EXPLORING A STRATEGIC TEACHERS' BRAIN-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR SMALL-CLAIMS COURT INTERPRETATION: A CASE STUDY IN JORDAN

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGES	Attention, Generation, Emotion and Spacing
BBL	Brain-Based Learning
CI	Consecutive Interpreting
CIC	Court Interpreting Curriculum
ELO	Enabling Learning Objective
ExGr	Expert Group
PrGr	Professional Group
SCC	Small Claims Court
SCCI	Small Claims Court Interpreting
ST	Student (enrolled in case-study trainings)
TLO	Terminal Learning Objective

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MENEROKAI STRATEGI PENGAJARAN GURU BERASASKAN OTAK DALAM INTERPRETASI TUNTUTAN KECIL DI MAHKAMAH: SATU KAJIAN KES DI JORDAN

ABSTRAK

Peranan jurubahasa mahkamah amat penting dalam memastikan keadilan dalam persekitaran perundangan dwibahasa. Walaupun banyak negara telah menetapkan piawaian profesional dan rangka kerja undang-undang bagi bidang jurubahasa mahkamah, sistem peraturan di Jordan masih kurang berkembang, dan kajian akademik dalam bidang ini masih terhad. Kajian ini meneroka pengetahuan konseptual, prosedural, dan situasional yang diperlukan oleh jurubahasa mahkamah tuntutan kecil (SCCI) di Jordan. Ia turut memperkenalkan modul latihan inovatif yang direka untuk menyampaikan pengetahuan tersebut kepada pelajar jurubahasa. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif dan berpaksikan dua rangka kerja teori: model AGES dari bidang neurosains dan Model Guru Strategik (STM) daripada pendidikan berasaskan otak. Data dikumpulkan melalui temu bual separa berstruktur secara mendalam dengan jurubahasa yang sedang berkhidmat serta satu kajian kes yang melibatkan sesi latihan dan penterjemahan. Model AGES digunakan untuk menilai hasil pembelajaran dari perspektif neurosains. Berdasarkan dapatan, kajian ini mencadangkan hipotesis tentang keberkesanan model AGES-STM bersepadu dalam melatih jurubahasa SCCI di Jordan. Pendekatan antara disiplin ini menyumbang kepada pendidikan jurubahasa dengan menyelaraskan sains kognitif dengan strategi pedagogi. Kajian ini memberikan implikasi kepada program latihan jurubahasa, pendidikan tinggi, dan pembangunan dasar, serta menyokong pemerkasaan

profesionalisme dalam bidang jurubahasa mahkamah dan peningkatan mutu keadilan dalam bilik mahkamah pelbagai bahasa.

EXPLORING A STRATEGIC TEACHERS' BRAIN-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR SMALL-CLAIMS COURT INTERPRETATION: A CASE STUDY IN JORDAN

ABSTRACT

The role of court interpreters is crucial in ensuring justice in bilingual legal settings. While many countries have established professional standards and legal frameworks for court interpreting, Jordan's regulatory system remains underdeveloped, and scholarly research in this area is limited. This study explores the conceptual, procedural, and situational knowledge required by small-claims court interpreters (SCCI) in Jordan. It also introduces an innovative training module designed to impart this knowledge to interpreting students. The research adopts a qualitative design and is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: the AGES model from neuroscience and the Strategic Teachers' Model (STM) from brain-based education. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with practicing interpreters and observation of a case study that captured training and interpreting sessions. The AGES model was applied to assess learning outcomes from a neuroscience-informed perspective. Based on the findings, the study proposes a hypothetical model regarding the effectiveness of an integrated AGES-STM model in training SCCIs in Jordan. This interdisciplinary approach contributes to interpreter education by aligning cognitive science with pedagogical strategies. The study offers implications for interpreter training programs, higher education, and policy development, supporting the professionalization of court interpreting and advancing the quality of justice in multilingual courtrooms.

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Deep within the maze of the human brain, the basal ganglia orchestrate our habits (Mullins, 2025), the amygdala pulses with emotional resonance (Lalit & Singh, 2025) and the hippocampus weaves the tapestry of memory—each a cornerstone of how humans learn (Hake, 2024). Yet, sceptics argue that simply mapping these neural territories offers little more than a seductive illusion of understanding, dismissing neuroscience as pseudoscience that leans on brain scans to dazzle rather than enlighten. They warn of the "seductive allure effect," where glossy fMRI images overshadow flawed arguments, reducing complex learning to mere biological buzzwords (Nuccio & Wesselmann, 2024). But to discard neuroscience's insights is to ignore a revolution: learning is no longer seen as behavioural conditioning but as the dynamic remodelling or 'changing' of the brain itself (Sousa, 2022). The real challenge lies not in debating its validity but in translating these discoveries into classrooms where instruction aligns with the brain's natural rhythms—transforming pedagogy from guesswork into a science of possibility (Amran & Sommer, 2024). How, then, do we bridge the gap between the promise of neuroscience and the pragmatism of education? The answer may redefine what it means to truly teach, and to truly learn.

