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Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpretation from English to Arabic: How Does Pragmatic Context Influence Meaning Transfer?

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Abstract

This article examines the role of pragmatic context in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, particularly in international and political settings, where cultural, social, and political factors significantly shape the transmission of meaning between languages. Interpretation is not merely the transfer of words but a complex discursive process that necessitates an understanding of intentions, rhetorical strategies, and the cultural backgrounds of both the speaker and the target audience. The significance of this study stems from the urgent need to enhance the quality of simultaneous and consecutive interpretation due to its crucial role in diplomacy, politics, media, and international relations. The article seeks to analyze how pragmatic context influences interpretation, investigate the impact of cultural and social differences between English and Arabic on translation accuracy, and provide practical examples illustrating how interpretation can lead to meaning shifts depending on context. The study adopts a pragmatic and analytical methodology, examining translated political speeches with a focus on how cultural and political context shapes the final meaning. Case studies and applied examples are also presented to highlight the challenges faced by interpreters and the strategies they employ to navigate them.

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The research concludes that pragmatic context plays a fundamental role in interpretation, as meaning is not solely derived from words but is deeply intertwined with the speaker's intent, the audience, and the political or cultural situation.

Keywords: Simultaneous Interpretation, Consecutive Interpretation, Pragmatic Context, Speaker, Interpreter.

Introduction:

Translation, whether written or spoken, holds immense significance in the modern era, serving as an indispensable tool for societal development across various domains. It is both a civilizational construct and a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge, literature, and sciences across linguistic boundaries. Indeed, translation is an essential process, a vital engine of intercultural interaction, and the bridge that links nations and peoples. It facilitates progress, fosters intellectual exchange, and drives the dissemination of innovations and achievements.

In recent years, translation has garnered increasing attention, with renewed calls for its revival and flourishing, prompted by a growing awareness among scholars, literary figures, and cultural experts of the critical crisis threatening this vital pillar of human knowledge. Historically, translation has played a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge and fostering cross-cultural communication, thereby narrowing the gaps between civilizations.

From ancient times, humans have moved across regions for trade, scholarship, exploration, and conquest, necessitating the presence of interpreters to facilitate communication, bridge linguistic barriers, and ensure mutual understanding. Through translation, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can comprehend and exchange ideas, fostering cross-cultural understanding and reducing the gaps that arise from linguistic differences. Furthermore, translation serves as a conduit for transmitting cultural values and concepts, thereby enhancing cultural awareness and promoting peaceful interaction among societies.

When discussing interpretation, we find ourselves confronted with two closely intertwined yet distinct types in practical application: consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation. Additionally, we encounter speech interpretation, sight translation, and whispered interpretation, each serving a unique function in the broader field of translation.

In the realm of simultaneous and speech interpretation between English and Arabic, interpreters play a pivotal role in facilitating communication and mutual understanding. Interpretation serves as a bridge between cultures, fostering stronger international relationships and promoting collaboration across various fields. For instance, at international conferences that bring together representatives from English- and Arabic-speaking countries, participants rely on simultaneous interpretation to swiftly exchange ideas and information. Similarly, in political or cultural speeches, speech interpretation is indispensable for ensuring that the intended message reaches the audience.

effectively, preserving both rhetorical impact and the speaker's original tone. This process demands meticulous attention to linguistic nuances while considering various social, cultural, and psychological factors that may exist beyond the immediate linguistic framework.

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to examine the impact of pragmatic context on simultaneous and speech interpretation from English into Arabic. The primary objectives include analyzing how pragmatic context influences the interpretation process, assessing its role in meaning transfer, and exploring how contextual factors—such as social, cultural, and psychological elements—affect translation accuracy. Additionally, the study aims to identify the challenges interpreters face when navigating diverse pragmatic contexts, particularly in simultaneous interpretation, where immediacy is paramount.

The central research question that this study seeks to address is: How does pragmatic context influence meaning transfer in simultaneous and speech interpretation from English into Arabic? Furthermore, how do cultural and social differences between English and Arabic shape the interpretation process? How do interpreters select the most suitable words and expressions to align with the given context? Can context fundamentally alter the meaning of a sentence? Moreover, how does contextual influence differ between simultaneous interpretation, which demands instant response, and speech interpretation, which allows for greater flexibility?

To answer these questions, the study adopts an analytical and descriptive approach, examining translated texts across varied contexts to evaluate the impact of pragmatic factors on interpretation. Through this methodology, the research aims to provide precise and comprehensive insights into the role of pragmatic context in simultaneous and speech interpretation, ultimately offering strategies to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the interpretation process.

1. The Concept of Simultaneous and Speech Interpretation

The significance of interpretation has grown over time due to rapid advancements and the emergence of official institutions, as well as the increasing interdependence of nations across various fields. Diplomacy, as one of the fundamental pillars of international politics, plays a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding, communication, and economic exchange. While interpretation is essential in times of peace, its necessity becomes even more pronounced during conflicts, where oral translation proves vital for negotiating treaties, prosecuting major criminals, and holding leaders accountable for war crimes.

