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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Student-Interpreters' Foreign Proper Noun Pronunciation Errors in English-Arabic and Arabic-English Media Discourse Interpreting

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| ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the types of pronunciation errors that student interpreters make in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns during English-Arabic and Arabic-English Liaison Interpreting, the pronunciation error strategies that students utilize when they encounter unfamiliar Proper Nouns in media discourse, and the factors that affect students' incorrect pronunciation of foreign Proper Nouns. A corpus of foreign Proper Noun pronunciation errors was collected from interpreting tests and in-class practice. Error analysis showed that students have difficulty identifying and discriminating one or more phonemes in foreign Proper Nouns such as *Rio di Janeiro*, *Paraguay*, *Abuja*, *Davos*, *Scandinavia*, *Missouri*, *Helsinki*, *Crimea*, *Al Gore*, and *Yuan*, whether such words were heard in English or Arabic. Whenever the students heard an unfamiliar Proper Noun, they produced (made up) nonsense words that rhyme with the unfamiliar source words as in *\*Dagos*, *\*Dados*, *\*Dabos* which they provided for *Davos*; *\*lizouri*, *\*rozouri*, *\*kansouri*, *\*mansouri* instead of *Missouri*; and *\*Scinavia* for *Scandinavia*. Sound analogy was also used in producing equivalent for unfamiliar Proper Nouns. *Volcanoos* and *\*burkini* were provided as equivalents for *Balkans* and *\*NADO* for *NATO*. They reduced, i.e., deleted part of the Proper Noun, whether it is a vowel, consonant or even a syllable as in *\*Buja* instead of *Abuja*, *United \*State*, *\*Izheimer*, *\*Philippine*, *\*Parkins*, *\*Bloomber* probably because of the length of the words and poor short-term memory. Phonemes were changed and substituted by a longer or shorter vowel, by another consonant or another syllable as in *Dracula /dracola/*, */gri:k/*; *Sergey Lavrov /sergi la:vro:v/*; *\*snab shat*, *\*Uzbekistan*, *\*foks fagon*, *Ukraine /ʊkrɜ:ɾɔ/*, */sinofa:rm/*. The Arabic pronunciation was retained and overgeneralized in *Eiffel Tower /i:fəl/* or */i:vəl/*, *\*Ardoghan*, *\*Anadol*, and *\*Athina*. A vowel was inserted to break the consonant clusters in *\*Beligrade*, *\*Bangaladesh*, *\*Barazil*, *\*Danimark*, *\*Kazakhstan*, *\*Uzbekistan*, *\*Shangahai*, *\*Tarafalgar*. Syllables were reversed in *\*Serbrenica* and *\*ALESCO*. Most pronunciation errors in interpreting are attributed to lack of knowledge of Proper Nouns commonly occurring in the media. Knowledge of the similarities and differences in Proper Noun pronunciation in English and Arabic and extra practice using online videos, podcasts, mobile apps, and TED Talks are needed in Liaison Interpreting instruction.

| KEYWORDS

Interpreting, Student interpreters, pronunciation errors, Proper Noun pronunciation errors, Arabic-English interpreting, English-Arabic interpreting.

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### 1. Introduction

Interpreting is a complex cognitive activity that requires expert knowledge of the subject matter, extraordinary listening comprehension skills, excellent public speaking skills, including native-like pronunciation, and the intellectual capacity to instantly convert the meanings of sentences, lexical items, specialized terminology, idioms, colloquialisms, and culture-specific expressions into their equivalents in the target language in order for the target audience to understand the message and information conveyed<sup>1</sup>. For these reasons, teaching and learning interpreting is challenging to both instructors and students. Despite the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.languagescientific.com/6-major-types-of-interpreting/](http://www.languagescientific.com/6-major-types-of-interpreting/)

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efforts exerted by interpreting instructors, student interpreters make a variety of pronunciation, lexical, semantic, syntactic, and morphological errors while practicing interpreting.

The weaknesses that student interpreters have in interpreting practice have not received much attention in the literature. Only a number of studies was found. For example, Pratiwi (2016) analyzed common errors and problems encountered by students during English-Indonesian consecutive interpreting. The researcher found that addition was the most frequent error made by consecutive interpreting students as it accounted for 30% of the errors.

In Malaysia, Lu, Abdul Ghani, Ang & Abdullah (2021) found that the most frequently made errors by student interpreters are comprehension errors. The students made more comprehension errors in English-Chinese than in Chinese-English interpreting. In addition, the students made more grammatical and disfluency errors in Chinese-English than in English-Chinese interpreting.

