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MASTER’S THESIS

PERCEPTION OF REMOTE INTERPRETING TECHNOLOGIES
BY CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS IN TURKEY

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APPROVAL PAGE



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "Perception of Remote Interpreting Technologies by Conference Interpreters in Turkey" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.

18/07/2022

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ABSTRACT
Master's Thesis
Perception of Remote Interpreting Technologies by Conference Interpreters In
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Remote Simultaneous Interpreting has become the common mode for most conferences after the Covid-19 pandemic started. This study at hand aims to find how conference interpreters who work in Turkey think of Remote Interpreting. It first gives a history of simultaneous interpreting starting with the first experiments conducted in the 1920s and gives an account of simultaneous interpreting becoming widespread in the 1940s at the United Nations. It also provides definitions for Remote Interpreting, categorizing various definitions given by several scholar to describe different settings Remote Interpreting can be used in. The definition selected for the thesis is any kind of simultaneous interpreting setting in which the conference interpreter is required to work in another location than where the conference is taking place. The thesis uses Gile's Effort Model as its theoratical background to describe the issues faced by the interpreters during a Remote Interpreting session. This allows us to put some of the problems faced during a remotely interpreted event in context. The study is built on a pilot study (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020) and further investigates the issues faced by the conference interpreters in Turkey.

The thesis is a case study that focuses on seven interpreters' experiences in Remote Interpreting as it gathered its data through a set interviews done with these seven interpreters. The study at hand gives a detailed chronological history of Remote Interpreting experiments and lists common problems found in the literature. One of the common problems found in the literature is that the

feeling of being there and in control is largely diminished and the onset of fatigue happens earlier than an on-site setting (Moser-Mercer, 13, 2003). This thesis confirmed that conference interpreters feel more stress due to having more responsibilities and lack of human touch. This study also elaborates the issue of incorporating Remote Interpreting into existing curricula in interpreting departments.

Keywords: Remote Interpreting, Conference Interpreting, Impacts of Remote Interpreting, Simultaneous Interpreting, Interpreter training



ÖZET
Yüksek Lisans Tezi
Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri Teknojilerinin
Türkiye’de Çalışan Konferans Tercümanlarınca Alınımı
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Uzaktan Simultane Çeviri, Covid-19 salgını başladıktan sonra çoğu konferans için varsayılan yöntem haline geldi. Eldeki bu çalışma, Türkiye’de çalışan konferans tercümanlarının Uzaktan Çeviri hakkında ne düşündüklerini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak 1920’lerde yapılan deneylerden başlayarak 1940’larda Birleşmiş Milletler’de yaygınlaşan simultane tercümenin tarihini özetler. Ayrıca, Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri’nin kullanılabileceği farklı yöntemleri belirten çeşitli akademisyenler tarafından verilen birden fazla tanımı kategorize eder ve Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviriyi tanımlar. Tez için seçilen tanım, konferans tercümanının başka bir yerde çalışması gereken her türlü simultane çeviri ortamıdır. Tez, bir Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri oturumu sırasında tercümanların karşılaştığı sorunları açıklamak için teorik arka planı olarak Gile’nin Çaba Modelini kullanır. Bu, uzaktan çevrilen bir konferans sırasında karşılaşılan bazı sorunları bağlama koymamızı sağlar. Çalışma bir pilot çalışma (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020) üzerine inşa edilmiştir ve Türkiye’deki konferans tercümanlarının karşılaştığı sorunları daha derinden incelemektedir.

Bu tez, yedi tercümanla yapılan bir dizi görüşme yoluyla verilerini topladığı için yedi tercümanın Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri deneyimine odaklanan bir vaka çalışmasıdır. Eldeki çalışma, Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri deneylerinin ayrıntılı bir kronolojik tarihini verir ve literatürde bulunan yaygın sorunları listeler. Literatürde bulunan yaygın sorunlardan biri, orada olma ve kontrol altında olma hissinin büyük ölçüde azalması ve yorgunluk hissinin yerinde yapılan

sözlü çeviriye göre daha erken başgöstermesidir (Moser-Mercer, 13, 2003). Bu tez, konferans tercümanlarının daha fazla sorumluluk sahibi olmaları ve insan dokunuşu eksikliği nedeniyle daha fazla stres hissettiklerini doğruladı. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda uzaktan sözlü çevirinin çeviri bölümlerinde mevcut müfredatlara dahil edilmesi konusunu da detaylandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri, Konferans Tercümanlığı, Uzaktan Sözlü Çeviri'nin Etkileri, Simultane Çeviri, Çevirmenlik eğitimi.



**PERCEPTION OF REMOTE INTERPRETING TECHNOLOGIES BY
CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS IN TURKEY**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
CAI	Computer Aided (or Assisted) Interpretation
CAT	Computer Assisted Translation
ETI	School of Translation and Interpreting, Université de Genève
ETSI	The Technical Committee Human Factors of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute
EU	European Union
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MI	Machine Interpretation
RI	Remote Interpreting
SCIC	Directorate-General for Interpretation
TKTD	The Conference Interpreters Association of Turkey
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Remote interpreting, also known as RI, has been around since late 1980s (Alexander et al., 1987). Once an institution driven mode of conference interpreting, as many experiments were conducted from the late 1970s to the present day (Baigorri-Jalón, 1999; Alexander et al., 1987; Anderson and Böcker, 1993; Moser-Mercer, 2003; European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001; European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2002; UN, 2001a; UN, 2001b; UN, 1982; Roziner and Shlesinger, 2010; Seeber et al, 2019), RI turned into the default mode for conference interpreting right after the Covid-19 pandemic brought about nationwide shutdowns in many countries including Turkey. This sudden switch to RI brought many challenges for conference interpreters in Turkey and around the world.

In this thesis, I aim to explore the following:

- Whether conference interpreters in Turkey show any resistance to RI,
- Whether conference interpreters face the same challenges found in the literature,
- What conference interpreters think about their profession's future considering the latest developments in the industry and the world.

In its quest to explore the status quo for RI in Turkey and find answers to these questions, this thesis takes form of a case study. Its aim is to find the current situation in RI for the case of Turkey, and it deploys a series of interviews with conference interpreters in Turkey, whose responses constituted its raw data. When investigating the subject, patterns seen in the literature make up a roadmap for this study. However, some specific points come into light, too, and they are explored given the nature of a work-from-home job is not found in the years of RI experiments.

One of the main points drawn in the literature and relevant to our introduction is that RI's evolution was not a streamlined process. Even though the first experiments largely focused on the technical and financial aspect of RI, they, too, acknowledged the psychological impact of RI and the working conditions of it, as can be seen in quote from a citation of Christopher Thiéry by Mouzourakis, which mentions that the current video technology at the time did not allow a viable option

for the interpreter (1997). A waterfall development of RI technologies, where all requirements are first considered thoroughly and then developed, is not the case, but rather that an agile development of the technology by many teams and stakeholders seems to be identifiable. In today's software development methodologies, there is the waterfall method where a need for an application is determined, and all stages are first worked on completely before moving into the next phase. In plain language, a linear cycle of development takes place, in whichever phase a certain topic is handled before moving into the next one. An example for RI would be first considering the question of technical feasibility, thoroughly working on it and bringing it to a feasible conclusion, after which another phase for cost-saving alternatives would take place. This, however, was not at all the case with RI. All experiments, whether they be the earliest or the latest, sought to answer the three main questions: a) technical feasibility and challenges, b) financial sustainability, and c) effects on the interpreter. This development process resembles what software developers call an agile methodology, in which every process is given its own phase. Imagine a linear line that revolves into a circle and then goes ahead in a linear line before entering another circle for another phase of development. The development of RI resembles what software developers call an 'agile methodology'. Every experiment can be taken as a circle in the linear development of RI. One could conclude that RI's development is one single line but several different linear lines, with sound reason. However, our reading of the literature highlights the aforementioned agile methodology-like development of RI. In our reading of the literature, we particularly put an emphasis on the human impact of RI technologies as this study is interpreter-centric. That means, when reading the literature review, the reader envisions the historical development of RI in a conference setting but is also given frequent hints as to how a particular piece of an RI experiment is relevant for our understanding of the literature in this thesis. Taking the human aspect from the experiments, a list of challenges faced is listed to compare what interviewees reported regarding RI challenges in their experience. Most differences come down to the fact that RI setting our interviewees have experience in differs from a well-controlled experiment environment as they have in large part worked from their own home. This thesis doesn't intend to paint a picture of the future in the interpreting

profession where RI takes over all possible forms of interpreting and leaves interpreters in disarray. It intends to show, however, how conference interpreters approach the topic putting the case of Turkey in the wider picture of RI's development. In doing so, the thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter One gives us an insight into the history of simultaneous interpreting, how simultaneous took over consecutive interpreting as the mode of interpreting at the United Nations (Baigorri-Jalón, 2016) before giving an overview of RI technologies' birth while categorically describing these events. It then establishes the definition of RI for our purposes in this study and the specific type of RI is meant throughout the thesis, which is that any type of simultaneous interpretation in which the interpreter is located anywhere but where the event takes place. In this section, we also mention different styles of naming conventions for RI depending on the location of the user, the speaker and the interpreter and the method of connection, for example telephone versus videoconference. Chapter One ends explaining the aim and research scope of this thesis at hand.

Chapter Two delves into the history of RI experiments and gives a thorough account of all experiments conducted thus far, finding common ground among their results. The literature review demonstrates how RI evolved in the last four decades from 1980s to 2010s. A table for all the experiments is also given to clarify the long literature review for the reader. Chapter Two, then, summarizes Gile's Effort Model for simultaneous interpreting as the thesis uses Effort Model for exploring the effects of RI on the conference interpreters. This chapter also explains the methodology of the present thesis, which is an exploratory case study that aims to show the perception of RI by conference interpreters in Turkey. Chapter Two also explores the interview structure used to gather information from interpreters and lists the results from the pilot study and the Conference Interpreters Association of Turkey survey on RI, both of which gives a basis for this thesis.

Chapter Three summarizes the background information about interviewees, including biographical and professional information. This chapter categorizes the answers found in the interviews in three sections. The first section lists all the personal information about the interviewees without giving their names, the second section summarizes responses derived from past experiences in RI and the third

section inquires about interviewees' personal thoughts about RI and the future of the conference interpreting profession.



CHAPTER ONE

ABOUT THIS STUDY

1.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF REMOTE INTERPRETING

1.1.1. Consecutive vs. Simultaneous Interpreting

Since the beginning of time, technological developments have played a crucial part in human advancement. Changes in agricultural production have gained us an unlimited supply of food throughout the year, which were perfected by certain technologies such as irrigation techniques and some farming tools. Thanks to these technologies, humans became shapers of their own environment rather than being forced to adapt to it. Technological developments gave humans an upper hand in the world compared to other species. These developments not only have let us conquer the world as in the truest form of the word, but also advance even further and more quickly thanks to the printing press and later inventions such as the telephone.

Information could spread even faster in the second half of the 20th century thanks to the computer technologies and invention of the world-wide web and the Internet. One particular profession came to be thanks to technological developments as we know it today. Simultaneous interpreting was enabled when first experiments took place in 1920s. The first full use of simultaneous interpreting technology was deployed at the 11th Labor Conference in Geneva of the International Labor Organization (Baigorri-Jalón, 2014: 145–146). The use of primitive simultaneous interpreting technology in the Soviet Union also coincided with the 11th Labor Conference and similar developments took place in Soviet Russia, the first use of ‘interpreting’ technology was at 6th Com-intern Congress (Chernov, 2016). The widespread use of simultaneous interpreting technologies was during the famous Nurnberg Trials where war criminals from Nazi Germany were tried after their defeat in the Second World War in 1945. It was then that the use of simultaneous technologies provided a faster, more comprehensive trial that eased the burden of interpreting between four different languages, namely, French, Russian, English and German. The trials lasted only about thirteen months and would probably last longer

were it not for the deployment of simultaneous interpreting. Another wide use of such technologies would later become part of the newly established United Nations' headquarters in New York City, USA. The use of simultaneous interpreting became the norm in the United Nations and even if the delegates had the right to ask for consecutive interpreting until 1971 when it was eliminated, anyone barely used that option (Baigorri-Jalón, 2016) and the United Nations would influence the use of the technology in that it helped its spread throughout the world. The main reason for leaning towards the use of this new technology was the fact that it actually saved time. The cost-effective part of simultaneous interpreting was anything but small in Soviet Russia when it was first considered but it indeed speeded up the process of interpreting (Chernov, 2016). Another concern was that it would decrease the quality of interpreting output both when it was first introduced in the USSR of 1920s and when it was considered as an option for interpreting during the establishment of the United Nations (Chernov, 2016; Baigorri-Jalón, 2016). And hence, there was some resistance to the use of technology by interpreters and participants alike. One more reason that there was a backlash against the use of machinery that enabled simultaneous interpreting was the consecutive interpreters' fear that the technology would take over their job and take on their reputation, and that their positions as interpreters would diminish to the point of extinction of their job titles (Baigorri-Jalón, 2016). Another complaint was that use of simultaneous interpreting eliminated their 'time to think' that consecutive interpreters enjoyed during consecutive interpretation. But as time passed, all these worries and concerns were out of sight for most people, and simultaneous interpreting became the new normal for the rest of the 20th century. This coming of age, as can be put in the best way, of simultaneous interpreting can be considered as the first technological breakthrough in the history of simultaneous interpreting (Fantinuoli, 2018). Even though there was some resistance to the new technology by the interpreters of the time, the use of technology prevailed among interpreters and users thanks to the advantages it brought about. Another breakthrough, as Fantinuoli describes, would come in the early 1990s with the advent of the Internet as a communication technology (2018). This communication technology, i.e. the Internet, essentially a network of networks that connect millions of devices, has enabled the Web where much of the traffic on the

Internet takes place. And as Fantinuoli notes, this advent affected the interpreter just as much as the coming of the simultaneous interpreting technology itself, if anything less.

1.1.2. The Technological Turn and Remote Interpreting

There is another technological upcoming, or a ‘technological turn’ in interpreting in our age (Fantinuoli, 2018). This affects three areas in interpreting, namely computer-assisted interpreting (CAI), machine interpreting (MI) and remote interpreting (RI). Computer-assisted interpreting tools such as online and offline dictionaries have been available since the late 1990s and they facilitate the actual task of interpreting and help the preparation process before the task itself. Machine interpreting is somewhat new and is actually deployed in messaging and video-call applications such as Skype, there are other devices that facilitate real-time interpreting for travelers. Remote interpreting has been around for some time even though it has gained popularity only recently. Before its use widened to conference interpreting, it was mainly used for consecutive interpreting, mostly in legal and hospital interpreting practices (Fantinuoli, 2018). However, it is becoming more popular and widespread thanks to the improvements in communication technologies. The use of this technology seems to be a burden on the interpreter as it adds new form factors to the task of interpreting such as new responsibilities about the connection and other technical details that would normally get handled by a technician in the conference room. Studies (Moser-Mercer, 2003; 2005a; 2005b) show that remote interpreting may affect the psychological mood of the interpreter and hence affect the quality of the interpreting output.

Apart from Fantinuoli’s description of technological breakthroughs in interpreting, it can be noted that another kind of technological breakthrough took place in the 1970s (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015, 23) when the first remote interpreting tests took place at the United Nations and UNESCO for the first time (videoconference-interpreting.net). In 1978, the United Nations held a conference on technical co-operation between developed countries in Buenos Aires, Argentina and a remote interpreting test was conducted (Chernov, 2008, 81). The experimentation with

remote interpreting was possible thanks to a new satellite, *Symphonie*, that was launched eight years prior to the undertaking of the test. Interpreters in New York interpreted the meetings in real time via satellite connection. A group of interpreters were also present on site in Buenos Aires in case the connection failed or other problems occurred so that interpreting service would not be disrupted. For another two decades, remote interpreting has been limited to experiments.

These experiments have demonstrated the technical difficulties arising from remote interpreting based interpreting activities. These technical difficulties were mostly due to the lack of the necessary technological development at the time, from the 1970s onwards. The most obvious problem was the transmission of live audio and video from the conference room to the remote interpreting booth and the interpreted text to the listeners' headphones (Mouzourakis, 2006, 47). As mentioned before, any possibility for a remote interpreting experience became real when the transmission technology for carrying such data between the two points was developed. The first such technology was the use of orbit satellites but they were not handy for any one as they were expensive (*ibid.*). And as such, not much was done till we reached the 1990s when another cheaper technology, Integrated Services Digital Network or ISDN for short, came to be. ISDN enabled transmission of data in blocks over telephone networks. This cheaper technology enabled another set of remote interpreting experimentations throughout the 1990s and 2000s (see References of Mouzourakis, 2006). But the reason for carrying out such experiments was not only due to the technological developments made thus far.

