

**DIRECTIONALITY AND TEXT TYPOLOGY IN  
ENGLISH-ARABIC-ENGLISH SIMULTANEOUS  
INTERPRETING: IMPACT ON STRATEGIC  
PERFORMANCE**

by

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CS: Communication Strategy

SISs: Simultaneous Interpretation strategies

SI: Simultaneous Interpretation

AS: Achievement Strategy

RS: Reduction Strategy

TT.P: Text Type (Political Text)

TT.A: stands for text type (Academic Text)

TT.B: Text Type (Business Text)

A-B: Interpreting Direction from Arabic into English

B-A: Interpreting Direction from English into Arabic

A-B-A: Interpreting in both directions from Arabic into English & from English into Arabic

R: Rater

P. Professor

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Towards An Inclusive Mould of Translation and Interpretation Requisite Competence. 1st Student-led Symposium USM, Oct, 2010
- Professional Consecutive vs. Simultaneous Interpreters' Required Competence Catalogue. AWEJ Volume.4 Number.1, 2013. pp. 161 – 174. Omar Ali Fraihat & Tengku Sepora Binti Tengku Mahadi, School of Languages, Literacies & Translation Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia
- Co investigator of AMY MAHAN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM on the Impact of Information and Communication Technology on the Public. This research project investigated the impact of social and economic Cybercafés on the Jordanian community (<http://www.upf.edu/amymahan/fellowshipsawarded/>). This project was based on a competition in developing countries, as a Co investigator I won that award. The research lasted for 18 months. MIT Press. <http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/public-access-ict-across-cultures>

**KEARAHAN DAN TIPOLOGI TEKS DALAM MENGINTERPRETASI  
SECARA SPONTAN BAHASA INGGERIS – BAHASA ARAB: IMPAK  
TERHADAP PRESTASI STRATEGIK.**

**ABSTRAK**

Penyelidikan ini mengkaji impak daripada tipologi teks terhadap prestasi strategi interpreter dalam kedua-dua arah interpretasi bahasa Arab- bahasa Inggeris – bahasa Arab. Bagi mendapatkan pengertian yang mendalam tentang masalah sebenar yang dihadapi oleh para pelajar interpretasi, dan juga untuk meneroka protokol penyelesaian masalah mereka, maka suatu kaedah jujukan bercampur (kuasi-kual) disesuaikan di samping produk bercampur dan pendekatan yang berorientasikan proses. Dapatan daripada koleksi data bersepadu dan analisis menunjukkan bahawa kebiasaan atau formaliti dengan jenis teks dapat diinterpretasi sebagai suatu faktor yang mempengaruhi prestasi strategik interpreter (penggunaan dan pilihan strategi tertentu). Di samping itu, ditemui bahawa kebiasaan dengan jenis teks juga mempunyai impak terhadap prestasi kearahan interpreter. Analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa terdapat impak yang jelas daripada tipologi teks terhadap prestasi strategik peserta. Kekerapan strategi pencapaian (achievement strategies, AS) didapati amat tinggi apabila mereka menginterpretasi daripada bahasa Arab ke bahasa Inggeris dalam bidang politik (78.97%) dan akademik (71.11%) jika dibandingkan dengan teks perniagaan, yang skor frekuensi AS adalah amat rendah (64.24). Analisis daripada proses interpretasi menunjukkan bahawa ketidakbiasaan dengan bidang perniagaan mungkin satu daripada alasan bagi permasalahan ini. Alasan lain yang mungkin adalah bahawa pelajar interpretasi dilatih lebih banyak dalam teks politik berbanding dengan teks lain. Namun demikian, peratusan frekuensi AS masih lagi tinggi daripada strategi pengurangan (reduction strategy, RS). Keadaan ini membuktikan bahawa penguasaan bahasa ibunda menyebabkan

mereka mengambil risiko dengan menggunakan strategi yang bersesuaian dan menangani masalah komunikasi dalam bahasa Arab dengan cara yang berbeza

**DIRECTIONALITY AND TEXT TYPOLOGY IN ENGLISH-ARABIC-  
ENGLISH SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING: IMPACT ON STRATEGIC  
PERFORMANCE**

**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the impact of text typology on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance in both interpreting directions Arabic-English-Arabic. To provide deeper insight into the actual problems encountered by the graduate interpretation students and to explore their problem solving protocol, the mixed sequential method (quan-Qual) was adopted along with the mixed product and process-oriented approach. Findings of this integrated data collection and analysis showed that the familiarity with the text type being interpreted plays an influential factor on interpreters' strategic performance (use and choice of certain strategies). In addition, it was uncovered that the familiarity with the text type also has impact on the directionality performance of interpreters. The quantitative analysis showed that a clear impact of text typology on participants' strategic performance was noted. The frequencies of achievement strategies (ASs) were apparently higher when they were interpreting Arabic into English in the political (78.97%) and academic (71.11%) field compared to the business text which scored lower frequency of ASs (64.24). Analysis of the interpreting processes showed that unfamiliarity with the business field might be a reason for this divergence. Another possible reason is that interpretation students were trained more in the political texts compared to others. However, the percentages of ASs frequencies are still higher from the reduction

