CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NOTE-TAKING PROCESS DURING CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION FROM ITALIAN INTO TURKISH

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Foreword

The main objective of this paper is to put forward some proposals related to the note-taking process during consecutive interpretation from Italian into Turkish.

These proposals have been developed as a result of research conducted in the School of Modern Languages for Interpreters of Trieste under the supervision of Prof. Laura Gran.

This is the first study in the field of Italian-Turkish interpretation, therefore considerable difficulties were encountered by the writer with regards to reference sources. These sources treated interpretation at a general level or specific problems between Italian and English. The writer was unable to find even minimal theoretical support for the specific problem of Italian-Turkish interpretation.

The proposals put forward here have only a hypothetical value and they need to be verified. This may be carried out by people who know both languages well. Verification has been at present delayed by the lack of such qualified people. On the other hand, although the writer himself is fluent in both languages he did not want to test the proposals himself as this would interfere with the objectivity of the research. However, the writer developed his proposals by observing the behaviour of students of interpretation. In this light, the work has a relatively practical validity.

Until recently interpretative work between Turkish and Italian has been extremely rare. Interpretation and particularly simultaneous interpretation is not practised between these two languages because of their many differences. Therefore, the discussion whether consecutive interpretation between these two languages is viable or not is challenging for all scholars in the field of interpretation or applied linguistics.

The writer hopes to take the first initiative with the contents of this paper with regard to research in the field of interpretation from Italian into Turkish. Finally, he hopes that this initiative might become an incentive to those who are interested in pursuing scientific work on the subject in the future.

The proposals

During the note-taking process in consecutive interpretation from Italian into Turkish, the page may be divided so that various syntactic elements of the period are placed diagonally. This division permits the interpreter to identify these elements immediately while reading the notes prior to the rendering of the interpretation. According to this scheme the subject is placed at the top-left of the page, the verb in the centre, the direct and indirect objects in the lower right-hand corner of the page, and the various phrases below the latter. This scheme can be represented as follows:

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SUBJECT

VERB

DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

(OTHER TYPES OF PHRASES)

(THE SUBORDINATE CLAUSES FOLLOW THE SAME SCHEME)
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Each sentence is separated from another by a line indicating the end of the period rather than the full-stop used in the conventional punctuation.
system.

This proposal based on the principles of "verticalism" and "stepped note-taking" of J.F. Rozan (See, 1957), is inspired by Laura Gran (See, 1982: a and b). It consists of two arguments: firstly, enabling the interpreter working with Turkish both to take notes quickly and afterwards to read them immediately as in the case of other language combinations; secondly, contrary to the opinion of some experts active in the field, it is believed that it would be better to follow the syntactic order of the source language, in this case Italian. In any case, the writer is aware of the fact that the syntax of the two languages discussed in this paper is completely different and his proposal of considering the syntactic order of the source language would cause the interpreter difficulties when he renders his work into the target language. Without any doubt, proposing a scheme that respects the syntactic order of the Turkish language would make the work of the interpreter easier when he renders his interpretation. However, it would make his work more difficult during note taking. During the note-taking process the interpreter faces another professional challenge of vital importance, namely, understanding the underlying structures, in other words, the semantic message of the speech after decoding the surface structure. The writer believes that during this process in dealing with the semantic reconstruction of the note-taking process, that is, with the transformation of the syntactic order of the source language to the target language, in spite of its relative initial advantages, it would not be useful for him in the final analysis. In any case, if the interpreter can grasp the meaning of the message in the source language and takes notes even with its syntactic order, he will have considerably more time to reconstruct the syntax of his work according to syntactic criteria of the target language when he renders his interpretation. Whereas, the opposite is more difficult, when the speaker utters his message, the only means on which the interpreter can depend is his short-term memory which may be of modest capacity.

example:

- ieri / la mia mamma / ha fatto un regalo / a mio padre / a casa nostra.
  / Yesterday / my mother / gave a gift / to my father / at our home /.

- A casa nostra / ieri / la mia mamma / ha fatto un regalo / a mio padre /.
  / At our home / yesterday / my mother / gave a gift / to my father /.

- ieri / a casa nostra / la mia mamma / ha fatto un regalo / a mio padre /.
  / Yesterday / at our home / my mother / gave a gift / to my father /.

- ieri / a casa nostra / la mia mamma / ha fatto un regalo / a mio padre /.
  / Yesterday / at our home / my mother / gave a gift / to my father /.

The Turkish language, however, is more rigid than Italian in this respect, in that Turkish dictates a precise word order that must almost always be respected. The nucleus of this order may be charted in the following manner (See Lewis, 1989):

- SUBJECT;
- ADVERBIAL PHRASE OF TIME;
- ADVERBIAL PHRASE OF PLACE;
- INDIRECT OBJECT;
- DIRECT OBJECT;
- VERB.