The most common reason for a new type of interpreting at the United Nations was down right basic economics (Efimov et al., 1987, 6). The European Union was expanding and the number of official languages increased. And the policies of the EU required that all EU member states had their own language as one of the official languages of the EU. Hence interpretation work between these language pairs became intense and the physical structures of the EU buildings were not enough to accommodate the number of booths for every language pair. Overall, the amount of interpreting work at EU institutions became burdensome (Seeber, 2017). Although the United Nations and one of its affiliates, UNESCO, did the first remote interpreting experiments over satellite in late 1970s and early 1980s, the EU started

funding remote interpreting experiments as an alternative to on-site simultaneous interpreting in the 1990s and early 2000s (Ziegler, Gigliobianco, 2018, 120).

The early studies done in the 2000s showed that remote interpreting changes the working environment for conference interpreters and brings new challenges for them, either on the interpreter him or herself, e.g. increased psychological pressure (Moser-Mercer, 2005a) or the overall task itself due to new variables, e.g. the extra technological requirements (Mouzourakis, 2006).

1.2. DEFINITIONS OF RI

Even though the interpreting community is rather close-knit, they used the term remote interpreting for various purposes. Remote interpreting has referred to the following thus far:

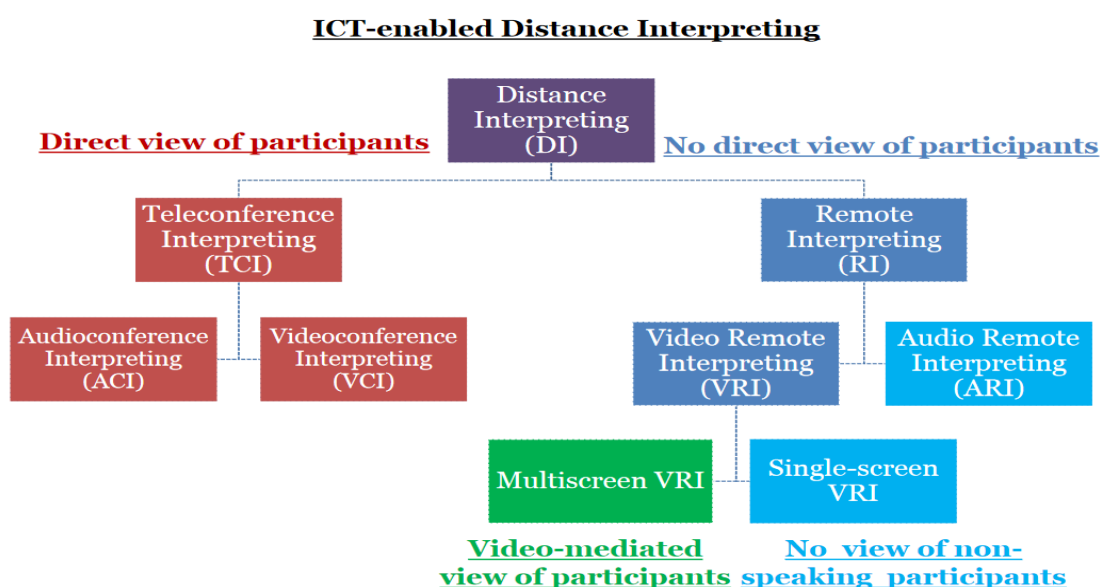
- Telephone interpreting for courts, asylum seekers and police
- Interpreting over video conferencing apps (Skype, Hangouts)
- Simultaneous interpreting from a remote location either with an audio only set-up or with video

These combinations are the generalized categories that one could sum up from years of different types of RI being used. Several scholars defined Remote Interpreting in several different ways. Mouzourakis defines remote interpreting as “simultaneous interpretation where the interpreter is not in the same room as the speaker or his/her audience, or both” (Mouzourakis, 1996, 3). A more detailed definition came from Sabine Braun in her article “Remote Interpreting” (2015), in which she clarified remote interpreting terms. According to her fundamental description, remote interpreting is any sort of interpreting situation where an interpreter is located somewhere else than the users. She reminds her readers of a few instances where the umbrella term ‘remote interpreting’ or its kindred terms such as telephone interpreting can be used interchangeably. To make way for clearer definitions, she divides the sorts of remote interpreting occasions in two by the medium used, namely, videoconference-based interpreting for all working types that include any form of videoconferencing, and telephone-based interpreting for interpreting occasions where a telephone line is the main course of communication. She, however, recognizes that any working condition of remote interpreting can fall

in between these two definitions. So, one of the main reasons why we have a variety of definitions for remote interpreting situations is that everyone used a somewhat different basis for their academic work, in a way that best suited their study and research. Braun refers to what Paneth had to say about remote interpreting, which is that RI is “something that might be developed further”.

While other scholars also described remote interpreting in several other ways as described above with the example from Mouzourakis, another one is worth our attention as it aims to describe every possible situation in a straightforward fashion. Andrew Constable, in his paper on RI called ‘Distance Interpreting: A Nuremberg Moment for Our Time?’, defines every possible remote interpreting setting (2015). Constable uses the term Distance Interpreting preferred by AIIC instead of Remote Interpreting as an umbrella term. Interestingly enough, AIIC also uses definitions put forth by Constable on their official website, using remote interpreting as a branch of ‘distance interpreting’. So these definitions that are explained here are also AIIC’s own approach to remote interpreting phenomena (ibid.).

Figure 1: ICT-enabled Distance Interpreting



Source: Constable, 2015: 13

Using an umbrella term ‘Information and Communication Technologies enabled Distance Interpreting’, Constable divides DI into two categories according to an interpreter’s view of the participants. If the interpreter has a direct view of some or all participants, this is referred to as ‘Teleconference Interpreting’, if not, then it is called ‘Remote Interpreting’. These two definitions branch out to two different categories as well.

In an Audioconference Interpreting setting, the interpreter has no view of the speaker but a direct view of all or some participants. In Videoconference Interpreting, the interpreter has some view of the speaker and a direct view of some or all participants. What’s important for the first branch, that is Teleconference Interpreting, is that interpreters are at the same location as the audience or the participants and the speaker is at a distant location. The distinction that Constable uses here is the remoteness of the interpreter to the event. When the interpreter is in the same location as the participants, and the speaker is in another location, the interpreting activity is called Teleconference Interpreting.

In the AIIC defined ‘remote interpreting’ where the interpreter is remotely working, we also have two branches: Video Remote Interpreting and Audio Remote Interpreting. In Video Remote Interpreting, the interpreter has a video view of a distant speaker but no view of participants. VRI has two versions depending on the view of the participants: if the interpreter has a view of participants, then it is called ‘Multiscreen VRI’, and if the interpreter has no view of the participants and only of the speaker, then it is ‘Single-screen VRI’. In Audio Remote Interpreting, the interpreter does not have a view of the speaker and the participants and they only interpret via audio.

The clear cut definitions proposed by Constable gives interpreting studies scholars a basis to define their research. In this study, we will be using Remote Interpreting as defined by Constable and also by Mouzourakis, which is any type of simultaneous interpreting where the interpreter is away from the users and/or the speakers. In short, any type of simultaneous interpreting where the interpreter is away from the event counts as Remote Interpreting for the rest of this thesis.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE THESIS

This thesis aims to investigate the use of remote interpreting (RI) technologies among conference interpreters in Turkey and their perception of RI technologies in order to fill the gap in current literature regarding technology and interpreting in Turkey and overall implications of RI technologies on the future of the interpreting profession. This study also aims to lay the groundwork for any future RI-related research in Turkey as it intends to draw a general picture of the mentioned technologies.

This study aims to explore the use of RI technologies by conference interpreters on a personal and also professional basis. It is claimed that the use of RI technologies affects the interpreter and accordingly changes the working conditions for conference interpreters, and also has the potential to change the future of conference interpreting as Baigorri-Jalón describes the advent of RI as a technological breakthrough (2015, 23).

In this study, I will investigate the perception and use of RI by conference interpreters in Turkey. As discussed in the introduction, such technologies have an impact on the interpreter, and as such, this thesis explores the perception of the new technology and finds trends in perception of the technology depending on a few factors such as age, education, and interpreting experience.

Research questions that this thesis aims to find answers to are:

- Is there any resistance to RI among conference interpreters in Turkey? If so, how strong is it and why?
- Do the interpreters that use RI in Turkey face the same difficulties that we encounter from earlier literature on the subject?
- What do the interpreters think about the future of their profession and the newly developed RI technologies that are considered a breakthrough for the profession?

We might infer that a resistance for RI among conference interpreters in Turkey might be present considering earlier generations of interpreters were not too keen on simultaneous interpreting and as indicated by earlier studies on RI. But there are also a few new factors that were not in place almost a hundred years ago, such as

the rapid spread of new technologies and hence the presumed eagerness of millennials, people born between 1981 and 1996 to try out new technologies.

Since this is a Master's thesis, the scope of the present research is limited to conference interpreters in Turkey and it will show the use of RI in Turkey even though it will also make assumptions regarding the current situation in RI in general and hence it will compare the progress of RI shown in earlier papers and make suggestions for future RI developments that are also mentioned in the literature review.



CHAPTER TWO

REMOTE INTERPRETING IN INTERPRETING STUDIES, METHODOLOGY AND MEANS OF DATA GATHERING

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW: REMOTE INTERPRETING IN INTERPRETING STUDIES

The first distinguishable feature regarding writings on RI is that there are two main sources, reports from institutions such as the European Union, the United Nations and UNESCO that were interested in reducing costs and academic papers that generally investigate the feasibility of RI and its impacts on conference interpreters. The reports mention every aspect of RI but the main concern is financial, and the academic literature on RI mostly concerns RI's impact on interpreters and problems occurring henceforth. Writings on RI behold a certain peculiarity, which is that studies on RI take hold as early as the birth of the first RI technologies and even before its availability for the general public became a possibility. Basically, its development is shaped by the results obtained from tests, experimentations, and papers written on these results, only so much as by on-site observations and note-taking about the technology. This relationship between the two can be easily explained by factors that strengthened RI's birth in the first place, the need for faster, more affordable, and in some cases, more quickly available interpreting. Papers that deal with RI can be categorized in two groups, the first of which are the papers that directly deal with RI and its implications and the latter of which are the papers that mention RI. The second group mostly consists of papers on the history of conference interpreting. There could be described a third category that deals with specific uses of RI, i.e. in legal, healthcare settings, which have been published since the early 2000s. In this thesis, however, only the first two categories are mentioned, in spite of which, again, some comparisons can be made. Another distinction that we can make for the papers on RI is that the first writings explore the idea of RI, whether it is feasible, how much the technology at hand makes it possible. When RI is proven to be feasible and possibly cost-effective in the early 1990s, the research then focuses largely on how RI affects the interpreter.

Another feature of reports regarding RI is that the existing body of internal reports about the RI experiments remain largely unpublished and I have not found access to most. The papers written by researchers are either based on findings from these experiments or experiments that were conducted otherwise. This thesis derives from both sources whenever access has been found but when not, second hand sources are used for the first internal reports.

One more consideration to keep in mind is that these reports and writings include the above-mentioned aspects of RI, the feasibility of technology, technological details, perspectives on the human aspect, the quality of the remote interpretation, financial cost of experiments, extra costs (such as a camera team at the conference site) among others. In this study, the human aspect and the effects of RI on the interpreters are topics of inquiry, along with the perception of the technology by the conference interpreters. And as such when the other elements found in the literature do not contribute to the factors mentioned above such as the perception of RI by the interpreters, they are not included or mentioned only in that they contribute to the topic at hand: how interpreters see this technology and how they are affected by it.

In our reading of the literature, we have stressed that our main of focus remains on the human aspect. In our doing so, for reasons of better visibility and comprehension of the events, i.e., the experiments, the reading follows a linear path in which it goes from one experiment to the next in a chronological order. This reading aims for a clear comprehension of all events as it also gathers points of resemblance between different experiments and uses them as crossroads. We will see that the experiments between 1976 and 1992 largely focused on feasibility and finance. Experiments after 1992 focus on feasibility in a larger scale, longer events, considering costs for the long term and, on the ways, they affect the interpreter. The line of feasibility is the least blurry one for RI while financial concerns, quality, effects on the interpreter are all shared by experiments of different decades. What changes is the mention frequency of these concerns.

What's included in this literature helps us understand what this study is about. But it is done with considerable care to not include all mentions of RI in this literature review. As one might recall from reading the definitions section in the

introduction, this study solely focuses on the conference interpreter who interprets a session remotely either with video or not. There is more than a handful of different studies on remotely conducted interpreting services, namely, community interpreting. The readily availability of a remote interpreter was much more enticing for community interpreter service providers and users as courts, police stations and other places of public services had a higher demand of unexpected time and period and ringing someone on the other side of the telephone cord seemingly was a quicker solution. And so were academics' interest in and research of 'telephone interpreting'. The first service was available from 1973 on in Australia (Bertozzi, Russo & Spinolo, 2018: 12). This form of remote interpreting was particularly eligible for community interpreting modes, such as in legal and healthcare. Its first use in Australia was to enable faster communication for the increasing number of new immigrants into the country (Kelly, 2008: 5). It was also developed in the US in 1981 when language barriers in police proceedings were meant to be broken down (*ibid.*) and later branched out to other 'industries.' This growth and expansion were clearly due to the wide availability of telephone lines and decrease cost (*ibid.*). Another factor was that it was quick. When someone in the United States who did not speak English needed to call their bank, it was both cheap and easy for that company to offer telephone interpreting. There was clearly a demand as a result of a need created by the language barriers in multi-lingual nations, and it gave way to increase availability of telephone interpreting services. This early flowering also made the research more prominent for telephone interpreting. For the sake of talking numbers, a quick search on Google Scholar reveals 539,000 results for 'telephone interpreting' and 484,000 for 'remote simultaneous interpreting'. What's more is that the research took into different genera, specializing on the setting they take place, e.g., healthcare, legal. Interestingly, the Google Scholar search for 'legal remote interpreting' shows up a whopping 936,000 results. Another prominent specialization example is the AVIDICUS project, which stand for Assessment of Video-Mediated Interpreting in the Criminal Justice System, funded by the European Union (Avidicus, n.d.). The project, whose details can be seen at videoconference-interpreting.net, focuses on 'video-mediated interpreting in criminal proceedings', and has three editions. After AVIDICUS' third volume, another project called SHIFT, which stands for *Shaping*

the Interpreters of the Future and of Today, took off and produced three reports and three ‘outputs’ (Universita di Bologna). The second report, which is called ‘Remote Technologized Interpreting (Telephone-Based And Video-Based Remote Interpreting): Main Features And Shifts With On-Site Bilateral Interpreting’, lists the areas of most common RI use: “Telemedicine, remote emergency services, remote court videoconferencing and interpreter-mediated remote police cross-examinations” (Iglesias Fernández, n.d.). In this introduction, we see that when telephone interpreting is done in any of these mentioned areas, it brings up its counterpart’s original problems with itself, i.e., dialogue interpreting (*ibid.*: 12). The new challenges are also present to no one’s surprise, lack of quality, the problems that occur due to the nature of the medium (the telephone), the issue of ‘co-presence’, lack of ‘visual communication’ and the extra stress and burden that comes with these technologies (*ibid.*: 13). And the benefits of ease are welcomed by the users and interpreter alike. Users like the ease of use and fast access and interpreters also like the flexibility of work hours (*ibid.*) The author also mentions the farther range of availability for less common languages. An important factor for telephone interpreting is that the dynamics of a dialogue where social factors such as power and status kick in are far different than the monologue equipped environment of a conference setting. The nature of events is also different than the professional or institutional multilingual conferences. Researchers of telephone interpreting, hence, include a sociological approach to technology. Whereas such methodology is all too important for instances of a migrant in a police station, an elderly parent in a nursing home who doesn’t speak the dominant language of the country, or a defendant in a court of law, RI research in a conference setting is bereft of such concerns as of now, at the very least, in our study.

