TEXT PROCESSING STRATEGIES: A HYPOTHESIS TO ASSESS STUDENTS' APTITUDE FOR SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING

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The present work is an attempt at assessing aptitude for simultaneous interpreting by taking into consideration those skills that have been developed by the student during his or her previous educational and formative (in the widest sense of the term) experiences and that are deemed to be part of an interpreter's performance as has been empirically widely demonstrated. These skills fall into two main categories: cognitive skills and linguistic skills.

The first category includes those abilities related to the fulfillment of tasks such as comprehending, analysing, anticipating, reprocessing and summarizing a text, whereas the second category contains those abilities that indicate a perfect linguistic competence in the mother- and working tongues (among which syntactical, lexical, stylistic and terminological competences).

While it is self-evident that the above-mentioned skills are commonly shared by any member of a linguistic community, within the framework of an experiment in simultaneous interpreting it is, nevertheless, of considerable interest to highlight those particular strategies and operations which, while they are spontaneously and often unconsciously carried out by the speaker in dealing with a text, for the interpreter constitute a willful choice enabling him/her to achieve a given objective in a given communicative situation.

A case in point is offered by the macrorule named "generalization" by Kintsch and Van Djick (Jennifer Mackintosh, 1985) in their model of discourse comprehension and production, whereby a general proposition denoting an immediate superset may replace any sequence of propositions. Consequently, a series of names of institutions like "the Independent Broadcasting Authority (I.B.A.), the European Broadcasting Union, etc.", whose comprehension, memorization, retention and reproduction may result in an excessive drain of resources to the detriment of other simultaneous cognitive tasks (including paying attention to the subsequent incoming pieces of information), leads the interpreter to opt for a more generalized formula of the type "national and European broadcasting authorities".

In so doing, the interpreter waters down the specificity of his/her message, without however distorting it significantly, while at the same time gaining a respite so as to better manage his/her resources.

The aim of the present work was that of verifying among would-be interpreters whether and to what extent outstanding cognitive and linguistic abilities which are considered useful prerequisites to embark upon a training course in simultaneous interpreting spontaneously emerged during text reprocessing strategies.

To this end an experiment was carried out at the Scuola Superiore per Interpreti e Traduttori dell'Università di Trieste involving 20 second-year students who wished to start the training course in interpreting. In order to focus better on precisely those skills relevant to the above-mentioned aim of the test, thus eliminating error variables due to linguistic code-switching difficulties, the experiment consisted of a simultaneous transposition from Italian into Italian of an oral text: this intralinguistic task assigned to Italian mother-tongue subjects guaranteed an excellent and homogenous linguistic competence within the group.

The type of text selected for the test
particularly lent itself to modifications since it was a political speech (the speech was delivered during a debate at the European Parliament), the style of which was typically rhetorical and cumbersome.

The selected text was characterized by the following difficulties: factual pieces of information (such as proper nouns), long embedded sentences, artificial interruption of the text surface cohesion in two instances (first: intentionally incorrect concord; second: verb omission caused by the cover up of the verb itself through another sound, namely "uhm". These devices enabled the present writer to test the subjects' ability to restore the semantic and syntactic continuity of the message).

Experimental procedure

The experiment consisted of four stages: in the first stage, each subject was asked to listen to a recorded trial text while at the same time referring back the meaning of what was being heard in his/her own words and not following the original wording unthinkingly.

This first stage was aimed at gradually training the subject to split his attention in performing a dual task simultaneously (listening while speaking). The duration of this first part necessarily varied according to each subject's difficulties (some asked to stop the tape recorder at some point, others to hear a pattern performance or to repeat the same text). On the whole it took them between ten and forty minutes to become familiar with the exercise.

During the second stage, the real test took place on the basis of a previously recorded speech.

In the third stage, the subjects were asked to fill in a questionnaire concerning the difficulties faced, from which a useful hierarchy of obstacles for teaching purposes was devised.

Finally, during the fourth stage, the subjects were asked to write a summary of the same text, made available to them for the purpose, so as better to detect the individual information selecting and reprocessing procedures under conditions of highest concentration for decision-making.

The last aspect of the experiment entailed a comparison between the subjects' and real interpreters' performances: this latter control group was made up of four subjects about to graduate in the same above-mentioned University who simultaneously interpreted the same text first into English and then into Italian. From the analysis of each interpreter's two versions a first interesting feature emerged: the text processing and segmentation strategies were substantially the same and were target language-independent.