The goal of this study is to explore the implications of neuroscience and brain-based learning in the design and delivery of training for small-claims court interpreting for Jordanian students. However, the title of this thesis prompts numerous inquiries spanning various academic disciplines, each of which could serve as a distinct focus for scholarly exploration. These disciplines—law, neuroscience, and education—are interwoven in this study to provide

a framework for the design of court interpreting instruction. This chapter, therefore, aims to establish the context and rationale for the study, laying the groundwork for a focused investigation into the teaching of court interpreting in Jordan, using it as a case study. Specifically, it examines the Jordanian legal system with a focus on court interpreting and the role of court interpreters in small claims courts (SCCs). The chapter also reviews existing frameworks for training court interpreters in Jordan, analysing how interpreters are prepared for the labour market. In doing so, this chapter not only situates the study within its broader context but also underscores the need for an innovative approach to training interpreters for court settings.

Court interpreting is a recognized complex cognitive skill, requiring interpreters to dynamically receive, process, encode, and decode information while rendering accurate and neutral interpretations in high-stakes legal settings. Such cognitive demands highlight the critical need for training programs that explicitly address these challenges through pedagogically sound and scientifically grounded approaches. In recent years, brain-based education—a framework informed by neuroscience principles—has emerged as a compelling paradigm for optimizing learning processes by aligning training design with how the brain acquires, retains, and applies knowledge.

However, translating neuroscientific insights into practical pedagogical strategies remains under-investigated. While foundational principles of brain-based learning provide essential guidance, their effective application requires structured models to bridge theory and practice. This study integrates two frameworks to address this gap: the AGES model (Attention, Generation of connections, Emotion regulation and Spacing) and the Strategic Teachers' Model in education. The AGES model, rooted in neuroscience, prioritizes four pillars for enhancing memory retention and skill acquisition: sustaining learner attention, fostering active neural

connection-building, managing emotional states to reduce cognitive interference, and spacing instruction to reinforce long-term retention. Complementing this, the Strategic Teachers' Model (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2007) emphasizes pedagogical adaptability, advocating for the integration of diverse instructional methods to accommodate learners' varied preferences and needs.

By synthesizing these frameworks, this research proposes a holistic approach to court interpreter education—one that harmonizes insights from neuroscience and pedagogical theory. Such an approach aims to optimize training design by addressing the multidimensional demands of the profession: cognitive (e.g., information processing under pressure), emotional (e.g., feeling of reward, punishment and frustration), and practical (e.g., adaptability to diverse courtroom scenarios). Ultimately, this integration seeks to equip interpreters with the skills and resilience necessary to excel in their critical societal role.

The following sections provide details about the current legal and educational settings of court interpreting in Jordan to highlight the research problem.

1.1. Legal framework

Court interpreting occurs within legal environments, where court interpreters are bound by specific regulations governing the performance of their duties in judicial proceedings. This discussion outlines the structure of Jordan's court system, examines the qualities of judges with whom interpreters must engage, and provides a comparative analysis of court interpreting practices globally, with a particular focus on the context in Jordan.

1.1.1 Jordan's court system

The Jordanian constitution of 1952 classifies courts according to subject-matter jurisdiction and degree. Regular courts consist of civil and criminal courts, whilst Sharia courts and special tribunals treat marriage and other religiously based family issues. Courts are divided into two tires of litigation: first instance and second instance, with the court of cassation acting as the review court of last resort. The lower courts are either conciliation or courts of first instance, whereas the supreme courts are the Appeals Court and the Cassation Court. Each court has its subject-matter, geographical coverage and value jurisdiction defined by the law. A case where the claimed amount is less than 10,000 Jordanian Dinars is heard at the Reconciliation Court. In 2018, Jordan's legislature adopted the small-claims arrangements, which adjudicates claims of up to 3,000 Jordanian Dinars utilizing streamlined procedures to reduce the duration of litigation. Small claims are also heard by civil courts of conciliation (MoJ, 2019).

1.1.2 Roles and qualities of judges in Jordan

Court interpreters communicate directly with judges during legal proceedings, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the judicial role (Markic & Gersak, 2017). A judge in Jordan presides over the proceeding, hears the case, establishes the legal relationship between the litigants and applies the law to reach a decision. The qualities of judges are provided by the Code of Judicial Practice of 2021, issued in accordance with Article 43(d) of the Judicial Independence Law No. 29 of 2014. Professional judicial practices include independence and neutrality, even in daily life, avoidance of conflict of interests, refraining from leaning to their personal or subjective tendencies, coping with judicial and scientific developments, and putting on professional attire. In civil cases, Judges apply the applicable law on each case and follow the Civil Procedural Law No. 16 of 2006, as amended. When hearing a civil case, the judge applies the Civil Code of 1976 to consider which source of rights applies

to establish a legal relationship between a plaintiff and a defendant: (i) the law, (ii) contract, (iii) beneficial act (undue enrichment), (iv) harmful act (tort) and (v) unilateral will.