When, however, a certain part of the sentence needs to be emphasized, this part immediately precedes the predicate. Let us examine the construction of this sentence:

- Türkiye Sam buyukelcisi / dun / toplantida / "Baris Suyu" projesini / anlattı /.
  / The Turkish ambassador to Damascus / yesterday / in the meeting / the project "Water of Peace / explained /.

If however, one wishes to emphasize that it has been the Turkish ambassador to explain the project and not anyone else, the construction of our sentence would become:

- Dun / toplantida / "Baris Suyu" projesini / Türkiye Sam buyukelcisi / anlattı /.
  / Yesterday / in the meeting / the project "Water of Peace / the Turkish ambassador to
Damascus / explained.
Ultimately, should one wish to emphasize the
time or the place of the act, our respective
sentences will be the following:

- **Turkiye Sam buyukelcisi** toplantida "Baris Suyu" projesini
  (SUBJECT) (ADV. PHR. OF PLACE) (DIRECT OBJECT)
  
  dun
  (ADV. PHR. OF TIME)
  anlatti.
  (VERB)

- **Turkiye Sam buyukelcisi**
  (SUBJECT)
  toplantida
  (ADV. PHR. OF PLACE)
  
  dun
  (ADV. PHR. OF TIME)
  "Baris Suyu" projesini
  (DIRECT OBJECT)
  anlatti.
  (VERB)

Apart from this fundamental syntactic exception there is also a stylistic or rhetorical license to the model of the word order indicated above, which however in the opinion of this writer, is not compatible with the scope of this paper given that these allowances have literary consequences that are not reconcilable with the task of the interpreter but rather with that of the translator.

On the basis of what has hitherto been said, it is evident that the consecutive interpreter in the phase of elaboration of the discourse from Italian into Turkish does not have the possibility of manipulating the words as much as he may be allowed when translating from Turkish into Italian, thus he must follow a more rigid syntactic order.

At this point one may elaborate the word order model proposed above on the basis of the specific criteria of Turkish. The variant consists of two points: first one may draw a vertical line, preferably in red, at the left of the page from top to bottom so that a consistent space is formed where the interpreter will write only adverbial phrases of time and of place. In this fashion, once the interpreter has stated the subject he may immediately see if there are adverbial phrases of time and place that need to follow it. Therefore, the new formation of our arrangement appears thus:

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ADV. PHR. OF TIME       SUBJECT
ADV. PHR. OF PLACE       VERB
DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS
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The second modification, however, concerns the accentuation of a syntactic element in a sentence. This modification is obtained, as explained above, in the moving of that element to the position immediately preceding the verb, a position normally reserved for the direct object. In such a case, this writer's proposal in visualizing such emphasis is simply to circle the syntactic element that needs emphasizing. This solution for the manipulation of the concept of the syntactic emphasis in Turkish, offers the interpreter an immediate visualization of the element.

Now to illustrate how this above-mentioned proposal works, the previous example will be treated again: "In the meeting of yesterday the Turkish ambassador to Damascus explained the project "Water of Peace". In this sentence one may emphasize the adverbial phrase of time in the following way.
If, instead, one wishes to accentuate the adverbial phrase of place or the subject for their emphatic value, one may circle either, "meeting" or "Turkish Ambassador to Damascus".

**Description of nouns**

In Italian, adjectives may either precede or follow the noun in almost all cases. While in Turkish adjectives, words or word clusters, that modify the noun always precede it (See Lewis, 1989):

- O adam (That man)
- O sisman adam (That fat man)

Such rules are valid also for relative clauses that modify a noun.

For example:

- Dun Ankara ya gelen basbakan (The prime minister who came to Ankara yesterday)

On the basis of these premises owing to the syntactic structure of Turkish, the description of nouns in this language may be annotated with an abbreviation or a symbol so that the modifier may be placed with respect to the modified noun at the bottom of the parenthetic closure, using the rule of *verticalism*. In this way the interpreter may make an immediate distinction between the noun and the adjective and vice-versa. Having this kind of distinction and interpreting into Turkish he knows that he must always enunciate first the element found at the bottom of the parenthesis and then the element above it. According to this proposed model "ministro inglese" (British minister) will be written as such:

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min.ro
(ing.se)
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On the other hand, in the case of an adjective cluster and/or a relative clause modifying a noun, it would be preferable to amplify this formula joining the various modifiers of the cluster one above the other inside the parentheses (The rule of coordinate position of verticalism). Applying this criterion of note-taking procedure for the description of nouns in Turkish the sentence "Il ministro degli esteri inglese che visita la Turchia..." (The British Foreign Secretary who is visiting Turkey...) will be written the following way:

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min.ro
ing.se
est.ri
visita TR
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**Why and How**

In the present work to date three parameters of the analysis of the message have been discussed. The interpreter must:

1. Analysie the message to find the responses to four questions in the following order "Who did What to Whom".
2. To answer the question "When".
3. "Where".
4. And finally "How" and "Why".