The comparison between the strategies that were spontaneously adopted by the subjects and those developed and strengthened by the interpreters through intensive training showed considerable similarities and meaningful divergences, as will be later explained in greater detail.

Analysis and evaluation criteria

The twenty performances were examined on the basis of five positive and five negative criteria, each scoring +1 and -1 respectively. In the case of several negative criteria all present in one of the main nuclei in which the text was broken down, as for instance semantic error and loss of cohesion, an overall negative score of -1 was given. Similarly, an overall positive score of +1 was assigned in the converse case, unless a particular skill needed stressing.

The following criteria were adopted:
1) application of macrosrules on the incoming pieces of information: (+1)
   - for semantic abstraction via construction (SA): any single piece or sequence of pieces of information may be replaced or conceptualized by one denoting a global fact of which they are constituents (i.e. bricks, cement, wall->house);
   - for semantic abstraction via generalization (Ge): any single piece or sequence of pieces of information may be replaced or conceptualized by a general one denoting an immediate superset (i.e. in June, July and August-> during Summer);
2) (+1) for active storage in short-term memory (AS) of incoming linguistic occurrences so as to facilitate their processing with subsequent permutation of the sentence segments during the message output;
3) (+1) for syntactic and/or semantic anticipation ability;
4) (+1) for paradigmatic replacement of a phrase (PR) (i.e. "The response of the European Parliament"-> "The stance taken up by the European Parliament");
5) (+0.5) for ability to detect and modify a paradigmatic structure;
6) (-0.5) for deletion (De) of a main nucleus (noun phrase and modifiers) or of an important secondary nucleus (specification, etc.). Advisable deletion (AD) implies deletion of an unimportant secondary nucleus;
7) (-0.5) for form-linked errors (Fo) of various types including style imperfections, wrong collocations, violations of combinatorial constraints or grammar mistakes, provided the
8) (-1) for loss of cohesion (CL): wrong reproduction in the target text of the grammatical links to the extent of rendering its content difficult to make out (i.e. incorrect concord of subject and verb separated by an embedded sentence);
9) (-1) for loss of coherence (CoL): the text produced by the subject lacks its internal logical links between the pieces of information thus rendering the text world reconstructed by the receiver incomplete and lacking its consequential and informative aspects. This is the cause and at the same time the effect of the previous condition;
10) (-1) for semantic error (SE): the comparison between the source and target texts shows that original pieces of information have been replaced by incorrect ones (including misinterpretation).

The following features were also taken into consideration:
11) length of the performance, ie. 12/12 sentences (+1);
12) fulfillment of the task without breaks (+1);
13) deletion of a whole sentence: (-1) for each deleted sentence;
14) fulfillment of the task with breaks: (-1) for each request to stop the tape-recorder and consequent break.

Breaking down of the text: criteria used

The text presented to the subjects had been previously analysed and broken down into a network of grammar and semantic relations on the basis of the distinction between main and secondary information nuclei or heads suggested by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).

The following network is a simplified and linear representation of these relations which were interpreted in the light of a pragmatic criterion according to which the main nuclei (in italics) are the major information-carriers for the benefit of the interpreter. Here is a token representation of the first two of the twelve sentences contained in the experiment text:

"Signora Presidente, la proposta alla quale abbiamo aderito e che perciò voteremo, rappresenta, a nostro avviso, una risposta dignitosa, ferma e puntuale del Parlamento europeo ad una situazione che desta generale preoccupazione e che ha ormai assunto nel Mediterraneo, un alto grado di pericolosità.

Essa rappresenta inoltre una valida indicazione politica per la riunione della prossima settimana dei dodici ministri degli esteri sulle vie da seguire per intensificare e meglio coordinare l'azione contro la barbarie del terrorismo e pe: rinnovare gli sforzi direttamente ad avviare un processo di pace capace di portare una soluzione di pace e di giustizia nel Medioriente, ... " (Segre, Resoconto Integrale delle sedute, 16.1.1986: 386)

(Madam President, the proposal we have agreed upon and therefore will vote is in our opinion a dignified, firm and timely response by the European Parliament to a situation that is cause of general concern and that in the Mediterranean has become highly dangerous by now.

