International Journal of Translation and Interpretation Studies
ISSN: 2754-2602
DOI: 10.32996/ijtis
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijtis

IJTIS
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trainee Interpreters' Comments on Sight Translation Practice Oriented to Simultaneous Interpreting Learning: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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| ABSTRACT
Sight translation (ST) practice has been adopted by interpreter trainers to facilitate trainees' simultaneous interpreting (SI) learning. However, it remains uncertain as to how trainee interpreters perceive the role of ST practice in SI learning and how such practice is carried out in different interpreter training programmes. Therefore, the study sets out to examine how trainee interpreters perceive and experience ST practice tailored to SI learning. In this study, nine trainee interpreters from three training programmes took part in one-to-one interviews about their SI-oriented ST practice, with the interview data subject to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Following IPA, two major themes occurred: 1) inconsistent perceptions towards ST's effects on SI and 2) between-programme similarities/differences in arranging ST practice. The study serves to enrich scholarly understanding on SI-oriented ST practice, as well as demonstrating potential issues in ST practice designs.

| KEYWORDS
Sight translation, simultaneous interpreting, interpreter training, interpretative phenomenological analysis

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 March 2025 **PUBLISHED:** 14 March 2025 **DOI:** 10.32996/ijtis.2025.5.1.6

1. Introduction

In some interpreter training programmes, sight translation (ST) practice has been used to prepare trainee interpreters for simultaneous interpreting (SI) learning (Li, 2014). The importance of ST practice to interpreter training has been highlighted by Weber (1990) who noted that ST practice could develop multiple skills (e.g. rapid analysis of linguistic information) that are required of a conference interpreter. Based on personal experience in training conference interpreters, Viaggio (1995, p.33–34) also opined that 'sight translation in general is perhaps the most effective and complete prelude to and preparation for attacking simultaneous interpretation.' Additionally, interpreter trainers have offered multiple suggestions on how to design ST practice tailored to SI learning (see Setton & Darwant, 2016; Song, 2010; Yan & Song, 2021; 2022).

Nevertheless, there remains a scarcity of scholarly attention paid to SI-oriented ST practice (Pöchhacker, 2016). Apart from that, existing research on SI-oriented ST practice has demonstrated two limitations. First, the comments on how ST practice benefits SI learning are mostly given by interpreter trainers, while trainees' views are somewhat neglected. Second, uncertainty remains as to how SI-oriented ST practice is implemented in various interpreter training programmes.

To help bridge the aforementioned research gaps, the present study focuses on trainee interpreters' ST practice oriented to SI learning and addresses the following two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How do trainee interpreters perceive the role of ST practice in SI learning?
RQ2: How is SI-oriented ST practice carried out in different interpreter training programmes?

The author started by explaining the rationale behind using ST practice to serve SI learning and by describing potential ways of designing SI-oriented ST practice. The author then moved on to delineate the research design. Afterwards, the author demonstrated and discussed the research findings, and presented concluding remarks.

2. Rationale behind ST Practice Tailored to SI Learning

A major feature of SI, according to Yudes et al. (2011), is the simultaneity of actions involved. SI interpreters are burdened with various cognitive tasks, such as the decoding of linguistic information, memorisation of specific input, retrieval of long-term memory and monitoring of the output production (Gerver, 1975; Moser-Mercer, 1997). As noted by Korpal (2016, p.21), 'interpreters themselves often report that the difficulty of simultaneous interpreting lies in the fact that they need to perform several cognitive operations at the same time.' Lambert (2004, p. 296) has highlighted the risk of listening and speaking concurrently in SI, claiming that 'the simultaneity of listening and speaking imposes a severe strain on human channel capacity, which explained in part why professional interpreters normally ask to work for 20-minute periods only.' As explained by Gile (2018), SI interpreters need to simultaneously pay attention to two speeches (i.e. the speaker's source speech and the interpreter's output) while interpreters' voices might hinder the comprehension of the source speech. The difficulty of simultaneous actions has been highlighted by Pashler (2008) who noted that the tasks requiring the same type of mental processing can hardly be conducted simultaneously without performance deterioration because the specific mental processor responsible for operating the tasks works for one task at a time.

A common measure to facilitate SI learning refers to ST practice, The potential benefits of ST exercises to SI learning were frequently reported by interpreter trainers. As noted by Mikkelson (1994), in view of a significant overlap of skills and aptitudes of ST and other modes of renditions (e.g. SI), ST practice can be a valuable tool in training interpreters. Viaggio (1995) has emphasised the ST-SI commonality in real-time processing and considered that this shared feature makes ST practice useful to SI training.

