UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

L-Università ta' Malta

THE RETOUR QUESTION
FOR MALTESE INTERPRETERS

Michela Catania

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master in Interpreting Studies at the University of Malta

March 2019

Declaration of Authenticity

L-Università ta' Malta

FACULTY/INSTITUTE/CENTRE/SCHOOL   Faculty of Arts

DECLARATIONS BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Student's I.D. /Code   95395M

Student's Name & Surname   Michela Catania

Course   Master in Interpreting Studies

Title of Dissertation

The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters

(a) Authenticity of Dissertation

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this Dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree

or
qualification of this or any other university or institution of higher education.

I hold the University of Malta harmless against any third party claims with regard to copyright violation, breach of confidentiality, defamation and any other third party right infringement.

(b) Research Code of Practice and Ethics Review Procedures

I declare that I have abided by the University's Research Ethics Review Procedures.

As a Master's student, as per Regulation 58 of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, I accept that should my dissertation be awarded a Grade A, it will be made publicly available on the University of Malta Institutional Repository.

_____   MICHELA CATANIA
Signature of Student   Name of Student (in Caps)

26th March 2019
Date

To my parents

For their unwavering love, support

and encouragement

Abstract

Malta is a bilingual country, having both Maltese and English enshrined in its constitution as its two official languages. While this may make the provision of retour interpreting services seem redundant, this is not actually the case. Being a minority language, Maltese is understood by few people outside Maltese shores, which means that, particularly in the international arena, interpreting services from Maltese to English are highly sought after.

This study will look further into the retour question, first and foremost by investigating the issue from two contrasting points of view: that in favour of interpreting into a foreign language out of a mother tongue, and that against.

This argument will lead into a discussion of the reasons why an increasing number of interpreting training institutions are choosing to include retour interpreting training in their training courses and pinpoint the stumbling blocks which student interpreters working with different languages are encountering along the way.

While quite a few studies have been carried out internationally with the primary focus of studying the retour interpreting technique and its implications, no studies discussing the use of retour by Maltese interpreters have been carried out as yet. For this reason, a questionnaire was disseminated among Maltese interpreting students and interpreters working with a retour in order to get a better understanding of the challenges faced by Maltese interpreters and whether these differ at all from those faced by interpreters working with other language combinations.

The main aim of this study is to shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of Maltese retour interpreters and put forward suggestions on how this unique interpreting tool can be sharpened to ensure that the quality of each interpreting performance into English is just as high as interpreting performances delivered in their mother tongue. No interpreting performance can ever be perfect, as there will always be some room for improvement. However, interpreters constantly strive to get as close to perfection as they possibly can. Recognising where they are going wrong and learning about how they can improve is the first step.

Acknowledgements

This study would not have come to fruition without the help of several people.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my tutor, Ms. Victoria Dimech, for her advice, support and guidance at each stage of the research process. I would also like to express my gratitude towards all the interpreting lecturers at the University of Malta, who introduced me to the world of interpreting in the first place, and whose feedback and guidance during the past two years led me to where I am today.

I would also like to thank each and every interpreting student and professional interpreter who took the time to answer each question laid out in the questionnaire. This dissertation could not have been completed without your contributions, which will, without a shadow of a doubt, help future students in their journey towards a professional career in interpretation.

Most of all, I would like to thank my brother, my parents, colleagues and friends who constantly encouraged me to keep moving forward, and who never failed to put a smile on my face when the going got tough.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Glossary of Key Terms

A language: "The interpreter's native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language), into which the interpreter works from all her or his other languages, and as a general rule, in both modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive." (AIIC, Regulation governing admissions and language classification).

Active Language: "Active languages are those languages into which the interpreter works". An active language can either be the interpreter's mother tongue (an A language) or a B language (AIIC, How we work).

B language: "A language other than the interpreter's native language, of which she or he has a perfect command and into which she or her works from one or more of her or his other languages" (AIIC, Regulation governing admissions and language classification).

C language: "Languages, of which the interpreter has a complete understanding and from which she or he works" (AIIC, Regulation governing admissions and language classification).

Passive language: "Passive languages are those languages of which the interpreter has complete understanding and from which s/he interprets", otherwise referred to as C languages (AIIC, How we work).

Retour interpreting: Interpreting from an A language into a B language.

Relay interpreting: Relay interpreting, also referred to as 'indirect interpreting', occurs when interpreters use "the output of another interpreter [working with a retour] as the source" (AIIC, Selecting conference interpreters).

Chapter 1.   Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Being proficient, or even fluent, in more than one language and being able to interpret between them are two completely different stories. Interpreting requires particular skills and coping strategies which allow an interpreter to handle a large intake of information, process it and deliver the same information to an audience whose language and culture more often than not differ from those of the speaker. Each language and each interpreting direction come with their own challenges, but the retour technique in particular is one of the most challenging to handle, given that interpreters would be interpreting out of their mother tongue into a foreign language. The next few chapters will provide further insight into what retour interpreting actually is and whether or not the difficulties faced by Maltese retour interpreters differ from those encountered by other retour interpreters working with different languages.

1.2. Why focus a study on retour interpreting?

Retour interpreting is probably the most controversial interpreting technique in use, which is precisely what makes it the most interesting technique to study. The most commonly used interpreting direction is interpreting from a foreign language into the interpreter's mother tongue, since many linguists and interpreters are of the opinion that interpreters can only interpret fluently and coherently when they interpret into the language they are most familiar with – their mother tongue. Conversely, several other interpreters argue in favour of interpreting out of a mother tongue and into a foreign language for a variety of reasons, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.3. Why analyse factors influencing the Maltese retour interpreter?

Given that Malta is a bilingual country, most citizens are able to converse in both English and Maltese, in varying degrees of fluency, and so retour interpreting is most probably one of the least sought after interpreting techniques in the local market. However, since Maltese is a minority language, the importance of the availability of retour interpreting services is greater than in the case of other widely spoken languages, particularly in the international arena.

The linguistic structures and historic make-up of the Maltese language make it practically impossible for a foreign audience to understand even the simplest of phrases. The Maltese retour interpreter is therefore faced with the added pressure of ensuring that whatever is said is not only transmitted in its entirety in a different language, but must also make sure that the message is understood by the audience, whose customs, culture and sometimes even manner of expression differ from the interpreter's.

For this reason, training is of the essence, in order to guarantee that the quality of the retour interpretation services offered by Maltese interpreters is on par with the high-quality interpretation services provided by interpreters working with other languages. Since the Master in Interpreting Studies programme was launched at the University of Malta, all student interpreters were trained to work to and from English, and could choose an additional foreign language to work out of and interpret into Maltese. Interpreting training is two-fold, splitting the focus between interpreting training and linguistic training, in order to cover all bases. While this has been the case for the past few years, research has not yet been carried out on the mistakes that Maltese retour interpreters are more susceptible to make and how training can help them recognise and correct them, in a bid to understand better the

challenges that need to be addressed from the beginning of the student's journey into the interpreting profession.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to identify the challenges associated with the retour interpreting technique in general, then delve deeper into how a particular language combination can affect a retour interpreter's performance. Defining these areas of weakness will allow for possible remedies to be found, making students more aware of how they can recognise and tackle inevitable obstacles going forward.

As explained above, the study will take a detailed look at retour interpreting between Maltese and English, focusing on the particular areas which Maltese student interpreters and professional interpreters alike feel are holding them back, given the bilingual setting in which they are working, and the role that training plays in helping student interpreters to overcome these difficulties and improve their interpreting performances overall.

By the end of this study, the researcher will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1.   'Which are the difficulties faced by interpreters taking on retour and how can they be overcome?'

2.   'Do Maltese interpreters feel stronger interpreting into their mother tongue or their B language?'

3.   'How can training help Maltese interpreters develop solid retour interpreting skills?'

1.5. Conclusion

The retour technique has become an important tool for Maltese interpreters, but understanding the technique before attempting to work with it is crucial. Given the lack of empirical research carried out on the subject, particularly in the case of the Maltese retour, certain gaps of information related to retour need to be filled. The exploration of several literature sources will serve as a starting point, shedding light on the different views on retour interpreting, its advantages and disadvantages. This chapter will also help to identify possible weaknesses associated with the use of the retour interpreting technique. Chapter 3 presents a detailed explanation of the methodology used by the researcher in carrying out this study, including the different data collection methods chosen and the reasoning behind the choice of presentation of the results. The findings of the second chapter will then be compared to the results obtained from a questionnaire carried out among Maltese students and interpreters, which will be presented and discussed in further detail in Chapter 4. Last but not least, Chapter 5 draws conclusions based on the analysis of the results presented in the previous chapter, and proposes recommendations on how any potential problems related to retour interpreting, locally or otherwise, could be remedied.

Chapter 2.   Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The interpreter's working languages are divided into three categories by the International
Association of Conference Interpreters, referred to as AIIC. On the one hand, active
languages, which are those s/he interprets from and into, are referred to as A languages and B
languages. On the other hand, all passive languages, that the interpreter has a full
understanding of but only interprets from, fall under the C language category.

While AIIC defines the A language as the interpreter's mother tongue, the B language is
defined as a language "other than the interpreter's native language, of which she or he has a
perfect command and into which she or he works from one or more of her or his other
languages" (AIIC, Selecting conference interpreters). This type of interpreting is referred to
as 'retour', deriving from the French noun meaning 'return' or, in this case, working from an
A language back into a B language.

Since interpreters having a B language in their language combination are generally more
fluent in their mother tongue than their B languages, most interpreters choose to interpret into
a second language exclusively from their A language (Jones, 2014). However, AIIC also
explains that an interpreter can also choose to interpret from both their active and their
passive languages into a B language in only one mode of interpretation, either consecutive or
simultaneous (AIIC, 2012).

This chapter studies the concept of directionality, which remains one of the most hotly debated issues in the interpreting world, and to this date still divides the interpreting community.

The chapter also outlines studies which have been carried out over the past few years in an effort to determine which problems interpreters face when interpreting into a language other than their mother tongue.

The literature sources consulted in this chapter will hence serve as a foundation for the study the researcher will be carrying out in relation to the retour question for Maltese interpreters.

2.2. The issue of directionality in retour interpreting

'Directionality' in retour interpreting refers to whether interpreters work from their mother tongue into a B language or vice versa. To this date, not many studies have been carried out regarding the issue of directionality. However, opinions on the topic are generally divided into two, with linguists and interpreters either favouring interpretation solely from active and passive languages into the mother tongue on the one hand, while, on the other hand, others prefer to practice and promote working in both directions.

2.2.1. The drawbacks to interpreting into a non-native language

According to Pöchhacker (2004), Gile (2005) and Perret (2013), the former opinion was most commonly held by linguistic organisations and interpreters working in Western Europe, who believed that interpreters should only work into their mother tongue, or A language, from foreign languages, in order to ensure fluency, clarity and spontaneity in their delivery.

It was Seleskovitch and Lederer of the ESIT School for Interpreters and Translators in Paris who developed the foundation of this argument, the "théorie du sens". This theory holds that interpretation depends on the interpreter's ability to detach himself from the words of a speaker and transmit only the underlying message. For this reason, they explain that an interpreter can only transmit a coherent message when interpreting into their mother tongue. Seleskovitch and Lederer go on to outline three main points to support this argument, the first being that interpreting into a language other than the mother tongue adds unnecessary stress to the interpreter's work. They also stipulate that interpreting into one's native tongue rather than out of it will result in a fluent, "natural-sounding [rendition]... which native speakers can follow easily". Finally, they argue that interpreters working into their A language have a lower risk of falling behind, and consequently omitting information from their interpretation, purely because they are unable to express themselves freely in a foreign language (Seleskovitch and Lederer, 1989).

This final argument was supported by a study carried out by Darò, Lambert and Fabbro, who found that the errors made by simultaneous interpreters were influenced by the direction of their interpretation. They also found that errors which led to the loss of information occurred more frequently when the interpreters worked from their A language into their B language (Darò, et al., 1996).

Seleskovitch and Lederer's theory is also behind AIIC's belief that retour interpreting should be avoided at all costs, as can be seen in the association's Code of Professional Ethics and Professional Standards. Article 7(c) of the Code of Professional Ethics clearly states that teams of conference interpreters should be formed in such a way that relay interpretation is avoided as much as possible (AIIC, Code of professional ethics). Article 6(3) of the Professional Standards adopted by the association reiterates that "[t]eams of interpreters must

be put together in such a way as to avoid the systematic use of relay." It goes on to explain that, in the absence of any alternative to the use of relay, "the team shall comprise at least two interpreters able to provide a relay from that language. In addition, if the relay is provided from a two-way booth, at least three interpreters shall work in that booth" (AIIC, Professional standards).

The use of the term 'relay' refers to a situation where interpreters working during a conference do not understand all of the languages being used and so need to work off the retour of one of their colleagues in a different booth. This has become the case within the European Union, particularly after the 2004 enlargement, when minority languages such as Maltese were introduced into the already multilingual fold of the union. Given that the European Union promotes the use of minority languages as well as the right of European citizens to express themselves freely in their mother tongue within the institutions, it therefore needs to provide interpretation services, especially in meetings where all 24 official languages are being used. However, not all language booths are composed of teams of interpreters who cover all language combinations. For this reason, the use retour interpreting and, more specifically, relay, within the European institutions has become a necessity.

Despite the fact that Seleskovitch acknowledges the growing demand for training in retour interpretation to cater for the needs of the ever-changing European Union, she maintains her stance on directionality, arguing that interpreters work best into their native languages because "[f]ew interpreters working into and from widely used languages have a good enough working knowledge of their B languages to be able to perform equally well into both their B and A languages" (Seleskovitch, 1999).

The notion that interpreters can only express themselves in a free, natural manner when interpreting into their mother tongue was also supported by Déjean Le Féal, who argues that the knowledge of a native language comes with what she refers to as a 'corrective instinct', that alerts people using the language to the exact error they are making whenever they express themselves incorrectly. She goes on to explain that this instinctive reaction is missing when speaking in acquired languages, leading errors to be overlooked and adding to the risk that the speaker's original message will get lost in translation when interpreters work out of their native language (Déjean Le Féal, 2000).

This proved to be the case in a study carried out by Donovan (2004), who conducted surveys among interpreters, working with French and English, as well as delegates during 30 conferences in Paris between 2001 and 2002. She found that, while directionality made no difference to the delegates' satisfaction with the quality of interpretation services, the interpreters were more reluctant to interpret into their B language, due to the fact that they felt more insecure and less able to monitor their output when interpreting out of their mother tongue (Donovan, 2004).

According to Donovan (2004), this was particularly the case when the interpreters needed to interpret an "unexpected conceptual area", which includes idioms, witticisms and anecdotes. Baker touches on this aspect of interpreting into a B language in a 1992 study, where she states that idioms and fixed expressions cannot be truly exploited by interpreters unless they are native speakers of the language (Baker, 1992). While this seems to be the most commonly held belief, the Council of Europe's Chief of the Interpretation Department Sally Bailey-Ravet brings up an opposing argument by describing interpreters as "communication facilitators". She goes on to explain that interpreters are expected to have perfect knowledge not only of the language they are interpreting into but also of the culture and mentality of the

country, in order to be able to transfer a message, or even a sentiment, from one cultural setting to another (Perret, 2013).

2.2.2. The benefits of interpreting out of a native language

In contrast to the views held by the Western European interpreters, the Eastern European camp, led by the former Soviet Union, argued that interpreters working into their B language have an advantage over their non-retour interpreting counterparts, since they have a complete understanding of the source language (Gile, 2005).

Denissenko challenges the views of Baker (1992), Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) that clear and complete interpretations of high quality can only be delivered in a native language, arguing that "a full or near full message gotten across even if in a somewhat stiff, less idiomatic or slightly accented language serves the purpose much better than an elegantly-worded and impeccably pronounced half message or less" (Denissenko, 1989). She goes on to say that source language comprehension is the key element to an interpretation of the highest quality, and explains that getting caught up in elaborate language or misunderstanding the source can lead the interpreter to fall behind and leave out important components of the original message.

Fernández echoes this sentiment in her 2005 study, where she proposes the argument of a "cognitive economy" (Fernández, 2005). She explains that, since the interpreter's choices of wording are more limited when working into a language that is not his or her mother tongue, the interpreter does not need to put in as much effort in reformulating the words of a sentence because he or she will only be able to transmit the message and thus, paradoxically, facilitating the task at hand (Fernández, 2005).

Denissenko's argument was further enforced by a study carried out by Tommola and Helevä (1998), who studied the interpretations of Finnish students working from English into Finnish and vice versa to test the accuracy of the students' interpretations. They found that the accuracy of the students' interpretation in both directions was equally sufficient when interpreting simple texts. However, the students delivered a more accurate interpretation of more complex texts when interpreting out of their native tongue, Finnish, and into their B language, English (Tommola and Helevä, 1998). This result contrasts directly with that achieved by Chang and Schallert, who found that Chinese retour interpreters were overall more accurate when working into their A language rather than when they worked into their B language (Chang and Schallert, 2007).

However, two separate studies carried out among Korean retour interpreting students and German retour interpreting student, both working into English, yielded similar results to those achieved by Tommola and Helevä (1998). Lee found that Korean interpreting students, working to and from Korean and English, were on the one hand more likely to make semantic errors when working into their native language, but on the other hand more likely to make grammatical mistakes and errors in presentation when interpreting into their B language (Lee, 2003). Färber (2002) also found that German interpreting trainees delivered more accurate and complete interpretations when working into their B language, English, from their A language, German.

Therefore, in contrast to the findings of Darò, Lambert and Fabbro (1996), these studies proved, to a certain extent, that the interpreting into a native language could prove to be a greater challenge for interpreters trying to understand and work from a foreign language. However, one could not rule out that this result could also have been achieved due to the

interpreters' insufficient knowledge of certain linguistic and cultural aspects of their B and C languages.

Evidently, the studies carried out by both camps of the directionality argument have brought forward convincing evidence to support their standpoint. However, the different factors considered by each researcher, and the conflicting evidence resulting from a few of the studies, prove that the argument itself is not as clear cut as it might seem. As Gile (2005) points out, the directionality preferences of each interpreter are most often based on tradition, rather than solid facts, and, due to the significant lack of empirical research carried out on the subject, there is no way of determining which of the two arguments is the most relevant to the current situation in the interpreting world. Gile not only implies that a more balanced view on the issue of directionality needs to be adopted, but also suggests that different factors are influencing interpreters' decisions on whether or not to work with a retour, including market demands and equal proficiency in their A and B languages (Gile, 2005).

2.2.2.1.   Meeting increased market demand

Despite their disapproval of the use of retour interpreting, various interpreters from the Western camp seem to agree with Gile's point that interpreters choose to interpret into a B language in order to meet market demands. As discussed above, Seleskovitch (1999) acknowledged that the need for retour interpreters within the European Union has grown since the European Coal and Steel Community was conceived in 1951, starting with 6 countries and welcoming an additional 22 countries from around the continent into its fold to date.

Donovan and Déjean Le Féal, who are also firm supporters of the "théorie du sens", both seem to agree with Seleskovitch's reasoning. On the one hand, Donovan (2003) acknowledges that the acquisition of a B language can increase an interpreter's "market value" due to growing demand for retour interpreters, despite her insistence that working into an active language other than the mother tongue will result in an interpretation of inferior quality. On the other hand, Déjean Le Féal (2003) differentiates between interpreting into a B language simultaneously and consecutively, finding that a substantial number of interpreters who refuse to deliver a simultaneous interpretation into their B language more often than not accept to interpret out of their native language in consecutive mode.

The demand for retour and relay interpreting has grown to such an extent that international organisations are seeking out interpreters working with an AA combination. However, Bailey-Ravet explains that the Council of Europe, whose two official languages are French and English, works with both interpreters with an AA language combination as well as interpreters with an AB language combination, and remarks that both deliveries are of equally high quality (Perret, 2013).

The AA and AB combinations are not only sought after in Europe, but are also sought after in other large interpreting markets, including the American and Asian markets. Guichot de Fortis explains that, in direct contrast to AIIC's directives (AIIC, 2004), these two language combinations are the only relevant combinations that suit the needs of the local market, the downside to this being that an added pressure is put on interpreters to add a passive language as a 'B' language rather than a 'C' language to their combination, despite the fact that the interpreter's proficiency in the language might not be up to scratch (Guichot de Fortis, n.d.).

Setton (1994) explains that the situation is similar in Asia, where interpreters are required to

be fully biactive, or work proficiently, in two languages in both simultaneous and consecutive

mode. She states that interpreters are pressured into including either of the Chinese, English

or Japanese languages in their language combinations, since these are languages which are

always required in multilingual conferences, and so will need to be used by relay interpreters.

Similarly, Choi (2004) finds that 91.3% of Korean interpreters, who have been working in the

field for at least two years, work into Korean and English equally, due to the fact that "there

aren't any foreign interpreters who can work into Korean". She explains that, since the

combination is in such high demand, Korean interpreters are expected to be equally proficient

in Korean and English to even be considered within such a competitive market (Choi, 2004).

2.3. Acquiring a second active language

Apart from market demands, Gile (2005) lists a high level of proficiency in an additional

language, apart from the native tongue, among the factors which might influence an

interpreter's decision to add a B language to his or her language combination.

However, one must keep in mind that, as Guichot de Fortis points out, being a bioactive user

of two languages is not synonymous with being bilingual, since bilingual skills alone are not

enough to guarantee a successful interpretation (Guichot de Fortis, n.d.).

2.3.1. Distinguishing between different types of bilinguals

A certain degree of bilingualism is required in interpretation. In fact, bilingualism is often

described as, in the words of Bloomfield, "the native-like control of two languages"

(Bloomfield, 1935), which is one of the most important requirements that a retour interpreter

must meet. However, the degree of a person's bilingual skills can vary. Weinreich (1963) distinguishes between two main types of bilinguals; compound bilinguals and coordinate bilinguals.

On the one hand, he explains that a compound bilingual is the true, natural bilingual, who has learnt two languages in the same environment, usually during infancy, and is able to use both interchangeably, by associating different expressions in both languages with one common notion (Weinreich, 1963).

On the other hand, Weinreich (1963) describes a coordinate bilingual as one who acquires a second language in a different setting than that in which the first language was acquired. For this reason, it is also referred to as artificial bilingualism. Thiery (1978) considers the different stages in life when the second language was acquired, usually after infancy when the first language was acquired, as well as the different context in which the language was learnt, with the second language usually being taught at school while the first language was taught at home. Given the different environments in which the languages were acquired, the speaker develops two independent systems of communication, leading linguists to suggest that, contrary to compound bilinguals, coordinate bilinguals would be unable to translate or interpret from one language to another due to the separate compartmentalisation of both languages and their respective grammars (Diller, 1970). However, Hamers and Blanc (1989) disagree with this view, on the grounds of lack of evidence proving "that coordinate bilinguals might make better translators than compound ones, and vice versa".

Weinreich (1963) also recognises subordinate bilinguals, who learn a second language by means of their first language. This means that subordinate bilinguals' mother tongue dominates over their acquired language, meaning that they would need to identify an object

or a concept in their first language before identifying it in the second language. However, the only two types of bilingualism that are recognised by linguists nowadays are compound and coordinate bilingualism.

