

Article

Diagnostics of The Linguocultural Competence Level of Future Simultaneous Interpreters

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Abstract: This article examines the diagnosis of linguocultural competence among future simultaneous interpreters. Simultaneous interpreting requires not only advanced linguistic proficiency and fast cognitive processing, but also the ability to understand culturally marked meanings, social norms, pragmatic intentions, discourse conventions, and intercultural communication patterns. Therefore, diagnosing the level of linguocultural competence is an important stage in interpreter education. The article discusses the theoretical basis of linguocultural competence, proposes diagnostic criteria, and describes possible methods for assessing students' readiness for culturally sensitive interpreting. The study emphasizes that diagnosis should include linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, communicative, and reflective components. The article concludes that systematic diagnosis helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses and supports the development of more effective training programs for future simultaneous interpreters.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting, linguocultural competence, diagnostics, interpreter training, intercultural communication, professional competence, assessment.

1. Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting is one of the most demanding types of professional translation activity. The interpreter has to listen, understand, process, reformulate, and produce speech almost at the same time. This process requires excellent language skills, strong memory, quick thinking, topic knowledge, psychological stability, and professional discipline. Basically, the brain is expected to behave like a multilingual processor under stress, because apparently normal communication was too easy for humanity.

However, simultaneous interpreting is not limited to linguistic transfer. The interpreter must also understand cultural meanings, historical references, social values, politeness strategies, humor, idioms, metaphors, emotional tone, and institutional discourse. A grammatically correct interpretation may still fail if the interpreter does not understand the cultural meaning behind the speaker's message.

Linguocultural competence is therefore one of the key components of professional interpreter competence. It allows future interpreters to recognize culturally specific language units, interpret pragmatic meanings, avoid cultural distortion, and preserve the communicative intention of the speaker. AIIC states that conference interpreters need specialized postgraduate training, including interpreting techniques, knowledge of international organizations, preparation for meetings, terminology management, public speaking, voice training, and translation theory [1]. These requirements show that interpreter training is complex and multidimensional.

The European Masters in Conference Interpreting also emphasizes common recruitment and assessment policies, quality maintenance, and regular review of interpreter training programs [2]. This proves that professional interpreter education requires systematic assessment, not random classroom impressions, which are academically suspicious and spiritually exhausting.

The aim of this article is to analyze the diagnosis of linguocultural competence among future simultaneous interpreters and to propose key criteria for assessing its current state.

Literature Review

In translation and interpreting studies, competence is usually understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, strategies, and professional behavior required for successful translation activity. For simultaneous interpreters, competence includes linguistic competence, cognitive competence, communicative competence, subject competence, technical competence, ethical competence, and intercultural competence.

Linguocultural competence occupies a special place within this structure. It connects language with culture and allows the interpreter to understand how meaning is shaped by cultural context. It includes knowledge of national traditions, social values, cultural symbols, etiquette, discourse norms, phraseology, idiomatic expressions, historical references, and culturally marked concepts.

Modern interpreter training programs increasingly recognize the importance of cultural awareness. AIIC notes that professional conference interpreter training includes not only simultaneous and consecutive interpreting techniques, but also preparation for international organizations, terminology management, public speaking, and translation theory. These elements are directly connected with the formation of cultural and professional awareness.

European interpreter education also supports high-quality professional training. The European Commission notes that the European Masters in Conference Interpreting plays an important role in promoting high-quality interpreter training in the European Union [3]. The EMCI program is based on common policies for student recruitment, assessment, and quality review. This shows that assessment is an essential part of interpreter training.

Thus, the diagnosis of linguocultural competence should be considered not as a formal test, but as a systematic process of identifying how well future interpreters can understand and transfer culturally marked meaning in real communicative situations.

2. Materials and Methods

This article uses a theoretical and analytical research method. The study is based on the analysis of interpreter training principles, competence-based education, and diagnostic approaches used in professional language training.

The following methods were applied in the study. First, theoretical analysis was used to examine the concept of linguocultural competence in relation to simultaneous interpreting [4]. This method helped clarify the meaning, structure, and importance of linguocultural competence as a professional quality required from future simultaneous interpreters.