Moreover, Chang (2018) examined the linguistic features of 146 short consecutive interpreting samples from the Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation Competency Examinations. The results showed that students who did not pass the delivery scale showed a slower rate of speech, produced incomprehensible utterances and more disfluency markers. However, no significant differences were found between students who passed the delivery scale and those who did not in the types of lexical and grammatical errors made. In Hairuo's (2015) study, a preliminary analysis of students' errors in consecutive interpreting in Chinese and English language pairs showed that the students made mistakes in numbers, nouns (or names) and logical relationships.

In the area of legal interpreting, Burn and Crezee (2017) analyzed students' errors in interpreting legal questions to find out the question types that are most difficult to interpret because the meaning is not literal, the true function of legal questions is not very obvious, or because they have no direct lexical or grammatical equivalents in the target language. Student interpreters typically found it difficult to accurately render the meaning of longer, mult clause, and complex legal question forms. They also had difficulty in accurately rendering modals and recognizing imperatives and declaratives in legal questions as '*questions in disguise*'.

In Iraq, Musa & Al-Maryani (2021) assessed the simultaneous interpreting outputs of Iraqi fourth year translation and interpreting students at the University of Basra, who took a 3-and-half-minute simultaneous interpreting test of political speeches. The results showed that students' simultaneous interpretations were full of errors that impacted the transferred meaning. The students made intertextual errors that involved omission, substitution, and addition; disfluencies errors such as repetition, false start, filled pause, and unfilled pause; and intratextual errors in the use of singular, dual, plural, gender, pronouns, inflection, and vernacularism.

Another line of research investigated the factors that affect students' interpreting errors. Nam Won-jun (2012) identified the causes of errors in fourth year undergraduate translation and interpreting students in Korean-English consecutive interpreting. The researchers indicated that feedback in the consecutive interpreting class usually focuses on the production phase of consecutive interpreting, although errors in the consecutive interpreting production phase can be traced back to the reception phase. To enable interpreting students to attain an achievable goal and make progress in phases, the instructor should provide customized feedback that matches the students' level.

Furthermore, Pratiwi (2016) found seven reasons for Indonesian students' consecutive interpreting errors. Those included lack of language proficiency, nervousness, time pressure, lack of practice, insufficient vocabulary knowledge, poor concentration, and the training environment.

Students' background knowledge, in particular, has a significant effect on students' ability to comprehend oral discourse. Results of an interpreting test revealed that college students majoring in translation and interpreting had problems comprehending the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items referring to ministries, corporations, organizations, diseases, medication, place names, and names of politicians and political parties that they encounter in oral discourse. Results of questionnaire-interviews with a sample of interpreting students showed that the main source of difficulty during the interpreting task was lack of world knowledge and unfamiliarity with certain lexical items and their Arabic equivalents (Al-Jarf, 2018). Similarly, Al-Jarf (2010) found that student-translators had difficulty recognizing, understanding the meaning of, and translating English neologisms into Arabic. The students tended to translate words literally rather than conceptually. They tended to give a single-word equivalent rather than a borrowing, periphrasis, or explanatory equivalent. They made mistakes in pronouncing some English neologisms. Students' difficulties with English neologism were due to unfamiliarity with neologisms, lack of world knowledge, and inability to infer the meaning of unfamiliar neologisms from context.

The above review of prior studies that investigated students' problems in interpreting mostly focused on intertextual and intratextual, comprehension, addition, grammatical and disfluency errors. The students had difficulty rendering the meaning of

long, multiclausal, and complex legal question forms, had difficulty rendering modals and recognizing imperatives and declaratives in legal questions. They produced a slower rate of speech and incomprehensible utterances.

In addition, the literature review showed a dearth of studies that focus on student interpreters' pronunciation errors in liaison interpreting, in particular. No prior study has examined the pronunciation problems that students have in all types of interpreting. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the types of pronunciation errors that interpreting students make during English-Arabic and Arabic-English Liaison Interpreting. Specifically, the study will focus on the following: (i) segmental errors (auditory identification and auditory discrimination errors) that students make in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns occurring in oral media discourse; (ii) the pronunciation error strategies that student interpreters resort to when they encounter unfamiliar Proper Nouns in oral media discourse; and (iii) identify the factors that affect student interpreters' correct and incorrect pronunciation of foreign Proper Nouns occurring in oral media discourse. The study will focus on segmental errors only. It will not focus on auditory comprehension, lexical, grammatical, or fluency weaknesses while interpreting oral media discourse.

Accurate pronunciation of lexical items, especially of Proper Nouns in the target language, is of ultimate importance for understanding the interpreting output, whether it is in English or Arabic. A study by Tsang (2020) explored the perceptions of ten L1 and L2 English accents by bilinguals who spoke English as a first or second language. Findings showed that the L1 accents were not perceived consistently in terms of suitability for English teachers, models for learning, and maintaining students' attention. Having a native accent was found to be more strongly correlated with suitability than comprehensibility. This means that there is an inter-relationship between accents, communication effectiveness, students' attention, and instructor pronunciation quality. Certain instructors' non-native accents were associated with lower attention spans on the part of the students. Some interviewees also reported that exposure to some instructors' inaccurate pronunciation resulted in later embarrassment and communication breakdown.

