The Interpreters' Newsletter

Expertise in Conference Interpreting

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Contents

Editorial

Expertise has been an object of research since the first studies and textbooks on conference interpreting were published more than fifty years ago. Investigations concentrated mainly on simultaneous interpreting (SI) given the multi-task competence required from professionals during this type of interlinguistic oral translation. Its peculiar and double nature of being both a process and a product attracted scholars' interest: while listening to the delivery of simultaneous interpreters it is indeed possible to perceive how the input in one language is processed to produce the output in another language. The product cannot be separated from the process because evidence of the background process constantly surfaces in the use of language. This is the reason why simultaneous interpreting has been used as a research paradigm in cognitive sciences. At the same time it is also the reason why investigation on quality in SI is such a daunting task, due to the many variables implied.

The way in which expertise has been investigated so far reflects to a large extent the evolution of the discipline on the whole: from individual reflections and theories, to empirical studies with different cognitive and linguistic approaches and, finally, the inclusion of the sociological dimension of the profession. Several lines of study can be identified within the field of expertise research such as the expert-novice paradigm and the progression of expertise, interpreting skills, quality, strategies, norms, competence, workload management, speed and working memory load management, professionalization and expert performance.

The interest in defining expertise first arose within studies designed to analyse the cognitive components, processes and skills that come into play in SI

by comparing the performances of novices and experts. This line of studies followed on from the work carried out within expertise research to understand what distinguishes an expert from a novice in a specific domain, with a view to developing methodologies and tools to detect the particular aspects that make up expertise in interpreting. The studies were mainly training-oriented and aimed at examining expertise and related skills either for refining aptitude tests for the selection of interpreting candidates or for understanding how interpreting skills develop so that interpreting expertise can be achieved in the most efficient and rapid way (Moser Mercer 1997; Moser Mercer et al. 2000).

The aim of more recent studies on expertise is to examine and analyse how professional interpreters consider the concept of expertise, thereby integrating the socio-cultural professional dimension into the concept of expertise and investigating how professional thinking and acting is felt among conference interpreters.

This special issue on Expertise in Conference Interpreting includes six papers which focus on some sociocultural, cognitive and linguistic aspects that are connected to the concept of expertise.

The study carried out by Tiselius aims at ascertaining whether expert interpreters make use of deliberate practice as part of the process of expertise acquisition as defined by Ericsson. Through in-depth, unstructured interviews, the author investigates to what extent her interpreter subjects adopt deliberate practice, to improve their current level of performance.

Expert interpreter competence is investigated in Albl-Mikasa's paper through semi-structured in-depth interviews of ten professional interpreters giving special attention to what is considered necessary or useful in terms of formal learning, informal learning and implicit learning reflecting a transitional process from novice to expert.

Quality is a crucial element in interpreting expertise and Macdonald's contribution contains a very critical stance on how it is defined in Interpreting Studies and inquires whether the methods adopted, such as user satisfaction surveys, can produce reliable results considering its subjective, ineffable and cultural nature. He then proposes alternative approaches to investigating quality applying methods from the social sciences.

Martellini analyses the prosody of professional interpreters as a feature of expertise. In her study the prosody of an impromptu speech dense in information and its SIs performed by six professional interpreters is analysed with the aim of acquiring data to integrate, confirm or confute previous studies. The criteria of analysis chosen are speech rate, pauses and syllable lengthening, intonation and prominence.

A pilot study is presented by Scaglioni on the relevance of preparation for the SI of speeches dense in cultural items with the aim of examining to what extent preparation affects SI, since cultural items are not always easily inferred from the context alone, thereby leading to possible disruptions or infelicities in the interpreter's output. The strategies adopted by interpreting students and professional interpreters were analyzed to ascertain similarities and differences related to the kind of preparation adopted.

Xiangdong Li's contribution is of a didactic character and investigates to what extent strategies as part of interpreting expertise are teachable and whether the

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use of strategies by students is related to their teachers' inclusion of strategy training in the consecutive interpreting classroom. Retrospection was used to collect data from the student-interpreters and questionnaires were administered to elicit data on teachers' inclusion of strategies in class and to detect possible correlations.

On the whole, the six authors of this special issue provide original empirical contributions but also challenging, even provocative thoughts that enrich the on-going debate on expertise in conference interpreting. So much so that concerning the research paradigms and methods, a first reaction already appears in this special issue from a member of the Advisory Board (Letter to the Editors).

We wish to dedicate this special issue to our beloved late friend and colleague Francesco Straniero Sergio who was extremely interested in the novice-expert paradigm and launched the idea of bringing scholars together in a collective effort.

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Letter to the Editors

Mr Macdonald's description of an increasingly larger group of researchers into interpreting who seek inspiration from established scientific disciplines and paradigms is a gross caricature of their views, potentially damaging because it might have a divisive effect if taken as reflecting reality. I urge readers to look at the evidence carefully, and in particular to check whether indeed Gile or others have ever indicated that science needs to be quantitative. I also invite them to read the short PowerPoint presentation "Principles of 'science': a reminder", available online at http://cirinandgile.com/pwrpointhome.htm, which reflects my own teaching of basic principles of research, and judge for themselves whether this evidence is in line with Mr Macdonald's claims.

Daniel Gile

Expertise without Deliberate Practice? The Case of Simultaneous Interpreters

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Abstract

Deliberate practice (Ericsson 2007) is a type of focused, goal-oriented practice that is part of the process of developing expertise. A less explored area in interpreting research, deliberate practice is a construct that is not easily investigated using an experimental research design.

This article reports on in-depth interviews with three interpreters. By exploring their background, training, views on interpreting, and perceptions of core areas of deliberate practice (such as practice, setting clear goals and being open to feedback), an impression of their practice habits emerges. The article concludes that deliberate practice as defined by Ericsson is not consciously employed by these interpreters. Some of the implications of these findings for the application of expertise theory in interpreting are outlined in the discussion.

Introduction

The expertise approach was introduced to interpreting studies in the late 1990s. Several important publications on expertise in interpreting appeared around 2000, such as Ivanova (1999), Ericsson (2000), Moser-Mercer (2000), Moser-Mercer et al. (2000) and Liu (2001). Most research into expertise in interpreting has been done on conference interpreting, in particular simultaneous interpreting. The expertise theory originates from psychology (Ericsson/Smith 1991) and argues that the reason for experts outperforming other performers in their field is a combination of various characteristics. Expertise is thus not just a result

of talent or aptitude, but years of extended practice involving a combination of different tactics for acquiring, developing and maintaining a specific skill. These characteristics (which include but are not restricted to "long experience in the task domain", "regular outstanding performance", "access to expert knowledge when needed", "deliberate practice", "clear goals" and "openness to feedback") are common among expert performers regardless of field. The first three characteristics can be observed to a greater or lesser degree by the researcher, whereas the latter three cannot.

The findings reported in this article result from in-depth interviews with three conference interpreters, hereafter referred to as the informants. The aim of the interviews was to investigate their personal and professional backgrounds as well as their views on their profession, preparation, practice and goals. The rationale for doing this was to approach the more elusive concepts of deliberate practice, clear goals and openness to feedback.

1.   Background

Deliberate practice is a particular type of practice, summarised by Horn and Masunaga (2007: 601) as "focused, programmatic, carried out over extended periods of time, guided by conscious performance monitoring, evaluated by analyses of level of expertise reached, identification of errors, and procedures directed at eliminating errors." According to Ericsson, "the core assumption of deliberate practice is that expert performance is acquired gradually and that effective improvement of performance requires the opportunity to find suitable training tasks that the performer can master sequentially" (Ericsson 2007: 692). Deliberate practice is crucial for achieving levels of expertise in a domain. Ericsson et al. (1993: 368) divide any activity into three parts: work, play and deliberate practice. Work is defined as performing in public and often also for remuneration, play is defined as an enjoyable activity without any particular goal and deliberate practice is defined as an activity that includes processes designed to improve the current level of performance. Ericsson et al. also suggest that deliberate practice can be used to discern experts from other performers.

An important part of deliberate practice is having clear goals. The performer must be able to specify intentions, results or outcomes. Research in goal-setting has shown that performers perform better if they are able to specify detailed goals or can break a goal down into different sub-objectives (Zimmerman 2007).

Experts are open to feedback, whether from coaches, trainers, colleagues or the performer's own results. Being open to feedback helps the performer to evaluate performance, improve performance and set new goals (Horn/Masunaga 2007: 601).

Deliberate practice as described above can materialize during training or education, and also when the performer steps out into the professional world. In expertise theory, a performer is not an expert when he or she graduates from school or a training programme. Budding experts continue to refine their skills by deliberate practice.

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Studies of interpreting expertise have typically studied the performance of highly skilled interpreters and compared the features of their performance to that of less experienced interpreters (see for instance Ivanova (1999); Liu (2001); Köpke/Nespoulous (2006); Vik-Tuovinen (2006)). This type of design favours measurable aspects of expertise, such as "outstanding performance" or "access to expert knowledge when needed", but is less suitable for studying different aspects of "deliberate practice", "clear goals" and "openness to feedback".

Few, if any, studies of expertise in interpreting have used qualitative methods, although researchers in other fields have made use of qualitative methods when studying the expertise theory. For example, Sosniak (2007) reviewed different studies using retrospective interviews (i.e. dealing with events that occurred a long time ago, such as in childhood or adolescence) to study how expertise developed. Deakin et al. (2007) used diaries in studies of time management in practice and its links to expertise. Sosniak reported that habits of deliberate practice were formed during childhood, while Deakin et al. found that experts practise more and with a higher intensity than other performers.

Interpreting is made up of skills and sub-skills. The primary skill is the elusive interpreting skill, and sub-skills include language knowledge (both foreign and mother tongue), general knowledge (popularly referred to in interpreting as "culture générale"), communicative skills (i.e. analysing, speaking, presenting and voice), concentration, memory and the ability to deal with stress. Many more skills can be added to this list. In a literature survey on aptitude testing, Russo (2011: 13) identified three specific areas: a) language knowledge and cognitive skills, such as general mental ability, general and culturally specific knowledge, ideational fluency, verbal and associative fluency and working memory; b) interpreting-related skills that can be acquired, such as simultaneous note-taking and simultaneous transfer; and c) personality traits. When students acquire these skills, Moser-Mercer says that they "develop flexible understanding of when, where, why, and how to use their declarative and procedural knowledge to solve new problems" (2008: 13).

2.   Methodology
2.1   Participants

The three informants in this study were all female who grew up in Sweden with Swedish as their mother tongue. After graduating from the same interpreting programme, they became staff interpreters for various European institutions, where they have been active for the past fifteen years. The interview study was a complement to a larger longitudinal project[1], and the three participants were recruited on the basis of their early recordings as well as their professional success. They were regarded "good interpreters" by their colleagues. They had experience from teaching and peer reviewing of other interpreters. On the basis of their previous experience both on and off task, it was assumed that they would have developed

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1 Presented in its entirety in Tiselius and Jenset (2011).

expertise. They were also willing to participate both in new recordings as well as in in-depth interviews, which in turn indicate willingness to expose themselves to both scrutiny and in-depth reflection. The participants were informed of what their participation implied and signed a form of informed consent.

2.2 Procedure for conducting the in-depth interviews

The in-depth interviews lasted between an hour and ninety minutes and were conducted in an unstructured way following a map of topics; Koskinen (2008) used a similar method in her study of translators in the European Union (see Kaijser/Öhlander 1999 for a thorough description of the use of unstructured interviews). These interviews were structured insofar as both parties agreed that an interview was to take place and they set time aside for it. In all other respects they were unstructured in order to be as free as possible. Traditional definitions of an interview are also applicable, for example that an interview is a form of communication where one person recounts something and answers another person's questions, and the material is recorded in some way (Fägerborg 1999: 55). Patton (2002: 342) refers to this type of interview as informal conversational, defining it as the most open-ended approach to interviewing and the type that offers maximum flexibility to "pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate" (2002: 342). Patton stresses that unstructured does not mean unfocused and that such interviews should rather be highly focused.

For the purpose of this study, an interview model was developed by means of discussions, mind maps, a pilot interview and pilot focus group interviews. On the basis of early discussions with research colleagues and pilot studies, different areas of interest were identified, the main ones being "deliberate practice", "clear goals" and "feedback". Concepts relating to these areas were identified in the preparation phase. The focus group study (Tiselius 2010) showed that expertise concepts like "deliberate practice", "clear goals" and "openness to feedback" were not clearly perceived by those taking part in that study. These different characteristics of expertise were ranked below concepts like "render a complete interpreting" or "not change the information in the message" (Tiselius 2010: 12–13). From the discussions in the focus groups, it was also clear that the participants did not really understand the concepts[2]. The experiences from this focus group study helped to create a more open interview form with which to investigate the three core areas in question.

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2 Deliberate practice was perceived as only practice of the interpreting skill, in the booth in front of a microphone. No consensus was achieved of what a goal would be, and it was concluded in the focus group that the concept was unclear. Openness to feedback was also dismissed as unclear.

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2.3 Identification of topics and core phenomena

This section presents the topics and core areas that were included in the interview mind map (see figure 1, below) and the reasons for including them. *Childhood and teenage dreams and goals* were included because studies in expertise show that expert characteristics are present during childhood (see above Sosniak 2007). *Learning languages* is a sub-skill of interpreting, but strategies for learning languages reveal practice habits, goals and so forth. *Experiences from the interpreting* programme were included because interpreting skills (e.g. consecutive and simultaneous interpreting) are taught in interpreting programmes, along with different sub-skills such as preparation, practice or terminology work, and habits promoting expertise. *Testing*, that is, interpreters' attitudes to tests and being tested, reveals their approach to goal setting, practice habits or relations to colleagues. *Practice* and *preparation* are logical starting points for discussions about deliberate practice. *Colleagues*, *listeners* and *clients* provide feedback that the participants could be more or less open to.

The above topics and core areas were included in the interview mind map, which then served as the basis for the questions in the more structured yet un-moderated focus group study mentioned above. After being tested in a pilot interview, the mind map was furthermore used as a road map for the interview. Using a mind map rather than already formulated questions entails that the informants are not necessarily asked exactly the same question, because many of the questions are guided by the answers; since the same concepts were covered, however, the questions were more or less the same for all three respondents. For the purpose of this article, the mind map and its concepts are presented in figure 1 below.
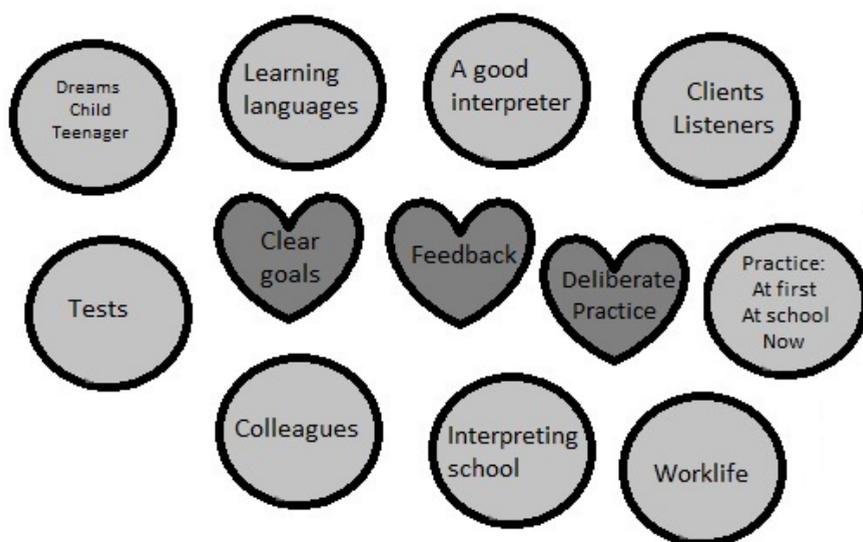

Figure 1. Thematic sketch of topics covered in the in-depth interviews. The heart-shaped themes reflect the focal points of the study.

2.4 The interview setting

The interviews were conducted at the informants' workplaces. It should be mentioned that the author of this article is a colleague of the informants. As Fägerborg (1999) points out, the role of the interview leader in an ethnographic in-depth interview is that of a discussion partner, that is, the interview is co-constructed by the interviewer and the interviewee. The implications for such an interview can be that the participants are less honest when discussing difficult topics, such as mistakes, tests or relationships with colleagues. Answers may be formulated with the intent of making an impression on their peer (me) or hiding weaker aspects; these mechanisms may even be unconscious. Moreover, as in all interviews, the informant is aware that the material will be used for a certain purpose and thus has the power to choose what to say or not to say in this situation. All this has to be taken into consideration when analysing the collected data. The informants in this study were candid in their responses, however, and did not shy away from difficult topics. In my experience, if a trustworthy atmosphere is created, honesty and openness will follow.