strategies (RSs). This provides evidence that their control of their native language made adopt ASs and fix the encountered communicative problems in the source texts (Arabic) with a varying degree among them.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the past few decades, the world has witnessed sweeping transformations in all aspects and repertoires of our life as a consequence of globalization and advancing technologies, particularly, with the advent of internet progress which is considered to be the globe's gate that facilitates exchange of information influx through transnational communities. These changes gave rise to novel disciplines and methodologies on social, academic, and urbanization of mankind. Accordingly, interpretation studies as a growing discipline must keep up with today's pace of time by developing and formulating diachronic theories and approaches that match these advances. Simultaneous interpretation (SI) scholars were aware of these shifts and started to advance new tactics in dealing with SI practical, theoretical, and diachronic problems.

SI studies have been recently mushrooming as an interdisciplinary field of study which interacts with various disciplines, just to name a few, history, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy. SI can be defined as a cognitive process of converting the intended message in the source language (SL) into its equivalents (meaning) in the target language (TL) instantly. SI, as the oral version of translation, has gained much focus in our contemporaneous time; nonetheless, it is still lacking and demanding in-depth research especially in investigating target language (TL) communication problems and their potential solutions. Throughout the course of SI, simultaneous interpreters may come across TL communication difficulties as a result of any imperfect knowledge. When encountered with such interpreting difficulties, they may abandon transmitting particular language items, describe or paraphrase, use paralinguistic features or gestures to convey meaning, translate literally, use new

language items (word coinage) which are not existent in the TL, or insert a language item from their native language by applying second language phonology to first/native language lexical items to achieve their communicative goals. Consequently, they must be more conscious about how to confront these difficulties in order not for TL communication to break down.

Simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance is of crucial importance, since it reflects the interpreters' aptitude, consciousness, as well as problem solving protocol in dealing with TL communication difficulties. This area of study is still relatively underrepresented by interpretation scholars, more particularly, with reference to English-Arabic-English SI. It can be observed that when simultaneous interpreters face TL communication problems, they unwittingly embark on the action of maneuvering around the communication problems encountered in an attempt to fulfill their TL communicative goals. The study of strategies in TL communication encompasses a wide range of strategies which includes both reduction strategies (RSs), in which the simultaneous interpreter reduces his/her communicative goal by ignoring and abandoning the message in the TL.

The use of these strategies is considered to be unsuccessful as the intended message might be ignored and communication may break down (Al-Khanji, El-Shiyab, and Hussein, 2000). In achievement strategies (ASs), on the contrary, simultaneous interpreters employ all available means in order to reach their TL communicative goals. Achievement strategies involve, for instance, approximation and paraphrase. Consequently, it is believed that the successful use of these strategies helps simultaneous interpreters to overcome their communication problems in the TL and keep communication channels open (Farech and Kasper, 1983a; Al-Khanji et al. 2000).

It is of great significance to increase our knowledge of how Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors utilize these strategies in simultaneous interpreting to solve their TL communication difficulties while transmitting the intended message in the TL by determining how, which, and why certain strategies are employed and selected. Having obtained such knowledge, we may be able to help our interpretation majors to be more conscious of the strategies they are employing and selecting, subsequently, they can embark on this profession more effectively.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

### **1.1.1 Strategic Competence and SI Strategic Performance**

For simultaneous interpreters as non-native language speakers to communicate effectively in the TL, they must be competent enough in the working languages. This requires several types of competences. The generative grammarian Noam Chomsky (1965, 4) in his linguistic theory states that communication competence is "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language", Chomsky made his influential distinction between competence and performance by revealing that performance is "the actual use of language in concrete situations". He was the first linguist who overtly linked behavior to communication performance. Thus, he theorized the mentalistic phenomenon that "linguistic theory is mentalistic, since it is concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behavior". (Chomsky, 1965, 4). In the past few decades, some linguists identified a number of competences. In Canale and Swain's view (1980) communication competence can be classified into (1) grammatical competence (language learners' knowledge of syntax, phonology, semantics and morphology), (2) pragmatic and discursal competence, (3) Strategic competence which means the communicator's ability to employ CSs to make up for communication breakdowns in L2 (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Strategic competence may include unconscious and/or conscious, verbal and/or non-verbal individual processes used to overcome communication difficulties encountered during the translation process. This fundamental competence is also used in making decisions and correcting occasional deficiencies in all other sub-competences (PACTE, 2000). Wagner and Firth (1997, p. 342) add that “CS is a very prominent element in speech production and therefore an important element in natural discourse”. Al-Khanji et al. (2000), on the other hand, assert the importance of raising the consciousness of interpreters about the vitality of using achievement strategies in simultaneous interpretation since they contribute to grasping the main plots in an argument.

