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Students' Attitudes towards Virtual Learning in Consecutive Interpreting

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Abstract

This paper sheds light on the students' attitudes about Visual Learning (VL) during online Consecutive Interpreting (CI) courses and to what extent this type of education is important to influence the skills required in performing consecutive interpreting. This type of oral communication demands good skills in order to receive the source message comprehensibly from the speaker and render it accurately and efficiently in the Second Language (SL). CI is initiated when the interpreter receives the Source Message (SM) from the speaker and renders it within a specific period of time into Target Message (TM) to the listener. This paper shows how the VL influences the students' skills required when they interpret consecutively . Forty students from Department of Translation/ College of Arts/ University of Tikrit have been selected as respondents to see if the VL has affected their performance in CI during a distance learning course due to COV-19 pandemic instructions. Ten-items questionnaire has been distributed to the students after studying an online course in CI to see their attitudes towards this course and to what extent their learning influenced by technological apps.

Keywords: Consecutive Interpreting, Language Skills, Virtual Learning, Motivation.

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وجهات نظر الطلبة حول التعلم الافتراضي في الترجمة التعااقبية

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الملخص : يسلط البحث الضوء على الدور المهم للتعليم الافتراضي في الترجمة التعااقبية و الى اي مدى هذا النوع من التعليم مهم لتطوير المهارات المطلوبة لأداء هذا النوع من الترجمة. ان هذا التواصل الشفوي يتطلب مهارات جيدة الرسالة المصدر بشكل مفهوم من المتكلم و تحويلها الى الرسالة الهدف بدقة و كفاءة في اللغة الثانية. تتم الترجمة التعااقبية عندما يستلم المترجم الرسالة المصدر من المتكلم و تحويلها خلال فترة زمنية محددة الى رسالة هدف للمستمع اذ ان هذا البحث يبين كيفية تأثير المنصات الالكترونية على اتقان المهارات المطلوبة من قبل الطلبة لغرض الترجمة تعااقبياً. تم اختيار اربعون طالباً من قسم الترجمة/ كلية الآداب/ جامعة تكريت للعام الدراسي 2020-2021 كعينات لهذا البحث لغرض معرفة فيما اذا هذه المنصات قد اثرت على ادائهم في الترجمة التعااقبية خلال فصل دراسي عن بعد بسبب وباء الكوفيد المنتشر. اذا تم توزيع استبيان مكون من عشرة فقرات بعد تلقيهم هذا الفصل الدراسي الكرتوني الى اي مدى تأثر تعلمهم بالتطبيقات التكنولوجية .

الكلمات الدالة: ترجمة تنابعية ، مهارات لغوية ، تعلم افتراضي ، تحفيز .

1.Introduction

1.1 Overview

Distance Education (DE) seems to be a new idea to many students and teachers. It is one of the most dramatic of the recent technology-based innovations influencing education in different parts of world. All the educational institutions in the globe adopt a certain strategy for teaching their students during the pandemic in order to avoid the health risks result from the face-to-face communication. This paper studies the to what extent the platforms used in teaching CI and how they impact the students' performance. The data analysis refers to positive students' points of view towards DE adopted during the spread of Corona Virus. Teaching CI requires oral communication in order to listen the SM and renders it into a TM, so using the electronic platforms develop the students' skills involved in the process of CI.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teaching interpreting is a very complicated task because it requires exceptional skills and certain strategies in order to improve the students' performance. When COVID-19 spread, distance education becomes as an alternative instead of the traditional education. To overcome the problem of teaching CI in such deteriorated situations and crises which

requires speaking and listening skills to be performed successfully, VL becomes a solution to this problem.

1.3 Aims of the Study

There are many aims in this study to be studied :

1. Investigating students' attitudes towards distance education.
2. Showing the influence of distance education on students' performance.
3. Suggesting new teaching methods that conform with situations when crises and disasters spread.

