

**BETWEEN FIDELITY AND ORALITY: SIMILARITIES AND  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRANSLATION AND  
INTERPRETATION**

By

**Dr. Uzoma Patience Agwu**

*Department of Linguistics, Foreign and Nigerian Languages,*

*National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN),*

[uzomaranmaagwu5@gmail.com](mailto:uzomaranmaagwu5@gmail.com)

[uagwu@noun.edu.ng](mailto:uagwu@noun.edu.ng)

and

**Dr. Adeyemi, Roheemat Olabimpe**

*Department of Linguistics & Nigerian Languages,*

*University of Ilorin.*

[adeyemi.ro@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:adeyemi.ro@unilorin.edu.ng)

**Abstract**

This article explores the convergences and divergences between translation and interpretation as two central practices of linguistic mediation. While both disciplines share the common purpose of transferring meaning across languages and cultures, they differ significantly in their modalities, constraints, and professional demands. Drawing on theories from translation studies (Nida's dynamic equivalence, Venuti's domestication and foreignization, Vermeer's Skopos theory, Toury's descriptive translation studies) and interpreting studies (Gile's Effort Model, Pöchhacker's disciplinary autonomy, Rozan's note-taking techniques), the study conducts a comparative analysis of practical cases in diplomatic, legal, and commercial contexts. Findings reveal that translation privileges precision, documentary support, and deferred revision, whereas interpretation requires immediacy, memory, stress management, and oral adaptability. The article argues that conflating these practices risks undervaluing specialized skills and producing inadequate training frameworks. It recommends clearer academic curricula, differentiated professional recognition, and integrated language policies to strengthen both disciplines as complementary tools of intercultural communication.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Constraints, Fidelity, Intercultural Communication, Interpretation, Translation

## **Introduction**

Translation and interpretation constitute two essential pillars of linguistic mediation in today's interconnected world. As globalization intensifies exchanges across political, economic, and cultural domains, the demand for professionals capable of bridging linguistic divides has grown exponentially. Whether in international diplomacy, multinational commerce, or transnational legal proceedings, the ability to transfer meaning across languages is indispensable. Yet, despite their shared purpose, translation and interpretation are often conflated, treated as interchangeable practices, or subsumed under a single disciplinary umbrella. This conflation obscures their distinct modalities, undervalues specialized skills, and hinders the development of tailored pedagogical and professional frameworks (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 45).

Historically, translation has been associated with the written word, enabling the preservation and dissemination of texts across linguistic boundaries. From religious scriptures to literary masterpieces, translation has shaped cultural memory and intellectual history (Nida, 1964, p. 134). Interpretation, by contrast, has been tied to oral communication, facilitating immediate exchanges in contexts where time and interaction are critical. Ancient records describe interpreters mediating between rulers and emissaries, while contemporary institutions such as the United Nations rely on simultaneous interpretation to sustain multilingual diplomacy (Gile, 1995, p. 161). Despite these longstanding traditions, the academic recognition of interpreting studies as autonomous from translation studies is relatively recent, with scholars such as Franz Pöchhacker emphasizing the need to delineate disciplinary boundaries (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

The persistence of confusion between translation and interpretation can be attributed to several factors. First, both practices share the overarching goal of fidelity to meaning and intercultural transfer, which encourages the perception of equivalence (Nida, 1964, p. 135). Second, institutional frameworks often group translators and interpreters under the same professional categories, particularly in language service industries (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). Third, public awareness of linguistic mediation tends to privilege outcomes—successful communication—over processes, thereby masking the distinct cognitive, technical, and contextual demands of each discipline. As Lawrence Venuti has argued in relation to translation, invisibility of the practitioner contributes to the erasure of disciplinary specificity (Venuti, 1995, p. 22). Interpreters, though necessarily visible in communicative exchanges, are similarly subject

to misconceptions about their role, often reduced to “mere conduits” rather than recognized as active mediators (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

The objective of this article is to clarify the similarities and differences between translation and interpretation, thereby contributing to a more nuanced academic and professional understanding. By examining convergences—such as fidelity to meaning, intercultural mediation, and the mediator’s role—and divergences—such as temporality, communication channel, cognitive constraints, and visibility—the study seeks to refine disciplinary boundaries. The analysis draws on foundational theories in translation studies (Nida, 1964; Venuti, 1995) and interpreting studies (Gile 162; Pöchhacker 47), complemented by comparative case studies in diplomatic, legal, and commercial contexts.