Despite Hamers and Blanc's argument that compound bilinguals and coordinate bilinguals are equally able to interpret, Kornakov (2001) suggests that coordinate bilinguals work best as retour interpreters. He explains that translation is most commonly used to teach a second language artificially, and so connections with the native language are created instinctively. This allows interpreters to be quicker on their feet when interpreting, particularly in simultaneous mode. Conversely, as explained above, when a second language is acquired, a language system is created independently from that of the first language.

However, Kornakov (2001) also acknowledges that compound bilingualism comes with its own advantages. He argues that a person is more likely to achieve native fluency in a second language by being immersed in a community where it is spoken, that is by acquiring the language naturally. This notion is supported by D'Acierno (1990), who explains that when children acquire languages naturally, they are not only exposed to a language but they are also immersed into a culture, allowing them to become a member of the community. She finds that adults find it harder to integrate into a community which is not their own out of fear of losing their natural social identity.

Kornakov (2001) goes on to explain that it is more difficult for a compound bilingual to forget a naturally acquired language than it is for a coordinate bilingual, who acquires a second language artificially. He states that a coordinate bilingual interpreter needs to use the second language regularly in order to remain fluent in the language and to prevent resorting to literal translation rather than interpretation.

2.3.2. The difference between being bilingual and being a biactive interpreter

Lynn Visson (1999) dispels the myth that all bilinguals are capable of being interpreters, by stating that "contrary to what most people think, many interpreters are not [naturally] bilingual, and many bilinguals are incapable of simultaneous interpretation. Some bilinguals cannot interpret the simplest of conversations" (Visson, 1999).

As Lambert (1978) points out, interpreters require a particular skill set that goes beyond basic bilingualism. He explains that an interpreter is trained to not only understand two or more languages, but to understand what is implied by the words being spoken and to decode and transmit successfully the message that the speaker wants to convey. Kolers (1973) cites this to be the main difference between interpretations and literal translations of a speech. He finds that interpreters are able to decipher the social and cultural context in which a person is speaking, and so they process the words they receive in one language and transmit a message that can be understood in not only a different language but also a different culture. In these cases, he states that a lack of interpreting skills resulting in word-for-word translations could lead to the wrong message being conveyed, or to the point of the speech being lost entirely.

Therefore, even though all interpreters require a certain degree of bilingualism in order to interpret successfully, retour interpreters in particular are required, rather than to be bilingual, to be fully biactive in two languages in both simultaneous and consecutive mode. A person who is considered to be a biactive user of two languages is not only equally fluent and proficient in each of the languages, which he or she can interpret to and from interchangeably, but also culturally aware of the communities they are interpreting for.

Retour interpretation of high quality remains highly sought after in the international market (Donovan, 2003) but, as Skutnabb-Kangas (1984) suggests, interpreting requires abilities that need to be built on solid foundations that can only be moulded by specialised interpreting training courses.

2.4. Training interpreters to work into a non-native language

Skuntabb-Kangass (1984) and Seleskovitch (1999) are just two of the numerous linguists who recognised the need to draw up courses in retour interpreting, in conjunction with interpreting training in simultaneous and consecutive mode into the mother tongue, in order to satisfy the market demand. In fact, an international survey carried out by Opdenhoff among 2,129 interpreters in 94 countries showed that only 1.7% of the group of interpreters disagreed with offering retour interpreting training at university level. 26.7% of the participants were in favour of offering retour interpreting training solely to students with specific language combinations, while 36.1% were in favour of offering retour interpreting training to all students, regardless of their language combinations. The remaining participants stated that retour training should be a compulsory component of interpreting courses, with 13.7% agreeing that students with specific language combinations should be subject to the course and 21.9% agreeing that all students, regardless of their language combination, should be obliged to follow this taught component of the course (Opdenhoff, 2011).

Upon finding that the main concern for interpreting trainers was not "whether retour interpreting should be taught, but how it can be taught", Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff (2014) studied different conference interpreting teaching techniques from Spanish into English and German in universities within the European Higher Education Area. They claim that retour interpreting training from English into Spanish and vice versa was not even

considered until recently, when an obvious need for the language combination in the local market needed to be met. They go on to explain that the situation with the Spanish and German language combination differed slightly, since the combination was offered to students in German universities when interpreting training courses first opened and, a few decades ago, the same combination also became available to interpreting students studying in Spanish universities. This is due to the fact that the combination is not only highly sought after in German-speaking countries but also in the Spanish interpreting markets (Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff, 2014).

However, not all countries have been hit by a surge in demand for retour interpreters, for the simple reason that retour has always been a necessity either within international organisations or in the local market. In fact, this seems to be the case in both Poland and Malta, where retour interpreting training is considered to be an intrinsic part of interpreting training courses at university level. Gumul (2017) explains that one of the main reasons why retour training has always been the norm for Polish interpreters is due to "the limited scope of Polish on the international arena" (Gumul, 2017). Similarly, a Maltese retour into English is highly sought within the institutions of the European Union, since few interpreters from the other 23 language booths have Maltese as their C language.

2.4.1. Introducing retour interpretation

Opdenhoff and Iglesia (2014) start tackling the subject of teaching and learning the retour technique by first and foremost distinguishing between three concepts: aptitude, skill and competence.

According to the linguists, both aptitude and skill can be encouraged or learned, since an aptitude is considered to be a natural ability, and a skill is defined as the ability to fall back on previously attained knowledge and use it effectively during a performance. Opdenhoff and Iglesia (2014) highlight the importance of adopting a "constructivist" approach when training students to interpret, that is by helping them to acquire new knowledge by adapting previously attained knowledge through personal experience. This tends to be the case for most interpreters, who attain most of their knowledge through practice by means of pedagogical materials, tasks and simulations in the interpreting lab.

The glue that binds all these elements together is competence, "a combination of skill and aptitude, together with knowledge or understanding, and behaviour or attitude" (Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff, 2014). In the case of retour interpreters or interpreting students, this translates to meeting the expectations of a client or a lecturer by using their skills and knowledge to professionally and successfully interpret the speaker's original message. Opdenhoff and Iglesia study the competences required in the retour interpreting context in further detail, by diving them into specific competences, which are directly related to interpreting, and general competences, which can also be linked to other professions.

Among the general competences, Opdenhoff and Iglesia (2014) list skills and abilities which are required for all modes of interpreting, regardless of directionality or language combinations, including "cognitive abilities", which refers to the mental process of understanding and analysing information that the interpreter is receiving, "methodological abilities", meaning that student interpreters must have a basic understanding of what the interpreting profession entails, "technological dexterity", since an interpreter should have to make the most of the technology at hand for research as well as interpreting practice, and

finally "interpersonal skills", that is skills which help interpreters communicate more effectively with clients or colleagues.

Another general competence which applies mainly to retour interpreting is "linguistic skills", which refers to improving fluency in the interpreter's B language and gaining a deeper understanding of the target audience's culture to facilitate communication (Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff, 2014). While interpreters might have more than one active language, the interpreter's linguistic competence of either language may vary. In fact, Carroll (1978) distinguishes between the linguistic competences required of an interpreter interpreting into an A language and into a B language. On the one hand, he states that interpreters are expected to have an excellent command of their mother tongue. He explains that interpreting into an A language not only requires lexical knowledge, but also syntactic and semantic flexibility, linguistic prediction, as well as the ability to communicate effectively. On the other hand, Carroll (1978) suggests that the essential verbal competences that interpreters interpreting into a B language must master first and foremost are correct pronunciation and correct grammar. Apart from this, he explains that retour interpreters are also expected to deliver clear, fast, confident and precise interpretations into their B languages. However, he admits that a good retour performance also depends on the interpreter's grasp of the retour technique.

The specific competences, as explained above, are intrinsic to the interpreting profession. In this case, Opdenhoff and Iglesia (2014) recognise that different modalities, ranging from liaison to conference interpreting, require different competences. They also point out that specialised knowledge is required for certain subject matters, such as technical or scientific terminology. In this case, Adams (2002) recommends that students study the terminology that they come across, or expect to come across, in different speeches, and to keep in mind that

they are, as Bailey-Ravet refers to them, "communication facilitators" (Perret, 2013) who might need to explain cultural references which might not be understood by the audience.

Lastly, they emphasise that different language combinations require different competences, particularly when learning to interpret into a B language (Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff, 2014). This argument is also brought up in Gile's 2005 study on directionality, where he outlines "language-pair specific factors" which retour interpreters need to tackle. For example, Gile (2005) points out that the difficulty of a particular speech increases when an interpreter must interpret from an overly-expressive language, "with a relatively high frequency of idioms, proverbs or cultural quotations" (Gile, 2005), to a language which is not as expressive. He goes on to explain that a heavier load is placed on the interpreter's memory and thought process, not only when interpreting from a concise language to a less concise one, but also when interpreting between languages having vastly different sentence structures and therefore requiring the interpreter to listen for a longer time before starting to interpret.

2.4.2. Improving knowledge of a B language

Despite the fact that technique plays an important role in retour interpretation, the first step that student interpreters must take is to activate their B language. In fact, Llewellyn Smith (2018) does not refer to the practice of interpreting from an A language into a B language as a means towards an end, but rather as "the end goal of a retourist" (Llewellyn Smith, 2018). Here, Llewellyn Smith is building on Le Féal (1981)'s notion that an interpreter's retour technique is improved by activating the B language, and not vice versa. Láng (2002) points out that, while certain interpreting schools do not offer courses which directly help students activate their B language, the ones that do are missing the mark, since they focus mostly on teaching students new terminology. She goes on to explain that interpreting students are

required to have a good standard of grammatical and lexical knowledge before being
admitted to the course, and it is their unnatural-sounding interpretation into a B language
which needs to be improved. For this reason, Láng (2002) suggests that interpreting teachers
focus on four main areas of knowledge when teaching B language enhancement classes, these
being knowledge of pragmatics, foreign customs and cultures, terminology and grammar, as
well as presentation skills.

2.4.2.1.   Pragmatic competence

Pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics, studies "language from the point of view of users,
especially […] the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in
social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of
communication" (Crystal, 1997). In contrast to 'grammatical competence', which is referred
to by Chomsky as the "knowledge of form and meaning", 'pragmatic competence' is defined
as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in
conformity with various purposes" (Chomsky, 1980). As previously explained in
Seleskovitch and Lederer's "théorie du sens", pragmatic competence takes precedence over
grammatical competence while an interpreter is interpreting, since the context in which
utterances are spoken bear more significance to an interpreter than the literal meaning of any
particular word or phrase. While Minns (2002) acknowledges that an important part of the
interpreter's role is to understand what a speaker is saying, he emphasises that the
interpreter's primary job is to pass on the speaker's message to members of an audience, who
have not understood what was said the original speech, in a way which makes sense to them.

In order to bring interpreting students out of their comfort zone and expose them as much as
possible to their B language, Minns (2002) suggests that language enhancement classes are

taught by native speakers of the students' B language, who do not understand the students' A language. Minns (2002) explains that this method of teaching will encourage the students to deliver a clearer, more natural-sounding interpretation. An added advantage of interpreting students becoming more accustomed to using their B language actively is that their language prediction skills improve significantly. For this reason, the EMCI Consortium advises language enhancement teachers to carry out "lexical and syntactic anticipation" exercises with their students, where students are given the first part of a sentence and are then encouraged to complete it. In this way, students will also familiarise themselves with commonly-used collocations and how their meaning could change in a different context (EMCI Consortium, 2002).

Since the opportunities for interaction can be limited inside a classroom, Llewelyn Smith (2018) encourages interpreting students to incorporate their B language into their daily lives, for example by changing the language setting on social media accounts from their A language to their B language. She also recommends that students surround themselves with native speakers of the B language, either by spending some time living in a foreign country where the language is spoken at a native level, or by becoming friends with foreigners who speak the language fluently through activities or organisations, such as debating societies. While this can be a good method to become aware of different meanings that utterances could take up in different contexts, Llewelyn Smith (2018) warns that if such native speakers are not ready to correct students speaking in their B language when they make a mistake, they will not be able to make significant progress.

2.4.2.2. Lexical and grammatical competence

A survey carried out by Donovan (2002) among delegates who required retour interpretation while attending various international conferences between January 2002 to April 2003 found that lack of lexical knowledge was one of the primary reasons why delegates felt that the service they were being given was "inadequate" at times. Several delegates also commented on the need for interpreters to have access to the relevant documentation that will be discussed during the meeting beforehand, so that they would be able to prepare themselves accordingly. While documentation might not always be made available to the interpreters beforehand, the interpreters are usually aware of the main subject of the conference. For this reason, Donovan recommends that the interpreter reads up on the subject before the meeting since, as the survey showed, "[a]n interpreter who uses incorrect terminology is assumed not to have any genuine understanding of the subject matter and thus lacks credibility" (Donovan, 2002). Another study carried out among Polish students interpreting into English at the University of Warsaw showed that the majority of mistakes which irritated the listeners the most were related to terminology and grammar. Among the most obvious mistakes that the students made while interpreting, Tyruk (2002) mentions the following: borrowing certain terms, phrases and grammatical structures from their A language, using the wrong articles and prepositions, leaving out logical links, making up words which do not exist in the B language by following the morphological structures of the B language, having insufficient knowledge of modern terminology and slang, and using 'false friends', i.e. words found in the B language which sound similar to words used in the A language but which have different meanings.

Other grammatical mistakes were noted by several other researchers. For example, Köhlmyhr (2003)'s dissertation, carried out among sixteen-year-old Swedish students speaking English showed that Swedes have the most difficulty with nine specific English prepositions, these being *about*, *at*, *by*, *for*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to* and *with*. She found that the most common mistakes made by Swedish students when working into English were substituting either one of these prepositions for another, adding a preposition where is not needed and omitting an essential preposition. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003) explain that these mistakes are caused by a subconscious influence of the speaker's A language on the B language being spoken. This leads them to reason that when our knowledge of a B language fails us, we turn to our knowledge of our mother tongue. In fact, Köhlmyr (2003) finds that our knowledge of an A language can influence our delivery into a B language in two ways: grammatically and non-grammatically. She explains that grammatical influence occurs when there is a discrepancy in the use of prepositions in sentences which mean the same thing in different languages. One of the examples she gives to prove her point is the English phrase "walk around the streets" which Swedes tend to translate as "*walk around *in* the streets" since the original phrase in Swedish takes the preposition. In the case of non-grammatical influence, which according to Köhlmyr causes the vast majority of propositional mistakes, most mistakes related to the incorrect use of articles or prepositions are made "due to semantic, phonological and/or orthographic similarity between the two languages, also resulting in grammatical errors" (Köhlmyr, 2003).

The use of 'false friends' is also a relatively common phenomenon in interpreting. Fusco found that morphological, syntactic and lexical 'false friends' are a common occurrence particularly when interpreters interpret between genetically similar languages, such as Italian and Spanish (Fusco, 1990). One of the examples she gives of lexical false friends noted in

Spanish interpretations into Italian is the word 'burro', meaning 'donkey' in Spanish and 'butter' in Italian (Fusco, 1990).

The importance of reading up on a particular subject and preparing related terminology lists is much greater when preparing to interpret into a B language, rather than a mother tongue. Déjean Le Féal (2002) reminds interpreting trainers that anyone is capable of putting an idea into words when the person is speaking in his or her mother tongue, but when it comes to interpreting into a B language, students need to put in extra effort to learn the terminology that does not come as natural to them. She explains that the more familiar a student interpreter is with a subject and the terminology related to it, the more likely he would be to reformulate the speaker's words, rather than translate them literally. Llewelyn Smith (2018) recommends the use of mobile applications, such as Memrise or Duolingo, and playing games like Taboo, as the most enjoyable ways for students to not only improve their lexical and grammatical knowledge of their B language, but also to practice their reformulation technique. Such games, combined with regular additional exercises of sight translation, will train the student interpreters' minds to instinctively think of alternative ways to express one particular idea, therefore helping them to detach themselves from the speaker's words and to instead focus more on the message that needs to be transmitted to their audience (Llewellyn Smith, 2018).

Llewelyn Smith (2018) also points out that spending time with native speakers of a B language not only improves a retour student's pragmatic competence, but is also a practical way to learn new terminology and become a more fluent and natural user of the language. However, she suggests that student interpreters have a better chance of improving their lexical knowledge by reading newspapers and classic novels, or even just by listening to podcasts or watching television, and taking note of useful terminology and stock phrases they

come across. This idea is backed by Minns (2002), who goes a step further and recommends that interpreting lecturers encourage their retour students to compile a word bank with set phrases, links and useful expressions (two of the examples he offers are "my subject today Ladies and gentleman is ……" and "let me turn now to my second point") which can be used while interpreting any speech to make the delivery sound as natural and effortless as possible.

2.4.2.3.   Presentation skills

According to Minns (2002), being armed with a good set of stock phrases and collocations can greatly improve the retour interpreter's confidence, and this will result in a better presentation overall. Presentation covers a vast range of qualities, including synchrony with the speaker, a smooth and natural delivery and lack of hesitation while interpreting (Donovan, 2002). Donovan (2002)'s survey, which is referred to above, found that delegates regarded synchrony between their speeches and the interpreter's delivery to the audience as the most important factor of retour interpretation since, according to the respondents, "listeners do not want to feel cut off from the meeting" (Donovan, 2002). Apart from speed, which might be the most obvious factor why interpreters struggle to keep up with the speaker, various other factors can throw an interpreter off guard while interpreting, hence leading the interpreter to lose synchrony with the speaker. For example, Ardito (1999) states that register can prove to be problematic when interpreting between two languages whose speakers typically express themselves in a formal manner on the one hand and informally on the other. She brings up the Dutch/Italian language pair as an example of such languages, explaining that "Even in formal contexts such as plenary session of the European Parliament, Dutch MEPs adopt a much more informal language register than their Italian colleagues, characterised by colourful metaphors and idiomatic expressions which abound in the Dutch

language" (Ardito, 1999). Ardito suggests that, when student interpreters get caught off guard by humour or informal register, they use their intonation to tackle the situation. She goes on to explain that, in this way, the interpreter will be capable of transmitting the speaker's original message with a similar ironic or sarcastic tone of voice, without feeling the need to lower the register of the target language (Ardito, 1999).

Tyruk (2002) emphasises that any language enhancement course aimed at improving interpreting students' retour deliveries must primarily make the students aware of the mistakes they make which stand out the most to native speakers, including unnatural intonation, incorrect pronunciation and phonetic interference stemming from the A language's phonetic structures. Llewelyn Smith (2018) suggests that students to find it particularly difficult to detach themselves from their A language's phonetics and intonation patterns practice shadowing a good speaker, i.e. repeating the speaker's words, in order to train their ear to recognise the natural from the unnatural.

Minns (2002) goes a step further and suggests that students not only work on linguistic aspects of their B language during their self-study time, but that trainers also devote a certain amount of teaching time to intonation and pronunciation practice. Speaking from his own experience as an interpreting trainer, Minns (2002) explains that the first step is for trainers to identify the particular problems that each student is having trouble with. He then helps each student individually to develop "drills" which will help them overcome the obstacles they face when pronouncing specific sounds. Another option he puts forward is the use of what he refers to as "accent reduction tapes", which serves the same purpose. Minns (2002) encourages trainers to use this same teaching method not only to improve a student's accent or intonation, but also to correct students who develop a habit of using incorrect tenses when interpreting, and consequently inhibiting their listeners from understanding them. This can be

done by identifying the errors that the student is consistently making, correcting them, and comparing them to the utterances that a native speaker might use in their place.

Llewelyn Smith (2018) also stresses the importance of correct pronunciation, especially when dealing with the pronunciation of international terms and names of countries and organisations (a few of the generic examples which she proposes are "IKEA", "Nobel Prize" and "Siemens"). However, it must be said that this task also requires a certain amount of cultural competence and general knowledge.

2.4.2.4.   Cultural competence and general knowledge

In the student interpreter's case, "[l]inguistic competence must go hand in hand with cultural competence" (Szabari, 2002). While Szabari (2002) explains that even fluent speakers of certain languages make the odd cultural mistake, for example by using the wrong form of address or else by intruding on cultural taboos, she goes on to state that retour interpreters must avoid making any similar intercultural error at all costs. Similarly, Rejšková (2002) emphasises the importance of student interpreters enhancing their general knowledge, due to the fact that knowledge of the B language's culture usually tends to be lacking. Consequently, this lack of knowledge will not only prevent the students from understanding the source speech or text when working from a B language, but it will also impede the student's ability to communicate effectively and essentially overcome the cultural barrier between the speaker and the audience when working with retour. She therefore concludes that student interpreters working into a B language must be well-informed about both "static facts", meaning the

history, geography and literary works of the countries of the languages into which they interpret, and "dynamic facts", here referring to current affairs (Rejšková, 2002).

Minns (2002) also builds on this point by suggesting that student interpreters arm themselves with a list of names, phrases and abbreviations related to the institutions of the speaker's country, such as "'the Estonian stock-exchange watchdog', 'the Czech environmental protection agency', 'Korean banking regulators', and 'the Vietnamese association of catfish producers'". In this way, Minns (2002) explains that student interpreters will not only be able to understand what the speaker is referring to, but that these set-phrases will also help them deliver a smoother, more natural-sounding interpretation. While some universities offer language enhancement courses, such as the 'Comparative studies of life and institutions in A and B countries' course which is offered at ELTE University in Hungary, and is aimed specifically at improving interpreting students' knowledge of economic, social, cultural, foreign and government affairs (Láng, 2002), other universities encourage their students to strengthen their cultural and general knowledge either by spending time in a country where the target language is spoken at native level, or else by working alone during self-study sessions.

Speaking from her own experience as an interpreter who travelled abroad to improve her knowledge of her B languages, Xanthopoulou (2017) admits that immersing herself in new cultures not only improved her linguistic skills but also helped her to become a better interpreter. She explains that living in the speaker's country and being affected by the same anxieties, challenges and pressures that he or she is facing will only help to transmit the message and sentiment of the speaker, as faithfully as possible. If travelling is not a viable option, Llewelyn Smith (2018) suggests that students start collecting valuable reading matter,

such as newspapers and news magazines, including the Economist, classical literature books
and news podcasts.

2.4.3. English as a B language

The fact that Malta is a bilingual country, whose official languages are Maltese and English,
means that a Maltese – English language combination has little to no market value locally,
but a strong grasp of the English language can work to the Maltese interpreters' advantage
when working within international organisations if, as Diller (1970) and Kornakov (2001)
suggest, a compound bilingual is capable of being a stronger interpreter than a coordinate
bilingual. Since opening its doors in 2005, the Department of Interpreting Studies at the
University of Malta has incorporated retour training into its curriculum.