The following literature review, thus, eliminates all mentions of RI other than remote simultaneous interpreting. It develops a chronological reading of events by connecting the dots between different experiments and reports, and categorizing them roughly in three sections considering the technological feasibility as a threshold and using an analogy from the software development: the alpha experiments between 1976 and 1992, the beta experiments where a wider adoption of the technology was

tested between 1995 and 2004 and the release candidate version in the development of remote simultaneous technologies from late 2000s onwards.

2.2. THE EXPERIMENTS

The first writings on RI date back to the late 1970s and reports on RI are also found in the 1980s. The earliest such report on RI goes back to 1977 when Bernstein and Christopher Thiéry composed two separate reports on the first RI experiment carried out by UNESCO in 1976 between Nairobi and Paris over a satellite connection (Baigorri-Jalón, 1999). Even though the journal articles are not obtained for this thesis, their existence is drawn from a paper by Baigorri-Jalón, “Conference Interpreting: From modern times to space technology”, which goes through the history of conference interpreting. These two journal articles were published in the AIIC Bulletin in 1977 according to the references of the aforementioned paper. Another paper that draws upon an earlier report by Thiéry is “Videoconferencing: Techniques and Challenges” by Panayotis Mouzourakis (1997). In direct quotation from the 1976 report by Thiéry, Mouzourakis describes it as ‘tempting’:

“Remote interpreting with sound only is not workable for conference purposes under any circumstances

- Remote interpretation off a TV screen is workable when the speaker is addressing a TV camera. If his audience is partly visible to him, the interpreter should see what he sees.
- For remote interpreting to be feasible under " Plenary session " conditions the interpreters should see, on a large screen, what they would normally see from well placed booths. This does not appear possible with present technology.”

These words by Thiéry define the basics that are expected of RI and related technologies and also define the rough working conditions of an RI system. Video is an inevitable part of RI, because interpreters rely on visual keys in the conference environment to carry out the interpreting task. His first comment on the issue sets the first standards of a remote interpreting system. These standards are to change only a bit for the rest of the decades to come. After these two experiments, a third experiment was conducted in 1982 by UNESCO (Alexander et al, 1987). This test, too, proved it possible that a remote ‘video-conference’ interpreting is feasible. Yet

the problem thus far was that the costs for RI exceeded that of on-site, which was predominantly because sending data over the satellite was an expensive expenditure (ibid.). The 1987 report “REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: 'MANAGEMENT OF INTERPRETATION SERVICES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM' concludes that the UN should ‘reassess cost factors and feasibility of communication technologies in RI’ to determine its implementation in UN institutions, again, if it becomes ‘financially feasible’ (Alexander et al., 44). One noticeable factor that is drawn from the report is that it, too, acknowledges the change that RI might prompt for the conference interpreting profession and notes it might be as far-reaching as the change that was brought by the General Assembly’s decision to switch to simultaneous interpreting from consecutive in 1947 (Alexander et al., 27). This point of view is also shared by academic papers written in later decades (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015, 23).

Table 1: RI Experiments

YEAR	LOCATION	ORGANIZATION	EVENT
1976	Nairobi - Paris	UNESCO	19th session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
1978	New York - Buenos Aires	UN	the Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
1982	Vienna - New York, Salyut 7 space station	UN Office for Outer Space Affairs	The UN Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Use of Outer Space (UNISPACE II)
1992	European Telecommunications Standards Institute HQ in Sophia-Antipolis, France	Project Team 47 (ETSI) and AIIC	Experiment
1995	Studio Beaulieu	EU Commission	Experiment
1997	Brussels	EU Commission	Experiment

1999	Geneva - Vienna	UN	"the session of the Working Group on a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography"
1999	Geneva	ITU/ETI	"ITU meeting of a general nature,"
2000	SCIC, Brussels	EU Commission	Experiment
2001 (January)	European Parl, Brussels	EU Parliament	Meetings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism
2001 (December)	European Parl, Brussels	EU Parliament	Meetings of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Group of the Party of European Socialists
2001	UN HQ, New York	UN	Ninth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
2001	-	European Council	-
2004	Brussels	EU Parliament	
2014	Brazil	FIFA	FIFA World Cup

Source: Made by the author.

So far, the earliest reports from the 1970s and 1980s show us two crucial points with regard to this technology, one of which is whether such an undertaking is possible at all, if so, how it would be possible and the second is whether this possibility isn't a financial burden. And the conclusion is that even though RI is certainly here to stay, it is not financially feasible over a satellite connection. This course was to take another direction in the early 1990s when ISDN, short for Integrated Services Digital Network, enabled transmission of data over the telephone network. As opposed to a satellite connection, which is expensive and not easy to set up, a connection over ISDN is cheap and readily usable (Mouzourakis, 1996, 4). After the introduction of ISDN, the number of RI tests also increased gradually.

The first paper that mentioned the feasibility of video-conference interpreting over an ISDN connection was published in 1993 by two private individuals who worked at technology companies, one based in Norway, the other based in Berlin, Germany (Anderson and Böcker). This paper derives its results from an early experiment conducted by The Technical Committee Human Factors of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and Association International des Interprètes de Conférence (AIIC) concluding that at the time of the experiment the technology was not good enough for a RI system to work. But other aspects of this experiment prove more important than its short conclusion for the time. The most important thing about this study is that it was conducted not in a real-time conference setting; but rather real life-like conference conditions were created using recorded videotapes. The results from this experiment permit us to confer that even in ideal conditions conference interpreters do not think that RI is not adequate for them as results clearly show that they were not satisfied with their output. So, this shows us very clearly even in early studies conference interpreters were not very keen on the idea of a new simultaneous interpreting technology much like the interpreters in the 1940s who opposed simultaneous interpreting for fears of inadequate performance of their work.

'A series of tests' were conducted in 1995 by EU Commission for the first time at Studio Beaulieu, presumably a Brussels location for SCIC, French abbreviation for the Directorate-General for Interpretation (Service Commun Interprétation-Conférences) (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 2). Unfortunately, the details of

these tests are not known as the report for these experiments remains unpublished. But the significance of these tests are that they are the first of their kind to be done by a EU body, up until then all tests were conducted by other international organizations such as the UN and UNESCO except for the test conducted by AIIC and ETSI in 1992 (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 6). But here it can be deduced that the European Union also seeks alternatives to on-site simultaneous interpreting. The most obvious reason behind this trend is that there is a spatial problem as the number of official languages increased in the 1990s, no building can host as many booths as per language pairs in every conference or meeting room (ibid). Even though this report is from a later date, e.i. 2001, it is very likely that the driving force behind the first tests was no different. Moser-Mercer (2003) also reports that European Commission conducted yet another experiment in 1997. The report from this experiment remains also unpublished.

After its last try in 1982, the UN launched its first ‘full-scale’ experiment in 1999 using all of its six official languages (2001a, 163). It was intended to explore possibilities of remote interpreting from permanent locations of New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. One of the main factors for the test appears to be the UN’s intention to use the ISDN, which, according to the report (UN, 2001a), did away with the question of feasibility. But the interpreters were not satisfied with their performance even though the users of the service were content with the interpretation (UN, 2001a, 164). Here lies an important perspective that needs our attention: that perception of the interpretation by the conference interpreters greatly differs from that of the users or participants. In an article published in 1996, Mouzourakis explains that ‘non-interpreters’ might tend to downplay the importance of video and audio quality comparing remote interpreting to a telephone call (11). It should be noted that this article was written at a time when the ISDN bandwidth was good enough for the required bitrates for audio and video transmission. But the UN report clarifies this perspective even when technical specifications were good enough for an acceptable simultaneous interpretation from a remote location, interpreters were not content with the work. This experiment showed that video was one of the main problems for interpreters. The interpreters felt limited by the video broadcast preferring being on-site to watching a video broadcast of the conference. For the UN,

the main goal was to provide interpreting services from the main locations to other parts of the world where UN events take place. To this end, they must cover all places where ISDN coverage is not in place. One such location at the time was Nairobi. Here one can notice another pattern that reoccurs: even after the introduction and deployment of better, faster and cheaper technologies, some places, some people will not have the required technology or what is at hand will not suffice for an acceptable remote interpreting service. For this very reason, the experiment took place in Geneva and Vienna (UN, 2001a, 154). This part of the report also writes that the headquarters in New York were discarded because of time differences. The only experiment that included major time differences was the UN experiment in 1982 for The UN Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Use of Outer Space (UN, 1982, 145). But there is no indication of how interpreters worked despite this time difference in the report published in 1982. The interpreters who took part in the 1999 experiment in Geneva consistently reported increased fatigue and stress and ‘less satisfaction with [their] performance’ (UN, 2001a, 156). The following excerpt from the report summarizes the perception of remote interpreting conditions by the conference interpreters (UN, 2001a, 157):

[...] the interpreters emphasized that they were able to maintain performance at acceptable levels, but at a higher psychological and physiological cost. Remote interpretation over a two-week period has a cumulative effect on health, pointing to stress, fatigue, eyestrain, loss of concentration, lack of motivation and overall anxiety [...]

Here it can be clearly seen that conference interpreters can well adapt to a new environment for their work but only at a higher cost on their part. Although this experiment did not include medical devices for the assessment of factors such as stress, perception of the remote interpreting technology by the interpreters makes it visible that interpreters are not very fond of this technology. An interesting comparison could be drawn between this experiment and another experiment conducted also in 1999 where medical tests were conducted for stress indicators.

This other 1999 experiment was also conducted in Geneva (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 2). This test, being carried out by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Ecole de Traduction et d’Interpretation, Université de Genève (ETI),

stands as the first experiment to be conducted by an academic institution. Unlike its predecessors this experiment is also a controlled one, indicating that there were two groups of interpreters, one at the conference site and the other at a remote location at ITU. But like other tests before it, the main objective was to explore the feasibility of remote interpreting and the cost of it and its effects on interpreters and the quality of interpreting (ibid.). The hypothesis put by the researchers was that RI would make no difference and everything would be the same as on-site simultaneous interpreting. One important part of this experiment was that saliva samples from the interpreters were collected to evaluate the stress levels of the interpreters (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 4). Three types of questionnaires were also conducted in order to understand the psychological effects of RI on interpreters. Among the interpreters who participated in the experiment, those who think other interpreters would accept RI is higher than those who said that they would accept RI themselves but the percentage of interpreters who say the profession should accept RI is the lowest indicating peer pressure might be the cause for the positive reception of RI (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 9). The delegates could not tell the quality difference between on-site and remote interpretation as it was the case with the 1999 UN experiment in Geneva (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 7). One of the features that set this experiment aside from the rest was the collection of saliva samples, whose primary purpose was to look for cortisol levels of interpreters, which is a sign of stress. The results drawn from cortisol levels was that the levels of cortisol were congruent with the self-reported stress in the questionnaires, but the levels of cortisol were up at the beginning of the experiment only to go down towards the end (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 9). Moser-Mercer emphasizes that these results are not statistically insignificant. The last and most important conclusion from this experiment is that RI comes with an earlier onset of fatigue among interpreters than on-site simultaneous interpreting due to the fact that working remotely brings about the feeling of alienation and not being in control, which all add complexity to a task complex enough. The study concludes with the recommendation of 'shorter turn times' for interpreters and stresses on the need for more research on human factors in RI (Moser-Mercer, 13, 2003).

This experiment can be a turning point for this study in RI experiments as it takes into account how interpreters are affected by this technology and how they

perceive it on a more detailed basis. It also makes the suggestion that remote interpreting times should not be the same as on-site simultaneous interpreting. It also is done by an academic institution rather than an international organization, thus mostly focusing on the human factor. Human factor is the most important aspect in RI for this study at hand as it investigates the perception of RI by conference interpreters in Turkey and how they engage in it.

With the new arrival of the third millennium, an increasing number of experimentations is recorded, especially on the part of EU bodies. The EU's interest is primarily due to the increasing number of official languages as more countries joined the union. In 2000, the EU had eleven official languages and 110 language combinations (Introduction: Interpretation.). This clearly shows a challenge for the EU because no conference room can host that many booths. Only four years later, with the new member countries coming into the Union, the number of official languages rose to 20, and as of 2020, that number is 24 languages with 506 different language combinations (ibid.). This creates a very clear problem for the EU, a spatial problem as stated in a quote from an earlier report on multilingualism in a RI experiment report published in 2001 by European Parliament Interpretation Directorate (8). Subsequently, there is an institutional eagerness on the part of the European Union. In the case of the United Nations, one can observe that it too displays an institutional eagerness for remote interpreting but on other accounts, primarily because the UN and its agencies host many meetings around the world, e.g. New York, Vienna, Geneva, Nairobi, Buenos Aires, and sending interpreters from the headquarters is costly. In short, the UN's institutional eagerness for RI is mostly financial. The reason why this trend is set by institutions rather than individuals is that interpreting has been an institutional-driven profession since its birth and any changes to it are likely to come from institutional bodies. As noted before, remote interpreting has come as part of an institutional eagerness to solve problems around interpreting costs. This, however, does not mean that institutions have not considered the human factor.

The first EU experiment in 2000 was the remote interpretation of European Commission's meetings for a week (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 7). There were two sets of interpreters, on-site and ones working in an adjacent

room to the meeting room. This shows an important part of RI's definition: that remote does not necessarily mean 'in another building'. The only reference that this research has reached is a second-hand source that mentions 'an extreme alienation' that could not be 'overcome' even with technological enhancements (ibid.). Since other details of the experiment are not known, one cannot argue on this emphasis but this emphasis put forward by the interpreters shows their lack of interest in or even resistance against RI. Subsequently, staff interpreters at the EU requested RI experiments to see how interpreter health was affected by this mode of interpreting and to form their own opinion of RI (ibid.). For the first time, apart from the institutional eagerness mentioned above, a clear move by the interpreters for a RI experiment is observed.

In January of 2001, as requested by interpreters who wanted to see how this mode of interpreting affected their job, a new experiment was conducted at the European Parliament in Brussels (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 10). This experiment was done in normal working conditions, i.e. no meeting was conducted for the purposes of a RI experiment. This test included some details that are irrelevant to any one working in the 2020s, one being the comparison of monitors and screens as devices to show video from the meeting rooms.

One of the important comparisons that the four day long experiment's report makes is that it gives how attitudes towards RI change over the course of the experiment. All participants reported a declining feeling of comfort and an increasing fatigue (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 23). Participants' 'self-perception of quality' was also in decline parallel to their fatigue levels (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 25). No correlation was found on the basis of gender, age or educational background but interpreters who used eyeglasses gave negative ratings to visual aspects of the experiment (ibid.). Another important point was that the feeling of participation in the meeting, i.e. the feeling of being there or present in the meeting, was quite low to begin with and it went even lower over time. The report notes the importance of seeing several sides of the meeting room and how interpreters were unable to see the votes being counted in the room. This explains partially why interpreters rated the feeling of being there negatively. Another point was the lack of communication between the remote

interpreting room and the meeting room, the speeches of two speakers were delivered after the speeches were over (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 20). This is an important point as communication with other parties in a conference, especially with another interpreter working remotely, remains problematic even to this day. A crucial point this experiment tried to make was that no questionnaire question except for one asking whether there was any discomfort was asked to let the interpreters respond without any presumptions in the comment section of the same question (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 37). Some interpreters reported alienation, 'an agent' becoming 'a viewer'. This feeling of alienation is also in parallel with earlier tests such as the ITU/ETI RI test in 1999. This feeling of alienation on the parts of interpreters is an interesting part of RI in today's world where most meetings are held virtually. The report concludes that the feeling of not being there may result from the fact that interpreters are not able to render the meeting in a three dimensional manner from a two-dimensional screen, that the interpreters' reported discomfort and fatigue arise from the virtual environment they were subjected to (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001, 45). Again, how a virtual environment shapes human experience of events is an important topic in today's world. In summary, the report concludes that even though RI is feasible, its effects on human health are serious and that the European Parliament should not adopt RI as is.

In light of the first experiment in January 2001, another test, again with two groups, at the European Parliament was conducted in December of that year (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2002, 1). Unlike the first experiment in January, which involved only committee meetings, this second experiment included political group meetings, which are thought to be more common in the European Parliament (*ibid.*). The main reason for the second test was to look upon areas where the first one was found lacking and build on them. But the second experiment did not achieve objectives of full medical and ergonomic study and 'individual image selection' by the remote interpreter. This test did not deliver on better visual equipment, either, according to the questionnaire results (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2002, 5). Most of the complaints point out to problems that originate in screens used, plasma screens in particular. Remote

interpreters chose LCD screens over plasma screens, which are out of production today. The fast changing and evolving technologies also make experiments out of date and require a dynamic study of remote interpretation related technologies and interpreters' relationship with them. All in all, this experiment concluded that remote interpreters suffered more mental and physical discomfort than their peers who worked on site and RI in its contemporary conditions would not be a viable alternative to on site simultaneous interpretation. An important take from these two last tests is that remote interpreting is no longer a financial concern but its effects on interpreter health is still in question.