This comparative approach is significant for several reasons. First, it highlights the technical requirements that distinguish translation from interpretation: translation favors precision, documentary support, and deferred revision, whereas interpretation demands immediacy, memory, stress management, and oral adaptability (Gile, 1995, p. 161). Second, it underscores the professional implications of conflation, which risks undervaluing specialized skills and producing inadequate training frameworks (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50). Third, it situates linguistic mediation within broader debates on intercultural communication, language policy, and globalization, thereby demonstrating the relevance of disciplinary distinctions beyond academic circles (Venuti, 1995, p. 20).

Ultimately, this article argues that translation and interpretation must be recognized as autonomous yet complementary disciplines. Their convergence lies in the shared purpose of linguistic and cultural transfer, but their divergence lies in the modalities through which this purpose is achieved. By promoting clearer distinctions in academic curricula, professional recognition, and language policies, the study contributes to strengthening both disciplines and advancing comparative research in linguistic mediation.

## **Literature Review**

The study of translation and interpretation has developed into two distinct yet interconnected fields within linguistic mediation. While both disciplines share the overarching goal of transferring meaning across languages and cultures, their theoretical foundations and methodological approaches reveal important differences. This literature review examines major contributions in translation

studies and interpreting studies, highlighting points of convergence and divergence that inform the comparative framework of this article.

### **Translation Studies**

One of the earliest systematic approaches to translation theory was developed by Eugene Nida, whose concept of *dynamic equivalence* emphasized the importance of the target audience's reception of the message rather than strict adherence to the source text (Nida, 1964, p. 134). Nida's work, particularly in the translation of religious texts, underscored the need for communicative effectiveness, thereby shifting attention from literal fidelity to functional equivalence. His distinction between *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence* remains a cornerstone in translation studies, influencing subsequent debates on meaning transfer and cultural adaptation.

Lawrence Venuti advanced the discussion by introducing the concepts of *domestication* and *foreignization*, which describe strategies of cultural mediation in translation (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–22). Venuti's critique of the "translator's invisibility" highlighted the tendency of Anglo-American publishing practices to erase the translator's presence, privileging fluency and transparency over cultural difference (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–22). His work foregrounded the ethical dimension of translation, arguing that translators inevitably shape intercultural communication through their choices.

Hans Vermeer's *Skopos theory* further expanded the theoretical landscape by emphasizing the purpose (*skopos*) of translation as the guiding principle for decision-making (Vermeer, 1989, p. 29). According to this functionalist approach, translation strategies must be tailored to the communicative goals of the target context, whether literary, legal, or commercial. This perspective reinforced the idea that translation is not merely linguistic substitution but a culturally situated act of communication.

Gideon Toury contributed to the descriptive turn in translation studies, advocating for empirical research into actual translation practices rather than prescriptive rules (Toury, 1995, p. 67). His concept of *norms*—regularities in translator behavior shaped by cultural and institutional contexts—helped establish translation studies as an autonomous discipline with its own methodological rigor.

Mona Baker and Andrew Chesterman also enriched the field by exploring translation universals and strategies. Baker's work on equivalence and corpus-based studies provided insights into recurring patterns in translation (Baker, 1992, p. 85), while Chesterman emphasized the importance of translation

strategies as cognitive and communicative tools(Baker, 1992, p. 85; Chesterman, 1997, p. 42). Together, these contributions underscore the complexity of translation as both a linguistic and cultural practice.

### **Interpreting Studies**

In contrast to translation studies, interpreting studies emerged more recently as a distinct academic discipline. Daniel Gile's *Effort Model* remains one of the most influential frameworks, describing interpretation as a cognitively demanding process involving listening, memory, and simultaneous production (Gile, 1995, pp. 161–162). Gile's model highlights the high cognitive load imposed on interpreters, who must manage multiple tasks in real time without the possibility of revision. His research underscores the importance of training in memory, concentration, and stress management.