A prominent similarity between SI and ST lies in the need for multitasking. Gile (2009, p.180) has indicated the simultaneity of actions required in ST, noting that 'while reading, they (sight translators) cannot devote all their efforts to understanding the meaning of the text but must think of its translation as well in order for their target-language rendition to be smooth enough.' Additionally, Gile (ibid., p.179–180) has proposed an ST effort model (i.e. ST = Reading Effort + Memory Effort + Speech Production Effort + Coordination), indicating the variety of the componential tasks involved in ST processing. The challenge of simultaneous actions in ST has been highlighted by Chmiel and Mazur (2013, p. 190) who noted that 'sight translation places a lot of strain on the processing capacity of the interpreter as it involves a number of simultaneous subtasks, such as processing the visual input, producing the oral output, and monitoring one's output aurally.'

To alleviate the pressure of multitasking, SI and ST entail the use of common rendition strategies. A case in point refers to chunking, a strategy adopted by interpreters to divide a source text sentence into several shorter units and render them in a linear manner (Ma & Li, 2021). Chernov (2004, p.145) has emphasised 'the need to maintain, as far as possible, the sequences of sense groups of the original' in SI. As explained by Chernov (ibid.), in most cases it is impossible for SI interpreters to make significant changes in the sequence of meaning units considering the linear development of the SL discourse over time and the constraints on interpreter's WM capacity. The positive role of chunking in SI processing has been confirmed by Wang and Gu (2016) who found that chucking was associated with significantly fewer information losses and errors than syntactic reformulation in SI processing. Chunking also plays a role in facilitating ST processing. As opined by Ho et al. (2020), with the use of chunking, interpreters could start sight translating the text before delaying it for too long in order to keep the rendition flowing. In ST processing, chunking was the primary strategy adopted by the trainee interpreters to address asymmetric structures, along with its substantiated effects on reducing interpreters' cognitive burdens (Ma, 2019; Ma & Li, 2021).

When delivering ST practice tailored to SI training, interpreter trainers might have SI training preceded by ST practice (Li, 2014). As advised by Li (2015), teaching contents should manifest a hierarchical sequence from simple to complex so that learners can gradually adapt to learning difficulty rather than being frustrated by an excessively challenging task. ST could be a less challenging task than SI. In Lambert's (2004) study, student interpreters' ST performances were significantly better than their SI performances, indicating greater challenge in SI than in ST. As noted by Chmiel et al. (2020), the overall cognitive load in SI could be higher than that in ST. This might explain why ST practice might take place prior to SI learning. If frustrated by excessive challenges, learners might not demonstrate a satisfactory level of engagement with the teaching activities (Malone & Lepper, 1987). To avoid trainee interpreters' frustration in SI training, they might need to receive ST practice that consolidates their skills/abilities (e.g. chunking and multitasking) required in SI, before undergoing the challenging SI learning.

On top of that, ST consists of multiple componential tasks that consume cognitive resources (Gile, 2009). Following sufficient practice, cognitively demanding tasks can be undertaken in the way of automatic processing (Fabio et al., 2019) which is being swift and requires little cognitive effort (Moors & De Houwer, 2006). Following the elicitation of automatic processing in ST componential tasks, interpreters might face fewer cognitive challenges in SI since ST and SI share various componential tasks. Moreover, as opined by Timarová et al. (2014), given that an automatic task demands little cognitive effort, interpreters could spend more cognitive resources on other tasks if necessary, thus increasing the feasibility of two tasks processed in parallel.

However, the benefits of ST practice to SI training are mainly reported by interpreter trainers while trainee interpreters' views are somewhat neglected, risking biases in data collection. To increase the validity and credibility of research findings, researchers need to adopt triangulation which 'by combining theories, methods or observers in a research study, can help ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method or a single observer are overcome' (Noble & Heale, 2019, p.67). Alongside interpreter trainers' views, the addition of trainee interpreters' opinions helps to validate existing findings concerning

how ST practice benefits SI training. Additionally, trainees' views on how ST benefits SI might influence their motivation to do ST practice tailored to SI training. As noted by Ryan and Deci (2020), learning is more likely to take place if the positive and desired outcomes of learning have been identified by learners. If trainee interpreters are found to neglect the importance of ST practice serving SI training, they might be discouraged from engaging in such practice. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse how interpreting trainees perceive SI-oriented ST exercises.