To perform the difficult cognitive and linguistic operation in SI, interpreters' mental gymnastics required will undeniably make interpreters resort to certain lexical or synthetic strategies, such as the use of *compensatory strategies* to transcend TL communication difficulties in the course of interpretation (Al-Khanji et al. 2000). However, the reviewed literature proves that it was Faerch and Kasper (1980) who were the first psycholinguists to term the concept "compensatory strategies" for L2 communication problems in the TL. Faerch and Kasper (1980, 1983a) formulated their taxonomy by classifying it into two major sets: (1) Achievement strategies which include compensatory strategies and retrieval strategies; and (2) Reduction strategies which include formal reduction and functional reduction. Nonetheless, Al-Khanji et al. (2000) referred to the term compensatory strategies for both achievement and reduction strategies (p. 551). This might be attributed to their philosophy that compensatory strategies comprise a subset of CSs pertinent to SI.

SI is the process of rendering the intended message in the source text into its equivalent meaning in the TL simultaneously through the medium of verbal

communication. It includes a sender, a channel (medium), and a recipient. Thus, a simultaneous interpreter can be considered as a transitional point of contact between the two cultures/languages (Al Salman and Al Khanji, 2002).

Thus, simultaneous interpreters must bear in mind the significance of communicative competence effects in the working languages. Apparently, communication is the channel for transmitting the meaning between the working languages. Thus, communication strategies (CSs) which are the core of strategic competence are of crucial importance in the course of simultaneous interpreting especially when TL communication breakdowns arise due to any imperfect language knowledge or use. Communication in the wider sense refers to language use based on the assumption that better communication means better language understanding (Rababah, 2001). During the last two decades, increasing emphasis has been placed on interpreters' strategic competence and its role in dealing with communication difficulties. Strategic competence is vital in the problem solving practice in TL communication; therefore, it can be defined as the knowledge of CSs that can compensate for communication deficiencies by using verbal and non-verbal CSs (Richards and Schmidt, 2002).

Chang (2005) defined interpreters' use of strategies as "any goal-oriented, potentially conscious employment of tactics designed to overcome the processing problems interpreters encounter during simultaneous interpreting"(p. 6). Chang's definition is apparently inspired by Faerch and Kaspers' (1983a) definition of CSs "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal"(p. 36). This definition includes two basic steps to solve communication problems: (1) detecting a communication problem (consciousness), (2) reacting to solve this problem to attain

the communicative goal (plan). Distinctly, Richards and Rodgers (2002) strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that L2 users employ to fix communication hindrances. As a consequence, the use of strategies in SI plays a significant role in the remedy of simultaneous interpreters' communication difficulties in the TL. In addition, it is a strategic process whereby interpreters activate the linguistic and cultural schemata and employ SI strategies when they encounter communication difficulties so as to facilitate the flow of communication in the TL (Al-Khanji et al. 2000; Riccardi, 2005; Wang, 2009). Furthermore, strategic competence refers to the CSs that enable L2 communicators to overcome communication difficulties when encountered, so as to make the communicative channel flow as much as possible (Celce-Murcia et al. 2007). Harmonically and considerably, Angelelli (2009) argued that strategic competence of translators and interpreters includes the "ability to exercise conscious control over their linguistic, cultural, field, and instrumental knowledge (p.37)" to overcome TL performance difficulties. According to Angelelli (2009), this competence shows how translators and interpreters are successful and creative in finding solutions to the communication hindrances in the TL performance.

For the purposes of the current study, the use of strategies in TL communication will be investigated with reference to English-Arabic-English SI. Thus, the term simultaneous interpretation strategy (SIS) is defined as a strategy used by simultaneous interpreters in order to make up for any lack of knowledge while interpreting the message into the TL. These strategies reflect their strategic performance when they experience communication breakdowns in transmitting the message to the TL, as well as they provide insights into simultaneous interpreters' problem solving process, henceforth, the term simultaneous interpretation strategies

(SISs) will be used interchangeably to mean both communication strategies (CSs) and simultaneous interpretation strategies. In this piece of research and based on his observation, the researcher explored the TL communication difficulties of Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors while interpreting various text types (political, academic, and business), the strategies they employ to transcend these difficulties in these three different oral speeches, the reasons behind using certain strategies, as well as the influence of text typology (political, academic, and business) in both directions English-Arabic-English on their use and choice of strategies.

### **1.1.2 Text Typology (Subject-matter) and SI performance**

SI is a sensitive profession which requires simultaneous interpreters to master certain skills and competencies and to exert all efforts to keep abreast always of any development and change in certain fields. In the recent years, the moot point on the shackles that determine interpreters' performance between contextualists vs. cognitivists has become a point of a lively debate. Cognitivists assume that interpreters' performance can best be examined through the cognitive determinants (e.g. Gile, 1995, 1999; Al-Khanji et al. 2000; Chang, 2005). Contextualists, on the other hand, are inclined to accentuate that interpreters' performance can be more grounded and understood within the context itself (e.g. politics, economics, and so forth), rather than within cognitive effort modeling alone (Cronin, 2002 as cited in Pym, 2008; Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002; Pym, 2008; Kaprenov, 2008). This implies the importance of context subject matter (text typology) on interpreters' performance. Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002) hypothesized that the interpreting text type (subject matter of the SL) may have an impact on simultaneous interpreters' performance, namely, may affect their strategic performance in both directions of SI.