2.5 Coding and analyses of the interview data

The recorded interviews were fully transcribed and analysed. The analysis took its starting point in the various skills and sub-skills considered to be crucial for interpreting. All the occurrences that had any bearing on the identified skills, topics and core concepts were coded. The skills that were discussed with the interpreters were used as indicators of deliberate practice, goal setting or openness to feedback. For example, even though all the respondents explicitly stated that they did not use deliberate practice, they did give examples of practices such as the following: "It's normal – if you're just hanging around waiting, you can always go and listen to your colleagues, and for instance reflect about what makes that interpreter so pleasant to listen to."[3] Instances like this were classified as supporting the different core areas or skills. In the above cited case, it was classified as supporting deliberate practice, in accordance with Ericsson's (2000: 214) claim that listening to or studying the performance of highly experienced peers helps to improve your own performance. It should be pointed out that the interpreter's perception of practice and the construct of deliberate practice as it is explored in this study is not necessarily the same thing. Therefore, the many instances that are classified as deliberate practice by the researcher may not be regarded as practice by the interpreter.

   In order to capture other narratives, topics or tendencies that may have arisen in the interviews, the interview transcripts were re-read together with another research colleague.

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3   All the quotations have been translated from Swedish to English by the researcher.

3. Qualitative sides of expertise

This section presents the analyses of the various topics discussed in the interviews. Fictitious names (Filippa, Ingrid and Gabriella) have been used in order to protect the identities of the informants.

3.1 Language learning and language knowledge

Contrary to the common belief that interpreters grow up bilingually, the three informants grew up in monocultural and monolingual environments and did not focus on language learning early on in life, although this had clearly not affected their ability to interpret well. Ingrid was the only one to display an early desire to communicate in other languages, as she tried to learn different languages with dictionaries as her only sources of reference. Ingrid also recalled how her dad used to say that what he remembered from her middle school years and throughout secondary school was "a murmur from my room when I read texts and glossaries aloud". In contrast, Gabriella was focused on natural sciences, and only decided to study languages when she was in her twenties, after having gained a university degree. Filippa started secondary school by studying the natural sciences, but then switched tracks during secondary school and focused more on languages. The common denominator for the three participants was that when they did decide to learn a language, they focused intently on the language learning task. Ingrid studied an additional fourth language on her own in secondary school. Both Filippa and Gabriella went abroad soon after starting their language studies, for longer periods of time to study their chosen language at University.

In the interpreting programme all three informants experienced the need to improve their mother tongue and not "merely" learn foreign languages. In Gabriella's words, "my focus had been on learning foreign languages and now I suddenly felt that I had to learn Swedish".

The language profiles of the informants differ with respect to the age at which they began their active work with L2. They started acquiring their L2 past the critical age, in fact for two of them, this is a process which began in early adolescence. However, once they became interested in languages, they pursued their studies with unusual dedication and focus, seeking different opportunities to enrich their knowledge of both foreign and native languages.

3.2 General knowledge

All the informants talked about improving their general knowledge, albeit not in those exact words. Filippa said that when she left secondary school, "the idea was to get a complete, general foundation that I would then be able to do anything with – whatever that might be". All the informants said that in the interpreting programme they read newspapers, listened to the radio and watched TV in new ways, both in their mother tongue and in their foreign languages. Gabriella add-

ed that when she talked about reading in general, it meant that "I read differently than I would do otherwise [i.e. if not an interpreter], it's not like reading in a deckchair" (meaning that reading much more focused).

The informants were all curious and well informed about world events. They also considered curiosity and general knowledge to be necessary for being a good interpreter. When Filippa talked about general interpreting abilities, she mentioned "a general curiosity and openness, striving to always absorb everything and a genuine desire to understand everything". When Ingrid talked about what made a good interpreter, she mentioned "intellectual curiosity, general knowledge and fast thinking".

3.3 Communicative skills

Filippa said that "interpreting is very personal depending on who you are – we all have our personal way of expressing ourselves, and when [we started to work] we were able to listen to experienced interpreters who worked differently, but who were all equally good, and that was very useful". The informants listened to their colleagues interpreting when they worked together in order to improve their own communication skills, which included good formulations, solutions and terminology use. Ingrid's statement summed this up well:

> I listen because I may have to help out with a word or maybe something else, or maybe even take over, it happens sometimes. Sometimes I listen because it's a pleasure to listen, and it's a joy to hear how somebody solves a tricky situation, and I also try to – even if I don't think that you can just assimilate somebody else's system – get inspiration for different solutions.

Gabriella emphasized the interpreter's communicative relationship to clients and listeners in particular. Ingrid and Filippa, on the other hand, stressed the importance of being understood when interpreting no matter who was at the other end of the headphones. Although Gabriella initially stated that she did not have a relationship with her listeners, she went on to say that she almost had a crush on everyone who made contact with the interpreters, for example by waving or smiling to them in the booth or just saying thank you. While she stressed that interpreters at the European Parliament are primarily there to provide a service, she felt it was a great boost to discover that "our service is used, they listen to us", or to hear a client say, "Oh, it's you again, that's great!"

3.4 Focus

In their responses, all three respondents came across as being focused when young, although in different fields. Filippa had focused on sport and spent most of her youth practising and competing at a high level, at high school she studied natural sciences. Gabriella had specialized in the natural sciences too, and in middle school she had forced her parents to find out how she should prepare for

secondary school and university in order to work in this field. Ingrid had a particular interest in learning languages, sometimes with a dictionary as her only support. The common denominator here is not their initial field of interest, but rather the intensity of the interest.

Another striking similarity is that although the informants were determined and had clear goals with regard to sports, hobbies or school results, as children or young adults they had no clear goals or visions about their future, and they had little idea about what to study after leaving secondary school. Even after obtaining a university degree, their future profession was not obvious.

Focus, in this section, has been approached from a macro perspective, goal focus in life. It can also be approached from a micro perspective, meaning the ability to focus on task. At the micro level, as is also indicated in section 3.5, the informants talk about being good at concentrating on the task, in the here and now.

3.5 Coping with stress

Interpreting can be both psychologically and cognitively stressful, and an inability to cope with stress will have a significant impact on one's interpreting skills. Interestingly, none of the informants talked about particular types of stress management or learning to deal with stress, although all three seem to cope positively with stress.

An area in which coping with stress was discussed was test situations. Interpreting tests are stressful, because the candidate has to interpret one or several unprepared speeches in front of an examination board, often with five or more assessors present. The informants approached tests differently. Filippa said that she had "a very good ability to concentrate and be present in what I do". Gabriella said that she did what she was told to do, namely, "pass the test". Ingrid stressed the importance of routines for test preparation and not "over-preparing". Filippa also said that tests were good because several people listened to the performance and gave the interpreter feedback.

Ingrid also talked about the demands and stresses of the interpreting programme, which according to her "were of a different nature; it felt like you were inside your brain and tampered with it much more [than in traditional university training]". This intuitive impression of the learning process of interpreting is supported by results in the brain imaging study of Hervais-Adelman et al. (2011) which found indications of change in the bilingual brain of interpreters.

3.6 The interpreting skill

The question of whether interpreting is an innate or an acquired skill has been discussed by both researchers and interpreters (see for instance Mackintosh 1999). All the informants claimed that the ability to interpret had a certain innateness to it, and they considered their profession to be close to their nature or personality. Ingrid explained this as follows: "And then I believe there is a certain

factor X, as there is in all recipes, you can use some of this, this and that, and then there is something, that little extra, which is also needed and which cannot be defined". To some extent this may have a bearing on how the informants viewed the need for practice.

If they consider the interpreting skill to be innate to a certain extent, they may not need to practise the main skill, so that practising their sub-skills would suffice. However, Ingrid also talked about improving her interpreting skill: "I also believe that to continue to add new languages is also a way to improve. Because I believe that if I master more languages, then I can disconnect from the original languages in some way. That it forces the actual interpreting process to be stronger." Ingrid made the connection between the sub-skill (language learning) and the main skill (interpreting). During the interview she returned to the skill of interpreting when talking about the interpreting programme, how they were taught and how to teach interpreting:

> Because I think that this process – and I have to say that I'm not even sure it can be taught, I have not made up my mind yet – but this process – well, I suppose that everyone can develop a certain skill – but what makes it really come to life has probably to do with aptitude. Because [the development] of this process cannot be rushed.

This was not unique to Ingrid, with all three informants talking about "an X factor", "something innate" or "a particular skill".

They all said that they practised consecutive interpreting (although more as a tool for language learning rather than actually improving the consecutive skill) when preparing for a test with a new language. Gabriella was the only one who said anything about practising an interpreting skill. She said that "I still do à vistas (interpreting from a written text) when I discover a good text, or feel that I have to hammer in some terms, not every week, but maybe twice a month".

The finding that the informants did not practise the interpreting skill is supported by Leis' (2003) conclusions from her questionnaire study on self-assessment and self-evaluation among trained and un-trained Estonian interpreters. Her study showed that trained interpreters prioritized improving sub-skills such as language learning or background knowledge over refining the interpreting skill.

4. Deliberate practice, clear goals and openness to feedback

The informants seemed to have been highly focused from an early age on areas that interested them: sport for Filippa, language learning for Ingrid and science for Gabriella. They all mentioned setting goals and the importance of practice when talking about their childhood activities. Ever since childhood the informants took time to prepare and practise, although none of them explicitly defined this as deliberate. The determination displayed in mastering different skills since childhood characterized how they now mastered the various skills necessary for interpreting.

With regard to interpreter training, they all mentioned different types of practice, although they did not specifically state that they practised their main

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skill. Without being taught to do so, and without regarding it as practice, they talked about different types of activities performed regularly under practice-like conditions, such as Filippa's newspaper reading or Gabriella's radio listening. But they did not seem to consciously or even unconsciously practise in a way that could be defined as deliberate in terms of Ericsson's definition. They simply did not engage in activities outside the actual interpreting activity (work in Ericsson's words) that were solely aimed at improving their interpreting skills (contrast this with how for example athletes, singers, actors or chess players regularly practise, i.e. with time set aside for practice, with a precise goal for the practice session, often with a coach and so forth). When they talked about practice, they all said that they did not practise per se, that is, they did not practise their main skills in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. But they did all talk about reading plenty of newspapers and listening to the radio, which indicated that they do practise sub-skills.

On the other hand, they talked about how they struggled to improve and how their improvement was rewarding. Ingrid labelled herself as a perfectionist and said that she always tried to improve herself, and that her worst professional nightmare would be to discover that she was working on autopilot. Filippa said that:

> It's a kick. For me, it's particularly when I really understand, for instance, a strange line of reasoning, and I manage to sort it out, then I get a huge kick. Both because it's my job, which is the only important thing really, but also for me personally, when everything falls into place, I'm in harmony, it's a very physical experience.

Ingrid said:

> There are days when I am better, when I strain every nerve, and then it's very rewarding when I feel that my performance is better. It feels good in my whole body. It's harmony, it's more like I create order in the chaos of universe.

Getting a perceived physical reward from producing good interpreting creates a virtuous circle. This feeling of producing high-quality interpreting is self-perpetuating, in that the interpreter is motivated to perform better and spend more time on the task.

In the case of clear goals, the informants all said that the most important goal in every interpreting situation was to understand and be understood. It should be stressed that the goals mentioned here are task goals, i.e. what to achieve while on task, and not training goals, i.e. goals related to structuring practice in order to improve performance. Before the discussion about goals arose, Ingrid repeatedly mentioned that she constantly tried to perform better because she was never totally satisfied and always had a desire to improve her performance. Ingrid also said about goals that "there is no absolute goal, but that is also something that is satisfying, that you will never get there". Gabriella, who practised by doing an à vista interpreting, set goals like reading most of the *Economist* and similar sub-skill goals. Filippa said that when she started working she did not use all her languages, but broke the work down into different part-time goals, mastering one language at a time. The goals the informants talked about did not necessarily pertain to improv-

ing the interpreting skill but the different sub-skills, such as learning or improving languages, because these are the areas that are publicly rewarded.

For the informants, feedback came from evaluating themselves according to their own standards or from listening to their colleagues' performances, rather than from receiving comments on their performances from colleagues. This finding aligns with that of Leis (2003), who found that Estonian conference interpreters evaluated themselves according to their own standards learned in interpreting training, rather than from clients' feedback (in that case possibly a lower standard). In terms of deliberate practice in expertise theory, however, openness to feedback from peers and trainers is a tool that the informants only partially made use of. In their view, listening to highly experienced peers was beneficial for improving their own performance (Ericsson 2000: 214).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The interviews analysed in this article constitute a case study on deliberate practice. They represent an enquiry into the practices engaged in by three interpreters, which places emphasis on exploring in depth their perception about interpreting, and the process where by they have acquired and perfected their skill. The analysis highlights interesting findings, which emerge from the informants' stories that align with findings in other studies.

Many superficial indicators suggest that the informants in this study fulfil the criteria of experts as defined by expertise theory, for example that they have long experience and have passed challenging accreditation and qualification exams. But experts are also defined by other qualities, including deliberate practice and the activities linked to such practice. Deliberate practice is not easily or immediately investigated in fields lacking obvious needs or incentives for improving the main skill. For employed interpreters at larger institutions, a personal physical positive reward (cf. the quotes in section 5) may be the only reward available, especially as there is little hope of higher remuneration, prizes or other recognition. Staff interpreters at larger institutions do not get a pay increase for producing better interpreting than their colleagues, there are no prizes for outstanding interpreters or interpreting, and outstanding simultaneous skills do not automatically lead to promotion. Instead, it is additional languages or administrative skills that have the potential to increase a staff interpreter's salary. Freelance interpreters could theoretically get more jobs if their interpreting skills are outstanding, which may in itself be an incentive for practising the skill. But for freelance interpreters who are accredited to the European institutions and who are placed in the highest quality category, the only criteria that matter for recruitment are geographical distance and number of languages. There is not much incentive here for continued refinement of the interpreting skill. Interpreters cannot be compared with translators in this area, because several different translation awards are available.

This does not mean that interpreters are not interested in improving their performance. On the contrary, the in-depth interviews reported here show that

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although the respondents had not been taught deliberate practice, they did make use of deliberate practice strategies to improve their sub-skills. They also seem to have made use of these strategies at a young age. But whether this can be defined as deliberate practice as it has been defined by Ericsson et al. (2007) is open to discussion, especially as none of the informants participated in activities in order to improve their main interpreting skill.

The in-depth interviews have shown, however, that these interpreters engage in (although unconsciously) deliberate practice strategies. They practise their language skills and strive to enhance their general knowledge, they actively learn from their peers by listening to them. Moreover, they also consider at least some part of the interpreting skill as innate, or dependent on an x-factor. This view of the interpreting skill may have effects on practice, which did not come up in the interviews. Presumably an innate skill would need less practice than an acquired one. However, the fact that the participants engage in so many other practice activities argues, at least partly against that argument.

The narratives that emerged during the interviews formed a uniform pattern. As the informants came from similar backgrounds, were more or less the same age, attended the same interpreting programme, had similar language combinations and the same professional backgrounds, it is fair to assume that they shared the same norms and the same professional habitus. Their stories nevertheless say something about their interpreting expertise. From a superficial perspective they are highly experienced interpreters who have reached the highest levels of the interpreting profession, and are regularly evaluated by their superiors. Nevertheless, they are unable to make more money, win competitions or become famous by improving their interpreting skills. From their narratives it is clear that their goals to perform better, or at a level that was acceptable to them, revolved around their own personal ranking or pride and no one else's. They were also convinced that the interpreting skill was mostly innate. In other words, there was scant external or internal incentive that could motivate them to engage in deliberate practice with clear goals and regular feedback from colleagues in order to improve their main skill of interpreting.

The above conclusion might not be valid for interpreters who aim towards passing accreditation tests for larger institutions, as they may well have an incentive to improve their interpreting skills. But if this conclusion proves to be true for the *crème de la crème* of the interpreting community, it will have implications for the application of expertise theory in interpreting. The definition of experts in interpreting research is very varied (see Liu 2008). Findings in this study indicate that experienced interpreters do not engage in deliberate practice the same way as other professions. If this is the case, the theoretical framework will need to be adapted both in terms of how an expert is identified and also in terms of how the expertise concept of deliberate practice can be applied to interpreting research.

The findings of this study raise the following questions: Is it possible to be an expert without deliberately practising the main skill? Would it be enough to refine one's sub-skills? Is expertise theory still applicable to interpreting studies? In order to answer these questions, more studies of simultaneous interpreters' deliberate practice must be conducted.

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Developing and Cultivating Expert Interpreter Competence

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Abstract

This paper explores the way in which 10 professional interpreters develop and cultivate their expert interpreter competence. It draws on semi-structured in-depth interviews and carries forward the previous process- and experience-based account of interpreter skills and (sub)competencies based on the same 90,000 word corpus (cf. Albl-Mikasa 2012). The main points addressed are the requirements that can be learned, the timeline of acquisition of the various (sub)competences, and the ways in which they are further developed. These ways include formal continuous professional development, semi-formal assignment-geared knowledge building, informal off-the-job acquisition of relevant information, on-the-job learning by doing, and the evolvement of savoir-faire in the course of professional life.

