the experimental group and the control group, and both tools were sent to participants at the same time – which is why some respondents only filled out the questionnaire without interpreting the recorded video. This made data analysis difficult and may render the credibility of the findings questionable. It would have been ideal to design one distinct questionnaire for each group, knowing that the control group did not need to answer questions about the speaker's accent, which after all was standard. Also, to prevent participants from responding to the questionnaire without taking the experiment, the questionnaire should have been administered only to those who participated in the experiment.

Moreover, like any experimental interpreting research, this study may be criticised for conducting the experiment in an environment that is not typical to the normal

interpreting work environment, thus lacking ‘ecological validity’ (Bartłomiejczyk, 2013, p. 2). The researcher cannot guarantee that participants did not listen to the speech more than once before interpreting. If they did, then the results would lack credibility; if they did not, then the conditions would be similar to those of remote RSI.

5.2 Study replicability and recommendations

The challenges posed by BSAE accent are the same for any accent varieties in any language when spoken by non-native speakers. In the context of South Africa, what has been said about BSAE accent is applicable to the other prominent accents in the country, including Afrikaans English, Cape English accent, and South African Indian English, according to the taxonomy of Lanham (1996). This can be extended to other accents in Africa, for example, the Arabic English and the West African English accents.

Interpreting an unfamiliar accent always requires additional mental effort for listening comprehension, which may end up affecting the entire interpreting process and, ultimately, the output quality. As Tieber (2017) puts it, “The additional cognitive capacities necessary for this process can, in turn, lead to mental overload during subsequent phases, which can ultimately result in inferior quality of target speech. Consequently, conference interpreters are more likely to feel dissatisfied when working with non-native speakers of English” (Tieber, 2017, p. 43).

In addition to transcoding, reformulation, ear-voice span, guessing, lip-reading and segmentation recommended above as some of the coping strategies to adopt when facing an unusual and difficult accent, participants also formulated a number of recommendations in the online survey. These include good preparation of the subject matter before the meeting by listening to speeches in different accents likely to be used by the participants in the meeting in order to become familiar with these accents; dedicating more effort to listening; focusing more on the content of the message of the speaker than on his accent and words; adopting maximum concentration; and contextualizing the speech to infer the speaker’s message.

Hopefully, the findings and the recommendations of this study will help to further

research and enrich existing literature on accent in interpreting practice, namely, through the strategies used by interpreters to mitigate the challenges posed by accent and its impact on the quality of interpretation.

5.3 Conclusion

A key variable likely to affect listening comprehension in the interpreting process is the speaker's accent. This study has investigated the impact that accent of a BASE speaker could have on the quality of interpretation. This was done through a quasi-experiment using an empirical study in which mixed-methods research was used to collect and analyse data. 13 professional freelance interpreters with diverse profiles participated in the study by interpreting online a recorded speech by a Black South African speaker with a pronounced accent, and by completing an online survey on their perception of the interpreted speech. The outputs were assessed and rated by an evaluator, and the results were analysed together with the survey responses. The findings of a comparative analysis confirmed the research hypothesis that an unfamiliar speaker's accent affects the quality of interpreting. It was also found that familiarity with an accent in the era of technologies of information and communication is not dependent on the geographical location of the interpreter, but on their level of exposure to a given accent. In addition to the strategies applied by participants in this study to cope with speaker accent (among other challenges encountered by participants), preparation for a conference was strongly recommended to mitigate the impact that any unusual accent, not only BSAE, may have on the performance of the interpreter.