Franz Pöchhacker has been instrumental in establishing interpreting studies as an autonomous field. In *Introducing Interpreting Studies*, he argues for the recognition of interpretation as a discipline with its own theoretical foundations, distinct from translation (Pöchhacker, 2004, pp. 45–50). He emphasizes the role of interpreters in diplomatic and legal contexts, where immediacy and accuracy are critical. Pöchhacker also highlights the visibility of interpreters, who are necessarily present in communicative exchanges, unlike translators who often remain invisible in written texts (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

Jean-François Rozan's work on note-taking techniques in consecutive interpreting remains a practical cornerstone of interpreter training. His emphasis on structured notes to support memory illustrates the technical skills required for effective interpretation (Rozan, 1956, p. 33). More recent scholarship has examined the impact of technology on interpreting, including remote interpreting platforms and AI-assisted tools, which introduce new challenges and opportunities for the profession (Braun, 2015, p. 102).

Michael Cronin has contributed to the broader cultural and political dimensions of interpreting, situating it within globalization and migration studies. He argues that interpreters play a crucial role in mediating not only linguistic but also social and political differences (Cronin, 2002, p. 58). Maria Tymoczko similarly emphasizes the ethical responsibilities of interpreters, particularly in contexts of conflict and inequality (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 74).

### **Points of Convergence**

Despite disciplinary distinctions, translation and interpretation share several points of convergence. Both practices aim at fidelity to meaning, ensuring that messages are accurately conveyed across languages (Nida, 1964, p. 134). Both involve intercultural mediation, requiring practitioners to navigate cultural differences and adapt communication strategies (Venuti, 1995, p.25). Finally, both position the translator or interpreter as a mediator, actively shaping the communicative encounter rather than serving as a neutral conduit (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

### **Points of Divergence**

At the same time, the literature highlights key divergences. Translation is characterized by temporality that allows for deferred revision, enabling precision and documentary support (Venuti, 1995, p.20). Interpretation, by contrast, is immediate and irreversible, demanding rapid cognitive processing (Gile, 1995, p. 161). Translation operates through the written channel, producing durable and archivable texts, while interpretation functions orally, producing ephemeral exchanges (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). Cognitive constraints also differ: translation involves moderate load supported by tools, whereas interpretation imposes high cognitive demands on memory and concentration (Gile, 1995, p. 162). Finally, visibility diverges: translators often remain invisible within texts, while interpreters are necessarily present in communicative exchanges (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

### **Synthesis**

Taken together, these contributions demonstrate that translation and interpretation, while united by a common purpose of linguistic mediation, differ in their theoretical foundations, technical requirements, and professional implications. Translation studies emphasize textual strategies, cultural adaptation, and documentary precision, while interpreting studies focus on cognitive load, immediacy, and oral interaction. Recognizing these distinctions is essential for advancing both academic research and professional training.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a comparative and interdisciplinary methodology designed to highlight both the convergences and divergences between translation and interpretation. The approach combines a **critical review of the literature** in translation studies and interpreting studies with a **comparative**

**analysis of practical cases** drawn from diplomatic, legal, and commercial contexts. By integrating theoretical insights with real-world examples, the methodology ensures that findings are both academically rigorous and professionally relevant.

### **Research Design**

The research design is qualitative and comparative. Rather than seeking to quantify differences between translation and interpretation, the study aims to **clarify disciplinary boundaries** and explore how theoretical frameworks illuminate practical distinctions. As Gideon Toury has argued, descriptive approaches are essential for understanding translation practices in their cultural and institutional contexts (Toury, 1995, p. 67). Similarly, Franz Pöchhacker emphasizes the need for interpreting studies to establish autonomy by examining interpretation in specific communicative environments (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). This study therefore situates both disciplines within their respective theoretical traditions while analyzing their application in professional practice.

### **Literature Review as Methodological Foundation**

The first methodological step involves a critical review of foundational theories. Eugene Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence provides a lens for examining fidelity and reception in translation (Nida, 1964, p. 134). Lawrence Venuti's domestication and foreignization strategies highlight the ethical and cultural dimensions of translation (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). In interpreting studies, Daniel Gile's Effort Model offers a framework for analyzing cognitive constraints in real-time communication (Gile, 1995, p. 161). These theories serve as benchmarks against which practical cases are evaluated.