1.4 Hypotheses

This study tests two important hypotheses :

1. Virtual Education is vital to be taught and followed in educational institutions.
2. Students' performance is affected positively during online courses.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is considered important because it shows the significance of the distance education in teaching CI and how the students can make use of the electronic devices and online platforms in developing their performance. It also shows how to conduct the distance communication in teaching certain subjects that requires language skills efficiently.

2.Virtual Learning (VL):

Distance education is a type of modern education that has spread widely with the tremendous technological development in all fields. It is considered an alternative solution to traditional education that requires face-to-face communication between the student and the teacher, as its use has spread significantly in all academic and educational institutions in all parts of the world in order to continue the educational process successfully.

Shank and Sitze (2004:2) define VL as the use of network technologies (such as the Internet and business networks) for delivering, supporting, and assessing formal and informal instruction via online resources and materials, electronic libraries, learning materials and courses, real time and non-real-time discussions, chats, e-mail, conferencing, and knowledge sharing applications.

To promote the students' motivation in VL, Clark and Kwinn (2007:40) mention that the teachers have to support motivation through social presence, by incorporating job-relevant examples and interactions into the class, by maintaining a brisk pace, and by offering focused, frequent, and job-relevant interactions.

Ko and Rossen (2010:287) explain that VL can be as frustrating for both student and instructor, mainly for those taking an online course for the first time. Suddenly push into a world in which independent or collaborative learning is deeply stressed, and students acquainted to traditional classroom activities "taking notes during a lecture, answering the occasional question, attending discussion sections"

Moreover, Ambrose *et al.* (2010:15) clarify that students link what they learn to what they already know, interpreting incoming information, and even sensory perception, through the lens of their existing knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions. In fact, there is prevalent agreement among researchers that students must connect new knowledge to previous knowledge in order to learn.

In this context, Paloff and Pratt (2013:8) emphasize that emerging technologies are altering the face of online learning. The use of cell phones, smart phones, tablets, and iPods are allowing mobile access to parts or all of a student's online courses. Many of these technological developments may be supportive in

accommodating various student learning styles. An auditory learner, for example, may feel more comfortable listening to a brief audio clip explaining a concept than reading about it. A visual learner tends to do well in an environment that presents mainly text or uses video clips. These techniques also aid to keep things interesting for students who feel the need for more activity in a learning situation.

1.2 Elements of Success in VL:

There are certain aspects that must be taken into account to success the VL and make students participate actively. These students will be subjected into a new learning style and technique. To make students cope with technological developments and electronic programs, it is significant to provide elements for the success of this modern method of learning.

- 1. General Ability:** To be successful, it is crucial that students are in the exact educational setting. There are some students for whom the distance setting is not a practical learning place. The successful students tend to be capable of initiating their own work and seem to have the desire to complete their study. (Smith and Dunn; (1991: 168–172)
- 2. Prior Knowledge.** When an teacher accounts for the background and prior knowledge of students, the learning experience can be more successful. Students of all ages come the educational setting with some knowledge and skills in topics and areas related to the topic of study. It is essential that the instructor have an understanding of what students know and how that relates to the intended instruction. (Simonson *et.al*; (2001: 124–142)
- 3. Learning Styles:** one more indicator of successful learning at a distance is learning styles. For some students, the unique characteristics of distance learning facilitates better learning experiences than in a traditional classroom. (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005:25).

3. Consecutive Interpreting (CI)

CI is one of three significant modes of interpreting that requires skills, knowledge and mastering of both languages. CI occurs when the interpreter receives the SM from the speaker and reformulates it into the TM in the second language within a specific frame of time. Two important language skills involve in this process(listening skill and speaking skill), so the interpreter has to possess good those two skills in order to perform the rendering successfully. This type of interpreting is widely used in different occasions such as (Questions and Answers sessions, Press Conferences, High Level Political Talks, Welcome Addresses and Dinner speeches).