In conclusion, it is agreeable with Mazzetti (1999) that source speech deviations in the form of “unfamiliar accent of the speaker” indeed affect listening comprehension capacities as well as the quality of interpretation and constitutes, for the interpreter, “the most stressful work-related factor” (Mazzetti, 1999, p. 127).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics 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-TRA-5

PROJECT TITLE

THE IMPACT OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN
ENGLISH SPEAKER'S ACCENT ON THE QUALITY
OF INTERPRETATION

INVESTIGATOR

Constantin Désiré Lebogo

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Translation Studies

DATE CONSIDERED

19 August 2022

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved

RISK LEVEL

Minimal risk

EXPIRY DATE

19 August 2023

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE

22 August 2022

CHAIRPERSON Prof. Anette Horn

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. Horn".

cc: Supervisor : Dr Natasha Parkins-Maliko

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 procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

____/____/____2022____
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

Questionnaire – Tick the appropriate boxes

Instructions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate how Black South African English (BSAE) accent of a speaker affects the quality of interpretation by interpreters with little or no exposure to BSAE accent. In addition to identifying specific challenges faced by the interpreters when interpreting a speaker with a Black South African English accent, the study aims at determining the extent to which an accented BSAE speech affects the quality of interpretation. This questionnaire is to be completed by the interpreter after listening and interpreting an excerpt of a video recording of the Premier of Kwazulu Natal Province, South Africa.

(1) Are you a professional practicing interpreter? Yes ☐ No ☐

(2) If Yes to (1) above, please indicate the number of years of experience

1-5 years	☐
6-10 years	☐
11 –15 years	☐
16-20 years	☐

(3) How familiar was the speaker's accent to you?

Very familiar	☐
Quite familiar	☐
Unfamiliar	☐
Completely new	☐

(4) What is your experience in interpreting BSAE?

1-5 years	☐
6-10 years	☐

11-15 years

☐

16-20 years

☐

(5) On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 the highest) how would you rate your understanding of the speaker's speech?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(6) What difficulties did you encounter while interpreting the speaker? (Tick all that apply)

Speech speed

☐

Information density (numbers, proper nouns, etc.)

☐

Sound quality

☐

Speaker's accent

☐

None of the above

☐

All of the above

☐

Other ☐ (Please state)

(7) If accent was one of the challenges encountered, what level of speech was the most affected by the speaker's accent? (Tick the most applicable box)

Phonemes (words)

☐

Prosody (syntax)

☐

Both equally

☐

Other ☐ (Please state)

(8) To what extent did the speaker's accent affect your output?

Strongly	☐
Averagely	☐
Slightly	☐
Not at all	☐

(9) What strategies did you use during your interpretation to mitigate the challenges posed by the speaker's accent?

.....

.....

.....

.....

(10) What would you recommend as a solution to the issue of interpreting an unfamiliar accent?

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 3: information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Constantin Désiré Lebogo and I am a Masters student in Interpreting at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating “*The impact of Black South African English speaker’s accent on the quality of interpretation*” under the supervision of Dr Natasha Parkins-Maliko. The aim of this research project is to find out how an accented Black South African English speech can affect interpretation output or interpreter performance.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to audio record yourself, using a digital device, while interpreting a video-recorded speech by a Black South African high profile public figure. The speech will be about 10 minutes long, but the whole activity may take around 30 minutes. You will be requested to send to me via email your recording, which will be stored in my personal computer and communicated anonymously to two evaluators for the purpose of the study. The recording will be deleted after one year following completion of the study. I would also like you to complete a questionnaire on the challenges you would have encountered in the process of interpreting, and the techniques and strategies used to overcome such challenges, in addition to providing information on your professional experience. This other activity will take approximately 15 minutes.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project. You will not receive any direct benefits for your participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The recording and the questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, you may opt to end your participation.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report, and if you wish to receive a summary thereof, I will be happy to send it to you. The data collected from this research project will be stored in my personal computer and will be kept for one year following completion of the study. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this 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,
Constantin Désiré Lebogo

Researcher:

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83 727 9067

Supervisor:

Dr Natasha Parkins-Maliko, E-mail address: natasha.parkins-maliko@wits.ac.za, Tel.:
011717 4241

Appendix 4: Participant's consent form

Title of project: ***The impact of Black South African English speaker's accent on the quality of interpretation***