Furthermore, faulty pronunciation may cause communication failure or create nuisance in comprehending the interpreting output. Accurate and native-like pronunciation, in general, reflects high professionalism and mastery of the source and target languages.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Participants**

68 senior female students in the fifth semester of the translation program at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, participated in the study. The students were enrolled in their first Liaison Interpreting course (2 hours a week). All the students were native speakers of Arabic. They all had completed 66 hours of EFL courses (4 Listening, 4 Speaking, 4 Reading, 4 Writing, 3 Grammar, 2 Vocabulary building courses), and were concurrently enrolled in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting courses (2 hours per week each).

### **2.2 Tasks (Interpreting Instruction)**

In the first Liaison Interpreting course, interpreting training proceeds in a series of graded exercises and steps consisting of breathing exercises; speech shadowing exercises; sentence paraphrasing exercises; summarizing in the same language, first of sentences, then of whole paragraphs; memory training exercises in which the students interpret words, sentences, and short easy dialogs; interpreting easy specialized interviews with familiar topics, then interpreting interviews that increase in length, difficulty level and topic familiarity. The students practice interpreting in a multimedia language lab (Al-Jarf, 2021h; Al-Jarf, 2021e; Al-Jarf, 2007b; Al-Jarf, 2000).

### **2.3 The Error Data Collection**

The students were given two interpreting tests, each of which consisted of 5 Arabic and 5 English dialogues. The dialogues covered media reports on politics, medicine, IT, education, sports, business and so on. The dialogues were recorded. The tests were given in the multimedia language lab where the students listened to each dialogue from a recording and were required to interpret the Arabic part of the dialogues into English and the English part of the dialogues into Arabic. Each student recorded her interpretation of the oral texts that she heard on an MP3/MP4 player. Some Proper Noun pronunciation errors were also collected from interpreting practice sessions.

### **2.4 Data Analysis**

In grading the students' interpretations, a list of English and Arabic foreign Proper Nouns occurring in all the dialogs was made. A corpus of 587 errors in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns was identified. These were categorized into the following:

- Personal names: *Messi, Pythagoras, Sergey Lavrov, Zuckerberg, اردوغان (Erdogan), آل غور (Al Gore), ميلوسوفيتش (Milosevic).*
- Place, city, state and country names: *Abuja; Balkans; Bangladesh; Belgrade; Brazil; Crimea; Davos; Denmark; Greece; Kazakhstan; Kiev; Missouri; United States; Uzbekistan; Scandinavia; Shanghai; Suez Canal; Srebrenica massacre; The*

Philippines; Ukraine; Trafalgar; هنغاريا (Hungary); كوسوفو (Kosovo); هلسنكي (Helsinki); ريو دي جانيرو (Rio Di Janeiro); باراغواي (Paraguay); اوكرانيا (Ukraine); برج ايفل (Eiffel Tower); جورجيا (Georgia); اثينا Athens.

- Organizations and acronyms: ALECSO, NATO, PDA.
- Disease names: Alzheimer; Parkinson.
- Cars: Daihatsu; Volks Wagon
- Brand names (products): Duncan Donuts; Nutela; نايك (Nike); أديداس (Adidas).
- Newspapers and News agencies: Associated Press; Reuters; United Press International; Wall Street Journal; بلومبيرغ نيوز (Bloomberg News); الاناضول (Anadolu); دويتشه فيله (Deutsche Welle).
- Chemical names or medicines: Chromium.
- Fictitious characters: Dracula.
- Weapons: Kalashnikov; صواريخ غراد (Grad missiles).
- Names of sports teams: Under Armour; بايرن ميونخ (Bayern Munich); أتلتيكو مدريد (Atletico de Madrid).
- Social media: Snapchat.
- Vaccines: سينوفارم (Sinopharm); سينوفاك (Sinovac).
- Measurements: ميكروغرام (microgram).
- Currencies and stock markets: كرونة سويدية (Swedish Krona); روبية هندية (Indian Rupee); الجنيه الاسترليني (Sterling Pound); بورصة الناسداك (NASDAQ); بورصة فرانكفورت (Frankfurt Stock Market); شيلين كيني (Kenya Shilling); اليوان (Yuan).

The author listened to each student's interpretation and marked her pronunciation errors of English and Arabic Proper Nouns on a dialogue script. Mispronunciations were transcribed using the IPA symbols. Some mispronounced Proper Nouns contain two or more pronunciation errors as in *Kalashnikov* /kɫafinko:v/; *Snapchat* (snab shat); *Brazil* (Barazeel); *Erdogan* (Ardoghan); and *International* /intərnəʃnəl/.

