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THE *THÉORIE DU SENS*: STUDYING THE DEPTH OF PROCESSING OF INTERPRETING PROFESSIONALS IN RELATION TO THE SOURCE-TEXT TYPE

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the depth of processing in consecutive interpreting. The data concern five professionals interpreting an easy and a difficult speech. Note-taking, target-text quality and the depth of processing have been studied. The results show that the participants apply a form-based approach, though meaning-based interpreting is more common if task circumstances are challenging. Higher accuracy and notes with more full words/fewer symbols might be related to form-based interpreting.

KEYWORDS: deverbalization, depth of processing, consecutive interpreting, note-taking, accuracy

STRESZCZENIE

W niniejszym badaniu została poddana analizie głębokość przetwarzania w tłumaczeniu konsekwentnym. Przedstawione dane dotyczą pięciu profesjonalnych tłumaczy ustnych wypowiedzi zarówno łatwych, jak i trudnych. Badano sporządzanie notatek, jakość tekstu docelowego oraz głębokość przetwarzania. Wyniki pokazują, że uczestnicy stosują podejście oparte na formie, choć tłumaczenie oparte na znaczeniu jest bardziej powszechne, gdy warunki wykonania zadania są trudne. Jak pokazało badanie, tłumaczenie oparte na formie może się wiązać z wyższą dokładnością notatek oraz z notacją zawierającą więcej pełnych wyrażen, a mniej symboli.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: dewerbalizacja, głębokość przetwarzania, tłumaczenie konsekwentne, notacja, dokładność

THE THÉORIE DU SENS

The deverbalization technique is omnipresent in the interpreting and translation classroom. Practitioners and trainers embrace it for its simplicity and comprehensiveness. It is easy to apply for didactical purposes and effectively convinces students to move away from the source text's linguistic structure (*e.g.* Dejean le Féal 1998: 43; Lederer 2010: para. 23). Even though the concept was developed in the seventies by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer, it is certainly no fossil, thanks to its practical and communicative value (Setton 2002: 124).

The *Théorie du sens* is a triangular model with an intermediate stage between source-text reception and target-text production where listeners discard the words,

i.e. the deverbalization stage that interpreters need to achieve in order to be able to create the same message and effect. The theory, therefore, distinguishes between meaning, present in verbal memory, and sense, present in a non-verbalized form, between word correspondences and text equivalences (Lederer 2010: para. 10) or between transcoding and interpreting (Albl-Mikasa 2008: 199). Nowadays, the pair human and machine translation might come into mind.

According to the *Théorie du sens*, interpreters, therefore, extract the sense from a speech, by using extralinguistic knowledge, as well as the context and situation (*e.g.* Lederer 2010: para. 7). Meaning-based interpreting would be the standard strategy, while form-based interpreting would be an exceptional approach to overcome difficulties (Dam 2001: 28), such as stress, fatigue, source-text difficulty, etc. Seleskovitch (1975: 30) uses the image of a fruit loaf to illustrate the predominance of the meaning-based technique: the large majority of the loaf, the dough, represents meaning-based interpreting, while the raisins stand for the rare occasions when interpreters have to resort to form-based interpreting, when for example dealing with numbers, names, technical terms, etc.

Despite the omnipresence of the deverbalization technique in the classroom, there has also been quite some criticism. First of all, there is little empirical evidence and research on the depth of processing (Dejean le Féal 1998: 42). Moreover, the theory has been rejected for not considering the possible ambivalence of meaning in concrete situations (Diriker 2008: 211) and for considering retention and recall to be automatic consequences of comprehension (Ilg, Lambert 1996: 71). Furthermore, it failed to consider language pair or setting, while the relatively large body of literature focusing on strategies related to specific language pairs shows the importance of such a point of view (*e.g.* Fusco 1990: 93; Donato 2003: 102).

Nevertheless, the concept of deverbalization can also be seen as a prescriptive rather than a descriptive concept, as it is only challenged as a descriptive approach in the scientific sense of the word (Gile 2003: 58). Moreover, most of the disagreement simply concerns the depth of this cognitive analysis, meaning that we can also take into account two possible levels which can both come into play: a deeper conceptual level, on which the deverbalization principle indeed operates, and an implementation level, which is concerned with practical and cognitive issues, such as the existence of false friends or linguistically induced information (*ibidem*).