In this perspective, interpreter is required to reformulate a faithful and an accurate target message. In this respect, Phelan (2001: 9) reveals that this category is not a summary; it is a complete rendering of the original discourse in another language. Seemingly, CI is time consuming as the time factor is practically doubled. Some practitioners feel that this extra time is useful because it gives participants time to think.

While Kalina (2002:174) says that CI is changing professionally and in the mass media as a main mode of interpreting because in certain speech, the speakers tend to use CI phrase by phrase rather than an extended formal sentences with turns from 15 to 20 minutes). Moreover, this mode is highly required in meetings because it gives the interpreter to manage the task of interpreting enough time to process the information in order to reach well understood message.

For Gharib (2011:12) interpreter has to convey the message consecutively in the TL after the speaker delivers his message or gives a portion of it. Mainly the

speaker pauses after every portion to allow the interpreter reformulates what has been said in the SL into the TL. In this mode, the interpreter usually takes notes during the delivery of the TL.

3.1 Features of CI

There are many reasons make CI is preferable than other types of interpreting modes . Setton and Dawrant (2016:134) stress that CI gives enough time for the interpreter to think and find a proper equivalent in the TL. There are specific reasons behind this tendency into this mode such as:

1. **Cost:** consecutive can be done by a single interpreter, and involves no equipment rental charges.
2. **Mobility and convenience:** consecutive is transferable, and can be performed anywhere and anytime – down a coalmine, in a moving limo, on an aircraft, etc.
3. **Privacy or confidence:** CI provides person-to-person communication without the influence of machines and with fewer people involved.
4. **Accuracy and/or monitorability:** It is believed by many that CI is more accurate than SI because the interpreter has enough time to think.
5. **Slowness:** CI may be preferred in negotiation or diplomacy for its temporizing potential, giving principals extra time to think; on occasion it has even been used as a pure formality, or deliberately to waste time.

For Gillies (2019:10) CI is still considered part of the skill set required to be called a conference interpreter. Moreover, he adds that it is easier for students and teachers to identify the technique problems students are having when interpreting in consecutive because the skill is split into two distinct phases listening and speaking. It also is seen as the gateway to interpreting by many scholars because it is a good idea to learn the analytical and presentation skills required for consecutive first.

3.2 Teaching of CI

To start teaching interpreting courses, the first mode must be CI because it is regarded as the gateway of the other types of interpreting. Many scholars emphasize that CI is the basic stone for developing the skills required for the next steps and mastering this process which requires a high level of cognitive processing.

Ilg and Lambert (1996: 73-75) assert that teaching CI is first step in a ladder of interpreting modes intended to develop oral communication skills. This preliminary phase in teaching CI provides an opportunity to assess the student's ability and to concentrate on the comprehension and production phases.

While Pochhacker (2004:183) explains that teaching CI takes into account the interface between memory and note-taking also the need for preparatory exercises to enrich 'active listening', message analysis, and recall the final message.

One study by Niska(2005:48-49)highlights that teaching CI before conference and simultaneous interpreting is significant because it is regarded as a main interpreting mode the students must master. Niska adds that they will be able to listen to the meaning of the words not to translate the words.

For Gile (2005: 130) in many teaching courses and programs of CI training start with a short period of drills of consecutive without note-taking in order to boost and train the student's memory. He adds that CI is seen by many the top form of interpreting because it necessitates the comprehension phase to be accomplished.

4. Practical Field of Study

4.1. Design of Questionnaire

In this study, the practical aspect includes an analysis of data collected from a ten-closed items questionnaire which distributed into forty participants in this study. They have studies online CI course during the spread of COV-19. This course lasted three month and the lectures were distributed electronically via (Google Classroom, What's Up, Telegram) Apps. The data collected in this study have been analyzed statistically based on Fisher's equation. The questionnaire contains (10) closed- ended items that each participant is asked to answer with one of the four options: strongly agree, agree , neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

For Brown (2007:6) questionnaires are any written tools that given to respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to respond either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". The questionnaire has significant benefit by enabling quantitative data to be collected in a standardized way so that the data are internally consistent and coherent for analysis.