Each error was then classified as being an auditory identification or an auditory discrimination error. The kinds of pronunciation errors in producing foreign Proper Nouns were categorized into the following:

- *Insertion (addition or epenthesis)* errors where a vowel is added in word initial, medial, or final positions.
- *Deletion* errors where a vowel, consonant or syllable is deleted from a Proper Noun.
- *Substitution (change)* errors in which a vowel or a consonant is substituted by another, i.e., changing a vowel, consonant or a syllable and replacing it by another.
- *Reversal (metathesis)* errors where two vowels, consonants or syllables are put in a different order.

To identify the pronunciation errors strategies, students' faulty responses were classified into:

- Creating a *nonsense* word.
- *Analogy*, i.e., the use of words in the students' vocabulary that are similar in pronunciation with the stimulus words.
- *Overgeneralization* of the Arabic pronunciation in the English output text and the English pronunciation in the Arabic output text.

To define the errors causes, mispronunciations were sorted out into the following:

- *Interlingual* errors that results from faulty or partial learning of the target language and the influence of one target language item upon another.
- *Interference* errors, i.e., those where the Arabic pronunciation is transferred to the English output.
- *Intralingual* errors, i.e., students creating their own pronunciation as in saying /hngɜ:rɪə/ for *Hungary*, and /ʊkrɜ:rɪə/ for *Ukraine*.

## 2.5 Reliability

Two colleagues with a Ph.D. degree who have experience teaching interpreting, listening, and speaking courses participated in double-checking the pronunciation error data in a 30% sample of the students' recordings and categorizing each error into auditory identification or an auditory discrimination, insertion (addition), deletion, substitution (change), or reversal (metathesis) errors; whether the faulty Proper Noun produced is a nonsense word, a lexeme with a sound analogy, or a overgeneralization of the Arabic pronunciation. They also had to sort out pronunciation errors into interlingual, intralingual and interference from L1, i.e., (Arabic). Analysis of the error data by the author and the two colleagues were compared and discrepancies were solved by discussion. There was a 96% agreement among the 3 analysts.

## 2.6 Students' Surveys

To find out the sources of difficulties that the students encountered while interpreting the media reports in the test, the students answered an open-ended survey about the difficulties they have in pronouncing Proper Nouns and whether they watch news TV and how often they watch the news. Students' responses to the survey questions were compiled and are reported qualitatively.

**3. Results and Discussion**

**3.1 Types of Interpreting Errors**

The Proper Noun pronunciation error data revealed several pronunciation weaknesses and several strategies that the students resort to when they encounter unfamiliar foreign Proper Nouns each of which is described below.

- 1) Difficulties in identifying and discriminating one or more phonemes in unfamiliar foreign Proper Nouns such as personal names, place name, names of organizations, newspapers, and news agencies, chemical names, disease names, names of measurement units, acronyms referring to international organizations and so on, whether such Proper Nouns were heard in English or Arabic. In 25% of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample, unfamiliar Proper Nouns were substituted by a nonsense word that the students created. Whenever the students heard an unfamiliar Proper Noun in the spoken discourse with which they had auditory identification/ discrimination difficulties, they would produce (make up) nonsense words that rhyme with the source Proper Noun as in \*Dagos, \*Dados, \*Dabos which they provided for Davos; \*clodiom, \*cronium \*chronomium, \*lokonium which they provided for chromium. 63% of the students gave nonsense words for chromium; (63%) gave nonsense words for microgram; 58% for Athens; 50% provided a variety of nonsense equivalents for Missouri such as \*lizouri, \*rozouri, \*kansouri, \*mansouri and \*Scinavia for Scandinavia; and (38%) gave \*Helinx for Helsinki (See Table 1).

For other foreign Proper Nouns, the students modified the Arabic pronunciation of the foreign Proper Noun and produced their own English version as in saying /hng3:riə/ for هُنغاريا (Hungary) & /ʊkr3:riə/ for اوكرانيا (Ukraine).

**Table 1: Examples Nonsense Words Provided for Unfamiliar Proper Nouns**

| Input                          | Students' Mispronunciations  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ريو دي جانيرو (Rio Di Janeiro) | Rio Dignero Janerio Rio Jinero du Ri Ridigi tora dew Grano Rio Ranyero redio Gnero                         |
| اثينا (Athens)                 | athina Atheens Athen Atheena Vienna Athina Theen Atheen Athen  |
| Missouri                       | Rozori – Mizouria – missori – lizori – Mizorai – almizri – Mirazi – Kinsori - Misery                       |
| Chromium                       | clodiom criyomine lokerteem lenkemeem cronium chronomium cromemine lokonium<br>clodiom lokerteem lenkemeem |
| آل غور (Al Gore)               | al go – algaw – Al Tor – Arjer – Al Gairo – Goal – Al Jool   |
| PDA                            | PDN – PAC — BD- PCA, PPA   |
| اليوان (Yuan)                  | /taiwa:n/ - /awa:n/ - /alʔi:wa:/ - /aliwa:n/   |
| Davos                          | Dagos - Dabos - Dados  |
| ميكروغرام (microgram)          | Microme - criyomine  |
| Abuja                          | Albuja- Buja - Buji  |
| Scandinavia                    | Skinavia   |
| باراغواي (Paraguay)            | Bilgrulay  |
| NATO                           | NADO   |
| هلسنكي (Helsinki)              | Helinx   |
| كوسوفو (Kosovo)                | /Kosov/ or /kusu:f/  |