The same evolution can be seen in the literature on note-taking, as notes were also first seen as a purely deverbalized product, while they were later seen as language and discourse. Initially, note-taking represented the non-linguistic, sense-perceptual level. The symbols used should be “liberated” from the word, and the interpreter should let go of grammatical formulation or of the surface structure (Paneth 1984: 328–329). At the end of the 1980s, authors described notes rather as a product of the interpreting process, which does contain the most important grammatical constituents, such as the subject-verb-object structure (Allioni 1989: 196; Ilg, Lambert 1996: 79; Mahmoodzadeh 1992: 234; Taylor 1997: 255; Lim

2006: 90). Note-taking is described as a “text” (Allioni 1989: 196) that presents features for word formation and inflexion (Kohn, Albl-Mikasa 2002: 262).

Even though there has been little empirical research on the deverbalization technique in interpreting, Albl-Mikasa (2008) studied five trainee interpreters working in the consecutive mode and used cognitive theory of text and language processing, as well as Relevance Theory to study their depth of processing. She saw that interpreters mainly work on a propositional level and closely follow the source text. This approach might offer several advantages, as it may be less capacity-consuming, it might allow interpreters to work more accurately (Albl-Mikasa 2008: 205) and to preserve the precise content, details or even vague statements (*ibidem*: 204). Nevertheless, she adds that the strategy interpreters choose may depend on the nature of the text and its presentation parameters, the task at hand and its goal, as well as the interpreters’ memory capacity and knowledge (*ibidem*: 204–205).

Similarly, Dam (1998) analyzed five consecutive interpretations and studied lexical similarity or dissimilarity, though she did not analyze the notes. The results showed that the interpretations contained more often features of lexical similarity than lexical dissimilarity and that the participants mainly used form-based interpreting. Nevertheless, the author adds that both approaches are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary, as they are two extremes on a continuum. Interpreters can alternate consciously or subconsciously between both strategies, depending on task circumstances.

Dam (2001) then added a second study on junior simultaneous interpreters working with both an easy and a difficult speech and saw that most of the analyzed segments in her data again present features of the form-based approach. Meaning-based interpreting would therefore not be the standard technique (*ibidem*: 49), though it was more often associated with the difficult source text. She explains this result by proposing that interpreters need more capacity for comprehension, when they face a difficult speech, meaning that they need to postpone target production and can only recall the gist of the speech. She also adds that the two approaches “may be a function of different memory requirements, which may again be reflections of different requirements for listening and comprehension” (*ibidem*: 52).

PROJECT RATIONALE AND DESIGN

As the only study taking into account source-text difficulty (*ibidem*) analyzed simultaneous interpretations, this project gathers data in the consecutive mode. Moreover, we studied professional interpreters in order to be able to compare our results to previous analyses (*ibidem*), but also added two other levels of experience, *i.e.* advanced students and beginning students (though this article will only report on data concerning the group of professionals). All participants interpreted two

speeches with a different difficulty level in order to shed some light on the different processing capacities, note-taking strategies, etc.

Fifteen participants (5 professionals, 5 advanced students and 5 novices) were asked to interpret two speeches and were given context and guidelines before they started. The interpretations were recorded and analyzed in terms of fluency, accuracy and depth of processing. The notes were studied by taking into account note quantity, the percentage of full words, symbols and abbreviations. Finally, retrospective interviews were conducted with each interpreter, meaning that the experiment provided both quantitative and qualitative data, though this article only discusses the quantitative results. Because of the high variability between the different levels of experience and the many variables which come into play in the interpreting process, no statistical analyses were conducted, but descriptive analyses were preferred to distinguish possible trends as a first step.

This project studies deverbalization as a descriptive concept and assumes that indeed two levels of comprehension might be implicated in the interpreting process, a deeper conceptual level, on which the deverbalization principle indeed operates, and an implementation level, as mentioned above. With this research project, we would like to shed light on the reasons why interpreters with different levels of experience opt for meaning- or form-based interpreting in specific task circumstances.