The literature review also incorporates functionalist perspectives such as Hans Vermeer's Skopos theory, which emphasizes purpose-driven translation (Vermeer, 1989, p. 29), and Jean-François Rozan's note-taking techniques, which remain central to consecutive interpreting (Rozan, 1956, p. 33). By synthesizing these diverse theoretical contributions, the study establishes a robust foundation for comparative analysis.

### **Case Selection**

The second methodological step involves **case selection**. Three professional contexts were chosen:

- **Diplomatic settings**, where interpreters facilitate multilingual negotiations and translators produce treaties and communiqués.
- **Legal settings**, where courtroom interpreters ensure immediate oral comprehension and translators provide certified written documents.
- **Commercial settings**, where interpreters support negotiations and translators adapt marketing materials for target audiences.

These contexts were selected because they exemplify the practical demands of linguistic mediation and highlight the distinct skills required in each discipline. As Pöchhacker notes, interpreting in diplomatic and legal contexts underscores the immediacy and visibility of the interpreter's role (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). Conversely, translation in legal and commercial contexts demonstrates the importance of precision, documentation, and cultural adaptation (Venuti, 1995, p. 25).

### **Comparative Framework**

The comparative framework is structured around four criteria derived from the literature:

1. **Temporality** — translation as deferred and revisable, interpretation as immediate and irreversible (Gile, 1995, p. 161).
2. **Communication channel** — translation as written and durable, interpretation as oral and ephemeral (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).
3. **Cognitive constraints** — translation supported by documentary tools, interpretation requiring high cognitive load and memory (Gile, 1995, p. 162).
4. **Visibility** — translators often invisible in texts, interpreters necessarily present in communicative exchanges (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

These criteria provide a systematic basis for comparing translation and interpretation across contexts.

### **Limitations**

The methodology acknowledges certain limitations. First, the study focuses on professional contexts and does not address community interpreting or literary translation in depth. Second, the analysis is qualitative rather than quantitative, relying on theoretical synthesis and case-based comparison rather

than statistical data. Third, technological developments such as machine translation and remote interpreting are considered only insofar as they illustrate evolving professional demands. As Michael Cronin observes, technology increasingly shapes linguistic mediation, but disciplinary distinctions remain crucial (Cronin, 2002, p. 58).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Finally, the methodology recognizes the ethical dimensions of linguistic mediation. Translators and interpreters are not neutral conduits but active mediators who shape communication through their choices (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Tymoczko, 2007, p. 74). By foregrounding ethical responsibility, the study situates disciplinary distinctions within broader debates on intercultural communication and language policy.

### **Results and Analysis**

The comparative analysis of translation and interpretation reveals both convergences and divergences across professional contexts. While both disciplines share the overarching purpose of transferring meaning and facilitating intercultural communication, their modalities, cognitive demands, and visibility differ significantly. This section examines these similarities and differences through case studies in diplomatic, legal, and commercial settings, applying the criteria of temporality, communication channel, cognitive constraints, and visibility.

### **Similarities across Disciplines**

Despite their differences, translation and interpretation converge in several key respects. Both practices are driven by the **common purpose of fidelity to meaning**, ensuring that messages are accurately conveyed across linguistic boundaries (Nida, 1964, p. 134). Both also serve as forms of **intercultural mediation**, requiring practitioners to navigate cultural differences and adapt communication strategies to target audiences (Venuti, 1995, p. 25). Finally, both position the translator or interpreter as a **mediator**, actively shaping communication rather than serving as a neutral conduit (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

These similarities are evident in all three contexts analyzed. In diplomacy, translators and interpreters alike ensure that negotiations and treaties are comprehensible across languages. In legal contexts, both disciplines safeguard the principle of linguistic equality before the law. In commerce, both enable transactions and marketing strategies to reach diverse audiences. Thus,

translation and interpretation share a foundational role in sustaining multilingual communication.

### **Diplomatic Contexts**

Diplomatic settings highlight the complementary roles of translation and interpretation. At institutions such as the United Nations, interpreters provide **simultaneous interpretation** during multilingual debates, enabling delegates to participate in real time (Gile, 1995, p. 161). The immediacy of interpretation ensures that communication flows without interruption, but it also imposes high cognitive demands, requiring interpreters to manage listening, memory, and production simultaneously (Gile, 1995, p. 162).