- 2) In 14% of the Proper Nouns in the sample, a familiar lexeme that rhymes with the unfamiliar stimulus (input) Proper Noun was given such as 'Al go & goal' instead of 'Al Gore', and Albuja for Abuja; 'volcanoes' and burkini for 'Balkans'; PCA, for PDA; NADO for NATO; corwn crone corona for Swedish Krona, and Atlantico for Madrid Atlitico (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Examples Words with Sound Analogies Provided for Unfamiliar Proper Nouns**

| Input                        | Students' Mispronunciations |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Balkans                      | Bolkino - volcano - borkino |
| كرونة سويدية (Swedish Krona) | Crown - Crone - corona      |
| صواريخ غراد (Grad missiles)  | Grad - grade - garad - rad  |
| Crimea                       | Cream – crema - crime       |
| Greece                       | Greek                       |

- 3) In 50% of the foreign Proper nouns in the sample, the students overgeneralized the Arabic pronunciation of foreign Proper Nouns to English. Since the participants knew that some Proper Nouns have identical pronunciation in both English and

Arabic, they overgeneralized this to cases in which the English and Arabic Proper Nouns have different pronunciation. Since some students were unfamiliar with 'Athens' as an equivalent to the Arabic 'Athina', they transferred the Arabic 'Athina' to the English output. Similarly, the students retained the Arabic pronunciation in برج ايفل *Eiffel Tower*, بايرن ميونخ *Bayern Munich*, اردوغان *Erdogan*, أديداس *Adidas*, قناة السويس *Suez canal*, الاناضول *Anadolu*, روبية هندية *Indian Rupee*, شيلن كيني *Kenyan Shilling*, فيثاغورس *Pythagoras*, and others (See Table 3 for the faulty pronunciation transcription).

**Table 3: Examples of Proper Nouns with Transferred Arabic Pronunciation**

| Input                              | Students' Mispronunciations |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alzheimer                          | /izhaimər/                  |
| Bangladesh                         | bangaladesh                 |
| Brazil                             | Barazeel                    |
| Denmark                            | Danimark                    |
| Duncan Donuts                      | /dänkən/                    |
| Kazakhstan                         | Kazakhstan                  |
| Kiev                               | /kyev/                      |
| Messi                              | /meisi/                     |
| Nutela                             | /nu:tela/                   |
| Pythagoras                         | fithagoras                  |
| Sergey Lavrov                      | Sergi Lavrov                |
| Shanghai                           | Shangahai                   |
| Snapchat                           | snab shat                   |
| Srebrenica                         | Sebrinitsa                  |
| The Philippines                    | /filipi:n/                  |
| Trafalgar                          | tarafalgaar                 |
| United Press International         | /intərnəʃʊnəl/              |
| Uzbekistan                         | Uzbakistan                  |
| Volks Wagon                        | /foks fakin/                |
| Wall Street Journal                | /dʒʊna:l/                   |
| أديداس (Adidas)                    | /ədida:s/                   |
| اردوغان (Erdogan)                  | Ardoghan /ardʊya:n/         |
| الاناضول (Anadolu)                 | Anadol                      |
| بايرن ميونخ (Bayern Munich)        | /myu:nix/                   |
| برج ايفل (Eiffel Tower)            | /i:fel/ or /i:vel/          |
| بورصة فرانكفورت (Frankfurt)        | /fra:nkfo:rt/               |
| الجنيه الاسترليني (Sterling Pound) | Isterleeni guinaih          |
| جورجيا (Georgia)                   | Georjya /dʒordʒiə/          |
| روبية هندية (Indian Rupee)         | Rubbiyya                    |
| سينوفارم (Sinopharm)               | سينوفارم                    |
| سينوفاك (Sinovac)                  | سينوفاك                     |
| شيلن كيني (Kenyan Shilling)        | Shillin /filin/             |
| قناة السويس (Suez canal)           | /sʊweis/                    |
| نايك (Nike)                        | Nayk                        |

