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UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT IN BRAZILIAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH CLASSES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

In the context of inclusive classrooms, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) interpreters play a key role in mediating communication between teachers and deaf students. This study examined the role of Libras interpreter-translators (TILSP) in managing uncertainty during English classes in a public school. Specifically, it aimed to identify the uncertainties interpreters encounter when translating between English and Libras, as well as the strategies they use to address these challenges. Ten interpreters participated by answering a questionnaire, and two were selected for further analysis: one with a high intermediate level of English proficiency and the other with a basic level. Data collection included a questionnaire, classroom observation and recording, field notes, and a stimulated recall interview. Angelone's (2010) framework was used for analyzing uncertainty management, while interpretation strategies were explored through the frameworks of Novais (2002), Hortncio (2005), and Monteiro (2018). Findings revealed that the main sources of uncertainty for TILSP were the lack of class adaptation for deaf students, the need to alternate between three languages (Portuguese, English, and Libras), and limited knowledge of English vocabulary and expressions. The high intermediate-level interpreter predominantly faced production-related uncertainties, followed by comprehension and transfer, and employed strategies such as explanation and visual aids to manage them. Conversely, the basic-level interpreter encountered more comprehension-related uncertainties, followed by transfer and production, relying primarily on strategies like synthesis, omission, and ratification. Moreover, the basic-level interpreter experienced four times more uncertainties than the high intermediate-level interpreter during classes, highlighting the impact of English proficiency on managing challenges effectively. These findings underscore the need for targeted support and training to enhance interpreters' skills in multilingual classroom contexts.

KEYWORDS: Interpreting strategies. Uncertainty management. Brazilian sign language interpreter. English classes. Deaf student.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Lewis, Gary, and Charles (2014), English is the third most spoken language globally, with 335 million speakers. It serves a crucial role as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2001) in academic, economic, and tourism fields, facilitating communication between people from different countries. With the intensification of globalization, which has bridged geographic and cultural divides, learning English has become indispensable.

Globalization has not only reduced borders but has also integrated countries economically, culturally, and linguistically, further emphasizing the importance of learning English (Spasiani, 2018). This dynamic has motivated learners and increased research on effective teaching and learning methods for new languages. In the scientific field, linguistic dominance is evident: in 2020, 8 out of 10 Ibero-American researchers published their work in English rather than in their native languages (El País, 2021). This trend reflects the interest of educational institutions, journals, and scientists in internationalizing their work (Meneghini & Packer, 2007). Similarly, Gordin (2015) highlights the expectation of greater visibility for publications in English.

One of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasizes the importance of quality education, advocating for inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all. In this context, teaching and learning English in Brazil's educational structure are particularly significant. However, this process must extend beyond hearing students to include deaf learners, who also have the right to access English education through effective means that enhance their understanding.

Educational inclusion is a fundamental right, irrespective of individual needs. For deaf students, quality education demands attention to their linguistic and cultural particularities, as education serves as a vital pathway to social inclusion. As Martins and Melo (2016, p. 72) note, inclusion extends beyond mere enrollment and requires "mechanisms of access, quality, and permanence" to ensure meaningful participation. Therefore, it is essential to provide resources that allow deaf students to thrive in the school environment. Teaching English to deaf students presents unique challenges, particularly in foreign language instruction.

In Brazilian education, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB) (Brazil, 2017) mandates the inclusion of English in the Basic Education curriculum from the 6th grade onward. Furthermore, Decree No. 5,626/2005 guarantees the presence of interpreters to support communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in private and public institutions. This highlights the critical role of interpreters in ensuring access and inclusion for deaf learners.

Given this context, there is a pressing need to investigate the performance of TILSPs (Libras Interpreter-Translators) in English classrooms. This study seeks to explore the uncertainties faced by TILSPs with varying levels of English proficiency and the strategies they employ to manage these challenges, ultimately aiming to enhance English education for deaf students in Brazilian schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Uncertainty management

Angelone and Shreve (2011) define uncertainty as a cognitive state of indecision, manifested through various observable behaviors during the translation process. This concept extends naturally to the context of interpretation, as interpreters face similar challenges in their tasks. Such behaviors often indicate “interruptions” in the process, stemming from an inability to make immediate decisions, which are central to both translation and interpretation activities. While uncertainty is considered an inherent aspect of all translation processes, it is particularly prominent in interpretation—the focus of this study—due to its real-time nature.

