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Common English Syntactic and Pronunciation-related Errors Made by Trainee Simultaneous Interpreters

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Abstract:

The crucial aim of this paper is to unveil the common English syntactic and pronunciation errors made by trainee simultaneous interpreters. Knowing these common errors will help interpreting instructors focus on these two linguistic aspects while teaching simultaneous interpreting. In addition, recognising these repetitive errors will give trainee interpreters a clear and focused picture of the errors that they can avoid during their interpreting assignment. A focus on general interpreting is discussed, as well as the main and repetitive syntactic and pronunciation-related errors. Data from 96 trainee interpreters were analysed using the Triangular Model of Interpreting. Study findings showed that grammatical errors were most common and took many forms, such as incorrect pronouns, verb-related errors, to+ infinitive, incorrect use of adjectives, and redundancy of subject and subject-verb order. Pronunciation problems ranked second and included hesitation, mispronunciation, and spoonerism. In addition, it was observed that the number of mistakes made by trainee interpreters depends on their English proficiency, and the direct effect of their mother language.

Key words: Common pronunciation-related errors, Common syntactic errors, Trainee simultaneous interpreters.

الأخطاء النحوية واللفظية الانكليزية الشائعة لمتدربي الترجمة الفورية

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المخلص:

يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على الأخطاء النحوية واللفظية الانكليزية الشائعة التي يقوم بها متدريو الترجمة الفورية. إن معرفة هذه الأخطاء ستساعد متدري الترجمة للتركيز على هذين الجانبين اللغويين أثناء تدريس الترجمة الفورية. علاوة على ذلك، فإن المعرفة المسبقة لهذه الاخطاء المتكررة سيجنب متدري الترجمة من خطر الوقوع مجدداً بتلك الأخطاء اثناء الترجمة الفورية.

تناول هذا البحث الترجمة الفورية عامةً والأخطاء النحوية واللفظية المتكررة خاصةً. وذلك بالاعتماد على موديل المثلث للترجمة الفورية (The Triangular Model of Interpreting) ، ومن ثم تحليل عينات ٩٦ متدرياً للترجمة الفورية.

وتوصل البحث ان الخطأ النحوي هو الأكثر شيوعاً بين متدري الترجمة الفورية، ويأخذ هذا الخطأ اوجه عدة مثل: الاستخدام الخاطئ للضمير والأخطاء المتعلقة بالفعل و صيغة المجرّد و الاستعمال الخاطئ للصفات وحالة تكرار الفاعل واخيراً الترتيب الخاطئ للفاعل والفعل. اما فيما يتعلق بالأخطاء اللفظية فإنها احتلت المرتبة الثانية بنسبة الاخطاء الأكثر تكراراً بين متدري الترجمة الفورية وشملت كل من: التردد واللفظ الخاطئ للمفردة والتلثم. الى جانب ذلك توصلنا إلى أن كمية الأخطاء التي يرتكبها متدري الترجمة الفورية تعتمد على المستوى اللغوي للمتدرب وكفاءته في اللغة الانكليزية وعلى مدى تأثيره بلغته الأم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: متدريو الترجمة الفورية، الأخطاء النحوية الشائعة، الأخطاء اللفظية الشائعة

1. Introduction:

Simultaneous interpreting is not a new phenomenon; it dates back to 3000 BC (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002). However, the study of the phenomenon of simultaneous interpreting is considered to be relatively new. The main concept of simultaneous interpreting is the delivery and translation of a message from one language into another within the aim of keeping communication between two parties: source and target speakers. Janzen (2005: 136) defines simultaneous interpreting as “the process of interpreting into the target language at the same time as the source language is being delivered”. Moreover, Chernov (2004: 6) outlines simultaneous interpreting as “a complex type of bilingual verbal communicative activity”. Similarly, Namy (1978: 26) states that the simultaneous interpreter’s duty is to ensure communication and convey sense. Therefore, simultaneous interpreting is based on and was created for communication. Interpreters, especially trainees, may make some mistakes while interpreting and working to achieve their ultimate goal: enhancing communication.

These errors vary from one language to another; however, they generally include grammatical, phonological, semantic, and non-linguistic errors. Fraser (2000: 7) states that “being able to speak English of course includes a number of sub-skills, involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. However, by far the most important of these skills is pronunciation”.

An interpreter must master not only linguistic competence, but also social and cultural knowledge (Hale, 1999; Morris, 1999). However, in his model, Levelt (1989) underpins the importance of grammatical and phonological encoding in the process of speaking simultaneously. Similarly, Trabing (2002: 14) states that an interpreter must have “a broad knowledge, very good every day grammar and syntax and specific knowledge in many fields”.

Ellis (1994: 55) found that most second-language learners, whether in elementary or intermediate levels, make grammatical errors at different ratios. Dagneaux et al. (1998: 163- 174) agree with Ellis’s finding, and add that even advanced second-language learners commit some syntactic errors, such as subject-verb agreement. In an experiment conducted on interpreting students, Fabbro and Gran (1994: 304) conclude that most of the interpreting students’ attention went to the “syntactic form of the message (word-for-word-translation)”. Gonzalez et al. (2012: 781) state that grammatical errors committed by interpreters usually include verb tenses

and agreements. Similarly, Fabbro and Gran (1994) notice that trainee interpreters are very conscious with syntax.

By the same token, Zhang and Bailey (2015: 2978) conclude that the most basic grammatical errors made by non-native English interpreters whose A language is Chinese are the misuse of “articles, singular and plural noun forms, chain nouns, tense and vocabulary”.

According to Gile (2005: 10), the number of mistakes are connected with language directionality; thus, he states that interpreters may feel comfortable and will be more accurate when they interpret into their A language. In the same vein, Dailidénaitè (2009: 15) identifies that trainee students tend to “make more grammatical corrections, and would resort to lexicon- or pronunciation-related repairs more frequently” when interpreting from A into B language. On the contrary, Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002) prove in their empirical experiment that Arabic-English interpreters feel more relaxed when interpreting into their B language.