Hence, Al-Salman and Al-Khanji seem to be at the contextualists' camp. Rababah (2001) also claimed that "The nature and demand of the text are important factors in the choice of a particular strategy and its frequency" (p. 344).

This presented another debatable point whether interpreters are generalists (in all fields) or specialists (political interpreters, economic interpreters, and so forth). This issue perplexed some interpretation scholars who commented on this issue with caution. For instance, Nolan (2005) stated that most interpreters in general are of necessity generalists not specialists, since it is not possible to have a specialist interpreter in every field of knowledge, but rather he postulated that interpreters must master certain competences and skills, and then, promote their need to vocabulary and knowledge wealth in different fields. Besides, interpreters may also search to obtain the material subject matter or background prior interpretation. Similarly, Pym (2008) asserted that interpreters' expertise should incur the basics of many areas and they should be all set to interpret in numerous fields. Pym's view would seem to be very much in the contextual camp in the former debate (cognitivists vs. contextualists) and to be in generalist camp for the latter debate (generalists vs. specialists). In affirming the role of context (e.g. political discourse) in SI performance, Pym (2008) stated that:

Research on simultaneous interpreting continues to work from products (measuring quality without reference to context) and from models of processes (using whatever insights can be gained from neurology and cognitive science), mostly without reference to settings of any kind. (p. 85)

It is clear that Pym stressed the importance of contextual determinants (text type interpreting e.g. political, academic...) in the evaluation of SI performance. This may not counter cognitivists (e.g. Gile, 1995, 2009, Al-Khanji et al. 2000) who measure the performance quality of SI through measuring out the distribution of SI

efforts (for details see page 70), but rather balance the way performance should be evaluated. Consistent with the contextualists, Al-Khanji and Al-Salman (2002), alternately, postulated that text type of the material being interpreted is a significant variable in interpreters' strategic performance. For instance, an interpreter trained in linguistics may encounter communication difficulties when interpreting in politics, economics, and so forth. The aforementioned accounts may clarify the researcher's choice of text typology influence on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance as a main variable, more specifically, on their use and choice of certain strategies.

Other interpretation scholars have expressed similar attitudes, For instance, Gile (2005) proposed investigating the issue of interpreting directionality with reference to the interpreting text type (subject-matter). Correspondingly, Kapranov (2008) examined simultaneous interpreters' basic competences based on his three main stands that interpretation is an intricate cognitive problem solving activity, intricate bilingual meaning oriented verbal text, and finally interpreters' output accuracy and acceptability. Kapranov classified the knowledge of subject matter as a basic competence which he termed extra-linguistic competence. Thus, this also indicates that Kapranov laid especial emphasis on the role that the subject matter (extralinguistic competence) plays in interpreters' performance or output accuracy and acceptability as referred to by Kapranov himself. Therefore, it is hoped that the results of the present research will support or refute the contextualists' views (e.g. Cronin, 2002 as cited in Pym (2008); Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002; Pym, 2008, Kapranov, 2008) who argue and affirm the importance of context-text typology (subject matter) on interpreters' performance. Consistent with Al-Salman and Al-khanji (2002), Gile (2005) also stated that:

The issue of directionality is generally discussed in terms of language mastery only. However, when determining which interpreting direction is "best", it makes sense to refer to overall performance, which depends not only on language mastery, but also on familiarity with the topic. (p. 6)

This indicates that Gile is in line with Al-Salman and Al-khanji (2002). However, he further suggested investigating the issue of directionality impact on interpretation performance with reference to the familiarity with the text type (e.g. politics, business, and so forth) in the working languages (A & B). This may actually justify the reason for investigating the text type influence on interpreters' performance on both interpreting directions A-B-A. According to Gile (2005), an "A" language is the interpreters' NL and "B" is the TL or a language other than the interpreters' NL which interpreters have a good command over. This also aroused the researchers' interest to investigate the influence of text typology (e.g. politics, academic, and so forth) in both directions (English-Arabic-English) on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance. Gile's view may not contradict his previous views (Gile, 1995, 1999) towards the influence of cognitive operations on interpreters' performance, but it may rather balance this issue rightly.