Name of researcher: **Constantin Désiré Lebogo**

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 agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that my interpretation of the audio or video-recorded speech presented to me by the researcher may be audio recorded and used anonymously for the purpose of this research, or in other academic works, subject to obtaining a relevant ethics clearance.	YES	NO
--	-----	----

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO
---	-----	----

..... (signature of participant)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

..... (signature of researcher)

..... (name of person seeking consent)

..... (date)

Appendix 5: Permission letter to use APRM official database of interpreters



Ref: APRM/COS/UW/062022/1000bm

15 June 2022

Mr. Constantin Désiré Lebogo,
Faculty of Humanities,
School of Literature, Language and
Media, University of the
Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Dear Mr. Lebogo,

**RE: PERMISSION TO USE THE APRM OFFICIAL DATABASE OF FREELANCE INTERPRETERS FOR
ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

Following your letter dated April 10 2022, requesting for permission to use the African Peer Review Mechanism's (APRM) official database of freelance interpreters for academic purposes, I write to inform you that authority has been granted within the jurisdiction of APRM. You are required to strictly adhere to the regulations stated below:

- The study shall be under APRM code of ethics regulations;
- Data collected will be used strictly for academic purposes only.

The continued permission to access this database shall only be sustained subject to fulfilling the requirements stated above.

Sincerely,

**Adv. Batlokoa
MAKONGA**
Chief of Staff,
APRM Continental Secretariat

cc. - Conference Management Unit- APRM Secretariat
- Human Resources Unit- APRM Secretariat

Appendix 6: Transcription of source speech

Transcription of video excerpt of KZN Premier Sihle Zikalala media briefing

Members of the media,

Government officials who are with us,

Colleagues and compatriots who are following us on the social media,

Thank you very much for joining this virtual media briefing, which affords us the opportunity to speak on many recent developments in the province.

It is in the interest of our society and an indication of our commitment to clean, accountable and transparent government that we speak openly and transparently on all matters of provincial importance.

We wish to commence by expressing our gratitude to all people of Kwazulu Natal for the recent Local Government Elections, which were largely held in a climate of peace, tolerance and acceptance of each other's right to campaign and to vote freely.

While we are concerned about the number of people who chose not to participate in these elections, we are nevertheless pleased that our society seems to be coming of age. It is indeed a sign of maturing of our democratic order, and a mark of social progress, that our elections no longer have many incidents of political violence. It is certainly something that we need to build on, and consolidate in the march forward as a country and as a people of Kwazulu Natal. Even in the few incidents where political leaders were assassinated ahead of the election, we remain very committed and confident that the law will indeed take its full course, because even one murder is just one too many. That is why we say, we will continue to follow and ensure that the law takes its full course.

Regarding the outcomes of the elections themselves, the people of Kwazulu Natal have spoken and declared that there should be no outright winner.

This is a clear message that they want political parties to work together through the democratic process of co-governing Kwazulu Natal.

Now that elections are behind us, we would like to appeal to all political parties to be united and work together. We must never lose sight of the fact that we have a province to develop, a country to grow. This is something that no political party can achieve in isolation from the rest of the society. Since last week Monday's elections, we have noted a few unpleasant scenes in which certain people were seen toy-toying, and others demanding keys to certain buildings. Others were engaging in other forms of provocation. These were accompanied by insults hurled at municipal officials, who are public servants and not politicians. We want to remind all citizens that public servants are employed in line with relevant legislations governing employment in South Africa, including the Labour Relations Act. Therefore, they must be allowed to discharge their duties without any interference or victimization. Any practices to the contrary may be reported to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, so that these incidents can be dealt with immediately.

We live in a constitutional democracy, which is underpinned by the rule of law. The constitution, research and demand that political transition must always take place in a manner that is smooth, democratic and procedural. While it is natural for people to want to celebrate victory, none must do so by infringing on the rights of others and at the risk of polarizing other sections of our society.

