Journal of Translation 21:1 (2025): 1–21
https://doi.org/10.54395/SM4C1
ISSN 1558-7282
journaloftranslation.org

Amateur English-Kiswahili Interpretation in Tanzanian Pentecostal Churches: Challenges and Strategies

SIMON MLUNDI
Lecturer, Institute of Accountancy Arusha, Tanzania
symonmlundi2017@gmail.com

Abstract: Interpreters apply different strategies to overcome challenges during the interpretation process. This study examines the frequency of strategies selected and utilised by amateur church interpreters in Tanzania in overcoming challenges of translation between English and Kiswahili. The analysis reveals that these interpreters use strategies such as expansion, compression, and skipping, as well as approximation, message abandonment, and incomplete sentences. More practice and self-training are recommended for amateur interpreters to use interpreting strategies more effectively.
Keywords: Church interpreting; interpreting challenges; consecutive interpreting; communication; interpreting strategy; amateur church interpreters

1 Introduction

Interpreters employ a variety of strategies to address the challenges they encounter in different contexts. The term *strategy* is used in interpreting studies to mean the planned and unplanned activities of interpreters to overcome communication breakdown during the interpretation process. As noted by Dong et al. (2019:408), "an interpreting strategy is a method used deliberately to prevent or solve potential problems in interpreting." Interpreting strategies are also called coping tactics (Gile 2009) or techniques (Jones 1998). Oléron and Nanpon (2002) and Mlundi (2021a) are among the scholars who explain that interpreting strategies arise to address the complex situations faced by interpreters as they seek to render a message in the target language. These interpreting challenges are related to cognition, speed, use of technical words,

© SIL Global, 2025

and other language-related issues. Without appropriate techniques to address these challenges, one may mediate the message unfaithfully. There is no clear distinction between strategies used in church settings and those used in general interpreting, but this study explores attempts made by amateur church interpreters in Tanzania to cope with interpreting challenges.

2 Literature review

Several studies have been conducted to analyse various strategies used to overcome interpreting challenges. Barik (1971) explained that the interpreter's version may depart from the original text in one or more of three ways: omissions (skipping, comprehension, delay, and compound omissions) (200–201), additions (qualifier, elaboration, relationship, and closure additions) (202–203), and substitutions (mild and gross semantic errors; mild, substantial, and gross phrasing changes) (204–206).

Napier (2004) discussed a study conducted with Australian Sign Language (Auslan)/English interpreters in a university lecture, paying special attention to factors that influenced the interpreters' omissions. She hypothesised:

> that interpreters would make recourse to omissions both consciously and unconsciously, depending on their familiarity with the discourse environment and the subject matter ... [In addition,] interpreters use omissions as linguistic strategies for coping with the discourse environment.

Pym (2008) found that modeling "the resources used when interpreters make omissions suggests that cognitive management may actively respond to contextual factors", including such issues as "the aims of the discourse, the strategies of the speakers, and the variable risks of the text items."

Wilss (1978) argued that "any transfer of a text from a source language into a target language is more or less characterised by structural asymmetry between the two languages" on multiple levels (such as morphemic, lexemic, syntagmatic). Bartłomiejczyk (2006) concentrated on the interpreting strategies used by expert interpreters in simultaneous interpreting. Stenzl (1983) examined "the main approaches to translation and the literature on simultaneous interpretation" in the hope of contributing to "an overall framework for research on simultaneous interpretation". Another study has been conducted to assess the interpreting strategies used by student interpreters in comparison with those of professional interpreters (Díaz-Galaz et al. 2015) and how such strategies differ as they reach different interpreting experiences (Arumí Ribas 2012).

Kohn and Kalina (1996) analysed the strategic dimension of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. They described the cognitive-linguistic processes and

strategies underlying compression and production in interpreted bilingual communication.

Some studies focused on specific types of interpreting strategies. For instance, scholars have focused on anticipation (Liontou 2012) and compression (Sunnari 1995). Riccardi (2005) argues that strategies make it easier for researchers to describe the research process.

Napier (2007) drew from a framework of interactional sociolinguistics, and naturalistic data from a seminar presentation was analysed, focusing on the use of pauses, nods, and eye contact as contextualisation cues in the interpreter-mediated event. She found that three participants used these cues deliberately and strategically for signaling comprehension, marking episodes, clarification, and controlling the pace of the presentation. The data suggested that the cooperative principle of interpreting involves the establishment of particular cues for communication.

Other studies have concentrated on interpreting strategies used in church settings. According to Downie (2024), empirical literature in church or sermon interpreting can be organised into three different approaches: publications aimed at practitioners, descriptive research, and prescriptive research. These approaches each presuppose a different relationship between the researcher and the object of study, and thus show distinct trajectories. Publications aimed at practitioners are developed as a tool for educating interpreters. Prescriptive research seeks to professionalise church interpreting, mostly through locating errors or challenges in interpreter output (Downie 2024, Mlundi 2021b).