1.1.3 Court interpreting worldwide

The legal framework governing court interpreting in Jordan may be more comprehensively understood when analysed within a comparative framework, considering relevant practices in other Arab countries and beyond.

In the United States, the US Act of Interpreters of 1978 provides for interpreters to litigants who do not speak English to put them on an equal footing with English speakers (Baker & Saldanha, 2019). In Arizona, the Code of Conduct for Court interpreters provides for the professional standards including competence, impartiality, confidentiality, professionalism and continuing education. Generally, US courts recognise the complexity of court interpreting, thus requiring rigid certification exams to test their knowledge, skills and abilities (United States Courts, n.d.). Recently, the Maricopa County Superior Court in Arizona appointed Zainab Khadouri, a certified and professional Arabic court interpreter, as a staff interpreter in a U.S. court (Casey, 2023). This is the first time that an interpreter is appointed for a fulltime job at US courts. US courts consider the interpreter as a language conduit where interpreters interpret in an objective mechanic way (Morris, 1995), though confrontation with interpreters has been long debated especially after Crawford v. Washington (Benoit, 2014) and United States v. Yurofsky (Klubok, 2015).

In the United Kingdom, courts outsource interpreters from the Big Word. Interpreters working for the Criminal Justice System, however, must be enrolled in the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). Interpreters in the United Kingdom can be confronted at

court, should a defendant contest to the accuracy of interpreting (The Crown Prosecution Service, 2019).

In Oman, the Civil and Trade Procedural Law No. 101 of 1996 provides that "courts may hear the statements of litigants or testimonies of witness who do not speak Arabic through an interpreter after taking the statutory oath" (Article 27). Oman has a pool of interpreters employed by the court system as full-time employees. Their roles include both written translation and interrupting. There is no code of conduct for court interpreters nor a certification program to ensure the qualification of candidates for this job. The role of court interpreter is unclear (Issaei, 2007). Translators who perform translation under oath will be subject to imprisonment penalties under the 'false witness' provisions, if they intentionally distort truth in translation (Criminal Procedure Law No 97/99). It is not clear in the law whether an interpreter is a language conduit or a witness, though. Noteworthy is that the Omani Supreme Court allowed for the confrontation of an interpreter to make a testimony related to the accused as per Decision No. 304 on Appeal 282/2004.

In Tunisia, the interpreters' profession is regulated by the Law of Regulating the Profession of Sworn Translators No 80 of 1994. The law provides for the qualification and certification requirements of sworn translators and interpreters to be enrolled in the registry and designates them as 'para-public servants'. There is also the *Handbook for the Sworn Translator Procedures* issued by Minister of Justice's Decree on 27/11/1998 that details the professional aspects of the career, including wages and disciplinary measures. The handbook mandates that registered translators/interpreters may not decline an assignment, except with a legally accepted excuse, such as conflict of interest. It also provides for civil liability if they commit an error

that causes harm to a third party, and criminal liability should they knowingly present a false translation or interpretation that does not match the original text.

In Algeria, the legislature regulates the profession of translators and interpreters under Presidential Decree No. 95 of 1995. The decree details the responsibilities and rights of translators and interpreters, designating them as ‘public officers’. Regulated aspects include the certification of translators and interpreters, their business attire, neutrality, confidentiality, and wages. In addition, the decree states that the translator or interpreter will be subject to criminal liability of perjury should the translation or interpretation they render proves to be intentionally false.

In Morocco, Law by decree No. 50 of 2001 on Translators and Interpreters Admitted to Courts regulates the profession, certification, rights and responsibilities as well as disciplinary measures of court translators and interpreters, designating them as ‘judicial assistants’. In contrast, a written translator of a contract is deemed as a witness ("Decision on civil file No. 2016/9/1/4276," 2016).

In Syria, Law No. 22 of 2014 on Sworn Translators regulates the certification of sworn translators, who, upon satisfying the requirements are entered into the registry of sworn translators. The law allows, though, courts to seek assistance from unregistered interpreters in case of necessity and it allows the court as well to use relay-translation through more than one interpreter. The law also prescribes an imprisonment penalty combined with a fine to be imposed on any sworn translator who deliberately ‘changed the truth’ or disclosed a secret brought to his attention while performing translation or interpreting.