For Angelone (2010), translation is a cognitive process driven by sequential decision-making, with uncertainty marked by noticeable pauses. These pauses reflect moments of hesitation or doubt that require resolution. In sign language interpretation, this decision-making process occurs with heightened immediacy, as interpreters must manage uncertainties dynamically and in real time. Angelone argues that uncertainty management begins at the onset of doubt and continues until the interpreter resolves the issue. He categorizes uncertainties into three main types: comprehension, transfer, and production.

Comprehension uncertainty arises from difficulties in understanding the source language. Articulated indicators include direct expressions, such as “I don’t understand this word or phrase,” or indirect actions, like signaling or repeating specific segments of the source text, often accompanied by prolonged pauses. Unarticulated indicators involve retrieving monolingual or bilingual information from tertiary resources, such as online dictionaries, internet searches, or consulting with the message sender.

Transfer uncertainty emerges during the mediation process when interpreters struggle to find correspondences between linguistic structures in the source language and appropriate equivalents in the target language. Primary nonverbal indicators include searching for bilingual resources, such as glossaries, dictionaries, or parallel texts. Broadly, any behavior involving the generation of options in the target language can be classified as a transfer activity.

Production uncertainty pertains to the target language. Articulated indicators often include direct or indirect assessments of the interpreter’s output in the target language. This type of uncertainty is frequently associated with strategies like addition, ratification, revision, omission, or explanation.

Most existing studies on uncertainty (Angelone, 2010; Tirkkonen-Condit, 2005; Asadi & Séguinot, 2005; Hansen, 2003; Amirian & Baghiat, 2013, among others) focus on written translation tasks, where translators have the advantage of time to pause, reflect, and search for solutions. These studies frequently utilize tools such as screen-recording software to identify translation pauses and track uncertainty management strategies. However, the immediacy required in interpretation makes this process significantly more challenging. In real-time communication, interpreters lack the luxury of

pausing to deliberate or research solutions, especially in high-stakes environments such as educational settings.

This challenge becomes even more pronounced when interpreting between languages with different modalities—such as visual (sign language) and spoken languages. In these contexts, interpreters must employ strategies quickly to maintain the flow of communication. The complexity of managing uncertainties is compounded by the dual task of conveying meaning accurately while adapting to the unique linguistic and cultural demands of each modality. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring uncertainty management in sign language interpretation within educational contexts, highlighting the strategies interpreters use to navigate these challenges effectively.

2.2 Interpretation strategies

Bartholamei and Vasconcellos (2008, p. 9) define strategy as “a set of potentially conscious plans to solve what, for an individual, presents itself as a problem of translation/interpretation.” Similarly, Nogueira and Weiler (2021) conceptualize strategy as an intentional action aimed at achieving a specific objective during the interpretation process, even if the outcome is not always successful. According to these authors, the term “interpretation strategy” has been referred to by various names in the literature, including coping tactics (Gile, 1995), strategic processes or strategic action (Kohn & Kalina, 1996), errors (Cokely, 1985; 1992), and strategies of linguistic coping (Napier, 2002).

On an international level, scholars such as Al-Saman (2002), Napier (2003), Bartłomiejczyk (2006), and Gile (2009) have identified several interpretation strategies, including omission, addition, reformulation, summary, paraphrase/approximation, delay time adjustment (processing time), repair, and no repair. These strategies aim to enhance communication fluidity, making messages clearer and more comprehensible. Effective use of these strategies also fosters more inclusive learning environments by addressing the specific needs of diverse audiences.

In the Brazilian context, Aubert (1998) proposed classifications of translation modalities that are also applicable to interpretation. Aubert’s framework helps translators and interpreters analyze the motivations behind their choices, enabling them to refine their practices. The author lists thirteen strategies: omission, transcription, borrowing, transfer, literal translation, transposition, explanation/implicitness, modulation, adaptation, intersemiotic translation, error, correction, and addition.

