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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Challenges in Consecutive Interpreting by Undergraduate Students for The Politeness Strategies in Biden's Election Speech: A Conceptual Paper**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research examines the consecutive interpreting challenges encountered by undergraduate students while translating the politeness strategies utilized in one of the election speeches by President Joe Biden. The primary gap is how translation students navigate politeness strategies during their interpretations. A qualitative method of observation and note-taking was used to collect the data. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was used to analyse the politeness strategies that were used by President Biden. Moreover, Nida's equivalence model (1964) was adopted to analyse the student's consecutive interpretations of those strategies. The expected results will be divided into two sections to achieve the objectives of this research. Firstly, Specifying the politeness strategies that utilized by President Joe Biden. Secondly, the problem of undergraduate translation students interpreting politeness strategies is also a problem. This research helps future researchers to know the precise problems of interpreting a linguistic aspect which is politeness strategies by undergraduate students. It could help them to look for solutions to further problems in other linguistic aspects such as persuasion and refusal strategies in Biden's speeches or any other presidential speeches.

**KEYWORDS**

Consecutive interpretation, politeness strategies, translation, Jordanian students

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### **1. Introduction**

Much previous research was conducted to analyse the consecutive translation for many phenomena, but rare of them integrated the interpretation with a specific linguistic phenomenon such as politeness performance in general and the strategies of politeness by President Joe Biden in particular. The consecutive translators must have very high competences in both L1 and L2 to interpret the speeches adequately.

The challenges in consecutive interpretation, especially in the context of Biden's election speeches, are essential to highlight the skills and techniques required for effective interpretation. Consecutive interpreting involves listening to a speaker, taking notes, and then delivering the message in another language. Key skills include active listening, note-taking, and memory retention. All of these interpretation skills will be analysed to identify the problems of the undergraduate students while they translate the politeness strategies used by President Biden.

Active listening is crucial as it allows the interpreter to fully understand the speaker's message, tone, and intent. Note-taking techniques, such as using symbols or abbreviations, help interpreters capture essential points without losing the flow of the speech. Additionally, memory retention techniques, like chunking information or visualizing concepts, support the interpreter in recalling details accurately. Understanding the cultural nuances and the appropriate use of language can enhance the effectiveness of the interpretation, ensuring that the message resonates with the audience while preserving the speaker's original intent.

Consecutive interpreting is a demanding skill that requires interpreters to not only listen and comprehend the speaker's message but also to convey it in another language while preserving its original intent, tone, and nuances. Furthermore, the pressure to perform in real-time during such high-stakes situations can exacerbate the challenges faced by students. The anxiety associated with interpreting live speeches can impede their cognitive processes, making it difficult to recall vocabulary or apply the appropriate interpreting strategies. By identifying these issues, the research aims to provide insights into how educational programs can be enhanced to better prepare students for the demands of consecutive interpreting in political contexts.

Ultimately, this research will contribute to the broader field of translation and interpreting studies by highlighting the specific challenges faced by students and offering recommendations for curriculum improvements. The findings will not only be relevant for educators and trainers in the field of interpreting but will also have implications for the development of best practices in teaching consecutive interpreting, ensuring that future interpreters are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in politically charged environments. This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by providing a detailed analysis of the interplay between language, context, and interpretation in the realm of political discourse, thus paving the way for further research and exploration in this vital area.

### **1.1 Problem Statement:**

This research explores the challenges faced by students at Jerash University when interpreting the politeness strategies in President Joe Biden's speech. Consecutive interpretation is considered one of the essential skills required in the field of translation, especially in the context of political speeches like those delivered by President Biden. Thus, this research seeks to identify the multiple challenges that affect the students' performance which can complicate the processes of understanding and interpreting the politeness strategies employed by President Joe Biden in one of his election speeches.

### **1.2 Research question:**

1. What specific challenges do undergraduate translation students encounter when interpreting President Biden's use of politeness strategies in his election speech?
2. How do the identified challenges in interpreting politeness strategies affect the students' consecutive interpretations' accuracy, fluency, and completeness?
3. What are the potential underlying causes of the challenges the undergraduate translation students committed?