3. Design of ST Practice Oriented to SI Learning

As suggested by Ericsson and Moxley (2012), the practice activity could demonstrate the representative conditions of the target context and capture the desired skills in the context. When designing ST practice oriented to SI learning, interpreter trainers need to take account of how SI processing diverges from ST processing and how to simulate the SI-specific condition in ST practice. As explained by Agrifoglio (2004), SI is a speaker-paced activity which requires the interpreter to follow the pace of the source speech, while ST processing is in line with the interpreter's own pace. In an effort to orient ST practice to SI learning, various measures have been adopted to decrease trainee interpreters' autonomy in ST processing.

As advised by Setton and Darwant (2016), ST practice tailored to SI learning could feature the controlled and drip-fed input which drills trainees' chunking techniques needed for SI processing, with the trainer controlling the speed of input delivery, size of input segments and length of pauses. Such practice has been created by Song (2010) who divided the source text into several segments, presented each segment on a PowerPoint slide and then displayed each slide within a specific timespan pre-set on PowerPoint so that trainees have less autonomy in doing ST. Later, Yan and Song (2021; 2022) created dynamic ST exercises where the ST input could appear and fade away all at once or gradually on a screen, with the input rates ranging from 90-130 words per minute. Furthermore, dynamic ST exercises have been found to adjust trainees' awareness of how various rendition strategies benefit ST/SI processing (Yan & Song, 2021; 2022). Despite this, Yan and Song's studies (2021; 2022) have used questionnaire surveys to collect trainee interpreters' views on SI-oriented ST practice, without conducting interviews that could gather more detailed information relevant to such practice. Apart from that, it remains unclear as to how SI-oriented ST exercises are actually implemented in different interpreter training programmes, albeit with various pedagogical suggestions on how to design ST exercises serving SI learning.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

Email invitations were sent to potential participants in three interpreter training programmes, introducing the research aim and participants' duties. Nine postgraduate student interpreters replied with the consent to participate in this study. The participants were all native Chinese speakers, speaking English as their second language. Four student interpreters (i.e. participants 01, 02, 03 and 04) were recruited from an English-Chinese interpreter training programme (i.e. a master's programme) offered by a British university. Participants 05, 06, 07, 08 and 09 were recruited from another university in the United Kingdom, but the five participants studied in two different English-Chinese interpreter training programmes, with participants 05 and 06 studying in a postgraduate diploma programme while participants 07, 08 and 09 studying in a master's programme. The author has labelled the master's programme joined by participants 01, 02, 03 and 04 as programme A, the postgraduate diploma programme as programme B, and the master's programme joined by participants 07, 08 and 09 as programme C. Noteworthily, participants 07 and 08 have studied in programme B before taking part in programme C. All three programmes lasted nine months respectively.

By the time when interviews were conducted, all participants have completed a module on SI in the first term of their respective programmes. ST practice has been adopted in their modules on SI. In addition, Table 1 shows each participant's gender, ST/SI learning experience prior to their engagements in current programmes, and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores:

Table 1: Participants' Basic Information

	Programme A				**Programme B**		**Programme C**		
	01	**02**	**03**	**04**	**05**	**06**	**07**	**08**	**09**
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male
With or without ST learning experience prior to engagement in current programmes	without	with	with	without	without	without	with	with	without
With or without SI learning experience prior to engagement in current programmes	without	without	without	without	without	without	with	with	without
IELTS (overall)	6.5	8	7	6.5	6	7	7.5	7.5	6.5

IELTS (listening)	6	8.5	7.5	7	6	8	8.5	8.5	6
IELTS (reading)	7	8.5	7.5	7	7	7	9	8.5	7
IELTS (writing)	6.5	7	7	6	5.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6
IELTS (speaking)	6	7	6.5	6	6	6.5	6.5	6	6

4.2. Interviews

The study has administered nine one-to-one interviews with each participant. The interviews were semi-structured with the use of open-ended questions, eliciting participants' unrestrained responses and in-depth information relevant to the two RQs (Turner, 2010). Based on their responses, follow-up questions were asked in order to further enrich the findings. Each interview was conducted in Chinese and audio-recorded, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview data were then transcribed, translated into English and then annotated, along with the removal of all identifying information (e.g. participants' names and universities, etc.) to ensure privacy protection.