The period between the two World Wars, particularly after World War II, is often regarded as the golden era for conference interpretation. The Nuremberg Trials of 1945, held for high-ranking Nazi officials, laid the foundational principles for simultaneous interpretation as an institutionalized practice. This development coincided with the establishment of the United Nations. As noted:

*"When interpreting is mentioned in these articles, it refers to consecutive interpreting, the only method which had been used until the San Francisco conference. However, thanks to the Nuremberg trials, people had become familiar with the technique of simultaneous interpreting."*²

In this context, it is worth mentioning that one of the earliest recorded experiments in simultaneous interpretation was conducted by André Kaminker in 1934, when he translated a speech by Adolf Hitler, which was broadcast on French radio. However, such early attempts can be considered the embryonic stages of what later evolved into full-fledged simultaneous interpretation.

Despite its long history, the concept of simultaneous interpretation—often referred to as conference interpretation—has yet to be fully crystallized into a universally agreed-upon definition, particularly at the theoretical level among scholars of different translation schools. Notably, the concept of interpretation is closely linked to the notion of "hermeneutics," a term first documented in 1160, according to the **Hachette** French dictionary, which defined it as the practice of explaining and clarifying ambiguities.³

Given the academic and professional advancements in simultaneous interpretation over the years, it is imperative to rely on a credible academic source for a precise and contemporary definition. The **International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)** provides a widely accepted definition:

According to the AIIC glossary, the role of the simultaneous interpreter is to sit in a booth with a clear view of the conference hall and speaker, listening to the speech and rendering it into the target language in real time. The AIIC also highlights that simultaneous interpretation requires a dedicated booth—either fixed or mobile—that meets the standards set by the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** and the **International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)**. These standards encompass sound insulation, booth dimensions, air quality, electrical conductivity, and the provision of appropriate equipment, such as high-quality headphones and microphones.⁴

This professionalization of simultaneous interpretation underscores its complexity and the high level of precision required, making it an indispensable tool in modern international communication.

1.1 Definition of Simultaneous Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation is the process of translating a message from one language to another in real time while a speech or presentation is being delivered. The core principle of this mode of interpretation is that the interpreter conveys the meaning almost simultaneously with the origi-

² Jesus Baigorri Jalon, *Interpreters at the United Nation. A history*, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanka, 2004, p24

³ CF. Hachette. *Dictionary from French 1995*(Interpret).

⁴ AIIC. (n.d.). Glossary - Simultaneous Interpreting. Retrieved from AIIC: <https://aiic.org/site/world/conference/glossary>

nal speech, ensuring a continuous flow without delays. This demanding process requires exceptional skills in listening, comprehension, interpretation, and immediate articulation.

As defined:

*"Simultaneous interpretation is the process of rendering a message in one language while listening to or watching the message being delivered in the source language."*⁵

This definition highlights the interactive nature of the process between the interpreter and the audience. The interpreter does not pause or wait but must continuously deliver the translation while following the speaker's speech sequence.

Another definition emphasizes the immediacy and technological requirements of the process:

*"Simultaneous translation is the immediate rendering of a spoken message from one language into another, typically using headphones and microphones to maintain fluidity."*⁶

Similarly:

"Simultaneous interpretation refers to interpreting in real time, typically done in conferences or meetings, where the interpreter conveys the speaker's message almost simultaneously, with minimal delay."

These definitions add an essential contextual dimension, specifying that simultaneous interpretation is frequently used in conferences and meetings. The primary goal is to minimize delays as much as possible, ensuring that the meaning is conveyed in a timely manner. Consequently, simultaneous interpretation demands exceptional speed and concentration. The interpreter must process spoken content instantaneously, carefully selecting the most precise wording while maintaining the natural flow of speech.

1.2 Definition of Rhetorical Translation

Rhetorical translation refers to the process of translating texts that contain rhetorical elements—such as public speeches, political addresses, or literary presentations—while preserving their rhetorical and emotional impact in the target language. Unlike standard translation, which focuses primarily on meaning transfer, rhetorical translation emphasizes stylistic fidelity, persuasive force, and emotional resonance, ensuring that the audience in the target language experiences the speech with the same depth and influence as the original audience.

Rhetorical translation is the art of reproducing the communicative effect of a speech in another language, maintaining not only the meaning but the speaker's rhetorical style and tone.⁷

⁵ <https://globibo.blog/consecutive-vs-simultaneous-interpretation-understanding-the-differences-and-applications/>. Gile, D. (2009). *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training*. John Benjamins.p45-60

⁶ Baker, M. (2018). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge.p50-60

⁷ 1. Gile, D. (2009). *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training*. John Benjamins.p45-60

This definition reflects that rhetorical translation is not limited to conveying meaning alone; rather, it requires preserving the rhetorical style and tone used by the speaker in the original text. This presents a challenge as it demands a deep understanding of the cultural and linguistic context.

"Rhetorical translation involves the careful adaptation of a speech's message, style, and emotional tone from one language to another, ensuring the impact of the original delivery is preserved."⁸

In this definition, emphasis is placed on the necessity for rhetorical translation to retain the message and content in addition to the style and emotions conveyed by the words. The goal is to ensure that the speech does not lose its impact when transferred from one language to another.

"Rhetorical translation is concerned with translating speeches in a way that conveys both the meaning and the persuasive or emotional appeal embedded in the original rhetoric."⁹

This definition clarifies that rhetorical translation deals with speeches containing persuasive or emotional elements, and the translator must transfer these emotions and effects with the same intensity as in the original language. Thus, rhetorical translation is a special type of translation where linguistic transfer is not the sole objective; rather, it is essential to maintain the ability to influence the audience. One of the most important skills a translator needs in this type of translation is understanding the cultural and social context of the speech and being able to present the text in a manner that generates the same impact on the target audience.