Up to this point, it is worth pointing out that there are many types of contextual determinants due to the fact that context can be observed and detected in many different ways (Pym, 2008). However, our focus here is restricted context- text typology sensitivity (knowledge of subject-matter) in both interpreting directions as proposed by Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002) and Gile (2005), namely, its impact on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance. Based on the reviewed literature, it is also worth pointing out that text type context sensitivity impact on interpreters strategic performance in both interpreting directions has been less fully examined, namely, with reference to English-Arabic-English SI. Another significant aspect in

context sensitivity in SI is the issue of suprasegmental features (intonation, stress...) or the type of utterance selected (sarcastic command, question ...) based on the assumption that different kinds of utterances can have different suprasegmental cues (Wright, 1998). Thus, it would seem that these cues can best be understood through the knowledge of subject matter in the working languages (e.g. good knowledge in the political interpretation) and should be addressed in the advanced translation and interpretation programs. In what follows, a glimpse about the importance of SI in Jordan will be briefly presented. This will be followed by a short overview of the University of Jordan.

### **1.1.3 A Glimpse about Simultaneous Interpretation Importance in HKJ**

The importance of the regional location of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (HKJ) stems from six main observable facts; first, its location at the borderline between Africa and Asia, as well as its long borderline with Zionist entity; second, its central site in the core of the Middle East; third, the unrest status quo of Middle East (e.g. political conflicts and terrorism uprising); fourth, it is seen as the trade gate of the adjacent countries between Asia and Africa that makes it one of the most vibrant business centers in the neighborhood; and finally, the escalating number of academic institutions which totals twenty six universities, dozens of community colleges, and hundreds of other academic training centers, a number which is very high compared to HKJ's national gross and geographical space. In addition, the presence of many international/workshops and conferences, which are attended by bilinguals. English is the lingua franca, so interpreters either interpret A/B or B/A. All these reasons contribute to the regional importance of HKJ. The previous facts designate the nature of interaction and activities between the Jordanian society and the international

community which encompass three main constituents; Politics, Business, and Academic.

HKJ's geo-strategic setting, its integration and close propinquity with the rest of the countries in the arena, its good relations with the global community on the whole, as well as the very secure coordination that it plays with all Arab states have enabled HKJ to play as central a role as is needed especially in advancing peace initiatives in the Middle East (Middle East Bulletin, 2009). The safe and secure status in HKJ especially when compared with the neighborhood uprising, the kingdom's geographical strategic location and its implications on politics, academics, and business life, as well as the escalating number of international workshops and conferences held on its secure territories call, admittedly, for highly proficient simultaneous interpreters to decode and encode this overflow of inputs of foreign languages. As a result, the Jordanian academic authorities in the past few decades paid much attention and focus to this vital issue by legislating new laws for translation and interpretation teaching and training. Thus, academic universities and training institutes started to run degrees (B.A & M.A) and certificates in translation and interpretation which finally led to establishing the Jordanian Translators' Association (JTA) in 1993.

This association manages all the aspects of translation and interpretation at the national level. It aims at (1) promoting the value and activating the practice of translation/interpretation in HKJ from Arabic to various languages and vice versa, (2) raising the quality level of translation/interpretation in HKJ by standardizing translators and interpreters' quality and developing their professional efficiency, (3) exchanging relevant expertise and databases, and maintaining close ties with members of the Association and other similar associations as well, (4) coordinating

with the entitled bodies to guarantee the rights of the professional translators and interpreters, as well as supporting accredited translators and interpreters. (<http://www.jta1993.com>).

Since that time, many researchers directed their studies to uncover the translation and interpretation problems to better enhance these programs i.e., Shunnaq, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998a, 1998b; Farghal, 1993, 1994; Abul-Kas, 1995; Farghal and Shunnaq, 1992, 1999; Al-Khanji, 2000, 2002; and others. However, there seems to be many other problems in simultaneous interpretation in particular. This account is based on the researcher's own observation of TL communication problems among Jordanian graduate translation majors at a Jordanian university (for details see below in the statement of the problem). Despite there being problems in SI in HKJ, it has gained less attention and focus compared to translation, specially, at the postgraduate level. Consequently, many governmental and private universities designed M.A. programs in translation and interpretation to meet the needs of this profession in the kingdom. The University of Jordan (UJ) has been chosen among other universities for the purpose of the current research. In what follows, it will be elaborated more on the reasons behind choosing the participants from UJ.

#### **1.1.4 University of Jordan Profile**

The University of Jordan is a government mandated university located in the capital Amman. It was founded in 1962. It is the first and the largest university in the HKJ. The eighteen faculties of UJ offer a wide range of programs, more than 3500 different courses. At the undergraduate level, students can select from among 63 different programs in the Science, Arts, Business, Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy, Agriculture, Engineering, Educational Sciences, and Technology, Dentistry, Law, Physical Education, Humanities, Shari'a, Social Sciences, Rehabilitation Sciences,

Administration, Information Technology (IT) and, most recently, Arts and Design. At the postgraduate level, students can select from 30 doctoral programs, 81 Master's, 17 in the Higher Specialization in Medicine and Dentistry, 3 Professional higher diploma programs, and 6 Master's programs in interdisciplinary studies. (<http://www.ju.edu.jo>).