Introduction

This paper follows up on the process- and experience-based model of interpreter competence developed on the basis of a 90,000 word corpus of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 professional conference interpreters (cf. Albl-Mikasa 2012). It draws on the same corpus and aims to bring together the reported experience of how these interpreters developed and now cultivate their interpreter competence. Given their long years of mostly AIIC-based contracted engagement in the profession, they can all be said to perform at expert level. As

detailed in Albl-Mikasa (2012), the 4 female and 6 male interpreters (recruited, on the basis of their availability, from the 32 respondents who had completed the earlier questionnaire in my survey on the implications of Global English on the interpreting profession, cf. Albl-Mikasa 2010) have a long working experience: 2 of them of 30 plus years, 2 of 20 plus, and the other 6 of about 15 years; all work as freelance conference interpreters in the German-speaking market: 1 for the EU, 2 for the EU and the private market, and the other 7 in the private market; 9 have German as their A (native) language and English as B (active) or C (passive) language, 1 has an English A and a German C; 8 of them are members of AIIC.

The interviews were conducted (and recorded) in a face-to-face situation at the interpreter's home and at a time chosen by the interviewee (with the exception of three interviews – I-1, I-4, and I-6 – which were conducted at the interviewer's home). Apart from I-2, which was conducted in English, all other interviews were held in German; thus the quoted statements given herein are translated versions (my translation). The interviews lasted for 60 to 70 minutes and their word-for-word transcriptions (disregarding prosodic and other para-linguistic features) range from 7,000 to 11,000 words each. They were coded and referenced as I-1 to I-10. Of the 10 interpreters, 3 (I-2, I-3, I-7) are also involved in interpreter training and 1 of them used to teach (I-4). Since they have not only a performance-oriented but also pedagogic view of interpreter competence, I will specifically mark them as I_t (t for teacher/trainer). To account for the differences in how interpreters with only one foreign (B) language and those with several foreign (mostly C) languages approach competence development, I will further mark the interviewees for that criterion, which results in the following coding of the 10 interview(ee)s: $I\text{-}1_B$, $I\text{-}2_{Ct}$, $I\text{-}3_{Bt}$, $I\text{-}4_{Ct}$, $I\text{-}5_C$, $I\text{-}6_B$, $I\text{-}7_{Ct}$, $I\text{-}8_B$, $I\text{-}9_B$, and $I\text{-}10_B$.

In this paper, I analyze the interpreters' statements on how they built up and now cultivate the competencies and (sub-)skills they reported to be the professional basis of their work. These reported skills and the corresponding processes were detailed in Albl-Mikasa (2012), where I used Kalina's division of the overall interpreting process into pre-, peri-, in-, and post-processing dimensions (cf. Kalina 2002) as a scaffold to structure and model the process-oriented skills specified by the interpreters. For reasons explained in my previous article, I added the para-process dimension. I also provided a summary of the resulting model of interpreter competence in the following graph (due to a lack of space I refer the reader to the 2012 article for a clearer understanding of what the individual skills, such as ELF compensation, ELF accommodation, and informed semi-knowledge, represent):

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                   Para-process skills                    │
│  - business know-how, customer relations, professional   │
│                        standards                         │
│             - lifelong learning predilection             │
│                    - meta-reflection                     │
│         ┌─────────────────────────────┐                  │
│         │      Peri-process skills    │                  │
│         │   - teamwork, cooperation   │    ┌───────────┐ │
│         │   - unimposing extrovertedness│  │Post-process│ │
│ ┌──────────┐│ - instinct and realism  │   │   skills   │ │
│ │Pre-process││- pressure resistance   │   │- terminology│ │
│ │  skills  │└─────────────────────────┘   │  wrap-up   │ │
│ ...        │ ┌───────────────────────┐    │- quality   │ │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Para-process skills
- business know-how, customer relations, professional standards
- lifelong learning predilection
- meta-reflection

Peri-process skills
- teamwork, cooperation
- unimposing extrovertedness
- instinct and realism
- pressure resistance

Post-process skills
- terminology wrap-up
- quality control

Pre-process skills
- high-level command of languages
- low-level terminology management
- informed semi-knowledge
- streamlined preparation

In-process skills
Comprehension skills
- below-expert scanning, identifying, matching
- contextualization
- ELF compensation

Transfer skills
- simultaneity
- capacity relief measures

Production skills
- synchronicity and *décalage* modulation
- reduction
- balancing between high fidelity and audience design
- ELF accommodation
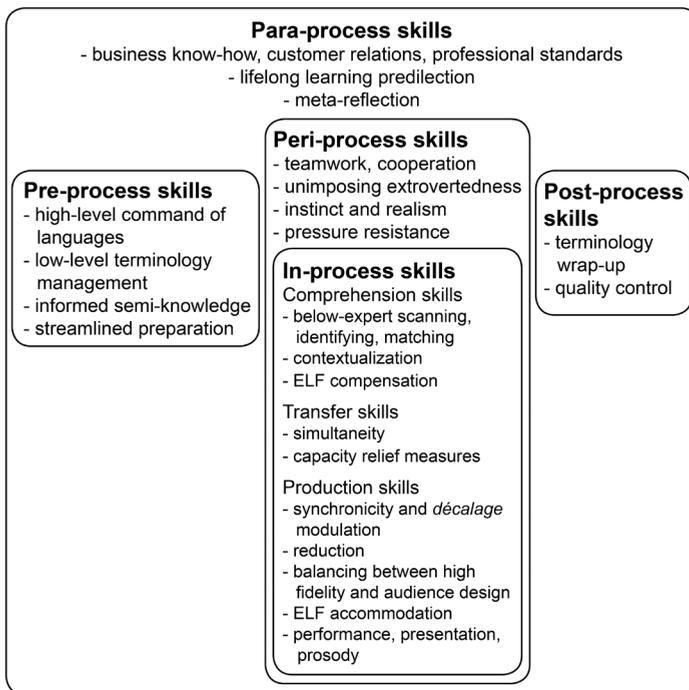- performance, presentation, prosody

Table 1. Process- and experience-based model of interpreter competence (Albl-Mikasa 2012: 63).

Against this background, I begin by presenting the interpreters' ideas of what can be learned and what skills students require to become a professional interpreter. I then address what they feel is acquired in the course of interpreter training and what is adopted in the post-study phase. I continue with their reports on how they achieved expertise development. Their elaborations can be analyzed in terms of *formal learning*, that is, planned and targeted learning, organized in the framework of a particular setting or structure (e.g., in professional development schemes, courses, programs, workshops, or seminars); *informal learning*, that is, unplanned, unintentional, but conscious and meta-reflective learning; and *implicit learning*, that is, learning without awareness (cf. Williams 2005). Finally, I detail what it requires, in their view, to be a successful, professional conference interpreter.

Herein, I use the term 'interpreter competence' in the sense of Kutz's "Dolmetschkompetenz" (2010), that is, as a general term for everything an interpreter needs to know and be able to do to perform a professional task. This differs from Pöchhacker, who makes the distinction between *interpreter competence,* which refers to the interpreter's professional role, and *interpreting competence*, which concerns transfer and *linguistic/cultural competence* (2007: 44-45). In my analysis, the notion of 'interpret*ing* competence' is used to refer to interpreting proper, that is, the interpreting-specific skills involved in the simultaneous and consecutive modes (see below).

1. Interpreters are neither born nor made

Interpreters agree that not everybody can become an interpreter and carry out their highly specialized task (cf. Russo 2011). In the psycholinguistic literature on bilingualism, simultaneous interpreting is described as "one of the most complex language tasks imaginable" (Christoffels/de Groot 2005: 454). The four 'teacher interpreters' interviewed all agree that sometimes it takes barely a week in training courses to determine who will not succeed (for interpreting aptitude, cf. Chabasse 2009, Shlesinger/Pöchhacker 2011). This view is shared by their non-teaching colleagues:

> There are people who I am sure could never do it. Not that they are not intelligent enough, but for them it would be too much tinkering and pottering, they'd simply be annoyed by the fast-paced seesawing. It is to those who are ready to engage in this enormous degree of simultaneity, and who, in addition, can fully depend on their mother tongue, that I would say "learn a foreign language and give it a try". (I-5$_C$)

At the same time, none of the interpreters felt that would-be interpreters needed to be born with a unique talent or specific characteristic properties.

> I'm not sure, but I think it can be learned. There are, of course, those who are gifted, that's the high-flyers, and that's probably the difference, but as for the 'mid-fielders' I believe one can learn it unless one has no interest in languages. (I-9$_B$)

Interest is, in fact, generally favored over talent by the interviewees as a necessary prerequisite. According to one interpreter (I-8$_B$), one need not even be endowed with a talent for languages, which s/he felt s/he had never had. While s/he conceded that it was true that those who had a "musical ear" learned a number of languages with much greater ease (cf. "speech sound discrimination" in interpreter experts, Moser-Mercer 2008: 8), it was not the talent for languages that this interpreter felt it took to become a good interpreter; instead one had to *take joy in* and have a constant preoccupation with language. This was reported by other informants as well: the key point was to be constantly alert with regard to, and take a great interest in, language-related matters (I-5$_C$, I-7$_{Ct}$, I-9$_B$) and to be ready for an above-average level of awareness and meta-cognitive consciousness for language(s) (I-1$_B$, I-10$_B$). In fact, it was felt that required capabilities were not so much a matter of genetic endowment, but of "socialization" (I-9$_B$). It helped, for instance, to be brought up in a family environment where language was understood to be important, where there was linguistic awareness, or where family members were generally articulate and eloquent (I-9$_B$), and "to have a certain 'Sprachgefühl', the foundations of which are laid in childhood" (I-1$_B$).

Finally, the interpreters were not sure whether one should assume dispositional traits, but they were certain that a fundamental *eagerness* was the one indispensable precondition, that is, more than relishing in questions related to language, one had to "want to communicate" (I-8$_B$); to "feel like exposing oneself" (I-10$_B$) while, at the same time, being happy to hold back and not to take centre stage (I-7$_{Ct}$, I-8$_B$, I-9$_B$); to take delight in any subject matter (I-8$_B$) and not to ex-

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clude anything (I-4_{Ct}); to fancy the schizophrenic simultaneity of listening and speaking (I-6_B); to be ready and willing to endure stress (I-4_{Ct}, I-6_B) and to enjoy recurring challenges and travelling at short notice (I-4_{Ct}, I-10_B); to be always in for something new, for challenges and flexible dealings (I-10_B); and to have a general learning predilection and curiosity (I-4_{Ct}).

It was felt that "when you take this kind of attitude or have this type of personality that a lot can be learned" (I-10_B). Against the background of such a basic foundation, additional requirements were reported to be "social competence", regarding colleagues and customers alike (I-9_B), an ability to "empathize" with speakers and audiences (I-7_{Ct}), "acting" qualities (I-5_C), "a certain mindset, a certain openness of attitude" (I-2_{Ct}), being "quick in uptake" and analysis (cf. "processing speed" Moser-Mercer 2008: 6), an "intent concentration" capability (I-10_B) and the ability to grasp orally presented, complex subject matters quickly and reproduce them.

> What's the use if people are brilliant in a number of languages but afterwards you don't know what was actually said, or they may know exactly what a speaker is on about, but can't reformulate it or only in deficient language. (I-3_{Bt})

Again, it was said that the main thing was not necessarily to be disposed of these requirements but to want to obtain them and not to get annoyed or be put off by any of them. Accordingly, in the interpreters' view, preconditions for the acquisition of interpreter expertise are situated somewhere *between 'environmentally induced predisposition' and attitudinal zest*. This is in agreement with accounts in the specialist literature on interpreter competence and expert skill acquisition, regarding predispositional traits for professional interpreting (cf. Kutz 2010: 233-258) and the role of willingness or motivation, which is "an essential ingredient" of the considerable effort required for "[h]igh levels of performance" (Moser-Mercer 2008: 4).

It is against this background, and providing one has an appetite for it, that the interpreters feel that the following requirements *can be learned*:

– *lexical and grammatical knowledge in the foreign language(s)*, less so in one's mother tongue (I-7_{Ct}) ("you can learn to cope with the language better", I-2_{Ct})
– *entrepreneurial skills* (negotiate with customers, acquire an assignment, etc.) (I-5_C, I-6_B)
– *preparation skills*, namely, how to tackle the technicalities of a highly specialized assignment and what to focus on (I-5_C) ("You start off working your way through an entire business report before your first annual meeting, but after a number of such assignments you know what you are looking for", I-6_B); efficient, fast, and effective decision-making on the essential ingredients, key terms and central notions of a particular assignment (I-4_{Ct}, I-8_B); rapid text and document analysis (I-4_{Ct}) (see also Moser-Mercer 2008: 5)
– *oral production skills and fluency* (I-6_B) (see also Moser-Mercer 2008: 8)
– *interpreting strategies* ("you can learn coping strategies, little things like what to do with those typical convoluted German sentences", I-2_{Ct}).

2.   Developing interpreter competence – start-up and consolidation

When asked about interpreter competence development, what immediately came to mind to the interpreters interviewed was (linguistic) knowledge of their mother tongue and foreign language(s), the technicalities of interpreting proper, and business-related know-how. There is a general consensus about the timeline and chronological development of interpreter competence(s). *Language(s) competence* needs to have been acquired prior to the study/university course phase; command of one's mother tongue must be 'perfect' and foreign languages must already be at a high level of proficiency. This competence is then further developed and cultivated during university courses, in stays abroad, and in the post-study professional work phase. *Interpreting competence* proper is learnt during interpreter training and is maintained on the job. It refers to simultaneous and consecutive modes and, thus, to simultaneous comprehension, transfer, production, and monitoring, as well as to the necessary strategies, and, for the consecutive mode, to additional mnemonic and note-taking techniques (I-6$_B$). *Business competence* is – excluding some basic facts and ideas – only acquired in the post-study working phase. It includes the whole range of skills involved in setting up a business, managing a small-scale enterprise, and establishing and maintaining good customer contact and relations (see the para-process skills in Albl-Mikasa 2012: 86-87).

General education phase │ interpreter training phase │ professional on-the-job phase

Language(s) competence
General background knowledge

Interpreting competence
Special purpose content and terminological knowledge
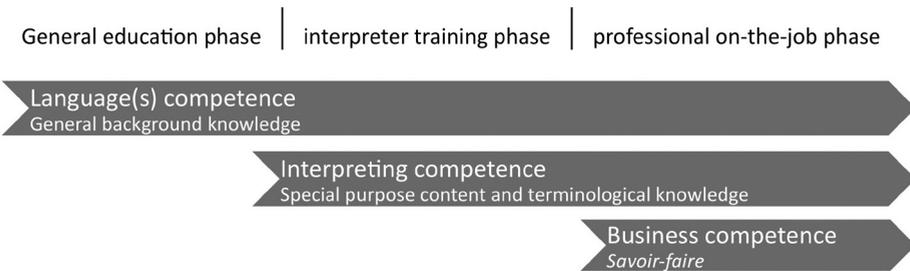
Business competence
Savoir-faire

Table 2. Timeline for the development of interpreter competence.

The interpreters are most concerned with *language(s) competence*. It is the fundamental precondition for their university course and training and it is what they are preoccupied with throughout their professional life. With regard to *interpreting competence*, "the main thing at university is the basic skill of interpreting, to lay the foundation, I don't think it would make sense to offer highly specialist knowledge about organizations, terminologies, or particular subject matters at that stage" (I-4$_{Ct}$). Once such interpreting competence is acquired, it is maintained on the job through work and, otherwise, taken for granted: "All those simultaneous techniques are, in principle, set and internalized" (I-10$_B$). This is why many interpreters are reluctant to accept consecutive assignments, because they simply do not get enough work opportunities and, thus, get out of practice regarding memorizing and note-taking: "When I was at the university I loved consecutive, but it's just a matter of practice, I can't do note-taking any more" (I-2$_{Ct}$);

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"memory faculties suffer during working life because in simultaneous you always only store a sentence at most" (I-9$_B$). *Business competence* is felt to be essential and needs to be built up. Thus, while it is believed that the pertinent skills can be learned, they also depend on inner growth and experience and on "age, especially when it comes to dealing with customers" (I-9$_B$). Life and work experience give people a better idea of how to deal with things. It is this *savoir-faire* part of interpreter competence that one does not yet have upon graduation. Just like business competence, *special purpose content and terminological knowledge* are also largely obtained during the course of the interpreter's professional life (apart from some basic foundations, which are laid in supplementary university courses on law or economics or during mock conferences).

What also emerges from the interviews is that the more formal or systematic parts of competence development are confined to the early stages. Thus, *continuous professional development* in the form of programs, courses, *workshops, or seminars* begins shortly after receiving one's degree and is geared towards individual needs:

– "formal learning doesn't really happen in my case, I don't think I did any professional development courses after university" (I-1$_B$);
– "I did AIIC updating courses in my C languages" (I-2$_{Ct}$);
– "three weekend seminars on banking and finance to get into my main operational fields" (I-3$_{Bt}$);
– "summer schools at universities in the C language countries and interpreting courses in the C languages" (I-4$_{Ct}$);
– "a one-week course in Edinburgh to turn my English into a B and a consecutive refresher course" (I-5$_C$);
– "an accounting and tax workshop, a corporate image seminar, and a workshop on legal issues for interpreters" (I-6$_B$);
– "an interpreting course in my C language" (I-7$_{Ct}$);
– "a vocal training course, that's all I did, I'm a bit of a couch potato when it comes to continuous professional development" (I-8$_B$);
– "an occasional speech training course, because my mouthparts are an important aspect in interpreting" (I-9$_B$);
– "an interpreting refresher course in Edinburgh and an 'American language and culture' AIIC course in Washington" (I-10$_B$).