- 4) In two thirds (68%) of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample, phonemes were substituted by or changed to a longer vowel as in (/meisi:/; /lavro:v/), a shorter vowel (/intərnəʃʊnəl/), or another consonant (snab shat). In some words, a diphthong was substituted by a single vowel /sinofa:rm/ instead of sainofa:rm/, or a vowel was substituted by a syllable (Georgia /dʒordʒiə/ instead of /dʒordʒə/. In other cases, the quality of the vowels was changed as in *Dracula*, *Duncan Donuts*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *دويتشه فيله Deutsche Welle* (See Table 4 for examples). In most of the examples in Table 4, the students transferred the Arabic segmental phonemes to English since Arabic has 6 vowels and 2 diphthongs compared to 12 vowels and 8 diphthongs in English. So English consonants that do not exist in Arabic such as /p, g, ch, v/ were replaced by their Arabic counterparts (*Volks Wagon*). The students also transferred the Arabic rules for adjacent sounds to English, where some require changing the quality of the vowels as in \**Uzbakistan* and \**Barazeel*.

**Table 4: Examples of Substitutions and Changes in Mispronounced Proper Nouns**

| Input                              | Students' Mispronunciations            |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Duncan Donuts                      | /dʌnkən/                               |
| Dracula                            | /drako:la/                             |
| Messi                              | /meisi/                                |
| Pythagoras                         | /fiθago:ras/                           |
| Sergey Lavrov                      | /se:rgi lavro:v/                       |
| Snapchat                           | snab shat                              |
| United Press International         | /intərnəʃʊnəl/                         |
| Uzbekistan                         | Uzbekistan                             |
| Volks Wagon                        | *fox fakon                             |
| Wall Street Journal                | journaal                               |
| Daihatsu                           | /di:hatsu/                             |
| هنغاريا (Hungary)                  | /hngɜ:rɪə/                             |
| اوكرانيا (Ukraine)                 | Ukrainia /ʊkrɜ:rɪə/                    |
| دويتشه فيله (Deutsche Welle)       | /dɔɪtʃ: villɜ:h/                       |
| بورصة الناسداك (NASDAQ)            | /nasdak/                               |
| سينوفاك (Sinovac)                  | /sinva:k/ instead of /sainova:k/       |
| سينوفارم (Sinopharm)               | /sinofa:rm/ instead of /sainofa:rm/    |
| روبية هندية (Indian Rupee)         | *Rubbiyya                              |
| الجنيه الاسترليني (Sterling Pound) | /isterli:ni gɪnɜ:h/, /isterli:ni gini/ |

- 5) In 23% of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample, part of the Proper Noun was deleted whether it is a vowel, a consonant or even a syllable as seen in the examples in Table 5 such as saying 'Buja' instead of 'Abuja', 'micro' instead of 'microgram', \*Under Arm, United \*State, \*Reuter. \*izheimer, \*Kyeve, \*Philippine, \*Zuckerbak, \*Parkins, نايك \*Nike, بلومبيرغ نيوز \*Bloomber probably because of the length of these words and poor short-term memory. Some deletions reflect transfer of the Arabic pronunciation of the Proper Noun to English and the fact that Arabic does not allow certain consonant clusters in word final positions.

**Table 5: Examples of Deletion Strategies in Mispronounced Proper Nouns**

| Input                          | Students' Mispronunciations         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Abuja                          | Buja, Buji                          |
| Alzheimer                      | /izhaɪmər/                          |
| Associated Press               | /asoʃertɪd/                         |
| Kalashnikov                    | /kla:ʃɪn/ or /klaʃɪnko:v/           |
| Kiev                           | /kyeɪv/                             |
| Nutela                         | /nu:tela/                           |
| Zuckerberg                     | Zuckerbak                           |
| بلومبيرغ نيوز (Bloomberg News) | Bloomber                            |
| كرونة سويدية (Swedish Krona)   | Corwn Crone corona                  |
| كوسوفو (Kosovo)                | /Kosov/ or /kusu:f/                 |
| ميكروغرام (microgram) (63%)    | micro                               |
| ميلوسوفيتش (Milosevic)         | /slovɪtʃ/ - /milsovi:tʃ/ - /sovitʃ/ |
| نايك (Nike)                    | /naɪk/                              |
| United States                  | United State                        |
| Parkinson                      | Parkins                             |
| Reuters                        | Reuter                              |
| The Philippines                | Philippine /fɪlɪpi:n/               |
| Under Armour                   | Under arm                           |

- 6) In 16% of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample, the students inserted a vowel to break consonant clusters in Proper Nouns such as in \*Beligrade, \*Nebenezia, \*Bangaladesh, \*Barazil, \*Danimark, \*Kazakhstan, \*Shangahai, \*Tarafalgar (See Table 6). The vowel insertion (epenthesis) reflects transfer of the Arabic pronunciation rules that do not allow consonant clusters in certain

positions in a word. In addition, those examples show the exact Arabic pronunciation of such Proper nouns that was transferred to the equivalent English Proper Nouns.