Interpreting strategies in church settings are discussed in the literature based on interpreting training and experience. Two kinds of interpreters are discussed: professional and non-professional interpreters. Non-professional interpreters with limited experience are referred to in this study as amateur interpreters. Meanwhile, non-professional interpreting and translation (NPIT) remains a relatively unexplored territory, despite its unparalleled spread in recent years in churches worldwide (Antonini et al. 2017, Hild 2017). As Hild (2017) mentions, non-professionals are being stigmatised, yet the proportions of NPIT in communities worldwide prove to be growing rapidly. These non-professional interpreters need to be studied with all due academic rigour.

Tan et al. (2021) identified the challenges faced by non-professional church interpreters in Malaysia and explored solutions to resolve those challenges. Using a qualitative approach, six church interpreters were interviewed and observed using an adapted semi-structured interview and an observation checklist. Data analysis revealed that grammatical issues such as SVO reconstruction and tense ambiguity were the most prominent challenges faced, followed by culture-specific items and limited working memory. Interview responses elucidated one main solution employed by church interpreters, which

permeates across different domains of challenges as an applicable one-for-all solution: practice. Moreover, it was concluded that although church interpreters are largely non-professionals, they are essential to the congruent rendering of the sermons in both languages, and thus they deserve recognition as an established body within interpreting studies.

Antonini et al. (2017) was the first systematic attempt at looking at NPIT in a scholarly yet pragmatic way. Offering multiple methods and perspectives, and covering the diverse contexts in which NPIT takes place, the volume is a welcome contribution.

Some studies were pilot studies on church interpreting in their countries (Arumí Ribas 2012; Tseng 2009), and others also focused on the involvement of church interpreters (Hokkanen 2017; Balci Tison 2016). One recent study (Mlundi 2021b) evaluated the professionalisation of church interpretation and the quality of interpreting.

Interpreting strategies play an important role in overcoming various interpretation challenges. Riccardi (2005) argues that successful and repeated strategies overcome cognitive problems to make good use of available processing capacity. Interpretation strategies can ease the cognitive workload and lower the risk of overloaded processing capacity (Kohn and Kalina 1996). Production strategies are adopted by the interpreters during the rendition or production time. These include anticipation, segmentation, and selection of information for comprehension, compression, expansion, and approximation.

Interpreting strategies have been extensively studied by numerous scholars in different settings. Studying these strategies helps to know how interpreters in a certain context employ such strategies to overcome interpreting problems. Most research in interpreting strategies has focused on expert interpreters' use of strategies in both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting (Arumí Ribas 2012, Bartłomiejczyk 2006). Other studies have compared interpreting strategies used by expert interpreters and student interpreters (Díaz-Galaz et al. 2015). However, there is a paucity of literature that examines the strategies used by amateur interpreters with limited professional training. More studies are important in different settings to establish the communication settings, relationships in the original discourse, the interpreted discourse, possible problems, and strategies applied (Li 2015). This study contributes to the literature by assessing the effectiveness of the interpreting strategies used by amateur church interpreters in Tanzania to overcome various interpreting problems. It specifically establishes the common strategies used by these interpreters to interpret English sermons into Kiswahili.

3 Methods

This study was conducted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a city that has many churches which offer sermons through English/Kiswahili translation. Ten Pentecostal churches and individual ministries are evaluated in this study. The study applies the Concurrent Triangulation Research approach to collect data through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively using the IBM SPSS Software programme. Qualitative data were transcribed with the help of the f4 programme and were analysed thematically using NVivo. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions took place with twenty participants. The descriptive statistical data were compared with the qualitative data analysed through the thematic coding approach (Robson 2011; Ryan and Bernard 2006) giving the final interpretation of the data. Ethical considerations were adhered to, including confidentiality of the information given by hiding the participants' identities and obtaining their consent to participate in the study.

4 Results

The interpreters used three coping tactics or strategies to overcome the challenges they face: expansion, compression, and skipping (or omissions). Although there is an overlap between compression and skipping, the main difference between the two is that compression gives a summary of the source text, while skipping omits some portions of the source text altogether. The analysis reveals that most of the challenges faced by interpreters were influenced by a lack of sufficient skills in interpreting church sermons. Data in the following table reflect the results of the author's field work.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Most Utilised Interpreting Strategies

		Expansion	Compression	Approximation	Abandoning	Incomplete	Skipping
N Valid		20	20	20	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Frequency						
	Yes	16	17	12	13	15	18
	No	4	3	8	7	5	2
	Percentage						
	Yes	80	85	60	65	75	90
	No	20	15	40	35	25	10

The findings of this study reveal that three interpreting strategies were used most frequently to address the challenges: expansion, compression, and skipping. Interpreters were asked to state which interpreting strategies they utilised the most in overcoming challenges. With the listed strategies, they were asked to choose between yes or no if they were using certain strategies or not. Statistical data show that skipping was the most used strategy (by 90% of the participants), followed by compression (used by 85%), and expansion (80%). Other strategies included incomplete sentences (used by 75% of the participants), message abandonment (used by 65%) and finally approximation (60%).