Building on the descriptive framework of Toury (1995), Novais (2002) investigated interpretation strategies employed by professional interpreters in legal settings. He identified seven core strategies: indirect speech, simplification, omission, synthesis, ratification, standardization, and explanation. Hortêncio (2005) extended Novais’ work to examine the applicability of these strategies to simultaneous interpretations from Portuguese to Libras in religious contexts. In addition to Novais’ seven strategies, Hortêncio identified three new strategies specific to sign language interpretation: repetition, the use of visual resources, and rhetorical questions to emphasize essential information.

Monteiro (2018) further expanded on these studies by exploring interpretation strategies used by TILSPs (Libras interpreter-translators) in English language classes. Monteiro not only confirmed the applicability of previously identified strategies to educational settings but also introduced a new strategy termed prior interpretation, underscoring the evolving nature of interpretation practices in multilingual and multimodal contexts.

The strategies that will be analyzed in this study are related to the studies by Hortêncio (2005), Novais (2002) and Monteiro (2018) and are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Interpretation Strategy Framework

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
INDIRECT DISCOURSE	Strategy in which the interpreter uses the third person to create distance between the teacher's speech and the interpreted message.
EXPLANATION	The interpreter adds words or phrases to clarify and better convey the intended message.
OMISSION	The interpreter shortens the source text, omitting details while maintaining the overall meaning. This is often observed when the source text in Portuguese or English is significantly longer than the interpreted version in Libras.
STANDARDIZATION	The interpreter aligns interpretations with the linguistic standards of Libras and the cultural norms of the Deaf community.
RATIFICATION	The interpreter confirms and reinforces the teacher's message to ensure it is accurately conveyed.
REPETITION	The interpreter repeats key ideas to emphasize their importance and aid understanding and memorization.
SIMPLIFICATION	The interpreter simplifies complex content by adapting their language to match the audience's level of understanding, using familiar terms and expressions.
SYNTHESIS	The interpreter summarizes the message, extracting and conveying only the essential information.
USE OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS	The interpreter employs rhetorical questions to engage the audience, provoke mental

	responses, and maintain attention on the subject being discussed.
USE OF VISUAL RESOURCES	The interpreter incorporates visual aids, such as typing, book illustrations, and additional classroom materials, to support comprehension.
PREVIOUS INTERPRETATION (rehearsal)	The interpreter practices the message by silently interpreting it to themselves before delivering it to the student, ensuring accuracy and fluency.

Source: Monteiro (2018)

The identification and analysis of the interpretation strategies used by TILSP are essential for understanding the mediation process in the classroom, especially in situations of uncertainty management. Nogueira and Weiler (2021) point out that analyzing and observing the choices and strategies used by TILSP serves to understand the countless possibilities that the interpreter has when carrying out an interpretation, including conscious and unconscious decision-making.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Study design

According to Gil (2008), “descriptive research aims primarily to describe the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon, or to establish relationships between variables” (Gil, 2008, p. 28). Therefore, the present study can be characterized as descriptive, since we are interested in describing the main challenges and strategies used by TILSP when managing uncertainty during English classes. Regarding data generation procedures, one classification is field research, since this type of investigation has “the objective of obtaining information and/or knowledge about a problem, to which an answer is sought, or a hypothesis, that one wants to prove, or even discover new phenomena or the relationships between them” (Marconi; Lakatos, 2008, p. 186).

3.2 Research Questions

The study was motivated by three research questions:

1. What challenges do TILSPs face during interpretation of English classes?
2. What uncertainties occur during the interpretation of TILSPs of high intermediate and basic English language proficiency?
3. What strategies are frequently used by TILSP when managing the uncertainties that occur?

3.3 Context and participants

The research was conducted at a municipal public school in the city of Maracanaú, located in the state of Ceará, Brazil. The school community reflects the socio-economic characteristics typical of other municipal public schools in Maracanaú, a municipality where the local economy is predominantly