From a grammatical point of view the above-mentioned questions may be discussed under two headings:

- Adverbial Phrases;
- Subordinates.

If the analysis of the text for the fourth parameter pertains to the first heading, it concerns either an adverbial phrase indicating cause or purpose, or an adverbial phrase of manner. In this case the writer proposes to the interpreter working from Italian into Turkish, to utilize the correlation be they semantic or syntactic. Thus, the semantic correlation X (for Italian "per"), X.ê (from "perché") and ...TE (for Italian "...mente" or for adverbial suffix) may serve to describe respectively adverbial phrases of purpose, cause and manner. The first two correlators are located before, while the third is located after the noun. For example: (Donega/ Tondelli/ Traini, 1986):

- Il villaggio era circondato da una palizzata a scopo di difesa.

(The village was surrounded by a palissade for...
defence purposes).  

- Per il ritardo del treno arrivammo a casa alle undici. 
(Because of the delay of the train we arrived home at eleven o'clock).  
x.ē ritardo tre

- Rispondi con gentilezza. 
(Answer with politeness).  
 gen. TE

On the other hand, the syntactic correlation indicates the position of the adverbial phrases, according to the rules of the graded note-taking, under the object (direct and indirect). For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>OBJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(OTHER TYPES OF ADVERBIAL PHRASES)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the analysis of the text concerns the second heading of our grammatical categories, the writer proposes the use of the syntactic correlative relative to the subordinates; and the appropriate semantic correlative with square brackets [ ] that will serve to reinforce the function of the syntactic correlative distinguishing the clause as a subordinate with the relative typology, above all in the case of the interpreter not following the rule of syntactic correlative for contingent reasons. Such a distinction is particularly important because of the rigid syntactic structure of Turkish. Therefore:

- x annotation subordinate clause indicating purpose;  
- x.ē annotation subordinate clause indicating cause;  
- TE annotation subordinate clause indicating manner.

Better to illustrate the principles here discussed, the following hypothetical period with the relative notation will now be examined:

"Bir gazetecinin sorusuna uzerine,/ Cumhurbaskani Ozal/ dun/ Ankara da/ gazetecilere,  
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)  
/ Turkiye A.E.T. ye tam uye olabilmek icin,/ gerek politik gerek ise ekonomik acidan, uzerine  
(6) (7)  
dusen tum yükumlulukleri yerine getirmistir/ dedi".

(Ad una domanda fatta da un giornalista, ieri ad Ankara, il presidente della repubblica, Ozal, ha dichiarato ai giornalisti che la Turchia ha portato a termine tutti i suoi obblighi sia dal punto di vista economico che politico per diventare un membro a pieno titolo della Comunità Europea).

(To a question posed by a journalist/ yesterday/ in Ankara/ the president of the republic Ozal  
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)  
/ declared to the journalists that/ Turkey has fulfilled all its obligations, both economic and political  
(6) (7)  
/ to become a full member of the European Community).  

?  

x.ē  
Gior. sta  

Ozal  

ieri  
detto  
Gior. sti  

(The subordinate clause indicating cause)  
(The main clause)
Ankara | TR | fatto | (The subordinate clause introducing indirect speech)
| x TR |

tutti D
ec.TE
pol.TE
diventa | (The subordinate clause indicating purpose)

(membro pieno titolo)
C.E.E.

Reflections on the relationship between the content and note-taking

The proposals put forward in this paper with regards to this discourse must be considered above all on the premise that the comprehension of the message is fundamental in any type of interpretation. This premise may not be sacrificed for any reason, whatever. Moreover, the understanding of the content of the message does not mean the comprehension of the single words therein, but means the comprehension of "the idea" that the speaker wants to communicate to his audience. Given that the primary task of the interpreter is to transmit the message to his audience from the source language to the target language, the first fundamental challenge for him, as has already been stated, is to understand the message. Indeed, if he does not satisfy this condition, he does not have the material to transmit. Nonetheless, the comprehension of the message, though indispensable, is not sufficient in itself to satisfy the demands on the interpreter. To grasp the meaning of the words of the speaker in the source language constitutes only the first phase of the task, that will only be completed upon the transmission of this content in the target language.