METHODOLOGY

Three aspects of the study will be explained in this section. The methodology used to determine source-text difficulty, to analyze the depth of processing and, finally, to assess the quality parameter accuracy. The methodology used to study fluency will not be discussed as the results regarding fluency did not allow to distinguish any trends related to the depth of processing in specific, the subject under study in this article (more information on the methodology used to assess fluency: Cardoen (2013)).

First, in order to study the effect of source-text difficulty on the interpreting process, two speeches on climate change have been developed, which were presented in English and had to be interpreted into Dutch. The participants are first asked to interpret a relatively easy text (Part 1) that serves as a possible introduction speech at a conference and then to render a more challenging, dense and technical speech (Part 2), which would be the first real conference presentation. This way, all subjects first interpreted an easy introduction and then a more difficult speech, which means that the interpreting process remains as natural as possible and that all subjects complete the experiment in the same conditions. Triangulation has been used to test the difficulty level of both speeches.

The difficulty level has thus been analyzed from three different angles, as we applied an intuitive, a subjective and an objective approach. First of all, two interpreting teachers have created the source texts based on their intuition, as it is in interpreting training and research common practice to rely on experience and intuition when judging the difficulty level of source speeches (Liu, Chiu 2009: 245). The speeches were, therefore, as natural as possible but presented clear differences concerning source-text difficulty without being too artificial. The first part was set out to be an introduction at a conference, which means that the content is more predictable, as an introduction generally welcomes the audience, thanks the organizers, introduces the subject, etc. Part 1 also includes an anecdote to grab the audience's attention, which is a clear characteristic of an introduction and means that the information that has to be interpreted is very visual in general. Part 2, on the contrary, was written to oblige the interpreter to process much more information a lot quicker. It contains more numbers and names, the speaker gives a technical explanation on a novel farming method (no-till farming), uses expressions (*e.g.* food for thought) and formulates her ideas more vaguely and abstractly (*e.g.* Business planners in this sector are moving away from assumptions of static climate conditions, and instead they are prioritizing activities that increase farm business resilience), since vague concepts are more difficult to memorize than concrete words (Walker, Hulme 1999: 1256).

Nevertheless, there is often a lack of consensus amongst a group of jurors judging source-text difficulty as a result of the fleeting nature of the interpreting task. Moreover, perception of source-text difficulty is influenced by the interpreting mode, working conditions, background of the interpreter, etc. (Liu, Chiu 2009: 245). Judges assessing the level of difficulty based on a written transcript might also focus on other features than participants actually interpreting the same speech (*ibidem*: 257). The difficulty level of the source text is therefore not only analyzed intuitively but also tested subjectively. We have asked three subjects whether they would take part in a retrospective interview after having interpreted the speeches. During the interview, they were first asked to judge the difficulty of both texts and, second, to run through their notes so that they might remember certain problems they encountered during the interpreting process. The subjective results confirmed the intuitive assessment.

As a final step, an objective analysis was also applied in order to examine source-text difficulty. Previous research shows that subjective assessments of source-text difficulty do not always correspond with the objective difficulty level of speeches (Lamberger-Felber 2001: 46) and that, therefore, both approaches should be applied (*ibidem*: 47). The objective analysis in this study, therefore, focused on both content-, as well as form-related parameters, such as speech rate, word length, lexical density, word frequency, sentence length, lexical diversity, index of syntactic complexity, etc. This objective analysis was in line with the results from the other two angles and confirmed that Part 2 was more difficult than Part 1.

Second, the depth of processing has been analyzed by using the methodology applied by Dam (1998, 2001). She looks at the product-manifestation of the two approaches, form- and meaning-based interpreting, and therefore carries out comparative analyses of the source and target texts. According to Dam (2001: 34),

we can expect the direct passage from source to target text involved in form-based interpreting to lead to a target text that displays a high degree of formal similarity in relation to its source text, whereas we can expect the deverbilization process hypothesized for meaning-based interpreting to lead to a target text with very few traces of the linguistic form of the source text, *i.e.* a target text that exhibits a high degree of dissimilarity to the source text in terms of form (Dam 2001: 34).