All UJ programs merge the broadminded methodologies which are based on discussion with traditional lecturing and creative research and thinking. Theoretical education is also assisted with computer-based materials, field work, practical training and interacting multimedia teaching tactics to sustain traditional teaching techniques. UJ implements the codes of Total Quality Management. Among its more than 1086 teaching members are many current and former staff members chaired important administrative, academic, and political institutions in the Kingdom; some of them have served as ministers in the government cabinets, advisers to the HKJ command system, chancellors of public and private universities, members of Parliament, and freelance writers as well as consultants for the radio and TV. A number of them have also shared their expertise and have taught in some neighboring and international prestigious universities all over the world.

#### **1.1.4.1 Overview of the Department of English Language and Literature**

The English major is one of the most desired specializations in the kingdom and more particularly in UJ. Therefore, the department of English at UJ celebrates its importance and desirability among Jordanian students by escalating its teaching aptitude and criteria to meet the expectation of academic superiority and excellence in teaching English language, literature, linguistics, and translation. The department offers the following undergraduate and graduate programs for local and international students: (1) B.A. in English Language and Literature, (2) M.A. in English

Language, (3) M.A. in English Literature, (4) M.A. in Translation, (5) M.A in Linguistics, (6) Ph.D in English Literature. (<http://languages.ju.edu.jo/EnglishLanguage>).

Furthermore, the department hosts and participates in symposiums, seminars, conferences, and cultural exchange programs. It aims at facilitating English language learning, the acquisition of a firm cultural knowledge to sustain the graduates with the fundamental academic skills and cultural tolerance in order for graduates to be able to adapt within a range of transnational domains and institutions. M.A translation candidates must go through an entrance examination in English-Arabic-English translation. This examination is administered by the Department to test the candidates' aptitude and compliance with the degree requirements. Upon passing the devised examination, candidates may choose from two tracks for the degree; thesis track and non thesis track. Both tracks must go through course work and pass obligatory courses with a minimum average of 'B' or GPA three out of four (for details see Appendix E).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The most up to date reviewed studies in simultaneous interpretation accentuate the need to broaden our horizons on the way SI is investigated and analyzed by considering newer problematic variables than those conventionally focused more particularly, interpreters' communicative behavior and strategic performance when the communication problems are encountered in the TL. Interpreters' strategic performance is an important aspect of interpretation teaching and qualification, since it mirrors interpreters' use/choice of communication strategies and their problem solving protocol.

It has been proven in research that both non-native and native speakers and both speakers and hearers resort to strategies in communication; however, non-native speakers use them more frequently (Rababah, 2001). Wagner and Firth (1997) asserted that CSs are major elements in speech production and thus important elements in natural discourse. Based on Wagner and Firth's statement, they also play an iconic role in interpretation process which requires oral TL production. PACTE group (2005; 2011) revealed that strategic competence (use/choice of strategies) can be viewed as a regulator or moderator for all other competences (cultural, linguistic, grammatical...). Accordingly, Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors, as prospective professional interpreters, are in need of SISs while interpreting different text types from English into Arabic and vice versa.

During the course of simultaneous interpretation, simultaneous interpreters may encounter some TL communication problems attributable to their restricted linguistic resources in general and strategic competence in particular. Consequently, and when they find themselves at a critical juncture, it can be observed that they resort subconsciously to an interpretation strategy to make them up. They either use reduction strategies (RSs), such as message abandonment, or they might be risk takers and resort to achievement strategies (ASs), such as paraphrase, approximation, and so forth (Al Khanji et al. 2000; Wang, 2009). Simultaneous interpretation is a challenging task, since it calls for high proficiency in both working languages; source language SL and target language TL. Al-Khanji and Al-Salman (2002) state that:

Those of us who had the experience of being involved in professional interpretation, at least once have realized that the process of interpretation is a challenging task – a task that requires various types of both linguistic and non-linguistic skills: mastery of the active language, solid background of general knowledge, some personal qualities like the faculty of analysis and synthesis, the ability to intuit meaning, the capacity to adapt immediately

to change in subject matter and different speakers and situations. Other qualities include the need to have good short and long term memory, the ability to concentrate, a gift for public speaking, and physical endurance and good nerves. (p. 608)

Since the researcher is an interpreter, English Language instructor at the University of Jordan this has enabled him to note that the Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors as prospective professional interpreters face many communication difficulties especially in simultaneous interpreting. This may be attributed to their lack of exposure to English. In addition, the university requirements may not be comprehensive to cover all aspects of SI in both interpreting directionality. This can be observed in the Department of English language at UJ. Finally, it is documented in research that the mother tongue of Arabic language has a negative effect on EFL learners. Therefore, we notice that Arab EFL learners, especially translation trainees and English majors resort to literal translation when they translate a text from Arabic into English (Zughoul, 1983; Rabab'ah, 2008). Given this setting, this dissertation aims at finding out SISs used by Arab (Jordanian) graduate translation majors at the University of Jordan. It also attempts to investigate the influence of text typology (political, academic, and business) on the use and choice of strategies in both directions English-Arabic-English. The interest in the study of SISs also aroused from my professional involvement in interpretation when I was the chair of translation/interpretation division in Prince Hussein Academy in HKJ.