In the later phases, the interpreters seem to be too busy for such courses and, for various reasons (see below), rely almost exclusively on assignment-geared targeted preparation work.

3.   Cultivating interpreter competence – learning by doing, practice, and experience

When asked directly and explicitly about how they further develop and cultivate their competence(s), the interpreters interviewed reported that they did relatively little. "Many skills are built up and enhanced rather unconsciously. I guess that's what you call experience" (I-7$_{Ct}$). It was generally agreed that "regular work

makes for regular practice" (I-5$_C$) and that their competence developed mostly through learning or practicing by doing.

When asked about continuous competence development, interpreters tend to think of language(s) competence first and foremost. Accordingly, the measures taken depend on the developmental stage of the respective language to a large degree. As one interpreter noted (talking about his five foreign languages, of which the first is a B):

> It's difficult to generalize, there's no homogenous answer I can give you, because in my various languages competence levels vary. So in language 1 and 2 I do relatively little in terms of formal or conscious professional development, I simply look up, after the session, problems (lexical points, idiomatic things, acronyms, etc.) I encounter during interpreting or I ask a colleague. There is little else I do other than reading the newspaper and watching television, of course, these are my main media, not to advance but to keep the languages at the given level and to keep them up to date. As for language 3, I do quite a bit using podcasts, which I listen to while traveling. Things are different for languages 4 and 5, where the level is not yet such that I can remain calm and cope with any subject matter. Here I make an active effort. For language 4, I enrolled in a summer school at a university in the respective country and participated in courses in philosophy, psychology, and marketing. As for language 5, I attended an interpreting course (in a group of 6) in the foreign country and last year I went to that country to attend university courses and sit in on court sessions to note down interesting points from the trial and case proceedings; and this year I will hire the teacher of that interpreting course for private lessons with a special emphasis on how to avoid interferences between languages 1 and 5. I am composing my own professional development program as it were. (I-4$_{Ct}$)

This is in accordance with all of the interpreters and particularly true of the C languages interpreters. As stated above, they would only engage in *formal* professional development measures, seminars, and workshops in the beginning stages or when taking up a new language. More "*semi-formal*" *learning*, directed mostly at the cultivation and further development of language(s) competence, is then pursued mainly for the C languages, which need to be maintained. Because the opportunity interpreters get to practice their languages, that is, work with them, varies from language to language and languages are a skill "you lose very, very quickly" (I-2$_{Ct}$), C language interpreters make it a point to "go to my various countries on an ongoing basis" (I-2$_{Ct;}$ also I-4$_{Ct,}$ I-5$_C$), to read the newspapers and listen to podcasts (I-4$_{Ct,}$ I-5$_C$), to have the radio or television on in the background much of the time, and to "devote attention" to the languages with which "I am still on a learning curve" (I-2$_{Ct}$). More *informally*, they keep reading books and chat with friends of the respective mother tongues over dinner (I-2$_{Ct}$, I-4$_{Ct}$, I-5$_C$) and regularly go to cinemas that display foreign language films (I-5$_C$). Maintaining C language competences means:

> [...] integrating it into everyday life. Just like others take to playing an instrument, I practice languages. I keep reading books, rotating between languages 1, 2, and 3; I have a satellite dish installed and have TV on all morning while doing my house work; I look up idiomatic expressions when I come across them in newspapers and I do a page of vocabulary work every day, a whole lot of little things like that all the time. (I-5$_C$)

The construction and maintenance of C languages takes "discipline" (I-4$_{Ct}$) and one has to keep at it all the time (I-5$_C$). What helps is the fact that competence in one *language transfers* to all other languages: "I have come to observe that my 'language head' works better and better; whatever I do for one language makes it work better for the other languages as well; it makes for greater ease, because there are a lot of similarities and points of transition" (I-5$_C$).

Things are somewhat different for interpreters with only one A and one B language. Because their B language is English, the interpreters interviewed (I-1$_B$, I-3$_{Bt}$, I-6$_B$, I-8$_B$, I-9$_B$, I-10$_B$) can afford not to offer interpreting in any language versions other than A-B and B-A. In those two versions, they are highly experienced and have no pressing need to keep building and developing their competence levels. Once more, they only make a special effort in the early phases of their career:

> In the beginning, I did three weekend seminars on banking and finance to get into my main operational fields and I thoroughly waded through a book for car mechanic apprentices to get fit for training courses in the automobile industry; and before I start working in a new field, I will have to sit down for several days. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

Other than that, in later stages, B interpreters tend not to cultivate their competence in any systematic way, but work in a highly targeted, assignment-geared fashion: "Then the pressure is high enough to get you down to doing something, otherwise I like to look at language-related matters more in terms of what I find interesting" (I-1$_B$). The picture is very similar for all interpreters who work exclusively with one A and one B language:

> Cultivating my interpreter skills is not something I do particularly consciously or systematically, but as part of my assignments, for which I prepare rather painstakingly; thus developing certain skills. As far as interpreting proper is concerned, again it's getting better by interpreting, I simply focus on not repeating the same mistakes. Other than that I keep doing job-based terminology work on my database and I realize that the work I did two years ago helps me to prepare new assignments more quickly and more efficiently. (I-1$_B$)

> Maintaining interpreter competence? Through work. Other than that I don't do much. In the early days, I used to read *The Economist* and systematically exploit parts of it subject- and vocab-wise. I used to read books on accounting and work my way through annual business reports and I ordered textbooks from England on how the Company Secretary has to organize his annual meeting. Today it's assignment-specific research on the internet, documents provided, and falling back on existing glossaries and my database. (I-6$_B$)

> How do I keep up my interpreter competence? By interpreting. Through my everyday work and very thorough conference preparation, and, of course, what they keep telling you at university, to keep updated by reading the newspaper, and virtually everything in it, even the feuilleton, the media page, and the bits on science. Competence development is really the very act of doing it, of interpreting, it's learning by doing, it also involves putting yourself in difficult positions and accepting a job that takes a day or two of intense preparation, even when you are not sure whether you will ever be working in that area again. (I-8$_B$)

After working for some time, interpreters find it "uneconomical" and even "counterproductive" (I-3$_{Bt}$) to build up subject-related and terminological knowledge unless it is in relation to a particular assignment, that is, they do not make an effort to gain access to a full subject matter in a systematic or comprehensive way. The reasons given are that, first, anything can crop up during an assignment (I-3$_{Bt}$) and one never knows in which domains one ends up getting jobs (I-6$_{B}$); second, for freelancers there is such a variety of subject matters that to dwell on a particular field would be at the expense of other relevant work-related measures (I-3$_{Bt}$); and third, it would be a waste of time, because by the time the processed matters might become topical, one would not have them down pat anymore. The preference for a more assignment-geared approach was expressed in the following terms:

> It is common experience that things learned at earlier stages gradually disintegrate and that one often fails to track down the terminology extracted and stored at some previous point. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

> I much prefer to work in an interpreting-specific way, namely, on what is of immediate relevance for an assignment. All this broad, unfiltered reading is dissatisfactory. You may recognize some of it at a later point but in the end you can't really say what you've gained. (I-10$_{B}$)

Some interpreters simply lack time because of teaching and other commitments (I-7$_{Ct}$). Moreover, it appears to be more to their liking "to make something I look up my starting point and then browse along" (I-1$_{B}$). Another interpreter specifies:

> I start researching in *Wikipedia* and end up following all kinds of links to more substantial articles. I like to get lost in reading alongside the assignment-based official homepages, which I find a better way of preparation than just sticking to the documents. (I-8$_{B}$)

Additionally, there is another major point the interpreters make for why they tend to refrain from engaging in any measures other than assignment-geared ones. They come to realize that interpreter expert competence is something that progresses over time in the course of one's working life; that evolves by developing a momentum of its own; and that, on the whole, is very much a matter of practice, *routine*, and *experience*. This applies to aspects ranging from the practical ("You just have to have been late for an assignment once to know that this is not the way to do it", I-1$_{B}$) to the more substantial. In fact, a great number of requirements and skills of the interpreter's task, as outlined in the interpreter competence model in the introduction above, are subject to the developmental aspect and routine factor. The following aspects were mentioned in the interviews as being highly dependent on developmental processes. Points a) to c) relate to the *pre-process* skills in interpreter competence, points d) to l) to the *in-process* skills, point m) to the *peri-process*, and points n) to o) to the *para-process* skills (in the model above):

a. develop an eye for what is essential and where to focus in the preparation process (I-1$_{B}$, I-6$_{B}$, I-10$_{B}$) and the ability for selective and economical preparation (I-7$_{Ct}$);

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b. develop an understanding of how to attack new subject matters (I-5_C, I-9_B, I-10_B) ("preparation is now quite a different matter from what it used to be, much more structured", I-10_B; "you no longer have yourself swamped by the flood of information", I-5_C);
c. develop an understanding of the importance of having rested before embarking on a job and of starting preparation work on time and organizing one's working week (I-7_{Ct});
d. develop a clear idea of what happens at an event on a particular topic, who's speaking, how speakers will present themselves, which position they take (I-7_{Ct});
e. develop a sense of how to enter the head of the speaker (I-3_{Bt}, I-5_C, I-7_{Ct}) and read between the lines (I-1_{Bt}) and of how to state it so that the audience gets a clear picture of the intended utterance (I-3_{Bt}, I-4_{Bt}, I-5_C, I-10_B);
f. develop the courage to leave out information in target speech rendering (I-4_{Ct}) and make pertinent reductions (I-3_{Bt});
g. develop the routine to keep pace with the presentation rate (I-6_B), not to lag behind, and "to be synchronous" (I-2_{Ct});
h. develop a routine that frees capacity for more complicated things (I-10_B);
i. develop equanimity (I-7_{Ct}) and the ability to remain calm (I-1_B, I-9_B, I-10_B) and to maintain a professional profile (I-7_{Ct}) under all circumstances;
j. learn to let go of perfectionism and develop a feel for what concessions are helpful without compromising speaker fidelity (I-8_B);
k. learn to work in a team, to take turns, to take the relay when languages suddenly change (I-7_{Ct});
l. more generally, get into the "conference grove" (I-7_{Ct});
m. develop "psychohygiene", that is, finding outlets for one's anger without letting the audience notice or annoying one's colleague (I-8_B); become more tolerant and stop getting angry at speakers (I-7_{Ct}, I-9_B);
n. build up the soft skills surrounding the job in terms of how to organize oneself as a freelancer (I-7_{Ct});
o. develop a clear concept of one's own value (I-7_{Ct}, I-8_B, I-9_B), a more differentiated way in accepting assignments (I-7_{Ct}), a more determined way in negotiating working conditions (I-4_{Ct}, I-6_B, I-7_{Ct}) and in arguing fees (I-8_B);
p. develop life experience and the wisdom of old age when dealing with colleagues and customers (I-9_B).

4. Becoming a professional

Because interpreter competence appears to have much to do with becoming experienced, with developing an intuitive sense, and with professionalizing in the course of practicing and gaining work-related routine, what is it then that forms a professional interpreter?

For the interpreters interviewed, it is all about performing better at what they do and about doing each individual assignment to the best of their abilities under the circumstances. Each time, from job to job, it is a kind of *rapprochement*

towards the *ideal* of which they have rather clear and similar ideas. The following points detail *interpreting quality as defined by the professionals*:

– "People will like it when I serve up things to them nicely, when you are rather sleek and when high fidelity does not mean antagonizing listeners with an ultra-complete rendering." (I-1$_B$)
– "The main thing is to keep the customer satisfied." (I-2$_{Ct}$)
– "Successful interpreting is when we interpreters supply the client in such a way that he can truly react, get the joke no more than a second later, and can fully participate in the conversation, it's the miracle of Babylon as it were." (I-3$_{Bt}$)
– "What customers value most is an unagitated presentation and pleasant formulation, remaining calm, daring to skip details, summarizing meaningfully, getting my text across just fine." (I-4$_{Ct}$)
– "Communication must work, that's the basic thing. And then my aim is to quickly arrive in the situation, never again to face a situation which I experience as terrifying in terms of subject matter, to always end up feeling that one did one's best under the given circumstances, never to be asleep at the wheel, to always make sure that communication works, to deliver a pleasant presentation, and to get across a certain ease so that the customer doesn't have to feel or suffer with the struggling interpreter, not to let him have the impression that he doesn't immediately get the information provided by the speaker, to be impeccable language-wise, to deliver a spontaneous, fluent and relatively complete target speech." (I-5$_C$)
– "The eternal principles are that the performance should be complete, idiomatic, convincing, and pleasant to listen to." (I-6$_B$)
– "I would say a blameless performance to keep the customer satisfied, to give a non-tiring presentation to the audience, to always be well prepared and informed, to give advice and consultation to the customer where needed." (I-7$_{Ct}$)
– "It's an absolute must that the performance sounds good, that one knows where to make cuts and to be able to give a meaningful summary rather than exchanging content for sounding good." (I-8$_B$)
– "I wish to leave with my listeners the impression that they were able to follow as well as those who listened to the original." (I-9$_B$)
– "We try, of course, to have things flow smoothly, so that, for the listeners, it feels as if they were communicating directly. As for the interpreting process, I'd say that the most important thing is faithfulness regarding sense. 'Form follows function', for what's the use of the most beautiful expressions, if it's not what the speaker intended to say; the next thing is to follow up on his style and to be as complete as possible and, then, what is also important is a pleasant voice, so that your listeners like to listen to you. There is no point in being a brilliant interpreter if people take off their headphones." (I-10$_B$)

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Finally, the interpreters report that their own, subjective *requirements have changed* in the course of becoming an expert. First, this is related to the fact that, after graduation, in the beginning phases of working as an interpreter, they were busy simply trying to meet the challenge.

> When I came out of university, I was more worried about actually understanding and getting the message across, just coping with it. (I-2$_{Ct}$)

> At the beginning you simply do it laboratory-like, you struggle along from utterance to utterance, you're basically busy trying to survive in this extreme other-determined situation and coming to terms with this perverse and unbearable uncertainty of not knowing what will happen the very next second. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

Requirements change when *routine* sets in and *capacity is released*.

> You learn all those energy-saving measures, you note down all those names, conference title, key terms so that you don't have to think about them, but can simply read them off and spit them out; you acquire all those reduction strategies and an awareness of your role, which helps to release energy for the comprehension process. And, of course, gradually you build up more capacity, just as you do in sports. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

> In the first assignments, it's simply a matter of how to survive, how not to make a fool out of yourself in the face of one's colleague. Later, routine will make you calm down and relax; thus freeing capacity, which you can then use for all those other things. (I-10$_{B}$)

This extra capacity is then invested into *flexible and dynamic adjustment* to the given working conditions.

> The more capacity you have the less you worry about less relevant phrases you left out and the more you think about how you want to perform; in some circumstances you find that it is possible to render all the details and then you raise your expectations and you feel you want to be complete; in other settings you are aware of the difficulties, of the bad speakers, the extremely difficult topic and then you lower the standards you set yourself. If things do not go well, you analyze, during your coffee break, what is going wrong and you stop being frustrated, you think about how to go about it differently, and what to concentrate on and then you turn the tide. (I-10$_{B}$)

Part of changing requirements is a more realistic appraisal of what is needed and a *giving up of perfectionist standards and exaggerated goals*.

> At university you learn to finish your sentences, to phrase things beautifully, to speak clearly, to render all the details, to be native-like in your B language. These are the expectations you have in the back of your mind all the time, which made me stand in my own way until I realized that it is more about keeping cool, sounding good, and coming across as competent. This idea of completeness made me talk very fast in the beginning so that I started to splutter, until I noticed that I could compensate for a number of details through intonation, or a confident phrase that did not follow the original very closely. Moreover, I used to think that I should do more acting, now I simply speak the way I speak. (I-4$_{Ct}$)

After graduation I was extremely eager to produce wonderful phrasings. That has given way to a much more economical way of working. When I find a good expression I'm pleased, but I no longer go out of my way for it. I think that was a bit vain, too. I'm much more of a neutral voice rather than a performer nowadays. (I-5$_C$)

I used to be a perfectionist or even pedantic. I couldn't bear not being able to render a phrase or to do something incorrectly. As a result, I got so annoyed with myself that my performance was even more affected. Nowadays 90% of my anger (about speakers, colleagues, or working conditions) is outside the booth, but no longer while interpreting. So, yes, have mercy on yourself, accept limitations, and indicate them where necessary. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

I used to agonize over putting in enough preparatory work and continue into the night. Nowadays I call it a day at 9 pm at the latest and rely on the confidence that I will not make a total fool out of myself. (I-1$_B$)

While clamping down on unnecessary perfectionism, the professionals, at the same time, *raise their expectations and self-imposed requirements,* because they have come to know that they can do very well: "I think the standards I set myself are constantly on the rise" (I-9$_B$); "There is now this new feeling of some communicative exchanges running through me, as in an electric circuit, which feels really nice" (I-3$_{Bt}$).

Changing requirements and becoming an expert is, in the final analysis, fundamentally about finding *one's own way* and doing things in a *self-determined* way.

I have developed my own yardstick, a sense of when I feel good at work, and when I actually am at my best. (I-4$_{Ct}$)

I used to work at the x ministry and they wanted to push me into English – French interpreting and that had never been my cup of tea; I did it at the time because they wanted me to, whereas now I see things in a wider perspective and in terms of what I still want to achieve. (I-5$_C$)

Such self-determination is a corollary of people being *different learner types* and having different learning styles, tastes, and preferences.