Translators, by contrast, work on treaties, communiqés, and official documents. Their task is characterized by **deferred temporality**, allowing for revision, precision, and documentary support (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). Unlike interpreters, translators can consult reference materials, verify terminology, and ensure consistency across texts. This distinction underscores the complementary nature of the two disciplines: interpreters sustain oral exchanges, while translators preserve written agreements.

Visibility also diverges in diplomatic contexts. Interpreters are necessarily present in communicative exchanges, often seated in booths or visible in plenary sessions (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). Translators, however, remain invisible, their work embedded in documents without explicit acknowledgment (Venuti, 1995, p.22). This difference reflects broader cultural perceptions of linguistic mediation, with interpreters recognized as active participants and translators often marginalized.

### **Legal Contexts**

Legal contexts further illustrate the divergences between translation and interpretation. In courtroom proceedings, interpreters ensure that defendants, witnesses, and lawyers can communicate across languages. The immediacy of interpretation is critical, as legal rights depend on real-time comprehension (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 45). Interpreters must manage stress, memory, and accuracy under high-pressure conditions, often with limited opportunity for preparation (Gile, 1995, p. 161).

Translators, meanwhile, produce certified translations of contracts, statutes, and evidence. Their work requires terminological precision and adherence to legal norms, with errors potentially leading to significant consequences (Nida,

1964, p. 135). Unlike interpreters, translators can revise and consult legal dictionaries, ensuring accuracy in written texts.

The communication channel also differs: interpretation is oral and ephemeral, dependent on courtroom interaction, while translation is written and durable, forming part of the legal record (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). Visibility diverges as well: interpreters are present in proceedings, often subject to scrutiny, while translators remain invisible, their work embedded in documents without direct recognition (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

### **Commercial Contexts**

Commercial contexts highlight the adaptability of translation and interpretation in global markets. Interpreters facilitate negotiations between multinational partners, enabling immediate oral communication. Their role requires rapid cognitive processing, stress management, and cultural sensitivity, as business negotiations often involve subtle nuances (Gile, 1995, p. 162).

Translators, by contrast, adapt marketing materials, product descriptions, and contracts for target audiences. Their work emphasizes cultural adaptation, ensuring that messages resonate with consumers while maintaining fidelity to meaning (Venuti, 1995, p. 25). Translation in commerce often involves creative strategies, balancing literal accuracy with persuasive communication.

Temporality again diverges: interpretation is immediate and irreversible, while translation allows for revision and adaptation. The communication channel differs as well: interpretation sustains oral exchanges, while translation produces durable texts that shape consumer perceptions. Visibility follows the same pattern: interpreters are present in negotiations, while translators remain invisible in marketing materials.

### **Comparative Synthesis**

The comparative analysis across contexts confirms the criteria established in the methodology:

- **Temporality:** translation is deferred and revisable; interpretation is immediate and irreversible (Gile, 1995, p. 161).
- **Communication channel:** translation is written and durable; interpretation is oral and ephemeral (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

- **Cognitive constraints:** translation involves moderate load supported by tools; interpretation imposes high cognitive demands (Gile, 1995, p. 162).
- **Visibility:** translators remain invisible; interpreters are necessarily present (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

These divergences highlight the need to recognize translation and interpretation as autonomous yet complementary disciplines. Confusion between them risks undervaluing specialized skills and producing inadequate training frameworks.

### **Implications**

The results have several implications. First, they underscore the importance of **distinct academic curricula** for translators and interpreters, tailored to their specific skills and constraints. Second, they highlight the need for **professional recognition**, ensuring that both disciplines are valued in institutional frameworks. Third, they emphasize the relevance of **language policies** that integrate both translation and interpretation as complementary tools of intercultural communication.

### **Discussion**

The comparative analysis of translation and interpretation confirms that these disciplines, while united by a common purpose of linguistic mediation, diverge significantly in their modalities, cognitive demands, and professional visibility. This discussion situates the findings within broader theoretical debates, pedagogical frameworks, and policy considerations, highlighting the implications for academic research and professional practice.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The results reinforce the theoretical distinctions articulated in translation and interpreting studies. Eugene Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence emphasizes the importance of reception in translation, privileging communicative effectiveness over literal fidelity (Nida, 1964, p. 134). This aligns with the finding that translation allows for deferred revision and adaptation, enabling precision and contextualization. In contrast, Daniel Gile's Effort Model underscores the immediacy and cognitive intensity of interpretation, where listening, memory, and production must occur simultaneously (Gile, 1995, p. 161). The irreversibility of interpretation reflects the high cognitive load described in Gile's framework.