From the above, we can conclude that simultaneous translation and rhetorical translation are two different types of translation that differ in style, context, and the tools used. Below are the key differences between them:

- **Context and Usage:** Simultaneous translation is used in formal settings such as conferences, international meetings, and diplomatic gatherings, where the translator conveys the text in real-time without pauses. This type of translation is required in events where the translator must deliver meaning continuously. It also relies heavily on technology, such as headsets and microphones, to ensure smooth and rapid translation.

On the other hand, rhetorical translation is primarily used in political, cultural, literary, or religious speeches. Its goal is to convey the rhetorical impact, emotional style, and distinctive tone of the speaker. In this type of translation, it is not just the content that is translated but also the rhetorical effect that the speaker leaves on the audience.

- **Style and Techniques:** Simultaneous translation is performed with great speed and accuracy, requiring the translator to listen to the text and translate it at the same time. The focus is on accurately conveying the meaning without interfering with the speaker's style. At times, the translation may be less detailed, as the translator may need to choose approximate meanings to maintain

⁸ Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. Routledge.p120-110.

⁹ Baker, M. (2018). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge.p50-60

fluency. In contrast, rhetorical translation focuses on conveying the speaker's rhetorical and emotional style in addition to the meaning. Here, the translator does not simply translate words but also captures the rhetorical tone, emotional impact, and sometimes even persuasive strategies. This requires the ability to creatively adapt the translated text to fit the cultural context and target audience.

- **Timing and Speed:** The primary characteristic of simultaneous translation is its extremely high speed, as the message is delivered instantly without pauses between listening and translating. This requires the ability to respond quickly and retain meaning without delay. Rhetorical translation, on the other hand, is not as immediate as simultaneous translation; the translator may take slightly more time to fully understand the original message and translate it appropriately. The focus here is on creativity, ensuring that the translation goes beyond words to preserve the full impact of the speech.

- **Tools and Supporting Technologies:** Simultaneous translation relies mainly on modern technology, such as microphones and headsets, to enable the translator to transmit the message quickly and without interruption. It is commonly used in environments requiring rapid interaction, such as conferences. In rhetorical translation, technology is not primarily used for speed but rather for a deep understanding of the text and its content. The process may require rephrasing sentences in the target language to match the speaker's original style.

- **Complexity and Challenges:** The biggest challenge in simultaneous translation is the ability to listen and translate simultaneously. This requires intensive training to focus on meaning and quickly grasp words. Sometimes, the translator may struggle with processing complex information in real time. In rhetorical translation, the challenge lies in accurately conveying the rhetorical effect to the audience. The translator must fully understand the cultural context, tone, and concepts used in the original speech to effectively reproduce its emotional impact.

In conclusion, simultaneous translation is a fast and direct form of translation used in contexts that require the immediate transfer of meaning, such as international conferences and official meetings. Rhetorical translation, on the other hand, is a creative and rhetorical process that requires the translator to convey the speaker's rhetorical style and emotions while ensuring cultural and audience impact. While simultaneous translation is ideal for situations requiring rapid communication, rhetorical translation is essential when delivering messages that rely on rhetorical techniques and distinctive tones.

For example, simultaneous translation is commonly used on news television channels when analyzing political, economic, or even sports issues. In such cases, guests speaking different languages are invited to live broadcasts, and the simultaneous translator must faithfully convey the intended meaning and purpose of the original speaker's discourse. The translator must also consid-

er tone and emotions, aiming to achieve the same impact on the audience as if the speech were delivered in its original language.¹⁰

2. The Pragmatic Dimension of the Translation Process (Translation as an Act)

Since speech is usually produced with a specific communicative effect in mind, the Russian scholar Filin Naumovich emphasizes that "pragmatic potential constitutes the most essential part of speech." From this, we can infer that the pragmatic dimension plays a crucial role in the translated text. The translator must therefore ensure that the translation achieves the intended effect on the target audience, whether by replicating the pragmatic potential of the original text or by modifying it. Studying the pragmatic aspects of translation is thus one of the key tasks of translation theory.¹¹

Basil Hatim further supports this notion in a different context, stating: "Our preliminary study of the pragmatic dimension of context has revealed the ways in which intentions are understood in communication (referring to speech acts, conversational implicatures, conditions for speech performance, Grice's conversational maxims, and presuppositions). A translator, in addition to being a skilled analyst of the source text's intentions, must also be capable of assessing the impact the translation will have on readers or listeners of the target text."¹²

A translated text is a secondary text that strives to be an equivalent of the original. However, one of the fundamental principles of translation is that maintaining meaning patterns in source texts during translation depends on the nature of those patterns themselves. Semantic meanings are the most translatable because the experiential knowledge of any linguistic community is recorded within the semantic system of its linguistic units. Given that real-world experiences align more often than they differ, and since semantic meanings tend to correspond across languages, it is generally possible to describe objects and situations in any language despite the structural differences in how they are expressed.