The differences between both speeches can be phonological, morphological, syntactic or lexical, and it is, of course, impossible to isolate the language-induced differences in the source and target texts from the interpreting-induced ones (*ibidem*: 35). Dam (2001), therefore, opts for lexical similarity and lexical dissimilarity as key concepts and tools to identify form-based and meaning-based interpreting. She considers a particular lexical target text element to be part of the category lexical similarity, if it “can be identified as the closest possible contextual equivalent, or an inflectional or derivational form thereof, of a particular lexical source text element” (*ibidem*). Those elements are then related to form-based interpreting. If we need, on the contrary, some kind of contextual and/or background knowledge to link a specific lexical target text element to a lexical source-text element and if “they represent interpretations (in the hermeneutic sense of the term) of the source text elements” (*ibidem*: 38), they are assigned to the category lexical dissimilarity and are related to meaning-based interpreting.

Dam (2001: 35), therefore, opts for a binary structure but highlights that this is, of course, a theoretical construct, and that there are many different degrees of dissimilarity. Similarly, two words may have more or less the same degree of equivalence in relation to the source-text word in a present context.

The target texts gathered for this project have been transcribed (including self-corrections, repetitions and other manifestations of oral language production) and divided into segments. A segment was defined as a series of words grouped around a finite verb (*ibidem*: 33). As a next step, the segments were tagged, either as “similar”, “similar(dissimilar)”, “similar/dissimilar”, “dissimilar(similar)”, and “dissimilar segments”. These five categories are illustrated in Table 1.

The first column contains the source-text elements, while the second mentions the interpretation in Dutch with a literal translation in English in brackets. The first line is an example of the category “similar segments”, as each of the lexical elements can be considered to be the closest possible contextual equivalent. On the contrary, none of the words in the last line can be qualified as such, meaning that it is an example of the “dissimilar segments”. In the case of the third example, half of the lexical elements can be considered to be the closest possible contextual elements, and it is, therefore, part of the category “similar/dissimilar segments”.

Table 1. Depth of processing

I, we, would be more than happy to help you.	ikzelf wij willen u heel graag daarbij helpen (I, we, would be very happy to help)
that this is just a single point of measurement,	dat dat maar een anekdotisch meetpunt is (that this is only one anecdotal point of measurement)
First of all, I'd like to welcome you all here to London.	goedemiddag dames en heren en hartelijk welkom in Londen (good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, you are very welcome in London)
If people are so concerned about money	nu als geld inderdaad zo belangrijk is (now, if money is indeed so important)
that will allow them to be resilient to future changes.	om de klimaatsverandering tegen te gaan (to fight climate change)

In the case of the second line (“similar(dissimilar) segments”), the majority of the lexical elements are the closest possible contextual elements, while in the case of the fourth line (“dissimilar(similar) segments”) the majority are not. Therefore, the first two examples are part of the form-based interpreting approach and the last two of the meaning-based approach.

Third, the quality parameter accuracy has been analyzed. For this project, accuracy is particularly important, as deverbalization implies a smooth target-language production without, however, compromising the accurate representation of the source text. Accuracy is described by Lee (2008: 169) as follows: “[b]ased on accurate understanding of the source speech, the interpreter should reproduce the meaning of the speech, achieving the same effect on the target language audience as on the source language audience”.

Two approaches, a rating scale and a grid, have been tested and compared in order to analyze their advantages and interjudge differences before analyzing the data. They both provided the same result and ranking. For both approaches, two judges rated the transcripts after they were given clear guidelines or criteria. No audio recordings are provided, meaning that the raters assessed the interpretations solely on the basis of the transcriptions. This methodological choice was based on two major elements. First of all, research in Spain (Pradas Macías 2007) indicates that parameters related to the presentation of an interpretation influence our perception of content-related parameters. As it was important to rate accuracy separately, we wanted to limit the possibility of other parameters influencing accuracy. Moreover, some subjects were colleagues or (ex-)students of the raters, so in order to ensure anonymity, we opted for assessing transcriptions rather than audio recordings, though we are aware of the limitations related to this choice.

The rating scale method, with a score going from 5 to 1 (Table 2), was less complex and time-consuming while being at the same time more intuitive and transparent. Moreover, the interjudge differences were small: in 55.11% of the cases, the judges indicated exactly the same result, in 40.81%, there was a minimal difference of one point, while only in 4.08% of the case did the judges' assessment differ with 2 or more points. The difference between the averages of both judges for each interpretation is smaller than 0.5 point, meaning that the ratings seem reliable.