Second, the descriptive method was applied to describe the main components of linguocultural competence. These components include cultural knowledge, pragmatic awareness, phraseological competence, intercultural communication skills, and the ability to transfer culturally marked meanings accurately during interpretation.

Third, comparative analysis was used to compare the general principles of professional interpreter training with the specific needs of linguocultural competence assessment. This made it possible to identify which aspects of interpreter training should be strengthened in order to diagnose and develop students' cultural and communicative readiness [5].

Fourth, diagnostic modeling was applied to propose criteria, indicators, and assessment tools for diagnosing linguocultural competence. This method helped structure the diagnostic process and define how students' knowledge, skills, and interpreting performance can be evaluated more objectively. Basically, it turns "the student seems okay" into something slightly less scientifically embarrassing (Figure 1).

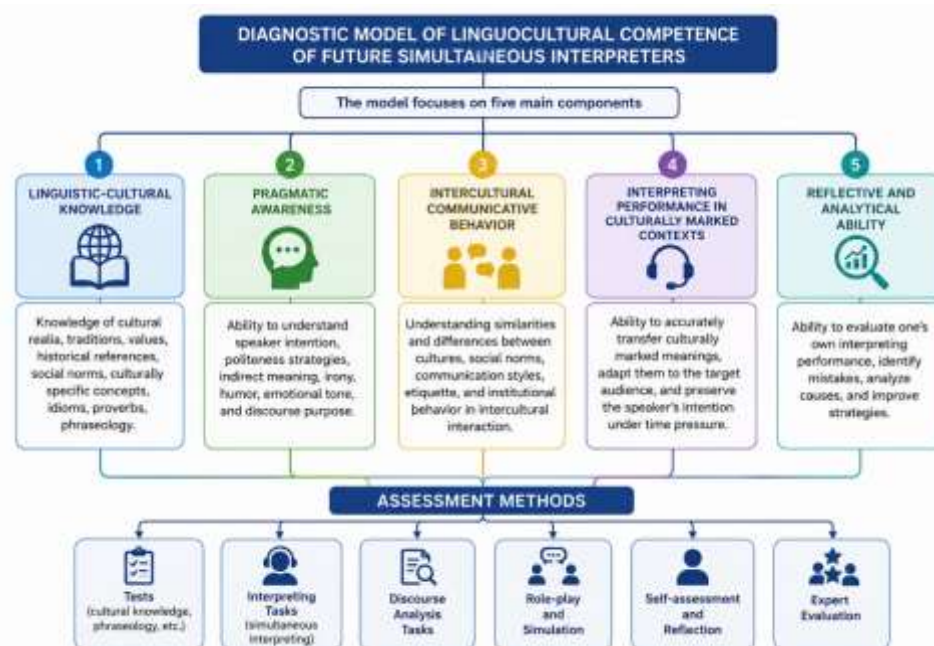


Figure 1. Diagnostic Model of Linguocultural Competence of Future Simultaneous Interpreters and Associated Assessment Methods

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The analysis shows that the linguocultural competence of future simultaneous interpreters consists of several interconnected components.

First, **linguistic-cultural knowledge** includes knowledge of culturally marked vocabulary, idioms, proverbs, phraseological units, realia, historical references, social concepts, and national symbols.

Second, **pragmatic competence** refers to the ability to understand speaker intention, politeness strategies, indirect meaning, irony, humor, emotional tone, and discourse purpose.

Third, **intercultural awareness** means understanding similarities and differences between cultures, including social norms, values, communication styles, etiquette, and institutional behavior [6], [7].

Fourth, **interpreting transfer ability** is the ability to render culturally marked meaning into the target language without losing the speaker's intention or misleading the audience.

Fifth, **reflective competence** is the student's ability to evaluate their own interpreting performance, identify mistakes, and improve strategies.

These components should be diagnosed together, because knowing cultural facts alone does not guarantee successful interpreting. A student may know what an idiom means and still panic in the booth like a browser with 47 open tabs.