1.1.4 Court interpreting regulatory framework in Jordan

Unlike the jurisdictions reviewed above, there is no standalone regulation for interpreters in Jordan. Interpreters are assigned to cases where any of the parties do not speak Arabic (The Mecella, Article 1825) and what the interpreter relays is deemed representative of what the original speaker has said (The Mecella, Article 71) so long as he takes the oath (Civil Code of Jordan, Article 84). The role of the court interpreter is that of a language conduit, following the Hanafi jurisprudence, meaning that a single interpreter, male or female, may be appointed (Al Zuhaili, 2006). This contrasts with the Shafiite school, deeming interpreter a witness (Al Mawardi, 1999). If an interpreter is considered a witness following the Shafiite school, then some rules apply including, for example, the prohibition of an interpreter (being a witness) to interpret for a first-degree relative (Al Mawardi, 1999). Invoking different schools of jurisdictions can cause controversies even at court (such as in Aqaba Appeal No. 211/2018 where the appellant objected to the application of principles from the Shafiite and Hanbali schools), but it is yet not clearly debated in research in Jordan. In relation to small claims, Jordan's legislator intended the small-claims arrangements at courts to expedite adjudication. The use of non-professional interpreters has already proven to cause delays in adjudication (Tampubolon, 2024), which implies that the lack of a professional interpreter at a small-claim hearing can be counter to the reason why such arrangements have been created in the first place.

In a broad scope, translation and interpreting firms are regulated and licensed by the Publication and Press Law of 1998, requiring the incorporators to produce identification cards and certificates of non-conviction, qualification proofs, experience, and payment of fees. If a written document is to be official, it must be notarised by the notary public as per the Notary Public Law No. 11 of 1952, in which case the translator is required to be of sound mind and

legal age. However, legislation uses the terms *translator* and *interpreter* interchangeably, unless the context explicitly differentiates between the two. Consequently, there is no specific law or regulation that could otherwise outline the role, qualifications, certification, or appointment procedures for interpreters, especially those serving in court settings.

The only legal framework governing court interpreters is found in the Bylaws of Experts Appearing before Regular Courts No. 35 of 2018. Interpreters appointed for court proceedings are conduits, so interpreting errors, even when detected, cannot be contested or cited as grounds of appeal, and cannot be confronted (Abu-Risha & Jaganathan, 2021). Interpreters, in their capacities as experts, rather than sworn or accredited interpreters, are subject to generalised expert recruitment requirements. The minimum requirements, per the bylaws, are no prior convictions, good morals, an academic qualification or experience, and neutrality. Education is not required, but conflicts of interest must be disclosed at court. The bylaws do not specify the consequences of court interpreting mistakes. There are no guidelines that specify whether the interpreter's rendering at court may be contested if the interpreter has violated any interpreter's code of conduct. In line with the bylaws, the Ministry of Justice offers the service of pooling experts including interpreters. The portal shows the requirements, which are educational background, proof of experience and a certificate of non-conviction. Since educational background is not required for court interpreters in Jordan, it is worthwhile to review possible local avenues for learning the profession.

1.1.5 Learning court interpreting in Jordan

In the absence of primary sources, the study conducted preliminary research, in the websites of ministries, revealing three potential sources of learning court interpreting: higher educational institutions, vocational training schools and Ministry of Labor’s employment

programs. The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (HEAC) oversee higher education institutions and approve university offerings. HEAC decides on new programs according to several factors, including justification, solvency, efficient infrastructure and the appointment of teaching staff with different ranks. A university's request may be denied if the proposed program is either stagnant or saturated in the labour market (MoHE, 2022). Foreign languages and translation in Jordan are among the 'saturated' jobs (MoHE, 2023), as Jordanian authorities encourage school graduates to pursue high-demand vocations instead.

As of 2024, there are 34 universities in Jordan (MoHE 2024), out of which 11 offer degrees in translation (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Universities offering court interpreting courses

University	**Does it offer court interpreting courses?**	**Name of course**
Muta University	Yes	Simultaneous conference and court interpreting
Yarmouk University	Yes	Court interpreting
Amman Arab University	No	
Jadara University		
Amman Ahliyya University		
Petra University		
Isra University		
Applied Sciences University		
Irbid University		
Jarash University		
The American University		

Vocational education is another possible venue to provide learners with specialized skills and knowledge aligned with the labour market (UNESCO, 2022). Vocational training is offered by the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) in fields, in accordance with the Law No. 11 of 1985. VTC, however, does not offer any translation/interpreting training. In contrast, the Ministry of Labour through the National Employment Program of 2021 (MoL, 2023), subsidized wages for on-the-job training of employees in the age group of 18-40. It allows for translators/interpreters internships but no statistics are available on that issue.