You have to keep updated all the time. I do that with newspapers, I find watching Italian television in Germany artificial. (I-2$_{Ct}$) – For me television in my various languages is absolutely essential, because it presents language in its most living form and discusses and analyzes the most topical daily news. When something like Fukushima happens, you want to find out how they put *Abklingbecken*, for instance. (I-7$_{Ct}$)

I don't think one can learn much from watching films in the original, because you don't really catch much or you lose it again very quickly. (I-6$_B$) – I watch a lot of DVDs in English, which helps enormously in comprehending different accents, slang, or colloquial speech. Also, production-wise I can now see phrasal verbs coming out automatically and correctly without me having to think about it. I think that comes from all that exposure. (I-10$_B$)

My students are supposed to acquire an informed semi-knowledge to be able to know how things are interrelated. How they do that is immaterial, because people are different, some of them attend professional development courses, while others like to work away in isolation using *Wikipedia*. (I-3$_{Bt}$)

I'm convinced that everybody must find out what suits him. At university, I found it rather unsettling to be told that we would have to keep updated in all our working languages and read all those newspapers on a daily basis. And that was among many other things we were supposed to do. Nobody can do that, at least I couldn't. I would definitely recommend that students read what they feel like reading in their respective languages, to pick up whatever comes their way in terms of films or books, provided they do not feel under any compulsion to do so and do not have to make an effort. It's when you enjoy it, when something sparks your interest, that you learn most. (I-10$_B$)

Finally, a sign of expert behavior and professionalism was reported to be approaching the interpreting task in a much more relaxed and even "playful" (I-5$_C$, I-7$_{Ct}$) way.

5.   Conclusions

When asked about interpreter competence development, the 10 professional interpreters interviewed speak of *language(s) competence*, *interpreting competence proper*, and *business competence*. They feel that much of it can be learned by those who have the drive for it and that motivation is more important than natural talent. They see a clear timeline for when the above-mentioned competences are acquired and enhanced over the three periods of general education, interpreter training, and on-the-job professional life. Moreover, they agree on the quality parameters that characterize expert performance. Although interpreters with several C languages are much more preoccupied with upgrading their various languages than those with only one B language, the picture of competence development that emerges from the interviews is a homogeneous one.

After the initial stages or, in the case of newly added languages, once language proficiency is at a high level, the interpreters barely engage in *formal* learning, other than assignment-specific targeted preparation work. They like to proceed in an interest-oriented way ("It's when you take an interest in something that you feel like it and have your mind set on it", I-1$_B$), which means that most of what they do is semi-formal. The interpreters can be observed to follow events with a constantly high level of meta-reflective awareness. During *informal* dinner occasions, interpreters are 'accused' of "never going off-line" (I-4$_{Ct}$) or they cause astonishment for taking a genuine interest in party small talk and for asking relevant technical questions into guests' professional backgrounds (I-9$_B$). Given this constant state of being on alert, it may be assumed that, in comparison with people in other professions, there is less *implicit* learning for interpreters; instead they are always on the lookout, "always on duty" (I-1$_B$), "always on standby or 5% in the working mode" (I-7$_{Ct}$), always meta-cognitively aware. At the same time, a substantial amount of unconscious learning might, in fact, take place due to "constantly browsing the internet in English or watching foreign language films", so that one ends up "automatically getting all those phrasal verbs right"

(I-10$_B$). However, the accent in expert interpreter development seems to be on *assignment-specific*, *semi-formal*, and *meta-reflective informal* competence building.

Based on my study sample, interpreter competence cultivation is, (a) *on the job*, that is, learning by doing, trying to do better each time; (b) *before the job*, that is, efficient, targeted information gathering; and (c) *over time*, that is, becoming a sovereign professional who builds on his experience and affords confidence and courage, awareness, and a relentless willingness to serve the customer, as well as to make languages and interpreting an integral part of his or her life. In this process, the *savoir-faire* part of interpreter competence becomes as important as the continuous updating of language(s) and of *special purpose content and terminological knowledge*.

Some of the interpreter statements might shed somewhat doubtful light on the interpreting profession because they might imply that building and keeping up one's own competence does not require regular effort. While stressing the obvious need for further investigation with larger groups of professional interpreters and different language combinations, I would like to adopt the tentative view that the results could, in fact, lead to a somewhat different hypothesis of expert competence development, which has some basis in the specialist literature and might be worth taking into account in future research. It seems to me that what may sound somewhat neglectful and *laissez-faire* at first (e.g., that advanced interpreters invest little effort in competence building, rely on on-the-job practice, and let regular work routine and experience take the lead rather than engage in systematic and more formal professional skills development) can be shown to tie in with findings in translation research into the ways in which translation competence evolves to support expertise.

According to Shreve (2006), the cognitive changes that bring about the multiple translation-relevant cognitive resources referred to as translation *competence* and are at the foundation of translation *expertise* (that is, consistently superior performance) require *deliberate practice*, that is, the "regular engagement in specific activities directed at performance enhancement in a particular domain" (ibid.: 29). One of four conditions under which deliberate practice can only occur is "informative feedback" (ibid.: 29), which is often restricted to pedagogical settings. In the absence of work environments and professional contexts that offer opportunities for feedback (and feedback is, indeed, a rare commodity in interpreting settings, cf. Albl-Mikasa 2012: 70, 71, 85), a high level of self-directed "metacognitive activity" related to performance assessment is paramount, including self-regulation, namely, "the ability to attend to, monitor, and reflect on the nature of the text and the task" (Shreve 2006: 32). Moreover, the cognitive changes that underpin the development of translation competence are also instrumental in the "reduction in effortful processing, increase in speed of task performance, and [generation of] 'automaticity'" (ibid.: 38), which are typical of expert performance. This means that self-regulation and more automatic processing may replace continuous, deliberate practice.

Similarly, while it is assumed that the accumulation of *experience* needs to be coupled with deliberate practice to bring about the cognitive changes associated with expertise (Shreve 2006: 29), this may no longer be the case once these cogni-

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tive changes are in place (according to a number of researchers, such as Ericsson and Crutcher 1990, it takes at least ten years of deliberate practice for expertise to emerge). Thus, once competence is acquired and expertise gained, experience *without* deliberate practice may suffice to uphold, stabilize, and even strengthen expert performance, because it is topped up with metacognitive regulation. Finally, there is evidence that the translational behavior of professionals is increasingly "heuristic and intuitive in nature" (Kirally 2006: 81) and that deliberate practice may not play the key role (cf. Albl-Mikasa, forthcoming) that has been posited (cf. Ericsson 2000).

Against this backdrop, the interviewee statements above (to the effect that the interpreters follow their own yardstick, approach their job in a self-determined way, replace perfectionism with an informed appraisal of requirements, remain calm, and handle the task in a more care-free way, etc.) reflect a transitional process from novice to expert, in which regular and targeted efforts and measures (in the sense of deliberate practice) are confined to the competence *development* stages and are then superseded, in the competence *cultivation* phase, by mostly intuitive and experience-enhanced, and to some extent meta-reflective and self-regulatory activity, which is predominantly on-the-job and assignment-based.

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It Don't Mean a Thing... Simultaneous Interpretation Quality and User Satisfaction*

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Abstract

The issue of quality has been extensively discussed in Interpreting Studies (IS). Quality is subjective, ineffable and cultural. As the "aspiring-to-science community" (hereafter "ATSC"[1]) defines "scientific" as empirical, quantifiable and objective[2], it is bound to struggle when dealing with such a concept. Yet, precisely because it stipulates that a scientific approach requires a quantifiable dimension, it has to try and define quality in an objective manner. Shackled by its postulates, the ATSC has drawn upon two approaches that have predictably come short. One vainly seeks to define quality and subsequently "objective and quantifiable" criteria to assess it. The other claims to draw on marketing and strives to measure user satisfaction, primarily through questionnaires. The most advanced work in marketing, however, has taken on board the findings of cognitive

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* I would like to dedicate this paper to one of my dearest friends, Alain Bonzon, who passed away not so long ago and happened to be an intensive Simultaneous Interpretation user. May he rest in peace.

1 I will use Gile's convoluted description in this paper although I would prefer the word "positivists".

2 A similar statement is unsurprisingly inscribed on the front of the Social Science Research Building at the University of Chicago. Frank Knight, the excellent albeit underestimated economist, is said to have remarked on it one day: "Yes, and when you can express it in numbers your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind!" (McClosky 1983: 482).

psychology and behavioural economics and rejects questionnaires as a reliable source of information about customers' thoughts and emotions. Moreover, IS questionnaires usually postulate clear-cut distinctions between such norms as fidelity to meaning and performance-related criteria. Quality is frequently restricted to performance in the booth although this could lead to significant problems being overlooked. Lastly, the ATSC might be stifling promising research approaches and projects because of its excessively restrictive criteria.

Introduction

Daniel Gile (1990a: 233) has argued that "a very important question which has never been studied in depth is the nature of interpretation quality" and called for research to look at how interpreters and delegates define quality. Eleven years later, he was still writing that "[a]ssessing quality in interpretation, as well as translation, evidently is a major issue, both at a professional as well as an educational level" (Gile 2001: 379). In fact, any discussion of expertise and professional performance requires shedding light on the concept of quality. Can "objective" criteria be defined? Or is there an intangible aspect that is subjective, because the *rapport* between interpreters and audience plays a crucial role? We have all experienced cases where users have praised our performance even though we know all too well that it was far from flawless and sometimes actually accumulated mistakes. In other words, what did the users like? If we know that we made numerous mistakes when interpreting names and figures, clearly we cannot hope to define quality by assessing our performance according to such criteria. I would argue that we are moving into a far more slippery area, where the users' reaction may very well depend on "subjective" factors such as the confidence conveyed by the interpreter's voice as well as the impression projected by the interpreter of being interested in the subject, and so forth.

   The ATSC's determination to assess quality in interpretation and translation has to be understood in the light of their definition of "scientific". Just as we need to define as precisely as possible a kilogramme, a metre or a litre in order to be able to make measurements, the rationale here is that, since we need to be able to quantify data when carrying out research, we must rely on an "objective and quantifiable" criterion, in other words quality. Afterwards, supposedly, we will be able to conduct tests to gauge the efficiency of, say, an approach in teaching as reflected by an improvement or deterioration in quality. Similarly, Gile (1990c: 29) has argued that scientific work is based on "facts collected through systematic observation, carefully checked and assessed", to be contrasted with unscientific research based on "facts encountered in daily, personal and subjective experience". His dichotomy is founded on the simplistic idea that facts exist objectively and simply wait for researchers to identify them. Such a pre-Kuhnian viewpoint stems from the inclusion of "empirical" in the definition of "scientific". Here, we could draw on E.H. Carr's (1961: 23) famous metaphor when discussing such a viewpoint in history:

[...] facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend, partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use – these two factors being, of course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants.

I apologise for insisting on the fact that the ATSC definition of "scientific" is so restrictive but, as we shall see, this plays a crucial role in the debate and accounts for otherwise contradictory and inconsistent statements. An additional reason why quality has been widely discussed in IS is that we conference interpreters claim we deserve to be paid similar rates to those of highly qualified professionals and therefore need to justify such a demand. Any such research in IS therefore needs to be above suspicion like Caesar's wife in order to pre-empt accusations of manipulating findings[3].

The foregoing leads to a paradox. Some twenty years ago, Gile hailed the fact that what he calls the aspiring-to-science community "has taken the lion's share both in recent publications and in conference participation" (Gile 1995a: 15). The reasons for its success were evident in his opinion: "In concrete terms, [ATSC scholars]:

- systematically conduct empirical testing of their ideas and theories;
- systematically provide evidence to back up claims;
- are explicit about their materials, methods and factual and/or logical grounds for their claims;
- make a clear distinction between documented facts and speculative thoughts" (Gile, 2004a).

Notwithstanding, although the changeover to a "scientific" approach could have been expected to result in major advances in the study of quality, the lack of any significant progress is striking. Kahane (2000) concedes that there is no consensus on "the elusive concept of quality; quality for whom, assessed in what manner?". Collados Aís and her team (2007: 224) conclude their book by quoting Cartellieri's words from 1983: "Much still remains to be done to overcome the present unsatisfactory state of affairs in the sphere of reliable quality parameters". In fact, such concepts as Quality or Beauty are ineffable, cultural and subjective. Seeking to define Quality "objectively" hardly makes more sense than trying to paint the wind. ASTC researchers have attempted to muddy the waters by talking about quality *per se* when they are clearly referring to a definition that necessarily includes a subjective dimension or about quality defined as equivalent to user satisfaction. In other words, the ASTC approach dooms research to a dead-end because of the flaws and shortcomings of its methodology.

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3   I hasten to say that Gile is exemplary in terms of tackling head on the fact that research findings may be inconclusive or suggest that some of the claims made by interpreters are not justified. His willingness to discuss research that apparently undermines some long-standing beliefs and viewpoints in the interpreting community is highly commendable.

In my opinion, the fundamental fallacy of the ATSC is the conviction that "scientific" means objective, quantifiable and empirical. Anything in Interpreting Research that cannot be quantified is rejected into the purgatory of the "Liberal Arts Paradigm". More fundamentally, although the ATSC portrays itself as scientific and objective, relying exclusively on solidly demonstrated evidence, its proponents repeatedly indulge in sweeping assertions that lack any basis whatever but seek to project the image of self-evident statements of fact. For instance, Gile (1995a: 20) writes:

> Most interpreters and interpretation teachers with academic degrees in fields other than translation or interpretation are graduates of foreign languages and/or cultures (*sic*) departments. Only a few practi-searchers have a solid background in an *established scientific discipline such as linguistics or psychology* [...] (my italics)

On what grounds can Gile argue that linguistics and psychology are "established scientific disciplines"? Psychology was dominated for far too long by behaviourism, a school that incidentally also argued that its methodology was empirical, quantifiable and objective. Would Gile argue that sociolinguistics is scientific? Would he claim that Chomsky's transformational generative grammar is undisputed and undisputable science? Likewise, Gile (2009: 144) writes: "scientific literature (...) *depends less on rhetoric*[4] and more on *strict, systematic, cautious, logical, objective use of data* [than academic literature of the liberal arts type]" (my italics). To which it could be retorted that the ATSC resembles Molière's Monsieur Jourdain who was astonished to learn that he had been speaking prose all his life: the ATSC apparently has been using rhetorical devices without being aware of it.

Take the habit of speaking about oneself or one's work in the third person. McClosky (1990: 32-33) explains how "[t]he suppression of the "I" in scientific writing is more significant than one might think. [...] The scientist says: It is not I the scientist who makes these assertions but reality itself". He adds that the underlying idea is that "[...] scientific texts are transparent, a matter of "mere communication", [...], simply "writing up 'theoretical results' and 'empirical findings' (*ibid.* 36-37)". Not all scientists feel the need to abide by such a convention with everything it entails. Indeed, Watson and Crick's landmark paper begins: "We wish to suggest a structure for the salt of deoxyribose nucleic acid (D.N.A.)" (1953: 737).

By contrast, ATSC researchers have repeatedly used the third person to make unjustifiable value judgements as if they were perfectly bland and self-evident. For instance, Gile has argued that "most interpreters are humanities- or language faculty graduates with no scientific training and expertise, and *they find less motivation in the long, somewhat arid efforts actual research implies* in terms of data collection, analysis and tests of precise hypotheses than in free theorization" (my italics). Moser-Mercer (1994: 17) divides the IS community into followers of the "natural science paradigm", where research requires "precision of logical processes" and a "liberal arts community" that is content with "explorations which *involve the intellect in a less logically rigorous manner*" (my italics). These two

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4   Here, Gile is using a rather negative and limited definition of the word "rhetoric".

statements hardly fit Gile's description of ATSC members' "reluctance to speculate [...] without the support of evidence for every step they take" (Gile 2004b): 126). Amazingly, he rejects Pöchhacker's description (2004: 109) of Moser-Mercer's statement above as "divisive" and disingenuously adds "until Pöchhacker presents evidence or at least a strong rationale to support this view, I should like to suggest the opposite"[5]. In other words, Gile seems to be saying that as Moser-Mercer is merely describing reality, i.e. the fact that the liberal arts community is content with explorations that are less taxing intellectually, who could object?

Likewise, Gile has also asserted that "questionnaires have been the most common means to determine user expectations and/or responses, as they are the most straightforward scientific way of collecting data on actual quality perception by delegates" (Gile 1991: 193-4). Kurz (2001: 397) has repeated this argument *verbatim* while referring to Gile's assertion. Neither writer provides the slightest shred of evidence to back up such a controversial claim (I would personally argue that a more compelling argument could be made in favour of participant observation) – although Gile defines the need to give references to "back statements which require them" as a "fundamental criterion for scientific quality" (1999a: 33). Another rhetorical device used at times consists in sprinkling a text with mathematical symbols even when this does not clarify the meaning of the text or provide any meaningful contribution to the argument. This list is obviously not exhaustive. The reader will find more examples of subjective (and even at times glaringly wrong) statements made by ATSC members masquerading as obvious statements of fact in the rest of this article.