As the heart of interpreting is communication, Julia (2002) outlines that neither oral communication nor spoken language would be achieved without pronunciation. Again, Fraser (2000: 7) considers pronunciation to be a significant oral communication skill. Therefore, as Fraser (1999: 8) states, many second-language teachers and interpreting trainers must recognise the importance of teaching and mastering pronunciation in spite of its difficulty for both learners and teachers.

Kharma and Hajjaj (1989: 195) discovered that Arab students have difficulty pronouncing some English pair consonant sounds, such as /v/ and /f/ and /p/ and /b/. Similarly, Tushyeh (1996) analyses the fact that Arab learners fail to distinguish between some sound pairs, such as /p/ and /b/ and /v/ and /f/.

When interpreters mispronounce words, this affects their fluency and may cause hesitation. Hartsuiker et al. (2005) point out some disfluencies that may interrupt communication, and note that disfluencies take many forms, such as false starts, repetitions, and hesitations. Gósy (2007: 93) defines speech disfluencies as “phenomena that interrupt the flow of speech and do not add propositional content to an utterance”. He sub-classifies disfluencies into fillers, such as *uh* and *um*, and repeating words. On the contrary, Clark and Fox Tree (2002: 103) argue that some disfluencies, like fillers, have a communicative function.

That said, when fillers combine with long pauses, they cause hesitation (Fox Tree, 1995). In their experiment to discuss hesitation disfluencies in simultaneous speech, Corley and Stewart (2008: 3) notice that “participants were more likely to repeat words, but no more likely to use fillers such as uh, in the fast conditions”.

Repetition, self-correction, or what Kohn & Kalina (1996) called “emergency strategy” are repair mechanisms utilized by interpreters when they realise that an error has occurred and they want to correct it (Levelt, 1983: 52).

In terms of pauses, Hargrove and McGarr (1994: 109) define pauses as “a period in time in which no acoustic signal occurs for at least 200-270 msec”. Moreover, pauses have many positive impacts on the interpreting process, such as giving the interpreter time to comprehend and understand the syntactic production of the utterance (ibid). Nevertheless, when the lag times exceed an average of 2 to 3 seconds (Barik, 1972), the merits of pauses may become demerits as they will be considered a hesitation.

As stated by Hurford (1987), rendering number may cause serious problems while interpreting. Gile (1995: 108) agrees with Barik’s view that numbers constitute a serious problem in simultaneous interpreting, and stresses the importance of remembering and rendering numbers correctly.

The interpreter’s job is to bridge the gap between two languages. This mission will be very hard if the two working languages are related to two different language families, such as is the case with Arabic and English. De Bot (2000) outlines that when interpreters deal with two typologically-different languages, many grammatical errors can occur. Again, the dissimilarity between Arabic and English sound systems may cause some pronunciation-related errors. These grammatical and pronunciation errors have been studied by researchers in the second-language acquisition field. However, few studies have focused on the details of these errors in the interpreting field; therefore, there has not been sufficient study of the common errors made by Arabic native trainee interpreters at the syntactic and phonological levels. Hence, an experiment on 96 trainee interpreters was conducted to answer the research question: what are the common grammatical and pronunciation –related errors committed by trainee interpreters?

Due to the limitations of this paper and the importance of the following syntactic and pronunciation aspects in forming idiomatic interpreting, it concentrates solely on six main syntactic errors: incorrect pronoun, verb-

related mistakes, to+ infinitive, incorrect use of adjectives, repeating subject, and subject-verb order. Regarding pronunciation errors, this study focuses on hesitation, mispronunciation, and spoonerism. By shedding light on these errors, this practical study aims to help trainers both pedagogically and practically.

The Triangular Model of Interpreting was utilized as a theoretical framework to fulfil the aim of this empirical study. The main concept of the Triangular Model of Interpreting is to achieve communication, which is crucial in simultaneous interpreting. Therefore, this model was chosen as a theoretical set up for this study. In addition, this model has been widely used in teaching simultaneous interpreting programs and is applicable in training novice interpreters. Because samples used in this study are trainee interpreters, the triangular Model of Interpreting provides a powerful link between theory and practice.

2. Error or Mistake?

In language, Crystal (2008: 173) defines errors as “mistakes in spontaneous speaking or writing”. According to Corder (1973: 259), an error is “a breach of the language's code, resulting in an unacceptable utterance; with L2 learners this might occur because ‘the learners have not yet internalized the formation rules of the code’”, and mistake stands for “the result of some failure of performance” (Corder, 1971: 152).

Ellis (1994: 51) draws a distinction between error and mistake, and defines error as “lack of competence” and mistake as “performance phenomena”. Ellis then states that students usually make an error (Ibid). Based on Ellis’s definition, the term “error” is used in this paper as a reference to any incorrect utterance made by trainee interpreters.

3. Triangular Model of Interpreting

In 1984, Seleskovitch and Lederer issued a book titled *Interpreter pour Traduire*. In their co-authored edition, the notion of the Triangular Model of Interpreting, or so-called three-formula hypothesis, was first introduced among interpreting theories as a developed version of Seleskovitch’s Theory de Sense (1977). Seleskovitch and Lederer (1984) describe the process of interpreting with a triangle model, in which the source and target languages are located at the bottom corners and the meaning is located at the top. The main concept within the Triangular Model of Interpreting is rendering the intended meaning. This model ignores the linguistic components of utterances and instead focuses on the meaning or sense as a

unit, which creates communication. The latter is the core concept in teaching simultaneous interpreting. Moreover, this theoretical framework has been utilized in academia as a training guide and in papers as a theoretical setup.

4. Methodology

Qualitative methodology is utilized in this paper. Williams and Chesterman (2002: 64) state that qualitative methodology means “describing the quality of something in some enlightening way”. Nevertheless, no generalization of this methodological type can be permitted due to the limited number of participants. Therefore, to avoid the aforementioned drawback, the number of participants was increased to 96. The large number of participants provides the researcher with the ability to generalize the experiment results.

5. Samples

The sample comprised 4th grade trainee students studying translation at the Department of Translation in one of the Iraqi Universities. The sample included 98 students, all of whom had nearly 30 weeks of simultaneous interpreting training. The students had different levels of English competence and varied simultaneous interpreting experience.