### **1.3 Objectives:**

1. To identify the challenges encountered by undergraduate students in interpreting politeness strategies in Biden's speeches.
2. To determine the factors contributing to interpretation errors associated with Biden's politeness strategies.
3. To categorize the causes of interpretation challenges that undergraduate students face while interpreting the politeness strategies employed in President Biden's election speech.

### **1.4 Limitation:**

The limitations of this research are demonstrated in four points. Firstly, this research investigates the consecutive translation of politeness strategies employed by President Biden. Secondly, the interpreters are undergraduate translation students at Jerash University. Thirdly, the study focuses on one of President Joe Biden's 2024 election campaign speeches. Fourthly, the examination of the consecutive interpretation challenges will be just on interpreting politeness strategies from English to Arabic language.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This research adopts two theoretical models: Brown and Levenson's (1987) politeness theory and Nida's equivalence model (1964). Brown and Levenson's (1987) analysis will be used to analyse the politeness strategies used by President Joe Biden. Then Nida's equivalence model (1964) will be used to analyse the consecutive translations of the students for the politeness strategies that were used President Joe Biden in his speech.

On the one hand, Brown and Levenson's (1987) Identified five universal politeness strategies that interactants can use to mitigate the hearer face: *positive politeness*, *negative politeness*, *bald-one record*, *off-record* and *Do not do FTA*. The politeness strategies that President Joe Biden utilized will be classified based on these strategies for dual goals. Firstly, he needs to identify the politeness strategies that he uses. Secondly, it helps the translation students to translate the strategies alone without listening to the whole speech's words and sentences. On the other hand, Nida's equivalence model (1964) will be used to trace the challenges the translation students encountered while they consecutively interpreted the politeness strategies. Nida's equivalence

model consists of two different types of equivalence. The first one is formal. In this type, the researcher tries to retain the interpreted text as much as the original text. It tends to underline fidelity to the original language's grammatical structure and lexical components without adding the translator's thoughts. The second type is dynamic equivalence, which translates "thought for thought" rather than "word for word". Nida (1964) claimed that dynamic equivalence transports the original text message into the receptor language. So, the desire is for the reader of both languages to understand the text's meanings in a similar fashion. The translator in this case tries to transfer the exact meaning of the message from L1 to L2 adequately as much as possible to help both L1&L2 readers to get the same understanding.

Figure (1) undoubtedly represents the theoretical framework of this study by integrating both theoretical models into one framework.