Upon applying to follow the postgraduate course in interpreting studies at the University of
Malta, eligible students are invited to sit for an aptitude test where, amongst other skills, their
proficiency in the English language is tested. Adams (2002) suggests that there are a number
of factors that interpreting trainers need to keep in mind when testing students in their B
language before admitting them into an interpreting course. She lists the "applicants'
understanding of English, familiarity with aspects of English language culture and - to move
on to their active use of the language – fluency" as the three most important boxes that
potential students must tick before moving on to any training course related to retour
interpreting (Adams, 2002).

Adams (2002) explains that incorrect pronunciation or a foreign accent should not hinder a
potential student's ability to interpret correctly and be understood by an English-speaking
audience because, as Perret (2013) points out, the English-speaking world is multicultural,

meaning that its members are used to different accents and varieties of the language being spoken. However, Adams (2002) suggests that candidates who are incapable of communicating effectively or developing a coherent message due to a poor command of the English language should not be considered for an interpreting course. Here, she distinguishes between interpreting or memory skills and language skills, stressing that trainers need to look out for candidates with "natural-sounding language, [and] an ability to express ideas clearly along with indications of interpreting potential" (Adams, 2002).

According to Adams (2002), students following an interpreting training course should immediately recognise the limitations and requirements of working into their B language when compared to working into their mother tongue. She states that the foundation for a good retour lies mainly in the interpreter's ability to KISS (Keep It Short and Simple), transmit a message using the correct register and not be tied down by words. Finally, Adams (2002) warns students to avoid "multiple choice" interpretation, therefore suggesting that students should not backtrack and repeat a message that has already been delivered in different words, as long as the first message was correct.

2.5. Conclusion

While there are two opposing opinions regarding whether retour interpreting should even be allowed, there seems to be widespread agreement among interpreters and trainers alike regarding the importance of dedicating several hours of training time to focus solely on the retour technique and B language enhancement, particularly in the case of students who are interested in becoming retour interpreters and whose language combinations are highly sought after nationally or internationally. Literature suggests that each conceivable language combination brings with it different challenges and, while trainers would be able to guide

students during training hours, interpreting students are expected to put in at least a few additional hours of work after training, in order to significantly improve their performance. Even though multiple studies have been carried out to highlight the difficulties faced by retour interpreters interpreting between two particular languages, no research analysing the obstacles that Maltese retour interpreters face and possible ways to overcome them has been carried out as yet.

Chapter 3.   Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The main objectives of this dissertation are to explore the difficulties faced by interpreters taking on a retour, particularly in the case of interpreters having Maltese as an A language, and to determine how retour training can be tailored to help Maltese student interpreters overcome these same challenges before they enter the labour market.

This chapter outlines the type of methodology and the instruments chosen to reach the main objectives this study, as well as the factors considered when choosing between quantitative and qualitative research collection methods.

3.2. Research Methods

The research method which was deemed the best suited for the purposes of this study was the quantitative approach. After a number of factors were considered, and the advantages and disadvantages of each approach were compared, the quantitative research method was deemed to be the most suitable and practical method to collect the data required for this study.

First and foremost, in order for the results of the study to be as effective and accurate as possible, the input of a substantial number of participants, ranging from student interpreters to working interpreters to former interpreters, was needed for this study. In this regard, a quantitative data collection method, such as a questionnaire, was considered to be the most

practical way to reach potential participants living and working or studying in Malta and abroad.

The researcher also wanted to identify a statistical relationship among the following variables: the difficulties faced while interpreting out of a mother tongue, the difficulties faced while interpreting into a B language, and the coping strategies adopted in order to overcome these difficulties during a retour performance. The similarities and differences between the responses given will be compared, paving the way for the researcher to be able to differentiate between the most effective and the least effective coping strategies adopted by Maltese retour interpreters. Such comparisons can only be carried out if the data collected is quantitative, "based on precise measurement using structured and validated data-collection instruments" (Johnson and Christensen, 2014), rather than qualitative, or descriptive, data, which relies mainly on the researcher as "the primary data-collection instrument" (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

Since qualitative data is collected by the researcher by means of "in-depth interviews, participant observations, field notes and open-ended questions", amongst others, the results emerging from this type of data collection tends to be subjective. In the case of quantitative data, the research is carried out by means of particular tools, such as a questionnaire. In order for this study to yield the best results, the researcher needed to separate herself from the research matter and remain objective when analysing the participants' responses, and so the latter, rather than the former, method of data collection seemed to be the best suited for this study.

It is for this reason, along with the reasons given above, that a quantitative research method was adopted by the researcher, as it proved to be the most efficient, practical and precise method of data collection for the purposes of this study.

3.3. Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data were consulted or collected for the purposes of this study. On the one hand, the primary data was collected from interpreters who have worked or are currently working as retour interpreters with Maltese as their A language, as well as former and current university students following a postgraduate course in interpreting studies, which included training students to interpret into a B language from their A language, Maltese.

On the other hand, the researcher's secondary data sources included dissertations, academic papers, online articles, blogs, journals and books related to teaching and learning translation and interpretation.

3.3.1. Collection of Secondary Data

The aim of collecting secondary data, by interpreting and re-analysing published studies related to the research topic at hand, is primarily for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the said research topic (Johnson and Christensen, 2014). In the case of this particular study, the researcher started from the two contrasting schools of thought on whether or not retour interpreting should be practiced, let alone taught in interpreting schools. The researcher then referred to various quantitative studies as well as case studies in order to compare how different countries deal with the growing demand for retour interpretation, and

how interpreting schools are going about teaching the retour interpreting technique to their students.

While hardly any studies relating to retour interpreting in the Maltese context were found by the researcher while analysing the secondary data, various studies which provided valid information regarding interpreting out of a mother tongue into any B language were consulted. This information proved to be essential during the initial stages of the study, when the research questions were still being drafted, and particularly before the primary data was collected, as well as while the collected data was being interpreted. This is due to the fact that the secondary data, which was presented in the previous chapter, the literature review, provided the researcher with the background information needed in order to be able to draw up the right questions for the study's participants to answer. The responses to this specific set of questions will essentially provide answers to the research questions presented in the introduction to the study.

3.3.2. Collection of Primary Data

The aim of conducting primary research, particularly research which is quantitative, is "to learn about something new that can be confirmed by others and to eliminate our own biases in the process" (Driscoll, 2011). By means of the questionnaire which was sent out to eligible participants, the researcher expected to learn about general trends in the difficulties faced by Maltese interpreting students, and working interpreters alike, when interpreting out of their mother tongue, and which strategies they turned to when trying to overcome them.

As Driscoll (2011) explains, questionnaires and surveys "are particularly useful to find small amounts of information from a wider selection of people in the hopes of making a general

claim". Out of the 46 questionnaires sent out via e-mail to eligible participants (26 people were contacted as working interpreters, while the remaining 20 people who were contacted were either qualified interpreters or currently following the postgraduate course in Interpreting Studies at the University of Malta), 24 questionnaires were completed.

A questionnaire was chosen as the tool by means of which to collect primary data predominantly because of the efficiency factor. Upon completion, the questionnaire was sent out to eligible participants residing in Malta and abroad, who could access the questionnaire online and answer the set of questions whenever they felt comfortable doing so. The responses given by the anonymous respondents were immediately made accessible to the researcher, who was then able to analyse the data by means of the same survey development software used to create the questionnaire. Had the researcher chosen to carry out interviews, rather than send out a questionnaire, the data collection process would have been more time-consuming for both the researcher and the respondents. It would have also been unlikely that the researcher would analyse the collected data completely objectively and without bias.

Furthermore, by using an anonymous questionnaire to collect data, rather than carrying out research by means of an interview, bias is not only significantly reduced from the researcher's perspective but also from the respondent's perspective. Given that all verbal and visual cues are eliminated, and that anonymity is guaranteed, the respondents will feel more comfortable giving their honest opinions and answering the questions truthfully, since they would not feel like they are being observed and judged.

3.3.2.1. Research Design

While drafting the questions which were to be included in the questionnaire, a sample of which can be found in Appendix 2, two main factors were considered: the amount of questions to ask and the type of questions to ask. The researcher settled on 25 final questions, which were divided into four sections:

- The first section, entitled Section A: General Information, is comprised of 5 general questions relating to the respondent's age group, gender and occupation.
- The second section, entitled Section B: Languages, is comprised of 6 questions centring on the respondent's linguistic background.
- The third section, entitled Section C: Education and Training, is comprised of 11 questions since it is the domain of greatest interest to the researcher. This section not only aims to pinpoint the weaknesses of a Maltese retour but also to shed light on the training strategies which proved to be the most and least effective among Maltese retour interpreters.
- The fourth and final section, entitled Section D: Work, is comprised of 3 questions to be answered solely by respondents who have worked or are currently working as interpreters. The aim of this set of questions is to gain insight into the demands of the local and international labour markets.

The researcher tried to keep the number of questions to a minimum, in order to encourage as many eligible respondents as possible to participate in the study. Driscoll (2011) therefore recommends preparing surveys which take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete, in order to

make the task seem less tedious. The final version of the questionnaire which was sent out as part of this study had an estimated completion time of 7 minutes.

All 25 of the questions asked in the questionnaire were closed-ended questions, meaning that each question can be answered by choosing from a limited amount of options (Driscoll, 2011), such as 'yes or no', or a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree'. The researcher made sure to account for all possible answers by adding an "other" category, hence giving respondents the option to add their own answer rather than choosing from those provided.

3.4. Presentation of results

The responses entered manually by each participant on the Survey Monkey website were automatically made available to the researcher, and were subsequently exported to Microsoft Excel. Here, the data could be analysed further and displayed in graphs, each of which will be presented and discussed in relation to the study's research questions in the following chapter. The graphical displays were included in the discussion of results in order to present the study's findings in the clearest and most easily understandable way possible. The use of pie charts and bar graphs were particularly beneficial when comparisons needed to be made between particular questions, and helped to distinguish between answers given by the participants falling under different demographics. In order to further facilitate the understanding of the results provided for the survey questions, percentage or weighted average values were also calculated and presented alongside each graph.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In compliance with the Principles of Ethical Research Conduct set out by the University of Malta, a consent form was prepared by the researcher in order to inform research participants about how the information they provide will be used and stored while the research is being carried out, as well as of their rights under the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation. The respondents were also reminded that participation in the study is voluntary, and that they are free to discontinue the questionnaire at any moment, should they feel the need to do so. It was also made clear to all respondents that the data collected by the researcher will be handled confidentially, while anonymity will be respected at all times.

Both the consent form and questionnaire were submitted to the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC), and were duly amended upon receiving feedback from the committee. The final corrected versions of both documents were re-submitted to the FREC, as well as to the University's Data Protection Officer, Dr Roxanne Meilak Borg. Once both the questionnaire and the consent form were approved, both documents were sent out to all potential participants electronically. While eligible participants who are currently working as interpreters were contacted directly via electronic mail, former and current interpreting students of the Department of Interpreting Studies at the University of Malta were contacted through the administration department.

3.6. Limitations

The aim of this dissertation is to identify the weaknesses of Maltese retour interpreters and to determine which training strategies are strong enough to eliminate them. In order to receive

as much feedback as possible from the involved parties, a quantitative data collection method was chosen for the purposes of this study. While this allowed for accurate results and the ability to generalise, the quantitative approach sacrifices the individuality of the study's participants in favour of averaging responses and receiving just the essential information from each respondent.

In contrast to qualitative data collection methods, such as observation and interviews, which prioritise the participants' individual perceptions over any other element of the study, quantitative research is based solely on the participant's choice from a set of answers. Driscoll argues that, while anonymity encourages respondents to answer questions truthfully without any fear of being judged, such detachment from a study might tempt participants to provide incorrect information to the researcher. She explains that this is due to the fact that "people are inherently biased about how they see the world and may report their own actions in a more [favourable] way than they may actually behave" (Driscoll, 2011).

3.7. Conclusion

While this chapter lays out the framework of the research carried out as part of this study, the following chapter presents and analyses the data collected by means of the questionnaire.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to continue answering the first research question presented in the introduction to this study, i.e. 'Which are the difficulties faced by interpreters taking on retour and how can they be overcome?', in the hopes of finding out whether bilingualism helps or hinders the Maltese retour interpreter in particular. The findings presented in this chapter will also provide answers to second and third research questions posed by the researcher, i.e. 'Do Maltese interpreters feel stronger interpreting into their mother tongue or their B language?' and 'How can training help Maltese interpreters develop solid retour interpreting skills?'.

This chapter will provide valuable insight into the mindset of the Maltese retour interpreter by presenting and analysing the data collected by means of the researcher's chosen method of primary data collection, the questionnaire, while comparing the information received to the opinions of the foreign interpreters and fellow researchers quoted in the literature review.

4.2. Demographics

Out of the 46 questionnaires which were sent out to eligible respondents, 24 questionnaires were completed, representing 52% of Maltese interpreting students and graduates, some of whom have interpreted or currently interpret professionally.

The researcher found that the best demographics to divide the participants of this study were age, gender and occupation. The aim of the first few questions of the questionnaire was therefore to collect general background information about each participant. Out of the 24 total respondents aged 18-64, 19 were women and the remaining 5 were men. As explained in the table below, the majority of the respondents' ages fell under the '25 to 34 years' category (46%), followed closely by the '18 to 24 years' category (33%). Out of the remaining 5 participants, two selected the '35-44 years' category (8%), another two selected the '55-64 years' category (8%), and one selected the '45 to 54 years' category (4%). These answers proved that the majority of respondents were of a younger age, perhaps having less professional experience and therefore being more interested in contributing to a study whose results can be relevant to their own work or training.

Figure 1: Question 2 – What is your age?
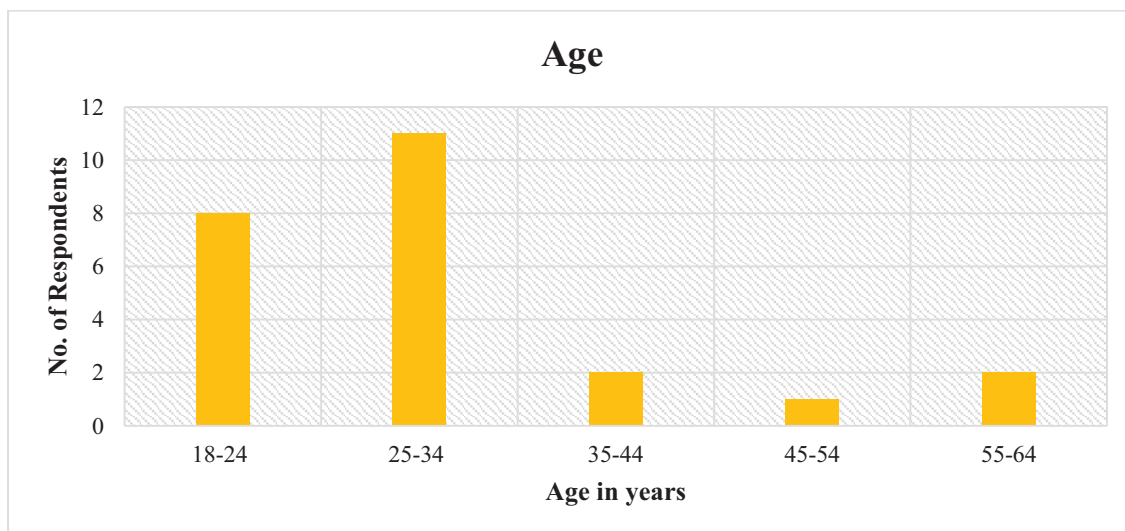
All respondents were also asked whether they are currently reading for a Master in Interpreting Studies, and whether or not they have ever practiced interpreting professionally. In this way, the researcher could divide respondents into four groups and compare each group's answers. As explained in the following chart, the four groups being composed of 3 student interpreters (13%), 6 former interpreting students who have never interpreted

professionally (25%), 8 interpreters (33%) and 7 former interpreters (29%). These results have allowed the researcher to divide some of the answers given to the following questions by the occupation of respondents, comparing and contrasting students' results to those given by respondent who have interpreted professionally.

Figure 2: Questions 4, 5 & 22 – Are you currently a student interpreter? Are you currently working as an interpreter? Have you interpreted professionally since completing training?
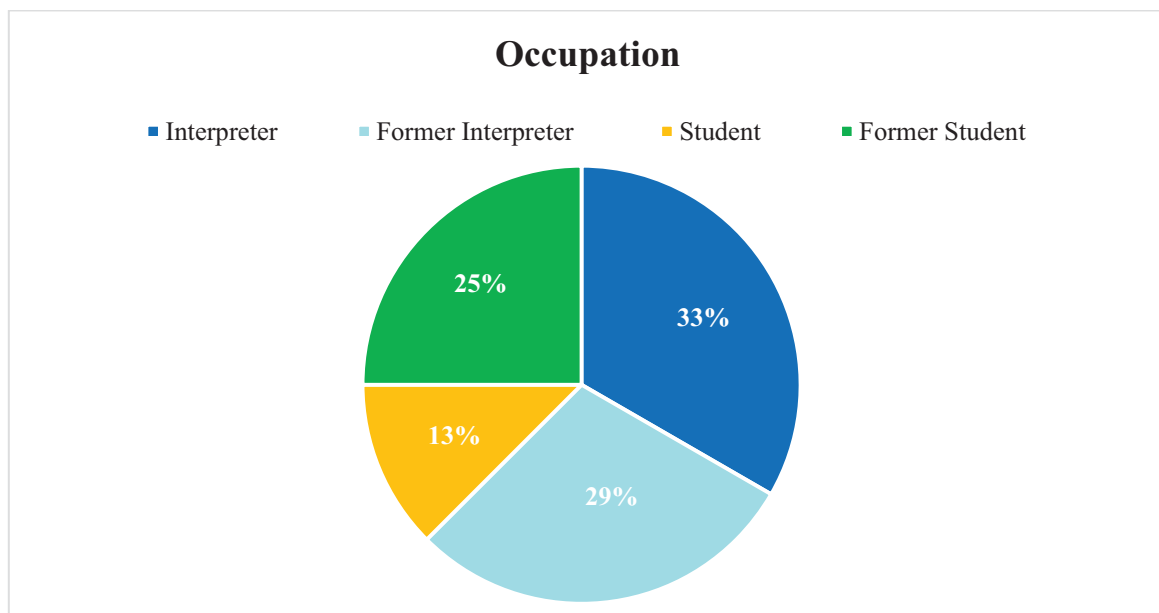
4.3. Languages

Survey respondents were asked which language combinations they work with or have worked with in the past, in order for the researcher to determine which are the most commonly used working languages among Maltese interpreters, and which is the primary retour language. As depicted in Fig. 3, all respondents selected Maltese as their A language. English was also selected by all participants as their second active language, while Spanish was selected by

only one of the participants as a second B language. While only 3 out of the 24 respondents stated that they do not work with a C language, the remaining 88% work with at least one C language along with their retour, the most frequently cited passive language being Italian (63%), followed by French (38%), German (13%) and Spanish (8%).

Figure 3: Questions 6, 7 and 8 - What are your A / B / C languages?
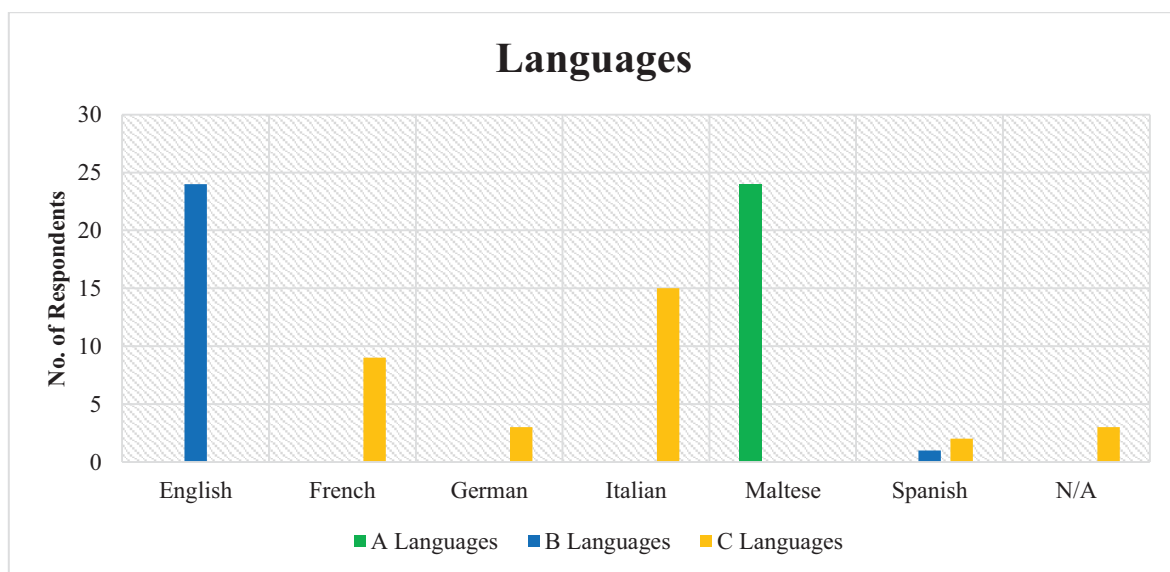
These results are consistent with the statistics published in Malta's National Statistics Office's final report on the 'Census of Population and Housing' carried out in 2011, as well as those presented in the final report on the 'Europeans and their Languages Eurobarometer' carried out in 2012.

As part of the Census, Maltese citizens over the age of 10 were asked to indicate their level of fluency in a number of foreign languages, including English, Italian, French and German. The majority of the 358,924 respondents, claimed to be most fluent in English (293,801 respondents), while 154,134 respondents stated that they have an average to advanced knowledge of Italian. The respondents' fluency in French was significantly lower (28,289

respondents), while the foreign language in which the Maltese population seemed to be the least fluent was German (5,964 respondents) (National Statistics Office, 2014). The results of the 'Special Eurobarometer 386: Europeans and their Languages', which was carried out among 500 Maltese residents aged 15 and over, were more or less the same as those published by Malta's National Statistics Office, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 1: Languages that members of the Maltese population claimed to know well enough to have a conversation.

	Census 2011 (National Statistics Office)	Eurobarometer 2012 (European Commission)
English	81%	89%
Italian	43%	56%
French	8%	11%
German	2%	1%

Both reports clearly show that, other than their mother tongue, Maltese natives tend to be the most fluent in the English and Italian languages, and the country's rich history is the main reason for this. Malta has been a bilingual country for centuries.

While the earliest version of the Maltese language was born during the 11th century, when Malta was still under Arab rule, the country's official language at the time was Classical Arabic, and remained so until Latin eventually took its place when the Normans conquered Malta in 1091. Latin remained the country's official language until the 18th century, and Sicilian became Malta's second official language in the 15th century. Meanwhile, Maltese continued to be used by the mostly-uneducated Maltese community and developed further alongside Italian and Sicilian throughout the years (Wettinger and Fsadni, 1983).

When Malta was handed over to the Knights of St. John in the 16th century, Latin and Sicilian continued to be used alongside Tuscan Italian for official purposes, but both were eventually phased out in order for Italian to become the only official language of the country, apart from the vernacular Maltese language (Briffa, 1998). The situation changed only when Malta fell under British rule in the 19th century and the language question came about, debating whether English should replace Italian as the country's official language. By the beginning of the 20th century, English had officially become Malta's second official language alongside Maltese, and remained an official language even after Malta was granted independence from the British in 1964 (Briffa, 1998).