To reach this objective, the interpreter must also record, in some way, the meaning that he has deciphered from the speaker's discourse in the source language. Here the consecutive interpreter must refer to his notes—that "substitute" or "complete" his memory according to his needs. Thus the notes are a function of his comprehension; in other words they depend upon the existence of an idea to record. On the basis of this premise, the use of abbreviations, symbols, and the specific arrangements of the elements on the page during note-taking is not meaningful in itself, if the result makes clear only the sense of individual words or parts of the discourse. The interpreter must have a clear idea with regard to the relationship that exists between the function of this idea, namely the content of the discourse, and note-taking, otherwise he may fall into the trap of seeking to take notes on everything that he hears without distinguishing what is important from what is not. Such an approach would probably produce interpreters who do not listen to the discourse in order to understand it, but merely hear it and take notes accordingly. Note-taking becomes a goal instead of a means towards an end which is to transmit an idea from one language to another. This objective of the interpreter may only be achieved when the idea has first been understood and then retained. In simultaneous interpretation, short-term memory carries out the function of storing the information, while in consecutive interpretation this is not usually possible, unless the interpreter is gifted with a particularly capacious memory, that may sustain the entire chain of ideas of the discourse in all of its details. In this phase note-taking is involved. Once he has understood the content of the message, the interpreter takes notes either to assist his short-term memory (keeping the content of the message in the form of notes that in a second phase will permit him to extract the discourse from his memory in its specific sequence, that his memory may have already retained but is not easy to make use of because of the limitations of short-term memory) or to substitute it, by storing the detailed information that the memory by itself normally finds difficulties in retaining, again for reasons of memory capacity.

In short, firstly, notes have a purely connective function between the ideas stored in the short-term memory and their specific order that the interpreter elaborates when he extracts the ideas
from his memory to transmit them in the target language, and secondly, the notes have a particularly substitutive function with respect to short-term memory, in registering the contents of the specific nature of the message, a process that memory by itself has difficulty in realizing effectively because it must concentrate on other tasks which are relatively more important, defined in this paper as "to grasp the idea, namely the content of the message".

In the opinion of the writer, the importance of the content of the message in consecutive interpretation is even more marked when the languages involved are radically different with regards to syntax, phonetics and vocabulary, in other words, when the languages concerned belong to different linguistic families. In this case the realization of identical deep structures in terms of surface structures (Chomsky's terminology) of these languages is achieved through phonetic, syntactic and lexical products that have no effective links between them.

Turkish and Italian certainly belong to two completely different linguistic families. Turkish is a language of the Uralo-Altaic family with a vocabulary of Asian origin; it is considered to have an agglutinative morphological structure in which there is a clear distinction between the various morphemes of the word that is almost always formed with suffixes attached to the word; it possesses a syntax in which the word order follows the subject, direct object and verb sequence that are arranged with various postpositions. Italian, however, is a language of the Indo-European family with a European lexicon, it has a structure known as inflectional morphological in which there is no clear distinction between the various morphemes of the word that are not formed necessarily with suffixes attached to the root words, but also with prefixes and infixes that often completely alter the original structure of the root; it has a syntax in which the order of the words, not as rigid as it is in Turkish, follows a subject, verb and direct object pattern that are arranged with various prepositions.

One presumes that this synthesis as it regards a comparative analysis between Turkish and Italian might be sufficient to validate the premise that Turkish and Italian are two completely different languages from a linguistic point of view. On the basis of what has been said up to now, the conclusion is that the interpreter who works from Italian into Turkish in the technique of consecutive interpretation, as in the case of other language combinations, must on the one hand pay attention to understanding the message in the source language and, on the other, take notes that may serve the connective function between ideas stored in short-term memory and/or as an integral element of the memory to grasp the detailed character of the information while it concentrates on the more general information. During note-taking the interpreter may avail himself of various techniques including the use of symbols. In any case the interpreter need not think of taking notes using the various symbols while sacrificing his comprehension of the message. Undoubtedly a considerable number of symbols are useful in his work, but if one identifies the use of symbols as a fundamental part of the work of the consecutive interpreter, one must not forget that he must first create the symbols, then practise them when the occasion occurs (See Bowen D. and M. 1984). After all the time and energy spent in learning them, there is the risk that he might not be able to use them with respect to a different discourse, given that another subject requires a completely different lexicon.

According to the writer of this paper, in consecutive interpretation from Italian into Turkish, the specific task of the interpreter is to understand the message in Italian clearly and consequently to render the message in synthesized and substantial notes. The details of this process, at first glance, rightly seem valid for other linguistic combinations, and the interpreter when he seeks to grasp the idea or the content of the discourse in Italian, must be careful not to fall into the pitfall of only considering its rhetorically elaborated surface structure as he must subsequently reproduce the discourse with the various subtleties of the totally different surface structure of Turkish, given that the two languages belong to two completely different language families.

In conclusion, the writer hopes to have contributed to shedding light upon some aspects of note-taking in consecutive interpretation from Italian into Turkish. It is the writer's future intention to be useful to all scholars who wish to carry out research and practice the consecutive technique of an Italian-Turkish linguistic combination.