Diagnostic Criteria

The diagnosis of linguocultural competence should be based on clear criteria. The following criteria may be used:

Table 1. Assessment Criteria and Descriptors for Evaluating the Linguocultural Competence of Future Simultaneous Interpreters

Criterion	Description
Cultural knowledge	Knowledge of traditions, values, realia, historical and social references

Phraseological awareness	Ability to recognize idioms, metaphors, proverbs, and culturally marked expressions
Pragmatic interpretation	Ability to understand intention, irony, politeness, implication, and emotional tone
Contextual adaptation	Ability to adapt culturally specific meanings for the target audience
Accuracy of interpretation	Preservation of meaning, intention, and cultural nuance
Communicative adequacy	Ability to produce interpretation that sounds natural and appropriate
Professional reflection	Ability to analyze mistakes and improve interpreting strategy

These criteria allow teachers to evaluate not only what the student knows, but also how the student uses this knowledge during interpreting (Table 1).

Based on the diagnostic criteria, the state of linguocultural competence can be divided into three levels: low, medium, and high [8].

Table 2. Rubric and Levels of Linguocultural Competence Development in Future Simultaneous Interpreters

Level	Characteristics
Low level	The student has limited cultural knowledge, often translates literally, fails to recognize idioms or cultural references, and has difficulty adapting meaning
Medium level	The student recognizes common cultural references, understands basic pragmatic meanings, but sometimes loses nuance or chooses unnatural equivalents
High level	The student accurately recognizes culturally marked meanings, adapts them appropriately, preserves pragmatic intention, and reflects on interpreting decisions

This level-based diagnosis helps teachers plan further training. Students with a low level need more cultural background work and phraseological training. Students with a medium level need more practice with authentic speeches and contextual interpretation. Students with a high level need advanced simulation tasks, conference-style interpreting, and critical self-analysis (Table 2).

Several tools can be used to diagnose the linguocultural competence of future simultaneous interpreters. One of the most common tools is cultural knowledge testing. These tests help assess students' knowledge of cultural realia, traditions, institutions, historical references, social norms, and culturally specific concepts. Such tests show whether students have enough background knowledge to understand culturally marked information in the source speech [9], [10].

Another important tool is phraseological recognition tasks. In these tasks, students identify idioms, metaphors, proverbs, and culturally marked expressions in source texts and explain their meanings. This is important because phraseological units often cannot be translated literally and require cultural and contextual understanding.

Simultaneous interpreting tasks can also be used as a diagnostic tool. Students interpret speeches that contain cultural references, humor, indirect meanings, idiomatic expressions, and pragmatic nuances. Their performance is then evaluated by experts according to accuracy, cultural adequacy, fluency, and the ability to preserve the speaker's intention. This tool is especially useful because it checks competence under real time pressure, where theory either works or politely collapses.

Discourse analysis tasks are also effective for diagnosing linguocultural competence. Students analyze speeches by considering cultural context, speaker intention, audience, topic, emotional tone, and pragmatic meaning [11]. This helps determine whether they can understand not only the surface meaning of the speech, but also its deeper communicative purpose.

Role-play and simulation activities are another useful diagnostic method. Mock conferences, diplomatic meetings, academic discussions, and business negotiations help assess how students behave in intercultural communication. These activities allow teachers to observe students' ability to respond to culturally complex situations in a realistic professional environment.

Self-assessment and reflection should also be included in the diagnostic process. Students listen to their own interpreting recordings and identify cultural, pragmatic, and linguistic mistakes. This develops their ability to evaluate their own performance and improve their interpreting strategies.

Finally, expert assessment rubrics are necessary for making diagnosis more objective. Teachers or professional interpreters can evaluate student performance using criteria such as accuracy, cultural adequacy, fluency, pragmatic appropriateness, and audience orientation. Clear rubrics help avoid vague evaluation and give students a better understanding of what exactly needs improvement.

These tools make diagnosis more objective and practical. Without tools, assessment becomes "I feel this student is good," which is not science, just vibes wearing a suit (Table 3) [12].

Example of an Assessment Rubric

A diagnostic rubric may include the following indicators:

Table 3. Point-Based Assessment Rubric and Performance Indicators for Linguocultural Competence

Indicator	1 point	2 points	3 points
Recognition of cultural references	Does not recognize references	Recognizes common references	Recognizes complex references accurately
Interpretation of idioms	Translates literally	Explains general meaning	Finds appropriate equivalent or adaptation
Pragmatic awareness	Misses intention	Partly understands intention	Preserves intention and tone
Cultural adaptation	No adaptation	Partial adaptation	Appropriate cultural adaptation
Fluency under pressure	Frequent pauses	Some hesitation	Smooth and confident delivery
Reflection	Cannot identify mistakes	Identifies some mistakes	Explains causes and improvement strategies

This rubric can be used before and after a training course to measure progress.