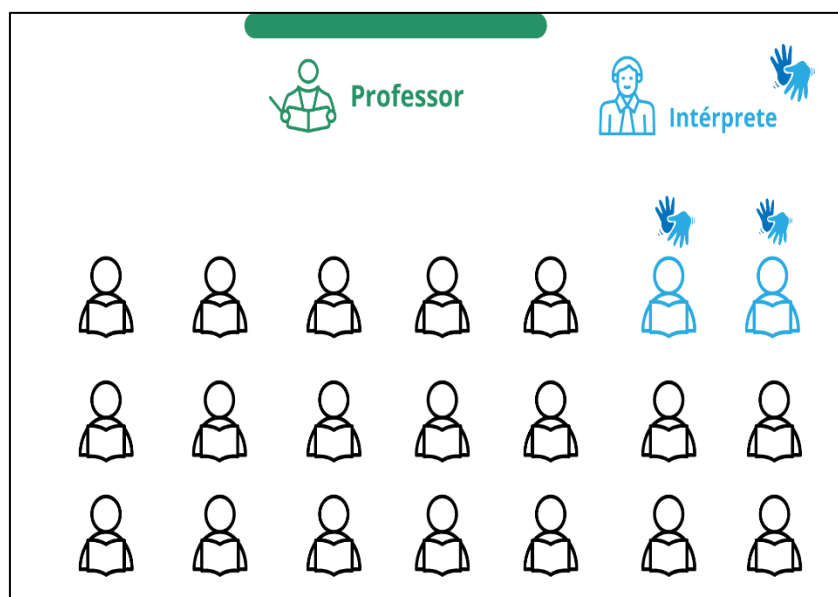
industrial. Most students are children of wage earners or come from fragmented or unstructured family environments. Despite the industrial focus of the region, one significant factor contributing to family disintegration is the lack of stable employment or alternative economic opportunities.

Adolescents in the area face heightened vulnerability, and it is common to hear reports from students about their exposure to individuals—whether relatives or not—engaged in alcoholism, drug use, or violence. Currently, the institution serves 871 students, supported by a staff of 47 teachers and 35 employees.

Deaf students receive specialized education, with interpreters present in all their classes. Since 2016, the school has implemented a linguistic policy in which Libras (Brazilian Sign Language) and Portuguese coexist within the school environment. Libras is recognized as the first language for deaf students, while Portuguese, in its written form, is taught as a second language, framing the teaching and learning process within a bilingual perspective.

Thus, the educational context in which this research was conducted is characterized as an inclusive school that incorporates the triad of teacher, TILSP, and deaf student. To better illustrate the classroom configuration observed in this study, Figure 1 represents deaf students in blue, hearing students in black, and the interpreter (also in blue) positioned to the left of the teacher (in green), near the entrance door.¹

Figure 1– Classroom layout



¹ Translation: professor – teacher
Intérprete - interpreter

Source: Prepared by the authors.

As for the participants in the study, 10 TILSPs (Translators and Interpreters of Brazilian Sign Language Professionals) from the school were invited to complete a questionnaire. From this group, two interpreters were selected for further observation, recording, and participation in a stimulated recall interview. One interpreter demonstrated intermediate proficiency in English (TILSP A), while the other had basic proficiency in English (TILSP B). These proficiency levels were determined based on the English courses they had completed.

Both selected interpreters share several similarities: they are within a similar age range (around 25 years old), male, and have completed higher education. They also acquired Libras in a religious setting and have approximately ten years of professional experience as interpreters. The selection criteria prioritized professionals with comparable backgrounds and performance contexts to ensure consistency in the analysis.

3.4 Instruments and data collection procedures

The data collection process employed multiple instruments, including a questionnaire, classroom observations with recordings, field notes, and a semi-guided interview using a stimulated recall approach. The process unfolded in three main phases:

1. **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire comprising 10 questions (6 objective and 4 open-ended) was administered to gather essential information about the practices of TILSPs in English classes. The primary focus was on identifying the strategies they employed to manage uncertainties during interpretation. The questionnaire was applied to ten interpreters, two of them were selected for further analysis, class observation and semi-guided interview with stimulated recall.
2. **Classroom Observation and Field Notes:** Classroom sessions were observed and recorded, with accompanying field notes taken. These observations aimed to identify moments of uncertainty, as indicated by pauses, hesitations, questions, or facial expressions.
3. **Semi-Guided Interview with Stimulated Recall:** The semi-guided interview consisted of individually presenting class recordings to each interpreter, highlighting moments of pauses observed during their interpretation. The stimulated recall is the procedure of asking questions based on recordings. The interpreters were asked three primary questions:
 - a) What were you thinking about at this moment?
 - b) What difficulties were you facing at this moment in your interpretation?
 - c) How did you address them?