Conversely, pragmatic meanings are less translatable than semantic ones. While objects, concepts, and situations may be largely similar across different linguistic communities, each community's relationship with those objects and concepts can vary. This difference results in variations in pragmatic meanings assigned to symbols across languages. Consequently, preserving pragmatic meanings during translation is more challenging than maintaining their semantic counterparts.¹³

As for the translation researcher, they are required to consider culture alongside language in their study. Translation is not merely the substitution of linguistic signs from the source language

¹⁰ For example, you can watch a meeting entitled "Interpretation Challenges at Work and Ways to Face and Overcome Them" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBMPQkZU5bo>

¹¹ Flynn Naomevich Komisarov - Contemporary Translation Science - Yellen Naumovich Komisarov - translated by Imad Tahina - Abu Dhabi - Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage - 1st Edition. 2010, p. 134:

¹² Basil Hatim and Ian Maysoon Al-Khattab and the Translator, translated by Omar Fayeze, Scientific Publishing, King Saud University, Riyadh, 1998, p. 99

¹³ Asaad Muzaffar Al-Din Hakim - Theoretical Translation Science - Dar Tlass Damascus - 1st Edition - 88-89

with their equivalents in the target language; rather, it goes beyond this, as Katharina Reiss explains:

« Le traducteur a affaire à des signes linguistiques employés par un émetteur dans des situations concrètes : sa tâche est de chercher dans la langue-cible des signes linguistiques de même valeur, et son effort est destiné à des récepteurs qui non seulement parlent une autre langue, mais aussi font partie d'une autre communauté culturelle. »¹⁴

A translator deals with linguistic signs that are connected to their users in real-life situations. Their task is to find linguistic signs of equal value in the target language, with all their efforts directed toward an audience that not only speaks a different language but also belongs to a different cultural community.

Translation and pragmatics intersect in several ways and share many common features, which is logical since both have a semiotic nature, as Hatim and Mason state:

« A translation should be primarily pragmatic because pragmatics and translation share common features. They are semiotic in nature, aiming at increasing understanding and facilitating communication. »¹⁵

Both concepts are based on the principle of communication. Pragmatics is considered the third dimension of semiotics (the study of signs). Clearly, translation focuses on signs and their meanings in different languages. Similarly, pragmatics, like translation, approaches language from a functional perspective rather than merely examining its usage.

Pragmatic differences between texts pose significant challenges for the translator. The reader or listener of a translated text belongs to a linguistic and cultural community different from that of the original writer. This affects the pragmatic relationship between the original speaker (the utterer) and the context, including sociocultural aspects. Therefore, the translator must take this pragmatic divergence into account and navigate its complexities while ensuring that the original writer's intent remains intact.

The intent behind an author's or speaker's text determines their linguistic choices, which must align with the social, cultural, and psychological background of the target audience, as stated:

« L'émetteur choisira ses signes linguistiques en tenant compte de la pragmatique du récepteur potentiel, c'est-à-dire en tenant compte de son pré savoir, de sa mentalité, de ses attentes quant au respect des conventions et des habitudes de 'mise en texte' propre à sa communauté linguistique. »

The speaker will choose their linguistic signs while considering the pragmatics of the potential recipient, meaning they will take into account the recipient's prior knowledge, mindset, and

¹⁴ Katharina Reiss, *Problematics of Translation*, p. 90

¹⁵ Bahaa-eddin Abulhassan Hassan, *Literary translation - Aspects of Pragmatic meaning*- Cambridge Scholars Publishing, U.K., 2011, p. 13.

expectations regarding adherence to conventions and textual structuring habits specific to their linguistic community.

When translating, the translator replaces the original writer or speaker, effectively assuming the role of the sender. Consequently, the same principles and rules apply, requiring the translator to preserve the original intent and express it in a manner dictated by the characteristics of the target language. These characteristics are not limited to linguistic aspects alone but extend to cultural and psychological factors that influence the target audience.

Equivalence is the key criterion in determining the success of a translation. Achieving the same effect on the target audience as the original text had on its audience is the ultimate goal of the translation process. If the translator successfully bridges the pragmatic differences between the source and target texts, they achieve pragmatic equivalence. As noted:

"Translation approaches informed by pragmatics as the study of intended meaning are ideally suited for this dynamic view of equivalence."¹⁶

Pragmatic differences between languages compel translators to make specific lexical choices. As Mohamed Enani states, "Pragmatic differences—those stemming from the way language is used—dictate the choice of words in translation."¹⁷

The discussion above aimed to establish a link between pragmatic linguistic theory and translation. The pragmatic approach seeks to clarify the relationship between language and its users to uncover communicative intentions. Similarly, translation aims to produce a text that harmonizes meaning and style through an accurate interpretation of the original speaker or writer's intent, which is often embedded in specific syntactic structures. Therefore, a pragmatic approach can significantly contribute to the translation process by identifying its manifestations and associated meanings.

3. The Concept of Pragmatic Context and Its Importance in Translation

Context is an essential component of both pragmatic linguistic analysis and the translation process. The intent behind speech cannot be understood in isolation from its context. Effective communication between the sender and the receiver can only succeed within the framework of discourse circumstances, whether oral or written.

Context encompasses all the conditions and circumstances that influence the production of a text or speech. It refers to the concrete situation that dictates meaning, including elements such as time, place, and speaker identity. As one definition states:

"Context consists of all the conditions necessary for understanding and assessing what is being said."¹⁸

¹⁶ Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday, *Translation -An Advanced Resource Book-*, p. 49.