The year 2001 had one more experiment in its tenure as the institutional drive for change in interpretation technologies came bearing fruit after the coming of the new millennium. The third experiment in 2001 was conducted by the United Nations at its Headquarters in New York. The UN experiment in 1999, which concluded that although RI is technically feasible, interpreters are not satisfied with their work and it comes at 'a higher psychological and physiological cost', featured ISDN between Vienna and Geneva for the first time. The United Nations, however, wanted to test the feasibility of RI at its Headquarters that have no appropriate infrastructure for high speed landline connectivity, for example, one in Nairobi, Kenya (United Nations, 2001b, 164). The UN wanted to use every duty station both as a recipient and a provider, including ones that did not have the appropriate infrastructure. The mandate for a second experiment covers all areas of concern, namely, the financial cost of all systems used for RI, the impact of RI on interpreters, 'the level of service provided' to users, 'the satisfaction of [users] with the interpretation' and technical aspects of RI (United Nations, 2001b, 166). Here it can be quite clearly seen that all aspects are mentioned, none is given priority as in earlier experiments where feasibility and financial costs reigned supreme over other areas of concern, meaning that RI was by then more financially sustainable and technically possible than before.

The alternative to ISDN was, as before, expensive satellite connections to provide video and audio connection to sites like Nairobi. This experiment also meant to find the best video technology for RI as interpreters complained about video at the UN experiment in 1999 (United Nations, 2001a, 157). As a whole, the experiment was expected to determine the optimum means for a RI setup as it lasted for two

weeks. To avoid complication, this remote experiment included only the New York Headquarters and interpretation was provided from a different room than the conference room via satellite connection. This also shows that alongside the EU, the United Nations, too, considered a remote interpreting hub to provide services to many facilities in the same building or other UN sites.

From a technical point of view, the experiment was partially a success with a few setbacks such as synchronization problems and connectivity issues over ISDN which all could be fixed with workarounds. Interpreters, too, reported that sound quality became very close to what one would have on site (United Nations, 2001b, 175) but video quality was still subpar. An important point that should be mentioned is that for interpreters, the most important visual part was the speaker. According to the report, the higher video and sound quality an interpreter was provided, the less likely they are to suffer psychological and physical ‘burden’ and vice versa (ibid.). Despite improvements in feasibility and ease of use for interpreters, costs of RI over a satellite link seemed still high especially if commercially available connections were to be used.

All in all, this experiment proved that RI caused more fatigue and psychological stress for interpreters making the authors of the report recommend that workloads for RI should be ‘reduced’ (United Nations, 2001b, 178) and RI was not a cheaper replacement for on-site simultaneous interpreting as costs for connection and extra staff such as cameramen, directors exceeded the amount paid to interpreters who traveled to the site (United Nations, 2001b, 179). These conclusions show that even though RI is a technical possibility and easier to conduct than before, it is still high in cost. And more importantly, despite many advances, RI still causes extra psychological and physiological burden for the interpreter and thus, it requires changes in interpreters’ working conditions.

There is one more experiment in 2001 by the European Council that is mentioned by Moser-Mercer in her 2005 article “Remote interpreting: The crucial role of presence” but no primary source for this experiment was reachable by the author, but considering the number of RI experiments by other EU institutions, it could be said that the European Council only followed suit. Thus far, we followed the experiments in a chronological order, finding out the reasons behind them, what

drove them, and their not quite optimum results. One of the key findings this look into the experiments revealed is that there is an institutional eagerness for change in interpretation technologies, roughly for spatial and financial reasons and this institutional drive resembles what helped simultaneous interpreting shape into the profession it is today in the late 1940s.

There was one more experiment in 2004 whose main purpose it seemed to be “to aid in the decision-making process regarding the optimal work conditions for simultaneous interpreters in the European Parliament” (Roziner and Shlesinger, 2010, 214). The experiment was, unlike its predecessors which gave equal importance to other aspects, designed primarily to find out the ‘optimal work conditions’. The main institutional driving force behind this experiment was the concern of growing official languages in the European Union and the spatial problems caused by new language pairs as more booths for every meeting and conference room were needed (Roziner and Shlesinger, 2010, 215). This experiment was the first one to include the same interpreters for both settings, on-site and remote. Thirty-six volunteers first worked for two weeks on-site and a month later, they worked in a remote setting. And to avoid any confusion during the adjustment period as shown in other experiments, which lasted a week in this experiment, no data was collected. This also made sure that any data during the technical adjustment did not dilute the outcome of the experiment. One of the new additions which this experiment put to use was having a number of experts from different fields, namely, ergonomics, physiology, ‘the study of the physical environment’, occupational health, and ophthalmology (ibid.). The reason for this inclusion of different experts were to draw the line between what interpreters reported with the surveys during the course of the experiment and how objective data obtained (such as the the amount of carbon dioxide in the environment, background noise, illumination among others) showed, and to show how they contradict or verify each other.

This experiment proved that even though interpreters reported physical discomfort, objective data showed otherwise. For example, their sitting postures during RI sessions were graded better than their posture during on-site interpreting by the experts (Roziner and Sclesinger, 2010, 226) but the interpreters reported more discomfort during RI sessions. Other areas of observation followed this pattern. This

study also proved that despite the best optimum conditions for RI created by the researchers, interpreters' perception of RI remained roughly the same. There were no 'significant' differences between the two settings (Roziner and Sclesinger, 2010, 242). No overlapping between what the interpreters reported and what objective data showed was the case as the study concluded that 'the main cost of RI [...] was psychological rather than physical' (Roziner and Sclesinger, 2010, 243). Interpreters reported quicker burnouts. At this point and time, the issue of feasibility of RI as well as quality of remotely interpreted speeches is beyond any reasonable doubt but what remains for the RI debate is how interpreters are affected by it at the present moment and how RI will affect them in the long run. The authors likens the trend of the approach towards RI to that of simultaneous interpreting when it was in its infancy stages.

There was one more experiment in 2014 during the Association Football World Cup in Brazil (Seeber et al, 2019). This experiment distinguishes itself on a few points: First it points out to the institutional nature of previous experiments and reminds that interpreters, who worked for these institutions, might have likened RI to the general deterioration of working conditions. Second, it makes the difference between the generation before the social media and the smartphone era and after it, which can be rendered as the distinction between digital natives, the generation that was born into the internet age, and digital immigrants, the generation that met with internet-related technologies later in their lives (Prensky, 2001). Third, it largely focuses on the human factor and the attitude towards RI. Other experiments, too, focused on the human factor but the primary concern of this experiment is the human factor (Seeber et al, 2019). They did focus on the human factor by eliminating a second test group and gathering data on a real-world RI work environment without the need to test its feasibility. The environment in which this RI mode took place was that of a hub where eleven booths were located in a room with a desk for technicians. Interpreters were in the company of one another unlike the RI mode where the interpreter works from home, one of the most common modes of RI that this study tries to explore. Interpreters were mostly satisfied with their work and their attitude towards RI is generally accepting so long as technology does not fail them. Interestingly, some prefer it because it makes them avoid the inquisitive audience

who gaze at the booths. And they prefer hubs over any home mode of RI. Two factors still remained problematic for interpreters: not having control over visual input and the possible alienation when one is not with their colleagues. This direct quote from an interpreter who took part in this experiment puts forth a summary of what it would mean to be working from home rather than a hub (Seeber et al, 2019, 295):

I think it's better to be here and not at home, because at least we still have contact with colleagues. If I was alone at home in my living room, then it would be over for me. Here at least we have an exchange among ourselves, we exchange experiences. You still have the impression that you're at a conference. If I was at home, that would be really alienating for me.

And another interpreter reminds us of the importance of 'teamwork' by saying "The team can be together. We can consult each other, support each other." (ibid.). This experiment shows us that the time of feasibility and cost-effectiveness related questions around RI is over and its impact on the interpreters and their perception of it are the concern for the scholars of interpreting studies.

Born out of large international institutions' needs, remote simultaneous interpreting proved to be possible both physically and fiscally only at a higher cost for interpreters who participate in it. Thus far, a general mapping of experiments that paved the way for remote interpreting to become a daily conversation for the interpreting profession was given. This chronological order both gives a general understanding of RI's history and its development, how and why it was developed. Apart from these papers, two authors, who have been mentioned in the chronology section of this thesis, are among the flag bearers of remote interpreting research and wrote several articles in the 1990s and 2000s. These scholars are Barbara Moser-Mercer, who first wrote papers on the human aspects of RI (2003; 2005a; 2005b), and Panayotis Mouzourakis, who wrote on the technical aspects of RI (1996; 2003; 2006). While papers and reports covered so far deal with experiments and their results, these writings by Mouzourakis and Moser-Mercer touch on the matter in a more scholarly manner. Mouzourakis summarizes the technical aspect of RI in his first paper on the issue in 1996, in which he explains the details of several different technologies used in videoconferencing and their impact on RI. Any researcher who

might be interested in the development of analog technologies into digital ones, for example, could take this paper as their base for their research. Because the impact of digitalization is far more important for the history of RI than what is mentioned in this literature review. The second paper by Mouzourakis also deals with the technical perspective of RI (2006). Mouzourakis explores how these technical aspects affect the interpreters and Mouzourakis also summarizes the ‘motivations’ behind RI. According to Mouzourakis, there are roughly two reasons for institutions like the UN and the EU to develop remote interpreting technologies (2006, 46). The first is the cost of interpreters traveling and interpreter availability at a certain location. As the UN, for example, has many different locations around the globe, and not an equal distribution of interpreters per site, interpreters have to travel. This is the case even for small briefings, explains Mouzourakis (2006, 47). If interpreters were to work remotely, the institutions would not have to arrange long travel plans for interpreters. The other reason, according to Mouzourakis, is the quantity of language pairs in the EU and the physical constraints it brings (ibid.). Mouzourakis reminds us of the EU’s solution to their spatial problem: i.e. having one interpreting center in a building that serves every meeting and conference room remotely.

Mouzourakis, despite being suspicious of any early attempts to define what causes alienation in RI for interpreters (2006, 54), suggests that visual perception might be the main factor in previous experiments. And we know from the FIFA experiment in 2014, as technology improved, any technicality related problems are all but eliminated. One core definition of remote and on-site simultaneous interpreting modes is, as proposed by Mouzourakis, is that these modes are on a continuum, on one of which remote simultaneous interpreting with some video access sits and on whose other end on-site interpreting where the interpreter has all the access to the live event as it is sits (2006, 56). In conclusion, Mouzourakis points out that interpreters should be a part of any new working condition discussions (2006, 58).

Moser-Mercer, on the other hand, wrote a paper in 2003 called “Remote Interpreting: Assessment of human factors and performance parameters” from data gathered during the first controlled RI experiment in 1999. In this paper, Moser-Mercer writes about the human factor in RI and concludes that interpreters need to

feel in control so as to ‘choose and process other extra-linguistic information’ during interpreting (2003, 13). Being in control reminds us of the importance of an interpreter’s role as an active partaker in the conference rather than a mere viewer. Another important point from this article is that it states RI in its any form is different from on-site simultaneous interpreting and the working conditions need to be revised (ibid.). For example, the normal 30 minute turns for on-site settings need not apply for RI as is. In an article published in 2005(a) “Remote Interpreting: Issues of Multi-Sensory Integration in a Multilingual Task”, Moser-Mercer concludes that interpreters are well able to adapt to changes but in doing so, they pay a price and extra ‘effort’ to make up the message in the target language. This causes them to deploy extra energy causing deterioration in their work while all other partakers in a conference expect things to continue as if the setting were on-site (speakers speak at the same speed, listeners expect the same interpreting quality as on-site). Moser-Mercer ends the paper by asking whether a newer generation of digital native interpreters can take advantage of RI and its new environment (2005a, 736). In another article from 2005(b) titled “Remote interpreting: the crucial role of presence”, Moser-Mercer repeats that there is a need to change the working conditions for interpreters who work remotely.

All in all, RI has been around for almost half a century by now and in this literature review, a linear history of its developments is given. It is clear that institutions have played a large role in bringing the RI to the fore as an alternative but it came down to interpreters to make it work as they have provided feedback many times as we have seen in this review. As one can make the assumption that remote became a necessity rather than a choice from early 2020 onwards, researchers need to study its impacts on interpreters to help fasten and smooth the transition in interpreting services. Taking on this duty, this study will try to further investigate the issue at hand in its next chapters.

2.2.1 The Literature in Turkey

The theses that are published in the National Center for Grad School Theses (Ulusal Tez Merkezi), a national archive where all MA, PhD dissertations in the

country are published on, were searched and no studies on communication and information technologies, let alone RI technologies, and their use in interpreting in Turkey seem to exist. In fact, even my search about technology and interpreting as two broad topics regarding the literature in Turkey proved to be not fruitful in any way. There are, however, a handful of studies regarding simultaneous interpreting in Turkey, none of which correlate to the topic that this thesis purports to investigate. In terms of papers published in Turkey, though, there are a handful of papers on interpreting technologies. The closest talk of RI technologies one has on hand is a book chapter written by Mehmet Şahin, who as of the writing of this thesis is a professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Şahin specializes on technology and wrote the book chapter in *Türkiye’de Sözlü Çeviri: Eğitim, Uygulama ve Araştırmalar*, which translates as *Interpreting in Turkey: Training, Practice and Research* published in 2019. His chapter is titled “Interpreting and Technology” (Şahin, 2019). He also writes about interpreting and technology in his book ‘*Bilgisayar Destekli Çeviri*’ or in English *Computer Assisted Translation* (2019). In this book, he composes a section where he mentions interpreting technologies. In his summary of interpreting technologies, he seemingly builds on the idea that simultaneous interpreting is more or less technology assisted. What Şahin does best is that he proposes a summary of almost all available interpreting related technologies for readers of interpreting studies in Turkey. A direct insight can be attained by Esra Özkaya’s paper ‘The Medium Turn in Interpreting Studies’ (2017). In her descriptive article on the status quo regarding RI in interpreting training related communities and among professional conference interpreters in Turkey, Özkaya focuses substantially on the catch up needed for interpreter training programs. Writing back in 2017, when the volcano erupted in Iceland and caused the cancellation of a key speaker’s flight, a famous gastroenterologist, the interpretation was to be done remotely. Özkaya suggests that we are at a medium turn in Interpreting Studies and reflecting on this experience, she reminds the readers the discrepancy between the status quo in the professional interpreting world and in interpreter training programs. Writing a considerable time ago, her touches on the training are an important area of discussion and focus, which, in and of itself, well deserve a MA thesis. The experience of so many changes in the

interpreting world reflect on the academia, and interpreter trainers. Traces of such reflections are felt not further away in our case as well, as the author and the supervisor of this thesis, too, published their paper on distance learning in interpreting training, looking into, again, the interpreters-to-be point of view (Kıncal & Ekici, 2022). The study where a survey with junior and senior students of interpreting was the main source of data shows that students are not that happy with distance learning in interpreting, and just like RI, the remoteness brings additional stress and makes everybody more tired (*ibid.*). One conclusion for this small part is, the pre-pandemic paper by Özkaya argues the training programs need some catching up with the professional world and, as you might have known long before you have read these pages, the training programs had to come up with quick solutions or build on their existing curricula when the pandemic hit. The case of Dokuz Eylül University is discussed in detail in *Distance learning in interpreter training: A survey on student perspective* (Kıncal & Ekici: 1441). Other institutions are also presumed to find similar solutions. Even though this literature review tried to demarcate itself within the remote simultaneous interpreting realm, the topic of training is an exclave that it must tolerate as the writer is also a practisearcher. A survey conducted after the onset of the pandemic sheds light on topics most close to our subject in this thesis.

The Conference Interpreters Association of Turkey, also known as TKTD by its Turkish initials, conducted a survey ‘Report on the Results of TKTD Remote Interpreting Survey’ in 2020. This survey was clearly conducted because of the Covid-19 pandemic that started in March 2020 causing nation-wide cancellations of conferences and other public events. But some events went ahead online as did classes in primary, secondary and tertiary education in the country. This prompted academics and professionals to take a deeper look into RI and its effects for the future of the conference interpreting profession. As TKTD is the leading institution for the interpreting community in Turkey, it took upon the role of investigating how interpreters approached the issue by conducting a survey.