Based on their responses, follow-up questions were posed for further clarification. This phase adhered to procedures adapted from Diaz (2022), tailored specifically to the context of sign language interpretation. The phases of data collection are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Phases of data collection

Phases of Data Collection	Setting
Application of the questionnaire and selection of participants.	Questionnaires were applied via Google Form. Selected participants were invited via WhatsApp
Observation and recording of TILSP in the classroom and recording of field notes.	School English classes (teachers, students and interpreters)
Interview and stimulated recall	School classroom (individually, researcher and interpreter)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis is structured into two sections. The first section examines the responses to the questionnaire administered to ten interpreters, focusing on the challenges they encounter while interpreting English classes. The second section explores the findings from the semi-guided interviews with stimulated recall, emphasizing the uncertainties faced by the interpreters and the strategies they employ to manage them.

4.1 Questionnaire responses

As described in the methodological section, the first research question was: What challenges do TILSPs face during interpretation of English classes? This question was present in the questionnaire and was answered by 10 interpreters of the school. The challenges reported by TILSPs are described in Table 3:

Table 3. Challenges reported by TILSPs.

1. Lack of adaptation of English classes to the reality of deaf students
2. Deaf students lack fluency in Libras
3. Switching between the three languages
4. Lack of anticipation of the material to familiarize the interpreter
5. Deaf students' lack of interest in learning English
6. Lack of visual resources in classes
7. Lack of knowledge of English words and expressions

8. Listening activities and teacher's pronunciation
9. Oral comprehension in English
10. Difficulty in textual interpretation in English

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The responses to the questionnaire—addressing issues such as switching between three languages, limited knowledge of English words and expressions, oral comprehension, listening activities, and textual interpretation in English—indicate that many of the challenges faced by TILSPs are directly linked to their level of proficiency in English. Thus, any efforts to enhance the work of TILSPs should prioritize improving their English proficiency in addressing uncertainties and developing effective strategies.

4.2 Semi-guided interviews with stimulated recall

This section presents the analysis of observations conducted in two English language classes mediated by TILSP. One class involved students with high-intermediate English proficiency (TILSP A), while the other focused on students with basic proficiency (TILSP B). The primary goal of these observations was to record videos to identify and document instances of uncertainty during the classes. Moments of uncertainty were identified based on observable behaviors, including prolonged pauses, omissions, facial or bodily expressions of doubt, word substitutions, self-corrections, rereading, and instances where students sought assistance from the English teacher or consulted a smartphone/online dictionary.

As outlined in the methodology, semi-guided interviews were conducted using a stimulated recall technique. Participants were shown excerpts of the recorded classes and asked two key questions:

- a) What difficulties or uncertainties were you experiencing at this moment in your interpretation? b) How did you address them?

4.2.1 Results of TISLP A

During the class observations and recordings, ten (10) instances indicative of uncertainties in TILSP A's performance were identified and documented. These instances were recorded and subsequently edited into short video clips, which were later used as part of the stimulated recall process during the interview. The occurrences of uncertainty are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Uncertainties instances

No. of occurrences	BEHAVIORAL ACTION
03	Long pause period.
01	Facial expression of doubt.
01	Facial expression of doubt followed by head shaking in denial.
01	Reflective pause with hand placed on chin.

01	Facial expression of doubt looking at the whiteboard.
01	Expression of doubt and gaze directed at the teacher
01	Asking for a teacher for clarification/help/translation
01	Using smartphone / Online dictionaries for help

Source: Prepared by the authors

As previously explained, during the semi-guided interview with stimulated recall, behavioral actions identified in the class recordings were presented alongside specific questions. The interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. Ten video clips, each lasting 10 to 30 seconds, were shown to highlight potential moments of uncertainty observed during the classroom recordings. Due to space constraints, two interview moments will be illustrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 1.

When the first video—depicting a facial expression of doubt and a long pause—was shown, TILSP A was asked what he was thinking at that moment. He responded:

“At the time, I was looking for what ‘thoughtful’ was, the meaning of the word, and it was so hard.”

This response indicates that, despite possessing high-intermediate English proficiency, TILSP A still experiences uncertainty at the comprehension level, as he was unable to recall or recognize the meaning of a specific word. Referring to Angelone’s (2010) framework, adapted to the context of sign language interpretation, three levels of uncertainty can be identified: comprehension, production, and transfer. Within this framework, the pause during interpretation signifies the interpreter’s acknowledgment of doubt, initiating a process to manage the uncertainty until a resolution is achieved.