1.2 Problem statement

In Jordan, the primary requirement for court interpreters is the ability to speak Arabic and a foreign language. This criterion, however, fails to capture the full scope of competencies needed for effective court interpreting. Moreover, there is a significant gap in empirical research concerning the knowledge of court interpreters in Jordan, and a lack of a scientifically grounded instructional framework to align interpreter training with real-life court settings. While bilingualism is undeniably essential for court interpreting, the mere ability to speak languages does not guarantee an accurate and reliable interpreting (Mulwa & Mabule, 2023). This concern is already echoed in research. Internationally, the scarcity of trained interpreters often leads to the recognition of interpreters as "qualified" as long as they are punctual and capable of basic communication in the courtroom (Romberger, 2007). However, a judge's confidence in an interpreter's performance is often undisturbed if the judge does not speak the foreign language, potentially leading to over-reliance on interpreters without assessing their competence (Bestue and Raigal-Aran (2023); Pym (2025)). This highlights a critical issue: the professionalization of court interpreters is inextricably linked to specialized professional knowledge, not confined to linguistic proficiency but involving an understanding of legal language and courtroom

pragmatics (Kadric & Stempkowski, 2024). Interpreters must demonstrate cognitive abilities, as interpreting under fast-paced conditions can challenge note-taking practices and interfere with effective listening (González, Vásquez, & Mikkelson, 1991). Errors in interpreting can lead to misinterpretations, mislead juries and distort justice (Hovland, 1992). Historical examples, such as the case of a man allegedly marrying the wrong woman due to an interpreter's incompetence ("Keystone Vignettes," 1894), or the disastrous misinterpretation of "blouse" as "brief blouse" in a rape trial (Shepard, 2007), underscore the profound consequences of poor interpretation.

The professionalization of court interpreters demands the ability to mitigate errors, which, if left unaddressed, can affect the outcomes of thousands of cases (Bowcott, 2016). This professional competence can only be achieved through systematic training that emphasizes both language skills and real-world court experience, along with an understanding of grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and the cognitive processes involved in interpreting (Yi, 2024). Recent advances in neuroscience also suggest that brain-related skills, such as attention, focus, and memory, are crucial for interpreting training (Díaz-Galaz & Winston, 2025). These findings highlight the growing need for educational approaches that incorporate brain-based insights into interpreting practice. The adoption of a brain-based learning (BBL) approach is particularly salient in this context, as it aligns with neuroscientific principles that optimize the cognitive, emotional, and procedural demands of court interpreting. Traditional pedagogical methods, which prioritize passive knowledge transfer (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014), inadequately equip learners with critical thinking and adaptive skills required in real-world contexts. As Hale (2004) and Mikkelson (2017) emphasize, courtroom discourse demands rapid decision-making, cultural competence, and adaptability to unpredictable interactions—skills

that are best cultivated through immersive, context-driven training rather than static, theory-heavy approaches. BBL leverages evidence-based strategies—such as spaced repetition (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014), multimodal engagement (R. Mayer, 2009) and metacognitive reflection (Pratama, Lustyantie, & Murtadho, 2024)—to enhance neurocognitive adaptability and long-term retention by aligning with the brain's natural learning mechanisms. This is critical for mastering the linguistic, cultural, and procedural complexities of court interpreting, which require rapid bilingual lexical retrieval, simultaneous information processing, and ethical decision-making under pressure—skills inherently tied to neural plasticity and executive functioning (Pliatsikas, 2020). By integrating BBL, interpreter training can address Jordan's systemic gaps in specialized education while aligning with broader educational reforms aimed at fostering 21st-century competencies. Furthermore, BBL's emphasis on sociocultural and cognitive inclusivity resonates with Jordan's bilingual legal environment, where interpreters mediate between Arabic/English frameworks and ensure equitable access to justice. Yet, scholarly work in Jordan lacks focus on a BBL instructional design for court interpreters.

Scholarly consensus indicates that interpreters should continuously enhance their proficiency, with a particular focus on authentic interpreting activities (Setton & Dawrant, 2016). A thorough understanding of legal terminology, grammar, idioms, and formal writing styles is essential (Berk-Seligson, 2017), as well as a foundational knowledge of court procedures (UK Ministry of Justice, 2018). Extensive legal knowledge can also be necessary in some cases (Orozco-Jutorán, 2023) to effectively convey legal concepts, thus necessitating court interpreters to possess, among other things, a comprehensive grasp of courtroom procedures (Berk-Seligson, 2017). The significant number of appeals arising from inadequate

interpreter performance further emphasizes the necessity of specialized training for court interpreters (Hayes & Hale, 2010). To bridge the gap in competency, interpreters must adhere to codes of ethics that stress accuracy, professionalism, and integrity (Salimbene, 1996). In many countries, including the United States, Oman, Poland, and Australia, court interpreters are subject to certification and regulation (Palma, 2023).