Two participants were removed from the study. The first was removed due to a technical issue with the recording system, resulting in unclear speech. The second was removed due to failure to complete the whole speech for some personal issue. As a result, the total sample size was 96.

6. The Experiment

The Sinew device, model DBS (Data Broadcast System) was used to fulfil the experiment. Any troubleshooting was fixed before starting the experiment. In addition, an optimal environment was guaranteed for the samples.

The participants were informed about the text type prior to the study, and the main included terminologies were covered during the 30 weeks of training. The trainees were divided into groups of 10 students, and, after explaining the circumstances of the experiment to them, they started to listen and interpret simultaneously.

With regard to the delivered speech, it was previously recorded to ensure that all participants could listen to the same speaker’s speed. The delivered speed was 120 words per minute, as this is the average speaking speed as proven by Chernov (2004).

Cheung (2013) notes that difficulty in understanding a speech may occur if the speech is performed with a non-native accent. For this study, an Arabic-native speaker delivering a political speech by Haider al-Abadi, the Iraqi prime minister, was chosen. The content of the speech focused on combating terrorism and defeating ISIS, and was originally delivered at the international conference held in Brussels in December 2014. This speech was chosen for several reasons. First, it had not previously been studied. Second, the language and terminology utilized in this speech were mostly covered during the simultaneous interpreting lectures, avoiding the possibility that the trainee interpreters would face unknown vocabularies. Third, the general topic of combating terrorism, and ISIS in particular, is an ongoing issue.

The original speech was 1,453 words; however, it was condensed to 701 words in order to reach the optimal goal of this paper. (See appendix)

7. Data Analysis & Discussion

When we carefully analyse the interpreting of Arabic speech, we discover some facts and numbers that need to be discussed in detail. The most common syntactic and pronunciation errors made by the trainee interpreters are discussed below.

7.1 Syntactic-related Errors

This study found that 76 out of 96 trainee interpreters, or nearly 79%, made grammatical errors. These errors were assessed on the basis of the Triangular Model of Interpreting, which focuses on conveying the sense and intended meaning of the original speech. It is observed that these syntactic errors include incorrect pronoun, verb-related errors, misuse of the to+ infinitive form, incorrect use of adjectives, and redundancy of subject and subject-verb order. For clarity of the results, the rate occurrence for each of these errors is calculated out of 100%.

7.1.1 Incorrect Pronoun

Surprisingly, it was found that 76 out of 96 participating students (about 79%) failed to use the correct pronoun. Below are some examples of this syntactic error:

In the original, Arabic speech, referencing Iraq and its people's efforts to counter terrorism, al-Abadi (2014) said:

ان حكومة العراق وشعبه ملتزمان بتأدية ما علينا في هذا السياق

“Iraq and its people are all committed to do their best in this respect” (back translation).

Some students referred to the people of Iraq by using the pronoun “his” or “it”, for example, “Iraq and his people are committed to face terrorism/Iraq and it people”.

Another example that can be used to illustrate the incorrect use of pronouns is the rendering of the Iraqi prime minister’s statement that ISIS is our joint enemy and we have to work together to defeat it:

وبما ان داعش يمثل عدوا مشتركا لنا ينبغي ان تكون هزيمته هي مسعانا المشترك ايضا
 “As ISIS is our common enemy, its defeat must be our common priority”
 (back translation).

A group of students interpreted “Daesh” (ISIS) into “he”, as *Daesh* in Arabic is masculine. Arabic, unlike English, does not have an *it* pronoun; thus, many said “he is our enemy”.

Here is another example of trainees using the pronoun *he* when they referred to *Daesh*:

هذا الكيان لا يعد اسلاميا
 “This entity does not belong to Islam” (back translation).

The original statement was rendered into: “he does not represent Islam/ he is not related to Islam/ he is not refer to Islam”.

Another example of incorrect pronoun use was found in the rendering of the prime minister’s thanking of NATO for hosting the conference:

كما اشكر حلف شمال الاطلسي (الناتو) لاستضافته هذا المؤتمر في مقره الرئيس
 “I would like also to thank NATO for the hosting this conference in its
main headquarters” (back translation).

Interestingly, 15 students used the incorrect pronoun when they referred to the headquarters of NATO by saying “I also would like to thank NATO for hosting this conference in his main place/his main hall/ his main headquarter”.

7.1.2 Verb-related Errors

Many study participants did not correctly deal with verbs. The trainees either incorrectly added to verbs (e.g. *-ing* form), dropped an auxiliary,

misused the subject agreement, failed to choose the right tense, swapped the verb with an adjective, or mistakenly used the passive voice instead of the active form and vice versa. Several examples demonstrating these errors is provided.

Surprisingly, 75 trainees (78%) failed to achieve subject-verb agreement during their interpreting assignment. For example, the original statement provided was:

اجرينا اتصالات وثيقة جدا وفعالة على مستويات عليا مع جميع دول الجوار
 “We made intensive calls on high levels with all the neighbouring countries” (back translation).

This phrase was interpreted by many trainee students into “We makes intensive calls with high parties/high levels/top officials”. Adding an “s” to the plural subject “we” makes this phrase grammatically incorrect.

In another example, the original statement was

وسنحتاج الى دعم واسع من اشقائنا وشركائنا في هذا الجانب
 “We need major support from our brothers and partners in this respect” (back translation).

Some participants rendered this phrase into “We needing much support from our brothers in this field”. The trainees failed twice here, first in converting the verb (need) into a noun by adding the *-ing* form, and then by saying “need” instead of “we need.” The second error was in the choice of tense, as the trainees chose the present tense instead of the future tense, as referred to in the original Arabic source.

Again, when 11 subjects interpreted

يقوم العراق حكومة وشعبا بكل ما في وسعه
 “...Iraq and its people and government are doing all its best to...” (back translation) into “...Iraq and its government making all what it can do to...”, they made an error by dropping the auxiliary verb “are” before “making”.

Below are some additional grammatically-incorrect forms of interpreted phrases:

- ان حضورنا اليوم يبين “Our attendance today shows” (back translation) was rendered into “our attendance show”. The error here is incorrect agreement with subjects.