¹⁷ Anani, *Literary Theory between Theory and Practice*, Egyptian International Publishing Company Longman, Giza, 3rd Edition, 2003, p. 18.

This definition underscores the critical role of context in determining meaning. Isolating sentences from their context leads to ambiguity and misinterpretation.

The importance of context in translation lies in its role in understanding meaning within translated texts. Translation goes beyond mere comprehension of the source language, with all its linguistic and grammatical constraints. It surpasses the literal level of meaning and becomes part of a broader textual and discourse analysis strategy. This process requires a set of skills and knowledge that highlight the crucial role of context in generating meaning during translation.¹⁹

« Since culture is defined succinctly as totality of beliefs and practice of a society, nothing is of greater strategic importance than the language through which its beliefs are expressed and transmitted and by which most interaction of its members takes place. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. ».

Eugene Nida was a strong advocate for the role of context in translation, emphasizing its significance in understanding and reproducing texts accurately. He stated:

"Over the years, I have increasingly recognized the importance of context in understanding and translating texts. Ignoring the context of a text is often a primary cause of the worst mistakes in interpreting its meaning and reproducing it. Moreover, context should be understood as influencing all levels of the text: structural, phonological, lexical, grammatical, and historical, including the events that led to the text's production and the ways it has been interpreted in the past."

Nida was among the pioneers²⁰ of the dynamic equivalence approach in translation, prioritizing contextual alignment with the needs of the target audience.

Similarly, John Lyons argues that:

"The meaning of a speech unit extends beyond what is explicitly stated; it includes what is implicitly intended (or presupposed). Context is closely tied to this aspect of meaning in speech units."²¹

According to Lyons, context determines the meaning of a sentence by first identifying the relevant sentence, then the proposition it expresses, and finally unveiling the non-verbal elements that convey this proposition. By considering these factors—the sentence, its meaning, and the non-verbal context—it becomes possible to infer the intended meaning of a discourse or literary text.

Wilson and Sperber offer a broader and more detailed definition of context, considering it an all-encompassing framework for interpretation:

¹⁸ Ranso Armenko, *The Deliberative Approach*, Ter Said Alloush, Publications of the National Development Center, Beirut Dat, p. 9

¹⁹ Zaoui Bouzriba Mukhtaria: *The problem of translation in the analysis of narrative discourse*

²⁰ Eugene Anaida, *Context in Translation* p5:

²¹ John Lines - *Language Meaning and Context* - Ter Abbas Sadiq Al-Wahhab - House of General Cultural Affairs - Baghdad - 1st Edition - 1987

"Expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, and beliefs about the mental state of the speaker may all play a role in interpretation."²²

In their view, context is not limited to immediate, observable information such as time and place; it extends to broader elements that shape interpretation.

Harman Parret classifies context into five types, considering his classification as one of pragmatic dimensions:

- **Textual Context:** This refers to the structural aspects of the text. Understanding vocabulary does not solely rely on dictionary definitions; if words are not analyzed within their textual context, interpretation may be flawed due to a lack of social background knowledge.²³

- **Referential Context:**

"The referential context canonically contains the item to which a linguistic expression refers. A shift from semantics to pragmatics occurs when the speaker, the receiver, and their spatio-temporal location are considered as indices of the existential context."²⁴

This type of context accounts for how linguistic expressions refer to real-world entities, emphasizing the role of the speaker, the listener, and the situational environment in shaping meaning.²⁵

It is a referential context in which utterances are linked to the things they represent in reality. This aspect has a semiotic nature, and then all elements of the communicative event—such as discourse participants, time, place, and others—are connected to transition from semiotics to pragmatics.

- **Situational Context:** This refers to considering the setting in which the speech occurs as a communicative context. It relates to the environment in which the speech act takes place. Harman emphasizes its importance, stating: *"The situational context offers factors partially determining their meaning."*

- **Action Context:** Linguistic actions are intentional acts performed by the sender with the goal of informing and making the recipient understand. Additionally, there is the condition of interaction, which means: *"The condition that linguistic actions of other speakers participating in a communicative situation are the context of production of one's own discourse."*²⁶

²² Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance -communication and cognition-*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2nd Ed., 1995, pp. 15-166

²³ Voir: Herman Parret, *Semiotics and pragmatics – An evaluative comparison of conceptual frameworks-*, John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam, 1983, p. 94

²⁴ Voir :Parret Herman, *Semiotics and pragmatics –An evaluative comparison of conceptual frameworks-*, p. 95

²⁵ See :Ibid., p. 96.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 97

Here, we are discussing Speech Act Theory, established by Austin, which posits that speech acts are intentional, and their utterance necessarily constitutes their execution. They are subject to the conditions of the communicative event.²⁷

- **Psychological Context:** This refers to the mental state that led to the production of the act, representing accumulated experiences and reflections on past situations that influence the communicative event in one way or another.

From the above, we conclude that context in translation is of great importance, as meaning in an isolated sentence is entirely different from meaning embedded in a context and specific situations. Context provides two mechanisms for linguistic precision: first, the extralinguistic elements to which the text refers, known as reference; second, the legitimacy of excluding all inappropriate assumed meanings within a given textual context.