The survey collected responses from its 162 participants. Since TKDT has easier access to reach people from the pool of conference interpreters in Turkey, the number of participants is six times as high as that of the pilot study carried out before

this thesis (TKDT, 2020). And as such, it displays a broader picture. Another important aspect is that the TKDT survey is in large part pandemic-centric as it has specific questions regarding the on-set of the first lockdown in Turkey, 15th of March, 2020. This thesis, however, began in mid-2019 and although it has pandemic related areas of investigation, it attempts to investigate how RI is perceived in Turkey regardless of the pandemic, and in comparison to earlier findings in literature. The survey also deploys questions regarding professional associations.

One of the first questions in the survey asks whether the participants ever interpreted in a remote setting before March 15th of 2020, when the first lockdown in Turkey took place. More than half of the respondents reported in the survey that they did a remote interpreting session at a location provided by the employer before the lockdown (TKDT, 2020: 3). The percentage of interpreters who did a RI session at home before the pandemic, which is at %69,1 is very high compared to the previous figure. This shows that RI was somewhat common before the pandemic at a location provided by an employer. Also, a majority of respondents bought new equipment or upgraded their existing equipment. One of the interesting questions refers to how the platform where RI is chosen, by the interpreter or the employer. This question can be seen as the ownership taken by the conference interpreter as they normally only can advise an employer on equipment during an on-site session. We cannot compare percentages for this question as respondents could choose multiple answers. However, there is a dynamic when it comes to interpreter's say in choosing the platform where the meeting or the interpreting takes place. Most people, a rocking %90 of respondents, used Zoom among others (ibid.: 8).

The most important question relevant to the study at hand now is the one that inquires what hardships the interpreters faced during their RI sessions (ibid.: 9). The most frequent answer is that interpreters did not have a direct line of communication with their boothmates. In second and third place come technical problems that happen on the employer's end and interpreter's end. These are problems that might occur at a speaker's location or interpreter's location. Managing multiple devices is the fourth most common problem. This is probably because interpreters stay in touch with their boothmates via a messaging application on their smartphones or second laptop. The last one is getting more tired compared to on-site simultaneous

interpreting. This is a conclusion of all the other four factors as RI makes it harder for interpreters to talk to one another, have technical difficulties and multitasking as a result of having different lines of communication with stakeholders in a conference.

When we take the results for the benefits of RI, we see that more than half of the respondents, namely %55, said that RI does not make them put their health under risk. The second benefit, according to the %48 of the respondents, is working from home. While we always try to find out how working from home changes the workload for an interpreter, some interpreters might choose to work from home as do some other professionals. Almost %40 of respondents said that not traveling is beneficial for them (ibid.: 10). And lastly, when interpreters were asked whether they wanted to work from home or a studio provided by the employer, more than %57 of the respondents said they would rather work from a studio provided by their employer. This clearly shows that interpreters do not want technical problems to disrupt their work.

In the conclusion section, the writers sum up the report by stating several facts about the dynamics of the interpreting profession in Turkey. The report concludes that interpreters are highly adaptive to new technologies or working conditions irrespective of their age. The report also mentions the importance of social networking and professional associations when we see the commonness of readiness for new technologies in the interpreting community as TKDT updates interpreters about changes and trends in the industry. There are also a few points that the report mentions including pricing for RI, the importance of professional associations in new technological developments and their adaptation by interpreters, and the pre-Covid adaptation of RI technologies.

The importance of this survey for this study is that it gives insight into how the interpreters in Turkey perceived RI after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time when the pilot study was conducted, we were living in a pre-pandemic world and even though the TKTD suggests that a majority of conference interpreters used RI technologies before the pandemic, our access to interpreter data was somewhat limited as the awareness of RI technologies were not as common. As mentioned in the first paragraph of this section, the number of respondents is at least six times higher than the pilot study we conducted prior to the undertaking of this

thesis. When the results of both surveys are compared and contrasted, it is seen that the answers concerning presence in the conference room are similar, 24 respondents out of 27 in the pilot study said being present in the conference is very important for them (Kincal & Ekici, 2020: 987). And 84 respondents to the TKTD survey out of 163 agreed that the most common problem is not being able to communicate with their boothmate, which reflects another aspect of being present in the conference room (TKTD, 2020: 9). While the pilot study assumed that any respondent had used RI before, the TKTD survey largely leaves this part to the individual participant and explores whether they had interpreted in a RI setting prior to March 2020.

2.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: EFFORT MODEL

In this research, there are discussions as to how RI impacts simultaneous interpreting. To grasp the processes and challenges in simultaneous interpreting, this study uses Daniel Gile's Effort Model as its theoretical background. This intention for the adoption of the Effort Model is clearly stated by Daniel Gile himself (2009: 171). By using this model not only are we making sense of several processes we deem interpreting to have, but also exploring possible new definitions as in a new 'effort'. In this section, a general understanding of the Effort Model will be laid out and we will also discuss why we are incorporating this theory of interpreting in this thesis.

Before diving into the details of the Effort Model, we can note that this thesis does not intend to change the particularities of this theory but rather only mention possible editions to it. While this theory gives a working example of simultaneous interpretation in a given situation, as we mentioned earlier, it also helps us discover possible problems or output speech deteriorating deficiencies. One might hypothesize that since RI brings extra layers in a simultaneous interpreting, we might suggest that these extra layers either add up as extra effort energy in defined Efforts or might constitute new Efforts on their own.

Gil reminds us that simultaneous interpreting is inherently a tiresome activity and this does not depend on the type of interpreting that one does. The speech itself does not change the difficulty of interpretation because, Gile explains, studies show

that all interpretation tasks, including ones done by students if interpreting and professional simultaneous interpreters show the same results (2009: 157). that there is a limited mental capacity that an interpreter has during interpretation and that interpreting requires this mental energy. However, according to Gile, interpreting is not a wholesome act on its own. There are different processes that go on during interpretation. Gile theorizes that these different sub-processes eat from the mental capacity available. Gile names these components of interpretation action 'Efforts'. Now let us examine these Efforts in detail.

2.3.1. Listening Effort

The first Effort, according to Gile, one deploys during interpretation is the effort of listening. Gile theorizes that interpretation begins once the interpreter starts hearing the words in the source language and then moves on to understand the utterances in the source language (2009: 160). Gile notes that this hearing process is not a standardized one. Everyone utters sounds differently and there is no single way of speaking a language. In fact, spoken language is certainly not a mathematical system.

On this note, Gile proceeds to claim that every interpreter analyzes the message in every sentence of the source text. And Gile gives this Effort the name Listening and Analysis Effort. This Effort begins with the interpreter hearing the spoken text and continues with the interpreter analyzing the speech. Using this Effort, the interpreter sometimes anticipates what is to come in the next sentence. This Effort can be summarized as the interpreter's construal of the source text.

2.3.2. Production Effort

After an interpreter's analysis of the source text, an output is to be formed by the interpreter in the target language. This output is akin to speaking according to Gile (2009: 163) but only in that the interpreter does not speak for their own behalf but that of the speaker. Speaking in a fluent manner is already hard as we often see speakers using filler sounds such as 'uh' and 'uhm' or filler words such as 'You

know,’ and ‘like,’. Speaking for someone else then can be classified as more burdensome. While creating an output in the target language, the interpreter has to keep up with the speaker, too, as they cannot store everything in their short term memory.

2.3.3. Memory Effort

Speaking of memory, it is known that conference interpreters rely on their short term memory to do their job. This is mostly because not every language has the same syntax and hence requires the interpreter to retain information in their short term memory to create the output in the target language. For example, when interpreting from a SVO language into a SOV language, the interpreter has to remember the verb to use at the end of their interpreted sentence. This Effort also is used to retain names, numbers and other information.

2.3.4. Summary of Effort Model

In summarizing the Effort Model, one can say interpreting requires mental energy that is limited, and interpreting, at times, requires more than available mental energy, in which case the performance of the interpreter deteriorates (Gile, 2016). This brain economy is the basis for the interpreting task. Gile then describes the concept of attention and divides activities into two, automatic and non-automatic. Automatic operations do not require attention and are carried out without usage of any processing capacity. On the other hand, non-automatic operations do need attention to be processed. Interpreting, Gile theorizes, consists of several components, which he calls ‘Efforts’, and these are Listening Effort, Production Effort, Memory Effort. These Efforts are largely non-automatic. And their definitions are as the following:

- Listening and analysis effort (L): This refers to conference interpreter’s analyzing the speech that the speaker utters.

- Production effort (P): The conference interpreter understands the message in the source language and then decides how to carry the message over to the target language, which results in the production of the interpreted message.

- Memory effort (M): The conference interpreter needs to make extensive use of short-term memory to cope with problems that occur during interpreting. The most obvious one is when syntax of the target and source language differ from one another. For instance, interpreting from a language with S-O-V pattern - like Turkish - into a language with S-V-O pattern - like English - might require the interpreter to keep the whole sentence in memory till he hears the verb at the end of a sentence.

These three efforts plus a coordination effort (C) that is used to systemize these three efforts in a harmonized way make up what we name simultaneous interpreting (SI) and it can be formalized in the following manner:

$$SI = L + P + M + C \quad (1)$$

The interpreter needs to handle his or her mental capacity and exert these three efforts evenly so that the quality of interpreting is not negatively affected. If the interpreter uses one effort more than the others, this might imply less capacity for one or more of the other efforts, which in turn might result in errors and omissions. These mostly occur due to the limited capacity or wrong distribution thereof. And deployment of information and communication technologies are supposed to reduce the need for mental capacity that these three efforts address. In that vein, the present study attempts to reveal and understand whether and how the use of ICTs, specifically RI, affects the use and distribution of various efforts in SI.

2.4. METHODOLOGY

This thesis concentrates on a sample of conference interpreters who have used RI in Turkey and their perception and views of RI. As such, it is a qualitative study that attempts to describe how these interpreters view RI and draw a general picture of the advantages and disadvantages of RI from interpreters' experiences. In these regards and others that we are going to describe later in this section, this thesis

carries the characteristics of a case study and is indeed a case study of conference interpreters who used RI in Turkey.

In a paper published in 2014 by Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva called “The Case Study Research Method in Translation Studies”, she lists several features of a case study or what a case study should look like, and below is an excerpt from this article (39):

- “they are open-ended and flexible – even though the researchers do have some prior hypotheses about the case in hand, they cannot afford to stick to their initial research questions and design at all costs, because this would be putting a straightjacket on to the ‘unruly’ data;
- they study naturally occurring cases, presenting qualitative analysis of ‘unstructured’ data – i.e. they are not concerned with controlling variables to measure their effects or with data that are already artificially pre-organized;
- they place a particular focus on the context in which the case is embedded and which can be highly pertinent;
- they focus on the whole unit of analysis per se, paying attention not to leave out any relevant detail – and certainly not those which might contradict the initial hypotheses – and also making sure that one can still see the wood through the trees;
- They yield narrative and descriptive reports which often focus on interpretation.”

The study is only exploratory as it tries to paint a picture of the perception of RI technologies by conference interpreters in Turkey. There are no pre-set expectations regarding the outcomes that the study might present. While the literature review has shown some tendencies and trends defined in the previous sections, this thesis does not intend to conform with the available literature. To this end, it deploys a semi-structured interview to gather data regarding interpreters’ experience with RI and form a narrative telling of their experiences in a critical sense.

As a case study, the study focuses on small details in the data it has gathered and does not per se intend to generalize its findings on the whole conference interpreting community in Turkey. The study aims to gather data in an unstructured way to give freeway for the interviewees to express their experiences in RI without any restrictions. In its methodology, it focuses on the individual experiences with RI and tries to find the patterns and similarities among these individual experiences with RI.

2.4.1. Interview

The interview used in this study is a semi-structured interview with three main parts. The interviews mostly lasted for around 30 minutes. The interview consists of three parts. The first part attempts to get to know the interviewee. The questions in this part inquire personal information about the interviewee and their professional background such as their years of interpreting experience. The second part has questions about the interviewee's direct experience in RI. This section builds a story of the interviewee's background in RI as it first asks about how many times the interviewee interpreted remotely and how they would describe their experience. It, then, delves into specifics such as any problems the interpreter might have encountered and whether they needed external help or not. This section also specifically asks the interviewee to rate their performance compared to on-site interpreting. And lastly, it prompts the interviewee to think whether they would change anything in a RI setting next time.

The last part of the interview is intended to get the interviewee to explain their personal perception of RI. It begins by trying to get an insight into the interviewee's personal feelings of RI and asks what they think about the future of the profession in light of recent events such as the Covid-19 pandemic. One question that it also asks might be subject for another study, this question asks whether curricula in interpreting programs should be updated to include RI. This section also asks the interviewee whether they think the new responsibilities that come with RI affect their stress levels.

2.5. PILOT STUDY: THE SURVEY

Before beginning with this study, a pilot study was completed with a survey (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020). The pilot study aimed to find how simultaneous interpreters who work in Turkey viewed remote interpreting. The pilot study featured a survey with 26 participants. Before conducting the research at hand now, the pilot study gave us an insight into what the approaches towards RI among conference interpreters in Turkey.

The survey, consisting of three parts, tried to see how interpreters approached technology in general and compared it to their approach towards RI in general. One of the main findings that struck our attention was interpreters' feeling of discomfort with RI despite the fact that they reported that they felt comfortable with technology. While survey participants said they are comfortable with technology, their views changed if the case is RI. This basically shows that interpreters are not that willing to accept a new technology for their work. And also as discussed in the paper, this is a pattern that we saw when the simultaneous interpretation technologies were introduced.

The survey also showed that most of the participants, 66%, belong to the generation X, people who were born between 1965 and 1980. This shows that most of the participants were Digital Migrants (Prensky, 2001), people who were not born into the internet age. This shows that participants might find it difficult to adapt to new technologies as they are not Digital Natives. This distinction might appear to us as a well-established fact but it should be pointed out that Prensky, who came up with the terminology, now considers these terms somewhat obsolete (2009). Certainly, clear-cut definitions might not work in social sciences so this distinction we have drawn here better be taken with a pinch of salt.

Another finding from the survey is that participants mostly do not feel comfortable with computer peripherals such as headsets. These are an important part of the interpreting job and even more important for a home setting where RI takes place from. This also helps us understand that computer peripheral literacy is important for interpreters who work in a remote setting. A majority of respondents also reported that being physically present in the conference room, meeting the speakers, and having a direct view of the stage improved their performance by a big margin. This shows that interpreters value their presence in a conference setting and believe that this improves their performance.

The pilot study paved the way for this thesis and proved that interpreters are skeptical of RI in general and they mostly do prefer on-site interpreting to RI, concluding that even if there is 'no resistance' to RI, there is a certain 'reluctance' for RI (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020: 988).

CHAPTER THREE

PERCEPTION OF REMOTE INTERPRETING IN TURKEY

In this chapter, we are going to explore the perception of Remote Interpreting in Turkey. As mentioned many times in this thesis before, interviews were conducted with conference interpreters who used RI in Turkey. These interviews give us an insight into how conference interpreters who work in Turkey see RI. In this chapter, we are going to examine and categorize the interviews. An important factor in our exploratory analyses of the data is we look back on what the literature review concludes in terms of RI's perception by the interpreters and make notes in our own analysis.

3.1. THE INTERVIEWEES

A total of seven interviews were conducted. Interviews were all made online except for the first one that took place in person. All other interviews were conducted via Google Meet, an online video conferencing service provided by Alphabet, the parent company that owns YouTube and Google among others. All interviews were recorded, and voice recordings were transcribed. Interviewees were reached out via associated connections with the help of my thesis advisor and TKTD also helped me reach their members via an email they sent out on my behalf to their members. Some interviewees were friends whom I had connections with over social media, who accepted my invitation for an interview.

Originally, ten interviews were conducted, however, the three interviews did not make it into the final form due to several reasons. The main reason is that the recordings were of poor quality -several different methods were used- and a readable transcription could not be produced out of these recordings. For better clarifications, I had to take these three interviews out of the collection of interviews this study has as its source of data.

Each interview was individually planned and conducted. The interviewing process took over a year to complete including the preparation of conducting interviews, transcribing and analyzing. Several transcription software were used,

some online and some offline. I tried to find several software options for the transcriptions to settle on the one that served this study best; however, a conclusion drawing from ten interviews could only be an early decision in statu nascendi.