Furthermore, it is a sound political indication in view of the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers due for next week on the path to follow to intensify and better coordinate action against the barbarity of terrorism and to renew efforts aimed at starting a peace process that paves the way for a solution of peace and justice in the Middle East, ...)

1 [Signora Presidente]
1°
dignitosa/ferma

\1.1 [ ngôi ישון] \1.1 [adetto]-\ [perciò voteremo]-\]

3° preoccupante pericolosa

\[\n\a situazione\[\in Mediterraneo

2

dei 12 Min.Est.

\1 [nuova]\2\ [nuova]\3 [nuova]

Essa [rappresenta]-\ [indicazione]-\ [per riunione]-\ [politica]

\valida pross. settimana

4°

intensificare-[azione]-contro \[\[vie da seguire per]\ [meglio]

\rinnovare-[sforzi]-[diretti ad avviare]-\[processo]-[capace di portare]-]

5° \[di giustizia]-\ [soluzione]-\ [in M.O.-di pace]

In this representation the square brackets [ ] indicate the lesser informative occurrences, whereas the bars | include strictly linked and subsidiary pieces of
Performance comparison

In analysing and evaluating the twenty performances, a considerable discrepancy emerged: the need to quantify this disparity led to a scale for measuring the results ranging from a minimum of -8 to a maximum +8. Within this frame of reference, individual potential appeared deeply differentiated, therefore being able to follow the progress of these students during their next two years in simultaneous interpreting training will certainly be of great interest.

A sentence by sentence comparison between the four interpreters’ performances and those of the top four subjects indicates interesting analogies in the respective message processing and reproduction strategies.

If a first distinction between linguistic and cognitive skills in performing the task, albeit with the full awareness that processing takes place simultaneously at various levels (both superficial and deep) with only a temporary dominance of one processing stage over the others (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981), it has generally been noted that those operations that are typical of the first stage of processing related to the language surface level are prevalent in both groups. These operations modify the target language usually by reducing it to its main informative nucleus: the subjects performed well-chosen deletions of “subordinate” pieces of information (i.e. a sequence of modifiers referred to the same nucleus, paradigmatic redundancies like for instance “per meglio intensificare e coordinare gli sforzi” = “better to intensity and coordinate efforts”). Furthermore, paradigmatic replacements were also frequent (use of synonyms) as were paraphrases which denote fluency and wide vocabulary, linguistic competence and mental flexibility.

With regard to the cognitive skills required for the task, the following abilities in the interpreters’ performances were detected: implementation of macrorules, namely generalization and construction, the use of strategies such as the active storage of information in short-term memory, syntactic and semantic anticipation (see the above-mentioned analysis criteria), synthesis, repetition of a main nucleus so as to strengthen the cohesion and thus the coherence of a long text with many embedded sentences (see the concept of “recurrence” in Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981), and regulative integration (namely the addition of information already known to the interpreter in order to restore the missing semantic and syntactic continuity of the message, ibid.). Most of these skills were also detected among the subject group performances, but mainly among those with the highest scores.

In order to provide a clearer picture of what has hitherto been written, there follow the performances of the four interpreters ([IA, IB, etc.] compared to those of the four subjects out of the twenty that represent the two extremes of the assessment scale, namely the two top and bottom scores (+8, +6.5, -6.5 and -8 respectively).

Only two of the twelve sentences of the text have been here integrally recorded. For the sake of further clarification: in the sentences the main nuclei that are relevant to our research have been stressed in bold characters and underlined when not adjacent. In the transcription, an asterisk (*) precedes and indicates semantic errors contained in the target text. Subsequently, a grid containing the operations performed by both the interpreters and the above-mentioned subjects on the whole text has been provided. In each sentence of the grid, only the nuclei determining a positive or negative score have been indicated. Furthermore, the operations that are common to both groups have been written in bold type to facilitate the recognition of strategy similarities:

1) Signora Presidente, 1ª la prospettiva alla quale 1.1) abbiamo aderito e che perciò voleremo, rappresenta, a nostro avviso, 2ª una risposta dignitosa, ferma e puntuale del Parlamento Europeo ad una 3ª situazione che desta generale preoccupazione e che ha ormai assunto nel Mediterraneo, un alto grado di pericolosità.