Thus, the primary task of the translator is to give sufficient attention not only to the meanings of words but also to the extralinguistic elements that guide the comprehension process. A speaker never fully states all their intentions, and the recipient (in this case, the translator) must complete the message through the shared event context. The broader this context is, the less the speaker needs to be explicit in their verbal material.²⁸

Among the factors influencing the translator's work in achieving accuracy, scientific integrity, and knowledge validity is the dominance of the text's context.

Naida stated that the fundamental and primary role of understanding the text's context is to convey the intended meaning accurately into another language. This is because context has a significant impact on all structural levels of the text, including phonological, lexical, and grammatical aspects. Translating words within context relies on selecting words and meanings based on different contextual aspects, such as nearby words and the intended audience. This is especially relevant when dealing with figurative expressions, indirect responses, proverbs, and idiomatic phrases, in addition to explaining grammatical linking mechanisms between words.

The **non-linguistic context** refers to the cultural context, meaning that the translator must be aware of cultural differences between the source and target languages, as these differences impact meaning. This is particularly evident in translating **symbols**—some symbols carry the same meaning across cultures, such as the lion representing courage, the fox representing cunning, and the snake symbolizing evil. However, many expressions vary from one culture to another. For instance, the **owl** symbolizes misfortune and bad luck in Arab culture, whereas in Western culture, it represents wisdom and dignity. Similarly, the **moon** is a symbol of beauty in Arab culture, while in Western culture, it does not hold the same significance. Consider the following example:

²⁷ Parret Herman, Semiotics and pragmatics –An evaluative comparison of conceptual frameworks, pp. 97 -98.

²⁸ Chen Wei, Context ; 1999 P 150

"She is as changeable as the moon."

In Western culture, the moon is commonly used as a metaphor for inconsistency and mood swings.²⁹

Those working in the field of translation should be familiar with what is known as **cultural substitution**, which means choosing an equivalent expression in the target language that best fits the meaning conveyed in the source language. For example, the English phrase *"It warmed my heart"* is translated into Arabic as *"أُثلج صدري"* (literally: "It cooled my chest"). This reflects the environmental contrast, as cold is a pleasant sensation in hot Arab climates, whereas Western cultures, which experience extreme cold, perceive warmth as more comforting.

The cultural aspect is particularly evident in translating **proverbs and idiomatic expressions**, as they strongly reflect the cultural identity of different societies. Another important factor in translation is **collocation**, which refers to word combinations that naturally occur together. Some words in English are used exclusively with specific words, and a literal translation into Arabic would not convey the correct meaning. For instance, in Arabic, one would say *"يضع عطرًا"*, but in English, the correct phrase is **"to wear perfume"**, meaning that a literal word-for-word translation would be incorrect.

4. The Impact of Pragmatic Context on Meaning Transfer in Simultaneous and Speech Translation from English to Arabic

Pragmatic context significantly influences meaning transfer in simultaneous and speech translation. It is well known that pragmatic context includes **time, place, speaker, target audience, and the purpose of discourse**. In simultaneous translation, this context plays a crucial role in accurately conveying meaning, requiring the translator to understand tone, political stance, and cultural background.

Applied Example:

In a speech by a resistance leader, the expression was used:
"أشعلوا الأرض لهيبًا تحت أقدام المحتلين الغاصبين"

Analysis:

This phrase carries strong incitement connotations in the Arabic context, reflecting enthusiasm and a sense of injustice. When translated into English, an expression like: *"Set the ground ablaze beneath the feet of the occupying oppressors."* could be used. However, this might be considered too strong in a Western context, necessitating a softer alternative such as:

"Resist the occupiers with unwavering determination."

Cultural and Social Differences and Their Impact on Translation:

²⁹ Muhammad Anani, *Literary Translation between Theory and Practice*, p8.

Example: The use of the term "الشهيد" in Arabic discourse to refer to those who die for a cause.

Analysis:

In Arab culture, the term "الشهيد" carries a positive connotation associated with sacrifice. When translated into English, the word "**martyr**" is commonly used, but it may have negative or extremist connotations in some Western cultures. Therefore, a translator might opt for a description like: *"those who sacrificed their lives"* to avoid cultural misunderstandings.

Choosing Appropriate Words and Expressions:

Example: The Arabic phrase "المقاومة الباسلة"

Analysis:

The word "الباسلة" means courage and bravery. In translation, "**valiant resistance**" could be used. However, since the term "**resistance**" might be perceived differently in a Western context, a better alternative could be "**brave defenders**" to ensure clarity of meaning.

The Impact of Context on Meaning:

Example: The phrase: "يسنرد على العدوان في الوقت المناسب"

Analysis:

This phrase carries deliberate ambiguity in Arabic, leaving room for speculation. When translated into English as:

"We will respond to the aggression at the appropriate time."

it may imply either a delay in response or ongoing preparations. The interpretation depends on the political context and the target audience.

The Difference Between Simultaneous and Speech Translation:

Example: During a live speech, the speaker said:

"لن نترك دماء شهدائنا تذهب هدرًا"

Analysis in Simultaneous Translation:

The translator must convey the meaning quickly, saying:

"We will not let our martyrs' blood be wasted."

Here, there is little time to elaborate on cultural connotations.

Analysis in Speech Translation:

The translator has more time to reflect and may choose:

"We will honor the sacrifices of those who gave their lives."