4.3. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The interview transcripts were examined by IPA which is underpinned by three philosophical principles: 1) phenomenology involves the detailed examination of participants' lived experience; 2) hermeneutics focuses on how researchers and participants make sense of the lived experience; and 3) idiography examines the particularity of each participant's lived experience (Smith, 2015). The focus of IPA, according to Smith et al. (2021, p.39), is placed on 'personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience.' The suitability of IPA to this research is validated by the two RQs that concern each trainee interpreter's lived experience in SI-oriented ST practice and his/her perceptions towards the importance of ST practice to SI training. The procedures of IPA (Tomkins, 2017) are outlined in Table 2:

Table 2: Phases of IPA

Phase	Activity
1. Reading and re-reading	The author gets immersed in the data by frequently reviewing the interview recording of a participant.
2. Initial noting	The author reflects and note points of interest, what he thinks the participant is expressing, and what associations this might trigger.
3. Developing emergent themes	The author converts the notes into initial themes that should be clearly traceable back to the raw data.
4. Searching for connections across themes (within-participant patterning)	The author refines the themes by identifying the most significant aspects of the participant's experience
5. Moving to the next case	The author moves on to analyse the next participant's recording and repeats Phases 1-4.
6. Seeking patterns across cases	The author identifies the patterns for all interviewees by analysing participants' similarities and differences
7. Making deeper interpretation	The author reviews the raw data and themes created, as well as making several iterations of phases 1 to 6 above, in order to draw on different interpretative resources and inspirations.

5. Findings

Following IPA on interview data, the author has created two superordinate themes: 1) inconsistent perceptions towards ST's effects on SI and 2) between-programme similarities/differences in arranging ST practice, with each superordinate theme associated with several sub-themes. The author has also identified participants' narrative extracts relevant to each theme.

5.1. Inconsistent Perceptions towards ST's Effects on SI

Participants differed from each other in how they perceived the effects of ST practice on SI learning. According to participants 03, 06, 07 and 08, ST practice helped to polish their use of rendition skills that could be applied to SI processing. For participants 01, 04 and 09, ST practice had limited effects on their SI learning as a result of their unsatisfactory language proficiency. On the other hand, participants 02 and 05 deemed ST practice to be potentially detrimental to SI learning since ST practice might develop their inclination to self-paced processing which does not necessarily suit SI tasks.

5.1.1. Improvement in the Use of Rendition skills

As commented by participants 03, 07 and 08, there might be several rendition skills that could be transferred from ST practice to SI processing, including chunking, generalisation and adjustments in linking devices. Participants' relevant narratives are cited as below:

Participant 03: When I initially learned ST in my undergraduate programme, I was asked to divide every source text sentence into several units and translate one unit after another… Now this skill (chunking) helps me save time in both ST and SI…It would cost me much time and effort to finish reading a long sentence before actually interpreting it.

Participant 07: It was basically impossible to render all the source language information, especially when we did SI or when we were given time limits in ST. The time pressure could be more intense in the Chinese-to-English direction (than in the English-to-Chinese direction). To save time, I had to make generalisations.

Participant 08: In my ST practice, the logical coherence between chunks might not be apparent, so I had to add an improper linking device. Even if the conjunction is present in the source text sentence, it could be inappropriate in the given context, which means I had to rephrase it. I had to check the source text carefully to find out the correct linking devices…The major benefit of ST practice to my SI lies in the use of linking devices, I think.

5.1.2. Impacts of Language Proficiency

Participants 01, 04 and 09 did not identify significant benefits of ST practice to their SI learning, which, according to the three participants, could be attributed to their limited proficiency in English listening and speaking. Participants' corresponding comments are presented as follows:

Participant 01: I am not bad at English reading, but I really suffer in English listening…If I do not understand what the speaker says, I can do nothing about it, and all the skills I have learned from ST might barely help my SI.

Participant 09: It is hard to find proper target language equivalents in Chinese-to-English SI. Generally speaking, the interpreter tends to spend more time expressing exactly the same meaning than the speaker in Chinese-to-English interpretation, but the output should be as succinct as possible in SI, so we might need to use the equivalents that are less perfect but more concise and still plausible. It is not easy to find such equivalents under high pressure, and I am not sure if ST practice could help me on this issue.

5.1.3. Inclination to Self-paced Processing

Participants 02, 05 and 06 highlighted ST-SI differences in interpreters' autonomy of processing. Such differences, according to the two participants, might make ST practice harmful to SI learning. Their relevant comments are shown as follows:

Participant 02: I feel that I have got used to the scenario of ST where everything is under my control, but the situation is quite different in SI. I feel more anxious in SI than in ST, because I have to catch up with the speaker…Of course, we were given time limits in ST practice, but the time pressure (in ST with time limits) is still much smaller than that in SI. We could still read forward and backward in such ST.