5 Discussion of findings

5.1 Text expansion

Expansion, one of the primary strategies used by amateur church interpreters, occurs when interpreters elaborate or add information that was missing in the source text. Text expansion is sometimes called addition or elaboration, as it allows interpreters to add information or expand the source discourse to better convey or clarify the message and avoid unclear information in the target discourse (Li 2013). It is the strategy of adding words or clauses in the TL (Target Language) output to complement an SL (Source Language) message that may be difficult for the audience to understand (Riccardi 2005; Arumí Ribas 2012; Kohn and Kalina 1996). For this technique to be effectively used, added information should not distort the intended message of the source speaker. Some participants in this study asserted that they used elaboration when they realised that the previous utterance was either unclear, ambiguous, distorted, or not well understood. Participant "R" explained how she clarified the misunderstood expression when interpreting:

> I interpret by expanding; giving a sentence or explaining the exact meaning of that word. I expanded what was said to come up with a clear interpretation. Sometimes, when experiencing difficult terms, I appeal for assistance from the speaker or the audience. [00:06:19-1]

Another participant ("F") stated, "I use the expansion strategy to clarify issues that are not clear to congregations." The assertion reveals that interpreters used elaboration strategies to clarify or explain the meanings of some words. Participant "A" also justified using the elaboration technique. For him, this strategy was also used when the preacher was clarifying something that was not clear from the previous preaching. The interpreter would clarify the speech by closely following what the preacher did, including their movement and emotions. He said, "So, there should be clarity from the speaker. If it was not preached, the interpreter should elaborate on it in the target language. To understand the message, you have to follow the emotions of the preacher."

This strategy was used by church interpreters to clarify terminology which seemed ambiguous, unclear, or had no equivalent in the target language. Many interpreters used this strategy in these situations. Participant "L" explained how she overcame the challenge when speakers spoke in ambiguous and unclear sentences: "When confronted by ambiguous sentences, I usually interpret by adding some useful information; giving a sentence or explaining what the exact meaning of that word is."

Sixteen out of twenty interpreters (80%) used this strategy. The expansion technique was observed to contribute to addressing the cognitive load problem and managed to reach the communicative goals of preachers. Consider the following examples of expansion:

1. ***Preacher***: *Is to glorify God* [00:01:42-9]
   Interpreter: ***Kitu cha kwanza*** *ni kumtukuza Mungu* [00:01:44-4]
   [***The first thing*** *is to glorify God*]
   Source: Sermon 4 Agape TAG
2. ***Preacher***: *There was a god for fertility* [00:04:33-0]
   Interpreter: *Kulikuwa na mungu* ***anayeshughulikia mambo ya*** *uzazi* [00:04:34-6] [*There was a god* ***who dealt with*** *fertility issues*]
3. ***Preacher***: *There was a god of agriculture* [00:05:15-9]
   Interpreter: *Kulikuwa na mungu ambaye* ***alikuwa anashughulikia mambo ya*** *kilimo* [00:05:15-9] [*There was a god* ***that dealt with issues of*** *agriculture*]
4. ***Preacher***: *David was just a teenage boy* [00:06:06-3]
   Interpreter: *Daudi alikuwa tu kijana mdogo* ***mwenye miaka kumi na kitu*** [00:06:08-8] [*David was just a teenage boy* ***of more than ten years***]
   Sources of examples 2–4: Sermon 1 Agape TAG

Examples 1 to 4 indicate how expansion was used to widen the understanding of the source text. For instance, in example 1, the interpreter added the words *cha kwanza* meaning 'the first thing'. The interpreter added this phrase to help the audience understand that glorifying God was the first thing to do. This is because the preacher uttered word-for-word preaching. If the interpreter followed the word-for-word translation, the meaning would have been distorted. Also, in examples 2 and 3, the interpreter added the words *ambaye anashughulika na* translated as 'who deals with' as a strategy to widen understanding of the text. Otherwise, he could have said *mungu wa uzazi* and *mungu wa kilimo* translated as 'god of fertility' and 'god of agriculture' respectively. The added information helped church members to understand that the said gods dealt with certain tasks.

Thus, the expansion technique was used to overcome interpretation challenges, especially during high-speed preaching, when there were unclear or ambiguous utterances and the absence of equivalent terminology.

5.2 Compression

Another strategy that is used by many church interpreters is compression, also known as filtering, paraphrasing, condensation, or summarisation. Compression involves rendering the original meaning in a more general and concise way, usually with all repetitive, less important or redundant information omitted (Li

2013, Dong et al. 2019). In this strategy, the amateur interpreters were found to compress the information by taking only the main ideas while leaving out less important information, including repetitions. Seventeen out of twenty (85%) of the interpreters who participated in the study adopted this technique, especially when the preachers were either speaking too fast or using long sentences before pausing for interpretation. Participant "D" said that she used compression when preachers spoke at a high speed:

> If preachers don't give me a chance, I let the speaker complete speaking and, after speaking, I just summarise all the sentences that were given. I just summarised to get one meaning of what the speaker wanted to deliver to the audience by summarising. I do this by leaving [out] all unimportant information. [00:07:24-8]

During the in-depth interview, participant "A" stated that he used compression when his memory was overloaded. Most preachers speak long chunks of information without giving the interpreter a chance to render it into the target language. He said, "I usually mediate the sermon in a summarised form, making sure I interpret only the general and important information when overloaded." He added, "We, interpreters, sometimes have trouble remembering all the source language sermons, so we summarise the sermons."