This effectively conveys the meaning while considering cultural sensitivities.

Applied Example:

- **English text:** "We call on all parties to exercise restraint."
- **Literal translation:** "ندعو جميع الأطراف إلى ممارسة ضبط النفس"

• **Interpretation in a political crisis:** If the situation requires diplomatic escalation, it might be translated as:

• "نبحث جميع الأطراف على وقف التصعيد فوراً"

A slight change in translation reflects the political stance and the pragmatic context.

Cultural and social differences between English and Arabic also affect translation: English tends to use direct and objective language, while Arabic leans towards rhetorical expressions, implications, and formal respect. Some cultural concepts may not have a direct equivalent in the other language.

⌘ Practical Example:

• English text: "We stand with our allies."

• Literal translation: "نقف مع حلفائنا" in Arabic

• More suitable translation in Arabic: "نؤكد دعمنا الثابت لحلفائنا" (Because the literal expression may sound unnatural in formal Arabic).

The social and political context imposes linguistic adjustments to preserve meaning.

Translators choose the most appropriate words and expressions that fit the context: They rely on synonyms, tone, and cultural analysis to select the most suitable expressions for the situation while avoiding terms that may be sensitive or ambiguous in the target culture.

⌘ Practical Example:

• English text: "This decision will have a significant impact on the region."

• Literal translation: "سيكون لهذا القرار تأثير كبير على المنطقة" in Arabic

• Pragmatic translation: "سيكون لهذا القرار تداعيات مهمة على استقرار المنطقة" in Arabic
Adding "استقرار" (stability) in Arabic enhances the political meaning and captures the attention of the Arabic audience.

Context can radically change the meaning of a sentence; even a slight change in translation can completely alter the intended message. Political stance, speaker's tone, and target audience all influence how the message is understood.

⌘ Practical Example:

• English text: "They are resisting the military operation."

• Possible translations :

• "إنهم يقاومون العملية العسكرية" (If the speaker supports the resistance in Arabic)

• "إنهم يعرقلون العملية العسكرية" (if the speaker criticizes them in Arabic)

The difference in translation reflects bias or a different interpretation of the situation.

The contextual impact differs between simultaneous translation, which requires quick responses, and speech translation, which allows more flexibility.

• **Simultaneous translation:** Requires speed without the chance for rephrasing, making accuracy and balance a major challenge.

• **Speech translation:** Provides more time for review, allowing rewording to improve pragmatic effectiveness.

▢ Practical Example:

An English text in an international conference (simultaneous translation):

- "This operation aims to secure the borders."
- Simultaneous translation: "تهدف هذه العملية إلى تأمين الحدود" in Arabic
- Speech translation (after review): "هذه العملية تستهدف تعزيز الأمن على الحدود" in Arabic
- ➡ The second translation is more precise and clearer, but it requires extra time.

In conclusion, pragmatic context determines how meaning is conveyed in both simultaneous and speech translation. Cultural and social differences between English and Arabic influence word choice and sentence structures. Translators rely on situational analysis to select the most appropriate expressions. Context can entirely change meaning in translation, and while simultaneous translation is fast, it may be less accurate than speech translation.

▢ A practical example illustrating the challenges faced by simultaneous translators and how to handle them:

Context:

In a United Nations Security Council meeting on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a Palestinian official delivered a speech in Arabic, which was simultaneously translated into English for the attendees.

• **Original Arabic text:**

• "نرفض أي محاولات لطمس حقوق شعبنا، وسنواصل مقاومتنا المشروعة ضد الاحتلال، ولن نتراجع حتى نحقق النصر."

• **Possible simultaneous translation into English:**

• "We reject any attempts to erase our people's rights, and we will continue our legitimate resistance against the occupation, and we will not retreat until we achieve victory."

Challenges Faced by the Simultaneous Interpreter:

1. **Choosing politically sensitive terms:**

- The phrase "المقاومة المشروعة" is typically translated as "**legitimate resistance**."
- In an international context, "*resistance*" may be understood as referring to armed struggle, while in Arabic, it can also include peaceful and political resistance.

○ **Solution:** Reformulating the phrase to avoid potential misinterpretations, such as: "**We will continue to defend our rights through all legitimate means.**" Here, "*resistance*" is replaced with "*defend our rights*," a less controversial phrasing in diplomatic settings.

2. **Handling metaphors and rhetorical expressions:**

- The phrase "لن نتراجع حتى نحقق النصر" carries strong connotations in Arabic but may sound overly militaristic if translated literally as "**We will not retreat until we achieve victory.**"

○ **Solution:** Adapting the phrasing to align with diplomatic language: **"We will persist in our struggle until our rights are fully realized."** This maintains the core message without implying violence or military confrontation.

3. Time pressure and speed in simultaneous translation:

○ In simultaneous translation, the interpreter does not have the luxury of extended reflection or sentence revision.

○ **Solution:** Utilizing key strategies for effective real-time translation, such as:

- Anticipating content based on background knowledge of the speech's political context.
- Breaking down sentences into smaller, manageable units for quicker translation.

This example highlights the complexities of simultaneous interpretation, particularly when dealing with politically charged speeches, where precise word choices can significantly impact how messages are received by an international audience.

