Visual Demands of Remote Simultaneous Interpreters: Initial findings from an experimental study

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Introduction

This study explores the challenges that interpreters face as a result of the immaturity of Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (RSI) platforms and how visual design impacts user experience by examining the visual demands of remote simultaneous interpreters.

A survey and experimental study were conducted with 29 remote simultaneous interpreters to gather data on their visual needs and preferences. The results of this study can inform the design of RSI platforms and training programs to improve user-friendliness and mitigate negative impacts on the interpreter's experience.

Research questions

- What impact does the interpreter's visual needs and the visual design of RSI platforms have on their overall user experience?

- What is the most effective way of presenting visual information to the interpreters on RSI platforms?

Study variables

- Design of interface: information-rich (maximal) vs information-poor (minimal)

- Display of speaker: zoomed in (head and facial expressions visible) vs zoomed out (hand gestures and body language visible)

- Automatic speech recognition (ASR): included vs excluded
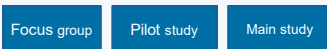
Participants

Overall SI experience: 400-799 hrs: 2, 800-1200 hrs: 4, 1200+ hrs: 23

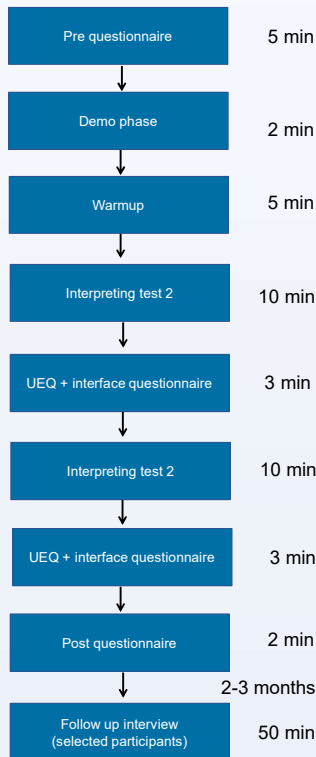Overall RSI experience: 20-49 hrs: 2, 50+ hrs: 27

Gender: female:19; male: 10

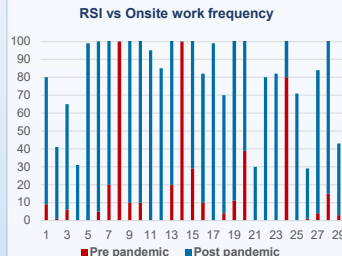Age groups: 20-29: 2, 30-39: 8, 40-49: 8, 50-59: 10, 60-69: 1

Study design

Focus group | Pilot study | Main study

Main Study design

Phase	Time
Pre questionnaire	5 min
Demo phase	2 min
Warmup	5 min
Interpreting test 2	10 min
UEQ + interface questionnaire	3 min
Interpreting test 2	10 min
UEQ + interface questionnaire	3 min
Post questionnaire	2 min
	2-3 months
Follow up interview (selected participants)	50 min

Results

RSI vs Onsite work frequency

Pre pandemic / Post pandemic

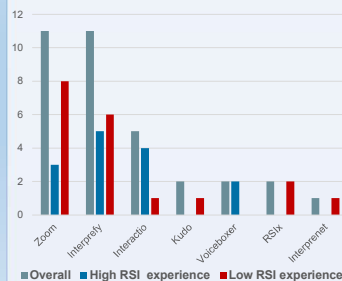### RSI vs Onsite work preference

Preference for onsite:
- female: 15/19 (79%), male: 9/10 (90%)
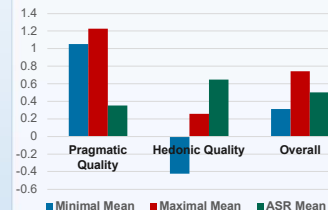- age range: 30-39: 7/8 (87.5%), 40-49: 6/8 (75%), 50-59: 9/10 (90%)

Post-covid RSI retention:
All participants aged 50 and above: more than 50% RSI post covid despite 90% onsite preference
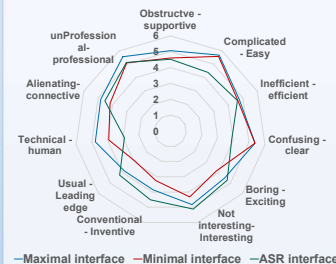
Platform preferences

Overall | High RSI experience | Low RSI experience

User experience: overall results

Minimal Mean | Maximal Mean | ASR Mean

User experience: individual item scores

Maximal interface | Minimal interface | ASR interface

Questionnaire results

The survey results suggest:
- Familiarity: Interfaces should be designed with user familiarity in mind using techniques such as skeuomorphism (emulating the physical world interfaces) and neomorphism (minimalistic Skeuomorphism)
- Individuality: Each interpreter is different and platform makers should provide extended customization to the interpreters.

Reference paper

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