The problem of this study was anchored anchored in two main debates in research community of SI; the cognitivists vs. contextualists' debate on the main determinant of interpreters' performance and the debatable point between opponents and proponents of the influence of interpretation directionality on interpreters' performance. In the recent years, the moot point on the shackles that mainly

determine interpreters' performance between contextualists vs. cognitivists has become a point of a lively debate. Cognitivists assume that interpreters' performance can best be examined through cognitive determinants (e.g. Gile, 1995, 1999, 2009; Al-Khanji et al. 2000; Chang, 2005). Contextualists, on the other hand, are inclined to accentuate that interpreters' performance can be more grounded and understood within the context itself (e.g. politics, economics, and so forth), (Cronin, 2002; Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002; Pym, 2008; Kaprenov, 2008). This speaks to the importance of context subject matter (task typology) in interpreters' performance. Therefore, contextualists assume that interpreters' performance can be affected by the context itself.

Pym (2008) claimed that research into simultaneous interpretation (SI) has not touched accurately the impact of contextual settings (familiarity with text type) on interpreters. Consistent with the contextualists, Al-Khanji and Al-Salman (2002), alternately, postulated that task type (the subject matter of the text being interpreted) is a significant factor in interpreters' strategic performance. According to Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, the task type means the nature of SL topic and content. For instance, an interpreter trained in linguistics may face difficulty with interpreting in economics, politics and so forth. Accordingly, they argued that the nature of task type may affect interpreters' performance which, in turn, may affect their strategy use or choice.

The aforementioned theoretical standpoints may clarify the choice of text typology influence on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance (strategy use or choice) as a main variable. Therefore, it is hoped that the results of the present study will support or refute the contextualists' views (e.g. Cronin, 2002 as cited in Pym (2008); Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002; Pym, 2008, Kapranov, 2008) who

argue and affirm the importance of context-task typology (subject matter) on interpreters' performance. Context is a broad term and can be detected in many several ways (Pym, 2008). However, our focus here is restricted to context-text typology (subject matter) familiarity in SI, namely, its impact on simultaneous interpreters' strategic performance as hypothesized by the contextualists (e.g. Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002; Pym, 2008; Kaprenov, 2008...).

The second debatable point is related to the influence of interpretation directionality on SI Performance (Opponents vs. Proponents). Supporters of A-B interpreting argue that simultaneous interpreters' better command of their NL/Arabic may support them to communicate more accurately in the TL (e.g., Denissenko, 1989; Williams, 1995; Al-Salman and AL-Khanji, 2002). In their empirical study, Al-Salman and AL-Khanji (2002) maintain that interpreters seem to be more comfortable and yield better accuracy when interpreting from (A) into (B) than vice versa which, in turn, supports that interpretation from (B) to (A) is more problematic.

Supporters from B to A interpreting, on the other hand, stress that simultaneous interpreters face cognitive difficulty when interpreting from A to B because of the extra mental processing activities needed to find equivalent items in B language (Kroll & Steward, 1994; Seleskovitch, 1999; De Bot, 2000; Ullman, 2001; Donovan, 2003; Chang, 2005). This stand may base on the assumption that language production in one's NL is more idiomatic and spontaneous, thus, more appropriate to the message transmission (Gile, 2005). According to Gile (2005), A is interpreters' native language and B is the TL/any other language that they have a good command over.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Research

The present research objectives can be subsumed within the following points:

- 1) Investigating the strategic performance of Arab graduate interpretation majors when TL communication problems encountered and the strategies they employ to overcome these difficulties through discovering their problem solving behavioral protocol.
- 2) Exploring the communication problems of Arab interpretation students and their consciousness level of developing plans to fulfill the communicative goals.
- 3) Investigating the influence of contextual determinants on their performance.
- 4) Investigating the influence of interpreting directionality on interpreters' performance, hence, presenting fruitful insights into which direction must be concentrated on during interpreting teaching and training.
- 5) Exploring the communication problems of graduate interpretation students and the possible solutions for them.

To be more specific, the following questions were addressed in this research:

1. What SISs are used by graduate translation/interpretation students in the English Language Department at the UJ, while interpreting simultaneously from Arabic (NL/SL) into English (TL)?
2. Are there any significant differences in the SISs (use/choice) while simultaneously interpreting from Arabic (NL/SL) into

English (TL), due to the text type (Political, Business, and Academic)?

3. What SISs are used by graduate translation/interpretation students in the English Language Department at the UJ, while interpreting simultaneously from English (SL) into Arabic (NL and TL)?
4. Are there any significant differences in the SISs (use/choice) while simultaneously interpreting from English (SL) into Arabic (NL and TL), due to the text type (Political, Business, and Academic)?
5. What are the communication problems of Arab interpretation students at the graduate level? And what are the possible solutions.