Both Maltese and English have become compulsory National Curriculum subjects for all students attending any Maltese school, from the earliest years of childhood education up to secondary school, and both are used as languages of instruction. In fact, the Special Eurobarometer (386) survey found that learning foreign languages at school was the most common method of learning a language in Malta, with 91% of Maltese respondents stating that the only foreign languages they are proficient in were taught to them through school lessons. 69% of Maltese respondents also remarked that language courses in schools are the most effective method of language learning.

Given that Malta's economy depends largely on human resources and foreign trade due to its limited land space and resources, it is not surprising that learning at least one foreign language at secondary education level has also become compulsory, since the knowledge of any foreign language can vastly improve a Maltese citizen's career prospects (Pace, 2015). However, the Special Eurobarometer (386) survey showed that only 25% of the Maltese citizens interviewed felt that they needed to learn an additional foreign language in order to improve their job prospects in Malta. With that said, this Eurobarometer study was carried

out 6 years ago. During the past few years, the language travel and iGaming industries have continued to grow here in Malta, which opened up many doors locally for linguists who work with more than one foreign language, especially German, French and Nordic languages. It must also be said that, despite the fact that six years have passed since this survey was carried out, Malta was already one of only eight Member States in which the majority of the population (59%) has achieved the long-term EU objective to have "practical skills in at least two foreign languages" (European Commission, 2012).

The answers provided by Maltese interpreters and interpreting students for questions 6 to 9 of 'The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters' survey clearly confirm this assertion, given that 88% of survey respondents have worked with a C language (Fig.3) and only one respondent claimed that she did not consider herself to be bilingual (Fig.5).

Figure 4: Question 9 – Do you consider yourself bilingual?

Despite the fact that the respondent claimed to not be bilingual, she stated that she has worked with an English retour. As explained in the literature review, the Master in Interpreting Studies course at the University of Malta to this date has included compulsory

study-units involving training in retour interpreting from Maltese into English as well as compulsory English fluency training, allowing students to work on their language skills and improve their marketability.

Given that most Maltese children are not only taught English and Maltese simultaneously, but are usually also exposed to the English language before they even set foot in a school, it is safe to assume that the majority of the 96% of respondents who claimed that they are bilingual are in fact compound bilinguals. Several linguists, including Diller (1970), Thiery (1978), D'Acierno (1990) and Kornakov (2001), argue that only interpreters who are compound bilinguals are capable of working with a retour since they learnt two languages in the same environment, usually during infancy, and not only acquired multiple verbal expressions in different languages which represent a single idea but they were also exposed to the culture of both language communities. As the data presented in Fig. 5 clearly shows, 83% of the 24 interpreters and interpreting students surveyed agreed, or strongly agreed, with this view.

Figure 5: Question 10 – In order to be capable of retour interpretation, interpreters must be compound bilinguals. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.
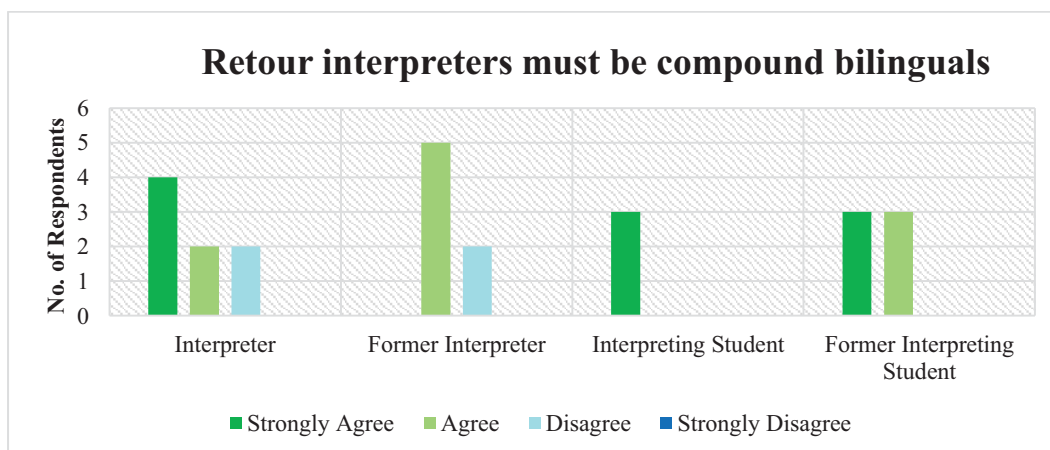
The remaining 13% shared the opinion of Kornakov (2001), who also argued in favour of coordinate bilinguals working as retour interpreters, and Hamers and Blanc (1989), who all agreed that there is not enough evidence to prove that coordinate bilinguals are less able to interpret into a second active language which they acquired artificially. One of the four survey respondents who disagreed that interpreters must be compound bilinguals to interpret into a B language is in fact an interpreter who works with two B languages (English and Spanish), one of which could have been acquired artificially.

In fact, Lambert (1978) and Visson (1999) both stress that bilingualism in itself cannot guarantee the speaker's ability to interpret a conversation. They explain that many bilinguals are incapable of interpreting, since interpreting goes beyond simply being able to speak or understand a second language, and that many interpreters are not even naturally bilingual. Kolers (1973) also explained that, rather than being bilingual, retour interpreters need to become biactive users of two languages, and acquire the interpreting skills they need to be able to transfer a message from one social or cultural context to another, without losing vital information in the process.

When interpreting into a B language rather than into the interpreter's mother tongue, this may prove to be a bigger challenge, since an additional factor influencing the interpreter's performance has been introduced: fluency in a second active language. This is the argument which was initially put forward by Western European interpreters and linguists to discourage the widespread use of retour. Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989), as well as Darò, Lambert and Fabbro (1996), used their studies to prove that retour interpreting adds onto the interpreter's pressure and stress, since they are being presented with the added difficulty of delivering a clear, natural-sounding message in a 'foreign' language while trying to keep up with the speaker and retain all the relevant information from the speaker's original message.

Therefore, according to this "théorie du sens", interpreters can only interpret accurate, complete messages when interpreting into their mother tongue. However, other studies, including those carried out by Fernández (2005) and Tommola and Helevä (1998), showed that, in certain cases, retour interpreters gave a more accurate, straight-to-the-point interpretation of a complex speech given in their mother tongue than when they worked out of their B language because they did not experience any language comprehension problems when listening to the original speech, and their gaps in knowledge of their B language made it easier for them to interpret the speaker's message rather than translate literally.

To this day, the jury's still out on whether retour interpreting should be phased out or not, due to the insufficient amount of literature proving that retour interpreters are unable to transmit accurate and coherent messages when interpreting out of their mother tongue. Survey respondents were also divided on the subject matter. On the one hand, the majority of interpreters and former interpreters (73%) backed Fernández (2005), Tommola and Helevä (1998) in this argument, and disagreed with the notion that the quality of retour interpretation is inferior to any form of interpretation from a passive language into a mother tongue. On the other hand, the majority of current and former interpreting students (56%) agreed with the Western European interpreters' "théorie du sens", by stating that interpreters perform better when interpreting into their mother tongue (Fig. 6).

Figure 6: Question 11 – Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) state that interpreters can only transmit accurate and coherent messages when interpreting into their mother tongue. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.
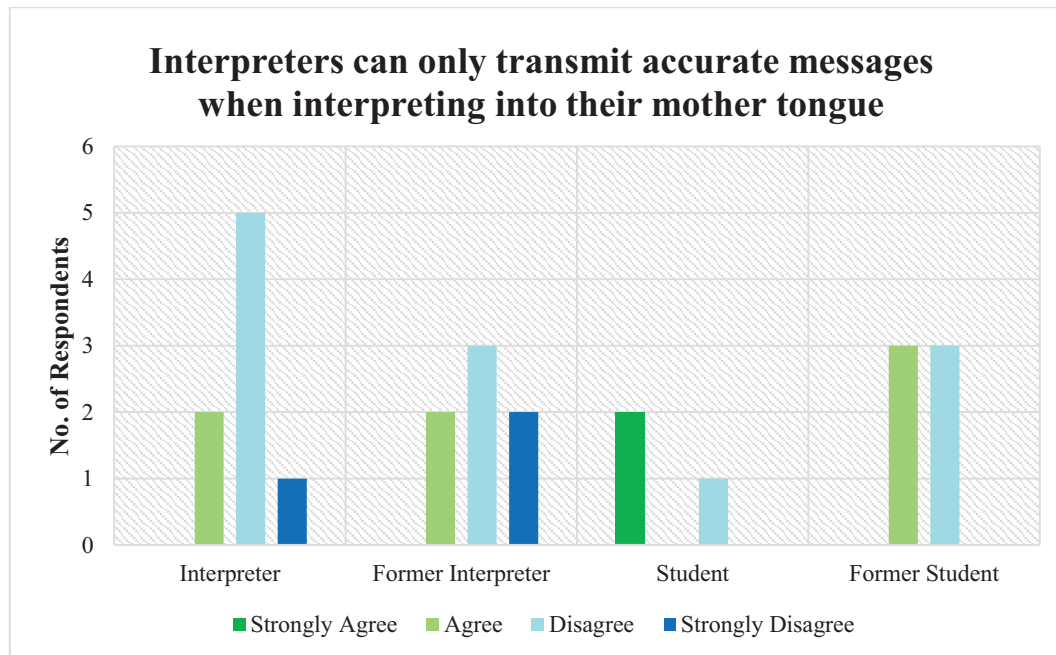
4.4. Education and Training

The questions presented in this section of the survey focused mainly on testing the theories and suggestions put forward in the studies presented in the literature review, particularly those regarding the obstacles that interpreters face when taking on a retour and possible techniques which can be helpful in overcoming them. The respondents were asked first and foremost about which of their working language combinations they felt most comfortable and least comfortable working with while they were being trained, in order to determine whether or not retour was the interpreting direction which posed the biggest challenges to Maltese interpreting students.

As the following chart (Fig.7) shows, 15 respondents asserted that, as students, they felt most comfortable when interpreting from their B language, which in the majority of cases was

English, into their A language, Maltese. This option was closely followed by retour, which was selected by 9 respondents as their strongest language combination during training. Lastly, five respondents claimed to feel most comfortable when interpreting from their C language into their mother tongue, while they were studying interpreting at University. In total, there were five cases where respondents selected two language combinations as their strongest working language combinations, bringing the total number of responses to question 12 up to 29. Out of the total 24 respondents, four claimed to work most comfortably when interpreting from their B and C languages into their A language, while one respondent chose both the A>B and B>A options as her strongest language combinations.

Figure 7: Question 12 - As a student interpreter, which of the following language combinations did you feel most comfortable working with?
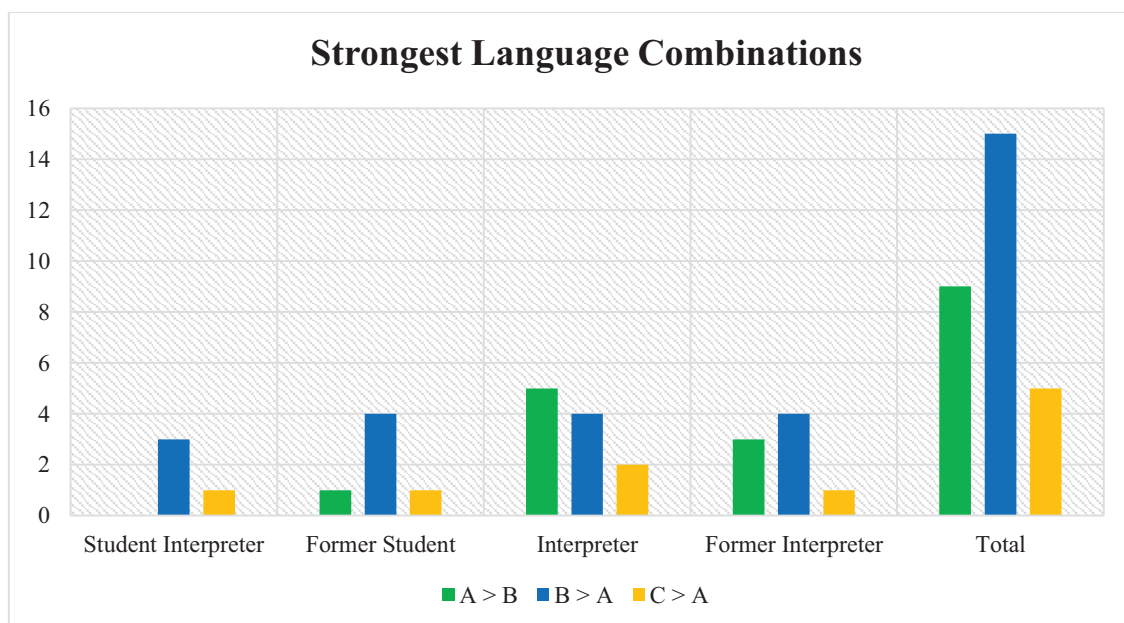
70% of respondents falling within the demographics of current or former student interpreter asserted that their strongest language combination was B>A. The C>A interpreting direction was the second most frequently cited option, with 20% of current and former student

interpreters claiming this to be their strongest language combination during training, and only one former student selected A>B as his or her preferred interpreting direction.

While on the one hand there was a significant gap between the most preferred and the second and third most preferred language combinations, the gap was much smaller in the case of interpreters and former interpreters. In fact, surveyed interpreters asserted that, as students, they felt most comfortable interpreting primarily from their mother tongue into their B language (45%), closely followed by interpreting from the B language into an A language (36%). The least frequently chosen interpreting direction was from a C language into the mother tongue, with just 18% claiming that this was their preferred language combination when practicing interpreting. In the case of former interpreters, the two most popular options were switched, with 50% of respondents falling within this demographic choosing the A>B language combination as their preferred interpreting direction, while 38% of the former interpreters surveyed claimed to feel most comfortable when working with a retour. Only one respondent chose C>A as his or her strongest language combination.

All survey participants were also asked which interpreting direction they found most demanding while they were still following the interpreting course at University. Given that interpreting from a passive language into an A language was the least chosen option in the previous question, it was expected that most respondents would choose this language combination as their weakest. In fact, as demonstrated in Figure 8 below, 50% of respondents chose the C>A interpreting direction as the most demanding one they had to work with. The second most cited choice was the A>B interpreting direction, with 38% of respondents asserting that, as students, they found retour interpreting to be the most challenging. Only 13% of the respondents felt that the B>A language combination was the hardest to work with during training.

Figure 8: Question 13 - As a student interpreter, which of the following language combinations did you feel was the most demanding?

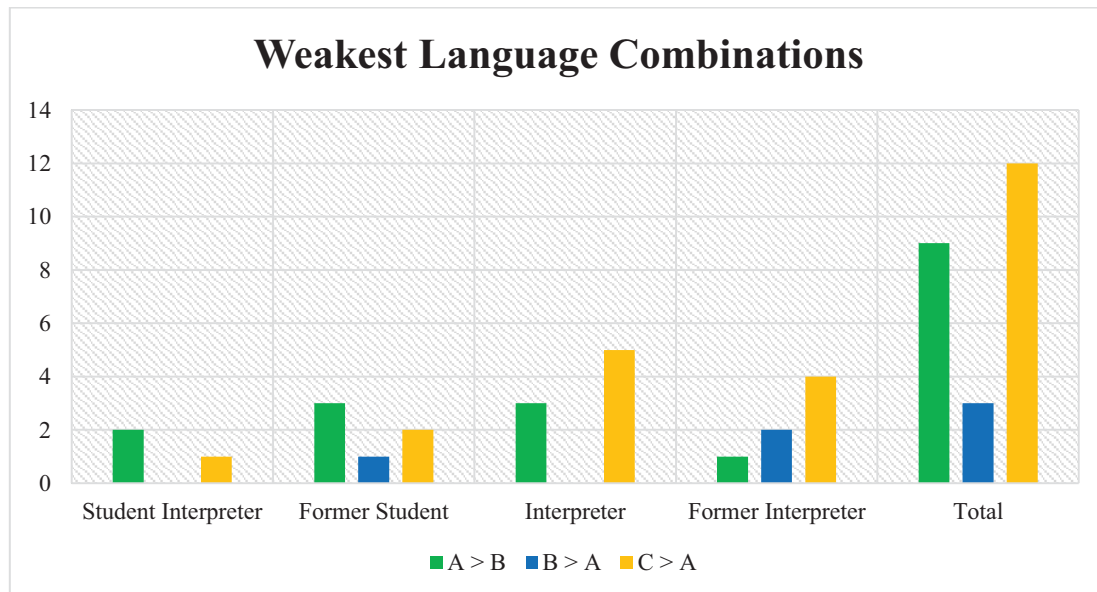Given that the two interpreting directions selected by respondents who have worked or are working as interpreters as their strongest were A>B and B>A, the researcher predicted that the C>A language combination would be selected by the majority of respondents falling within this demographic. This has proved to be the case, since 60% of the interpreters and former interpreters surveyed claimed to have found interpreting from a passive language into their mother tongue the most challenging interpreting direction during training. Retour interpreting was considered to be the most challenging of the three interpreting directions by 27% of the interpreters and former interpreters, while the remaining 13% felt that, as students, they had to work the most on interpreting from a B language into an A language because they found this to be their most demanding language combination.

However, the respondents who, in the previous question, claimed that they felt most comfortable interpreting into their A language from their B language were more inclined to state that what they felt was the most demanding interpreting direction was retour, rather than interpreting from another passive language into their mother tongue, since interpreting into

different languages requires different techniques. This seemed to be particularly the case with the surveyed student interpreters, the majority of whom (56%) felt that working out of their mother tongue into their B language was the most challenging out of their three language combinations. Three of the remaining interpreting students and former students chose the C>A interpreting direction as the most demanding one they had to work with, while only one former student found interpreting from a B language into an A language to be the most challenging.

Evidently, Maltese interpreting students are finding the retour technique relatively difficult to master. However, the demand for retour interpreting is growing particularly in the international arena, where the communication and interpretation needs of native speakers of minority languages need to be catered for. For this reason, any student reading for a Master in Interpretation Studies at the University of Malta must follow and pass two compulsory study-units, which together carry 18 ECTS, whose aim is primarily to train students in consecutive and simultaneous retour interpretation (out of Maltese and into English).

Every interpreting direction and language combination brings with it specific obstacles that student interpreters need to look out for during training, in order to be able to develop strategies to overcome them. Through the analysis of different studies and literature, the main difficulties that the researcher found to be the most frequently challenges for retour interpreters when working into their B language were keeping up with the speaker's speed, knowledge of terminology, trying to find the right word or expression, sounding natural, speaking with a different accent, distancing themselves from the speaker (décalage), reformulation, and transmitting the speaker's message rather than simply translating words.

In order to find out which of these factors related to interpreting are proving to be the biggest stumbling blocks for Maltese retour interpreters working from Maltese into English, respondents of the survey were asked to rate the obstacles listed in Figure 9 using a scale from one to eight, allocating the number one for the least challenging difficulty and the number eight for the most challenging difficulty.

Figure 9: Question 14 - What were your biggest obstacles when interpreting into a B language? Using a scale from 1 (as the least challenging obstacle) to 8 (as the most challenging obstacle), please rank each of the following potential obstacles.

Biggest obstacles when interpreting into a B language
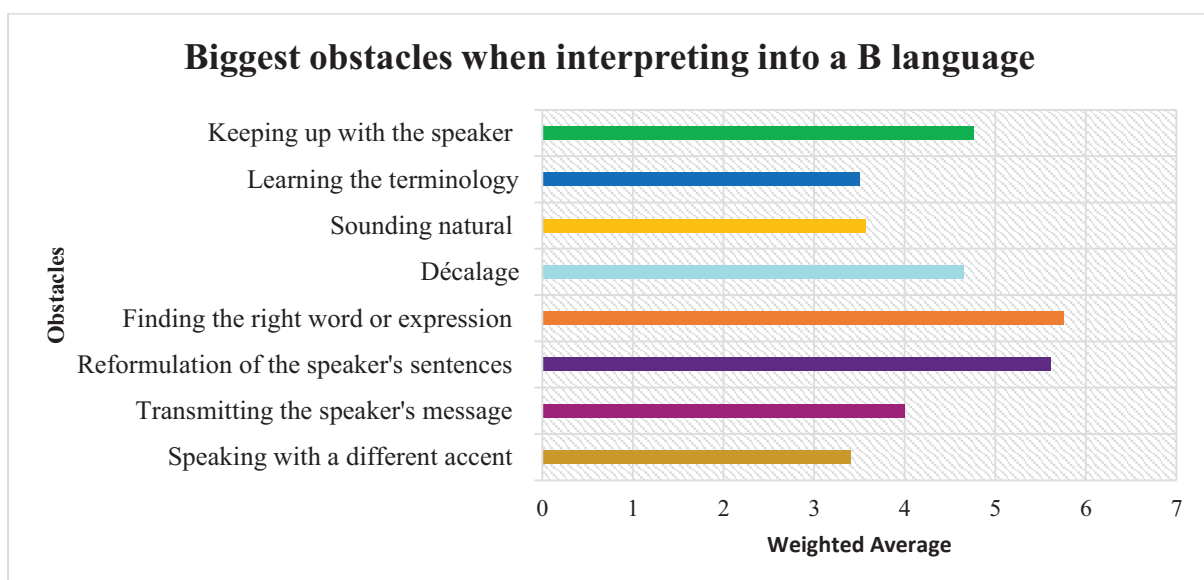
The most cited obstacle overall, with a weighted average of 5.75 out of 8, was finding the right word or expression while interpreting. As can be seen in the chart below, this was also the most challenging obstacle that Maltese interpreters face when working with a retour.