Table 2. Rating scale accuracy

5	4	3	2	1
Complete and correct chunk.	A few minor omissions or additions in the chunk. However, the affected elements constitute only details in the entire source text	Several and more important omissions, additions or substitutions, though the message in the chunk is still clear.	The message of this specific chunk of interpretation is lost or not clear.	The chunk contains a <i>contresens</i> , the chunk has not been interpreted at all or in such a way that the logic of the entire source text is lost.

We, therefore, opted for the rating scale in this project and excluded segments with a score of less than 2 from the analysis so that inaccurately interpreted segments would not be included and compared to their source-text segments, when analysing the depth of processing. Very inaccurate segments would, of course, cause bias, as they would often fall in the category of lexical dissimilarity and therefore the meaning-based approach. Dam (2001: 32–33) solved this problem by selecting the interpretations of students who obtained the highest scores at their final exams.

RESULTS

The results discussed in this article will focus first of all on the depth of processing of the interpreters, followed by an analysis of their note-taking and finally a quality assessment of the interpretations by studying the quality parameter accuracy in particular. All the results concern the data on the five professionals interpreting the easier and more difficult speech, therefore a total of ten interpretations.

The data on the depth of processing concerning the easy speech are presented in Table 3. The first column mentions the five segment categories, while the next five columns show the percentages for each category and each of the five interpreters.

The last column presents the averages for each category. The data show that the majority of the segments concern form-based interpreting (*i.e.* the “similar” and “similar(dissimilar) segments”), since 69.67% of the occurrences on average show mainly features of lexical similarity. Moreover, the most common segment type in this group of professional interpreters is the “similar segment”. Only 4.52% of the segments on average concern purely meaning-based interpreting, while 12.26% of the occurrences on average represent segments with mainly features of lexical dissimilarity (“dissimilar(similar)” and “dissimilar segments”). These results are in line with the data presented by Dam (2001) on professional interpreters working with Danish and Spanish.

Table 3. Depth of processing easy speech

Part 1	PROF A	PROF B	PROF C	PROF D	PROF E	Total
S	21 (31.82)	41 (56.94)	18 (35.29)	22 (35.48)	20 (33.90)	122 (39.35)
S(d)	18 (27.27)	18 (25)	19 (37.25)	18 (29.03)	21 (35.59)	94 (30.32)
S/D	15 (22.73)	9 (12.5)	10 (19.61)	12 (19.35)	10 (16.95)	56 (18.06)
D(s)	7 (10.61)	1 (1.39)	2 (3.92)	8 (12.90)	6 (10.17)	24 (7.74)
D	5 (7.58)	3 (4.17)	2 (3.92)	2 (3.33)	2 (3.39)	14 (4.52)
Total	66	72	51	62	59	310

The results on the difficult speech (Table 4) first of all confirm the trends presented in Table 3. The majority of the segments, on average still concern form-based interpreting, as 63.44% of the segments show mainly features of lexical similarity (“similar” and “similar(dissimilar) segments”). The most common

Table 4. Depth of processing difficult speech

Part 2	PROF A	PROF B	PROF C	PROF D	PROF E	Total
S	6 (12.77)	15 (26.32)	18 (32.73)	17 (26.98)	14 (24.56)	70 (25.09) (-)
S(d)	16 (34.04)	29 (50.88)	20 (36.36)	25 (39.68)	17 (29.82)	107 (38.35) (+)
S/D	8 (17.02)	10 (17.54)	9 (16.36)	13 (20.63)	11 (19.30)	51 (18.28) (+)
D(s)	12 (25.53)	2 (3.51)	7 (12.73)	4 (6.35)	6 (10.53)	31 (11.11) (+)
D	5 (10.64)	1 (1.75)	1 (1.82)	4 (6.35)	9 (15.79)	20 (7.17) (+)
	47	57	55	63	57	279

segment type is, in this case, however, the “similar(dissimilar) segment”. In the case of this more difficult source text 7.17% of the segments on average represent purely meaning-based interpreting while 18.28% of the segments present features of mainly lexical dissimilarity (“dissimilar(similar)” and “dissimilar segments”). We can therefore see a clear effect of source-text difficulty on the depth of processing, defined as the degree of lexical similarity or dissimilarity between source and target text, though the trend we can distinguish in these data does not seem to be in line with the strategy described in the literature, *i.e.* opting for the meaning-based approach when task circumstances are more difficult (*e.g.* Massaro, Schlesinger 1997).