Elections are behind us now; it is time for us to build unity and to recharge the institutions that are necessary for us to serve the communities better. We therefore take this opportunity to update the public on timelines for reconstitution of councils. As the province of Kwazulu Natal, we have 21 municipalities that must be co-governed by different political parties, as

the relevant democratic processes to achieve this transition are currently underway.

We want to emphasize that until these processes have been concluded, and new councils and councillors are sworn in, all currently constituted structures remain in place. Our Constitution does not allow for a vacuum and requires a smooth democratic hand-over from one administration to the next. Today, the Minister of COGTA, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma will publish the 2021 Local Government Elections results in the Government Gazette. As required by the Constitution, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, under MEC Hlomuka, has set up a programme and a support plan to ensure that all councils are reconstituted as required by the Constitution. In this regard, COGTA will work with all affected municipalities to reconstitute the councils and facilitate the election of office bearers. As per the requirement of the Municipal Structures Act, we have a plan in place to ensure that all municipalities meet the legal deadline, which requires them to reconstitute themselves within 14 days after the Gazetting of the election results by the Minister of COGTA. While we plan to do our best to support and facilitate a smooth transition, we are by no means underestimating the challenges that may arise in the hung municipalities. We trust that parties will continue to persuade each other to avoid political fears and tricks that may end up paralyzing municipalities and hamper the delivery of services. No one should drop the baton, for it is the very same lives of our people which we seek to develop and improve.

As elected representatives we need to waste no time in ensuring that we finalize this process within the set timeframe. COGTA has also advised that immediately after elections, together with SALGA, they will conduct a councillor's meeting and induction training programme. This is intended to capacitate councillors with the understanding of their leadership role,

legislation which is applicable to local government, key municipal processes, and the key concepts such as district development, models and community-centred service delivery.

We have noted with absolute dismay people spreading false claims that our country's national lockdown was downgraded only to allow for the elections to take place, and that after elections Government will bring back the hard lockdown. What is even more worrying is that even educated members of society, who must know better, were also making these claims. As far as we are concerned, these are just baseless allegations. Even though our COVID-19 numbers are fluctuating, there is nothing that suggests that there will soon be a hard lockdown. The only time that this can happen is when there is a sudden large increase in the number of confirmed cases. Decisions on coronavirus are informed by medical and science advice and figures. This is precisely why it is crucial for everyone to continue adhering to safety protocol, while ensuring that as many people as possible get vaccinated.

Maybe turning to the update on COVID-19 for this week, we are pleased and relieved that the rate of infections in our province remains relatively low. Although it keeps fluctuating up and down, the number of confirmed cases currently stands at 515 892. Sadly 14 770 people have lost their lives due to the pandemic. May their souls rest in peace!

Appendix 7: Evaluation rubric

Rating	Criteria/Description	Criteria/Description
	Accuracy	Completeness
5–Exceeds expectation on delivery (90-100)	- Interprets the content and intent of the source message accurately and transfers all elements of meaning. - Demonstrates ability to skilfully resolve all meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains all main topics and details from the source text with no unjustified omissions.
4–Meets expectations (80-89)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message almost accurately and transfers most elements of meaning. - Mostly demonstrates ability to resolve most meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains most topics and details from the source text with a few instances of minor unjustified omissions.
3–Approaches expectations (70-79)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with an average level of accuracy, leaving out some minor and/or major elements of meaning. - Demonstrates some ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Several topics and minor and/or major details from the source text are omitted from the interpretation.
2–Below expectations (60-69)	- Interprets the content and intent of the message with little accuracy, leaving out most elements of. - Demonstrates limited ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Interpretation contains frequent instances of unjustified minor and/or major omissions.
1–Unsatisfactory (50-59)	- No or very limited accuracy in the interpretation of content and intent of the message; almost all elements of meaning in are omitted. - No demonstrated ability to resolve meaning transfer problems.	Excessive instances of unjustified omissions of main topics and important details are omitted.