Figure 10: Question 14 - What were your biggest obstacles when interpreting into a B language? (Answers divided according to occupation)

Biggest obstacles when interpreting into a B language
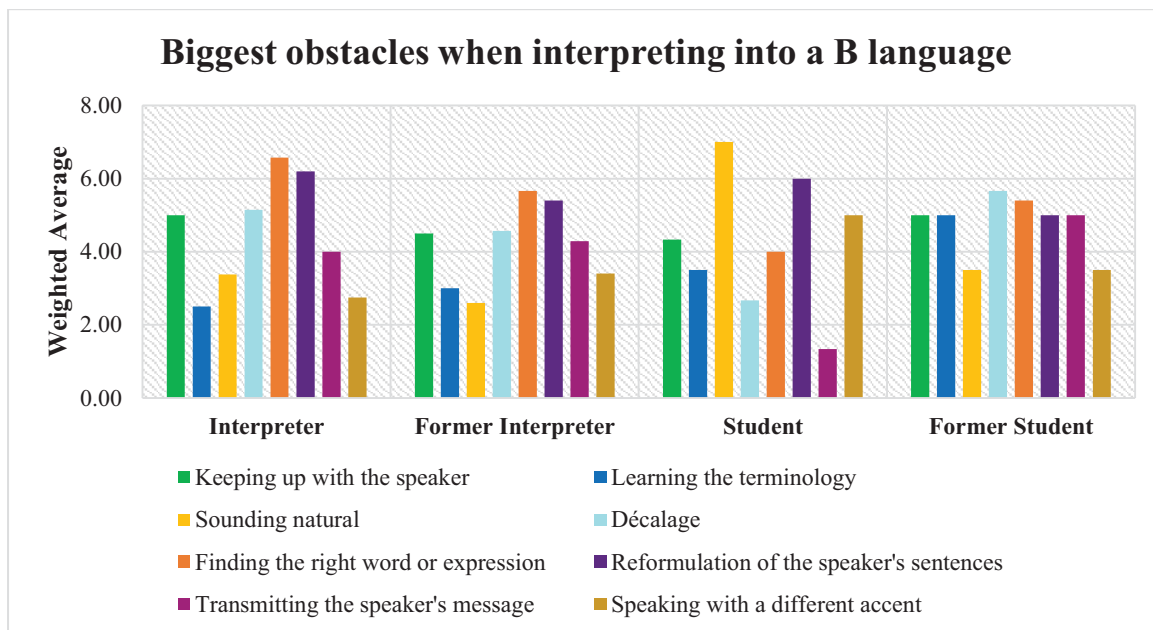
Several factors can cause a retour interpreter to experience a sudden lapse of memory and forget certain words or expressions while interpreting, including the added stress factor of interpreting into a language other than his or her mother tongue. Adams (2002)' warning directed at interpreters as well as students not to be tied down by words is more relevant than ever here, because overanalysing their word choice can lead to them falling behind while interpreting. In this case, her advice to interpreters is to move on from one particular idea as soon as they have interpreted it, so that they will be able to focus completely on the following ideas and how they are linked, rather than repeat the same idea using different words and losing track of what the speaker is saying or how the following ideas are being linked together (Adams, 2002).

Focusing on the message they want to transmit rather than fixating on words can also help Maltese retour interpreters improve their reformulation skills. While all respondents seem to be finding quite a bit of difficulty with transmitting the speaker's message rather than

providing a literal translation when interpreting into a B language, with the option scoring a weighted average of 4 out of 8 overall, this was the least cited difficulty by interpreting students who are currently following an interpreting course at the University of Malta. Reformulation, however, was the second most frequently cited difficulty that Maltese retour interpreters and students were facing, closely following 'finding the right word or expression' with an overall weighted average of 5.61. Many interpreters and linguists listed reformulation as one of the main challenges faced by retour interpreters in their studies, and tied this problem to lexical knowledge. Déjean Le Féal (2002) recommended that interpreters familiarise themselves with the topic of the meeting or conference they will be providing their services for before their work day, not only to be able to follow the speeches and understand what is being discussed, but also to be comfortable enough with the related terminology that they would not need to cling onto the speaker's every word in order to deliver an accurate interpretation. Since learning new terminology does not seem to be giving Maltese interpreters and student interpreters much trouble (learning terminology scored a weighted average of 3.5 overall and was recorded as the least challenging interpreting task among Maltese retour interpreters), Déjean Le Féal (2002)'s technique could be useful for them to adopt in order to accustom themselves to interpreting into their B language and refining their reformulation skills.

Fernández (2005) sees the situation from a different perspective. She sees the retour combination as a blessing rather than a curse, because she found that while interpreting into the B language, interpreters tend to fall back on a more limited set of terms or expressions, which means that they would not be able to translate a speaker word for word. She explains that this would make reformulating sentences easier for retour interpreters, who have no other option but to interpret the speaker's message rather than his words (Fernández, 2005).

The survey results presented in Figures 9 and 10 bring to light an additional factor which the majority of respondents seems to be having trouble with: interpreting speed. On the one hand, keeping up with the speaker scored a weighted average of 4.76, proving to be one of the main difficulties for all respondents. On the other hand, décalage scored the slightly lower weighted average of 4.65, but was the most frequently cited obstacle among the former interpreting student demographic. As Donovan (2002) explained, synchrony with the speaker plays a big role in how successful an interpreter's performance will be. A survey which she conducted between the years 2002 and 2003 proved that the client's priority is usually the synchrony between the original speech and the interpretation reaching the audience. This is due to the fact that if the interpreter begins to lag behind and fails to catch up with the speaker he is interpreting, the audience will feel lost or excluded from the conference or meeting (Donovan, 2002).

While both Donovan (2002) and Ardito (1999) find the speaker's speed to be one of the main reasons why interpreters generally fail to keep up with their clients, Ardito (1999) lists register as a challenge that retour interpreters in particular face when interpreting into their B language. She explains that interpreting for an audience whose native language is typically spoken in a more or less familiar register than that of the speaker can cause a retour interpreter to struggle under pressure (Ardito, 1999). Gile (2005) points out that, in situations where such external factors related to the interpreters' language combinations need to be considered, interpreters risk being spread too thin, since their thought process and memory would need to juggle these additional elements, apart from the information they are receiving through their headphones. Gile (2005) goes on to say that, in certain cases, interpreters need to listen to the speaker for a longer time before starting their interpretation, but must then

make up for lost time by getting through one idea as quickly as possible and listening attentively for the following idea.

The main challenge with décalage, or 'ear-to-voice span' as it is also known, is overloading short-term memory, adding on to the risk that important information will be lost. Jones presented the idea of using the so-called 'salami technique' in order to lighten the memory load, by chopping complex sentences into smaller units of meaning. He recommends that interpreters start interpreting once they are able to complete a grammatical sentence, short as it may be, and repeat the technique until the speaker finishes explaining his idea. This technique will therefore allow the interpreter to have better control over the speech and interpretation, while ensuring that the audience will find the interpretation itself easier to follow and understand (Jones, 2014).

Other obstacles which were related to presentation were among the least frequently cited obstacles. Sounding natural scored a weighted average of 3.57 and the challenge of speaking with a different accent scored the lowest weighted average (3.41). While former students and interpreters felt that these were two of the factors which gave them the least trouble, sounding natural was recorded as the most challenging obstacle among interpreting students. When dealing with these aspects of retour interpreting, it is important to recognise what is causing the interpreter to sound unnatural in the first place. Adams (2002) advised university lecturers to test every interpreting course applicant's understanding of the B language, and only admit the applicant into the course if they prove that they can communicate fluently. She explained that the aim of the interpreting course after all is to teach students interpreting techniques not

languages, and so fluency in a B language needs to be a requirement for all students who intend to work with a retour (Adams, 2002).

However, Adams (2002) also stated that other factors related to communication, such as incorrect intonation patterns, pronunciation or accent, should not affect the interpreter's ability to deliver a correct message. In this case, interpreting students should follow Tyruk (2002) and Llewelyn Smith (2018)'s suggestions to expose themselves as much as possible to a natively-spoken version of their B language, and where possible shadow the speaker, in order to train themselves to recognise and eventually adopt natural-sounding intonation patterns and correct pronunciation.

As the chart below confirms, most of the Maltese interpreters and interpreting students surveyed (67%) have, in fact, sought out linguistic training in their B language, with only 8 respondents stating that they have never received training which focused solely on B language enhancement.

Figure 11: Question 16 - Did you receive linguistic training in your B language, focusing on factors such as pronunciation and intonation?

Did you receive linguistic training in your B language, focusing on factors such as pronunciation and intonation?

33%
67%

■ Yes ■ No
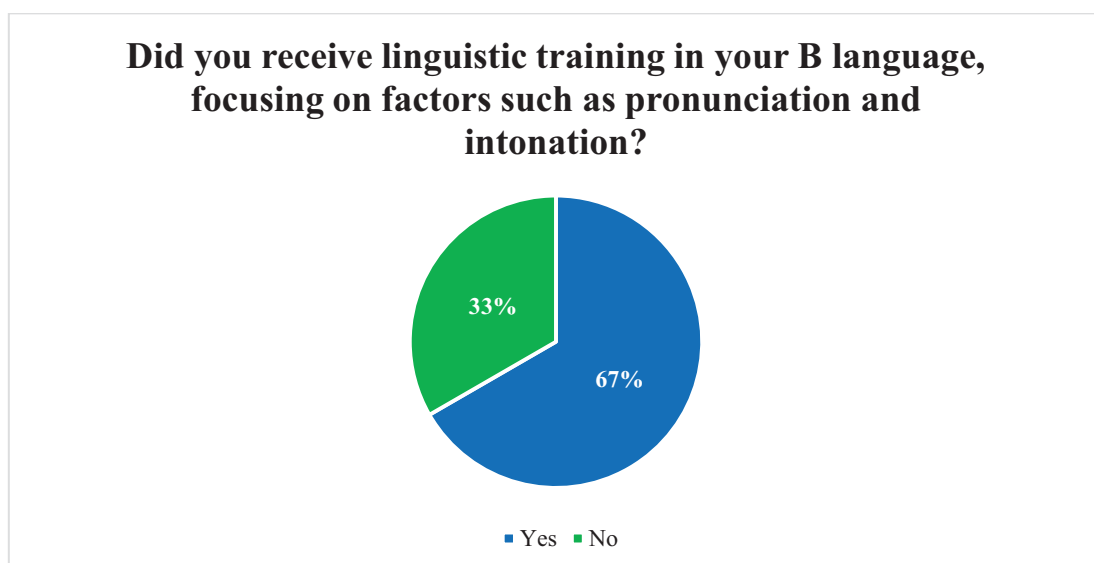
The Department of Interpreting Studies at the University of Malta has recently teamed up with the University's Centre for English Language Proficiency and introduced both compulsory and elective study-units aimed at improving retour interpreting students' proficiency and fluency in the English language, as part of the Master in Interpreting Studies degree. These study-units offer students the opportunity to improve their communication and presentation skills in English, while also receiving feedback on their performances from a native English speaker. The answers to question 17 provided by the respondents (Figure 11) prove that the vast majority of survey respondents agree that such training can improve a student interpreter's performance when working into a B language.

Figure 12: Question 17 - Such linguistic training vastly improves a retour interpreting student's performance. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.
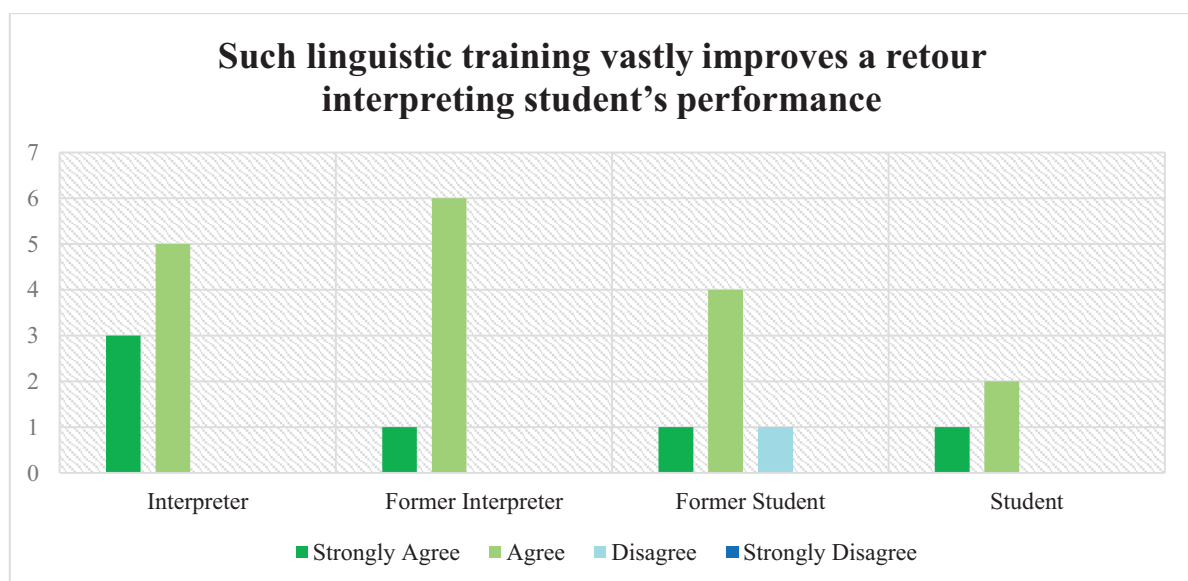
When asked to share their opinion on the issue, only one respondent felt that linguistic training will not have a significant impact on an interpreting student's retour technique, meaning that 96% of the respondents believe that retour students should at least be offered the opportunity to improve their linguistic skills in their B language.

Since interpreters and student interpreters evidently view linguistic training as a priority, and in the light of the Department of Interpreting Studies' decision to introduce such training in recent years, the researcher saw that more information was needed to determine whether the errors that are typically noticed in retour interpretations delivered by Maltese interpreters working into English are caused by gaps in language knowledge or result from other factors unrelated to the particular language combination the interpreter is working with.

Figure 13: Question 21 - Which of the following errors do you feel are most commonly made by Maltese retour interpreters when working into their B language? Please tick all that apply.

Most common errors made by Maltese retour interpreters working into their B language
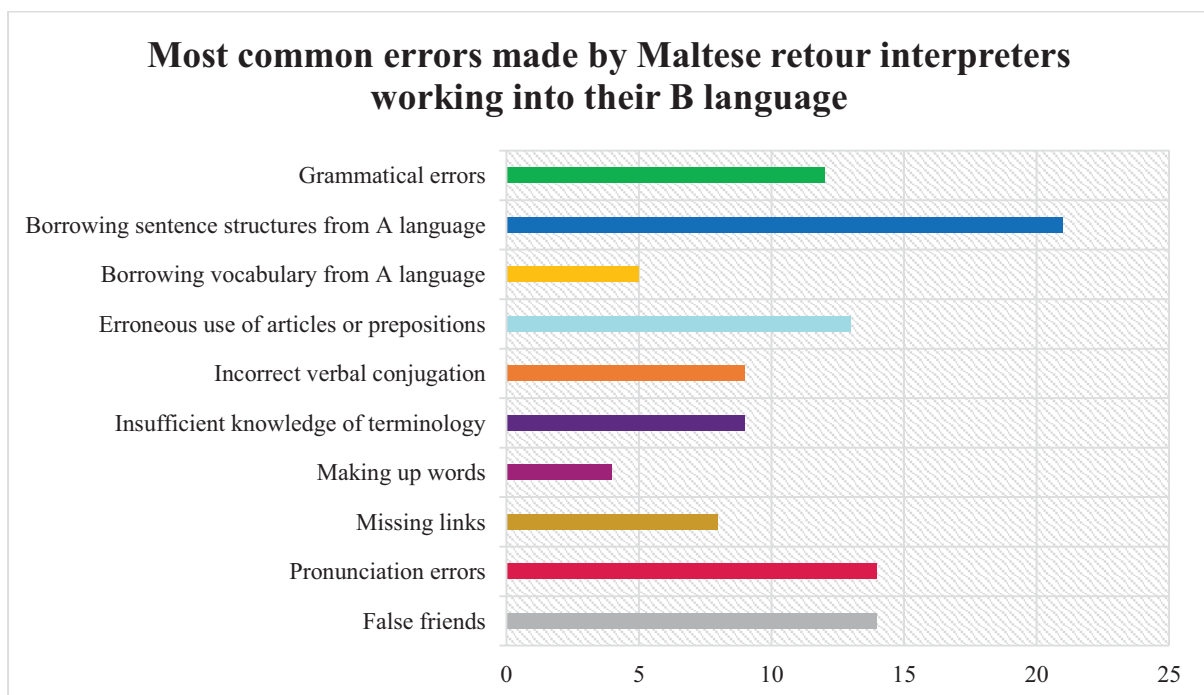
Figure 14: Question 21 - Which of the following errors do you feel are most commonly made by Maltese retour interpreters when working into their B language? Please tick all that apply. (Answers divided according to occupation)

Most common errors made by Maltese retour interpreters working into their B language

Legend:
- Grammatical errors
- Borrowing sentence structures from A language
- Borrowing vocabulary from A language
- Erroneous use of articles or prepositions
- Incorrect verbal conjugation
- Insufficient knowledge of terminology
- Making up words
- Missing links
- Pronounciations errors
- False friends
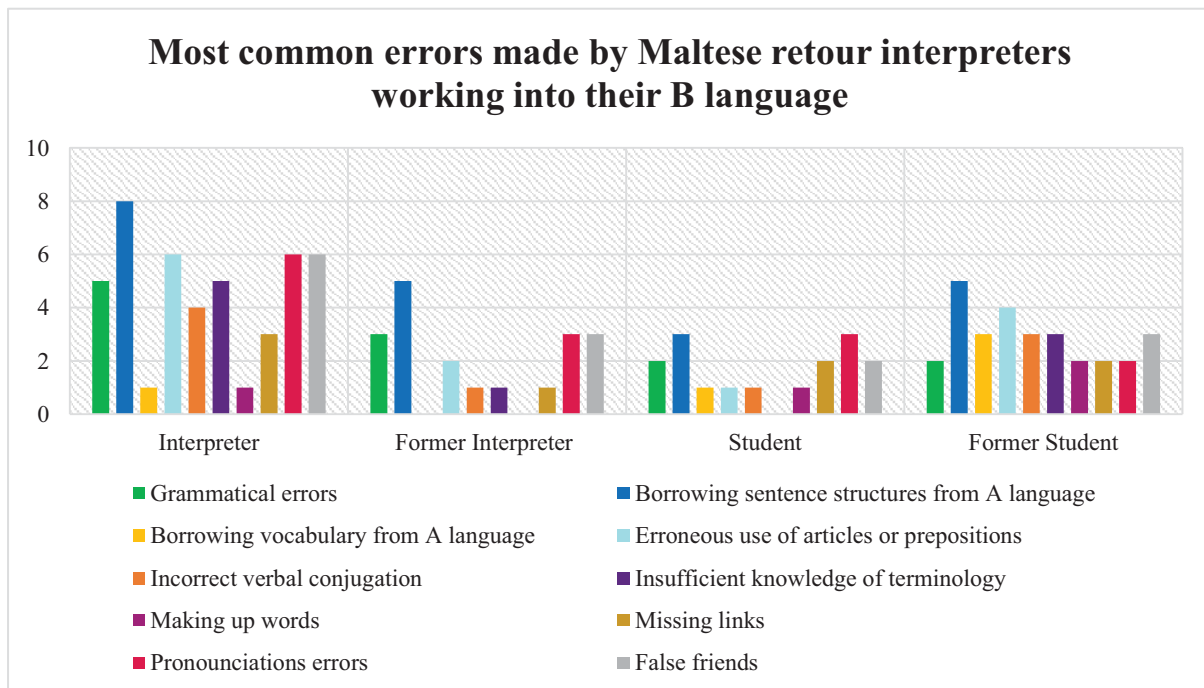
A retour interpreter's primary goal should be to communicate a message in a natural manner to native speakers of the language he or she is working with and to break any communication barriers, in order to help the audience not only follow but feel included in a meeting or conference where the languages being spoken are not languages which they understand.

Reformulating the speaker's sentences and using correct sentence structures while doing so are both important steps that a retour interpreter needs to take when interpreting into a B language. Given that reformulation of the speaker's sentences was selected as one of the two most challenging obstacles for a Maltese retour interpreter by respondents of this survey, it should come as no surprise that 92% of respondents selected '**borrowing sentence structures from an A language and transferring them to the B language**' as the most common error made by Maltese interpreters working into their B language.

As explained above, many Maltese citizens are bilingual. The additional exposure that most Maltese citizens have on a day-to-day basis to the English language allows them to be comfortable enough with the language to code-switch between English and Maltese when words fail them. Even though Malta achieved independence from British rule in 1964, to this day the Maltese language still looks towards the English language for guidance on how to remain relevant in such an ever-changing, technology-driven world, particularly when new terms are introduced to the world and they catch on. This is one of the biggest obstacles faced by Maltese retour interpreters, particularly when working into English. Gile (2005) explains that such an interference between the two languages requires an immense effort on the interpreter's part to detach himself or herself from the words of the speaker, to reformulate the sentence structure, and to interpret the original message, rather than recycle the speaker's own words or sentence structure.

Maltese interpreters who borrow their sentence structures from those used by Maltese speakers while interpreting into English are easily caught out. This is due to the fact that, generally speaking, Maltese speakers are much less concise than English speakers, who usually get straight to the point. According to Gile (2005), more pressure is put on the mental process of interpreters working out of Maltese and into English, who need to retain all the important details in working memory, get rid of superfluous information and fit the speaker's message into the typical word order of the target language, being subject – verb – object, in this case. While the English language has a fixed word order, the Maltese language is much more flexible, so the interpreter has much more constraints which limit his or her choice of expression when interpreting from Maltese into English.

Gile (2005) also suggests that languages with little syntactic flexibility, such as English, are harder to work into. This is due to the fact that interpreters need to obey a set syntactic

structure and so might get cornered, with only a limited number of solutions, if any, to "escape" (Gile, 2005). Contrary to English, the syntactic structure of the Maltese language allows the interpreter to mould a sentence in a variety of ways, thus allowing the interpretation to sound fluent, in spite of any sudden changes in direction by the speaker. For this reason, Maltese retour interpreters are also required to perfect their décalage technique, since they need to make sure that they have all the information they need before interpreting one idea and moving on to the next. This will also avoid any unnecessary back-tracking.

Pronunciation errors and the use of **false friends** were selected by 58% of respondents as two of the most noticeable mistakes which are made by Maltese interpreters when interpreting into English.

Using the correct pronunciation while interpreting was also one of the obstacles that interpreting students in particular found the hardest to overcome. As discussed above, the Department of Interpreting Studies is taking action by introducing classes to help students overcome this obstacle. While Minns (2002) commends interpreting trainers for devoting a certain amount of time from their lectures to purely linguistic training, Llewelyn Smith (2018) suggests that students also use their self-study time to improve upon their intonation patterns and pronunciation. By recording themselves and comparing their pronunciation to that of native speakers, student interpreters would not only recognise their mistakes but they would also be able to work on improving the words or word patterns which give them the most trouble. This will allow them to feel more confident, and to consequently deliver a more reliable and accurate interpretation.

These techniques, along with further B language exposure, will also allow student interpreters to associate the correct word with the correct meaning, rather than getting caught up in the

words that are coming through their headphones and using the wrong word in the wrong context just because it sounds similar to the word used by the speaker. As Tyruk (2002) explains, using both lexical and syntactic 'false friends' can give the interpreter's message a completely different meaning to that of the speaker. Fusco (1990) stated that interpreting between languages which are genetically similar will make a student interpreter more susceptible to the use of 'false friends'.

Avoiding the use of 'false friends' is one of the biggest challenges faced by Maltese retour interpreters when working into English. For example, it is relatively easy for a retour interpreter to mistake false friends such as *ekwipaġġ,* meaning 'crew', with *equipment*, which in Maltese translates to 'tagħmir', while interpreting a fast speaker, without being aware of the different meaning these two terms have.