3.2. ANALYZING THE INTERVIEWS

I used a spreadsheet to categorize answers from the interviews in an orderly fashion. The columns had the parts of the interview and each row had the answer from an interview for that specific column. This enabled me to categorize and analyze the answers in a coherent and consistent manner. I also used italic and bold fonts to highlight certain answers. This also made it easier to find the important information in the interview data.

The first column is titled “Interviewee” and carries a name from ‘Int1’ through ‘Int7’, Int standing for interpreter. I did not use the personal names of the interviewees to keep the data anonymous, and also interviewees were given prior knowledge that their names would not be used in the study. The second column carries the title ‘Tags’ and has other professional and biographical information about the interviewee, such as their age, language pairs and if they have any other professional work experience apart from being a conference interpreter. Some interviewees are either academics or employers as well as taking professional conference interpreting work on the side. The third column has the title ‘YoE’, standing for years of experience in conference interpreting. The fourth column is titled ‘Musts’, and it shows the must-haves for the interviewee in an on-site simultaneous interpreting setting.

The first five columns represent the biographical and professional background of the interviewee. The second part, which deals with the interviewee’s experience in RI, begins with the fifth column. I gave the fifth column the name ‘MSC’, a common abbreviation for miscellaneous, and I used this column to include various comments that did not fall into any of the other categories that I made. The fifth column has various points that individual interviewees made about RI. This part also was possible as the interview was semi-structured and sometimes the interviewees were asked questions that are not in the interview.

The second part of the interview has ten questions and tries to inquire into the interviewee's experience in RI. For this section of the interview, I created ten columns, the first being the 'MSC' column. The second column for the experience in RI section is about the years of experience in RI and models the interpreter used among other details. The third column delves into how the interviewees see the possible and actual problems during a remotely interpreted session. The fourth column tries to find an answer to the question whether the interpreters could solve the problem on their own. The fifth column titled 'Satisfaction/Quality' lists interpreters' rate of satisfaction and how they see the quality of their own interpreting during an RI session. The sixth column specifically makes a list of interpreters' answers to the question whether they had any stress or anxiety induced solely by RI. The seventh makes a direct comparison between on-site simultaneous interpreting and remote interpreting. The eighth column summarizes responses to the question if the interviewees would do anything differently next time when they do a remote interpreting session. The last two columns in this section are about listening and focusing during an RI session.

The third part of the interview is about the interpreter's personal opinion about RI and also their perception of RI technologies. For this section, I allocated nine columns. This is the part of the interview where the interpreters had the most leeway in answering the questions. This section is also the part where the semi-structure of the interview finds its shape as answers vary greatly from one another. The first column for this section lists answers about the latest developments in the profession, that is the on-set of the Covid-19 pandemic and hence triggered common use of RI technologies. The second column gathers interpreters' answers to the question whether RI will be commonplace in the future. The third column delves into one of the hottest topics of our time, the advantages and challenges of RI technologies. The fourth one is about the training programs for interpreter-to-bes. The fifth column gathers the answers regarding RI's overall impact on the job. The sixth column inquires about interpreters' opinion on equipment buying for RI, one of the new challenges for interpreters that comes with RI. The last and seventh column features the title 'Further comments', which reflects the last question in the interview, which asks if the interviewee has anything else to add.

Gathering all information on a spreadsheet like the one described above made it a whole lot easier to analyze the contents of the interviews and compare them in a constant manner. In our review and analysis of the data, having these categories in mind will make it easier to comprehend the results. Hence, this section of the third chapter will be of enormous help in our analysis of the data.

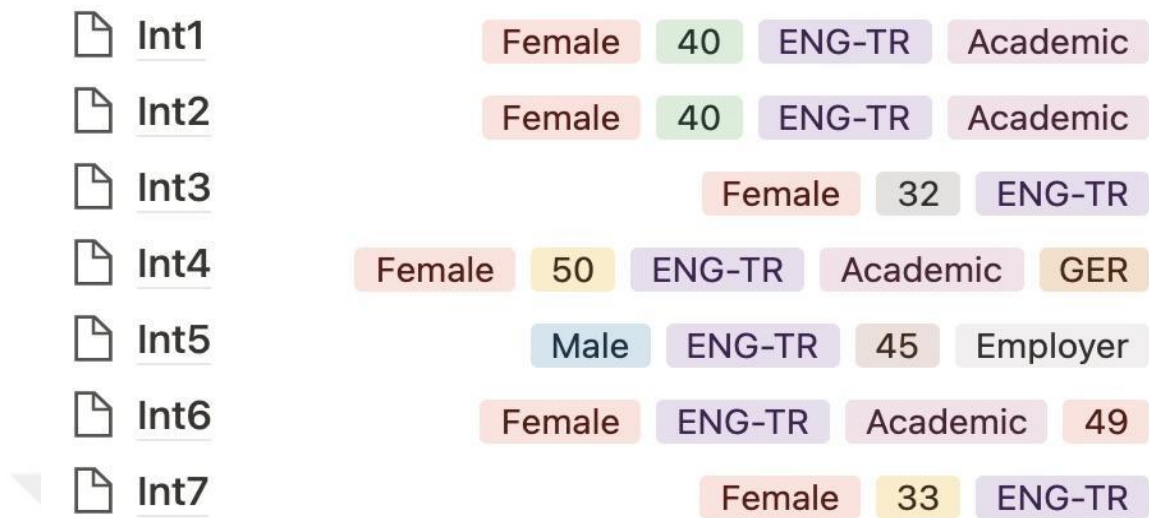
Some aspects in the analysis reflect the semi-structured nature of the interview, especially comments gathered in the MSC section. But comments made by the interpreters fall into a common pool of topics, nonetheless, giving ease for us to propound and summarize. Some of such topics are the visibility of the interpreter, and the issue of conference interpreting prices.

An important aspect of Notion is that it gives the ability to see the data in the spreadsheet in several different ways including a board view that gathers all relevant information under a tag, such a language pair tag ‘ENG-TUR’ showing all interviewees who interpret between these languages.

3.3. INTERVIEWEES’ BIOGRAPHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL DATA

Six of seven conference interpreters are female. Only one conference interpreter who took part in the study is male. Five participants are between the ages of 40 and 50. Two interpreters who participated in the study are between 30 and 40 years old.

Figure 2: Interpreters who took part in the interviews



Source: Made by the author.

Four participants are either current academics or have worked as one in a tertiary education institution. While all participants interpret between English and Turkish, only one interpreter interprets from and to German. One participant also owns a translation and interpreting business and hence an employer of other interpreters as well as being a conference interpreter themselves. Two interviewees had work experience between 5 to 10 years, whereas two others had work experience between 15 to 20 years. Three interviewees had work experience over 20 years.

These results show that the work group is largely female and quite experienced in the job with five of them having at least 15 years of work experience. Another important take from these results is that four respondents also have worked as an academic and as such are knowledgeable in interpreter training. Only two interviewees are ‘digital natives’, people who are born into the Internet age, while five interviewees are digital migrants, as they met with the Internet later in their lives (Prensky, 2001). The TKTD survey found that half of its respondents have 10 to 20 years of work experience and only two of the respondents in the interviewee sample we have in this study also only has the same work experience, between 15 to 20 years (2020). The pilot study reported 12 of its 27 respondents had more than 15 years of experience in conference interpreting (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020). When we compare these results, we see that the sample size for the interviews is not in line

with the results of the TKTD survey and the pilot study, however, it gives a good representation of the interpreting community as it has participants of all age groups.

3.4. THE MUST-HAVES OF A CONFERENCE INTERPRETING SESSION

The second section of the interview begins with the questions, “Do you have any must-haves for a conference setting?”. Below is a list of the answers from the interpreters I interviewed:

Figure 3: Must-haves for a conference setting.



Source: Made by the author.

The most common answer is audio quality for the interviewees as five of them said it is a must for them. Seeing the speaker, the stage and the screen, communication with the boothmate, location of the booth, and having a technician are other must-haves that the interviewees mentioned in their list of requirements of a good conference setting. These must-haves all have one thing in common and that is the location of the conference interpreter, that is being on-site where the conference takes place as opposed to being in a remote location where the interpreter either lacks or has limited access to these must-haves.

In the 1999 UN experiment, interpreters reported a preference of their own choosing rather than a camera operator deciding on the angle of the room at any time and this cost them losing their ‘concentration’ (United Nations, 2001a: 157) and documents were easily transferred to interpreters, which was highly appreciated.

Interpreters also had a direct and close-up view of the speaker at any given time, and they reported that this probably resulted in a better use of available Listening units. Both interviewees in our study and interpreters at the UN experiment in 1999 highly value seeing certain parts of the conference room or the stage. Interpreters' must-haves reflect on their unconscious dedication to perfect allocation or balancing of their available units for different interpretation Efforts. Speaking of optimum allocating practices, the interpreters in 1999 UN experiment were fortunate to have 'remote interpretation assistants' as well as on-site and remote site technicians, which resulted in a seamless undertaking of their work (*ibid*: 155). Although only the Interviewee 7 reported this as a must-have, we will see in the later parts of the analysis, that other interpreters also mention their frustration with the lack of the technician.

For interpreters at the 2001 UN experiment, the lack of controlling visuals resulted in 'loss of concentration' for the interpretation (United Nations, 2001b: 176), showing that they would too have listed the location of their booth, i.e., seeing the stage, speakers, and/or the audience as a must-have in a conference setting, had they partaken in this study. Participants of January 2001 European Parliament experiment would be on the same boat as well, meaning they would also consider their own location in the conference room, when they reported a 'significant loss' of visual information even though they had five different viewing options, which they could change at any time (European Parliament Interpretation Directorate, 2001: 21). In the most recent experiment at the World Cup 2014 in Brazil, where interpreters had 'high hopes', they were not satisfied with 'lack of visual access to speakers and meeting room dynamics', showing that interpreters value seeing the speaker and other parts of the conference/meeting room to get a grasp of the environment and the speech (Seeber et al., 2017). In the 2004 EU Parliament experiment, where almost all parameters seemed to be on par with any on-site simultaneous interpreting session, when stress was reported (Roziner & Shlesinger, 2010: 242) the culprit was poor visibility of the speaker or the audience. Being in the room where interpreting takes place gives the interpreter the feeling of presence and maybe being in control as they can experience the environment. In the most recent experiment at the 2014 Brazil

World Cup, interpreters reported that it was extremely important ‘to see face, lips, gestures and pointing’ (Seeber et al., 2019: 290).

3.5. INTERVIEWEES’ EXPERIENCE IN RI

It can be said that all the interviewees have experience in remote interpreting as the only prerequisite to become an interviewee for this study was having had experience in RI. In this section, we are going to describe the specific experience the interpreters who took part in this study had in their respective remote interpreting settings. The exploratory nature of this section is solely drawn from the second part of the interview.

How many times an interviewee interpreted varies greatly. Some interviewees reported 5 to ten times of interpreting remotely, while some others told in our discussions that they interpreted as many as 200 times. While the number of times an interpreter took part in a RI setting might matter in a purely quantitative research, here the approach is of an exploratory nature. And, possibly, it might be easier for an interpreter who took only several RI jobs, to describe their problems and experience more in detail as opposed to a conference interpreter who worked so many times that they cannot remember individual instances where a problem had occurred. For this reason, we are not going to show the times of interviewees interpreted remotely.

When it comes to the types of meetings and conferences the interviewees worked in, we can list the following: conferences in different areas such as finance, human rights, tourism, travel, finance, banking, law, immigration, politics, international relations, and so on. Interviewee 7 summarized remote settings as “exhaustive” no matter what the type of meeting or conference it is. The number of speakers also seem to vary greatly, interviewee 6 reported that they once had a RI session with 20 speakers. And when asked about the types of conferences they interpreted, they said “I have interpreted everything under the sun.”

3.5.1. Challenges Encountered in RI

The most common challenge that interpreters encounter according to our conversations about their experience with RI is the subpar audio quality. Audio quality was also mentioned many times as a must-have of any conference setting. Taking the first challenge we have in RI, we can divide the problems we encounter in RI settings into two categories: technical problems and non-technical problems. Technical problems, by their nature, occur because of the new environment in which interpreting takes place. When an interpreter is in a remote location and interprets from there, we have individual connectivity, audio and video problems. The most mentioned one, as said before, is audio quality. Interviewee 4 describes the audio problem as:

I think the main problems are related to my sound, but mostly the speakers' sound, which is less than standard. It's usually cut off, but not wearing the microphone or you know, there's something wrong with their connection.

Most times, bad audio quality is a result of suboptimal internet connections. Interviewee described a situation where audio quality was terrible for them and they interpreted a conference where the internet connection of the speakers was so bad that interpreter 7 was not sure if they simply needed to rely on their instinct to understand what the speakers were saying. Interviewee 7 said that they also thought about announcing that the speaker's audio was not clear and the interpretation could not continue. Interviewee 3 also suffered from a bad connection with their Internet and the moderator stepped in to pause the conference and explain the situation. Another technical problem that Interviewee 3 had during a Zoom-based interpreting session was that the organizers did not have the interpreter option was not available and it was again the moderators who helped solve the problem by upgrading the Zoom subscription. The videoconferencing service Zoom has different tiers of subscription that enable different features including simultaneous interpreting, not all Zoom subscription have simultaneous interpreting option by default.

Speaking of moderators, they cause one of the non-technical problems according to Interviewee 5 who said that moderators leave little to no time for breaks

and move onto the next session without giving enough time for the interpreter to rest or get ready for the next session. In an on-site conference setting, people take their time during coffee breaks and interpreters use these breaks to get ready for the next session. In a remotely held conference, though, organizers pack as many sessions as possible into one day and shorten breaks, which affects an interpreter's performance as the interpreter cannot rest and prepare properly for the session. Non-technical problems are born out of the work-from-home nature of RI. One of the examples is that having a good line of communication with a booth mate is harder, if possible at all. According to Interviewee 1, interpreters use body language to communicate with their booth mates and give notes in the booth, and when they are not in the same location, communicating via text messages makes the whole interpreting process more burdensome for the interpreters. Another problem that is encountered seems to be not having the chance to meet the speakers in person before the conference. Interviewee 1 says "communication is diminished, if you don't know the [speakers]". Interviewee 2 reminds us another point about being present in the conference location and says being in the conference room or where the meeting takes places makes you "see and smell the environment" and adds:

You know, who are the difficult people and who are the ones that can help you? I mean, you have an idea to know what's going to come. But in [an RI setting], it's not uncomfortable, but I was feeling nervous about what is to come. So I knew that if there was a technical problem [technicians] would sort it out.

And here we see the first extra responsibility that comes with RI: the role of a technician. All these extra technical jobs fall on the interpreter's shoulder if the interpreter works from home. But the most significant non-technical side of remote work is not being and feeling present in the conference room. This is mentioned by Interviewee 2 above and Interviewee 6 gives a deeper insight into the topic of being not present in the conference room:

You use the body language, you lose the body language to a great extent. And that always, that really makes our lives more difficult. When you're a conference interpreter, you're used to smelling the atmosphere of the conference. You watch the audience as much as you do the speakers, you see what their reaction is. You get a feel for what the mood in the room is, but when you're interpreting remotely, you lose all of that. And vice versa, the speakers

have no idea you're there. So they don't think about your data. Think about what your needs may be, that you may want to see the screen. You may want to see the presentation, or they may be going too fast, too slow, or you may be unable to hear them. That whole human interaction part is gone. It's a one-sided show. It's one-sided communication. And we all know that's far from ideal.

All of these non-technical challenges may apply to any work-from-home job but in the case of conference interpreting, it becomes a struggle for interpreters as they try to keep up with the event and the quality of their interpreting. One of the important things to mention is that the problems that occur during RI might force the interpreters to focus more on Listening and Analysis Effort than in an on-site simultaneous interpreting. Interviewee 6, describing Gile's Effort Model for Interpreting, gives one example for this:

You have to put in more effort to hear than you would in a normal conference setting. [...] And in a normal conference situation, you would allocate some of [these units of Effort] to listening. [In RI], you usually have to allocate a lot more units of attention to the listening part because the sound quality isn't that good. And that leaves you with fewer units for understanding and [...] reproducing the message.

This is an observable difference between on-site and remote interpreting as interpreters have to focus more on some other issues while doing their job. It is not quite yet deductible if a new Effort can be added to the Effort Model in RI but it is a certain fact that Effort Model can be used to describe the challenges interpreters face during a RI session.