Against this backdrop, Jordan falls short, with no specific regulations governing court interpreters or their qualifications. The legal ambiguity surrounding the role and qualifications of court interpreters in Jordan is exacerbated by the absence of defined standards for their training. While the Bylaws on Experts Appearing before Regular Courts (2018) specify certain fields of expertise, including translators and interpreters, they do not elaborate on the qualifications necessary for these roles. Historically, Jordan's laws, such as the Notary Public Law of 1946 and the current Notary Public Law of 1952, have allowed for the appointment of illiterate interpreters, further illustrating the lack of regulatory oversight.

Moreover, educational institutions in Jordan provide limited attention to the training of court interpreters. Translation departments at universities often lack a structured curriculum for court interpreting, with instructors not required to use specific teaching materials (Suleiman Al Abbas, personal communication, 2023). Authentic, real-life materials—essential for effective court interpreting instruction—are rarely incorporated (Hunt-Gómez, 2015). Apprenticeship models could offer an alternative approach, where novices learn by mimicking experienced professionals (Stern & Liu, 2019b). The Ministry of Labor's apprenticeship program (MoL, 2023) may serve as a useful framework, yet statistics on court interpreting training are scarce, and the Ministry of Higher Education discourages programs that do not meet market needs (MoHE, 2022). Despite the growing need for specialized court interpreters in Jordan, graduates

from translation programs are often ill-equipped to meet market demands (Khoury (2017); Mahasneh (2012); Abu-Risha (2005, 2006))

From a cognitive perspective, interpreting is a task that demands an understanding of how the brain processes language, memory, and cognitive load (Al-Suhaim, 2024). The integration of brain-based learning strategies into interpreter training could significantly enhance the effectiveness of training programs (Dubinsky (2024); Luk and Christodoulou (2024)). However, there is a scarcity of research on how to adapt instructional designs to the cognitive and learning needs of interpreting students. This issue is relevant to learning styles, in particular. Despite the recognition of diverse cognitive processes in interpreter training, learning styles—distinct ways individuals absorb, process, and retain information—play a crucial role in skill acquisition. According to the Strategic Teachers Model (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2007), learners engage with new material through mastery (analytical and structured learning), interpersonal (social and collaborative learning), self-expressive (creative and intuitive learning), and understanding (conceptual and reflective learning) approaches. In an interpreting context, these styles can influence how trainees develop essential competencies such as memory retention, cognitive flexibility, and decision-making under pressure.

However, interpreter training programs in Jordan do not systematically incorporate learning styles into instructional design. Traditional methods focus primarily on linguistic proficiency and legal terminology, often neglecting the cognitive and experiential aspects of learning that could enhance interpreters' adaptability and performance. This gap suggests that current training approaches may not fully align with the cognitive demands of interpreting, potentially limiting the effectiveness of skill acquisition and real-world application in SCCs.

The current landscape in Jordan underscores the urgent need for reform. Unlike in many other countries, Jordan lacks a standardized framework for the qualification and training of court interpreters. This gap in professional and educational infrastructure raises concerns about the potential negative impact of interpreting errors on the outcomes of legal cases. The lack of research on court interpreting in Jordan further exacerbates this problem, as interpreters are left without the guidance needed to navigate the complexities of their roles.

Therefore, this study aims fill this critical gap by conducting a qualitative investigation into the knowledge and skills of court interpreters in Jordan. The findings will inform the development of a brain-based instructional design for court interpreting training, which will address both the cognitive demands of the profession and the practical needs of the court system. Ultimately, this research sought to advance the professionalization of court interpreters in Jordan and contribute to the development of more effective training programs that align with international standards of competence.

1.3 Significance of study

This study aims to make three significant contributions to the legislative, educational, and research landscapes of court interpreting, with a particular emphasis on SCCs in Jordan.

First, from a legislative perspective, the study seeks to inform policymakers about the importance of professionalizing the role of court interpreters. By examining the knowledge and competencies of professional interpreters, this research provides evidence that may guide legislative reforms aimed at establishing clear qualifications and standards for court interpreters. The choice of SCCs for this study is particularly relevant, as these courts are designed for swift adjudication, a process that can be severely compromised by the involvement

of incompetent interpreters. Therefore, the study will underscore the need for an effective regulatory framework that ensures interpreters are adequately qualified to contribute to the efficient functioning of these courts.

Second, at the educational level, the study aims to offer valuable insights to university educators and apprenticeship trainers by identifying the essential knowledge areas for training court interpreters, specifically those serving in SCCs. By aligning interpreter training outcomes with the practical needs of the legal system, this research will help ensure that educational programs produce competent interpreters who are capable of meeting the demands of the job market and functioning effectively within the legal environment. This confluence of theoretical knowledge and practical application is critical for fostering interpreters who can navigate the complexities of court proceedings and contribute to the delivery of justice.

Third, the study introduces a brain-based approach to instructional design, which focuses on adapting teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles. By developing a model that maximizes learning efficiency, this approach aims to enhance students' understanding of the cognitive demands of court interpreting. This method will ensure that students not only grasp the linguistic complexities of interpreting but also develop the cognitive skills necessary to handle the speed, accuracy, and attention required in high-pressure court environments.