Discussion

The diagnosis of linguocultural competence is important because it reveals the real readiness of future simultaneous interpreters for professional communication. Traditional assessment often focuses mainly on grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and general accuracy. These elements are necessary, but they are not enough [13].

A future simultaneous interpreter may speak two languages well but still fail to interpret culturally marked content. For example, problems may occur when interpreting:

- ✓ idioms and phraseological units;
- ✓ humor and irony;
- ✓ political or historical references;
- ✓ religious expressions;
- ✓ etiquette formulas;
- ✓ indirect criticism;
- ✓ culturally specific metaphors;
- ✓ institutional terminology;
- ✓ emotional or evaluative language.

If these elements are not diagnosed, the student's weakness may remain hidden until real professional practice. And professional practice is a terrible place to discover that someone cannot handle cultural nuance. The audience tends to notice. Rudely, by existing.

The results of this article suggest that diagnosis should be continuous. It should be conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the training process.

At the beginning, diagnosis helps identify the student's initial level. In the middle, it shows progress and remaining difficulties. At the end, it helps determine professional readiness.

The diagnosis should also be integrated into practical interpreting classes. Students should not only complete written cultural tests, but also interpret authentic speeches containing culturally complex material. This is especially important because simultaneous interpreting happens under time pressure. Cultural competence must work automatically and quickly [14], [15].

Another important point is feedback. Diagnosis is useful only when it leads to pedagogical action. If a teacher only gives a score, the student may not understand what exactly needs improvement. Therefore, diagnostic results should include detailed feedback on cultural knowledge, pragmatic interpretation, adaptation strategies, and professional behavior.

4. Conclusion

Diagnosing the state of linguocultural competence of future simultaneous interpreters is an essential part of professional interpreter training. Simultaneous interpreting requires not only linguistic accuracy and fluency, but also the ability to understand and transfer culturally marked meanings, pragmatic intentions, social norms, emotional tone, and discourse conventions.

The article identified key components of linguocultural competence, including linguistic-cultural knowledge, pragmatic awareness, intercultural understanding, interpreting transfer ability, and reflective competence. It also proposed diagnostic criteria, levels, tools, and an assessment rubric.

The study concludes that linguocultural competence should be diagnosed systematically and continuously. Such diagnosis helps teachers identify students' weaknesses, plan targeted training, and prepare future interpreters for real professional communication. A competent simultaneous interpreter should not simply translate words quickly. They should transfer meaning, intention, and cultural nuance accurately under time pressure. Which is, frankly, a heroic activity disguised as a university skill.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis, several recommendations can be proposed for improving the diagnosis of linguocultural competence in simultaneous interpreter training. First, linguocultural competence should be diagnosed as a separate and important component of professional interpreter preparation, not as a minor part of general language assessment. Diagnostic tasks should include authentic speeches and real communicative situations, rather than only textbook examples, because future interpreters need to work with natural speech, cultural references, idioms, and pragmatic meanings.

Assessment should cover several key areas, including cultural knowledge, phraseology, pragmatics, adaptation strategies, and reflection. Teachers should use clear

assessment rubrics to make evaluation more objective and transparent. Students should also analyze their own interpreting recordings in order to identify mistakes, understand their causes, and improve their interpreting strategies.

Training materials should include culturally marked content from politics, business, education, law, media, and diplomacy. Diagnosis should be carried out regularly throughout the course, not only at the final stage. Expert evaluation should be combined with self-assessment and peer review, since this helps students develop critical thinking and professional awareness. In addition, students should receive detailed feedback, not only scores, because a number without explanation is just academic decoration pretending to be useful.

Finally, the final assessment should include real-time interpreting tasks with cultural and pragmatic difficulty. This allows teachers to evaluate whether students can recognize and transfer culturally marked meanings under real time pressure, which is one of the most important skills for future simultaneous interpreters.

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