Based on this assertion by interpreter "A", interpreter "F" pointed out that interpreters are subject to limited working memory. He said, "Interpreters are human beings; therefore, they sometimes fail to recall all the sermons preached. So, we condense the sermons to cope with the speed of the preachers."

As cited above, eighty-five percent of interpreters in this study used compression. They summarised only the main points of the utterances, leaving out all less important information. The use of compression has also been reported by other researchers. According to scholars, regardless of the skill or knowledge of the interpreter, like any other human being, they hold a limited working memory and are supposed to deal with different amounts of cognitive load (Chen 2017, Seeber 2013). Cognitive load refers to the portion of the individual's finite capability devoted to performing an interpreting task (da Silva et al. 2018). The interpreter used compression to reduce the cognitive load.

The following examples illustrate how compression was used:

5. ***Preacher***: ***Lakini tumeambiwa*** *tuombe bila ya kukoma* [00:02:28-2]
   Interpreter: *We pray without ceasing* [00:02:28-4]
   But, we have been told to pray without stopping
6. ***Preacher***: ***Watu ambao*** *hawana mchezo* ***na maisha yao*** [00:03:08-3]
   Interpreter: *They have no joke* [00:03:08-1]
   People who have no jokes in their lives

Source: Sermon 2, Heaven on Earth Church

7. ***Preacher***: ***Mimi na wewe*** *tunaweza kusimama kwa dunia* ***nzima haleluya*** [00:00:58-6]
   Interpreter: *we can stand for the world* [00:01:00-7]
   You and I can stand for the whole world, Hallelujah!
   Source: Sermon 3, Heaven on Earth Church

In these examples, the interpreters summarised only the main points spoken by the preachers. In example 5, the interpreter filtered the source text by leaving out the text *Lakini tumeambiwa*, which means 'but we have been told'. The text was left out because, according to him, what was important was "what we were told to do" but not "who told us". The interpreter, in example 6, compressed the source text ***Watu ambao*** *hawana mchezo* ***na maisha yao***, as the target text, "they have no jokes", instead of "people who have no jokes with their lives". Likewise, another interpreter, in example 7, compressed the text, *Mimi na wewe tunaweza kusimama kwa dunia nzima, haleluya* as "*we can stand for the world*" instead of "**I and You** can stand for the **whole** world, Hallelujah!" In this example, the interpreter managed to compress the target text without distorting the meaning of the source text.

A close observation indicates that most of the interpreters who used this strategy were confronted with the challenge of the pressure of time. The preachers spoke at a remarkably high speed. Such preachers did not recognise the presence of the interpreters and did not leave enough space for them to interpret the sermons. For the interpreters to cope with the speed, they opted to compress some of the source texts. Also, it was observed that this strategy was used by interpreters with little interpreting experience (amateurs); they failed to render the whole texts as they lacked sufficient equivalent terminology.

5.3 Skipping (omission)

The third strategy commonly used by many interpreters is skipping (also called omission or ellipsis). This is the strategy of omitting a certain SL segment when failing to understand it or failing to find the proper translation (Dong et al. 2019, Li 2013). In skipping, interpreters avoided using some words or groups of words in an attempt to express meaning. According to Li (2013), the interpreter uses periods of silence or pauses in which certain messages are not interpreted at all into the target text due to compression, note-reading, or memory failure. Some scholars have treated omission as an incomplete rendition of the information present in the source language, while others have considered it a mistake or a technique (Gile 1995, 1999). Some researchers treat skipping as a conscious decision made by interpreters while others treat it as a mistake resulting from misconception.

During their interpretations in the field, the interpreters left out lexical items to simplify the interpreted speech. Results of this study show two sides of omission or skipping. On one side, interpreters omitted only small lexical items or phrases of the source text. The absence of the omitted texts did not distort the intended meaning of the preachers. Eighteen church interpreters out of twenty (90%) used skipping in their interpreting.

On the other side, 10% of respondents either did not use this strategy to interpret or use it incorrectly (see Table 1 above). This group omitted important lexical items in bringing the meanings of the target texts. During the interviews, interpreters highlighted different ways they skipped some lexical items. Participant "E" affirmed, "I just skip some words to get one meaning of what the speaker wanted to deliver to the audience. I do so by leaving out some words which are not important to be interpreted."