Participant 05: The source speech tempo could change unpredictably in SI…I kept following my own pace in ST practice, and I feel a bit uncomfortable when moving to SI learning.

5.2. Between-programme Similarities/differences in Arranging ST Practice

The three programmes where participants were studying resembled each other in having ST exercises followed by SI tasks and welcoming in-class discussion of how to perform ST on given source texts, but the programmes also differed from each other in their ways of arranging time pressure in ST practice.

5.2.1. ST Practice Preceding SI Tasks

In the module on SI, ST practice was frequently followed by SI tasks, serving as a preparatory step for SI. Participants' corresponding narratives are cited as below:

Participant 04: The ST practice often preceded an SI task in our SI lessons…In one (SI) lesson, following the ST practice, the lecturer said 'it seems we are all prepared now, so it is time to get in the booths.' For us, ST is a way of preparing for SI, I would say.

Participant 06: The (ST) practice got us prepared with all the potentially difficult points of the SI task…It (ST practice) helped us get the first impression of the SI task topic. Although the real source speech might contain new information that was absent from the text, we could still do anticipation based on what we have known from the text.

5.2.2. In-class Discussion of How to Do ST

Participants' ST practice was characterised mainly by in-class discussion of how to perform ST on a given text. The discussion, according to participants, might not necessarily lead to fruitful results given the disagreement involved and the lack of constructive feedback. Participants' relevant comments as presented as follows:

Participant 02: It was really hard to reach a consensus in the group discussions…Some students preferred to slightly restructure a sentence while others liked to translate linearly. We could not know which strategy was better until we actually did the SI task.

Participant 09: Some students were asked by the lecturer to do ST and then received feedback from other students and the lecturer, but the feedback might not be effective, I am afraid. Students did not necessarily agree with each other in their comments…The lecturer might not comment in detail on the strengths and weaknesses of each student's ST. I am a bit confused about how she assessed our ST quality.

5.2.3. Time Pressure in ST Practice

ST tasks were performed within time limits in programme A, while such time limits were absent in programme B. On the other hand, programme C adopted ST practice that featured growing time pressure. Participants' corresponding remarks are shown as below:

Participant 01: A source text would contain multiple paragraphs. Each paragraph was sight translated by a student within a specific time limit set by the lecturer. If the student's ST exceeded the time limit, there would be a follow-up discussion of how the ST output could be more succinct.

Participant 05: As I recall, there was not any time limit set in the ST.

Participant 07: I have studied in the postgraduate diploma programme (programme B) before. The (ST) practice was done with basically little pressure in that programme…I think our ST practice was getting more and more challenging. In my current programme, the practice was given time limits, Besides, in several SI lessons the lecturer has shown the source text on a screen and the text kept scrolling down automatically, which made the ST a bit challenging.

6. Discussion

By analysing participants' comments, the author has identified potential factors influencing trainee interpreters' perceptions towards SI-oriented ST practice, and underlying issues in SI-oriented ST training.

6.1. Factors Impacting Trainees' Attitudes towards SI-oriented ST Practice

Participants' 01, 04 and 09 have considered that their limited English proficiency has hindered the ST-to-SI skill transfer. As shown in Section 5.1.2, limitations in English listening and speaking might prevent interpreters from comprehending source language information and producing appropriate English output in SI. This finding is consistent with Shaw et al.'s (2004) report that prospective trainee interpreters might not be adequately prepared for interpreter training because of their unsatisfactory second language proficiency. Moreover, participant 09 has specified the difficulty of Chinese-English ST/SI in terms of producing concise output. A potential reason for this phenomenon might refer to trainee interpreters' difficulty in doing summarisation. According to Sunnari (1995), student interpreters frequently fail to identify the gist of information in SI. Trainees' difficulty in using summarisation also takes place in ST tasks. When delivering ST practice that aimed at polishing student interpreters' summarising skills, Yan and Song (2021, p.20) found out that 'due to limited cognitive resources and underdeveloped capacity of fusing propositions, the students could not execute summarisation strategy like professionals, even when the students understood the text well.'

As demonstrated in Table 1, participants 01, 04 and 09 scored 6-6.5 in IELTS listening or reading, reaching B2 in CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). This is in line with their reports of limited language proficiency in English listening and reading. However, participants 03, 05, 06, 07, 08 and 09 also reached B2 in their IELTS listening or reading while they did not mention the impacts of language proficiency, indicating the complexity involved in participants' perceptions towards SI-oriented ST practice.