- ان داعش لا يهدد “ISIS does not threaten” (back translation) was interpreted into “ISIS do not threaten”. The error here is using the past participle form after the verb (do).
- داعش يعدم “ISIS executes” (back translation) was rendered into “it was killed”. The error here is swapping the active voice with the passive.
- في العراق اليوم، تبذل شتى الجهود لحماية المكتسبات الديمقراطية “In Iraq, all the efforts are exerted to keep democracy” (back translation) was transferred into “efforts exert”. The error here is swapping the passive voice with the active.
- داعش يمثل عدوا “ISIS represents our enemy” (back translation) was interpreted into “ISIS representative enemy”. Some trainees replaced the verb (represent) with the adjective (representative).

In total, 11 % of participants committed this syntactic error.

7.1.3 To+ Infinitive

Nearly 39% of the trainees could not utilise the to+ infinitive form correctly. Giving some examples may clarify this point:

The original phrase was في العراق اليوم، تبذل شتى الجهود لحماية المكتسبات الديمقراطية “In Iraq, many efforts are exerted to keep the democracy” (back translation).

Some participants interpreted this phrase into “efforts to protected” or “efforts are exerted to guarding democracy”. As it can be seen, the trainees used the -ed / -s forms after “to”; thus, their rendering was grammatically incorrect.

Once more, the prime minister concluded his remarks by pointing that

اننا اليوم، نتبادل الافكار، اما غدا، علينا ان نترجم اقوالنا الى افعال
 “Today we are exchanging thoughts; however, tomorrow we have to translate our saying into deeds” (back translation).

Several participants made the same mistake when they said “today, we have to exchanged / we need to swapped our thoughts today/ we have to exchange thoughts, but to interpreted our action/ have to”. Their grammar was incorrect as they did not use the infinitive after “to”.

7.1.4 Incorrect Use of Adjectives

Unlike English, Arabic tends to place adjectives before nouns. This grammatical rule may have confused trainees whose English does not allow

them to overpass this syntactic contradiction between Arabic and English. Thirteen percent of participants made this type of error.

The following are some examples of the students' errors in switching adjectives with nouns:

- الأعمال وحشية "Brutal acts" (back translation) was rendered into "acts brutal".
- الأفكار المتطرفة "Extremist thoughts" (back translation) was interpreted into "thoughts extremist".
- المدن المحررة "Liberated cities" (back translation) was rendered into "cites liberated".

It was clear that some subjects made this type of error due to their hesitation or lack of experience, as they tried to correct themselves immediately or even after a few phrases. On the other hand, very few students did not try to correct themselves and continued interpreting after making an error.

Surprisingly, although the trainees were informed during the tutorial lectures not to say "Arabic countries" in reference to the Arab countries "العربية الدول", 34 participants made this error.

7.1.5 Redundancy of Subject

Nearly 10 trainee interpreters, 10% of the sample, repeated the subject twice, first by stating the subject and then by using a pronoun to refer to that subject.

In one example of this syntactic error, the original phrase was

ولأن هذا الكيان لا يعد إسلامياً ولا دولة ولا يستحق أن يطلق عليه اسم رسمي، لذا أطلق عليه كلمة داعش كمختصر في اللغة العربية.

"It is neither related to Islam nor to a certain country, and it does not deserve to have an official name; therefore, I call it "Daesh" as an abbreviation in Arabic" (back translation).

This sentence was rendered into "ISIS it is a criminal organisation/ it ISIS is not related to Islam". In these two examples, the students first identify that ISIS is the subject, but then refer to ISIS using "it". Using two subjects in such a way is syntactically incorrect.

In another example, the original phrase was

ان قواتنا الامنية تفتقر الى التدريب والتسليح الشامل

“Our security forces lack training and comprehensive armament” (back translation).

This was rendered into “our security forces they lack training”. “Security forces” and “they” are the same subject; hence, this interpreting is incorrect.

7.1.6 Subject-Verb Order

In spite of the small number of trainees who were driven by their A language (Arabic), it is necessary to mention this type of syntactic error in order to achieve the aim of this paper and cover as many errors as possible. Only 7 participants, nearly 7% of the sample, followed the Arabic pattern of verb-subject-complement rather the English pattern of subject-verb-complement when interpreting from Arabic into English. This small percentage shows that more attention should be paid to those few trainees who make serious grammatical errors. Some examples include:

- نتبادل الافكار “We exchange thoughts” (back translation) was rendered into “exchange we thoughts”.
- لقد وعدنا مكونات شعبتنا “We promised Iraqi people” (back translation) was interpreted into “promised we people”.
- نحن ماضون قدما في حربنا “We are moving forward” (back translation) was rendered into “move we forward”.

All of the common syntactic errors made by trainee interpreters are summarized in Figure 1:

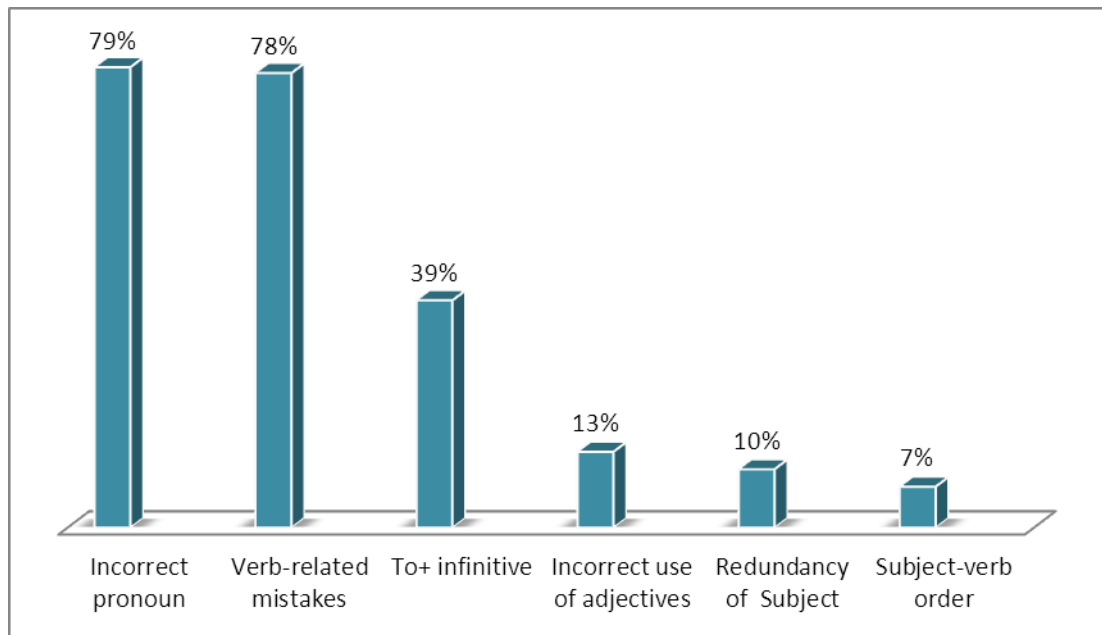


Figure 1: Common syntactic-related errors

7.2 Pronunciation-related Errors

Sixty-nine participants made critical pronunciation errors while they rendered the Arabic speech. As this is a high percentage (72%), a serious and careful analysis of these common errors should be completed. Based on the Triangular Model of Interpreting, pronunciation-related errors are any errors in production that negatively affect the delivered message. These errors included hesitation, mispronunciation, and spoonerism. Each error is discussed in detail below.

7.2.1 Hesitation

In language, hesitation phenomena refer to “‘normal’ errors which are introduced into speech” (Crystal, 2008: 325). Pöchhacker (2015) provides examples of hesitation phenomena, such as filled pauses, silent pauses, and repair. In his empirical study, Mead (2000) proves that disfluencies may occur among trainee students when the proportion of pause time exceeds 20 seconds (Mead, 2000, cited in Pöchhacker, 2016: 118). Based on this, any type of hesitation that exceeded 20 seconds was considered hesitation.

During the course of our analysis, 69 participants (72%) hesitated during the interpreting process. This type of error was embodied in several ways:

- **Silent Pauses**

Marcias (2006: 28) defines silent pauses as “any interruption in the flow of speech which is manifested in silent form”. According to Mead (2000), 20 seconds is a healthy time for a normal pause (Mead, 2000, cited in Pöchhacker, 2016: 118). Thus, when a pause exceeds that time it is considered a silent pause, which is a hesitation as the flow of the interpreting is interrupted.

In this study, about 40% of trainees were recorded as having silent pauses in their interpreting. In one example, the original phrase was

بما ان داعش يشكل تهديدا لنا جميعا ويحاول القضاء على تراثنا الكبير، فعلينا ان نتعاون لدره
 “As ISIS threatens us and it tries to end our great legacy, we have to cooperate to defeat it” (back translation).

This phrase was rendered into “as ISIS threatens us and/ ISIS is aa a big threat...”. This phrase was not accurately interpreted as the pause intervals of the trainee were 33 and 58 seconds, respectively. Therefore, the trainee was unable to finish the interpreting and lost the flow of the speech.

In another example, the original phrase was ان قوات الامن العراقية وشركائها تحقق خطوات الى الامام
 “The Iraqi security forces and its partners are making progressive steps” (back translation).

Once more, this phrase was performed by a student as “the Iraqi forces...”. The silent pause interval was 59 seconds, which badly affected her performance.

- **Filled Pauses**

Pöchhacker (2016: 118) states that filled pauses, also known as fillers, include “um” and “ah”. Nearly 32% of the subjects in this study resorted to using filled pauses.

In one example, the original phrase was

واشكر معالي وزير الخارجية الاميركي جون كيري ، لعقد هذا الاجتماع حول كيفية استجابة المجتمع الدولي للخطر الناجم عما يسمى بالدولة الاسلامية في العراق والشام.

“I would like to thank John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, for holding this meeting about the response of the international community to the danger of so-called ISIS” (back translation).

This sentence was rendered into “I would like to thank Jhon Kerry for holding this meeting about... ah...ah...um...ah...ummmmm to defeat ISIS”. The trainee used the fillers “um” and “ah” too many times, thereby affecting his performance.

In another example, trainees were provided with a title, خادم الحرمين الشريفين
“The custodian of the two holy mosques” (back translation).

In spite of providing this title to trainee interpreters during titular lectures, over 20 students failed to render the title correctly, saying “the cuttsss....”, “the custodian.....”, or even deleting it completely.

• Repetition

According to Merriam-Webster (2016), repetition means “the act of saying or doing something again”. For the purposes of this study, it indicates participants repeating the same utterance many times.

Repetition was a strategy utilized by 17% of trainee interpreters, and was used when they tried to hide their hesitation. If repetition is used it will not affect the trainees’ performance; in fact, it is considered a good technique for saving time while interpreting. However, when participants overuse this strategy by continuing interpreting and repeating the same chunk it greatly affects their fluency.

The two students’ interpretations provided below illustrate the aforementioned point of view:

The original statement was

ان حضورنا اليوم يبين ان لنا هدفا مشتركا وهو هزيمة داعش وان ذلك يتطلب جهودا جماعية
اقليمية ودولية

“Our attendance today shows that we have a joint goal which is defeating ISIS and that requires international and regional efforts” (back translation).

The provided interpreting were as follows:

- Trainee (1): “Our attendance today shows that our aim is united, our attendance today shows that our aim is united which is deafening ISIS, and that needs an international cooperation”.
- Trainee (2): “Being here today indicates that, being here today. Indicates that. Indicate we have one goal which is defeat Daesh and we have to, we have to to to to cooperate internationally and regionally to achieve that”.

As can be seen from the first example, the trainee's interpreting includes repetition, which did not negatively affect his production. On the contrary, it provided a spare second for the trainee to think of the next phrase and it was not boring for the listener to hear the phrase repeated twice. Moreover, repeating the first phrase emphasises the common aim of that meeting, which was defeating ISIS. Thus, trainee (1)'s interpreting sounds healthy, successful, and free of any type of hesitation.

Conversely, trainee (2)'s interpreting was not successful as he was not confident and repeated the same phrases three times. In addition, it was boring for the listener to hear the same phrase or word repeated three times.