2) 1ª Essa rappresenta inoltre una valida 2ª Indicazione politica per la 3ª riunione della 3.1. prossima settimana dei dodici Ministri degli Esteri sulle vie da seguire 4ª per intensificare e meglio coordinare l’azione contro la barbarie del terroismo e per 5ª rinnovare gli sforzi diretti ad avviare un processo capace di apportare una soluzione di pace e di giustizia nel Medio Oriente, con il 6ª riconoscimento dei diritti nazionali del popolo palestinese e 7ª dei diritti di tutti gli stati della regione, 7.1 compreso Israele, 7ª all’esistenza e alla sicurezza.

(i) A

1) Signora Presidente, oggi abbiamo aderito e voteremo su una proposta che secondo noi è una risposta precisa e coerente da parte del Parlamento Europeo nei confronti di una situazione fonte di notevoli preoccupazioni che ha portato a una situazione pericolosa nel Mediterraneo.

2) Questa proposta sarà punto di riferimento per i Ministri degli Esteri quando si incontreranno la
prossima settimana in modo da riuscire a coordinarla in misura maggiore la lotta contro il terrorismo e per riuscire a compiere progressi per ripristinare la pace nel Medio Oriente con il riconoscimento dei diritti *fondamentali dei Palestinesi e di tutti i popoli della regione compreso il diritto alla esistenza e alla sicurezza.

(i) B
1-2) Signora Presidente, la proposta che noi voteremo rappresenta la volontà del Parlamento Europeo di porre fine a una situazione nel Mediterraneo molto pericolosa e che sarà la base della riunione dei dodici Ministri degli Esteri che decideranno di agire contro il terrorismo e di sforzarsi per risolvere la situazione nel Mediterraneo nel migliore dei modi riconoscendo i diritti dei Palestinesi e degli stati della regione, e *soprattutto il diritto di Israele, di esistere ed avere confini sicuri.

(i) C
1-2) Signora Presidente, noi abbiamo aderito ad una proposta che voteremo ed è una proposta che, secondo noi, è una proposta ferma e puntuale da parte del Parlamento Europeo nei confronti di una situazione che ormai nel Mediterraneo ha raggiunto un altissimo livello di pericolosità ed è anche la via politica da seguire durante la riunione che si terrà la prossima settimana tra i dodici Ministri degli Esteri. Nella riunione si deciderà sulle azioni che dovranno essere intraprese contro il terrorismo e rinnovare tutti sforzi per poter avviare un processo che porti ad una situazione di pace nel Medio Oriente riconoscendo i diritti *internazionali del popolo palestinese e il diritto di tutti gli stati, incluso Israele, il diritto alla esistenza e alla sicurezza.

(i) D
1) Signora Presidente, la proposta che noi appoggiamo e per cui quindi voteremo, secondo noi è una risposta appropriata del Parlamento Europeo ad una situazione preoccupante e pericolosa che si è creata nel Mediterraneo.
2) Questa proposta è anche una indicazione, un indizio per la prossima riunione dei Ministri degli Esteri affinché questi possano coordinare le nostre azioni verso il terrorismo e dobbiamo anche concentrare i nostri sforzi per portare la pace nel Medio Oriente. Bisogna anche riconoscere i diritti del popolo palestinese nel Medio Oriente e anche il diritto di Israele ad esistere.

A
1) Signora Presidente, la proposta per la quale voteremo rappresenta una giusta presa di posizione del Parlamento Europeo di fronte a una vasta preoccupazione per una situazione che ha raggiunto un alt.. notevole grado di pericolosità nel Mediterraneo.

2) In vista della riunione della prossima settimana dei dodici Ministri degli Esteri della Comunità è un buon segno. [long pause and interruption] Un segno che potrà mostrare il tipo di azione da intraprendere contro il terrorismo e che mostrerà anche gli sforzi che si debbono fare per iniziare un processo di pacificazione nel Medio Oriente. Processo che dovrà portare al riconoscimento dei diritti del popolo palestinese e di tutti gli altri stati della zona, compreso Israele, che hanno un diritto di esistere e di essere sicuri, protetti.

B
1) Signora Presidente, questo *progetto che ci apprestiamo ad affrontare e a votare coerentemente, in qualità di Parlamento Europeo, sarà la nostra reazione per intervenire nell'attuale gravissima situazione nel Mediterraneo.
2) Il nostro *progetto è ancora più vasto nel suo significato e servirà come traccia per intraprendere una azione più coordinata e più efficace per combattere il terrorismo e risolvere la situazione riguardante Israele ed i Paesi vicini in modo da ristabilire la pace.