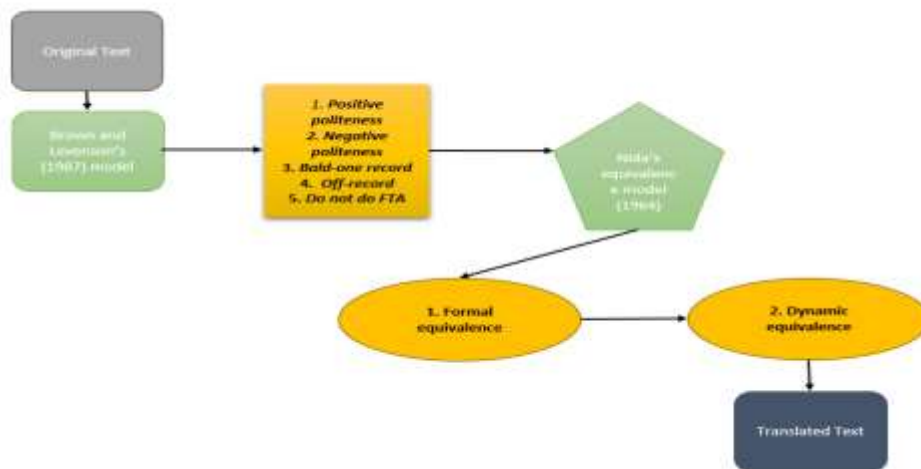


Figure (1): The research integrated theoretical framework

### 3. Past studies

Different studies have been conducted on politeness and concocitive interpretation. Many of these studies adopted Brown and Levinsons (19987) politeness theory and Nida (1964) equivalence model. Haryanto, H. et al. (2024) conducted one of these studies. Their study aimed to describe politeness strategies and the influence factors found in the political talk show of Mata Najwa. The study revealed that positive politeness was the most commonly employed tactic. Out of 193 utterances analysed, 114 utterances were positive politeness. The bald-on politeness strategy was used 34 times. 24 times was for the negative politeness strategy, and off-record politeness strategy utilized for 21 times.

Deichakivska (2024) investigated the predicative adjectives in the composition of expressions as tactics of positive and negative politeness strategies. The study showed that politeness strategies and the use of adjectives vary significantly depending on cultural contexts. The role of adjectives served not only as descriptive elements but also as a means of expressing evaluations and emotions. Habib, A., & Gul, N. (2024) studied King Abdullah II of Jordan's speech at the United Nations General Assembly. They concentrated on King Abdullah II politeness strategies in the speeches of Jordan at the 75th, 76th, and 77th sessions. The study revealed that positive politeness strategies fostered unity and collective responsibility. In contrast, negative politeness strategies emerged in discussions of sensitive issues like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to minimize imposition on the international audience while advocating for peaceful solutions.

Dwi, N., & Simatupang, E. C. (2024) study aimed to investigate the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of positive politeness strategies utilized in the captions of these reviews. The research delved into the socio-cultural context surrounding the reviews, considering factors influencing language choices in this digital communication medium. The study contributed to the broader field of pragmatics, offering insights into how individuals navigate politeness norms in the online domain. Sedkey, W. et al. (2024) wrote about advice and suggestion-giving as related to politeness strategies used in post-observation meetings in universities in Egypt. Their study discovered that supervisors manipulated almost all politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson and all linguistic expressions related to these politeness strategies proposed by Vásquez. The study explored that supervisors were cautious while using these expressions with their instructors

Nikpoo, I., & Allami, H. (2024) looked for exploring (im)politeness strategies in indirect reports in Persian across genders. They discovered that Persian male and female speakers utilised impoliteness and politeness strategies to change direct speech to

indirect. Kusumastuti, Y. (2006) conducted a study on Prabowo once he won the declaration to find the reasons why certain politeness strategies are dominant. The findings showed that positive politeness strategies used in Prabowo's winning declaration were: notice, attend to the hearer (12.5%), Intensify interest to hearer (12.5%), give (or ask for) reason (6.25%), use in-group identifies markers (18.75%), include both speaker and hearer in activity (31.25%), be optimistic (6.25%), and give gifts to hearer (12.5%).

Banat investigated the negative politeness strategies employed by Jordanian professors toward their students, S et al. (2024). They found that the professors preferred to use 7 negative politeness strategies: Hedging Indirect; Giving; Deference; impersonalizing Speaker and Hearer; Apologizing; Minimizing Imposition; and Questioning. The preferred politeness strategy by the professors was negative politeness because it was used indirectly to save the students' faces during class. It made them feel closer to their professors.

Almahasees, Z et al. (2024) sought to elaborate on the implicit meaning of silence between professors and their students in the EFL classroom. They found that the professors and their students employed the silence strategy for various purposes. The purpose of the Professor silence was to stop interruptions, unacceptable answers, and unaccepted behaviours. The students' silence was meant to illustrate inadequate knowledge, thinking for answers, and embarrassment.

Al-Natour examined the usage of terms of address by Jordanian students, M. et al. (2024) to identify the exact meaning of politeness, Brown and Levenson's politeness theory (1987) adopted. The analysis showed that Jordanian students desired to use the terms of address. They preferred to use the terms of address to soften their speech with others and save the hearers' face.