- **Low Voice Projection**

Kuhn and Schwanenflugel (2008: 47) encourage students to raise their voice while speaking inside classrooms as they prove that speaking with a low voice is a clear indicator of hesitation (ibid). Based on this finding, nearly 11% of the sample was considered to have very low voice projection during many intervals of their interpreting.

Table (1) provides a summary of the hesitation types and their percentages as found in this study.

Table 1

Silent pauses	Filled pauses	Repetition	low voice
40%	32%	17%	11%

7.2.2 Mispronunciation

It was observed that 68% of trainees mispronounced some utterances, which was demonstrated in several ways:

- **Numbers**

Throughout the process of analysing data, it was observed that trainees dealt poorly with numbers while rendering them from Arabic into English.

Strangely, 68% misinterpreted and mispronounced the number that was mentioned in al-Abadi's speech. Therefore, the trainees did not produce the equivalent number in the target speech. For example:

ان الحضور في هذا الاجتماع مايقارب ٦٠ وزير خارجية من دول العالم...

Original phrase: "The attendance of sixty foreign ministers from all over the world..."(back translation).

This phrase was rendered incorrectly into “the attendance/the presence of sixteen foreign ministers....” by 68% of participants. Although the aforementioned number is not complicated, many participants made the same error and interpreted “60” into “sixteen”. This is why Setton (2016: 167) stresses the necessity of additional practice hours for novice interpreters in order to avoid number confusion

Mixing up Sounds

21% of students switched the sound /p/ with /b/ or vice versa. Here are some examples:

- “Put” instead of “But”
- “pattle” instead of “battle”
- “compat terrorism” for “combat terrorism”
- “resbonce” for “response”
- “obtimistic” instead of “optimistic”
- “pest” for “best”
- “bercent” instead of “percent”

As for mixing up /s/ and /z/ and/or /t/ and /d/, very few cases were recognised (less than 2%). The overall percentage of mixing up sound errors was 23%

• **Countries**

A small group of students (around 9%) mispronounced the English equivalent of the Arabic country “Syria”, as shown in the following example:

Original phrase: لقد تسببت الاعمال الارهابية لداعش والحرب الاهلية في سوريا في نزوح مايقارب مليوني شخص

“The terrorist acts of ISIS and the sectarian war in Syria lead to 2 million refugees” (back translation).

Six trainees mispronounced “Syria” by pronouncing it as it is in Arabic, which is “Sooria”.

Additionally, three participants pronounced “Iraq” as “irak” when faced with the sentence below:

لن نتمكن من هزيمة الارهابيين الدوليين الحاقدين الذين يعتاشون على الفشل الا بعد اعادة بناء عراق آمن ومستقر في شرق اوسط آمن ومستقر.

“We cannot defeat those, who are living on failure, unless we build a secure and stable Iraq in a secure and stable Middle East” (back translation).

Although only 9% of the participants made this pronunciation error, it is worth noting in order to reach optimal and accurate results.

Table (2) summarises the types of mispronunciation that occurred in this study.

Table 2

Numbers	/p/, /b/ +/s/ and /z/, /t/, /d/	Countries
68%	21% + 2%	9%

7.2.3 Spoonerism

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008: 1399), spoonerism is defined as “a mistake made when speaking in which the first sounds of two words are exchanged with each other to produce a not intended and usually funny meaning.”

For example, one phrase provided for interpretation was

ان قواتنا الامنية تفتقر الى التدريب

“Our troops lack training” (back translation). This was rendered into “our scoops lack training” instead of “our troops”. It was funny as there is a big difference between “scoop” and “troop”.

In another example, the original phrase was

اننا نحارب اكبر المنظمات الارهابية الدولية الممولة والمنظمة والمجهزة بافضل ما يكون على مستوى العالم

“We are fighting the biggest and the terrorist organization "ISIS" that is funded and organized with the best equipment in the world” (back translation).

A student rendered this phrase into “we are fighting this terrt teerrt... organization that is well equipped”. It was very funny as he wanted to say “terrorist”, but the output sounded like the ringing of a landline telephone. The overall percentage of participants that committed a spoonerism error was 4%.

Figure 2 summarises the main pronunciation- related errors in this study.

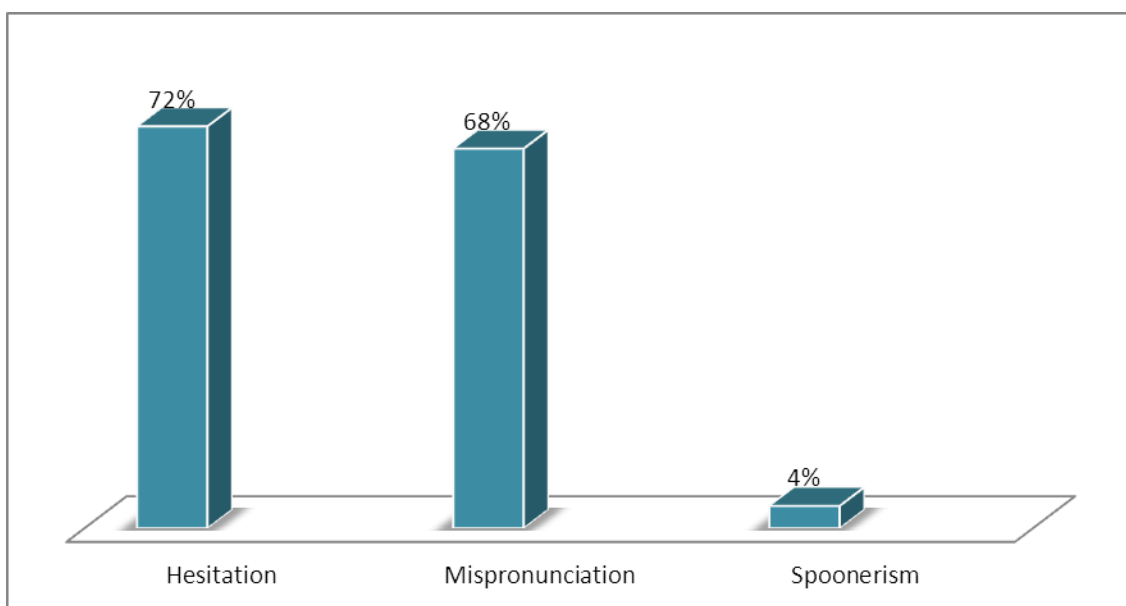


Figure (2): Main pronunciation- related errors

Table 3 sums up the main syntactic and pronunciation errors committed by trainees in this study.