1.   Am I measuring quality or user satisfaction?

Some researchers have designed surveys targeting interpreters and not users. Such questionnaires seek to determine the importance of various components of quality in the opinion of interpreters. In particular, Chiaro and Nocella (2005: 177) contended that "a genuine delegate is likely to be hard put to be able to judge the fidelity of an interpreted speech with the original" and therefore sent their questionnaire to interpreters. Gile has repeatedly questioned the ability of users to assess interpretation quality criteria. In all likelihood, this is indeed frequently the case and delegates often lack any such expertise. Notwithstanding, the vast majority of users *do* assess, when filling in a questionnaire, the quality of interpretation.

As Kahane (2000) points out, Gile throughout his extensive body of work has been tireless in advocating the need for *objective, quantifiable* criteria. At the same time, Gile has repeatedly highlighted the problems encountered with respect to

5   Ironically, Gile (2004 *ibid*) then writes: "I should like to suggest that a fundamental difference between followers of the 'natural science paradigm' and followers of a 'humanities-inspired paradigm' (or whatever other names one might like to give them) is that the former tend to stay much closer to evidence in their inferences than the latter, for whom it is legitimate to interpret and extrapolate without necessarily having to justify every one of their assertions." Bear in mind that Moser-Mercer does not provide any evidence at all to back her somewhat contentious statement.

the subjective nature of assessment[6]. In fact, how could a consensus ever emerge on quality assessment guidelines? Grbić (2008: 234) states the obvious when she writes that "quality is not intrinsic to an object". Luccarelli and Gree (2007: 2544) illustrate this point:

> In 1996, the Private Market Sector invited an expert on quality control systems to a meeting in Lisbon to explore the possibility of AIIC or its members applying for ISO quality certification (…). Our quality control expert recognized the difficulty of the task. Quality would be difficult to control in conference interpreting precisely because it depends on so many factors beyond the interpreter. Listeners may very well form different impressions and give different evaluations. In other words, he deemed that a degree of subjectivity was unavoidable.

To give just one example, we sometimes adapt our output to the people listening to us when we know enough about them. I regularly interpret at a three-day management seminar held by a CAC 40 company. Twice, a former French rugby star was the guest speaker. The first time I was working for two Britons and an American who had all played rugby (the American amazingly had been a long-standing member of the US national team). The second time, I was interpreting for a German, a Dutchman and a Pole and safely assumed they knew virtually nothing, if anything, about the sport.

If I had been taped and the quality of my two versions had been assessed, the obvious and "objective" conclusion would have been that I made far more errors and omissions the second time around. If I had been taped only the second time, my rating would have been quite low. I can remember one specific example because a colleague asked me at the time how I had translated "*on ne va pas faire pleuvoir des chandelles*". The first time I translated "we're not going to kick up-and-unders all day" (trust me: that is one way of rendering what it means in English) and the second time "we're not going to play negative rugby". The first time I peppered my interpretation with rugby-specific jargon, the second time I made numerous omissions and actually "mistranslated" quite a few words while adding information the speaker had not given.

Likewise, Peter Mead (2005: 40) describes a study of how seven interpreting teachers at Italian and Austrian universities were asked to assess interpretations by five students:

> Lack of consistency between the various assessments indicates considerable variability in standards and priorities from one assessor to another. It was emblematic, for example, that there was unanimity about awarding a pass or a fail for only three out of ten interpretations. Another interesting finding was that almost none of the seven assessors could generally be identified as a consistently higher (or lower) marker than others.

Any criticism on the grounds that the sample is too small statistically can easily be dismissed: extensive research in docimology has shown the subjective dimension of evaluation. This holds true in such subjects as mathematics as well

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6   See Gile 1990b: 195 for instance. In particular, in this article Gile explores a wide range of reasons that rule out the idea of ever defining objective assessment criteria.

as physics. One examiner will fail a student who made a calculation error at the very outset and accordingly every other calculation was wrong, whereas another one will give the same student an excellent grade because she deems a silly mistake in an otherwise faultless demonstration relatively unimportant. Quality is by definition a subjective and multidimensional concept.

I will not discuss in depth Gile's "scientific" definition of interpretation quality as:

> [...] a *subjectively* weighted sum of a number of components: the fidelity of the target-language speech, the quality of the interpreter's linguistic output, the quality of his or her voice, the prosodic characteristics of his or her delivery, the quality of his or her terminological usage, *all of them as perceived by the assessor*" (Gile 1995b: 151) (my italics).

He has even included a mathematical formula ($Q = S \, w_i \, c_i$) where c_i stands for the quality components and w_i for their relative weightings (ibid). He fails to explain, however, how these mathematical symbols enhance his explanation or how his approach can be reconciled with the inclusion of subjective components in his definition.

In sum, we are to build a rocket in order to explore a planet called Quality – although nobody has the slightest idea where the planet is to be found. Robert M. Pirsig in 1974 in his cult novel Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance summed up everything that can be said in this respect: even though Quality cannot be defined, you know what Quality is, in your opinion, when you see/hear/taste/read it[7]. The main character ends up on the verge of insanity because of his obsessive attempt to nail down the concept.

Another approach has been widely followed. Instead of pursuing the Holy Grail of defining quality, other researchers have sought to measure user satisfaction. Grbić (ibid: 236) has pointed out that several interpreting scholars explicitly refer to marketing and management studies, in particular Total Quality Management and Quality Assurance. An interesting point is that the main thinkers in these fields, the likes of Juran and Deming for instance, never define Quality – they simply measure the cost of failing to provide it. Citing Kotler and Armstrong[8], Kurz (2001: 394) nonetheless asserts:

> [...] quality must begin with customer needs and end with customer perception. There is no reason why this generally accepted marketing principle should not apply to conference interpreting as well

More accurately, it could be said that this principle is "generally accepted" among marketing apologists. Such an approach is blatantly functionalist. If quality is achieved by meeting or exceeding customer expectations, my children's subjective assessment of the quality of Big Mac hamburgers, i.e. outstanding, has to be

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7   I would like to thank Tomás de la Guardia for reminding me of this book and making many other insightful suggestions.
8   Actually, this is a textbook for undergraduates.

endorsed. Hunger and thirst are physiological needs, but a craving for a Big Mac and a can of Coke is a want stimulated by massive advertising, which has resulted in a severe child obesity problem in many countries. How could Kotler's definition be of any use in terms of evaluating quality in interpreting?

The fundamental assumption accepted by nearly all IS researchers who believe quality reflects user satisfaction has been voiced, as said above, by Daniel Gile: "Questionnaires (...) are the most straightforward *scientific* way of collecting data on actual quality perception by delegates" (Gile 1991: 193-4) (my italics). Note that Chiaro and Nocella (2004) made a compelling case that most questionnaire-based quality research carried out in Interpreting Studies suffers from severe methodological flaws in terms of statistical methodology. Interestingly, in their original article they stated that "[w]e would like to approach the issue of quality from the angle of economics, bearing in mind that interpreting is a service [...]" (2004: 280). In their answer to Pöchhacker, they (2005: 177) wrote "judging the quality of an interpretation is quite different from that of judging a regular marketable good. (We suggest that those convinced by our argument skip the rest of this section and move on to 3.2)". I beg to differ and strongly recommend *not* skipping the following part because it is illuminating:

> A housewife asked to judge the quality of a pot of jam, for example, has a range of tangible and highly perceptible characteristics upon which to base her evaluation. The colour of the jam, how much it costs, it's (*sic*) shelf life, nutritional information on the label, packaging and, last but not least, it's (*sic*) flavour.

Several ideas spring to mind. First, a sleight of hand is obvious: we have moved from "the angle of economics", and a "scientific" approach buttressed by statistical concepts such as sum of the scores, non-comparative scales and chi squared testing to ... what could be best described as a naïve view of marketing. Second, the housewife (the authors' choice of word) they describe is a *femina oeconomica* who makes rational choices based on objective criteria and is fully aware of the reasons why she makes these choices.

Whatever economic woman may say when answering a survey, her choice is influenced by a myriad of factors she is unaware of. For instance, retailers use colours: red dominates at McDonald's because it causes you to eat more quickly, freeing up room for the next customer. Supermarkets are now using specialised scent machines wafting the smell of fresh baked bread and other scents because shoppers will spend more when smelling them. The best slots on shelves are at adult eye-level, and that is where relatively expensive products are put, often to the right of popular items (to increase the chances that right-handed shoppers will pick them up). The fresh fruit and vegetables section is systematically positioned next to the entry. As *The Economist* (18 December 2008: "*The way the brain buys*") points out:

> For shoppers, this makes no sense. Fruit and vegetables can be easily damaged, so they should be bought at the end, not the beginning, of a shopping trip. But [...] selecting good wholesome fresh food is an uplifting way to start shopping, and it makes people feel less guilty about reaching for the stodgy stuff later on

In fact, the unreliability of surveys in terms of "reflecting" consumers' feelings and, above all predicting subsequent actions, has been obvious for many marketing professionals for a long time. In the 1950s, for instance, Ernest Dichter[9] and the Motivation Research school eschewed empirical marketing research and polling in favour of in-depth interviews and small panels. Robert Peterson (1992: 49) suggested in the 1990s that:

> customer satisfaction ratings may well reflect the Hawthorne effect: Attempts to measure customer satisfaction will, in and of themselves, serendipitously increase satisfaction, regardless of the product or service being investigated.

Vavra (1997: 29) reported that "60% of all defecting customers were either extremely or very satisfied according to CSM data"[10]. American marketing specialist Jack Trout (2008: 42) pointed out that 89% of people who owned cars of a certain make said they were very satisfied and 67% said that they intended to purchase another car from that company. A follow-up study found that fewer than 20% actually did so. As Ogilvy Group UK vice chairman Rory Sutherland in Tarran (2011: *passim*) states:

> No-one in any research group would ever say, "If there are four brands of shampoo, I'll buy the one that has most bottles on the shelf", or "I'll choose the one that's on the third shelf up because it's the one that doesn't require much reaching down" or "I'll look at the prices of three products and choose the one in the middle." In reality, we use heuristics and shortcuts and cognitively miserliness like this all the time.

Philip Graves (2010: 91-2) shows that the original estimate of consultants Deloitte & Touch projected that 12 million people would visit the Millennium Dome in London in 12 months. Advertising agency M&C Saatchi's subsequent review argued, on the basis of surveys, that 12 million was a "conservative" figure. In fact, only 6.5 million visitors came – a disastrous shortfall. They failed to come despite what they had said when questioned about their intentions.

In fact, more and more companies and researchers agree that watching consumers behave is far more relevant than listening to what they say when asked questions. By the way, any teacher worth her grain of salt knows that asking pupils/students whether they have understood something is senseless. Not only will they feel reluctant to confess they do not understand something more than once from time to time, but also all too frequently they will sincerely and mistakenly answer in the affirmative. Graves (2010: 92-3) makes a telling point of obvious relevance for the issues discussed in this article:

> Concern about the quality of research tends to be focused on the validity of the sample and the statistical significance of any differences in the data, but [...] the methodology can be pure and the results still grossly misleading.

9   He is credited with the concepts of focus groups and brand images.
10 CSM stands for Customer Satisfaction Management.

He carries on to describe in depth the flaws in surveys, focus groups and questionnaires used in marketing but his crucial point is as follows: "[..] over recent decades, a growing body of scientific evidence has revealed something that is both fascinating and somewhat disarming. We don't think in the way we think we do" (*ibid*: x)[11]. Sutherland spells out the logical conclusion that "survey research is an inherently unreliable means of getting to the truth of consumer behaviour and emotions." For him (Tarran 2011) at the very most, "it's still better than ignorance in many cases".

2.   Seventy times seven skins[12]

Cognitive psychology sheds light on the process with its "dual-process" model of the brain. According to Daniel Kahneman, who won the "Nobel Prize in Economics" in 2002, we use two fundamentally different modes of thought: "System 1[13]" and "System 2". In his riveting book *Thinking Fast and Slow*", he writes that System 1 "operates automatically and quickly with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control" while System 2 "allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations" (Kahneman 2012: 20). He argues that System 1 is sensitive to subtle environmental cues, e.g. instantaneously detecting hostility in a voice, and enables us to carry out everyday activities, such as driving a car, without needing to focus on them and so forth. However, this system is terrible at the sort of statistical thinking required to make complex choices, jumps to wild conclusions and uses irrelevant mental shortcuts or heuristics[14] and is prey to all sorts of illogical biases. System 2 is the conscious being we call "I" and mistakenly think it decides our choices and actions. System 1 is really the one in charge as it "effortlessly originates impressions and feelings that are the main sources of the explicit beliefs and deliberate choices of System 2" (Kahneman *ibid*: 20-21). Most of the time System 1 runs au-

11 The foregoing accounts for the emergence of neuromarketing and its techniques that range from measuring facial expression, skin conductance and pupil dilation to measures of brain activation (cf. Knutson *et al.* (2007 : 147-56); Senior C. and Lee N. (2008 : 263-271); and Ariely D. and Berns G.S. (2010 : 284-92). Likewise, the following articles highlight the shortcomings of traditional marketing tools and approaches: Chartrand et al. (2008 : 189-201; Fitzsimons G.J. *et al.* (2002 : 269-279. Another promising, albeit highly controversial, approach is provided by Big Data, with the focus put once more on how consumers actually behave.
12 Nietzsche, 1: "(…) how can man "know himself"? He is a thing obscure and veiled: if the hare have seven skins, man can cast from him seventy times seven, and yet will not be able to say "Here art thou in very truth; this is outer shell no more."
13 Wilson (2003) calls it the "adaptive unconscious" but Kahneman wanted a complete break from Freud.
14 Typified by the following example: "How many animals of each kind did Moses take into the ark?" The number of people who detect what is wrong with this question is so small that it has been dubbed the "Moses illusion" (Kahneman 2012: 73). By contrast, a very high percentage of respondents in a QCM survey in the United States answered the question "Who was Joan of Ark?" by ticking the "Noah's wife" box.

tomatically and System 2 is in a comfortable low-effort mode in the background. System 2 is a supporting character who believes him/herself to be the lead actor and often has little idea of what is actually going on.

The fundamental consequence of the dual-process model was summed up by Kahneman (2012: 52) as follows: "The notion that we have limited access to the workings of our minds is difficult to accept because, naturally, it is alien to our experience, but is true: you know far less about yourself than you feel you do". Wilson (2003: 52) reports that our five senses are taking in eleven million pieces of information every second but at the very most we can process consciously around 40 pieces of information. Accepting that human beings are often unaware of why they acted in a given manner, or believe in blatantly false explanations as to why they did, is a crucial step. We cannot expect such self-knowledge to be directly accessible by researchers. Actually, this explains why positivism fails in social sciences.

Economist Dan Ariely's book *Predictably Irrational* (2008) in which he explores, *inter alia*, the conflict between social and market norms has a revealing sub-title "The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions". Studies in this field highlight the astonishing extent to which we are influenced by arbitrary and apparently unrelated factors. The consequences can be dramatic. Kahneman (2012: 43-44) describes a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Eight judges considering parole applications on average approved 35% of requests. The authors of the study plotted the portion of approved requests against the time since the last food break (morning break, lunch and afternoon break). It spiked after each meal at around 65% and then declined steadily during the two hours or so until the following break, sinking to *about* zero just before the next meal.

3.   I can't get no satisfaction

The marketing industry was all the more fascinated by such findings as it was already aware of the problems encountered in surveys. In 1997 Vavra (1997: 71) came to the conclusion that:

> One of the insights in assessing customer satisfaction was the understanding that quality (as delivered in our products and services) is not an objective thing to be measured by conformance to engineering or design specifications. Rather, that *quality (as primary determinant of satisfaction) is, frustrating as it may be to engineers and technicians, a very subjective concept,* depending substantially on individually-derived cues and other soft data. So the first learning for a satisfaction professional is to never assume he or she knows exactly what the customer is looking for, *or how the customer defines quality.* (my italics)

Some twenty years ago, Robert Peterson (1992: 71) had complained that "indeed, examination of the satisfaction literature inevitably culminates in a pervasive yet inescapable conclusion -- *it is not clear what customer satisfaction ratings are measuring* (my italics)."

This very point was in fact raised by Cattaruzza and Mack in 1995 in their survey of simultaneous interpretation users, based on Vuorikoski's date quality

criteria, since they asked: "Are we sure we were all talking about the same thing?". Diriker (2011 *passim)* reports that her "semi-structured interviews with users of SI at a philosophy conference (…) hint at the fact that there is not a common and objective understanding regarding quality criteria […]". In her book, she drove home this point:

> […] although the respondents seemed to be referring to the "same" quality criteria that were also used by some user surveys (such as "fidelity to the original meaning", "correct terminology", "grammaticality", "fluency"), there were significant differences not only in how users of SI *rated* various quality criteria, but also in how individuals *defined* the criteria. (Diriker 2004: 80)

Unfortunately, the use of surveys runs into many other pitfalls than the straightforward fact that respondents understand key words in different manners.

"Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk" by Kahneman and Amos Tversky, published in the prestigious *Econometrica* journal in 1979, is one of the most frequently cited articles in social sciences. It showed that alternative decision frames produce systematic changes in responses and choices and even reversals in judgments, despite the fact that the frames are equivalent. For instance, large changes of preferences are sometimes caused by inconsequential variations in the wording of a questionnaire. Likewise, Ofir and Simonson (2001) have shown that forewarning customers prior to service consumption that they will be asked to assess quality afterwards leads customers to report less favourable quality evaluations and reduces their willingness to purchase and recommend the service. This is due to "negativity enhancement", i.e. forewarned consumers tend to focus primarily on negative aspects of service experiences.

Research in marketing has also shown that significant differences, of around 10-12%, in satisfaction ratings are found between a questionnaire administered orally and a self-administered one, as well as between telephone interviews and those obtained through mail (drawing on "a large, nationally representative sample in excess of 5,000 new car buyers") (Peterson 1992: 70). Bruine de Bruine (2010: 21) writes that:

> […] on written surveys, options that appear near the beginning of the list are more likely to be selected. […] It appears that earlier options receive more cognitive processing, with respondents presumably thinking of more reasons for selecting them […]. Possibly, respondents assume that earlier options are more important to the researchers.

Likewise, the ratings respondents can choose will exert an influence; e.g. whether the option to tick "No opinion" is provided. Such effects apply to all surveys. We now need to look at problems encountered in questionnaires that specifically ask respondents to look back at the last day(s) during which they have been listening to interpreters and judge their performance.

At this point, Kahneman's "peak-end rule" is highly relevant. He argues that when we look back at a past experience and evaluate it there is a discrepancy between the "experiencing self" and the "reflective self." We would not be surprised if a friend were to tell us that they were at the opera the night before and had a

fantastic time until the end when somebody's cell phone went off and rang noisily for what seemed an eternity. We would not tick if our friend said that incident had ruined the whole performance. In fact, her memory of the evening may have been ruined but she actually spent hours in musical bliss. Her "reflective self" however is confusing experience with the memory of it, which " [...] is a compelling cognitive illusion – and it is the substitution that makes us believe a past experience can be ruined. The experiencing self does not have a voice" (Kahneman 2012: 381). Kahneman (*ibid*: 388) conducted experiments that confirmed his intuition. "In intuitive evaluation of entire lives as well as brief episodes, peaks and ends matter, but duration does not." Therefore, when delegates fill in a questionnaire at the end of a conference, their reflecting selves are relying on their memory of how the interpreters performed, as determined by the moments when their level of satisfaction (hopefully) peaked and their recollection of the beginning and closing periods. Actually, this might provide an additional explanation to a paradox Gile has mentioned several times (e.g. Gile 1991: 198). Every interpreter has at times come out of the booth thinking "I'm afraid I wasn't very good in this shift" and to her amazement been complimented by users. In fact all parties might be reacting, albeit differently, in accordance with the peak-end rule.

After a conference on Heidegger, a respondent assessing the interpreters she has listened to for one or more days might, for instance, complain about the quality of their work but her memory could be influenced by the fact that she did not understand a lot of the content. What Taleb (2008: 71) calls "narrative fallacy" could be operating here. "Memory is more of a self-serving dynamic revision machine: you remember the last time you remembered the event and, without realizing it, *change the story of every subsequent remembrance*" (his italics). Alternatively, a colleague she admires and who speaks fluent German may praise the interpreters during a coffee break. As a result, whatever the respondent may have felt during the conference could well be overridden and she will voice her satisfaction at the quality of the interpreting.

The foregoing entails that such an innovative survey as the one conducted in 1993 and 1994 by Moser, which included open-ended questions and differentiated between respondents who were listening to SI for the first time and what Moser calls "old timers", different age groups as well as genders, etc., may well provide useful and interesting information. Nonetheless, it cannot hope to measure objectively user satisfaction or quality of interpretation. After discussing why questionnaires are far from problem-free with respect to surveying user expectations and satisfaction, I would now like to focus on two fundamental criteria they make wide use of: fidelity to the original meaning and performance-related criteria.

4.   All you do is read in French...

One of the first criteria in the list proposed to users in a questionnaire on the quality of interpreting/user satisfaction tends to be a variant of "sense consistency with the original message", or "fidelity to the original meaning", when it is not the very first parameter.

Diriker (2011: *passim*) demonstrated that, contrary to what was sometimes claimed earlier in the literature, "homogeneity" of the audience could not be taken for granted. Her interviews confirmed that some users listen exclusively to the interpreters while others shifted between the floor and their headset for various reasons. Furthermore, all interpreters know that somebody who is listening to SI for the first time will easily be "wowed" while a frequent user, say in an international organisation, tends to be far more *blasé*. Their expectations are likely to be radically different.

What about users who do not speak the SL? Interpreters must seek to convey the feeling that they are trustworthy by producing a discourse that "sounds" logical and inspires confidence and leaves users with the impression that nothing of importance has been omitted. In particular, when working for live TV an interpreter cannot afford to hesitate or stumble. When discussing SI, Pym (2008: 98) makes a relevant point: "For a mediator of any kind, once you lose trust, you lose everything." In my opinion, this entails using appropriate terminology but also the "right" jargon given the subject matter, for instance. When interpreting a presentation of financial statements for financial analysts, if the speaker is talking about IFRS-related issues, I would translate the French word "*fusion*" by "business combination." The analysts would understand perfectly well if I used "merger", but I hope that unconsciously they are getting the impression that I am familiar with IFRS jargon. Trust is the key word as shown by (Donovan 2002: 4) "participants often choose to listen to the interpretation even if they can "get by" without. They do so for reasons of convenience, *but only as long as the interpreter inspires confidence*" (my italics).

We often have to cope with speakers whose sentences remind me of Jean-Luc Godard's description of his own films: they have a beginning, a middle part and an end – but not necessarily in that order. In such a case, I will seek to "package" their utterances because I do not want the people listening to me to get the impression that the somewhat incoherent ramblings they would otherwise hear are due to my incompetence. In the same way, one of my rules of thumb is that if the SL people in the audience burst out laughing my listeners should laugh as well. Recently, a speaker I was interpreting disagreed with someone in the room about whether their company had four or three building sites under way in the city of Troyes. To put an end to this rather inconsequential controversy, he quipped "*allez, la guerre de Troyes n'aura pas lieu*." I translated this brilliant play-of-words by "oh well, you might be right, I was never any good at counting past two." As the English-speakers had just seen their French colleagues laugh heartily, they were in the right mood and giggled in turn.

As said above, the "fidelity to the original meaning" criterion frequently tops simultaneous interpretation user questionnaires and nearly always is one of the first parameters in the list. It also usually receives the highest percentage in terms of satisfaction, although, as we have seen, its very position could be sending the message that the people who drafted the survey think it is the most important parameter and accordingly its very position may influence answers. This criterion in fact will be frequently interpreted in accordance with a widespread "folk model", described by Sperber and Wilson (2004: 37) in the following manner:

> The speaker's thoughts, encoded into an utterance, should be replicated in the hearer by a decoding process. The result of verbal communication should be an exact reproduction in the hearer of the thoughts the speaker intended to convey.

Consequently, the interpreter/translator ought to be invisible since s/he is merely decoding a message. A striking illustration of this viewpoint, and its implication that translating/interpreting is not all that difficult, is the potential customer who once balked at the rate I charge for a translation and blurted out: "But all you do is read in French and type in English". Language here consists in individuals exchanging messages that have one, and only one, meaning. "Correct" translating or interpreting is expected to consist in deciphering an individual's message and faithfully as well as entirely replicating it in another language. A contrasting viewpoint is defended by Viaggio (2009: 10): "Every act of translation is, at the same time, an act of mediation. The translator's transparency, no matter how desirable in certain contexts, is a myth [...]".

Let me give an example of how different points I have made so far can overlap. At a meeting of an international institution, the head of the French delegation took the floor to voice his frustration because he felt a meaningless discussion was meandering on and on. In fact, in my opinion, he thought a pretext was being used to attack indirectly a key ally of his. He curtly exclaimed "*On ne va quand même pas passer des heures à enculer les mouches.*" The other French delegates laughed somewhat aggressively in agreement. My afore-mentioned rule of thumb kicked in and I said something like "Monsieur X has just complained that this issue has been debated far too long by using an obscene French saying that involves doing unmentionable things to flies." The English-speaking delegates roared with laughter. In the meanwhile, clearly thinking he had gone too far, he looked up at me and added "I suppose you shouldn't translate that". I reverted to the first person and translated his second comment. The French joined in the general merriment as he ruefully sighed "Oh well, too late".

The whole mood of the meeting changed. A tense situation that threatened to deteriorate had been defused. If I had merely interpreted his outburst by saying something tame like "Could we drop this issue, it's been discussed long enough?" in a monotonous tone, the English speakers would have noticed that he had spoken in an abrupt manner and the other French delegates were laughing rather unpleasantly. Moreover, the fact that the Frenchman had requested me not to translate his initial statement also implied he regretted his aggressive tone. Note that I did not mediate consciously, I wish I could react that fast, I was thinking only of the need to get my listeners to laugh.

In a nutshell, the "folk model" discussed above focuses on language as communication between individuals. Language is, by definition, a social activity and is "embedded" in culture and society. In 2011, I attended an event organised by the *Société Française des Traducteurs*. The guest speakers were Ros and Chloe Schwarz. Ros had just published a new translation of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. Chloe is Ros's teenage daughter and had been used as a sounding board by her mother since the translation was aimed at people of her age. Ros brought up the thorny problem she had faced in translating Saint-Exupéry's unsavoury phrase "*rois nègres*" and asked for suggestions. Regrettably, quite a few translators indignant-

ly bleated at what they deemed was yet another case of "politically correct" thinking. I tried to point out that "*rois nègres*" was a common, if unpleasant, phrase in French at the time unlike "nigger kings" in English and such a rendering was thus utterly unacceptable. Ros actually liked my proposal, i.e. "tin pot kings". Unfortunately, when she asked her daughter for her opinion, to my amazement, Chloe said she did not know the phrase. In other words, translating two French words gave rise to a political/cultural problem and an age-related one.

As Sperber and Wilson (2004: *passim*) point out, we can make hypotheses about the speaker's intentions, and will often be right, but we can never be certain. Diriker (2011: 23) argues that:

> [...] receivers cannot access authorial intentions completely because each instance of language use contains more meanings, intentions and accents than its formulator may have intended and any single receiver can purport to have accessed.

When we are working in a booth, we cannot always know when the speaker is making a veiled threat, referring to a scandalous situation, being sarcastic or poking fun at a past statement by someone else, and so forth. As a result, our version in the target language may very well distort or omit a crucial component of the message through no fault of our own since we can hardly know the background information (office politics, etc.) the speaker is referring to, or what people listening to us know, or their grasp of the TL. If I had been interpreting a debate about how to translate "*les rois nègres*" in *The Little Prince*, I would never have realised that most teenagers would not understand the phrase "tin pot kings" (like Chloe, my sixteen-year old daughter did not for instance). In a questionnaire handed out at the end of the debate, an English-speaking teenager may well have given me a negative rating since a key concept had been "badly translated."

5.   ...If it ain't got that swing

It makes no difference
If it's sweet or hot
Just give that rhythm
Everything you've got
It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing
It don't mean a thing all you got to do is sing
(doo-ah)
Duke Ellington & Irving Mills

The category of performance-related criteria encompasses such features as rhythm, intonation, fluency, voice quality and accent. Blatant omissions, lengthy gaps in the interpreter's flow of speech, audible hesitations and sentences that break off abruptly will undermine user trust. Rennert (2010:112-113) adds other flaws such as audible breathing, vowel and consonant lengthening, false starts, repairs, repetitions and speech rate to the reasons that lead the user to get the impression of lack of fluency. She draws the following conclusion:

[...] the results presented above suggest that there is a link between perceived fluency and perception of the interpreter's accuracy, confirming previous studies that suggested that lower fluency may impact negatively on the perceived quality of an interpretation. [...] fluency cannot be ignored as a factor that influences audience perception.

In like manner, Collados Aís (2001: 109) has shown that "monotonous intonation hampers users' retrieval of information" and apparently "has a negative effect on the evaluation of other quality criteria".

Following in her footsteps, Holub (2010: 117) states: "Analysis showed that monotony can have a negative impact on both comprehension and the assessment of the interpreter's performance." Yao *et al.* published in 2012 a fascinating article based on Yao's Ph. D. thesis. They scanned the brains of 18 participants using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while they listened to audio clips of short stories containing direct or indirect speech quotations. Their main conclusion is that when the brain hears monotonously spoken words it feels should be more expressive, it creates an "inner voice" to drown out the offending speech and the brain simply 'talks over' the speech it hears with more vivid speech utterances of its own. Their experiment showed increased brain activity in the 'voice-selective areas' of the brain, i.e. certain areas of the auditory cortex. The brain merely needs to be informed that it is dealing with indirect speech to react in this manner. We can assume that listening to somebody with a monotonous intonation for 30 minutes will result in a significant increase in brain activity, and this will be tiresome. For instance, a monotonous intonation means that the speaker's voice does not drop at the end of an affirmative statement. However, listening is a guessing game, we are constantly predicting what will be said next[15], and the listener will expect the sentence to continue. We can easily see the detrimental impact on the user's ability to understand the speaker. Collados Aís *et al.* (2007: 167) report that respondents associate monotonous intonation with the feeling of boredom for the listener. Furthermore, boredom reportedly leads respondents to feel tired and accordingly struggle to understand the content. Moreover, monotonous intonation gives the impression that the interpreter does not like his/her work and/or is not interested in what is being said. I would add that we may assume that the reason why respondents are attending an event is that they are usually interested in the subject and will unconsciously react negatively to their impression that the interpreter finds it excruciatingly tedious.

Collados Aís *et al.* (2007: 97) draw attention to their finding according to which respondents, after ranking content-related criteria above performance-related ones, as is usually the case in such surveys, clearly did not confirm this ranking in their actual assessment of interpreters' performance. They note that users brought up such features as diffidence in the interpreter's voice, shrill tone and monotonous intonation when talking about content-related parameters (*ibid*: 104). The Pöchhacker and Zwischenberger (2010) survey corroborates this finding:

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15   A key point in Relevance Theory: "The hearer's goal is to construct a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning which satisfies the presumption of relevance conveyed by the utterance." (Sperber and Wilson, 2004: 619)

The criterion of intonation […] has an appreciable impact on judgements of overall interpreting quality, even when listening for only one minute. Presumably, the impact of monotonous intonation would be even more pronounced for a standard turn length of up to 30 minutes.

An important conclusion is that *the dichotomy between content- and presentation-related criteria is therefore far less clear-cut than widely believed*. It is confirmed by Diriker (2011: *passim*) "users seem to perceive quality criteria as intertwined constructs with fuzzy borders". Moreover, the way in which respondents claim they evaluate performance apparently does not match what actually occurs.

In view of the foregoing, it is hardly surprising that Collados Aís (2002: 336) should draw the conclusion that "users not only desire but demand … a certain degree of intrusion or active involvement on the part of the interpreter". The interpreter should assume the conscious role of professional communicator and go beyond the 'ghost role'[16]. Granted, any comparison is apples to pears and misleading. I chose a jazz standard as the title of this article because, to some extent, an interpreter is a jazz musician in comparison with, say, a translator – who is more of a classical musician. When jazz musicians are jamming in an inspired manner, despite possibly a few flaws, their overall performance and spontaneous creativity can sweep the audience off its feet. An interpreter who is "on fire" creates a somewhat similar *rapport* with his or her listeners. As Gile (1999c: 159 for instance) has rightly emphasised "the high frequency of errors and omissions that can be observed in interpreting even when no particular technical or other difficulties can be identified in the source speech […]". Users will sometimes pick up such flaws, yet nonetheless be satisfied with the interpreters' performance just like spectators will overlook the shortcomings of a jamming session during a jazz concert because they are delighted by the experience as a whole.

6.   The elephant in the room

Although I have criticised them in this article, I would certainly not argue that user satisfaction questionnaires should be discarded, if only because they show that we interpreters are interested in user feedback. Surveys can also undeniably provide useful information as long as we keep in mind their intrinsic flaws. For example, Collados Aís (2001: 109) has recommended, on the basis of the surveys and follow-up interviews she has conducted, that students record themselves interpreting and listen to how they sound in the light of the importance of delivery-related criteria. An interesting point is never discussed in the literature to my knowledge although it deserves looking into. Questionnaires ask respondents to assess the quality of interpreting, although we may safely assume that at the very least two interpreters were involved every time. The implicit and contentious

16 In Collados Ais *et al.* this viewpoint is asserted even more decidedly: "Entre ellos, y a la vista de los resultados, el tema del papel del intérprete como elemento activo y decisorio del proceso de interpretación y experto comunicador, viene a ocupar una posición esencial." [2007: 223]

message is that interpreters provide homogenous quality. Getting respondents to assess individual interpreters in follow-up interviews and explain differences might actually be useful. In fact, we face the problem of deciding whether we want to carry out objective research or merely seek to defend our professional interests and therefore dodge such controversial issues.