So, the challenges faced in RI fall in either of these categories: technical and non-technical. While we can say both categories are caused by the remote setting of the job, non-technical ones play a larger role for interpreters as several interviewees described these non-technical aspects where they do not 'smell the atmosphere' in the conference room. This might be only a phase as RI is becoming more commonplace or these challenges are here to stay only in mitigated quantities.

When asked about if they could solve the problems on their own, three interviewees said that they could while one said the moderator solved the problem. This shows that interpreters interviewed in this study took on the job of a technician and their responsibilities hence increased and when conditions are suboptimum, interpreters' unequal use of different Effort units might come to the fore. In other words, the Efforts are not equally distributed as in on-site simultaneous interpreting.

Interpreter 7, for example, might have had to use more units for their Listening and Analysis Effort during the RI session where they said they had to rely on their ‘instinct’. Theoretically speaking, Effort Model explains why these changes in use of different units come into play, but further experimental research might be done in the light of the Effort Model.

All these non-technical problems that occur during an RI session for interviewees seem to be in line with what our reading of the literature in RI shows. The feeling of being there and in control is very essential for the interpreter (Moser-Mercer, 2005b: 78) and as seen in the direct quotation from Interviewee 6 above, the same applies for our interviewees. Interviewee 2, too, reported the lack of control they felt during RI. This diminished feeling of control seems to be essential to all other part of the RI experience as it sets the underlying tone of feeling for the interpreter. Other challenges found not in the literature seem to resort to the other partakers in the event: in the case of moderators, they reportedly keep breaks short giving minimal time for the interpreters to ramp up for the next speech. Organizers allegedly try to push in as many speeches as possible into the schedule giving the tight timing frame, and when a speaker starts their speech a bit late, then everything else in the schedule becomes jammed, leaving little to no time for the interpreter to use the bare minimum time they have for the next speech. These challenges are not present in the literature as literature is based solely on controlled experiments taken up by multinational institutions in most cases such as the EU and UN, whereas interviewees in this study rely on their own experiences where they worked in real world and uncontrolled conditions.

3.5.2. Quality in RI and The Stress that Comes Along with It

One of the most talked about topics in Interpreting Studies is the question of quality. Quality in Interpreting Studies have different viewpoints from different scholars as explained by Franz Pöckhacker in his article titled “Quality Assessment in Conference and Community Interpreting” but the quality used in the interview is self-satisfaction of the output by the interpreter themselves (2002). In this sense, we only focus on the quality as the interpreters view it and how satisfied they are with

their performance. Followingly, we also take a look at how stressed they are reportedly during an RI session.

Asking a straightforward question such as “Are you happy with your performance?” brings out some of the most candid comments about RI. One of the first noticeable comments about quality is that an interpreter is “never %100 happy with [their] interpretation” according to Interviewee 6 as they say that this is a ‘ground rule’. They say the quality deteriorates only because they do not have access to body language. Interviewee 6 concludes that the booth is a controlled environment whereas working from home has many uncontrollable factors such as children playing, construction work going on in the background. According to Interviewee 5, the quality stays the same as on-site simultaneous interpreting but they get tired more easily due to bad sound quality. They explain one incident where they had to deal with a speaker’s subpar quality microphone, which in return made them more tired earlier. In a normal setting where an interpreter is present in the conference room, this could be resolved easily. As explained in the previous chapter, the interpreter has to spend more units of attention to the listening and analysis effort to keep up with the quality of their interpretation. Interviewee 6 says that they judge the quality of their RI performance in a different way than an on-site simultaneous interpreting setting. Interviewee 4 also mentioned a similar viewpoint that quality is still ‘there’ but they find it extremely exhausting to deliver a similar quality to that of an on-site simultaneous interpretation. Interpreter 7, too, reported a similar effect took place in their experience and said their performance dropped in 15 minutes and they wondered when the assignment would end. All respondents agreed that they have to make extra effort to keep a quality on par with their on-site performance. In my own view, it was the Interviewee 4 who summarized the situation regarding quality best as they said “Quality did not falter, but I certainly did.”

It becomes a vicious cycle when poor audio quality or other problems make the interpreter put in more effort for listening, they become tired earlier than a normal conference setting and this sometimes leads to stress and anxiety in the interpreter, which in return might deteriorate the performance. The extra responsibilities that the interpreter has to take care of now make the assignment tough for the conference interpreter, if not for every assignment, at least for new

beginners. Interviewee 7 put their anxiety in words that reflect the current atmosphere for conference interpreters who start with RI:

Exactly all those fears and anxiety attacks or whether your electricity may be out, whether your internet connection will be cut or whether something really bad happens. So it's like, what am I going to do? And how am I going to be accountable for all of this? Not able to sleep properly sometimes, especially in that specific assignment involving more than nine language pairs, I was really like all over the place.

At the 2014 World Cup in Rio, the work-related stress varied greatly (Seeber, 2019: 294), one of the main reasons interpreters seemed to be at ease came down to two factors, which were that a great technical team was always available and meetings were relatively short and had large gaps in between. Stress was, however, on the horizon when interpreters couldn't see what was happening in the meeting room, as in when a question was asked by someone in the room and the interpreter could not tell whom it was from (*ibid.*: 293): "You don't know who is throwing the question at whom. I mean that's the worst." In the 2004 EU Parliament experiment, too, there were no big differences in stress factors between on-site and remote settings (Rozinger & Shlesinger, 2010: 242). This also boils down to the fact that most conditions were by this experiment perfected to suit interpreters' needs and expectations. The authors describe the stress due to lack of vision and 'feedback' from the audience as integral parts of RI and deem them as 'psychological' (*ibid.*). These results align themselves with this thesis' findings in that even though everything is perfectly planned in a remote setting, the feeling of control is diminished and might result in work-related stress during the session for the interpreter.

3.5.3. On-site Simultaneous Interpreting and RI

One of the simplest questions in the interview was asking the interviewees to make a direct comparison between on-site simultaneous interpreting and RI. The answers to this question revealed what interpreters saw the benefits of RI and that of on-site conference interpreting. The highlight of this section is that interpreters want to have a physical setting for all occasions except for meetings and conferences that are decided at the last minute or will last only an hour or two at most.

Interviewee 7 explains that sometimes they travel to an on-site assignment only to interpret something 'very short, silly or irrelevant'. Apart from these small

meetings or ‘get-together’ as they call it, Interviewee 7 thinks that it is best to have a physical conference. Interviewee 5 explains that traveling is part of the fun for a conference interpreter and says “I see my colleagues, my partners and my clients, [...] that’s how we socialize.” They also say that traveling for a short assignment is of no benefit for any party in the event and think that such short events, such as press conferences and briefings, do not require physical presence of an interpreter especially if the interpreter has to travel to another country or city and that traveling for short events is ‘time consuming’. For Interviewee 6, an on-site setting is always preferable over RI as they say “Communication is a two way process.” Also for Interviewee 4, an on-site interpreting assignment is better than RI even if all the conditions are met as required. Interviewee 3 thinks being physically present in the conference room feels more ‘professional’ and being next to their colleague makes it easier to ‘exchange ideas and notes’. Communication with a booth mate in RI is harder and interrupted. For this reason, Interviewee 3 prefers on-site interpreting to RI. For Interviewee 2, it is a matter of age as they say they are not ‘Digital natives’ and claim preference might change depending on the fact whether an interpreter is a Digital native or immigrant. Interviewee 2, too, goes for an on-site assignment rather than an RI one. Interviewee 1 says that the whole experience of being a conference interpreter changes when the assignment is remote and adds:

So being in a different environment, meeting different people, finding out about in different circles, different topics. Being in a different workplace or in a different city sometimes or a different country. These are all fun parts of simultaneous interpreting which are taken away in remote interpreting.

For these reasons, they say that they prefer an on-site assignment over RI but acknowledge that RI might have its benefits for certain scenarios by saying: “You remain in your comfort zone. You don't have to go anywhere. You don't have to pack. You don't have to travel. You don't have to get into traffic.” It seems like whether young or old, most interpreters are likely to see an on-site conference superior to RI as it feels more familiar and it has its advantages in terms of communication with colleagues, technicians and other stakeholders in a conference. Interpreters, however, think short events are better off with RI instead of on-site simultaneous interpreting. Interviewee 5 thinks that half of the events in the market will be held online while the other half remains in person. Even though most

interpreters acknowledge potential benefits for RI, they stick with the traditional way of interpreting in a conference for the time being.

These findings are in line with the results from the 2014 Brazil World Cup experiment, where interpreters showed reluctance for RI, as one of them reportedly said “Not something that you like, something that you live with and bear with.” (Seeber et al., 2019: 285)

3.5.4. Perfecting the RI Experience

After weighing the pros and cons of RI, I wanted to see what interpreters would do differently next time in an RI session based on their past experience. Most answers in this section refer to getting in touch with the speakers and other stakeholders in the event to let them know what might come up during a remotely interpreted event or prepare them for any further problems that might occur during the event. According to Interviewee 3, “the clients and the people attending the meeting are different sides of the story,” and they go on to say that “The client might not know what you have to do or what you have to have a good performance, but the people attending the meetings, they don't really know anything about interpreting, let alone remote interpreting. So I would love to [...] have the opportunity to talk to the client and tell them to speak with the attendees and tell them to be patient with the translation because, I mean the sound quality might not be that good or there can be some [...] a disconnection and [...] interpreting might be a little bit delayed. But it is usually not the fault of the interpreter.”

Not everybody who attends the conference as listener or speaker knows what might come up during a remotely interpreted session and they need to be made aware of potential problems that might happen as there are many stakeholders involved for an online event. For Interviewee 4, pre-briefing the speakers beforehand is more important as they need to check the quality of their internet connection and the headset they might use during the event. Interviewee 7 also makes the same suggestion that ‘each and every speaker’ should use a proper microphone and headset. Interviewee 5 also thinks that every speaker should have a good microphone and internet connection to avoid any fluctuations in the quality of their interpretation.

The answers show that briefing before the event seems to be of special importance to the interpreters to make sure that everything goes according to plan and, if not, that every stakeholder knows what is going on to solve any problems. Another important thing to note is that every speaker needs to better prepare for the event just as an interpreter does.

3.6. INTERVIEWEES' THOUGHTS ON RI

The last section of the interview inquires what interpreters think about RI and RI related topics. The topics covered in this section are the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects, challenges and advantages of RI from a personal perspective, interpreter training, equipment buying for RI and interpreter's visibility in RI. As every interviewee has a different background than each other, their touch on these topics also differ and give various insights. While some of these topics were covered in one form or another in the previous section, this section does not require the interviewee to make their comments based on past experiences, it only elaborates the personal views of the interviewee.

3.6.1. The future of RI and Interpreter's Visibility in RI

The first topic that comes up in any response is RI becoming more common and how it is going to happen in the future, especially in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Most comments were made in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, and accordingly, most comments made have the uncertainty about what might happen in the interpreting industry. There is also a continuum of ideas as to how common RI will be, ranging from RI becoming the norm in the industry to RI occupying only a small percentage of all assignments an interpreter gets.

Most answers, however, fall to the right of the continuum, which is that while RI will be dominant to a certain extent, on-site simultaneous interpreting will not just cease to exist. It is likely that we will live in a hybrid world where both modes of interpreting will have its uses. Interviewee 7 thinks that the world was not ready for RI technologies when the pandemic first hit and every uncanceled conference went

online, adding that even in ‘most advanced, cutting edge’ conferences, a speaker who could not attend in person had connection issues and their connection was lost. Interviewee 7 says that other stakeholders were waiting for RI to come but something like the pandemic had to happen as most earlier attempts were not welcomed by interpreters. But when the pandemic hit, interpreters had to come up with quick solutions and adapt. Referring to earlier conferences where speakers connected online, Interviewee 7 says they practiced RI. Interviewee 7 thinks that once the Covid-19 pandemic is over, there will be a rush back into physical conferences, as they say the following:

I also believe that people need to have physical contact. They have to have this emotional bond or a physical presence, and us interpreters can not be excluded from this context. And I think clients and we have also understood that. So I believe that the value they attribute to interpreters will be much more visible in the future. And the value we attribute to what we do on site will be much more relevant.

Here another take is that Interviewee 7 thinks that the visibility of interpreters will increase after everything goes back to normal. Another issue of common discussion is whether interpreters feel seen or unseen in this setting. Some interpreters claimed that being in a RI setting made them more visible as opposed to in an on-site setting, while others either remained undecided or thought otherwise. On the issue of visibility, Interviewee 5 also thinks that RI made interpreters more visible as they say:

Now interpreters and translators are more visible. Because otherwise they will be in the booth in a conference room, and maybe one out of 100 people will go and check the booth and say, thank you. [But] half of the people say thank you to the interpreters [in a remote setting]. So it made our profession more visible.

Interviewee 5 thinks that RI is not going to be commonplace, but it will take some %30 of all conference settings in the industry ‘easily, if not %50’. This view is of the consensus we described in the beginning of this section. Interviewee 4, too, follows the same pattern and says: “Maybe 30%, maybe 40% of the meetings will become remote.”

Interviewee 4 thinks that interpreters have become more invisible as they have stated that interpreters are now ‘a voice in a box’ and they are not ‘seen’ now.

Interviewee 4 adds that the connection to the audience is diminished while the connection to the organizers of the events is still 'there'. Interviewee 6 points out that there are other factors included in the debate over RI such as climate change by stating the following when asked about whether RI is going to be commonplace:

It will not necessarily be a common practice, but it will be one of the settings in which we work. I think it's here to stay in many ways. I mean, I remember this one specific meeting where I traveled for 14 hours, worked for 45 minutes and traveled back for 14 hours. That makes absolutely no sense. It makes no sense from a personal perspective or from an environmental perspective. So that was an ideal candidate for a remote job. They didn't need me there. I didn't need to be there. Once more from a cost perspective and from an environmental perspective, I think many things would definitely be remote, but then there are others who should, which should absolutely be face-to-face.

Additional travel in some cases is definitely a cost gravely added to climate change as many interpreters have to travel long distances overseas and in these cases, RI can be a better option for both budgetary and environmental causes. Another point that interpreters think that RI will be more commonplace is because of financial reasons. Interviewee 3 also is of the opinion that RI is likely to be more commonplace in the future due to its impact on the 'budget':

[Because] of the impact often on the budget, for example, the clients that we work with might prefer remote interpreting, right? [...] Having the interpreter come to a venue or organize and give huge events [for] their meetings or for their events [or] organizations, [they] would try to avoid that. And I think that could lead to remote interpreting, being more and more common in the future.

When it comes to the issue of visibility, Interviewee 3 is the only interpreter who is divided on the issue and feels they are invisible in both settings as they are away from the audience in a booth in a conference room and in an RI setting, they are also invisible as they do not turn their camera on. They stated the following to express their indecisiveness when directly asked about visibility: "So I think it's kind of I'm in the middle. I couldn't really decide." But they stated that they also think RI puts more 'light on the interpreter':

So I think the development, especially in terms of people, turning their attention towards interpreting. Because remote interpreting [...] puts us under the light a little bit more with the pandemic, because a lot of things to international

companies, they had to work with interpreters before, but they didn't even meet the interpreters [...] in a conference setting. But now you have to kind of be face to face with an interpreter, even though it's remotely, you can kind of feel the interpreters' impact on the job on the meeting. I think more and more every day with remote interpreting, but also there is a negative side, but it is because of the fact that we were kind of pushed into this. I mean, it didn't develop naturally.

Unlike Interviewee 7 who said that there was 'trial and error' with RI even before the pandemic started, Interviewee 3 states that they were 'pushed into' RI when the pandemic started. Interviewee 1 thinks that it will be 'more common to practice RI than [on-site simultaneous interpreting]' as they say that the change from physical meetings to online ones is not only for the interpreting profession:

[The] world is moving towards a more digital world. There are more and more meetings and communication online, rather than physical. And that will impact interpreting part of it, whether we like it or not. It's inevitable. It's not only the Corona period. The world was going in that direction anyway. Like I know from some professionals in the private industry that rather than traveling for, like team meetings, managerial meetings, they were now having more and more online meetings. And that would mean interpreters will also join online if needed.

Most interviewees think that RI will become one of the settings conference interpreters will be using in the future. There is a consensus, as stated above, that RI will constitute roughly %30 of all assignments. This will happen due to budgetary and logistical changes in the work environment and also as stated by Interviewee 1, the world was going to become more connected online and the Covid-19 pandemic only accelerated this process. This can be observed also by statements by the Interviewees when they said even though there was 'trial and error' with RI before the pandemic started, that they were pushed into RI as organizers had no other options to get on with their events than going online. The overall view is not pessimistic and interpreters are highly adaptive to changes in their work environment.