Another interpreter argued that he used skipping to avoid overloaded messages, saying, "I delete some words to simplify the interpretation process in Kiswahili." Some interpreters skipped words that carried the meaning of the whole structure. The following examples verify this notion:

8. ***Preacher***: *And* ***in the first Corinthians*** *it says Oh death where is your stray?* [00:09:55-3]
Interpreter: *Na pia anasema kuwa kifo maumivu yako yako wapi?* [00:09:57-8]
FI: ***Na katika Waraka wa 1 wa Wakorintho, unasema, ewe kifo, yako wapi maumivu yako?***
Source: Sermon 1, Efatha Ministry

9. ***Preacher***: ***Anaonekana*** *anahitaji mwenzi* ***wa maisha*** [00:01:32-2]
Interpreter: *He needs a partner* [00:01:33-4]
FI: ***He seems to need a life partner***.
Source: Sermon 2, Heaven on Earth Church

10. **Preacher**: **And** *if you can trust him* **this morning** [00:00:59-7]
Interpreter: *Ukiwa tu utamwamini yeye* [00:01:02-0]
FI: ***Na kama tu utaweza kumuamini yeye asubuhi hii ya leo***
Source: Sermon 7, City Harvest TAG

Examples 8 to 10 show how interpreters skipped some words (in bold font) of the source language. Specifically, in example 8, the interpreter omitted the words "in 1 Corinthians". The words *anaonekana* 'he seems' and *wa maisha* 'a life partner' were not interpreted in the target text in example 9. The interpreter skipped the bolded words in the source texts, including *anaonekana*, *wa maisha* 'he **seems** to require **a life** partner'. These words carried a certain meaning of the source text.

These omitted words were important to give a complete meaning to the target text. Similarly, in example 10, the interpreter deleted the words *and* and *this morning*. Thus, some of the omitted words were important to give a faithful rendition while others were not important.

Other skipping or omission strategies

Another group of techniques that were examined in this study is reduction strategies. These techniques include message abandonment, incomplete sentences, and approximation. These strategies were used by interpreters who omit or reduce some useful information from the source text to overcome the cognitive load problem. Korpal (2012:104) cites Barik (1994:124) as insisting that "the only accepted instances of omissions are those of connectives, empty fillers and hedges ..., and articles". Any other types of omissions are perceived as mistakes and should not be used when interpreting texts. Most church interpreters omitted important information from the source texts because of the high rate of delivery, high density of the information content, strong accents, and incorrect grammar and lexical usage (Gile 1995:173).

5.3.1 Message abandonment

Message abandonment is an omission strategy in which the interpreter abandons a large amount of the source language text or even the whole source text. This occurs when the interpreter begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue, so he/she stops in mid-utterance (Tarone 1981). In this study, abandonment is defined as a strategy where the interpreter abandons the whole sentence. Thirteen interpreters out of twenty (65%) abandoned whole source utterances. Some interpreters said that they did so because the preacher did not pause to give them space to interpret. Participant "G" reported, "You know this preacher does not give me enough time to interpret. So, I have to leave [out] many utterances to keep up with his speed." In some situations, the engagement of church members to the preachers' questions made the interpretations unheard. Another interpreter, participant "E", reported, "Interpreting Kiswahili to English is sometimes difficult because it is full of calls and responses. So, we abandon most words believing they have understood the source text."

Thus the abandonment of sentences happened when preachers called for responses and the members responded even before the interpretation. Another reason for abandonment was when interpreters failed to comprehend the source text. Participant "H" asserted, "How can I interpret the sermons which I have not comprehended? How can I interpret the message which is not clear to me?"

Sixty-five percent of the interpreters abandoned whole lexical items during sermon interpretations. In some instances, these interpreters started

interpreting but eventually stopped doing so due to several reasons, including the interruption of church members responding to the call given by the preacher. In other contexts, interpreters abandoned whole source texts. Likewise, the speed of the speakers as well as failure to get the appropriate lexical items to be rendered in the target speech hindered interpreters, causing them to abandon the messages. Participant "D" revealed how she used the message abandonment technique when interpreting ambiguous texts, stating, "Sometimes, when church members respond or shout Amen or if I didn't hear well the text, I just abandon such unclear text and wait for the next utterance to interpret."

Message abandonment affects church members since they do not get half of the texts in the TL. They failed to understand the source language text, so the whole sentence was omitted without interpretation. See the following examples:

11. ***Preacher***: *Hiyo roho ya ubize naiombea kwa jina la Yesu* [00:03:14-8]
    All: Amen
    Interpreter: ... [00:03:17-1]
    Source: Sermon 2, Heaven on Earth Church
    FI: ***That busy spirit I rebuke and pray in Jesus' name***
12. ***Preacher***: *Kuanzia leo hutahangaika tena kwa Jina la Yesu* [00:02:59-5]
    All: Amen.
    Interpreter: *You won't suffer* [00:03:01-4]
    FI: ***You won't suffer in Jesus' Name from today***.
13. ***Preacher***: *Sasa hapo kwenye kuja kwenye kanisa, Bwana Yesu asifiwe.* [00:02:38-4]
    All: Amina.
    Interpreter: ... [00:02:40-0]
    Source: Sermon 3, Heaven on Earth Church
    FI: ***Now, in the process of coming to the church, Praise the Lord Jesus!***

Examples 11 to 13 demonstrate that interpreters abandoned whole sentences. In these examples, the respective faithful interpretations (FI) are given to show how the interpreter was supposed to interpret the source text. It is only in Example 12 that the interpreter starts to interpret the text but stops in the middle of the sentence. Close observation shows that these interpreters abandoned the sentences due to their limited language competence, which made them fail to get the equivalent terminology to fit in the target language. Another reason was that the preachers called for responses, and when the church members responded, it made the interpreters fail to interpret the sentences.