**Table 6: Examples of Mispronounced Proper Nouns with Vowel Insertions**

| Input            | Students' Mispronunciations                |
|------------------|--|
| Abuja            | Albuja                                     |
| Bangladesh       | Bangladesh /bængæla:dif/                   |
| Belgrade         | Beligrade                                  |
| Brazil           | Barazeel                                   |
| Denmark          | Danimark                                   |
| Kazakhstan       | Kazakhstan                                 |
| Nebenzia         | Nebenezia                                  |
| Shanghai         | Shangahai                                  |
| Trafalgar        | Tarafalgar                                 |
| جورجيا (Georgia) | Georjya /dʒo:rdʒɪə/ instead of //dʒo:rdʒə/ |

- 7) In only 4% of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample, the students reversed syllables in \**Srebrenica*, \**ALECSO*. \**Helinsky*. This reversal (metathesis) strategy also shows a transfer of the Arabic pronunciation rules to English and breaking consonant clusters to make such words easy to pronounce and conform to the Arabic phonological system.

### 3.1 Pronunciation Error Sources

Students' responses to the survey showed inadequate competence in English and Arabic Proper Nouns encountered in media discourse. The students indicated that they were unfamiliar with the Arabic version of foreign Proper Nouns such as *Abuja*, *Davos*, *Scandinavia*, *Missouri*, *PDA*, *NATO*, *Atletico de Madrid*, *Al Gore*, *Pythagoras* and so on. They reported that they were unfamiliar with some Proper Nouns in English and their equivalents in Arabic such *أناضول* & *Anadolu*; how *Messi Eiffel Tower*, *Erdogan*; and how to pronounce names of currencies in English and Arabic. They added that they rarely watch international news on T.V. and rarely read about current world events in newspapers. They are not familiar with names of international newspaper, news agencies, T.V. stations, international organizations and so on.

## 4. Discussion

The types of errors and strategies utilized by student interpreters in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns in oral media discourse in the current study are partially consistent with the overall types and frequency of errors that Indonesian and Iraqi students made in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in prior studies. Unlike Pratiwi's (2016) study which found that addition was the most frequent error made by consecutive interpreting students in Indonesia (30% of the errors), the most frequent strategy in the current study is phoneme substitution which was used in pronouncing 68% of the Proper Nouns in the sample, followed by overgeneralization of the Arabic pronunciation to English which was applied to 50% of the Proper Nouns in the sample, followed by phoneme deletion and providing a nonsense names which were applied to one fourth of the Proper Nouns in the sample. Vowel insertion, i.e., addition was used in pronouncing 16% of the foreign Proper Nouns in the sample. Differences in the results may be due to differences in the features and structures of the language pairs (English-Indonesian and English-Arabic) and to the differences in the interpreting mode.

Similarly, the frequency of mispronunciations in the current study are partially consistent with findings of Musa & Al-Maryani's (2021) study with Iraqi students who made omission, substitution, and addition in simultaneous interpreting probably because of the mode of interpreting used and the short interpreting time provided to Iraqi students.

Furthermore, some of the problems that students have in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns in interpreting media discourse are similar to errors that educated Arabs make in pronouncing Proper Nouns used spontaneous speech such as mispronouncing English vowels in *Google*, *Moodle*, *Uber*, *Nixon*, *London*; replacing consonants absent in Arabic (*p v*) by their counterparts; and inserting a vowel in consonant clusters in Proper Nouns and acronyms (Al-Jarf, 2022b). Proper Noun pronunciation errors in interpreting and those made by educated Arabs in spontaneous speech may be attributed to transfer from the native language (Arabic), insufficient mastery of English pronunciation rules, and lack of knowledge of the differences between English and Arabic phonology.

As for the causes of pronunciation errors, students' Proper Noun pronunciation errors in English and Arabic show inadequate competence in both English and Arabic. Familiarity with current world events seems to strongly affect the pronunciation accuracy of foreign Proper Nouns occurring in oral media discourse. These findings are consistent with finding of two other studies by Al-

Jarf which showed the strong effect of students' world knowledge on interpreting performance in terms of accuracy of pronunciation, word meaning, and auditory comprehension of the oral discourse (Al-Jarf, 2018; Al-Jarf, 2010).