This research represents the first study in Jordan that explores the role of court interpreters through this integrated legislative, educational, and cognitive lens. It paves the way for further investigations into the professionalization of court interpreters, exploring their dual role as language conduits and cultural mediators, as well as the challenges in developing effective instructional models and training curricula. While the study focuses on SCCs, its

findings will have broader implications for other legal contexts in Jordan, offering a foundation for enhancing court interpreting practices across the judiciary.

In summary, the significance of this research lies in its potential to influence legislative policy, improve educational practices for court interpreters, and ensure a more effective and equitable judicial system. By addressing the gaps in interpreter training and professional standards, the study will contribute to a more robust framework for court interpreting in Jordan, fostering a system that upholds justice through accurate and reliable interpretation.

1.4 Research Objectives

The goal of this study is to conceptualize a model for guiding the professional development of training materials that can produce competent interpreters for SCCs in Jordan. To achieve this, the study's primary objectives are to: first, explore the knowledge and skills currently applied by practicing SCC interpreters in Jordan; and second, investigate the learning outcomes when these competencies are taught in brain-compatible environments. In summary, the study objectives are:

RO1. To define the relevant situational knowledge content of SCCI in Jordan

RO2. To elucidate the relevant conceptual knowledge content of SCCI in Jordan

RO3. To identify the relevant procedural knowledge content of SCCI in Jordan

RO4. To explore a brain-based strategic teachers' instruction of SCCI in Jordan

1.5 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1. To what extent does situational knowledge affect interpreters' renderings at small-claim courts in Jordan?

RQ2. What is the required conceptual knowledge of SCC interpreters in Jordan?

RQ3. How do professional interpreters perform interpreting in small claims cases in Jordans?

RQ4. Why is a brain-based training instruction needed in teaching SCCI in Jordan?

1.6 Limitations

Given the lack of primary sources of information, this exploratory study is based on interviews, observation and feedback of students undertaking the case study. Since English is not an official language in Jordan, the number of lawyer interviewee who speak English and interpret at courts were limited. The selected student respondents cannot be held as representative of learning styles of students, thereby necessitating more studies on that aspect.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research focuses specifically on small claims court interpreting (SCCI) in Jordan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other legal settings or interpreting contexts. Court interpreting varies across jurisdictions, and training programs in different regions may incorporate different methodologies that are not reflected in this study.

Second, while the study integrates brain-based learning principles and a brain-based instructional approach to explore interpreter training, the practical implementation of these frameworks remains largely theoretical. The extent to which such cognitive-based instructional approaches can be fully applied within the constraints of existing court interpreting training programs requires further empirical investigation.

Third, data collection primarily relies on interviews with SCC interpreters and observations of brain-based learning in practice. While these methods provide valuable insights into real-world training experiences, they may be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions and variations in interpreting environments. Additionally, the sample size is limited to a specific group of interpreters, which may not capture the full diversity of learning needs and styles among court interpreters in Jordan.

Lastly, the study does not assess long-term learning outcomes or the direct impact of brain-based learning on interpreter performance. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies that track the effectiveness of brain-based training interventions over time, as well as comparative studies that evaluate different instructional methods.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the growing discourse on cognitive-based interpreter training and highlights the need for more structured, learner-centred approaches in court interpreting education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of studies pertinent to two key dimensions of this research: court interpreting and brain-based learning. It commences with a historical overview of interpreting, tracing its evolution and development. Subsequently, it delves into the complexities of legal systems, including the nuances of terminology and conceptual frameworks, thereby establishing a foundation for exploring the educational dimensions of instructional design. In doing so, this literature review draws on theories from the neuroscience of education and curriculum design, which together form the theoretical framework underpinning this study. These perspectives not only inform the analysis of interpreter competencies but also guide the development of training content and instructional strategies. The chapter also presents and analyses various models that highlight the diverse and sophisticated skill set required of interpreters. Furthermore, it evaluates the implications of recent neuroscience research and the brain-based learning approach, offering insights into effective teaching strategies for their application in court interpreting training.

2.2 Historical overview of Interpreting

Since antiquity, interpreters have facilitated cross-language interactions, from the early days of Haremhab's reign (reigned 1323-1309 BCE) (Gardiner, 1953) or even from the Akkadians' around 1900 BCE (Pöchhacker, 2016). In medieval times, interpreters flourished with the constant contact between the Christian world and the Western Muslim World (Salicru Lluch, 2009). In modern times, the interpreter's role has increasingly received recognition in

such areas as war and politics (Baigorri-Jalon, 2010), achievement of justice at court (Morris, 1999) and healthcare systems (Hadziabdic, 2011).