C
1) Signor..., Signora Presidente, noi intendiamo dare una risposta chiara e sicura al problema del... del terrorismo.
2) Questa presa di posizione è anche un indirizzo valido per la prossima riunione dei... Ministri... degli... Esteri... della Comunità. Occorre trovare una soluzione a questo grave problema e... realizzare una situazione di pace e giustizia... in questi Paesi.

D
1) Signora Presidente, la proposta che...b...che a cui abbiamo aderito rappresenta una proposta decisa, ferma ad un ... per quanto riguarda la situazione che riguarda tutti ormai a livello internazionale, in quanto il terrorismo è considerato come un fattore altamente pericoloso.
2) Ed anche un punto di riferimento politico per la riunione dei dodici Ministri per... coordinare meglio l'azione contro il terrorismo in modo che... che si riesca a... a portare una situaz...soluzione capace, giusta, di giustizia in tutto il Medio Oriente...per far rispettare tutti i diri...diritti dei popoli che abitano la regione ed anche a livello di sicurezza.

Explanation of the abbreviations used in the grid:
Finally, the indication 12/12 means that the subject has correctly referred back 12 sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>(i) A</th>
<th>(i) B</th>
<th>(i) C</th>
<th>(i) D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>2° PR</td>
<td>2° AD</td>
<td>2° SE</td>
<td>2° AD</td>
<td>2° PR +1</td>
<td>2° De -0.5 Break 0= +1 12/12=+1 1° De -0.5 Break 0= +1 2° De,CL, Col-1 Break 0= +1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>2° PR</td>
<td>5° Ge</td>
<td>6° SE</td>
<td>2° AD</td>
<td>2° PR +1</td>
<td>1° 3° AS +1 Break -1 2° PR,De 3° PR 7° Ge +1 2° PR +1 4° Ge, but excessiveDe -1 3° 7° SE,De, CL-1 2° PR +1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>1° SE</td>
<td>1° PR</td>
<td>4° SE</td>
<td>1° PR</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>1° Ge</td>
<td>5° AD</td>
<td>1° PR</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
<td>1° SA +1</td>
<td>1° PR+1</td>
<td>1° 5° AD</td>
<td>Fo -0.5</td>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>1° AD</td>
<td>2° PR</td>
<td>5° PR</td>
<td>1° 2° PR</td>
<td>2° PR +1</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>1° 2° PR</td>
<td>Ge</td>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1° 2° PR</td>
<td>1° PR +1</td>
<td>1° SA +1</td>
<td>NO -1</td>
<td>1° 2° PR, but Fo +0.5</td>
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<td>7)</td>
<td>1° 4° AD</td>
<td>2.1 De</td>
<td>2.1 Ge</td>
<td>1° 4° AD</td>
<td>1° 4° PR +1 1° 4° PR +1</td>
<td>1° 4° AD</td>
<td>1° 4° De, Fo CL-1</td>
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<td>8)</td>
<td>1° 2.1 AD</td>
<td>2.1 Ge</td>
<td>1° 2.1 Ge</td>
<td>2.1 PR</td>
<td>2° PR, but Fo +0.5 2° 2.1 PR +1 1° SE -1 2.2.1 SE +1 1° De -1 2.2.1 SE -1</td>
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<td>9)</td>
<td>1° PR</td>
<td>2°, 3° PR</td>
<td>2°, 3° PR</td>
<td>NO -1</td>
<td>1° PR +1</td>
<td>2°, 3° SE-1 NO -1 NO -1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10)</td>
<td>3° De</td>
<td>4°, 5° AD</td>
<td>3° PR</td>
<td>1° De</td>
<td>1° PR, AS +1 2°, 3° De -0.5 4°, 5° AD +1 1° PR +1 2°, 5° De -0.5 1° 5° Ge+1 2° Fo-0.5 5° Se -1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11)</td>
<td>1°-2.1 PR</td>
<td>NO -1</td>
<td>1°-2.1 Fo</td>
<td>1°-2.1 PR</td>
<td>1°-2.1 PR</td>
<td>1°-2.1 PR +1 1°-2.1 PR +1 1°-2.1 SE +1 1°-2.1 SE +1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12)</td>
<td>4° PR</td>
<td>6°, 7° De</td>
<td>3°, 4° Ge +1 5°-6° Ge +1 1° SE-0.5 2°-7° De Ge but De (excessive)+1 1°-7° De of several nuclei 1°-7° CL &amp; CoL -1 1°-7° CL &amp; CoL -1</td>
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Conclusions

The juxtaposition of the performances of both the control and subject groups encourages the belief that the ability to process the incoming message is sharpened by the training in simultaneous interpreting, especially in terms of quickening the selection and reproduction of constituent information skills.