We conclude from the above that an interpreter is not merely a transmitter of words but a linguistic mediator who must carefully choose appropriate expressions. The greatest challenge lies in preserving the original meaning without causing political or cultural ambiguities. The best solutions involve skillful rephrasing and the use of diplomatic language suitable for the international setting in which the translation takes place.

Now, we present an analysis of the translation of a speech delivered by Syria's permanent representative during Security Council session No. 7834 (on the situation in Aleppo³⁰), focusing on the pragmatic context and the impact of simultaneous interpretation on variations in translation from Arabic to English. These variations depend on several factors, including:

• Analysis of speech acts in the discourse:

• The speech includes various speech acts such as condemnation, clarification, accusation, defense, and challenge. For example, the Arabic sentence: *"لقد اعتاد بعض أعضاء هذا المجلس الكريم على تقديم مشاريع قرارات تستند إلى معلومات مغفركة"*

• contains an accusatory speech act, implicating certain members of the council in misinformation.

In simultaneous interpretation, a more diplomatic expression might be used: *"Certain members of this council have repeatedly proposed resolutions based on unreliable information."*

The difference here is that the interpretation may resort to mitigation to avoid sharpness in international contexts.

³⁰ <https://speechbank.un.org/ar/media/1430>

• Presuppositions in the speech and their impact on translation:

The speech carries several presuppositions, such as:

"الحكومة السورية تحارب الإرهاب وتحمي المواطنين"

The underlying presupposition here is that terrorism exists in Syria and that the government is in a defensive position.

When translating into English, this assumption may be neutralized, resulting in:

"The Syrian government states that it is fighting terrorism and protecting its citizens."

Here, "states that" is added to avoid presenting the assumption as an absolute fact, reflecting a more neutral approach in simultaneous interpretation.

• War metaphors in the speech and their effect on translation:

The speech employs several war-related metaphors, such as:

"يفتح الجيش السوري ممرات آمنة لحماية المدنيين"

The metaphor presents the army as a humanitarian protective force.

When translated into English, it could be rendered in different ways:

"The Syrian army facilitated safe corridors for civilians." The interpretation of this phrase may be adjusted based on the interpreter's political stance or the media outlet conveying the speech.

• The impact of the pragmatic context on translation:

Since this is an official speech by Syria's representative at the United Nations, the pragmatic context influences translation in several ways, such as:

- Avoiding sharp or highly charged words in simultaneous interpretation to maintain a diplomatic tone.
- Reordering some sentences to ensure clarity in English, especially given that Arabic speeches often contain long and complex sentences.
- Using hedging expressions such as *allegedly*, *reportedly*, *according to sources* when dealing with information that may be politically contested.

In conclusion, simultaneous interpretation of this type of speech requires linguistic flexibility and a balance between accurately conveying meaning and adapting it to the pragmatic context. Differences in translation arise from the political intensity of the speech, which may necessitate neutralizing certain phrases or restructuring sentences when rendering them into English. The pragmatic context is key to understanding why translations may vary, as they depend on the audience, the target readership, and the media platform disseminating the speech.

Conclusion

Simultaneous and speech translation are among the most challenging types of translation, as interpreters must convey meaning accurately and swiftly while considering the pragmatic context. This context includes factors such as time, place, speaker's tone, political and cultural background, and the target audience. It plays a crucial role in the translation process, potentially leading to dif-

ferences in phrasing or interpretation when transferring a speech from one language to another. In simultaneous translation, the focus is on delivering the core message quickly, whereas speech translation allows for more refined rewording and adaptation to the context. However, in both cases, misunderstanding or disregarding the context can lead to translation errors that affect the audience's comprehension of the original message.

Finally, we propose a set of recommendations for simultaneous and speech interpreters:

- **Understanding the pragmatic context before translation:** Interpreters should be aware of the speech's political and cultural background as well as the target audience, helping them choose appropriate terms that preserve the original meaning.
- **Avoiding literal translation:** Word-for-word translation often leads to misinterpretations or distortion of meaning, especially when the sentence contains cultural metaphors or presuppositions. It is preferable to rephrase based on context rather than translating directly.
- **Using neutral language when necessary:** When translating politically sensitive speeches, interpreters should be mindful of words with strong or provocative connotations. In some cases, a more neutral phrasing may be preferable to maintain objectivity.
- **Paying attention to the speaker's tone:** In simultaneous interpretation, the role of the interpreter goes beyond conveying words; they must also capture the speaker's emotions and emphasis, helping the audience understand the intended message.
- **Managing speed and rhythm:** Simultaneous interpreters should keep up with the speaker's pace while maintaining clarity, whereas speech translators have the advantage of taking additional time to refine phrasing and ensure greater accuracy.
- **Developing cultural and political awareness:** Interpreters working in international conferences should stay informed about political and cultural issues relevant to the speech, helping them understand the terms and concepts used in official discourse.
- **Preparing in advance whenever possible:** While simultaneous translation leaves little time for preparation, prior knowledge of the subject matter helps interpreters avoid mistakes and improve translation quality.

In summary, the pragmatic context influences every aspect of simultaneous and speech translation, from word choice to how meaning is conveyed. To succeed, interpreters must think quickly, understand cultural differences, and adapt to various situations to maintain translation accuracy. By developing these skills, simultaneous and speech interpreters can deliver professional translations that effectively reflect the essence of the original speech.



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