Table 3

Syntactic-related errors	Pronunciation-related errors
79%	72%

8. Results

The Triangular Model of Interpreting was applied in this study, and helped the researcher to answer the research question and carefully examine study outcomes. As a result, two main types of analyses were drawn: macroscopic and microscopic.

8.1 Macroscopic Analysis

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (Stevenson: 1062), “macroscopic” is defined as “large-scale or general analysis”; therefore, this terminology is used to refer to general results and very obvious experimental numbers.

One prominent result was the presence of syntactic errors, which were observed in 79% of study participants. Although making grammatical errors are a very normal and healthy issue in interpreting as stated by Ellis (1994) and Dagneaux et al. (1998), this high percentage demonstrates trainees’ grammatical weaknesses and the need for additional attention on

the early teaching stages of English grammar. Despite the high percentage, some of these errors were cleverly managed by trainee interpreters.

In terms of pronunciation-related errors, 72 % of the participants committed different types of this error. Again, this shows the need for more instruction on pronunciation for interpreting trainees.

These general results coincide with the findings of Dailidėnaitė (2009) and Gile (1995), which showed that novice interpreters tend to make more syntactic and pronunciation-related errors when they interpret into their B language.

8.2 Microscopic Analysis

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (Stevenson: 1118), “microscopic” means “very small object”. Thus, this term is used to underpin the very detailed results of this study.

Considering syntactic errors under microscopic analysis, six main errors were discovered: incorrect pronoun, verb-related errors, to+ infinitive, incorrect use of adjectives, redundancy of subject, and subject-verb order.

Incorrect pronoun use was the most frequent error at 79%. Though some of the trainees have a good level of English competence, they unconsciously used an incorrect pronoun. This common error likely occurred due to students’ hesitation as they forgot that English, unlike Arabic, has a pronoun (it) used for inanimate objects in addition to the masculine (he) and feminine (she) pronouns. Consequently, some trainee interpreters treated the inanimate pronoun as masculine and replaced “it” with “he”.

Conversely, the subject-verb order error was the least common error (7%). The trainees who committed this error were noted to have very low English competence.

Verb-related errors were the second-most common type of error (78%), and the to+ infinitive error was third (39%). The percentage of incorrect use of adjectives and redundancy of subject errors were 13% and 10%, respectively.

Lee (2012: 695) justifies the syntactic challenges that interpreters might face by stating “the greater the syntactic difference between the source language and target language, the greater the challenge to the interpreter”. Lee’s justification might be an applicable explanation for the high ratio of

syntactic errors in this study as English and Arabic are completely unrelated languages.

Three main pronunciation-related errors were discovered in this study: hesitation, mispronunciation, and spoonerism.

Hesitation is a natural function that can happen to anyone facing a difficult situation. In this study, approximately two-thirds of trainees (72%) tried to hide their discomfort through hesitation. This hesitation took many forms, such as silent pauses, filled pauses, repetition, and low voice (40%, 32%, 17%, and 11%, respectively).

Mispronunciation is another form of hesitation. In this study, 68% of participants failed to pronounce a number correctly; 23% could not differentiate sounds (21% mixed up the /p/ and /b/ sounds, while 2% mixed up /s/ and /z/ and/or /t/ and /d/); and, 9% of participants mispronounced a country name. Few cases of spoonerism were recognized in this experiment, with only 4% of participants making this type of error.

In reviewing the results, it was found that the students with limited English competence frequently made both syntactic and pronunciation-related errors. On the contrary, very few errors were recorded for those trainee interpreters who have a good level of English competence. Hesitation, which reflects fear or discomfort, occurred frequently among the latter type of trainee interpreters.

9. Conclusion

Using the Triangular Model of Interpreting as a theoretical set up, the aim of this paper (i.e., discovering the most common English syntactic and pronunciation-related errors made by trainee interpreters) was achieved. After conducting an empirical experiment on 96 participants, the study concluded that 79% of trainees made syntactic-related errors and 72% committed pronunciation-related errors. One reason for these results may be the fact that Arabic and English are genetically unrelated. This dissimilarity may push trainee interpreters, especially those with a low level of English competence, to stick to the grammatical and pronunciation systems of their mother language.

The results also reveal trainees' incompetence in English grammar and pronunciation; therefore, additional emphasis should be put on teaching these two modules. One suggestion to accomplish this is to locate a module that concentrates on enhancing public speaking and building the trainee's

self-confidence, as mastering public speaking means speaking with good grammar and clear pronunciation.

Last but not least, during the process of analysis it was noted that other errors were also made by trainee interpreters. These errors included lack of socio-cultural awareness, courtesy and using appropriate honorifics, correct use of register, or focusing on different linguistic aspects, like semantic-related errors. These errors were not covered in this paper as the present study only addresses syntactic and pronunciation related errors. This paper may call other researchers to study these issues in detail, and has aimed to enrich academia, both theoretically and practically.

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11. Appendix

The delivered speech

كلمة السيد رئيس الوزراء الدكتور حيدر العبادي في المؤتمر الدولي لمكافحة الارهاب المنعقد في العاصمة البلجيكية بروكسل

السلام عليكم.. السيدات والسادة الحضور.

اشكركم جميعا لحضور هذا الاجتماع ولكل ما قدمته دولكم لدعم العراق وشعبه كما اشكر حلف شمال الاطلسي (الناطو) لاستضافته هذا المؤتمر في مقره الرئيس.