Despite the fact, or rather due to the fact, that most of the Maltese population is bilingual, as both the Eurobarometer and the Census have confirmed, the language structures used in Maltese interfere with the use of the English language by Maltese speakers, and is causing Maltese interpreters to **use the wrong articles or prepositions** when interpreting into English, resulting in further grammatical errors being made while the interpretation is being delivered. In fact, just over half of the respondents said that this is a common error committed by Maltese retour interpreters when working into English. It seems as though Swedish students also have similar problems when working into English. Köhlmyr (2003)'s study carried out in 2003 showed that Swedish students regularly fall into the trap of literal translation when speaking in English, which in turn leads them to make grammatical errors. She also found that the presence or lack thereof of prepositions in a Swedish sentence also influences whether a student would use the preposition or not in its English equivalent.

The example presented by Köhlmyr (2003), which is quoted in the literature review, can in fact also be transferred to the Maltese-English context. Whereas one would use the phrase "walk around the streets" in English, Maltese speakers would use the phrase "nippassiġġa fit-toroq", which translates to "*walk around *in* the streets". If Köhlmyr's reasoning is correct, in certain circumstances where interpreters might feel under pressure or where their knowledge of a B language is not on par with that of their A language, they will subconciously turn towards their A language knowledge for guidance and will therefore resort to using the latter rather than the former prepositional stucture presented in the previous example.

The same reasoning can be applied to the erroneous use of articles by Maltese interpreters working into English. The Maltese language only has a definite article, so, to express indefiniteness, the article is left out completely. For this reason, in certain circumstances, Maltese interpreters might find it harder to distinguish between the definite and indefinite articles in English, and mistakenly use one instead of the other.

The survey showed that using the wrong articles or prepositions in a sentence is not the only grammatical mistake that Maltese retour interpreters are making. Half of the respondents surveyed felt that errors caused by **gaps in grammatical competence** are particularly common in the work of Maltese retour interpreters. Such errors include lack of agreement between subjects and verbs, incorrect pluralisation and misused pronouns.

As is the case with the definite and indefinite articles, direct and indirect English pronouns in particular tend to give Maltese native speakers quite a bit of trouble. While the English language has subject pronouns, as well as direct and indirect object pronouns, the Maltese language is a pro-drop language, which means that subject pronouns are usually left out both in speech and in writing, since all the necessary information is transmitted by means of

inflections to the main verb. For example, the English sentence 'I am learning to drive' translates to 'Qed nitgħallem insuq'. Here, the subject pronoun referring to the first person singular, 'jiena', is not required. Maltese speakers refer to a direct object by means of a suffix attached to the end of a conjugated verb, for example the suffix -ni in the word 'tgħallim*ni*' (which translates to 'she teaches me') is referring to the first person singular. To refer to an indirect object, Maltese speakers add an additional component to the verb + suffix formula, which is the pronoun 'lil' (to). The pronoun is merged with the direct object suffixes in order to express indirectness in a sentence. For example, the Maltese verb 'tgħallimhom*li*' translates to 'she teaches them *to me*', where the merged suffix *lil + ni*, 'li', refers to the first person singular. It is for this reason that sometimes Maltese interpreters use the longer form of *to + direct object pronoun* rather than just the direct object pronoun when interpreting, so expressions such as 'he gave her' are often expressed as 'he gave to her', not only making sentences sound unnatural but also making them unnecessarily longer. In some cases, the indirect object marker 'to' is left out of a sentence erroneously, leading a correct sentence such as 'He explained the lesson to me' to be changed to the incorrect sentence '*He explained me the lesson', which is a literal translation of the Maltese sentence 'Spjegali l-lezzjoni'.

Nine out of the 24 survey respondents also noticed that some Maltese retour interpreters use **incorrect verbal conjugations** when interpreting into English. A common error which can be noted in the English used by native Maltese speakers is the wrong use of verb tense, due to A language influences. Some errors which have been brought to the researcher's attention include native-Maltese speaking retour interpreters mistakenly starting their interpretation with the sentence, "First, I introduce the subject", rather than "I *will* introduce the subject". Another common error observed is leaving out the auxiliary verb 'to have' when speaking in

the present perfect, leading to sentences such as 'She has just gone to her friend's house' to be changed to '*She just gone to her friend's house'. Irregular verbs also give Maltese retour interpreters trouble when interpreting into English, particularly when using the past tense, with common mistakes including '*drunk' being used instead of 'drank', '*mistaked' instead of 'mistook' and '*stinged' instead of 'stung'.

Apart from gaps in grammatical competence, survey respondents also found that gaps in lexical competence in English are also keeping Maltese retour interpreters back from giving a fluent, natural-sounding performance to a foreign audience. Even though the Maltese language seems to be more syntactically flexible than the English language, English remains the more lexically rich language of the two. As Gile (2005) points out, English speakers have an array of terms they can fall back on or even just one specific term that can be used to refer to a particular entity, while interpreters working into a language with a more restricted terminology pool need to develop a coping strategy. Maltese interpreters typically try to find a Maltese word or concept as close to the original or, if unsuccessful, paraphrase the original idea. For this reason, Gile (2005) argues that more pressure is put onto the interpreters' "working memory load" while interpreting from a more concise language into a less concise language, as is the case with the EN > MT language combination. This is due to the fact that the interpreter will need to use more words to bring the same idea across to a different audience, whereas the speaker takes up much less time while speaking to his audience. Using this same reasoning, interpreting into English should be easier for Maltese interpreters, if they are knowledgeable of the terminology which is being used during the meeting or conference.

However, 38% of survey respondents asserted that Maltese retour interpreters' **knowledge of terminology**, or rather the lack of it, is what usually lets them down when interpreting into English. This might be due to a number of factors, namely not being given a copy of the

speeches to be given or the documentation which is to be used during the meeting beforehand, particularly where technical or scientific terminology is involved. Despite the fact that Maltese interpreters might struggle in such situations, it seems as though they very rarely resort to **making up words** whenever they are quite literally lost for words. In fact, only four respondents claimed that the coping mechanism used by Maltese retour interpreters in situations such as these is making up words.

While borrowing sentence structures from an A language and transferring them to the B language is the most common error committed by Maltese retour interpreters according to survey respondents, only five of the interpreters and interpreting students surveyed asserted that **borrowing vocabulary from an A language** and using it when interpreting into a B language was a commonly committed error. Maltese interpreters are more likely to borrow English terms when interpreting into Maltese since, as explained above, English is the more lexically rich language of the two.

One third (33%) of survey respondents felt that an important component was missing from the interpretation being given by Maltese retour interpreters: the use of **logical links** between ideas. As Attard (2014) explains, these links are usually conjunctions which are used to connect a speaker's ideas, and "Having these links between ideas will help the interpreter follow the arguments presented in the speech and the direction the speech takes" (Attard, 2014). While an interpreter is able to follow an argument, and even remember the main gist of the ideas previously expressed by the speaker, it is harder for the interpreter to remember the exact work or expression which was used by the speaker to connect these same ideas. For this reason, Attard (2014) suggests that such links are noted down by interpreters working both consecutively and simultaneously, since the position which a speaker will take on a particular argument might be given away through just one of these links.

4.4.1. Self-study

While trainers are available at university to provide guidance to interpreting students and to make sure that they are on the right track to becoming professional interpreters, all students are expected to keep practicing with peers outside training hours. Interpreting trainers at the University of Malta encourage students to continue working together outside of training hours, in order to work on improving their weaknesses and share tips and tricks to help each other overcome the obstacles they are facing. When asked whether or not they practiced interpreting into their B language outside of university hours, the vast majority of survey respondents answered affirmatively, with only 2 respondents answering that they did not practice retour interpreting outside of university hours (Fig. 15).

Figure 15: Question 18 - Did you practice interpreting into your B language outside of university hours?

Did you practice interpreting into your B language outside of university hours?

- Yes - No
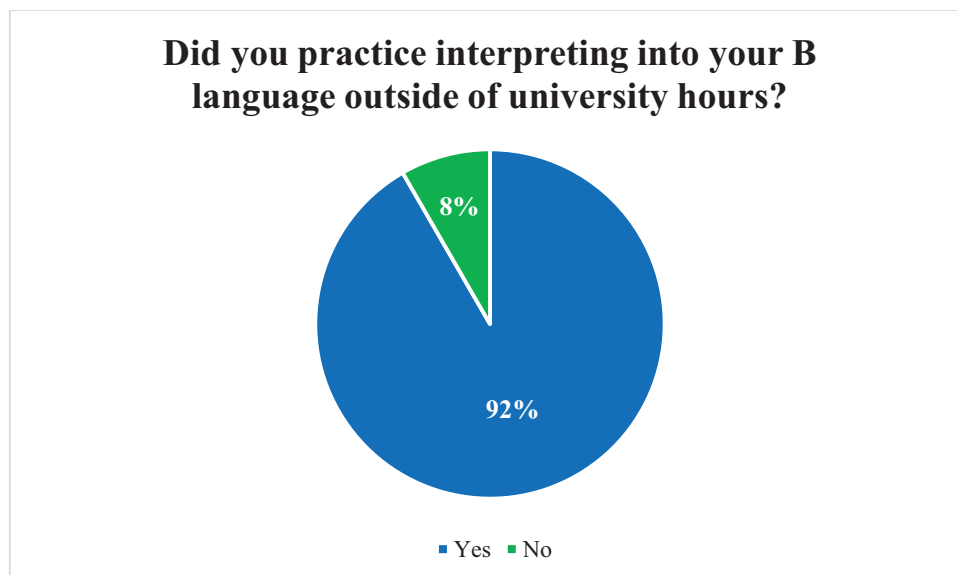
The 22 respondents who answered affirmatively to the previous question were then asked to specify how many hours of practice they dedicated to retour interpreting practice outside of university hours.

Figure 16: Question 19 - If you answered yes to the previous question, how many hours of practice did you put in each week outside university hours?
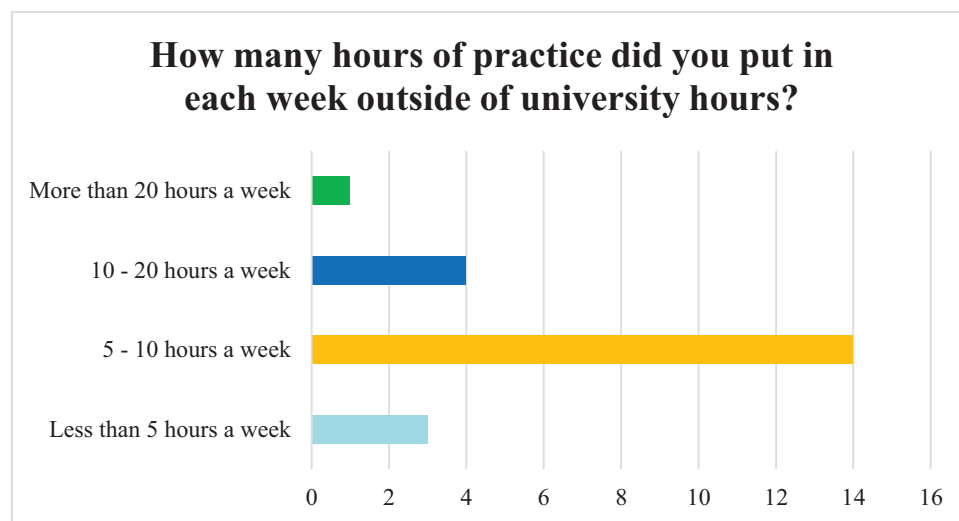
As indicated in Fig. 16, 64% of respondents claimed to dedicate 5 to 10 hours a week to retour interpreting practice outside of training hours at university, while 18% claimed to train for between 10 to 20 hours a week outside of university hours. Three respondents worked on improving their retour interpreting skills for less than 5 hours a week, while only one respondent practiced for more than 20 hours a week outside of compulsory training hours at university.

Given that the majority of respondents put in a substantial amount of time into self-training, the respondent taught that it was important to find out which aspects of retour interpreting the student interpreters were focusing on outside of university hours.

Figure 17: Question 20 - Which aspects of retour interpreting did you focus on during this self-study time? Please tick all that apply.
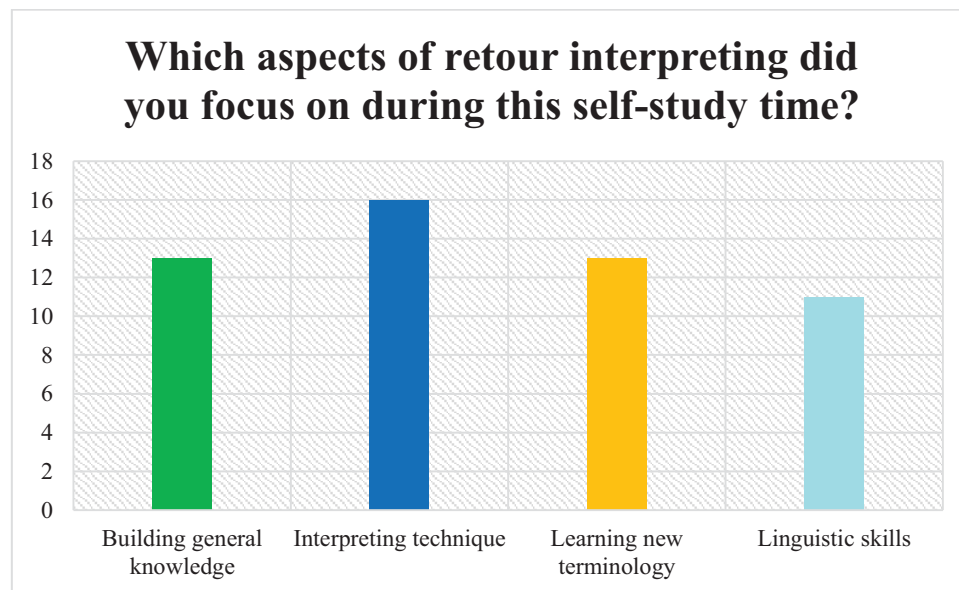
16 respondents claimed to work on refining their **interpreting technique** during their self-study time, by focusing on improving particular retour interpreting skills including presentation skills, reformulation and décalage. 13 respondents worked on **building their general knowledge** by using some of the techniques mentioned above, namely listening to podcasts, reading books, newspapers and magazines as well as watching movies or documentaries. 13 respondents focused on **learning new terminology** during their hours of self-study by compiling word banks and reading up on topics that will be discussed or debated the following day. 11 respondents claimed to work on their **linguistic skills** outside university hours, by shadowing native speakers in order to improve pronunciation and intonation patterns, as suggested by Llewelyn Smith (2018), as well as working on their B language grammatical and verbal competences.

Respondents were also asked which techniques they use to improve their B language skills.

Figure 18: Question 15 - Which of the following solutions did you find to be the most effective in improving your knowledge of your B language? Using a scale from 1 (representing the least effective technique) to 7 (representing the most effective technique), please rank the following solutions.

	Interpreter	Former Interpreter	Student	Former Student	Total
■ Compiling a word bank	3.40	3.60	4.00	3.60	3.59
■ Listening to podcasts	4.50	3.83	6.00	2.80	3.89
■ Living in a country where B language is a native language	3.29	5.00	3.33	5.20	4.20
■ Reading	4.80	5.17	4.50	4.00	4.63
■ Interpreting practice	6.63	4.86	3.50	5.00	5.41
■ Shadowing	4.38	3.71	3.33	4.60	4.09
■ Watching movies	3.00	2.86	3.00	4.33	3.29
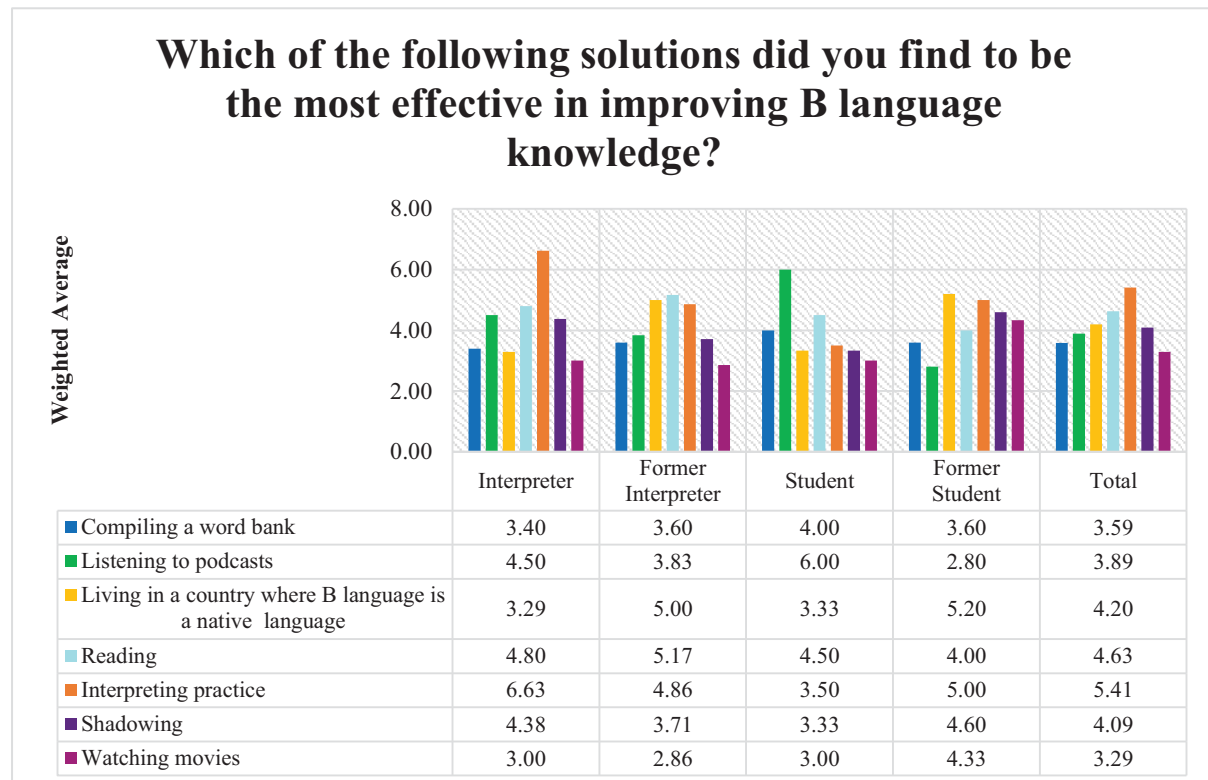
The most effective method of improving B language knowledge overall was **interpreting practice**, having a weighted average of 5.41, as indicated in Fig. 18. This was also the option which carried the highest weighted average among the working Maltese retour interpreters surveyed (6.63). As Kolers (1973) explained, the most important skills that a retour interpreter needs to have can only be acquired through hours of interpreting practice. According to her, this is the only means by which a bilingual speaker can become a fully-fledged retour interpreter, who is able to transfer messages between multiple different social or cultural contexts without losing any information in the process.

The second most frequently cited solution for improving B language knowledge was **reading**, with a total weighted average overall of 4.63. This was also the solution which

carried the highest weighted average among the former retour interpreters surveyed. Both Donovan (2002) and Llewelyn Smith (2018) harked on the importance of reading books, newspapers, articles, magazines or any other pieces of writing written in the student interpreter's B language, in order to improve general knowledge, knowledge of current affairs as well as lexical knowledge of the B language. After all, as Donovan explained in her 2002 study, knowledge of the correct B language terminology makes a retour interpreter's delivery sound more fluent, natural and believable. Turning to reading as a means of improving knowledge of a foreign language seems to be a common trend among the Maltese population. The majority of Maltese respondents (57%) of the 'Europeans and their Languages Eurobarometer' carried out in 2012 claimed to regularly read books, newspapers and magazines written in foreign languages, while 74% of Maltese respondents stated that their knowledge of English allows them to read magazines and newspaper articles written in English fluently and regularly (European Commission, 2012).

While former retour interpreting students found that reading was an effective method to improve B language knowledge, the majority of respondents falling under this demographic stated that **living in a country where their B language was spoken at native level** was the most effective solution for them, with the option garnering a weighted average of 5.20. Llewelyn Smith (2018) explained that conversing with native speakers is the best possible way for a retour interpreting student to improve his or her B language, as long as the native speaker is willing to correct the interpreter-in-training whenever he or she makes a mistake. However, the advantages of living abroad go beyond simply improving linguistic knowledge. In fact, Xanthopoulou (2017) states that living abroad while she was studying interpreting helped her understand better the anxieties, challenges and pressures that the country was

facing, which in turn allowed her to express the speaker's sentiment in a more accurate and faithful manner.

The closest alternative to speaking to native speakers regularly is possibly **shadowing**, which closely follows living in a country where their B language was spoken at native level, with a weighted overall average of 4.09. This solution is particularly important for students who sound unnatural when speaking in their B language because they find it hard to distinguish between the phonetics and intonation patterns of their A language from those of their B language. By listening to a native speaker's speech, and repeating whatever is said word for word, they will be able to detach themselves further from their A language and train themselves to speak their B language more fluently (Llewellyn Smith, 2018). While some interpreting students choose to shadow speakers delivering speeches prepared specifically for the purpose of interpreting training, many students choose to **listen to podcasts**. Listening to podcasts, which garnered an overall weighted average of 3.89, carried the highest weighted average among the retour interpreting students surveyed, with a weighted average of 6. Podcasts were also suggested by Llewelyn Smith (2018) as a means by which interpreting students not only improve their pronunciation and intonation, but also expand their lexical and general knowledge.

Minns (2002) suggests that learnt terminology is best stored in a form of database, which interpreting students can study and refer to whenever they are lost for words or feel as though they are being excessively repetitive. Maltese interpreting students reading for a postgraduate degree in interpreting studies are encouraged to **compile a word bank** where they can store list of B language terms, links and expressions which they came across in their readings or while shadowing, along with their equivalent in their A language. With a weighted average of only 3.59, this was found to be the second least effective method of improving a B language.

The least effective method to improve a B language was found to be **watching movies**, which garnered a total weighted average of 3.29.

While these hours of self-training evidently lead students to improve their interpreting skills, the benefits of self-training go beyond simply improving interpreting skills. For this reason, interpreting trainers must ensure that self-training is carried out correctly in order to be as effective as possible among their students. Postigo Pinazo (2008) advises interpreting trainers to incorporate peer assessment into training sessions so as to supervise students, ensuring that the feedback they are giving each other outside of training hours is correct, and to provide additional feedback when the students miss out on certain errors which need to be corrected. In fact, Postigo Pinazo (2008) suggests that the interpreting students themselves should be the first to provide their peers with feedback. Only after allowing students to correct their mistakes should trainers share their own feedback with the students. She adds that trainers who invest their time in teaching interpreting students to assess themselves will motivate students to improve their linguistic and cultural knowledge of all the languages they work with, to set their own goals for themselves, as well as to encourage better communication and co-operation between the interpreting group, therefore teaching them skills which they can transfer to their work life as professional interpreters after they graduate. Postigo Pinazo states that this will make students more confident in themselves and in their interpreting capabilities (Postigo Pinazo, 2008).