Lawrence Venuti's critique of translator invisibility also resonates with the findings. Translators often remain hidden within texts, their presence erased by publishing practices that privilege fluency (Venuti, 1995, p. 22). Interpreters, however, are necessarily visible in communicative exchanges, embodying the mediator role emphasized by Franz Pöchhacker (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). This divergence in visibility highlights the need to recognize the distinct professional identities of translators and interpreters.

Hans Vermeer's Skopos theory further illuminates the findings by emphasizing the purpose-driven nature of translation (Vermeer, 1989, p. 29). Translators adapt strategies to meet the communicative goals of target audiences, particularly in commercial contexts where cultural adaptation is essential. Interpreters, by contrast, operate under constraints of immediacy, limiting the extent of adaptation possible. The findings thus confirm that translation and interpretation embody different theoretical orientations, even as they share the overarching goal of fidelity to meaning.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The divergences identified in the analysis have significant implications for pedagogy. Confusion between translation and interpretation risks producing inadequate training frameworks that fail to address the specific skills required in each discipline. As Pöchhacker argues, interpreting studies must be recognized as autonomous, with curricula tailored to the cognitive and technical demands of interpretation (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50). Similarly, translation studies require specialized training in documentary research, terminological precision, and cultural adaptation (Venuti, 1995, p. 25).

The findings suggest that universities and training institutions should develop distinct curricula for translators and interpreters. Translation programs should emphasize textual strategies, corpus analysis, and cultural theory, while interpreting programs should focus on memory training, stress management, and simultaneous production techniques. Jean-François Rozan's note-taking methods, for example, remain essential for consecutive interpreting (Rozan, 1956, p. 33), while computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools are indispensable for modern translation practice (Baker, 1992, p. 85).

Pedagogical frameworks must also integrate interdisciplinary perspectives. Cognitive psychology can inform interpreter training by addressing memory and attention, while communication studies can enrich translation curricula by exploring audience reception. By tailoring curricula to disciplinary

specificities, institutions can ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills necessary for professional success.

### **Professional Implications**

The findings also highlight the need for differentiated professional recognition. Translators and interpreters often face undervaluation due to conflation of their roles. Translators are marginalized by invisibility, while interpreters are reduced to conduits rather than recognized as active mediators (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). This undervaluation undermines professional identity and limits opportunities for advancement.

Professional associations and institutions should therefore promote clearer distinctions between translation and interpretation. Accreditation systems should recognize the specific competencies required in each discipline, ensuring that practitioners are evaluated according to appropriate criteria. For example, translation accreditation should emphasize terminological precision and documentary support, while interpreting accreditation should assess memory, stress management, and immediacy.

The findings also underscore the importance of professional visibility. Translators should be acknowledged as co-authors of texts, their contributions recognized in publishing practices. Interpreters should be valued as active participants in communicative exchanges, their role acknowledged in diplomatic, legal, and commercial contexts. By promoting professional recognition, institutions can strengthen the status of both disciplines.

### **Policy Implications**

Language policies must also reflect the distinctions between translation and interpretation. In multilingual institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union, both disciplines are essential for sustaining communication. Policies that conflate translation and interpretation risk undervaluing specialized skills and producing inadequate frameworks for linguistic mediation.

The findings suggest that language policies should integrate both disciplines as complementary tools of intercultural communication. Translation policies should emphasize precision, documentation, and cultural adaptation, while interpreting policies should prioritize immediacy, accuracy, and stress management. By recognizing the distinct contributions of each discipline, policies can ensure that linguistic mediation is effective and equitable.

Policies must also address the impact of technology. Machine translation and remote interpreting platforms are reshaping professional practice, introducing new challenges and opportunities (Cronin, 2002, p. 58). While technology can support both disciplines, it cannot replace the human skills of cultural adaptation, memory, and mediation. Policies should therefore promote the integration of technology as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, human expertise.