To address this uncertainty, TILSP A employed the explanation strategy described by Novais (2002). This was evident when he provided examples and explained the meaning of the word after the teacher offered its translation into Portuguese.

Excerpt 2.

In the fourth video, we recorded a long pause and the use of a smartphone. The TILSP comments on what he was thinking:

“At that moment, I had some uncertainty, and I went to look up a phrase, a term, a figure or a word. Wow! I get confused (laughs).”

TILSP A manages uncertainty at the level of transfer and production. In this case, the interpreter used the strategy of visual resources and explanation to present a figure to the student. He also researched the internet with the support of the smartphone to explain vocabulary, often summarizing the content. According to Angelone (2010), a primary indicator of uncertainty at the level of transfer is the retrieval of information from bilingual resources, such as glossaries, dictionaries or parallel texts.

4.2.2 Results of TISLP B

During the class observations and recordings, forty (40) instances indicative of uncertainties in TILSP B's performance were identified and documented. It is important to highlight that, when compared to TILSP A, TILSP B presented four times more instances of uncertainties. These events were recorded and then edited into short videos that were part of the stimulated recovery present in the interview. The uncertainty occasions are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Uncertainties instances

No. of occurrences	BEHAVIORAL ACTION
11	Long pause period.
07	Facial expression of doubt.
06	Facial expression of doubt followed by head shaking in denial.
02	Reflective pause with hand placed on chin.
03	Facial expression of doubt looking at the whiteboard.
04	Expression of doubt and gaze directed at the teacher
05	Asking for a teacher for clarification/help/translation
03	Using smartphone / Online dictionaries for help

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Since TILSP B presented four times more instances of uncertainties than TILSP A, the interview lasted longer, approximately one hour, during which time the researcher presented 41 videos, each lasting an average of 10 to 20 seconds. Due to space constraints, two interview moments will be illustrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 1

In the second video, an expression of doubt followed by a look directed at the teacher was recorded. We can identify, based on TILSP B's response, uncertainty at the level of understanding (Angelone, 2010):

“Since the teacher was reading in English, I was left speechless, not knowing how to interpret it. I was thinking that the teacher could have spoken in Portuguese and then in English. That way, I could at least follow the text in English, because if he spoke in Portuguese first, I would already have a basis for what he was saying in English, but since he started speaking in English and I didn't understand almost anything, so I said one sentence and told the student it was hard.”

In the excerpt above, TILSP B expresses his frustration at the difficulty of understanding what the teacher was saying in English during a class and he manages this uncertainty with the strategy of omission, described in Novais (2002) and Monteiro (2018).

Excerpt 2

In the seventh video, TILSP B paused for a long time, sometimes looking at the teacher and the whiteboard. When asked what he was thinking, what difficulties he was facing at those moments, he reported:

“The teacher was speaking English, and I was picking up random words, because I don't have much knowledge of English. I was thinking about summarizing a lot, synthesizing as much as possible so that it is more understandable for the student. Sometimes I also explain extra things, like creating a background for the deaf person to understand better, this way I make things simpler to understand.”

TILSP B's response reveals that he had uncertainties at the levels of understanding and transfer (Angelone, 2010), and the strategy he uses is simplification and synthesis (Novais, 2002, Monteiro 2018). Lack of understanding was a recurring factor during interpretations in English classes by TILSP B which can be explained due to his lower level of proficiency in English.

4.2.3 Uncertainty management and the respective strategies of TILSPs A and B

During the observed interpretations of both TILSPs, many of the interpretation strategies identified by Novais (2002), Hortêncio (2005), and Monteiro (2018) were noted. However, for the purposes of this study, only the strategies employed by the TILSPs in managing uncertainties at the levels of understanding, transfer, and production (as defined by Angelone, 2010) were analyzed. Although the study adopts a predominantly qualitative approach to explore the performance of the TILSPs, the uncertainties and strategies were quantified to enable a comparative analysis between TILSPs A and B. The results of this quantitative comparison are presented in Table 6

Table 6. Uncertainties and Interpretation strategies of TILSPs A and B

Uncertainties	TILSP A (high intermediate proficiency level in English)	TILSP B (basic proficiency level in English)
Uncertainties at the comprehension level	3	30
Uncertainties at the transfer level	1	6
Uncertainties at the production level	6	5
Total	10	41