Martin and Abril Martí (2002) echo this sentiment when stating that, "clear explanation of assessment criteria in class promotes the learning process because it helps students set goals for themselves, while allowing them to understand what the course seeks to achieve and what is expected of them. This system does not only involve explaining assessment criteria but

also asking the students themselves to apply those criteria; thus, they become directly involved in judging the quality of their own work" (Martin and Abril Martí, 2002).

This system has been adopted in Malta, where the Department of Interpreting Studies' trainers provide retour interpreting students with worksheets to use as guidelines during their self-study practice, to keep track of what they were working on and to write down notes on what help they realise that they need from their trainers.

Trainers encourage students to make use of a self-assessment log-sheet (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 4) which is handed out to each interpreting student at the beginning of the course. This log-sheet allows interpreting students to plan out their self-study sessions week by week, listing down the specific exercises which they plan on carrying out throughout a particular week. The sheet focuses on five main areas of practice: general knowledge, on historic as well as current events, sight translation, language work, speech writing and interpreting practice. Each section has suggested exercises which students can choose to carry out, depending on the areas which they feel they need to work on the most. The results shown in Fig. 17 prove that each of these areas of study are given almost equal importance by interpreting students and interpreters alike when training alone or with their colleagues.

Another worksheet (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 5) is laid out in a journal-like format, which allows students to look back on previous self-study sessions and reflect on the improvements they have made as time went by, as well as the mistakes which they seem to still be repeating. The worksheet is split up into three main sections: symptom, cause and remedy. The questions asked in each section should serve as a guide for students to recognise the difficulties which they are encountering while practicing alone, reflect on what might be causing these difficulties, and finally think about possible ways to overcome these same

obstacles. A generic answer is given as an example after each question, in order to help students further understand the scope of the exercise. Students are then encouraged to share the results of their self-study and deliberate practice sessions with their trainers in order to develop a strategy to overcome their weaknesses and continue to improve their performance.

While both these worksheets encourage students to first plan out their studies in order to cover all bases, and then reflect on their work in order to not only recognise their mistakes but also correct them, during the early stages of the interpreting course students might not even be aware of what mistakes to look out for, even though their trainers clearly point out the mistakes that should be avoided during training. Interpreting students might find it easier to be given an assessment sheet at the very beginning of the course listing the indicative marking criteria that is typically used by trainers during exams.

 A frequently used set of assessment criteria is one created by Schjoldager (1996), who lists four main assessment criteria, these being *comprehensibility and delivery*, *language*, *coherence and plausibility* and *loyalty*, and expands on each individual criterion by asking a set of questions. Once again, this sheet could be used as a "diagnostic tool" for the interpreting students to recognise their mistakes, but, in this case, students are provided with concrete guidelines specifying what to look out for when listening to their peers while they are interpreting or when listening back to their own recorded interpretations.

Different universities may choose to focus on particular criteria more than others when assessing their students. In Spain, for example, universities evaluate students on what the trainers deem to be the most important aspects of any mode of interpretation (Soler Caamaño, 2006). Postigo Pinazo (2008) compares the University of Salamanca to the University of Vic. The former focuses primarily on the content of the student's interpretation, allocating 50% of

the marks to this criterion, followed by the interpreter's style and presentation skills, both of

which hold 20% of the final grade. The latter assesses students primarily on how loyal their

interpretation is to the speaker's original message, allocating 40% of the student's final grade

to this criterion. A maximum of 30% of the final grade can be earned if the interpreter's

language skills are up to scratch and if the content transmitted by the student is coherent and

plausible, while another 30% is allocated to the student's communication skills (Postigo

Pinazo, 2008).

Other interpreting institutions choose marking methods which differ from the percentage

allocations used in Spain, but the assessment criteria still stand. Postigo Pinazo (2008)

explains that the University of Prague assesses students based primarily on how loyal their

interpretation is to the original speech, then rates the students' presentation and linguistic

skills. Conversely, the Monterrey Institute of International Studies assesses students

according to the clarity and coherence of their performance first, followed by their

interpreting style and their presentation skills (Postigo Pinazo, 2008).

This leads Postigo Pinazo to admit that such a wide variety of assessment methods can leave

interpreting students at a loss, unsure of which criteria they should follow. For this reason,

she reminds trainers that, "Trainees should know in advance what competences they must

master and what other ones will be expected. They should have tools to guide their learning.

These tools should not discourage them but make them aware of their progress or weaknesses

and should direct them to solutions before final assessments at various stages" (Postigo

Pinazo, 2008).

If trainers or students find themselves unsure of which assessment criteria are correct, the

best guidelines to use would be those published by international accreditation organisations,

such as the European Commission. Since Maltese retour interpreting students are also trained

to sit for the freelance interpreting exams organised by the European Commission at the end of their course, it would be beneficial for them to follow the list of assessment criteria for both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting candidates, published by the European Commission itself (copies of which can be found in Appendices 7 and 8). Candidates are tested in both modes of interpreting, and are assessed according to three criteria: *content*, *delivery* and *technique*. While the European Commission's assessment criteria focus on more or less the same areas of interpreting as Schjoldager's, one significant difference between them is that the European Commission's assessment criteria vary depending on the mode of interpreting (simultaneous or consecutive) whereas Schjoldager does not make the same distinction. Having said that, the assessment criteria of both modes of interpreting overlap, with most criteria applying for both modes of interpreting. However, important aspects of interpreting, such as note-taking and eye contact, are specified in the European Commission's list while Schjoldager (1996) focuses on the more general aspects of presentation.

4.5. Work

As the data presented in Fig. 2 clearly shows, 8 out of the 24 total survey respondents started that they are currently working as interpreters, and an additional 7 respondents have interpreted professionally since completing training but do not currently work as interpreters. These 15 respondents were asked to answer three additional questions, in order to get a clearer picture of what the current demands for both the local and international interpreting markets are.

The respondents were first and foremost asked whether they have worked in the local or the international market. As shown in Fig. 19, the majority of respondents stated that they have worked in the international market, with six respondents answering that they have only

worked in the international market, and five respondents answering that they have worked in both the local and international markets. The remaining four respondents stated that they have only worked for the local market.

Figure 19: Question 23 - Have you worked in the local or the international market?

The interpreters were then asked to indicate which of their language combinations they felt was the most sought after in the labour market in which they worked, in order to determine the exigencies of both markets. The data presented in Fig. 20 shows that the vast majority of respondents felt that their retour combination was the most sought after, with 80% of respondents stating that the A>B language combination is one of their strongest assets, while the C>A language combination seems to be the least sought after.

Figure 20: Question 24 - Which of your language combinations do you feel is the most sought after?
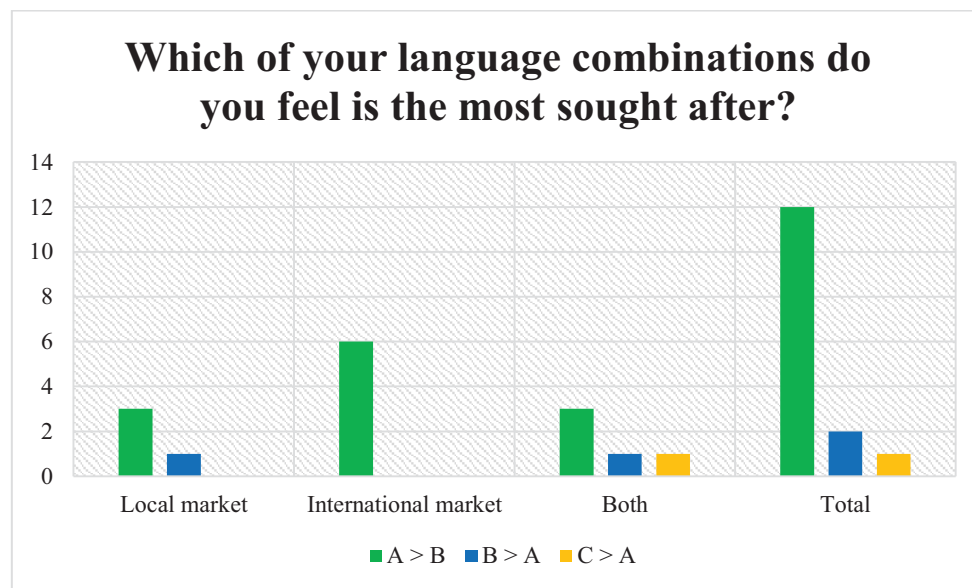
While all of the respondents working in the international market stated that their A>B language combination is the most sought after, three out of the five respondents who worked for both markets felt that their A>B language combination was in high demand. The remaining two respondents were split between the B>A language combination and their C>A language combination. In the case of interpreters and former interpreters working in the local market, 75% of respondents falling under this demographic stated that their A>B language combination was the most sought after and only one respondent choosing the B>A language combination as the one he or she feels is the most in demand locally.

Keeping these answers in mind, the interpreters and former interpreters were then asked whether or not they felt that they needed to add more languages to their language combinations in order to remain competitive in both the local and international markets (Fig. 21).

Figure 21: Question 25 - Maltese interpreters must add more languages to their language combinations to remain competitive in both the national and international markets. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.
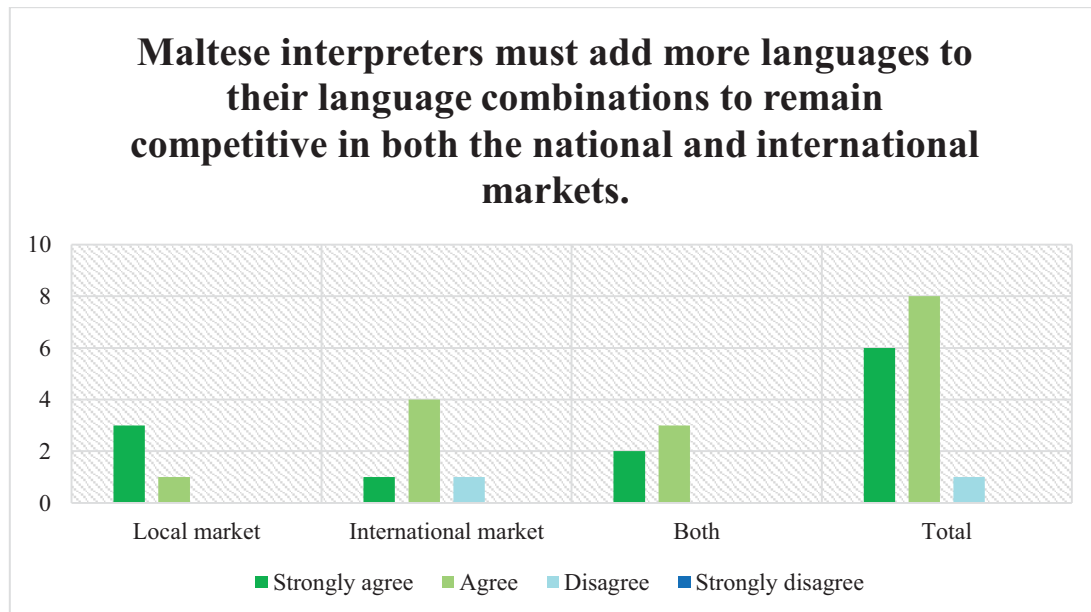
The answers to this question were practically unanimous, with 93% of respondents agreeing or even strongly agreeing that, as Maltese interpreters, they need to add additional languages to the language combinations which they have already acquired in order to compete with fellow interpreters in both the local and international markets.

Only one interpreter working for the international market stated that Maltese interpreters need not feel pressure to add more languages to their language combinations in order to remain competitive, additionally commenting that "quality is more important than quantity".

Chapter 5.   Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the literature review as well as those drawn from the analysis of the empirical research carried out among Maltese retour interpreters and interpreting students. The aim of the chapter is not only to present conclusions but also, and most importantly, to propose recommendations on how the weaknesses identified in the previous chapters of this dissertation can be transformed into strengths which will make Maltese retour interpreters even more competitive in both the local and international interpreting markets.

5.2. Overcoming obstacles

The most common retour interpreting challenges observed while collecting and analysing primary and secondary data were related to the interpreter's pragmatic competence, linguistic and presentation skills, as well as their general knowledge, or lack thereof. After researching the difficulties faced by Maltese retour interpreters in particular, it resulted that the most commonly faced difficulties are caused by insufficient knowledge of the B language and extensive influence of A language knowledge on the interpreter's delivery. In fact, the two obstacles which respondents found the hardest to overcome while interpreting from Maltese into English were 'finding the right word or expression' and 'reformulation of the speaker's sentences', while the most common mistakes made by interpreters interpreting in the same language direction was found to be 'borrowing sentence structures from the A language'.

Multiple linguists and interpreters put forward recommendations on how retour interpreters can improve their somewhat unnatural deliveries into a B language, focusing mainly on the importance of continuous exposure to the B language being used at native level and additional interpreting practice. Maltese retour interpreters seem to be in agreement, given that the survey results faithfully reflected the remedies suggested by professional interpreters which were discussed in the literature review.

What it all boils down to is, essentially, Seleskovitch and Lederer's 'théorie du sens' which centres around the notion that, for the transition of a message from one language to another to be seamless, retour interpreters must feel comfortable enough communicating in their B language that they are able to make the speech their own, without altering the original message in any way.

5.3. The language question

Since the vast majority of the Maltese population is bilingual, given that both Maltese and English are the official languages of the country, English is the most natural B language of choice for Maltese interpreters and interpreting students wishing to take on a retour. Retour training has been a compulsory component of the Master's in Interpreting Studies at the University of Malta since the course was launched in 2003, in order to meet the demands of the international market, namely the European institutions. Given that Maltese and English are used interchangeably in most cases locally, Maltese speakers find it difficult to detach themselves from one language when speaking in another. This seems to be particularly the case when Maltese interpreters interpret into English, as attested in the survey results presented above where reformulation was proved to be one of the most common obstacles that Maltese retour interpreters faced.

For this reason, most recently, study-units in B language enhancement have also been made compulsory. 96% of respondents, including those who were not offered language enhancement courses at university, backed this decision, agreeing that such training can significantly improve a retour interpreting student's performance.

In order to continue improving their B language knowledge and fluency, interpreting students, as well as established interpreters looking to add retour to their working language combinations, should look into attending additional retour training courses organised by universities, which work primarily with the student or interpreter's B language, or even retour workshops and refresher courses offered by individual accredited interpreters whose native language is their B language. In fact, a number of the interpreters and institutions whose works and publications were quoted in this study offer such courses, including accredited interpreter Sophie Llewellyn Smith. Interpreting students looking to gain some professional experience after graduating nowadays also have the additional opportunity to participate in traineeships organised by international multilingual institutions, such as the European institutions. Such traineeships allow students to put all they learnt during their interpreting course into practice, while continuing to improve their language and interpreting skills.

While retour remains an asset for the Maltese interpreter working in the international market, the demand for the C > A language combination is on the increase, particularly in the local market, meaning that interpreters not only need to improve their knowledge of the B language but must also strengthen their linguistic and comprehension skills in their C languages before adding more languages to their combinations. In fact, the questionnaire results showed clearly that the weakest language combinations of Maltese interpreters and student interpreters alike was the C > A combination, even though the majority of Maltese interpreters still feel that adding more languages to their combinations is their best option to

remain competitive both locally and abroad. For this reason, language training courses for interpreters should not only be made available for students interpreting to and from English, but other training courses in foreign languages should also be introduced for students who wish to focus more on their C > A language combination rather than their retour.

5.4. Towards a more comprehensive learning approach

Both the students and the interpreters surveyed seem to be aware of the weaknesses which are keeping them from delivering a strong, flawless retour performance. The next step is to overcome these obstacles. Given that interpreting classes in Malta are relatively small, individual attention can be given to each student, allowing trainers not only to point out their mistakes but also to proactively show them what they can do to automatically correct or avoid altogether making similar mistakes in future.

Apart from the hours of practice allotted to interpreting training at university, 92% of respondents claimed to put in additional hours of practice every week, meaning that a significant amount of time was regularly dedicated to self-study. In order for this time to be as beneficial as possible, students need to be trained to recognise what they need to work on and how they can improve their interpreting performances, rather than working without guidance and doing more harm than good. While the log sheets presented above are an excellent starting point, and a useful tool used by interpreting trainers and examiners all over the world, its effectiveness depends on how the self-training is executed. If students fail to update their log sheets after each session, they risk losing track of their progress, and start moving backwards rather than forwards. Apart from this, different language combinations and interpreting directions require different competences, and students need to become aware

of the particular challenges and the common mistakes associated with particular languages, and develop a strategy to overcome them.

Interpreting students must understand that the interpreting profession requires discipline, and that the quicker they settle down into a practice routine, recording each of their practice sessions and documenting the speeches and exercises they worked on, the better their progress will be. This routine can then be extended to self-study sessions, where it is essential for students to keep track of their own work and progress, in order to be able to seek help where difficulties are encountered.

Where difficulties are encountered, students could ask to meet with trainers to review their log sheets to date, and discuss which exercises were found to be the most helpful and which had little to no impact on their performance. From there, students can set goals for themselves and, with the trainer's help, figure out which deliberate practice exercises, new or otherwise, could help them improve further and reach their individual goals at their own pace.

Students should also dedicate some self-study time to follow-up sessions, where they practice exercises which target their weaknesses, in order to assess themselves regularly and ensure that they do not lose sight of their goals by pushing challenges aside and overlooking potential areas for improvement. Students must remember to record these sessions, so as to be able to listen back to the performance and any feedback which is given by fellow peers or even a trainer, recognise their mistakes and repeat the exercise with this new-found knowledge.

5.5. Areas for further research

One of the areas for further research which emerge from this study would take a look at the role technology plays in retour interpreting training, its advantages and disadvantages, and how to overcome the difficulties which arise when the online resources available for students working with one of the languages concerned, in this case Maltese, is limited. This research can also investigate how students can utilise resources which help them enhance their linguistic and interpreting skills to their full potential, and compare technological training tools and gadgets in order to determine which of them can equip students and trainers with the latest and best possible training methods for all modes of interpreting, and whether or not they are worth the investment in the first place.

Another possible area for further research is the exploration of the differences between interpreting as an undergraduate course and interpreting as a postgraduate course. While undergraduate courses are usually carried out over a timespan of at least 3 years, a postgraduate course is usually completed within one year of commencement. Such a study can discuss the most effective ways to spread out the curriculum over the designated timeframe, and compare this to the way courses are carried out in actuality, in order to recognise the feasible plans of study from those which spread out students too thin. It would also determine, once and for all, whether one year of training is enough to grasp the ins and outs of interpreting or whether a longer course is necessary to learn to interpret professionally.

Further research into the C > A language combinations studied in Malta and adopted by professional interpreters could also be carried out to determine why many students and interpreters find this to be their weakest language combination, and how fears and challenges

can be eliminated to make way for confident and fluent interpreting performances, regardless of the language interpreters would be interpreting from.

5.6. Conclusion

In order for Maltese interpreting students to become successful retour interpreters, they must be prepared to meet the challenges that come with the interpreting profession. Training, both in groups and individually during self-study sessions, is the most important stepping stone into this profession in particular, and so needs to be prioritised by students. Trainers can help students by equipping them with the right tools from the very beginning of their interpreting journey, ensuring that bad habits are nipped at the bud, and that the same professional mindset, interpreting techniques and coping strategies which are adopted during training will be transferred to their lives in the booth.

While continuous interpreting practice remains one of the most effective methods to improve the level of a retour performance, linguistic training also needs to be given its due importance. B language exposure is of the essence when interpreters are expected to interpret out of their mother tongue. With that said, interpreters and students still need to be given constant constructive feedback to ensure that they know where they stand, along with guidance from trainers showing them the way forward. Students, however, must be ready to accept this feedback given to them by professionals in the field of interpretation, and work on the areas which are observed to be their weakest, in order to ensure that they tackle these difficulties, rather than avoiding them at all costs, during self-study sessions.

The main aim of this dissertation was to shed light on the use of the retour interpreting technique in a mostly bilingual country, showing that despite the fact that most Maltese

interpreters are compound bilinguals who are continuously exposed to their B language in their own country, many of the difficulties they face when interpreting from Maltese into English are exactly the same as those faced by co-ordinate bilingual retour interpreters working with different languages. The fact that some of the most highly cited difficulties were more closely related to interpreting technique rather than particular interpreting directions, also proved that bilingual skills or linguistic ability alone evidently cannot ensure a solid and fluent interpreting performance.

Given the lack of empirical research carried out on the subject of retour interpreting in the Maltese context, this study should serve as a strong starting point to take the Maltese retour interpreter to the next level. By means of the results presented in this study, students, along with their trainers, can forge a new educational path centred around the new information which was brought to light, setting themselves up for a successful future in the interpreting booth.

Bibliography

Adams, Christine. "What is a B Language? Towards a Working Definition and Selection Criteria." *Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" Language*. EMCI, 2002. 20-22.

AIIC. "Code of professional ethics." 26 February 2014. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 2 January 2018. <https://aiic.net/page/6724/>.

—. "How we work." 11 March 2004. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 19 March 2019. <http://aiic.net/p/1403>.

—. "Professional standards." 28 February 2014. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 2 January 2018. <https://aiic.net/page/6746/>.

—. "Regulation governing admissions and language classification." 26 February 2014. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 10 December 2017. <https://aiic.net/page/6726/>.

—. "Selecting conference interpreters." 28 November 2011. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 19 March 2019. <http://aiic.net/p/4025>.

—. "Working languages." 29 April 2012. *aiic.net.* Accessed on 17 December 2017. <https://aiic.net/page/4004/>.

Ardito, Giuliana. "The Systematic Use of Impromptu Speeches in Training Interpreting Students." *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 9 (1999): 177-189.

Attard, Lucienne. *Language and Memory: Note-Taking in Consecutive Interpretation*. 2014.

Baker, Mona. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Bloomfield, Leonard. *Language*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1935 .

Brander de la Iglesia, Maria and Jan-Hendrik Opdenhoff. "Retour Interpreting Revisited: Tuning Competences in Interpreter Education." *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and* 1 (2014): 4-43.

Briffa, Charles. "Il-Bilingwiżmu." *Lingwa u Lingwistika*. Ed. Karl Borg. Valletta: Klabb Kotba Maltin, 1998. 292-320.

Carroll, J.B. "Linguistic Abilities in Translators and Interpreters." *Language Interpretation and Communication*. Ed. Sinaiko H.W. Gerver D. Vols. NATO Conference Series, vol 6. . Springer, Boston, MA, 1978. 119-129.

Chang, Chia-Chien and Diane L. Schallert. "The impact of directionality on Chinese/English simultaneous interpreting." *Interpreting 9(2)*. John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2007. 137-176.

Choi, Jungwha. "The Competitiveness of 'Into-B' Simultaneous Interpretation: A Correlation Based on Age." *Forum 2:2*. John Benjamins, 2004. 271-292.

Chomsky, N. *Rules and representations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Crystal, D. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. 4th. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997.

D'Acierno, Maria Rosaria. *Three Types of Bilingualism*. Dublin, 1990.

Darò, Valeria, Sylvie Lambert and Franco Fabbro. "Conscious monitoring of attention during simultaneous interpretation." *Interpreting 1(1)*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1996. 101-124.