5.3.2 Incomplete sentences

An additional strategy that was used by the church interpreters was the incomplete sentence technique. In this strategy, interpreters omitted large units of the source messages. The interpreters began to interpret but, in the end, they did not finish the sentence (Li 2013; Tarone 1984). Fifteen out of twenty interpreters (75%) were using incomplete sentences to interpret sermons. Once again, the reason for interpreting incomplete sentences was that some preachers spoke at a higher speed and did not give them enough time to interpret. One interpreter reported that he used incomplete sentences because the preacher spoke at a high speed. He unveils, "The Senior Pastor speaks quickly to catch up. I interpret only a few words."

Sometimes interpreters lacked equivalent terminology to interpret the rest of an utterance. Participant "E" declared, "I just leave [out] some utterances or segments of sentences which I did not comprehend thoroughly well to stay focused on the coming utterance. If it happens, I remember the previous utterance, I just summarised it in a few words."

In some cases, the audience interrupted through noises to respond to the preachers' questions or to show affection.

Observe the following examples:

14. ***Preacher***: *Na hesabu ya wanafunzi ikazidi sana* [00:00:05-1]
Interpreter: *And the number of* [00:00:07-3]
FI: ***And the number of disciples multiplied exceedingly***.

15. ***Preacher***: *Akiua maisha yako ya maombi ameua ukristo wako* [00:00:22-1]
Interpreter: *if he kills your prayer life he* [00:00:26-8]
FI: I***f he kills your prayer life, he has killed your Christianity***.
Source: Sermon 2, Heaven on Earth Church

16. ***Preacher***: *But also other people who will be amazed* [00:04:10-0]
Interpreter: *Lakini watu wengine* [00:04:10-2]
FI: ***Lakini pia watu wengine watashangaa***
Source: Sermon 7, City Harvest TAG

Examples 14 to 16 show some of the incomplete sentences produced during interpretation. The interpreters only interpreted the first parts of the sentences, and the rest of the sentences were not interpreted. In this situation, it was found that some interpreters lacked appropriate terminology to complete the whole sentences. For example, in 14, the interpreter said that he failed to remember the term for *wanafunzi*, which is 'disciples'. Other interpreters said that they used incomplete sentences because while they were attempting to interpret, the preachers had gone to other segments. Instead of focusing on the past utterances, they decided to listen and interpret the subsequent utterances. Once again, the

faithful interpretation (FI) is given in each example to show how each source text was supposed to be interpreted.

17. Preacher: *Au umewalalamikia tu* [00:01:52-5]
Interpreter: *Or you just* [00:01:53-8]
FI*: *Or you just ended up condemning them
Source: Sermon 4, Kinondoni Pentecostal Church

The interpreter in the above example started to interpret the first segment "Or you just ..." and eventually left out the second segment of the sentence, which "ended up condemning them". The remaining part of the utterance was important since it gave the theme of the message. By leaving out the predicate part of sentences, it becomes difficult for the audience to understand the intended message. This makes the preachers fail to achieve their goals for preaching.

5.3.3 Approximation

The last reduction strategy that was used by the interpreters is approximation. The interpreters used this strategy to apply the target language vocabulary, which would not be correct but shares semantic features with the desired item to satisfy the church members. Twelve interpreters out of twenty (60%) used approximation. Interpreters used terminology that did not represent the intended message and hence caused distortions. Some interpreters revealed that they sometimes used this technique when they failed to get the appropriate terminology that could be used to adequately represent the source text. So they resorted to words that had approximate meanings with the desired terminology. For example, participant "D" said, "What I do is that I try to find the nearby word which can fit the same meaning." Another interpreter ("G") said that she used approximation when confronted with difficult vocabulary, stating, "I approximate the synonym of the word when the preacher uses a complex terminology."

The following examples demonstrate how approximation was used by the interpreters in different churches:

18. Preacher: *Usikivu au uangalizi wa kiungu* [00:02:57-3]
Interpreter: *Keenness from Heaven* [00:02:59-0]
[*Divine attentiveness and observation*]
Source: Sermon 5, Efatha

19. Preacher: *Watu wanatoka bila kuelewa chochote* [00:01:47-9]
Interpreter: *People come out without anything* [00:01:49-7]
[*People go out of the church without understanding anything*.]
Source: Sermon 2, Heaven on Earth Church

In example 18, the interpreter lacked appropriate terminology for *Usikivu au uangalizi wa kiungu*, so the interpreter approximated the text with the word *keenness*, which does not fit in this context. The word *keenness* means the eagerness of wanting to push something. Two words are used here, *usikivu* for 'attentiveness' and *uangalizi* for 'observation', so the whole text would best be interpreted as "attentiveness or the Divine observation".

Finally, in example 19, the interpreter has approximated the phrase *kuelewa chochote* with *without anything*. This kind of approximation was not effective since the verb *kuelewa,* which means 'to understand something', is not related to the word *without anything*. So the desired interpretation would be, "People leave without understanding anything."

Generally, approximation did not yield the desired goals of delivering similar target messages to the church members. The strategy did not solve the interpreting challenge of using difficult terms but distorted the TL texts. Thus, the communicative goals of preachers were not achieved when interpreters used the approximation technique.