واشكر معالي وزير الخارجية الاميركي جون كيري ، لعقد هذا الاجتماع حول كيفية استجابة المجتمع الدولي للخطر الناجم عما يسمى بالدولة الاسلامية في العراق والشام، ولأن هذا الكيان لا يعد اسلاميا ولا دولة ولا يستحق ان يطلق عليه اسم رسمي، لذا اطلق عليه كلمة داعش كمختصر في اللغة العربية .

ان الحضور في هذا الاجتماع مايقارب ٦٠ وزير خارجية من دول العالم – يؤكد ان العالم قد أفاق لحقيقة ان داعش لا يهدد دول وشعوب الشرق الاوسط فحسب، وإنما يهدد جميع من يرفض ان يتقبل الافكار المتطرفة والممارسات المهجية في اي مكان

أيها السيدات، أيها السادة الكرام؛

ان حضورنا اليوم يبين ان لنا هدفا مشتركا بهزيمة داعش وذلك يتطلب جهودا جماعية اقليمية ودولية، وانا هنا اؤكد ان حكومة العراق وشعبه ملتزمان بتأدية ما علينا في هذا السياق.

نحن ممتنون للدعم الذي تقدمه الولايات المتحدة وأي عضو اخر في الائتلاف ، بيد اننا نعلم ان القتال على الارض هو مسؤوليتنا الاولى والاخيرة ، ونتفهم ان العراق بحاجة الى اصلاحات حكومية ومصالحة وطنية واعادة بناء اقتصادي واجتماعي الى جانب العمل العسكري لهزيمة داعش.

أيها الاصدقاء؛

دعوني اكن واضحا معكم، ان قواتنا الامنية تفتقر الى التدريب والتسليح الشامل، وسوف نحتاج الى دعم واسع من اشقائنا وشركائنا في هذا الجانب، ويمكنني طمأننتكم بان مساعدتكم بهذا المجال لن تذهب سدى، لاننا عندما

نحارب داعش، فاننا لانحارب من اجل شعب العراق فحسب، بل نحارب من اجل جميع شعوب العالم.

ان قوات الامن العراقية وشركائها تحقق خطوات الى الامام بفضل الدعم الذي نتلقاه من الائتلاف الدولي ومن خلال التنسيق الوثيق مع قوات البيشمركة الكردية ومن مساعدات جميع شرائح المجتمع العراقي سوية، واستطعنا ان نستعيد طرقا استراتيجية ومواقع اخرى وحررنا مدنا بأكملها. لقد وعدنا مكونات شعبنا بهذا الوعد الصادق، نحن ماضون قدما في حربنا من اجل تحرير كل شبر من اراضيها وكل شريحة من شرائح مجتمعنا، سوف نطرد عصابات داعش من ارضنا الكريمة، ونعيد الحياة الى المدن المحررة.

السيدات والسادة؛

وعلى الصعيد الدبلوماسي، فاننا نقوم بتعزيز علاقاتنا مع جميع دول الجوار، لكي نتمكن سوية من محاربة عدونا المشترك (داعش) بفعالية اكبر.

وخلال الاسابيع الماضية، اجرينا اتصالات وثيقة جدا وفعالة على مستويات عليا مع جميع دول الجوار، منهم مع أمير ورئيس وزراء دولة الكويت، والرئيس الايراني السيد روحاني، وجلالة الملك عبدالله الثاني ورئيس وزراء الاردن في عمان، وخادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك عبدالله بن عبدالعزيز بالرياض، ورئيس وزراء تركيا السيد احمد داوود اوغلو، ومع وزير خارجية دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة الشيخ عبدالله بن زايد آل نهيان في بغداد.

في العراق اليوم، تبذل شتى الجهود لحماية المكتسبات الديمقراطية، سواء من خلال اعادة تشكيل حكومتنا ومصالحة مجتمعنا، او من خلال مقاومة داعش واعادة علاقاتنا مع الدول المجاورة لنا. ولكن التحديات التي نواجهها لايمكن ان تجابهها دولة بمفردها، اننا نحارب اكبر المنظمات الارهابية الدولية الممولة والمنظمة والمجهزة بافضل ما يكون على مستوى العالم، لذا فان رسالتي لكم جميعا هي:

اننا نؤدي ما علينا، ونحن بحاجة الى مساعدتكم.

اما على الصعيد العسكري، فنحن بحاجة الى الاسناد الجوي والتدريب والتسليح وبناء قدرات القوات الامنية العراقية، كما اننا بحاجة الى دعم دول الجوار وحلفائنا في صراعنا لوضع حد لتسلل المقاتلين الاجانب الى داخل العراق، ولأجلنا ولأجلكم، ينبغي ألا يكون العراق ساحة لتدريب الارهابيين القادمين من والعائدين الى كل بقعة توجد فيها مشاكل على وجه الارض.

كما اننا بحاجة الى دعم المجتمع الدولي في معالجة الازمة الانسانية التي سببها داعش، لكي لا يتم تجنيد اللاجئين الذين هجروا بسبب الارهاب في موجات اخرى من اعمال العنف المتطرف.

لقد تسببت الاعمال الارهابية لداعش والحرب الاهلية في سوريا في نزوح مايقارب مليوني شخص وهم الان متواجدون ضمن حدودنا، نحن بحاجة الى مساعدات انسانية لتلبية احتياجاتهم لا سيما مع قدوم فصل الشتاء.

أيتها الأخوات والأخوة؛

لن نتمكن من هزيمة الارهابيين الدوليين الحاقدين الذين يعتاشون على الفشل الا بعد اعادة بناء عراق آمن ومستقر في شرق اوسط آمن ومستقر، وبما ان داعش يمثل عدوا مشتركا لنا ينبغي ان تكون هزيمته هي مسعانا المشترك ايضا.

وفي ظل صراعنا الحالي، يقوم العراق حكومة وشعبا بكل ما في وسعه، ومن خلال وجودكم ومشاركتم هنا اليوم، فإني متفائل بأنكم ستبذلون ما في وسعكم ايضا. اننا اليوم، نتبادل الافكار، اما غدا، وكلما اقتضت الضرورة، علينا ان نترجم اقوالنا الى افعال.

الدكتور حيدر العبادي

رئيس وزراء جمهورية العراق

الاربعاء ٣ كانون الاول ٢٠١٤