3.6.2. Challenges and advantages of RI

One of the main objectives for us in this study is to demonstrate what challenges interpreters face in RI and what advantages they think RI offers. Asking this question reveals the most important parts of RI interpreters take into account, and they make a list of advantages and disadvantages, or challenges they faced in a remotely interpreted conference. The biggest advantage seems to be the avoidance of travel to another city or to another location in a big city. There seems to be more than one challenge and when asked about challenges, every interpreter recalls a past experience and answers the question by revisiting a specific time. The most commonly mentioned challenge is the issue of pricing. Clients want to charge on an hourly basis for RI assignments.

Interviewee 1 says the number one advantage is that they do not have to travel and can avoid traffic. For Interviewee 1, the second advantage as a result of the first one is that RI is less ‘time-consuming’. For Interviewee 2, who cannot at the time of the interview accept assignments from other cities, the biggest advantage is being able to take more assignments as they can easily accept job offers from any place. They state this in the following excerpt:

The most important advantage is I think regardless of your physical setting, being able to take on jobs because you will not have to travel you will not have to adapt to your schedule. Just during the meeting time, you will have to be online and that's it. I think this is a great advantage.

This advantage is an important factor for some interpreters who happen to be parenting a newborn or a toddler to accept an assignment. Interviewee 4, too, follows the widespread opinion that RI cancels the need to travel as they state: “The biggest advantage I think is in terms of the commute and, [...] you don't have to go to a different city and stay there in a hotel overnight. So that's a good thing for me.”

Another point that they make in the above quotation is that an interpreter does not need to stay a night in the city they traveled for the conference. Most often, interpreters have to spend several days at a hotel as either the event lasts several days or it becomes too late for them to go back home when the event is finished. Interviewee 6 lists the biggest advantage as avoiding to travel for an assignment, too.

Interviewee 6 listed the biggest challenge as losing the ‘human touch’ in an RI setting. The feeling of being there and in control is largely diminished as shown in the literature review. Interviewee 4 thinks taking extra responsibility for the technical side of the job is a hassle and says:

We are required to take responsibility, not over our interpretation, but also over uncontrollable, technological problems. And they're [...] beyond your control. [...] So the shift of responsibility [for technical problems] to interpreters is what I dislike most about it.

Interviewee 3 lists another disadvantage of RI, which for some interpreters is an advantage. Interviewee 3 says that they would like to be in a ‘designated booth area’ rather than being home and interpreting remotely. The second challenge reported by Interviewee 3 is that not every city in Turkey has good internet infrastructure, which becomes a burden for the interpreter if they cannot hear what speakers are saying clearly. We learn about another challenge in RI, which adds another responsibility on the interpreter’s side to build their own at home booth, from the following excerpt taken from the interview with Interpreter 3 where they are talking about a past experience when their internet connection was not good enough over Wi-Fi:

So I had to buy another Internet cable, just because I don't want any disconnection problems in the future when I'm working remotely. So this is another expense, even the headsets and the microphones. We want everything to be the best quality. It's another expense on the interpreter's end. [...] You have to create your own professional setting. You have to get a good connection. You have to get your headset, [...] your microphone, you have to have that. You have to spend that money just with the off chance of getting a remote interpreting job.

While these purchases can be considered as one time investments, it is likely that interpreters will have to buy new accessories either annually or biannually. Another point is that buying such equipment needs expertise as the headset and microphones used for conference calls are different from normal headset and microphones in the industry. Not only does the interpreter have to pay for these expenses out of their own pocket but also they have to keep track of developments in the headset and microphone market, to make comparisons in price and quality. While more research is needed to determine if how much an interpreter is willing to pay for

their own equipment differs from the budget an event organizer or interpreter employer has for these equipments, it can be assumed that what the interpreters end up buying might not be of the same quality of the equipment purchased by an interpreter employer or a conference organizer, who obviously has better financial means.

Maybe the biggest challenge for interpreters is that employers offer hourly or half day rates for RI assignments, which is clearly explained by the Interviewee 3:

Almost all of my clients will reach out to me for remote interpreting. They said, [“but you're working at home”] and I was trying to explain [to] them. It doesn't matter where I work. I do the same job. I think it should be the same price for the same job. I mean, this is because even in a conference setting, when I go to a conference, when I attend the conferences as an interpreter, I get paid for a full day. Even if the conference lasts for two hours or even if it's like one hour, it doesn't matter. I charge them for a full day. And so for remote interpreting, I don't really think it should be changed because you're basically doing the same thing. The only thing that can be cut from the fees, I think, is the commute and that's all.

Interviewee 1, who counts equipment buying as a challenge, also speaks of the same lower rates mentioned in the the above excerpt from the interview with Interpreter 3:

It's not just my concern, but the concern I hear from the professionals in the market is that the rates, prices might drop like clients might demand lower rates from interpreters, which I think interpreters will strongly oppose because it's the same job without any traveling or accommodation expenses. But just because something is remote or something you do from your home should not diminish the value of what you do. I think that's a common concern that other interpreters might raise.

As stated by Interviewees 1 and 3, the value of the work does not change and interpreters rightly want to charge the same rates as if the interpreting is done on-site. The only expense that can be cut is the travel and accommodation fees. But it could be reasoned that if interpreters use their own equipment, the charge might go up. Because in an on-site simultaneous interpreting setting, the equipment would be provided by the employer. But in RI, interpreters are expected to use on-hand equipment, which, as stated elsewhere in this section, they have to pay out of pocket. This expense could be reflected in the price charged by the interpreter.

Interviewee 2 mentions another challenge, which is that not being in the physical sphere makes the interpreter less ‘in control and prepared’. When any work is done remotely, it might lose the social aspect and the ‘human touch’ as mentioned by Interviewee 6.

All in all, the best part of RI is the comfort of working from one’s home and avoiding unnecessary travel. But the same setting brings about the challenges of buying one’s own equipment, taking on the extra responsibilities such as making sure that the connection between the speaker and interpreter is good, that the speaker is using equipment of good quality to achieve uninterrupted connection and clarity of sound. Another significant disadvantage is that interpreters are offered lower rates because they are working from home. As discussed and explained above, the work done is the same, the preparation for the assignment is even more cumbersome for the interpreter as they have to make sure that everyone has a good connection and the microphones used by speakers produce good quality sound. Interpreters have to make known these rather self-explanatory facts about RI. While these disadvantages might be reduced to an extent that they are no longer reported by a huge number of conference interpreters, the issues of being and feeling present and having the human touch are inherent in RI. Some of these advantages and challenges might also apply to any work from home job but some such as the issue of pricing are peculiar to being a conference interpreter.

3.6.3. On Training

As four out of seven Interviewees also either work or have worked as an academic, their opinions about and experiences in training were asked in the interviews. While just one non-academic Interviewee answered the question on training, others described their current curricula and how they managed to teach after the pandemic started in March, 2020.

Interviewee 1, who also works as an academic and instructor, said that all classes had to turn online, and hence remotely interpreted, whether they are consecutive or simultaneous. They also mentioned that even note taking was conducted in a RI setting. Interviewee 1 followed developments in RI at the time

before the pandemic started and could easily conduct classes in a RI setting. Interviewee 1 found it even easier in some cases to teach these classes as they stated in the following quotation:

It was even easier because let's say if one of them runs into a problem. I could easily say 'you can turn off your mic and make a recording of this portion and send it to me.' So they would immediately record themselves for that class and send me their recording of the interpretation.

By asking for a recording of the interpretation done by the student for a class if the student had a technical problem, the classes should have gone smoothly with little to no interruption. Interviewee 2, who works as an academic as well, thinks that some classes should be updated to include RI. They say that an obligatory class could include RI for three or four weeks. Also, they state that RI tools can be purchased such as Kudo. Another option could be an elective course on RI but Interviewee 2 argues against it by saying: “[...] I think anyone who is willing to be a conference interpreter should be prepared and willing to learn and know about RI.”

Interviewee 4 states that RI was part of their curriculum even before the pandemic started as they said: “We have video conferences with the European institutions and some other universities. So our students were already interpreting remotely.” Interviewee 6, another academic, thinks that courses on simultaneous interpretation, consecutive interpretation, note taking and concept of interpretation should have ‘elements of RI in them’. Students, too, appear to have suffered from being not present in the classroom as explained in the following excerpt by Interviewee 4:

So if we could combine some aspects of [RI] with onsite training, that would be ideal, but only doing it online is not ideal because [...] students, especially, find it very unmotivating to be at home. Far away from the trainer and their peers, but it should be a part of training, just not the only type of training.

Interviewee 3, the only non-academic who talked about the importance of training, talks about the importance of inclusion of technology-related topics in interpreter training in the following excerpt from their interview:

I think it's a must, especially at this point, I think, not only [RI], but also some CAT tools and technical aspects of our job should be taught, [they] should be included in the curriculum. [...] We didn't know a lot about [RI]. We had to learn it on our own. And in this day and age where technology is kind of

invading all of our lives, it is impossible for them and the students, let alone interpreting students, to be [away] from technological advancements. I mean, they should [...] learn all the CAT tools, [...] anything they can do with a computer and anything they can do remotely over the internet, because these are the times that we are living now. You cannot do anything without the internet.

Interviewee 3 might have graduated from university when RI was not common practice, reserved only for large institutions. So it might be considered normal not to have been taught about RI but CAT tools have been around for two decades. All in all, everyone is of the opinion that interpretation courses should include ‘elements of RI’ in one way or another. These views might have changed the courses included in interpreting programs across the country. More research could reveal the contents of interpreting courses and their levels of RI inclusion. More research could also show us what students think of their RI training and how instructors deliver RI training in various universities in the country.

3.6.4. How RI affects an Interpreter’s Performance

When asked about RI’s overall impact on the interpreting action itself, one thing was common across the line: that RI is tiresome and causes stress. While further research could be done to reveal the actual quality of a remotely interpreted speech, the emotional state of mind of a conference interpreter during RI is important as it affects their job satisfaction and performance.

Interviewee 1 thinks that not being able to communicate with ‘the participants, organizers, sound people’ changes ‘the whole social environment’ and “the technicians will be missed greatly because they are one of our greatest help during the conference situation.”, all of which causes alienation from the conference experience. Interviewee 2 states doing a remote assignment negatively affects their stress level and making an already hard task, that is simultaneous interpreting, harder when done remotely. They also say that advantages at the time do not outweigh the disadvantages and only more practice might ease the edge off. Interviewee 4 states that not being in control over the speakers’ sound quality makes the RI experience very stressful and adds:

It increases stress. I think it increases stress when doing the work. And it also increases the stress before work in the sense that you feel again, will the technology work, are they going to be properly educated about how to use microphones?

Interviewee 7 refers to the importance of being and feeling present in the conference and not feeling present leads to stress as explained by them in the following excerpt:

What we do cannot be excluded from the entire context of a meeting. We have to be physically present. And without this physical aspect, everything feels a little bit off.

Interpreters seem to feel a certain amount of stress and anxiety due to not feeling present and in control, in previous sections many examples were given when interpreters felt pressure to keep a good quality of interpretation. This is probably due to the fact that RI became the mainstream all of a sudden for everyone and interpreters were rushed into using it.

Self-perceived performance was also reported to be lower than their on-site performance in the 2004 EU Parliament experiment, while independent judges did not necessarily agree with the self-assessment of the interpreters (Roziner & Shlesinger, 2010:241). The results from 2014 World Cup, on the other hand, showed that interpreters were mostly happy with their performance, and the authors point out to the fact World Cup meetings were relatively short and not as complicated (Seeber et al., 2019: 294). Considering that most experiments had good technological setups and support for the interpreters, the results are less likely to be worse off because the burden that falls on the interpreter is not as much as when a conference interpreter who works from home alone and doesn't have a dedicated technical support team.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that interpreters feel more stress during a RI session because they are given more responsibilities and most interpreters felt a rush into RI after the Covid-19 pandemic started. While interpreters remain highly adaptive to changes, they are sometimes bound to educate other stakeholders in an online conducted event to perform and keep a good quality in their interpretation. Taking on the technical side of the conference becomes a burden for the interpreter as normally these things are handled by sound technicians whose sole job is to make sure that everything runs smoothly in a conference.

A big concern for interpreters seems to be the issue of pricing as employers and clients offer lower rates since they claim interpreters do not spend a whole day for a two-hour event. However, it should be noted that interpreters take on extra responsibilities and are required to have good equipment and internet connection to provide a consistent simultaneous interpretation of optimum quality, for all of which they pay out of pocket. This resembles and can be even considered a continuation of the institutional eagerness towards a remote mode of simultaneous interpreting that can be arranged last minute and expected to lower the costs of a conference. While costs can be cut from the budget when the conference is held online, reducing the amount interpreters are paid cannot be reduced. Interpreters even might charge an extra amount for the use of their equipment and internet connection when they work from home.

Interpreters think that RI will constitute approximately %30 of all assignments in the future but not overtake on-site simultaneous interpreting. The study confirmed the outcome found in the pilot study that there is no resistance but reluctance for RI (Kıncal & Ekici, 2020) as interpreters seem to go for on-site simultaneous when asked about their choice, rather than RI. While RI seems to be perfect candidate for some occasions, interpreters think that the human touch is needed in a conference setting to socialize, communicate, receive and give help to and from their boothmates. The most appealing side of RI seems to be its eradication of the need to travel long distances for short events. Some interpreters even like the fact that they do not have to commute in the same city and avoid long traffic jams.

This study confirms that problems found in the literature, such as exhaustion, the feeling of being present and in control, are present for conference interpreters who work in Turkey. The root cause of these problems also is in line with the literature review, which is that there is alienation for the interpreter who works remotely which causes psychological exhaustion, stress and discomfort among others.

This study is only exploratory and confirmed the results found in the literature that RI causes more stress due to extra responsibilities and loss of human touch. The literature view largely focuses on the feasibility of RI and in today's world, RI is feasible in most circumstances, but some inherent technological problems seem to be the exception every now and then. This study tried to explore interpreter's approach to inclusion of RI in the existing interpreting curricula but gives only an overview. More research can be conducted to explore RI in interpreter training. A text analysis of a remotely interpreted speech might be conducted in a future study to evaluate the perceived quality by interviewing the interpreter retrospectively and a survey of satisfaction in interpreting quality can be sent to the conference audience to compare the results between the interpreter's perception of their own interpretation and that of the users.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Questions

1. General questions about the interviewee such as gender, age, years of experience and experience with RI.
 - a. What is your name?
 - b. How old are you?
 - c. What languages do you work in?
 - d. How long have you worked as a conference interpreter?
 - e. What are the important things in a conference setting for you as an interpreter? Are there any musts for you? (Do they contribute to interpreting quality, facilitate the interpretation etc.?) (Reception of conference material, meeting with conference attendees and/or speaker(s) etc.)
2. Questions regarding the interviewee's experience in RI.
 - a. How many times have you worked in a remote interpreting setting?
 - b. How would you describe your experience in RI? What kind of a setting was it in? (meeting, conference etc.)
 - c. What problems did you encounter while working in a RI setting?
 - d. Were you able to solve these problems on your own or did you require external help?
 - e. How satisfied were you with your performance? Was there any difference in terms of quality compared to on-site interpreting?
 - f. How do you think a new environment, that is RI, affected your performance and anxiety/stress?
 - g. Would you prefer RI over on-site simultaneous interpreting? Why or why not?
 - h. What would you do differently or change in a given RI setting considering your past experiences?
 - i. Was listening any different than an on-site simultaneous interpreting? In what ways?
 - j. Was focussing on the interpreting job affected by this new environment in any way?
3. Questions regarding the perception of RI by the interviewee.
 - a. What is your opinion on the latest developments in the profession? Such as the on-set of RI.
 - b. Do you think RI will be common practice in the near future considering the on-going pandemic? How would such a change affect you as an interpreter? (*)
 - c. What is the most important advantage and disadvantage of RI for you?
 - d. Do you think that the curriculum in translation departments should also include RI?
 - e. How do you think RI affects an interpreter's work overall? How do you think it affects your stress level?
 - f. What do you think about the extra responsibilities that come with RI such as the technical aspect, equipment (headset, etc.), the software? Do you feel confident enough to purchase the most suitable equipment on your own or would you have to rely on a guide or expertise from someone else?
 - g. Do you have any further comments on the topic, any additional thoughts you would like to add? What's your opinion of the profession's future?