Interpreting was ordained during the early days of Islam with Zaid bin Thabet assigned to be the first interpreter for Prophet Muhammad (Bukhari, 2002, No. 1779), though a ruler was recommended to recruit two interpreters (Bukhari, 2002, No. 7891). The appointment of Zaid is reported to have been an order from God to His Messenger through the *wahi* (Al Zuhaili, 2006), with different interpretations of that order. For the Shafiites, an interpreter is a witness, therefore requiring two male interpreters or one male and two female interpreters (Al Zuhaili, 2006), while the Hanafis consider an interpreter to be a language mediator who can be male or female except in certain circumstances. The Hanafis also hold that if a ruler speaks the languages of the litigants, an interpreter will not be required (Al Mawardi, 1999).

During the Ottoman reign, dragomans (the Turkish word for interpreters) were recruited to interpret between high-ranking figures, including the Sultan, and foreign diplomats or delegates (Eşiyok & Yağcı, 2023). Some were appointed by Turkish courts (Hallaq, 2009). It is speculated that graduates from Istanbul-based Western vocational schools served as interpreters mediating diplomatic and trade interactions (Delibas, 2023). The same language mediation role is reported in 10th century Andalusia (Adams, 2016) , 17th century China (Tormsen, 2015), and far East Asia (Ibrahim, 2007). In the 19th century, interpreters were indigenous intermediaries between French colonists and Africans in Senegal (M'bayo, 2016).

In the 1920s, the telephonic interpreting equipment was invented, a precursor to simultaneous interpreting equipment (Ball, 2021). The first interpretation system was experimented by the International Labor Organisation (2015) then used at the Nuremberg Trial against Nazi war criminals between 1945 and 1946 (Islamova & Xolmurodova, 2024). In 1946,

the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution the official languages of the organisation (UN General Assembly Resolution 2/1, 1 February 1946), recommending the use of interpreting through the telephonic systems.

In less than a decade afterwards, standardization efforts and codes of ethics emerged. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) was established in 1956 to promote interpreting standards, liaising with international agencies for the working conditions of interpreters. More recently in 1998, the International Standardization Organization introduced new standards on the booth and interpreting systems. The updated versions of the ISOs cover general recommendations (ISO18841:2018), guidelines for community interpreting (ISO13611:2014), legal interpreting (ISO/FDIS20228) and interpreting technology (ISO/DIS 20539). In 2002, the California Healthcare Interpreters Association published its standards for healthcare interpreters, and in 2013, the Judicial Council of California released its code of ethics for court interpreters (Judicial Council of California, 2013).

In the practice of interpreting, technology, such as video-communication devices, allowed for remote interpreting (Böcker & Anderson, 1993), sound systems enabled interpreters in their sound-proof booths to hear the speaker (van Rooy, 2005) and mobile interpreting devices that reduce technical problems and ensure a mobile service (Pienaar, 2006).

On the professional level, a distinction is made between untrained interpreters (just bilinguals), those with general skills (generalist interpreters) and others with special skills (professional interpreters). Community Interpreters (Al-Zahran (2007); Cerezo (2014)) offer services in such settings as police stations, schools, public safety, employment interviews and healthcare. Shuttleworth (2014) argues that an interpreter working in all those fields is a generalist interpreter, who knows something of everything and can handle assignments up to a

specific level of sophistication. On the other hand, there is a specialist interpreter, a linguist experienced, for example, in medical matters, or a practitioner trained in language interpreting (Hlavac, 2013).

Compared to translators, interpreters tend to be generalists as they accept assignments in a variety of disciplines (Schweda-Nicholson, 1986). On this generalist-specialist contention, though in the field of written translation, Martin (2011) justifies his criticism of specialisation by stating that every field of knowledge expands from time to time and that the term 'specialisation' and its derivatives are abused by both commercial companies and translators themselves. On the other hand, Lai and Gonzalez (2025) contends the implementability of specialised training for even untrained interpreters in the specific area of court interpreting.

The generalist-specialist controversy goes on, but linguists may find in laws and regulations a leverage tool to their specialisation. The Syrian Sworn Translators Law of 2014 (Ministry of Justice, 2014) regulates the affairs of 'sworn' translators and interpreters, with some provisions governing the use of interpreters by court. The State of California (California Courts, n.d) has a program for court interpreters, which seeks to ensure access to courts for people not proficient in English. To that end, it develops programs to improve the quality of interpreting and provide for a pool of qualified court interpreters. In the 1980s, Washington introduced a healthcare interpreter certification program, with the purpose of ensuring all people have access to medical services, across language barriers (Chen, Youdelman, & Brooks, 2007). These are just few examples to showcase the fact that interpreters may have a *de jure* status as professionals specialised in certain fields. This brings us to the discussion of court interpreters, as a specialisation that has its own principles, ethics, skills and competencies with specific reference to context of Jordan.