Another factor modulating trainees' perceptions might lie in ST instruction. Appropriate instructional support could facilitate skill/knowledge transfer by helping students examine the similarities between the practice context and target task so that the

between-context skill transfer could be achieved (Cree & Macaulay, 2000; Gick & Holyoak, 1987). The ST instruction received by participants 03, 07 and 08 might help the three trainees perceive the benefits of ST practice to SI learning, despite their potential weaknesses in English reading and listening. As remarked by Participant 03, his undergraduate study involving ST practice helped him realise the potential of transferring chunking techniques from ST to SI. Despite this, participant 02 (see Table 1) has also undergone ST learning in her undergraduate programme, while she has expressed negative attitudes towards ST practice serving SI learning, as demonstrated by her caution against the tendency to develop self-paced processing in ST practice (see Section 5.1.3). It is noteworthy that both participants 02 and 03 have not received SI teaching in their undergraduate programmes, indicating that their ST practice was not necessarily tailored to SI learning. On the other hand, participants 07 and 08 had already undergone SI-oriented ST instruction when they studied in programme B, demonstrating an advantage over other participants in understanding such practice. In this sense, the design of ST instruction could play an important role in promoting ST-to-SI skill transfer.

6.2. Potential Issues in SI-oriented ST Training

Given the impacts of language proficiency on ST/SI learning (see Section 6.1.1), corresponding measures should be adopted to address this issue. It would be inappropriate for interpreting trainers and trainees to spend considerable time on language teaching/learning in view of the need of polishing interpreting skills which are apparently more relevant to the aim of interpreter training. Under this circumstance, trainers might need to reconsider their ways of recruiting student interpreters. By adjusting language requirements in admission standards, trainers might ensure trainees' adequate language competence for receiving interpreter training.

Additionally, the three programmes where participants were recruited had the same course length (nine months), but the programmes diverged from each other in the design of SI-oriented ST practice. Such practice was associated with time limits in programme A but not in programme B. In programme C, ST practice was not only performed within time limits but also implemented with the help of moving screens, demonstrating the diversity of SI-oriented ST practice. The ST practice featuring scrolling texts could be described as dynamic text presentation (Uetsuki et al., 2017) which subjects readers to time pressure in having text information scrolled on the screen automatically at the speed pre-set by researchers so as to challenge readers' autonomy in information perception. Multiple studies (Chen & Chien, 2007; Proaps & Bliss, 2014; Schotter et al., 2014) have revealed that under dynamic text presentation, reading comprehension quality was influenced by the speed of text scrolling. In addition, as claimed by Potter (1984), information processing under dynamic text presentation may be similar to auditory language processing since the listeners must process speech at the speakers' rate in auditory language rather than being self-paced. Despite this, ST practice under dynamic text presentation has not been adopted in programme B. It is possible that trainee interpreters in programme B may move into programme C when they finish their current course, as demonstrated by participants 07 and 08. In this way, ST practice could exhibit the progression of challenges so that learners may gradually get used to their learning difficulty (see Section 2). However, the limited course length could complicate the situation, as exemplified by programme A. Compared with programmes B and C which could altogether provide more than one year of interpreter training, programme A may offer less time in ST/SI training, thus challenging trainers' efforts to diversify ST practice activities in programme A.

Another issue in SI-oriented ST training refers to the unclarity of instructional feedback. Interpreter trainers' constructive feedback could help trainees understand clearly how well trainees performed in ST and what constituted high-quality ST, especially when trainees failed to reach a consensus in their group discussion. However, participant 09 has reported his trainer's failure to give effective feedback, causing confusion in the participant's ST learning. Without sufficient pedagogical assistance, trainees may be unable to identify the standards of satisfactory ST and proper ways of using interpreting strategies.

7. Conclusion

The study has explored how trainee interpreters commented on the role of ST practice in SI learning and how trainees underwent such practice in different interpreter training programmes, as well as illuminating possible factors modulating trainees' understanding of SI-oriented ST practice. These research efforts help to fill existing study gaps in SI-oriented ST training which currently receives little attention from academia. From the pedagogical perspective, the study may enable interpreter trainers to identify potential weaknesses of their SI-oriented ST training and make corresponding adjustments.

Despite this, the study is not without its limitations. In this study, the nine participants were recruited from three E-C interpreter training programmes. The small size limited the generalisability of research findings. Hopefully, in the future the topic of SI-oriented ST practice would be studied with a larger sample size and more language pairs in order to enrich relevant research findings.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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