The following two tables present the results on note-taking for the easy (Table 5) and more difficult speech (Table 6). In each case, the first column mentions the different parameters, *i.e.* the percentages of full words, abbreviations and symbols, as well as the number of source-text words per note, in order to analyze note quantity. The lower the number of source-text words, the more notes the interpreter has therefore written down. The following five columns present the data on the five professional interpreters, while the last one shows the averages for each parameter again.

The main feature of note-taking as a technique is the very high inter-subject variability, which can also clearly be seen in Tables 5 and 6. As the results concern a relatively small group, we focused particularly on the data concerning the interpreter representing the highest percentage of meaning-based segments and the participant with the highest percentage of form-based segments, in order to establish a starting hypothesis that can afterwards be checked on a larger group of participants.

There does not seem to be a clear link with note quantity in either of the two tables. However, the data on the easy speech in Table 5 show that the interpreter with the highest percentage of form-based interpreting segments, used the highest percentage of full words and the lowest percentage of symbols in his notes, while the professional applying the highest percentage of meaning-based segments, used the lowest percentage of full words and presented on the contrary the highest percentage of abbreviations.

Table 5. Note-taking easy speech

Part 1	Prof. A	Prof. B	Prof. C	Prof. D	Prof. E	Average
Words	27.65	54.94	47.77	34.17	43.43	41.70
Abbreviations	38.82	19.75	23.57	23.62	16.57	24.47
Symbols	33.53	25.31	28.66	42.21	40.00	33.94
Note quantity	4.12	4.32	4.46	3.52	4.00	4.08

The same trend can also be seen in Table 6, concerning the data on the more difficult speech. Moreover, when we look at the averages of the group of professional interpreters, we can see that they used fewer full words but more abbreviations and symbols during Part 2, when, on average, the meaning-based segments increased as well compared to Part 1.

Based on the data presented above, we can hypothesize that writing down mainly full words, might imply that interpreters are more attached to the source text's propositional structure and resort more to form-based interpreting. On the contrary, writing down symbols (and abbreviations), might allow them to be more detached from the source text's propositional structure and opt for a more meaning-based approach.

Table 6. Note-taking difficult speech

Part 2	Prof. A	Prof. B	Prof. C	Prof. D	Prof. E	Average
Words	27.63 (-)	41.10 (-)	40.48 (-)	28.63 (-)	31.62 (-)	33.89 (-)
Abbreviations	31.58 (-)	21.00 (+)	26.19 (+)	25.95 (+)	26.50 (+)	26.09 (+)
Symbols	40.79 (+)	37.90 (+)	33.33 (+)	45.42 (+)	41.88 (+)	39.86 (+)
Note quantity	3.49 (+)	3.63 (+)	3.79 (+)	3.03 (+)	3.40 (+)	3.47 (+)

Finally, the following table (Table 7) shows the results concerning quality. As we mentioned before, since the data concern a small group of professional interpreters, we prefer to focus on the participant representing the highest percentage of meaning-based and the interpreter using the highest percentage of form-based interpreting. The trends seen in this group can then be used as starting hypotheses for a larger study.

Regarding fluency, no clear link could be distinguished regarding the depth of processing, as all participants were very fluent interpreters in general, presenting quite small intergroup differences. The data on novices and advanced students which will be analyzed as a second step in this project might yield more pronounced differences regarding the quality parameter fluency.

Table 7 contains the accuracy scores for the five interpreters on the easy speech in the second column and on the more challenging task in the last column. The averages for both speeches are mentioned below. The highest possible score was 5, while segments with scores below 2 were excluded from the analyses. The results on accuracy show that the interpreter with the highest percentage of meaning-based segments is the least accurate participant both during the easy and the difficult speech. The participant with the highest percentage of form-based segments, on the contrary, turned out to be the most accurate interpreter in Part 1 and the second most accurate in Part 2. We could therefore hypothesize that detaching from the source text might imply a loss in accuracy. Nevertheless, this effect might be less

pronounced when interpreting difficult speeches or, in other words, opting for a more deverbilized approach might be slightly more beneficial when interpreting difficult rather than easier speeches.