4.2. Data Analysis

The data of the study have been analyzed statistically, and the scoring scheme in this analysis has been done by giving numbers for each option in the questionnaire (1-5): 5 for "strongly agree" , 4 for "agree", 3 for "neutral", 2 for "disagree" and 1 for "strongly disagree". Based on this distribution, the frequency of each response will be determined.

Statistically, the data are analyzed based on the frequency of each response " coefficient midst " and " percentage weight ". Consequently, Fisher (1956 :327) suggests a formula through which the average of each item in the questionnaire can be found and to obtain knowledge of strength and weakness of each item, the following special formula can be adopted:

$$\text{Coefficient midst} = \frac{1r \times 5 + 2r \times 4 + 3r \times 3 + 4r \times 2 + 5r \times 1}{\text{Total number of repetitions}}$$

Where:

- 1r = repetition of the first answer (strongly agree) and its value (or degree) is 5,
- 2r = repetition of the second answer (agree) whose value is 4,
- 3r = repetition of the third answer (neutral) whose value is 3,
- 4r = repetition of the third answer (disagree) whose value is 2
- 5r = repetition of the third answer (strongly disagree) whose value is 1; and the total number of repetitions means the sample size which is (40 students).

To change the 'coefficient midst' of each item into percentage or what is called percentage weight, as stated by Al-Ghareeb (1970:77), the researcher made use of the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage Weight (PW)} = \frac{\text{Coefficient Midst (CM)}}{\text{Maximum value}} * 100$$

Maximum value = Maximum degree in the questionnaire is (5).

Table (1) The Frequency of each Option in the Students' Questionnaire.

#	Frequency of 1 st option (Strongly Agree)	Frequency of 2 nd option (Agree)	Frequency of 3 rd option (Neutral)	Frequency of 4 th option (Disagree)	Frequency of 5 th option (Strongly Disagree)	Coefficient Midst	Percentage Weight
1	7	20	8	5	0	3.7	74.5
2	10	23	4	1	2	3.9	78.5
3	30	8	2	0	0	4.7	94
4	9	15	10	0	6	3.5	70.5
5	10	22	8	0	0	4	81
6	15	17	8	0	0	4.1	83.5
7	3	30	2	3	2	3.7	74.5
8	7	25	3	5	0	3.8	78
9	5	17	10	5	3	3.4	68
10	4	28	5	3	0	3.8	76

Item1:

This item ranks 7th with value (3.7), and percentage (74.5). This item refers to that the students prefer the VL as a helpful education style compare with traditional education. This means that good percentage of students tend to improve their skill in VL because the learning outcomes have been improved significantly. This is an indicator of students' satisfaction concerning the new learning style.

Item2:

This item takes the rank 4th with value (3.9), and percentage (78.5). It's clear that student's performance becomes better in DE compared with learning according traditional education. The reason behind this improvement is the interaction between teacher and students during the online classes that makes communication easier without hesitation.

Item3:

This item ranks 7th with value (4.7), and percentage (94). This is the highest among other items in the questionnaire which shows that the majority of the students face technological problems during the course. These technology based-problems lead to unsatisfactory performance because of the electronic obstacles the students may face during online classes.

Item4:

This item takes the rank 8th with value (3.5), and percentage (70.5). In this item, the researchers find that note-taking strategy is needed to be employed by the students

because it is regarded as a supportive tool to memory during the interpreting task. This strategy must be taught in details and show the students how, when, what, why is used.

Item5:

This item ranks 3rd with value (4), and percentage (81). Listening skill is the core of the interpreting task. In this study, student's skill has been developed as they receive SM electronically and they have enough time frame to listen for many times and understand the message. The apps help them to save these SMs and listen carefully before render it in the TL.

Item6:

This item takes the rank 2nd with value (4.1), and percentage (83.5).

This item shows that the students have good time to process the information received and this time was enough to render the message comparing with the time they have in the traditional education. This effects their performance positively because there is no stress and the time is free to render the message. Time is one of the critical factors that affect student's performance.