### **Ethical Implications**

Finally, the findings highlight the ethical dimensions of linguistic mediation. Translators and interpreters are not neutral conduits but active mediators who shape communication through their choices (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Tymoczko, 2007, p. 74). Ethical responsibility is particularly significant in legal and diplomatic contexts, where errors or biases can have profound consequences.

The findings suggest that ethical training should be integrated into curricula and professional frameworks. Translators must be aware of the cultural and political implications of their strategies, while interpreters must manage the ethical challenges of immediacy and visibility. By foregrounding ethical responsibility, institutions can ensure that linguistic mediation contributes to intercultural understanding and justice.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has examined the similarities and differences between translation and interpretation, situating both disciplines within the broader framework of linguistic mediation. The analysis confirms that while translation and interpretation share a common purpose—fidelity to meaning and intercultural communication—they diverge significantly in their modalities, cognitive demands, and professional visibility. Translation is characterized by deferred temporality, documentary support, and textual precision, whereas interpretation is defined by immediacy, high cognitive load, and oral adaptability (Nida, 1964, p. 134; Gile, 1995, p. 161)

By promoting clearer distinctions in academic curricula, professional recognition, and language policies, this study contributes to strengthening both disciplines and advancing comparative research in linguistic mediation.

### **Key Findings**

The results highlight several convergences. Both translation and interpretation serve as forms of intercultural mediation, requiring practitioners to navigate

cultural differences and adapt communication strategies (Venuti 25). Both also position the translator or interpreter as a mediator, actively shaping communication rather than serving as a neutral conduit (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50).

At the same time, divergences are evident across contexts. Translation operates through the written channel, producing durable texts that can be revised and archived, while interpretation functions orally, producing ephemeral exchanges that cannot be corrected (Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47). Translation involves moderate cognitive load supported by tools, whereas interpretation imposes high cognitive demands on memory and concentration (Gile, 1995, p. 162). Visibility also diverges: translators often remain invisible within texts, while interpreters are necessarily present in communicative exchanges (Venuti, 1995, p. 22).

### **Recommendations**

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made for academia, professional practice, and policy:

#### **1. Distinct Academic Curricula**

Universities and training institutions should develop separate curricula for translators and interpreters. Translation programs should emphasize textual strategies, corpus analysis, and cultural theory, while interpreting programs should focus on memory training, stress management, and simultaneous production techniques (Rozan, 1956, p. 33; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 50). By tailoring curricula to disciplinary specificities, institutions can ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills necessary for professional success.

#### **2. Differentiated Professional Recognition**

Professional associations and institutions should promote clearer distinctions between translation and interpretation. Accreditation systems should recognize the specific competencies required in each discipline, ensuring that practitioners are evaluated according to appropriate criteria. Translators should be acknowledged as co-authors of texts, while interpreters should be valued as active participants in communicative exchanges (Venuti, 1995, p. 22; Pöchhacker, 2004, p. 47).

### **3. Integrated Language Policies**

Language policies must reflect the distinctions between translation and interpretation. In multilingual institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union, both disciplines are essential for sustaining communication. Policies should integrate translation and interpretation as complementary tools of intercultural communication, recognizing their distinct contributions (Cronin, 2002, p. 58).

### **4. Ethical Training and Awareness**

Ethical responsibility should be foregrounded in both disciplines. Translators must be aware of the cultural and political implications of their strategies, while interpreters must manage the ethical challenges of immediacy and visibility (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 74). Training programs should incorporate ethical modules to ensure that practitioners are prepared to navigate complex communicative environments.

### **5. Future Research**

Comparative research should continue to refine understanding of the convergences and divergences between translation and interpretation. Future studies might explore the impact of technology, including machine translation and remote interpreting platforms, on disciplinary boundaries (Braun, 2015, p. 102). Cognitive science research could also deepen insights into memory, stress, and attention in interpreting.

### **Final Reflection**

Ultimately, translation and interpretation must be recognized not as interchangeable practices but as distinct disciplines that complement one another in sustaining multilingual communication. Their convergence lies in the shared purpose of linguistic and cultural transfer, but their divergence lies in the modalities through which this purpose is achieved. By promoting clearer distinctions in academic curricula, professional recognition, and language policies, the study contributes to strengthening both disciplines and advancing comparative research in linguistic mediation.