5.4 Implications of the study

The findings of this study describe the ECS paradigm of church interpreting in Tanzania: expansion, compression, and skipping were the most frequently used strategies by these church interpreters. They were also the most effective strategies in overcoming interpreting challenges and reaching the communicative goals.

This article has discussed a range of strategies used to overcome interpretation challenges. These strategies of expansion, compression, and skipping formed the ECS paradigm of interpreting, and were a help to overcome these challenges, resulting in faithfully rendering the intended messages to the church members just like professional, experienced interpreters. This finding confirms the Gish approach's assumption that interpreters employ various strategies for clarifying the speakers' message, correction of errors, and management of time to make more accurate and complete interpretations (Gish 1996).

The amateur church interpreters ran short of sufficient experience and had limited professional training in translation and interpretation. They attempted to render a faithful interpretation using various strategies. This suggests that interpretation skills can be gained both through professional training and practice. Findings in this study also concurred with the observations of other scholars who found that various coping tactics were used in overcoming interpretation challenges (Al-Khanji et al. 2000; Riccardi 1996, 1998; Baxter 2012; Li 2013; Arumí Ribas 2012).

6 Conclusions

The ultimate goal of these strategies is to solve various challenges that face church interpreters. In their attempts to make an accurate and complete interpretation, some strategies led to failure to faithfully render the SL text. Reduction strategies such as message abandonment, incomplete sentences, and approximation failed to get across the preacher's intended message. The findings of the current study can be useful to trainers of translation and interpretation studies, interpreters, and scholars who wish to conduct further studies on strategies of interpreting in different contexts.

All these findings explain that with increased practice and devotion in interpreting, most church interpreters can interpret faithfully the source sermons using the ECS paradigm. This study calls for further assessment of how these strategies are used by professional interpreters in different settings.

References

Al-Khanji, Raja, Said El-Shiyab, and Riyadh Hussen. 2000. On the use of compensatory strategies in simultaneous interpretation. *Meta* 45(3):548–557. https://doi.org/10.7202/001873ar.

Antonini, Rachele, Letizia Cirillo, Linda Rossato, and Ira Torresi, eds. 2017. *Non-professional interpreting and translation: State of the art and future of an emerging field of research.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.129.

Arumí Ribas, Marta. 2012. Problems and strategies in consecutive interpreting: A pilot study at two different stages of interpreter training. *Meta* 57(3):812–835. https://doi.org/10.7202/1017092ar.

Balci Tison, Alev. 2016. *The interpreter's involvement in a translated institution: A case study of sermon interpreting*. Tarragona and Reus, Spain: Universitat Rovira I Virgill.

Barik, Henri C. 1971. A description of various types of omissions, additions and errors of translation encountered in simultaneous interpretation. *Meta* 16(4):199–210. https://doi.org/10.7202/001972ar.

Barik, Henri C. 1994. A description of various types of omissions, additions and errors of translation encountered in simultaneous interpretation. In Sylvie Lambert and Barbara Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Bridging the gap: Empirical research in simultaneous interpretation*, 121–138. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.3.12bar.

Bartłomiejczyk, Magdalena. 2006. Strategies of simultaneous interpreting and directionality. *Interpreting* 8(2):149-174. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.8.2.03bar.

Baxter, Robert Neal. 2012. A simplified multi-model approach to preparatory training in consecutive interpreting. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 6(1):21–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2012.10798828.

Chen, Sijia. 2017. The construct of cognitive load in interpreting and its measurement. *Perspectives* 25(4):640–657. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2016.1278026.

da Silva, Igor Antônio Lourenço, Eliane Brito Soares, and Marileide Dias Esqueda. 2018. Interpreting in a religious setting: An exploratory study of the profile and interpretive process of volunteer interpreters. *Traduçao Em Revista* 24:1–24. https://doi.org/10.17771/PUCRio.TradRev.34553.

Díaz-Galaz, Stephanie, Presentación Padilla, and Maria Teresa Bajo. 2015. The role of advance preparation in simultaneous interpreting: A comparison of professional interpreters and interpreting students. *Interpreting* 17(1):1–25. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.17.1.01dia.

Dong, Yanping, Yinghui Li, and Nan Zhao. 2019. Acquisition of interpreting strategies by student interpreters. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 4:408–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2019.1617653.

Downie, Jonathan. 2024. A critical review of church interpreting research. *Interpreting and Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4(1):1–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/27523810231225118.

Gile, Daniel. (1995) 2009. *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.8.

Gile, Daniel. 1999. Testing the effort models' tightrope hypothesis in simultaneous interpreting – A contribution. *Hermes – Journal of Language and Communication in Business* 12(23):153–172. https://doi.org/10.7146/hjlcb.v12i23.25553.

Gish, Sandra. 1996. The Gish approach to information processing. In Susan Boinis, Paula Gajewski Mickelson, Peter C. Gordon, Lauri Krouse, and Laurie Swabey (eds.), *MRID self-paced modules for educational interpreter skill development*, 52–77. Little Canada, MN: Minnesota Education Services.