Item7:

This item ranks 7th with value (3.7), and percentage (74.5). This item refers that the vocabularies of the students have been increased during this course because using of technology helps students find the meaning of the strange words and use different E-dictionaries. This use of technology helps them increase their vocabularies in different contexts.

Item8:

This item takes the rank 5th with value (3.8), and percentage (78). This percentage is a good indicator that shows the majority of students prefer the new technology in learning CI. To teach interpreting, it is important to make sure that the students master the skills needed for this task. Therefore; in DE the students make use of the technology to improve their skills. This is a promising percentage referring to teach CI by online classes and improve students' performance.

Item9:

This item ranks 9th with value (3.4), and percentage (68). This items indicates that speaking skill is not improved compared with listening skills. Students need more practicing in speaking in order to improve this skills when they interpret. To render the SM they repeat it more than one time to reach an accurate message in TL so their speaking skills need to be improved more.

Item10:

This item takes the rank 5th with value (3.5), and percentage (76). This items refers that self-confidence is required in interpreting task because it helps students manage the task of interpreting successfully with no hesitation. Self-esteem is very important to be taken into account in performance because the student can render the SM efficiently and reach to a very comprehensible TM without any anxiety.

4.3. Findings

This data analysis shows a great interest about the VL because the students see that their performance has been developed in spite of sort of difficulties they have faced in DE. Great percentage (94%) of the students faced technical problems and communication obstacles. While (83.5) of the students believe that the time give to them during the lectures is enough to receive SM and renders it into TM sufficiently. This percentage (83%) refers to students who agree that their listening skill is developed considerably during the DE courses as they listen to the SM through the electronic

platforms. In this context, (76.5%) of the students agree that their performance has been developed significantly as they learn virtually by using electronic platforms.

4.4. Discussion

In this study, the students showed a certain degree of preferences to use VL in improving their interpreting skills. According to the data analysis the VL is very important in improving the awareness of the students in CI and how they make use of the electronic support in interpreting process.

This study shows that the motivation of the students has been increased significantly as they employ the technology in developing their listening and speaking skills.

Table (2) Coefficient Midst and the Percentage Weight of the items in the Students' Questionnaire

Rank	Item Number in the Questionnaire	Items	Midst Coefficient	Percentage Weight
1 st	3	Do you believe that students face technological obstacles in DE that hinder their performance?	4.7	94
2 nd	6	Do you believe that the time given to render the SM in DE is better than in traditional education?	4.1	83.5
3 rd	5	Do you think that your listening skill has developed when you used technological apps?	4	81
4 th	2	Do you think that your performance is better than in traditional teaching methods?	3.9	78.5
5 th	8	Do you find that teaching CI in DE better than in traditional education?	3.8	78
6 th	10	Do you believe that ED helps you increase your self-confidence better than face-face communication?	3.8	76
7 th	7	Do you think that your vocabularies increased when you deal with technological apps?	3.7	74.5
7 th	1	Do you find that visual learning is helpful education style?	3.7	74.5
8 th	4	Do you find that note-taking helps you during VL in CI?	3.5	70.5

9 th	9	Do you think that your speaking skills improve as you employing the technological app in recording your rendering ?	3.4	68
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Appendix1: Students' Questionnaire

No	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Do you find that visual learning is helpful education style?					
2	Do you think that your performance is better than in traditional teaching methods?					
3	Do you believe that students face technological obstacles in DE that hinder their performance?					
4	Do you find that note-taking helps you during VL in CI?					
5	Do you think that you listening skill has developed when you used technological apps?					
6	Do you believe that the time given to render the SM in DE is better than in traditional education?					
7	Do you think that your vocabularies increased when you deal with technological apps?					
8	Do you find that teaching CI in DE better that in traditional education?					
9	Do you think that your speaking skills improve as you employing the technological app in recording your rendering ?					
10	Do you believe that ED helps you to increase your self-confidence better that face-face communication?					