The main discursive strategies used by His Majesty King Abdullah II in addressing Jordanians during COVID-19 were studied by Almahasees. Z et al. (2023). It was found that King Abdullah II used perspectivization, argumentation, prediction, nomination, intensification, and mitigation strategies in appeasing Jordanians and conveying his directives to the government regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ahmad, F., & Iqbal, J. (2022) delved into the English translation of one of its chapters i.e. Surah Al-Tariq to examine Eugene Nida's theory of translation. He concluded that Nida's theory of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence does not apply to the translation of Surah Al-Tariq. The translator Muhammad Ali didn't intentionally maintain this equivalence and ended up with a literal translation that he might not dare change the word of God. Tang, F., & Li, D. (2017) investigated the influence of interpreters' expertise on their exploitation patterns in Chinese to English (C-E) consecutive interpreting (CI). He stated that there were four tendency patterns that the interpreters used, one of which was the tendency of clarification: professional interpreters tend to clarify the original information. The tendency of cohesion enhancement: professional interpreters tend to add conjunctive adjuncts to enhance cohesion, and the tendency of subjective reinforcement is that professionals tend to reinforce the speaker's attitude by adding attitudinal information or intensifiers. Tendency to use explication as a strategy to make up for inadequate interpreting competency: student interpreters tend to explicate for time-management and gap-filling purposes.

Mounadil, T. (2023) investigated the strategies for translating idioms and proverbs from English into Arabic. He concluded that literal translation and paraphrasing distort the proverb's meaning in the target language. Al Saeedi, A. & Alazzawie, A. (2020) analysed news articles translated from English into Arabic using the Transitivity System developed by M.A.K. Halliday. It was found that in some cases, the different representations of Transitivity System of clauses in news articles changed the ST meaning, also affected the accuracy of the TT and changed the perspective drawn by ST writer.

#### **4. Methodology**

Two qualitative methods were used in this research: observation and note-taking. The data were collected from one of President Joe Biden's presidential election speeches uploaded to the White House website. This research will focus on the interpretation of the politeness strategies that Joe President Biden employed.

The sample of this research is undergraduate students who study translation in the English translation department at Jerash University. The responses will be collected from the students who had studied the consecutive translation course. The responses will be collected until saturation and no more new information is collected from the participants. According to Guest et al. (2006), data saturation refers to a point in the research process when no new information is discovered from the data and redundancy of the same findings begins and continues in the data analysis process.

The data collection procedure involves six processes: firstly, collecting the recorded speech of president Joe Bidin, which was held on Monday 19/08/2024, in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention. Secondly, the politeness strategies employed in his election speech were deducted. Thirdly, the student will listen to the collected politeness strategies that President Joe Bidin used. Fourthly, they will interpret them consecutively. Fifthly, the researcher will observe and take notes beside the students'

interpretations of the politeness strategies that they will listen to. Sixthly, their consecutive interpretation challenges will be identified and then analysed based on the adopted theories in this research.

## 5. Conclusion:

This research investigates the problems of undergraduate translation students when they implement the consecutive interpretation of political speeches. This research's main objective is to discover the vital challenges that undergraduate students face while interpreting the politeness strategies that President Joe Biden employed in the 2024 presidential election. The problem statement, research questions, objectives, limitations, theoretical frameworks and methodology were explained. The researchers are going to test the following hypothesis to find the solution to that problem:

- 1- The challenge of the undergraduate translation students in interpreting the politeness strategies that President Joe Biden utilized is related to their level of competency in English and Arabic.
- 2- The interpretation challenges occur in the undergraduate translation student's interpretation because they do not practice consecutive translation outside their university classes.

This research was conducted to examine the above hypotheses and discover the challenges that undergraduate translation students face. Then, it will seek to find out the reasons for these challenges to identify the solutions that could minimize them. Future research can examine the same or other political speeches for different linguistic aspects such as persuasion, refusal, and congratulations to identify the similarities and differences in the interpretation challenges the student performs in their consecutive translation.

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