Hild, Adelina. 2017. The role and self-regulation of non-professional interpreters in religious settings: the VIRS project. In Rachele Antonini, Letizia Cirillo, Linda Rossato, and Ira Torresi (eds.), *Non-professional interpreting and translation: State of the art and future of an emerging field of research,* 177–194. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Hokkanen, Sari. 2017. Experiencing the interpreter's role: Emotions of involvement and detachment in simultaneous church interpreting. *Translation Spaces* 6(1):62–78. https://doi.org/10.1075/ts.6.1.04hok.

Kohn, Kurt, and Sylvia Kalina. 1996. The strategic dimension of interpreting. *Meta* 41(1):118–138. https://doi.org/10.7202/003333ar.

Korpal, Paweł. 2012. Omission in simultaneous interpreting as a deliberate act. In Anthony Pym and David Orrego-Carmona (eds.), *Translation Research Projects 4*, 103–111. Tarragona, Spain: Intercultural Studies Group. Omission in simultaneous interpreting as a deliberate act.

Li, Xiangdong. 2013. Are interpreting strategies teachable? Correlating trainees' strategy use with trainers' training in the consecutive interpreting classroom. *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 18:105–128.

Li, Xiangdong. 2015. Putting interpreting strategies in their place: Justifications for teaching strategies in interpreter training. *Babel* 61(2):170–192. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.61.2.02li.

Liontou, Konstantina. 2012. *Anticipation in German to Greek simultaneous interpreting: A corpus based approach.* Vienna: Universitat Wien.

Mlundi, Simon. 2021a. Towards effective interpreter-mediated biblical sermons in English and Kiswahili in the Tanzanian charismatic and pentecostal churches: Any challenge or complexity faced by the church interpreter? *Studies in English Language Teaching* 9(5):32–49. https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v9n5p32.

Mlundi, Simon. 2021b. Towards professionalization of church interpretation in Tanzania: What do church stakeholders say about the quality criteria of church interpretation? *The Bible Translator* 72(3):294–312. https://doi.org/10.1177/20516770211039491.

Napier, Jemina. 2004. Interpreting omissions: A new perspective. *Interpreting* 6(2):117–142. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.6.2.02nap.

Napier, Jemina. 2007. Cooperation in interpreter mediated monological talk. *Discourse & Communication* 1(4):407–432. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307082206.

Oléron, Pierre, and Hubert Nanpon. (1965) 2002. Research into simultaneous translation. In Franz Pöchhacker and Miriam Shlesinger (eds.), *The interpreting studies reader*, 43–50. London: Routledge.

Pym, Anthony. 2008. On omission in simultaneous interpreting: Risk analysis of a hidden effort. In Gyde Hansen, Andrew Chesterman, and Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast (eds.), *Efforts and models in interpreting and translation research: A tribute to Daniel Gile*, 83–105. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.80.08pym.

Riccardi, Alessandra. 1996. Language:specific strategies in simultaneous interpreting. In Cay Dollerup and Vibeke Appel (eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting*, 213–222. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.16.30ric.

Riccardi, Alessandra. 1998. Interpreting strategies and creativity. In Ann Beylard-Ozeroff, Jana Králová, and Barbara Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Translators' strategies and creativity: Selected papers from the 9th international conference on translation and interpreting, Prague, September 1995*, 171–180. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.27.24ric.

Riccardi, Alessandra. 2005. On the evolution of interpreting strategies in simultaneous interpreting. *Meta* 50(2):753–767. https://doi.org/10.7202/011016ar.

Robson, Colin. 2011. *Real world research.* Third edition. Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Ryan, Gery W., and H. Russell Bernard. 2003. Techniques to identify themes in qualitative data. *Field Methods* 15(1):85–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239569.

Seeber, Kilian G. 2013. Cognitive load in simultaneous interpreting. *Target* 25(1):18–32. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.25.1.03see.

Stenzl, Catherine. 1983. Simultaneous interpretation: Groundwork towards a comprehensive model. MA dissertation. London: Birkbeck College, University of London.

Sunnari, Marianna. 1995. Processing strategies in simultaneous interpreting: "Saying it all" vs. synthesis. In Jorma Tommola (ed.), *Topics in interpreting research*, 109–119. Turku, Finland: University of Turku.

Tan, Alexander Kai De, Mansour Amini, and Kam-Fong Lee. 2021. Challenges faced by non-professional interpreters in interpreting church sermons in Malaysia. *International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities* 4(1):53–74. INSANIAH article - Challenges non-professional interpreters face.

Tarone, Elaine. 1981. Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly* 15(3):285–295. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586754.

Tarone, Elaine. 1984. Teaching strategic competence in the foreign language classroom. In Sandra J. Savignon, and Margie S. Berns (eds.), *Initiatives in communicative language teaching: A book of readings*, volume 1, 127–136. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Tseng, Hwa-chin. 2009. A pilot study on church interpreting in Taiwan. Master's thesis. Taipei, Taiwan: National Taiwan Normal University.

Wilss, Wolfram. 1978. Syntactic anticipation in German-English simultaneous interpreting. In David Gerver and H. Wallace Sinaiko (eds.), *Language interpretation and communication*, 343–352. Boston, MA: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-9077-4_30.