Interpretation Strategies	TILSP A (high intermediate proficiency level in English)	TILSP B (basic proficiency level in English)
Indirect discourse	0	0
Explicit Explanation	4	2
Omission	1	10
Standardization	0	0
Ratification	1	8
Repetition	0	0
Simplification	0	5
Synthesis	1	11
Use of rhetorical questions	0	0
Use of visual resources	2	3
Previous interpretation (rehearsal)	1	2

Source: Prepared by the authors

Regarding uncertainty management, TILSP B manages four times more uncertainties (41) than TILSP A (10). This difference was expected, since there were three languages in the interpretive context and the former is not proficient in one of them, in this case, English. It is understandable that TILSP B must deal with more uncertainties, since the lack of complete knowledge of the language can lead to difficulties in understanding and transferring information, thus increasing the number of uncertainties to be managed.

Most of the uncertainties of TILSP B are at the level of comprehension, that is, he does not understand much of what the teacher says, once he solves comprehension problems, either by asking the teacher or checking online dictionaries, he is able to interpret it in Libras. When he does not solve comprehension problems, he tends to omit, synthesize or simplify things. As regards the transfer and production levels, the difference between TILSPs is smaller, reinforcing that the key issue is lack of language comprehension by TILSP B.

Concerning the strategies TILSPs A and B employed to manage uncertainties, TILSP A, predominantly employed the strategies of explicit explanation (4) and use of visual aids (2), followed by the strategies of omission (1), ratification (1), synthesis (1) and prior interpretation (1). In addition,

he demonstrated a preference for the explicit explanation strategy, which was used more frequently. This suggests a tendency to clarify or detail information for better understanding by the recipients.

The strategies synthesis (11), omission (10) and ratification (8) were the most used by TILSP B, followed by simplification (5), use of visual resources (3), prior interpretation (2) and explanation (2). However, he mainly used the omission strategy, which was the second most used, thus corroborating the study by Monteiro (2018). This reinforces difficulties in understanding and transferring the content in its entirety. Strategies such as synthesis and ratification were also used on a larger scale, perhaps as a way of simplifying and restating information to facilitate interpretation.

5. CONCLUSION

This descriptive qualitative study aimed to identify the challenges, interpretation uncertainties, and strategies employed by two TILSPs (Teachers/Interpreters of a Limited Second Proficiency), one with high-intermediate and the other with basic English proficiency levels. Data was collected through questionnaires, class observation recordings, and semi-guided interviews with stimulated recall.

The findings highlighted that most challenges faced by the TILSPs—such as switching between three languages, limited vocabulary and expressions in English, oral comprehension difficulties, and challenges in listening and textual interpretation—were closely tied to their English proficiency levels. Notably, TILSP B, with basic proficiency, exhibited four times more uncertainties than TILSP A, suggesting a direct relationship between lower proficiency levels and increased uncertainties during interpretation tasks.

In addition, the results revealed that the proficiency level influenced not only the frequency of uncertainties but also the strategies employed to manage them. TILSP B relied predominantly on strategies such as synthesis, omissions, and ratification, while TILSP A, with higher proficiency, employed more sophisticated strategies, including explicit explanations and visual resources.

6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although, the findings of the study are limited due to the number of participants and classes observed, it is a seminal study in Brazil and represents the first step in the attempt to understand TILSP performance in a trilingual context (Portuguese- English-Libras). The findings underline the importance of tailored training programs that address the specific challenges faced by interpreters at varying proficiency levels. For lower-proficiency interpreters, training should focus on building vocabulary, listening comprehension, and strategies to minimize uncertainties.

Given that lower-proficiency interpreters resorted more frequently to omission and synthesis, further research could explore how these strategies impact the accuracy and effectiveness of interpretation. Incorporating explicit teaching of advanced strategies, such as using visual aids or providing contextual explanations, may help bridge the gap between proficiency levels.

Educational institutions and organizations employing TILSPs could use these insights to design workshops and support systems that prioritize the development of interpretation-specific skills, particularly for individuals at basic proficiency levels. These findings call for reconsidering language proficiency requirements for TILSP roles and integrating targeted skill-building modules into interpreter training programs, especially in multilingual settings.

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