Déjean le Féal, Karla. "Impact of the international status of the interpreting student's mother tongues on training." *Forum 1:1*. John Benjamins Publishing Company , 2003. 63–76.

Déjean Le Féal, Karla. "L'interprétation simultanée en B: Les principes." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" Language* . 2002. 27-29.

Déjean Le Féal, Karla. "L'enseignement des méthodes d'interprétation." *L'enseignement de l'interprétation et de la traduction: de la théorie à la pédagogie*. Ed. J. Delisle. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1981. 75-98.

—. "Perfecting Active and Passive Languages." *Conference Interpretation and Translation 2* (2000): 7-23.

Denissenko, J. "Communicative and interpretative linguistics." *The Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Conference Interpretation* . Ed. L. Gran and J. Dodds. Udine: Campanotto Editore, 1989. 155-157.

Diller, Karl C. ""Compound" and "Coordinate" Bilingualism: A Conceptual Artifact." *Word* 26.2 (1970): 254-261.

Donovan, Clare. "Interpreting 6(2)." *European Masters Project Group: Teaching simultaneous interpretation. Preliminary Findings.* John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004. 205-216.

Donovan, Clare. "Survey of Users' Expectations and Needs." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretations into a "B" Language.* 2002. 2-11.

Donovan, Clare. "Teaching simultaneous interpretation into B." *La direccionalidad en traducción e interpretación: Perspectivas teóricas, profesionales y didácticas.* Ed. D Kelly, et al. Granada: Atrio, 2003. 367–380.

Driscoll, Dana Lynn. "Introduction to Primary Research: Observations, Surveys, and Interviews." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing* 2 (2011): 153-174.

EMCI Consortium. *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" language.* 2002.

European Commission . *Europeans and their Languages: Special Eurobarometer 386 (Report).* Brussels: Directorate-General Education and Culture, Directorate-General for Translation and Directorate-General for Interpretation, 2012.

Färber, Birgit. *Anticipation in German-English Simultaneous Interpreting.* Unpublished MA thesis, Karl-Franzens Universität Graz, 2002.

Fernández, Emilia Iglesias. "Bidirectionality in interpreter training in Spanish universities: An empirical study." *Directionality in Interpreting: The 'Retour' or the Native?* John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005. 101-125.

Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams. *An Introduction to Language.* 7th. Boston: Thomson – Heinle, 2003.

Fusco, Marie Antoinetta. "Quality in Conference Interpretation between Cognate Languages: A Preliminary Approach to the Spanish-Italian case." *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 3 (1990): 93-97.

Gile, Daniel. "Directionality in conference interpreting: a cognitive view." Godijns, Rita and M. Hindedael. *Directionality in interpreting the 'retour' or the native?* Ghent: Communication & Cognition, 2005.
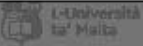
Guichot de Fortis, Christopher. "A few thoughts on "B languages"." n.d. Accessed on 2017 December 27. <http://interpreters.free.fr/language/BlanguagesDEFORTIS.htm>.

Gumul, Ewa. "Explicitation and Directionality in Simultaneous Interpreting." *Linguistica Silesiana* 38 (2017): 311-329.

Hamers, Josiane F and Michel H. A. Blanc. "Bilinguality and Bilingualism." *Applied Linguistics* 11.4 (1989): 403–411.

Johnson, R. Burke and Larry Christensen. *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*. 5th. SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014.

Jones, Roderick. *Conference Interpreting Explained*. Routledge, 2014.

Köhlmyr, Pia. *To Err Is Human. An Investigation of Grammatical Errors in Swedish*. Gothenburg University , 2003.

Kolers, P. A. "Translation and Bilingualism." *Communication, Language, And Meaning: Psychological Perspectives*. Ed. A. M. George. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1973. 280-290.

Kornakov, Peter K. "Bilingualism in Children: Classifications, Questions and Problems. Bilinguals and Bilingual Interpreters." *Hermēneus. Revista de Traducción e Interpretación* 3 (2001).

Lambert, Wallace E. "Psychological Approaches to Bilingualism, Translation and Interpretation." *Language Interpretation and Communication*. Ed. D Gerver and Sinaiko H.W. New York : Plenum Press, 1978. 131-143.

Láng, Zsuzsa G. "Language enhancement for interpreting into B." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" Language*. 2002. 57-60.

Lee, Yun-Hyang. *Comparison of Error Frequency in Simultaneous Interpretation A to B*. Unpublished DEA (pre-doctoral) thesis, University of Geneva, Ecole de Traduction et Interprétation, 2003.

Llewellyn Smith, Sophie. "The Best Way To Develop Your Retour." 23 July 2018. Accessed on 25 July 2018. <https://www.theinterpretingcoach.com/develop-your-retour/>.

Martin, Anne and M. Isabel Abril Martí. "Didáctica de la interpretación: algunas consideraciones sobre la evaluación." *Puentes* 1 (2002): 81-94.

Minns, P. "The Teaching of Interpreting into B - some Conclusions Gathered from 25 Years' Training Experience." *Conference Interpretation and Translation* 4:2 (2002): 29-40.

National Statistics Office. *Census of Population and Housing 2011: Final Report*. Valletta: National Statistics Office, 2014.

Opdenhoff, J.-H. "Estudio sobre la direccionalidad en interpretación de conferencias: de la(s) teoría(s) a la práctica profesional." Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2011.

Pace, Mario. "Speaking Their Language: Reviving The Teaching Of Foreign Languages In Secondary Schools In Malta; The Language Proficiency Assessment National Project." Madrid: University of Malta , 2015.

Perret, Matthew. "The abc of retour." *A word in your ear*. Lourdes de Rioja, 6 May 2013.

Pöchhacker, Franz. "Quality Assessment in Conference and Community." *Meta* 46.2 (2001): 410 - 425.

Postigo Pinazo, Encarnación. "Self-Assessment in Teaching Interpreting." *La formation en traduction : pédagogie, docimologie et technologie I* 21.1 (2008): 173-209.

Pöchhacker, Franz. *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Rejšková, Jana. "Teaching experience of simultaneous into B." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" Language* (2002): 30-34.

Schjoldager, Anne. "Assessment of Simultaneous interpreting." *Teaching Translation and Interpreting 3*. Ed. Dollerup and Appel. Benjamins, 1996.

Seleskovitch, Danica and Marianne Lederer. *Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation*. Paris: Didier, 1989.

Seleskovitch, Danica. "The teaching of conference interpretation in the course of the." *Interpreting 4(1)*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1999. 55-66.

Setton, R. "Experiments in the Application of Discourse Studies to Interpreter Training." *Teaching translation and interpreting 2: Insights, aims, visions*. Ed. C Dollerup and A Lindegaard. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1984.

Soler Caamaño, Emma. *La calidad en formación especializada en interpretación: Análisis de los criterios de evaluación de un jurado en un posgrado de interpretación de conferencia médica.* Barcelona: Universidad Pompeu Fabra, 2006.

Szabari, Krisztina. "Interpreting into the B Language." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" Language* (2002): 12-19.

Thiery, C. "True bilingualism and second-language learning." *Language, Interpretation and Communication*. Ed. D. Gerver and H. Sinaiko. New York: Plenum Press, 1978. 145-153.

Tommola, Jorma and Marketta Helevä. "Language direction and source text complexity: Effects on trainee performance in simultaneous interpreting." *Unity in diversity?: Current trends in translation studies*. Ed. L. Bowker, et al. Manchester: St Jerome, 1998. 177-186.

Tyruk, Malgorzata. "Le perfectionnement linguistique pour les interprètes vers la langue B." *Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation into a "B" language*. 2002. 51-56.

Visson, Lynn. *From Russian into English: An Introduction to Simultaneous*. 2nd. Newburyport : Focus Publishing, R. Pullins and Company, 1999.

Weinreich, Uriel. *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton, 1963.

Wettinger, Godfrey and Michael Fsadni. *L-Għanja ta' Pietru Caxaru*. Malta: G. Wettinger & M. Fsadni, 1983.

Xanthopoulou, Maria. "The Meaning of Living Abroad for a Translator / Interpreter ." 12 December 2017. Accessed on 5 August 2018. <http://www.translationembassy.com/the-meaning-of-living-abroad-for-a-translatorinterpreter/>.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Consent Form

I-Università ta' Malta — The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters

Participant Information Sheet

As part of the research component of the Master of Arts degree in Interpreting Studies, I am conducting research related to retour interpreting, particularly the difficulties faced by Maltese interpreting students and Maltese interpreters working for the local and international labour markets.

As an interpreter, or as a current or former interpreting student, you were selected as a possible participant in this study. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses will provide valuable insight into the difficulties Maltese interpreters face when interpreting into a language other than their mother tongue, and possible techniques that can be used to overcome them.

The survey, comprised mainly of multiple-choice questions, should take less than 10 minutes of your time to complete, and poses no foreseeable physical or psychological risk or discomfort to any of its participants.

The first few multiple-choice questions will ask about your age, gender and occupation. Please rest assured that any information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially, and that anonymity will be respected at all times. The published study will not include any personal information that would make it possible to identify you. The data collected will be used for the sole purpose of this study and erased upon completion of the study.

Even though your contribution to my study would be greatly appreciated, participation is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw consent and discontinue the survey at any moment, without penalty.

Should you need any further clarification or would like to access, rectify or erase any data submitted, as is your right under the General Data Protection Regulation, please do not hesitate to contact me on michela.catania.13@um.edu.mt. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Ms. Victoria Dimech (victoria.sammut@um.edu.mt) from the Department of Translation, Terminology and Interpreting Studies, within the Faculty of Arts.

If, after reading and understanding the information provided above, you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, please proceed to the next page. I would like to thank you in advance for your help, time and co-operation.

Kind Regards,

Michela Catania
B.A. Maltese (Hons)

1

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

L-Università ta' Malta — The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters

Section A: General Information

*(1) After reading the participant information sheet, please tick the statements that apply:

- [ ] I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- [ ] I agree to take part in this study.
- [ ] I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

(2) What is your age?

- ( ) 18-24 years old
- ( ) 25-34 years old
- ( ) 35-44 years old
- ( ) 45-54 years old
- ( ) 55-64 years old
- ( ) 65 years or over

(3) What is your gender?

- ( ) Male
- ( ) Female

*(4) Are you currently a student interpreter?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

*(5) Are you currently working as an interpreter?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

L-Università ta' Malta — The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters

Section B: Languages

*(6) What are your A languages?

- [ ] Bulgarian
- [ ] Croatian
- [ ] Czech
- [ ] Danish
- [ ] Dutch
- [ ] English
- [ ] Estonian
- [ ] Finnish
- [ ] French
- [ ] German
- [ ] Greek
- [ ] Hungarian
- [ ] Irish
- [ ] Italian
- [ ] Latvian
- [ ] Lithuanian
- [ ] Maltese
- [ ] Polish
- [ ] Portuguese
- [ ] Romanian
- [ ] Slovak
- [ ] Slovene
- [ ] Spanish
- [ ] Swedish
- [ ] Other (please specify)

_____

*(7) What are your B languages?

☐ Bulgarian   ☐ Irish
☐ Croatian   ☐ Italian
☐ Czech   ☐ Latvian
☐ Danish   ☐ Lithuanian
☐ Dutch   ☐ Maltese
☐ English   ☐ Polish
☐ Estonian   ☐ Portuguese
☐ Finnish   ☐ Romanian
☐ French   ☐ Slovak
☐ German   ☐ Slovene
☐ Greek   ☐ Spanish
☐ Hungarian   ☐ Swedish
☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

*(8) What are your C languages?

☐ Bulgarian   ☐ Irish
☐ Croatian   ☐ Italian
☐ Czech   ☐ Latvian
☐ Danish   ☐ Lithuanian
☐ Dutch   ☐ Maltese
☐ English   ☐ Polish
☐ Estonian   ☐ Portuguese
☐ Finnish   ☐ Romanian
☐ French   ☐ Slovak
☐ German   ☐ Slovene
☐ Greek   ☐ Spanish
☐ Hungarian   ☐ Swedish
☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

*(9) Do you consider yourself bilingual?

○ Yes
○ No

*(10) In order to be capable of retour interpretation, interpreters must be compound bilinguals, i.e. people who learn two languages in the same environment, usually infancy, in order to acquire two verbal expressions which represent one idea (Weinreich, 1963). Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.

○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly Disagree

*(11) Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) state that interpreters can only transmit accurate and coherent messages when interpreting into their mother tongue. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters
L-Università ta' Malta

Section C: Education and Training

*(12) As a student interpreter, which of the following language combinations did you feel most comfortable working with?

- ☐ A > B
- ☐ B > A
- ☐ C > A

*(13) As a student interpreter, which of the following language combinations did you feel was the most demanding?

- ☐ A > B
- ☐ B > A
- ☐ C > A

*(14) What were your biggest obstacles when interpreting into a B language? Using a scale from 1 (representing the least challenging obstacle) to 8 (representing the most challenging obstacle), please rank each of the following potential obstacles:

	Least Challenging 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Most Challenging 8
Décalage, i.e. distancing yourself from the speaker's words	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Finding the right word or expression	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Keeping up with the speaker	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Learning the terminology	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reformulation of the speaker's sentences	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sounding natural	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Speaking with a different accent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Transmitting the speaker's message	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. Which of the following solutions did you find to be the most effective in improving your knowledge of your B language? Using a scale from 1 (represting the least effective technique) to 7 (representing the most effective technique), please rank the following solutions:

	Least Effective 1	2	3	4	5	6	Most effective 7
Compiling a word bank	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listening to podcasts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Living in a country where the B language is the native language	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reading books, newspapers and magazines	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Regular interpreting practice	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Shadowing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Watching movies and television series	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

16. Did you receive linguistic training in your B language, focusing on factors such as pronunciation and intonation?

○ Yes

○ No

17. Such linguistic training vastly improves a retour interpreting student's performance. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

18. Did you practice interpreting into your B language outside of university hours?

○ Yes

○ No

19. If you answered yes to the previous question, how many hours of practice did you put in each week outside university hours?

○ Less than 5 hours a week

○ 5 - 10 hours a week

○ 10 - 20 hours a week

○ More than 20 hours a week

20. Which aspects of retour interpreting did you focus on during this self-study time? Please tick all that apply:

- [ ] Building general knowledge
- [ ] Interpreting technique
- [ ] Learning new terminology
- [ ] Linguistic skills
- [ ] Other (please specify)

[ ]

21. Which of the following errors do you feel are most commonly made by Maltese retour interpreters when working into their B language? Please tick all that apply:

- [ ] Grammatical errors
- [ ] Borrowing sentence structures from A language
- [ ] Borrowing vocabulary from A language
- [ ] Erroneous use of articles or prepositions
- [ ] Incorrect verbal conjugation
- [ ] Insufficient knowledge of terminology
- [ ] Making up words
- [ ] Missing links
- [ ] Pronunciation errors
- [ ] Using 'false friends', i.e. words used in different languages which have a similar form but differ in meaning
- [ ] Other (please specify)

[ ]

*22. Have you worked as an interpreter since completing training?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

The Retour Question for Maltese Interpreters

L-Università ta' Malta

Section D: Work

23. Have you worked in the local or the international market?

- ( ) Local market
- ( ) International market
- ( ) Both

24. Which of your language combinations do you feel is the most sought after?

- ( ) A > B
- ( ) B > A
- ( ) C > A

25 Maltese interpreters must add more languages to their language combinations to remain competitive in both the national and international markets. Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

Reasons for choice (Optional)

[   ]

Appendix 3: Ethics Board Approval

Charlotte Cucciardi Fava <charlotte.cucciardi@um.edu.mt>   Tue, 11 Sep, 12:43
to ▾

Dear Student,

At its September 2018 meeting, FREC reviewed and recommended your updated Research Ethics Proposal Form.

The form will be placed in your student file.

Regards

Ms Charlotte Cucciardi Fava
Diploma in Banking and Financial Services
Administration Specialist, Faculty of Arts
Room 100C Binja Guze Cassar Pullicino
2340 3974

Appendix 4: Self-training log sheet

Weekly SELF TRAINING_LOG-SHEET_2017-2018   Week _____

General Knowledge & Current Events: LISTEN, READ, vary your sources &languages

Current Event	Source Newspapers (local &foreign), Economist, Politico, BBC, CNN

Preparation for news round, surprise Qs & improvisation exercise

_____

_____

_____

Sight Translation &Language Work {speech transcripts, articles}: develop flow & coping strategies, work on glossaries, paraphrase in same language &record, do language work e.g. learn by heart; key words debate; set phrases; collocations; synonyms; symbols

_____

_____

_____

Speech Writing (CI no notes, CI, SI)

_____

_____

Interpreting Practice: CI no-notes: analyse content/mapping, internal logic, links & structure; Shadowing; Chunking: stop'n'go; terminology work; re-do notes; research context; shadowing; virtual trainer; _re-listen to speech &note language, transcrinotes {take notes of speech to deliver next day from notebook}_

Language [En, Mt, Cs]	Title Speech number	Mode of Practice (No-notes, CI, SI, CI>SI)

Appendix 5: Self-training journal

My Journal

Week/ Date: _____

| CI no notes | ☐ | CI | ☐ | SI | ☐ | Sight translation | ☐ | Shadowing | ☐ |

What exercises/speeches did I do?

_____

_____

_____

SYMPTOM: What are my strong points? What difficulties am I encountering? What feedback did I get? (from trainers, peers, self-evaluation/recordings) How do I feel about the feedback? *(e.g. you have a headache)*

CAUSE: Why am I encountering this difficulty? What is causing it?
(e.g. you are not drinking enough water)

REMEDY: What will I work on? How will I improve my interpretation? How will I reach my set targets? *(e.g. I will drink more. And to do so I will fill a 2 ltr bottle and make sure to drink it in a day)*

Appendix 6: Schjoldager's assessment criteria for simultaneous interpretation

Assessment criteria	Arguments / Examples
1. Comprehensibility and delivery	*If a listener cannot understand or bear to listen to an interpreter, the interpreters' other qualities are irrelevant.*
1.1 Is anything incomprehensible?	The interpreter does not talk into the microphone.
1.2 Is the articulation bad? KBB instead of KGB	KBB instead of KGB
1.3 Are there irritating outbursts?	ah! oh no! etc.
1.4 Are there exaggerated fillers?	Ermmmm grmmmm
1.5 Are there strange noises?	Coughing, sighing, rustling, clicking, etc.
1.6 Is the intonation unnatural?	Upwards in declarative sentences.
1.7 Are there excessive repairs?	Seems to think aloud.
1.8 Are there irritating unfinished sentences?	He's accusing them of…
1.9 Is the voice unpleasant?	Squeaky, hoarse, weepy…
1.10 Is the voice unconvincing?	Gives the interpreter's doubts away.
2. Language	*If an interpreter's choice of language is inadequate, the listener gets irritated and the interpreter's other qualities become less relevant.*
2.1 Are there irritating mispronunciations?	
2.2 Are there grammatical mistakes?	
2.3 Is there interference?	The interpreter incorrectly uses the syntactic structure or lexical choice of the source speech.
2.4 Is the language unidiomatic?	The power apparatus is recontrolled by the conservative powers.
2.5 Does it sound odd in the context?	Uses inappropriate register.
3. Coherence and plausibility	*If an interpreter's performance lacks coherence, the listener loses interest in the message*
3.1 Are there abrupt beginnings?	The listener feels that the premise is left out.
3.2 Are there abrupt endings?	The listener feels that the concluding point is left out.
3.3 Is the performance incoherent?	The message does not make sense.
3.4 Is the message implausible?	The message is illogical.
4. Loyalty	*A disloyal interpreter is unprofessional*
4.1 Does the interpreter mock the speaker?	Laughs in inappropriate places, shows contempt.
4.2 Does the interpreter mock the message?	Laughs in inappropriate places, shows contempt.
4.3 Are there significant omissions?	
4.4 Are there unjustified changes?	
4.5 Are there unjustified additions?	

Appendix 7: The European Commission's marking criteria for consecutive interpretation

CONTENT • Coherence / Plausibility • Completeness / Accuracy • Knowledge of passive language?	➢ Was the logic of the original speech clearly recognizable? ➢ Was the message coherent? ➢ Were the main ideas and the structure rendered? ➢ Were there any significant omissions with an impact on the coherence of the speech? ➢ Were there any important mistakes ("contresens")? ➢ Did the interpretation render the original ideas/information of the speech accurately? ➢ Was the content conveyed in full? ➢ Were there too many details missing? ➢ Were there any misleading or redundant additions ("embroidery")? ➢ Overuse of redundant filler phrases?
DELIVERY/FORM • Quality of active language • Communication skills	➢ Knowledge of target language (correct grammar, appropriate register, idiomatic expressions, vocabulary, interferences from the source language)? ➢ Appropriate choice of register? ➢ Terminology? ➢ Diction (mumbling or clear enunciation)? ➢ Accent (if applicable)? ➢ Pace of delivery (fluent or staccato)? ➢ Use of the voice (prosody)? Intonation? ➢ Was the delivery professional? Was it agreeable to listen to and confident? ➢ Eye contact? ➢ Appropriate body language?
TECHNIQUE • Interpretation strategies	➢ Literal rendition of speech or intelligent processing of content? ➢ Use of interpretation strategies (paraphrasing, output monitoring, ability to condense information, "telescoping")? ➢ Ability to monitor output? ➢ Note-taking technique? ➢ Time of delivery (shorter/longer than original speech)? Was the overrun excessive? ➢ Finishing sentences?

Appendix 8: The European Commission's marking criteria for simultaneous interpretation

CONTENT • Coherence / Plausibility • Completeness / Accuracy • Knowledge of passive language?	➤ Was the logic of the original speech clearly recognizable? ➤ Was the message coherent? ➤ Were the main ideas and the structure rendered? ➤ Were there any significant omissions with an impact on the coherence of the speech? ➤ Were there any important mistakes ("contresens")? ➤ Did the interpretation render the original ideas/information of the speech ➤ accurately? ➤ Was the content conveyed in full? ➤ Were there too many details missing? ➤ Were there any misleading or redundant additions ("embroidery")? ➤ Overuse of redundant filler phrases?
DELIVERY/FORM • Quality of active language • Communication skills	➤ Knowledge of target language (correct grammar, appropriate register, idiomatic expressions, vocabulary, interferences from the source language)? ➤ Appropriate choice of register? ➤ Terminology? ➤ Diction (mumbling or clear enunciation)? ➤ Accent (if applicable)? ➤ Pace of delivery (fluent or staccato)? ➤ Use of the voice (prosody)? Intonation? ➤ Was the delivery professional? Was it agreeable to listen to and confident? ➤ Fluency of the delivery ("décalage")? No abrupt or lengthy hesitations)? ➤ Stamina? ➤ Microphone discipline?
TECHNIQUE • Interpretation strategies	➤ Literal rendition of speech or intelligent processing of content? ➤ Use of interpretation strategies (paraphrasing, output monitoring, ability to condense information, "telescoping")? ➤ Ability to monitor output? ➤ Finishing sentences?