### **Statement of Contribution**

This article contributes to the fields of translation studies and interpreting studies by offering a systematic comparative analysis of their similarities and differences. While both disciplines share the overarching purpose of fidelity to

meaning and intercultural communication, they diverge in temporality, communication channel, cognitive demands, and professional visibility. By integrating foundational theories—such as Nida's dynamic equivalence, Venuti's domestication and foreignization, Gile's Effort Model, and Pöchhacker's disciplinary autonomy—with case studies from diplomatic, legal, and commercial contexts, the study advances a nuanced understanding of linguistic mediation.

The originality of this work lies in its dual focus: it not only synthesizes theoretical perspectives across translation and interpreting studies but also grounds them in practical examples that highlight disciplinary distinctions. This approach clarifies the risks of conflating translation and interpretation, which can lead to undervaluation of specialized skills and inadequate training frameworks.

The article's contribution is threefold:

1. **Theoretical advancement** — refining disciplinary boundaries by juxtaposing translation and interpretation within a shared comparative framework.
2. **Pedagogical impact** — recommending distinct curricula and training strategies tailored to the cognitive and technical demands of each discipline.
3. **Policy relevance** — advocating for integrated language policies that recognize translation and interpretation as complementary tools of intercultural communication.

By bridging theory and practice, this study strengthens the recognition of translation and interpretation as autonomous yet complementary disciplines, thereby enriching academic discourse and informing professional and institutional frameworks.

## References

Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. London: Routledge.

Baker, M. (2006). *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. London: Routledge.

Baker, M., & Saldanha, G. (Eds.). (2009). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. London: Routledge.

Bassnett, S. (2014). *Translation studies*. London: Routledge.

Bell, R. T. (1991). *Translation and translating: Theory and practice*. London: Longman.

Braun, S. (2015). Remote interpreting. In H. Mikkelsen & R. Jourdenais (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of interpreting* (pp. 101–118). London: Routledge.

Chesterman, A. (1997). *Memes of translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Cronin, M. (2002). *Translation and globalization*. London: Routledge.

Cronin, M. (2009). *Interpreting: A global perspective*. London: Routledge.

Delisle, J., & Woodsworth, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Translators through history*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Diriker, E. (2004). *De-/Re-contextualizing conference interpreting: Interpreters in the ivory tower?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gentzler, E. (2001). *Contemporary translation theories*. London: Routledge.

Gile, D. (1995/2009). *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1997). *Discourse and the translator*. London: Routledge.

House, J. (2015). *Translation quality assessment: Past and present*. London: Routledge.

Jakobson, R. (1971). On linguistic aspects of translation. In *Selected writings II: Word and language* (pp. 260–266). The Hague: Mouton.

Kelly, D. (2005). *A handbook for translator trainers*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Katan, D. (2014). *Translating cultures: An introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators*. London: Routledge.

Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. London: Routledge.

Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translating*. Leiden: Brill.

Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (1982). *The theory and practice of translation*. Leiden: Brill.

Pöchhacker, F. (2002). *The interpreting studies reader*. London: Routledge.

Pöchhacker, F. (2004). *Introducing interpreting studies*. London: Routledge.

Rozan, J.-F. (1956/2003). *Note-taking in consecutive interpreting*. Geneva: Librairie de l'Université de Genève / Warsaw: Wydawnictwo TEPIS.

Schäffner, C. (Ed.). (2003). *Translation and intercultural communication*. London: Routledge.

Shreve, G. M. (2010). *Translation and cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Snell-Hornby, M. (2006). *The turns of translation studies: New paradigms or shifting viewpoints?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Steiner, G. (1998). *After Babel: Aspects of language and translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive translation studies—and beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Tymoczko, M. (2007). *Translation in a global context: Practices and politics*. London: Routledge.

Tymoczko, M. (2009). *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. London: Routledge.

Venuti, L. (Ed.). (2012). *The translation studies reader*. London: Routledge.

Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and commission in translational action. In A. Chesterman (Ed.), *Readings in translation theory* (pp. 173–187). Helsinki: Oy Finn Lectura Ab.

Wilss, W. (1982). *The science of translation: Problems and methods*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.