In particular it increases the ability to remain as faithful as possible to the source text: indeed the results show that each main nucleus is present in the interpreters' target texts, which does not always apply to those of the subjects. In some cases, the time shortage or an instance of processing overwork led the interpreters to delete the redundant elements at the paradigmatic level and preserve only one or two nucleus modifiers (see (iD) sentence 1, nucleus 2°: "risposta ferma, dignitosa e puntuale" = "firm, dignified and timely response"->"appropriata risposta" = "suitable response") or to replace it with a generalization (see (i)A s.10, n.3° "se vuole isolare e dissuadere chi appoggia il terrorismo"="if it wants to isolate and deter those who support terrorism" -> "eliminare il problema del terrorismo"="eliminate the problem of terrorism").

Furthermore, it is worth stressing that the interpreters rely more frequently on their memory resources, including the active storage of information pending the occurrence of the main informative nucleus before reproducing an autonomous network of semantic and grammatical relations.

Summarizing ability emerges especially in the case of sentences that have been conceived to produce a strong rhetorical effect (see..."le tragedie di Fiumicino e Vienna sono un ultimo sanguinoso richiamo"="the tragedies of Fiumicino and Vienna are the latest bloody reminder..." -> "they must push us to act", "spezzare questa tragica catena" = "to break up this tragic chain" -> "solve the problem"). Their translation, in the former case, or reproduction, in the latter, would have jeopardized the processing of the subsequent occurrences if one wanted to attain at least the same dynamic effect, let alone reproducing the source text style.

The most common strategy applied by the twenty subjects is the generalization of the original message. This technique, very valuable in itself, might turn out to be counterproductive if too many deletions of the sentence constituents are performed, since the message thus loses its specific informative purpose. In the results obtained, these instances proved to be very numerous.

Some subjects showed signs of excessive memory burden which was probably due to the quantity and to the surface format of the processed information (sentences where the Subject-Verb-Object sequence is more an exception than a rule). Consequently, the subjects opted for two different alternatives: some broke up the incoming string of occurrences into coordinate sentences made of few elements which were organized following the most usual sequence (S-V-O); others deleted some pieces of information, not always however making a suitable choice.

On the whole, only a few subjects showed a remarkable aptitude to select the incoming message autonomously while preserving a formal and semantic continuity throughout the whole text. Still too many constitutive occurrences of the source text were often wrongly eliminated. This might also have been due to the subjects' scant familiarity with the dual task technique, as most of them declared in the written questionnaire (especially so at the initial stage of the test), which hampered complete perception and subsequent retention of the information as a whole. Some overcame this obstacle thanks to the activation of concepts prompted by the context and to semantic and morphosyntactic anticipation. These enabled a partial or global reconstruction of the grammatical and semantic network of the source text.

A particular case is that of the subject who produced the poorest results in his performance. The subject lacked fluency, used incorrect syntax and proved to possess scant vocabulary in his mother-tongue both at oral (test) and at written (later summary of the same text) levels.

Despite the assumed excellent comprehension of the source language, the subject in fact revealed a certain difficulty in understanding and immediately referring back the essentials of the heard message without making mistakes of diverse kinds: lexical (incorrect concords, inadequate register), morphosyntactical (incorrect use of prepositions), semantic (wrong replacement of a whole unit of information, see s.1, n.3° or of single phrases on account of assonance: "capace" ->"di pace", "internazionale" -> "razionale").

The above-mentioned difficulties in controlling one's own linguistic production, combined with general knowledge gaps, often caused the incorrect reproduction of precise pieces of information, such as the office of the politicians quoted in the text and, in one case, of a name "Mubarak" -> "Mubara..." (with loss of subsequent information).

Against this backdrop and given all the difficulties implied by the linguistic code
switching typical of the process, embarking on a course in simultaneous interpreting might require in such cases a period of training perhaps significantly longer than that required by others.

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