Table 7. Quality – Accuracy

Professional interpreters	Part 1	Part 2
Prof. A	3.64	3.16
Prof. B	4.44	3.85
Prof. C	4.00	3.21
Prof. D	4.05	4.00
Prof. E	4.16	3.29
Average	4.06	3.50

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The main conclusion based on these data is that the meaning-based approach is not the strategy most often used in this group of professional interpreters, though it is more common when task circumstances are difficult. This finding is not in line with the literature on deverbilization (e.g. Massaro, Schlesinger 1997). However, the results are in accordance with previous empirical studies on the subject (Albl-Mikasa 2008; Dam 1998; *ibidem*: 2001).

The data also provided some trends regarding accuracy and note-taking, which can serve as starting hypotheses for further analyses and which might partly explain interpreters' preference for the form-based approach. Form-based interpreting is related to higher accuracy, a core parameter in interpreting quality (e.g. Bühler 1986: 233). Moreover, regarding note-taking, full words might be related to form-based interpreting, while higher percentages of abbreviations and symbols might be linked to a meaning-based approach. A higher percentage of full words might imply that the interpreter sticks more to the source-text structure (e.g. Giambagli 1990: 111; Chmiel 2007: 67), which could also be advantageous in certain circumstances, as the interpreter has to propositionalize the output anyhow (Albl-Mikasa 2008: 225). Finally, though the data do not allow us to distinguish any trends according to fluency and the depth of processing, previous fluency analyses for this research project concerning the three groups of experience have shown that word-based interpreters are more fluent, which might also partly explain the preference for the form-based approach.

Of course, certain limitations should be taken into account regarding the analyses presented above. The data concern a relatively small group of five interpreters or ten interpretations. Moreover, the participants are professionals who mainly work in the simultaneous mode. We have, like Dam (2001), opted for the key concepts lexical similarity and dissimilarity to operationalize depth of processing, though of course many other aspects possibly related to a deverbilized approach have not been taken into account, such as phonological, morphological or syntactic differences (Dam 2001: 34). Finally, interpreting quality is a lot more than accuracy and fluency. Many other quality parameters have not been taken into account, such as target language quality, voice, eye contact, etc., though they might also be crucial in the assessment of overall quality.

Nonetheless, based on these data, some interesting perspectives emerge for future research. The note-taking strategies, as well as fluency and accuracy assessments of the two other groups of participants, *i.e.* the novice and advanced students, have already been carried out. As the next step in this project, they will now also be related to the depth of processing in both speech types, the easier and more difficult speech, in order to know whether the hypotheses described in this article also stand for the other two levels of experience and whether beginning (and advanced) students apply the same strategies as the ones described in the group of professional interpreters. Based on the literature, we would expect students, on the contrary, to cling to the source-text structure when the speech becomes more difficult if they have not yet learned which elements should be noted down or which should not and are anxious to forget important information (Alexieva 1994: 199). In other words, they might rather opt for a form-based approach when they are confronted with difficult task circumstances and, on the contrary, only apply the meaning-based approach when their cognitive load allows them to do so. Moreover, again according to the literature on the development of interpreting competence (e.g. Giambagli 1990: 111; Chmiel 2007: 67), we would expect that the target-language fluency and source-text accuracy of beginning students decline when they apply a form-based approach and use mainly full words in their note-taking, contrary to the results on professional interpreters presented here.

Even though the results in these analyses do not paint a picture of professional interpreters profoundly deverbilizing source speeches, based on context and extralinguistic knowledge, therefore distinguishing themselves from machines, two final remarks should be made. The data did also present some impressive solutions under high cognitive strain, when very dense and complicated passages have been correctly and efficiently interpreted by the professional interpreters who in those specific instances did apply a deverbilized approach. Moreover, we should again highlight that this study looks at meaning- and form-based interpreting as descriptive concepts. Deverbilization as a prescriptive concept, on the contrary, can give students the confidence to move away from the source text's structure and has proved its worth in many classrooms, which is exactly why, based on the literature, the following analyses on beginning and advanced students could provide different results.

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