The focus of the present research was oriented towards discovering the problem solving strategic process of Jordanian graduate interpretation majors and to uncover the influence of contextual effects (text typology) on their use/choice of strategies in both interpreting directions. More focus on interpreters' training and teaching in both interpreting directions is required before interpreters embark on this challenging profession (Chang, 2005). In addition, Tennent (2005) revealed that the chief aim of interpreters training should be directed to the recipients to estimate their decision making process and to raise their consciousness about the resources and strategies available to them. Accordingly, to investigate the aspects of pedagogy (e.g. interpreters' training); it is imperative that we extend our focus more to the interpreters' training. Consequently, Arab graduate interpretation students are the

targeted population in this study, since this category is the most important source for professional interpreters, especially in Jordan.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

The study of communication strategies gains its importance from the fact that realizing consciously the use of strategies especially achievement strategies may help interpretation students compensate for their lack of linguistic items and solve their interpretation problems by resorting consciously to one or more of these strategies during the process of SI. The significance of this study lies also in the fact that though little communication strategy research relevant to the Jordanian context was conducted, no research has been conducted to investigate SISs used by interpretation students, mainly Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors, as well as, no research has investigated the influence of text typology (e.g. political, academic, and business) on strategy use/choice in both directions of SI. Moreover, based on the reviewed literature, no study has addressed the issue of directionality effects in terms of contextualization.

limited number of research was conducted on Arabs in general with reference to the use of strategies in translation (e.g. Atari, 2005; Rababah, 2008) and few studies were conducted with reference to the use of strategies in interpretation (e.g. Al-khanji et al. 2000; Al-Salman and Al-Khanji, 2002). The first empirical study was conducted by Al-Khanji et al. (2000) who investigated the type of input that causes communication difficulties for four Jordanian professional simultaneous interpreters interpreting for the CBS channel on a provisional basis. In their empirical study, they examined the strategies used by the subjects to make up for a difficult or "incomprehensible input" as referred to by the researchers. The results of this study identified five different kinds of compensatory strategies (CPSs) that were used by

the subjects. These CPSs were classified into two main categories: ASs and RSs. The five most used strategies in order of frequency were: (1) skipping, (2) approximation, (3) filtering, (4) comprehension omissions, and (5) substitution. Al-khanji et al. (2000) attribute the use of RSs in their study to the “incomprehensible input” factor, among other factors i.e., time restriction, together with their own strengths and weaknesses of linguistic and extralinguistic competences. This may explain that the interpreters’ linguistic development did not allow them to process the information load in communication.

The second detected study on Arabs was conducted by Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002) who investigated the L1 factor (Arabic) in simultaneous interpreting. The corpus of data was collected by a questionnaire that elicited the answers of participants. In addition, they also analyzed the interpretation quality of some professional interpreters in interpreting in English-Arabic-English. The analysis of interpreters' performance was done with reference to the criteria of linguistic adequacy and communication strategies. They followed Labov's (1969) framework of the variability model to validate the data. The findings of their study provided evidence that interpreters interpreting into English used more ASs strategies than RSs which, in turn, supports that interpreting from English to Arabic is more challenging than vice versa. However, they wondered about the influence of text typology (subject matter i.e., politics, economics, and so forth) on interpreters' strategy choice in both directions English-Arabic-English. This may also justify the researcher's interest to investigate the impact of this variable (text typology) along with his own observation as stated at the statement of the problem.

As shown in the reviewed studies, noticeably very few studies have addressed the influence of interpreting directionality (A-B vs. B-A) on interpreters'

performance from the contextual and strategic dimensions, particularly, on Arabs' context. However, similar attempts were not detected in the reviewed studies not only in the Arab world, but in the Globe on the whole. Thus, the current study aims to fill the gap found in the literature by conducting this research on graduate translation/interpretation majors

The significance of the current research stems from its attempt to outline the SISs used by interpreters. It discovered which strategies were used and whether text typology affected strategy use and strategy choice. Thus, this may help researchers understand how Arab graduate translation/interpretation majors strategize their interpretation difficulties in both interpreting directions. Based on the findings of the present research, the main potential contributions of this study might:

- Present deeper insight into TL communication problems, with reference to SI and, in turn, make Jordanian graduate translation/interpretation majors more aware of those potential problems. As a result, some pedagogical observations and implications may manifest along with possible recommendations to better train Jordanian graduate translation majors on the use of CSs in SI.
- Encourage university professors and curriculum designers to adopt achievement CS for interpretation students to be risk-takers.
- Support or refute the debatable point between cognitivists (e.g. Gile, 1995, 1999; Al-Khanji et al. 2000; Chang, 2005) and contextualists (e.g. Cronin, 2002; Al-Salman and Al-Khanj, 2002; Pym, 2008; Kaprenov, 2008) on the determinants of interpreters' performance (see section 1.1.2).
- Support or refute the moot point between A-B interpreting supporters (e.g., Denissenko, 1989; Williams, 1995; AL-Khanji and Al-Salman, 2002) and B-