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Interviews with students showed that the main source of difficulty in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns frequently occurring in media discourse was unfamiliarity with those foreign Proper Names such as names of organizations and their acronyms, names of foreign countries, states, cities and so on, some of which are permanent, and some keep changing depending on the upcoming world events. To help student interpreters at COLT acquire world knowledge, and help them pronounce foreign Proper Nouns in English and Arabic accurately, this study recommends the following:

- Developing students' domain knowledge in interpreting, vis foreign Proper Nouns in the SL and TL; providing declarative knowledge, i.e., explicit knowledge of facts, histories, ideas, topics, principles, and concepts<sup>2</sup> and procedural knowledge, i.e., knowledge of segmental and suprasegmental knowledge of L1 & L2 Proper Nouns while performing the interpreting tasks<sup>3</sup> (Morais & Esqueda, 2019).
- Watching English and Arabic T.V. news on CNN, BBC, RT, Al-Jazeera, and Al-Arabiyya, read news headlines and news stories of major world events in English and Arabic newspapers, and jotting down Proper Nouns in both English and Arabic, i.e., have their own glossary of Proper Nouns in English and Arabic. Watching English and Arabic T.V. news channels, online videos, news podcasts and TED Talks would increase students' background knowledge (world knowledge) and increase their exposure to pronunciation of foreign Proper Nouns by native speakers of English and Arabic (Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2021b; Al-Jarf, 2021i; Al-Jarf, 2020a; Al-Jarf, 2012b; Al-Jarf, 2011).
- Raising students' awareness of news headlines, reports, features and how to recognize Proper Nouns occurring in media discourse (Al-Jarf, 2021c).
- Interpreting instructors should emphasize the importance of public speaking quality including pronunciation, accent, and intonation. They should develop student interpreters' competence in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns in both directions: English-Arabic and Arabic-English interpreting since Liaison Interpreting involves interpreting in both directions in the same session (Al-Jarf, 2022a; Cho & Park, 2006; Al-Jarf, 2007a).
- Raising Interpreting instructors' awareness of students' weaknesses in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns commonly used in media discourse and how to design activities to remediate those weaknesses. Special pronunciation training workshops and seminars can be organized for instructors on social media such as Facebook, using online discussion forums, web-conferences, Periscope, and other platforms (Al-Jarf, 2021d; Al-Jarf, 2021f; Al-Jarf, 2014; Al-Jarf, 2006b; Al-Jarf, 2006c).
- Interpreting instructors should help students identify their mistakes in pronouncing foreign Proper Nouns. They should be aware of their student interpreters' pronunciation needs in order to give a range of techniques and activities for remediating their pronunciation weaknesses.
- Raising students' awareness of the similarities and differences between English and Arabic phonetic/phonological structures through a contrastive analysis of English and Arabic phonology and phonetics can be particularly beneficial to student interpreters since they are advanced students of English. (Cho & Park, 2006; Al-Jarf, 2021a; Al-Jarf, 2003; Al-Jarf, 1994; Al-Jarf, 1990).
- Raising students' awareness of English pronunciation rules, phonics, phoneme-grapheme correspondences and of, the differences between English and Arabic vowels, consonants, allophones, geminates, consonant clusters, assimilation, elision, contraction, primary and secondary stress rules and solidifying such aspects through interpreting of dialogue (Al-Jarf, 2019; Al-Jarf, 2008a; Al-Jarf, 2008b; Al-Jarf, 2005a; Al-Jarf, 2005b; Al-Jarf, 1992).
- Integrating mobile learning to develop student interpreters' phonetic competence. Specifically, mobile audiobooks can be used for developing students listening comprehension, oral production, and correct pronunciation (Gurova, Riabukha, Zinenko & Gostishcheva, 2020; Al-Jarf, 2021g; Al-Jarf, 2020b; Al-Jarf, 2012a).
- It is important that pronunciation instruction of foreign Proper Nouns be part of the interpreting instruction. Interpreting instructors can enhance students' correct pronunciation of English and Arabic foreign Proper Nouns through explicit pronunciation instruction and training. They can prepare Proper Noun lists in categories such as personal names (presidents, prime ministers, ministers of some countries), place, city, state and country names, common organizations and acronyms, disease names, brand names, newspapers and news agencies, chemical or medicine, vaccine names, weapons, names of sports teams, social media, measurements, major currencies and stock markets. The instructors and their students can add English and Arabic Proper Nouns under each category and practice pronouncing them. Mind maps can be used for categorizing and organizing Proper Noun categories and examples (Inceoglu, Solène, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2015; Al-Jarf, 2006a).

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<sup>2</sup> Declarative Knowledge - Writing Commons

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thecloututorial.com/procedural-knowledge/>

- The students can engage in task-based pronunciation activities that focus on foreign Proper Nouns. For example, the students can use reflective journal entries about new English and Arabic Proper Nouns that they have encountered over a week. They can submit their Proper Noun journals to their instructor weekly or biweekly. This activity would raise students' (self-)awareness of their pronunciation change (Inceoglu, Solène, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2021c; Al-Jarf, 2007a).

Finally, the presents study recommends that future researchers focus on further aspects of English pronunciation with which beginning and advanced Arab student interpreters have difficulties such as single word stress, stress in compounds and sentences, stress shift in words that end in certain suffixes, assimilation, elision and intonation in general as well as specialized oral discourse is still open for further investigation by future researchers.

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