This leads to another crucial issue: all the questionnaire-based quality research in Interpreting Studies I know of breaches a fundamental marketing rule. Surveys poll existing users and most often do not consider former or potential users[17]. Questionnaires could be given to every participant in a conference or seminar to ask them whether they are going to use the interpretation and, if not, why? Some former users would presumably say this is because their grasp of the SL has sufficiently improved. But if some delegates have stopped using the service of interpreters because their expectations were not met in the past, we are systematically skewing results. Moreover, once again, follow-up questions as to why they were not satisfied could reveal important information. The same point holds for people who have stopped recruiting interpreters. Is it only because of the expense?

Interestingly, again to my knowledge, SI quality research never mentions sound technicians although corporations and institutions often employ them on a full-time basis. Their viewpoint may well have an impact, albeit an indirect one perhaps, on the decision to hire interpreters or not. It would be interesting to ask them and other people in administrative jobs at agencies, international institutions, Communication Departments and interpreters' secretariats for instance, whether they have any complaints about interpreters and why they prefer to work with some interpreters and not others?

Alain Bonzon, my late friend whom I met 25 years before becoming an interpreter, worked for an international institution and frequently recruited interpreters. I cannot remember him ever criticising interpreters for their work in the booth. On the other hand, when I read an article published by Viaggio in 1996, "*The Tribulations of a Chief Interpreter*", I could literally hear Alain's voice as he indignantly described cases of freelance interpreters, in particular, behaving in a less than satisfactory manner – especially when reading Viaggio's "caricature[18]" of interpreters (he does pointedly comment though: "As any caricature, my appraisal above contains more than a grain of truth"). To be blunt, I have heard the words "divas" and "prima donnas" used in the same sentence as "interpreters" far too often. Most often, this holds for older colleagues, of my age in other words, who regret the loss of status interpreters have suffered from, like many other professions, and is hopefully less true for younger colleagues.

In a nutshell, in contrast with the usual approach, the quality of the service provided by interpreters needs to be assessed in a holistic manner – not just their

17 Peter Moser (1995) is an exception.
18 "When you are a recruiter, it becomes immediately apparent that interpretation is an overpriced […] service provided somewhat grudgingly by notoriously testy specimens who count minutes the way Scrooge counted gold coins. […] [Furthermore, they] are complaining every time they do not have a document, or about a speaker going too fast or the slides being projected on the wrong wall […]."

performance in the booth. Daniel Gile (1995b: 156) is a noteworthy exception since he also mentions the way interpreters dress, behave inside and outside the booth, interact with delegates, etc. I would like the hypothesis I have just outlined, i.e. too often interpreters have reacted negatively to the relative deterioration in our profession's status by behaving in a demanding and/or exasperating manner, to be proven wrong. I would argue, however, that we cannot ignore such a possibility.

7.   Completely uninteresting and trivial tautologies

Shlesinger (1997: 129) highlights the fundamental flaw in the idea that accumulating surveys, ultimately, will lead to "scientific" knowledge[19]. "However, as long as each questionnaire focuses on different variables, is formulated along different lines, and is administered to different types of target audiences, comparisons of the results will be difficult". We have seen above many other problems that would also rule out such a possibility, first and foremost the fact that the data from such questionnaires are unreliable since respondents' answers cannot be presumed to shed light on their actual thoughts and emotions. Chiaro and Nocella (2005: 172) voice a totally different viewpoint from mine.:

> Over and over again we read that investigating quality in interpreting is not an easy task due to the huge number of variables involved [...] The general idea which comes across to the reader is that dealing with the enormous heterogeneity of circumstances in and around interpreting verges on the insurmountable.

They go on to argue:

> But is not apparent insuperability typical of scientific enquiry? Was Watson and Crick's model easy to identify? And what of the excogitation of a formula that shows that distance and time are not absolute? And discovering penicillin? The list of seemingly intractable problems is endless. But is it not this very complexity that is what makes research fascinating and irresistible?

Apparent insuperability can also be absolute insuperability, as alchemists eventually discovered. Note also that Chiaro and Nocella mention only examples from so-called "hard" sciences. Such scientism goes hand in hand with another egregious error. The successes enjoyed by research in physics are not accounted for by its methodology *per se*, but the fact that physics adapted its methodology to what it studies, in other words matter. Positivism claims, by contrast, that there is one, and only one, scientific methodology although it concedes that said methodology may be adapted to social sciences. But, to paraphrase French economist Jacques Généreux, I can drop a stone from the top of the Eiffel Tower and calculate precisely where and when it will hit the ground or some unfortunate passer-by. If I throw the same stone at somebody, I cannot predict how they will react, or

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19   A viewpoint Thomas Kuhn described as "the textbook image of science".

in fact how I would react tomorrow if somebody threw a stone at me. As Passet (2010: 256) points out, the words "individual" and "atom" share the meaning of "beyond which no further division is possible". Precisely, positivism postulates that an individual is to society what an atom is to the physical universe. The absurdity of the battle cry of economics, i.e. *ceteris paribus*, consists in the fact that all other things are *never* equal when dealing with social events[20]. Individuals are not atoms unless you believe that there is no such thing as society. Carr (1960: 31) summed up the argument pithily:

> [...] take the dictum of J. S. Mill, the classical individualist: 'Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance.' Of course not. But the fallacy is to suppose that they existed, or had any kind of substance, before being 'brought together'.

One example springs to mind: the important issue of the role played by interpreters during colonialism or even current wars such as Afghanistan or Iraq. At times, research in interpreting accordingly needs to consider cultural, social and economic factors. Assuming that such research is "unscientific" or less "serious" simply reflects a misunderstanding of what science really means.

We cannot accept the "diktats" of the ATSC and their definition of science, as otherwise Interpreting Research will be doomed to the fate Werner Heisenberg, Nobel laureate for the creation of quantum mechanics, described in *Physics and Beyond*:

> The positivists have a simple solution: the world must be divided into that which we can say clearly and the rest, which we had better pass over in silence. But can anyone conceive of a more pointless philosophy, seeing that what we can say clearly amounts to next to nothing? If we omitted all that is unclear we would probably be left with completely uninteresting and trivial tautologies. (1971: 213)

They would presumably include attempts to define quality[21] "objectively" and debates about the statistical treatment of data generated by respondents' answers to questionnaires.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize I am not criticising any kind of research *per se*. I am simply arguing that the stifling influence of positivism must be challenged. Asserting that one's approach is hard-headed and scientific while the so-called Liberal Arts Paradigm is merely woolly-headedness may be gratifying, but bold statements tantamount to dismissing the "Humanities" in fact imply that the proponents of such a viewpoint are somehow entitled to call into question the "intellectual rigour" of fellow researchers who have studied such subjects as philosophy. In fact, first and foremost, we need to move beyond C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures" mindset.

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20 Indeed mainstream economics epitomises all the detrimental consequences of "physics envy".
21 Such as the "formula" proposed by Kurz (2001: 405): "Quality = Actual Service – Expected Service"

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Prosody in Simultaneous Interpretation: a Case Study for the German-Italian Language Pair

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Abstract

Prosody in simultaneous interpretation (SI) is a recent research field receiving increasing attention but still insufficiently explored for certain language pairs. The present contribution discusses the prosodic features of interpreted texts as such and in relation to the source text (ST) for the German-Italian language pair.

The target texts (TTs) of six professional interpreters were transcribed and analysed according to the following analysis criteria: speech rate, pauses (filled and unfilled and their position in the text) and syllable lengthening, intonation and prominence.

The objective of the study was to analyse the prosody of professional interpreters through the perceptual method, assessing the features of prosody as observed in interpreting practitioners. Since the ST is an example of impromptu speech, the study also aimed at understanding the role played by spontaneous speech in the interpreting process.

The results concerning interpreters' speech rate and intonation confirmed consolidated theories in SI, whereas categories such as pauses, stress on words and the sub-category of syllable lengthening raised new points, showing that some specific behaviour is intentionally produced by interpreters to deal with difficult portions of text through the use of prosodic features.

Introduction

Prosody is the combination of speech intonation, stress and rhythm and is essential for a fluent and natural delivery; it may facilitate or hinder comprehension.

Prosody can be considered a hallmark of expertise since a conference interpreter is a "communication professional who needs to be a good public speaker" and should not speak in a "deadpan monotone, nor in a sing-song [...] making *their* (ed.) interpretation as easy and pleasant to follow as possible" (AIIC 1982). Research in the past has shown that professional interpreters sometimes display anomalous intonation and stress patterns (Shlesinger 1994; Ahrens 2004) due to the cognitive load they are exposed to during SI. To what extent the speaker's prosody may affect comprehension of the ST by the interpreters is still little explored and deserves further research.

This case study analyses the prosody of an impromptu speech dense in information and its SIs performed by 6 professional interpreters with the aim of acquiring more data to integrate, confirm or confute previous studies.

According to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) prosody is a subsidiary system of text cohesion: its absence may influence a crucial phase of SI, namely ST comprehension and, from the perspective of the interpreter's prosody, TT comprehension by the audience. Understanding the ST and producing the TT also depend on a number of paralinguistic elements. Collados Aís *et al.* (2011: 76-91) stresses that intonation is crucial for the logical cohesion of the text and the interpreter can use it to save time by delivering with prosodic features what the speaker expresses verbally or, sometimes, with face or gestures.

Indeed an appropriate use of prosody is first of all desirable in the ST, since it supports the interpreter's comprehension. Then, an interpreter with a good command of all prosodic features will contribute to the audience's comprehension and, therefore, to the success of the communication process.

1.   Prosody in SI
1.1   Prosody: constituents and pertinence for SI

Prosody is defined as the *suprasegmental level* because it concerns specific features of the language whose application domain is wider than that of the single sound (Sorianello 2006: 16).

Prosody is a complex subject not only because the terminology concerning its elements often differs according to the author and the analysis methods. Hargrove and McGarr (1994: 3 ff) define prosody as multifaceted (composed by intonation, pauses, speech rate, etc.) and not directly corresponding to the specific linguistic meaning, because context and situation play a crucial role in the interpretation of prosodic elements by the audience.

The terminology used by prosody researchers is so diverse that the present study draws mainly on the terminology of Sorianello (2006), whose research is one of the most complete and recent Italian contributions to the analysis of intonation and prosody.

The definition of the prosodic elements analysed in this study combines the explanations of Sorianello (2006), Cruttenden (1986), Voghera (1992), Hargrove/McGarr (1994) and Canepari (1985).

The following prosodic elements were analysed in the case study:

– *Speech rate* refers to the number of syllables and phonemes uttered in a given time unit (Sorianello 2006: 31). Unlike articulatory speed (Goldman Eisler 1958a: 61), this also includes pauses. Speech rate depends on many prosodic factors including pauses, vowel and consonant lengthening, style, context etc.
– *Pause* is a temporary interruption of articulatory activity (Sorianello 2006: 30). In prosody literature (Sorianello 2006; Ahrens 2004; Cruttenden 1986; Schwitalla 1997) pauses are unfilled (silence) or filled (hesitations, vocalisations, etc.). The former are the silences within the speech and the latter (ehm, mm) are examples of vocalisation typical of impromptu speech which depend on the difficulty of linguistic production (Sorianello 2006: 30). Syllable lengthening is not an actual interruption of the phonation, but a continuation of the last vowel or consonant of a word while processing the new part of speech to be uttered.
– *Intonation* is "the pitch contour of an utterance" (Ahrens 2005: 53). One after the other, tone units create the melodic framework of the speech and in order to define the limits of a tone unit, the *tonic* must be found. The tonic is the syllable with the highest intensity compared to the other syllables of the tone unit (Voghera 1992: 111). In Italian the tonic is usually placed on the last accented syllable of the tone unit (Voghera 1992; Canepari 1985). A universal of intonation is the opposition between rising and falling boundary tones (ending tone of a tone unit) – the first usually implying a sentence left open to be continued and the second implying the conclusion of an utterance. Cruttenden (1986: 45) differentiates three *terminal junctures* (boundary tones): falling, rising and level. A falling boundary tone is detected when a conclusive intonation is perceived, whereas a raising boundary tone shows a non-conclusive and ascending intonation (usually in questions). Finally, a level boundary tone is when the intonation of a tone unit is kept also at its boundary, thus being perceived as suspended.
– *Prominence* is traditionally defined as "a local degree of stress or emphasis" (Liberman, Pierrehumbert 1984 in Sorianello 2006: 49). It refers to the perceptual significance placed on specific syllables or words of an utterance which are consequently perceived as stressed (Sorianello 2006: 49). Often speakers stress the words of their speech which contain new information or when they want to draw the audience's attention.

In SI the interpreter aims at producing a fluent TT, therefore fluency is a fundamental quality feature always included in SI studies (Goldman-Eisler 1980; Kurz 1989; Kopczynski 1994; Altman 1994; Collados-Aís 2008; Collados-Aís *et al* 2011; Zwischenberger / Pöchhacker 2010). It derives from the integration of various prosodic elements such as speech rate, pauses, hesitations, vowel and consonant

lengthening, and self-corrections (Ahrens 2004). Fluency may be defined as an attribute that "indicates the degree to which speech is articulated smoothly and continuously without any 'unnatural' breakdown in flow" (Ejzenberg 2000: 287).

The following paragraph is a short collection of SI studies concerning the single prosody features analysed in the present study in order to gain a general overview of the state of the art.

1.2   Prosody research in SI

The analysis of prosodic elements is an integral part of the Interpretation Studies, yet only few systematic studies on orality involving the ST-TT relationship have been conducted, mainly by Dejean Le Féal (1978), Shlesinger (1989, 1994) and Ahrens (2004). These contributions are relevant for this study because, as stated by Tissi (2009: 9), considering the ST-TT relationship the authors detected specific parameters to take into account while defining the degree of orality of a speech.

The lack of detailed studies on prosody in SI is allegedly caused by the difficulty of controlling non-verbal prosodic elements alongside the fact that the artificial laboratory conditions under which tests are performed do not always reflect the real communication process (Ahrens 2004: 117).

However a number of studies on intonation, pauses, speech rate and prominence should be quoted in order to obtain a clear picture of the state of the art regarding the prosodic features relevant for this study.

Barik (1975), after analysing interpreters' deliveries in order to find omissions, added material etc., detected that TTs are generally rich in false starts and retraces, thereby being "less smooth than 'natural' speech" (Barik, 1975: 294).

Concerning interpreters' intonation, Shlesinger (1994) studied excerpts of a real work situation. The author asserted that interpreters used a particular intonation not to be found in any other language use and mainly characterised by a non-final tone at the end of sentences. It happens because the interpreter has to wait for new ST material, not always knowing when a sentence can be concluded.

Ahrens (2004) conducted an exhaustive analysis of a number of prosodic features applied to interpreted texts by means of speech analysis software (PRAAT). The author simulated the conditions of a work situation at the University of Mainz at Germersheim and six interpreters, two in each booth, interpreted a text (English into German). After analysing the transcripts Ahrens found out that the interpreters produced their own tone units probably because they segmented their speech autonomously and also because of the limited short-term memory available. Moreover, Ahrens detected much more rising and non-final (level) boundary tones (see 1.1 and 2.6) than the more natural final boundary tones.

Nafá (2007) investigated how intonation contributes to the organisation of ST and TT in SI by segmenting STs and TTs in phonological paragraphs. These prosodic units introduce new topics and are signalled by boundary markers. The author's results showed that, generally, both speakers and interpreters use intonational features that contribute to the entire ST and TT organisation. It complies

with the literature on intonation, according to which high pitch at the beginning and low pitch at the end of a paragraph are to be found. The present study, though, focused on tone units detected, but not analysed, by Nafá (2007: 182).

Intonation as perceived by the audience has been the object of several analyses carried out by Collados Aís (1998, 2008) and Holub (2010), who conducted studies on the impact of monotonous intonation. Their results were in partial contrast to those of previous studies (Kurz 1989 and 1993) according to which a pleasant voice and an appropriate intonation are not crucial quality criteria in SI. Collados Aís and Holub's audiences always defined as better the TTs with lively intonation. Collados Aís (2011: 91) also affirms that a monotonous intonation can be considered by the audience as a lack of interest of the interpreter. Monotony might therefore impair the audience's comprehension, as previously stated by Shlesinger (1994) and Seeber (2001).

Collados Aís *et al.* (2011) published a detailed contribution on quality parameters in SI casting light on the category of intonation in all its parts. A special attention is paid by Collados Aís, in the chapter dedicated to intonation (2011: 61-92), to the perception of emotions through intonation and the description of the interpreter's *sui generis* intonation (Collados Aís 2011: 77). Moreover, the author asserts that in the evaluation grids of most universities training interpreters, intonation and its related categories are still missing and then recalls her previous studies on audience reactions to interpreters' intonation to underline its importance for a successful interpretation.

Pauses were thoroughly studied by the English psycholinguist Goldman-Eisler (1958a/b, 1968, 1972a/b, 1980), who analysing TT pauses in relation to ST speech rate asserted that interpreters make more pauses than the original speaker. They use pauses autonomously to produce the TT.

Čeňková (1989) calculated the pauses in ST and TT and speech rate including and excluding pauses. The author found fewer and shorter pauses when the speaker accelerated and concluded that interpreters formulate the main part of the TT simultaneously to the speaker. According to Čeňková pauses and intonation are the most important tools used by interpreters for segmenting their TT.

Ahrens (2004) analysed pauses, reaching opposite results to those of Alexieva's renowned experiment (1988), according to which TTs show fewer and shorter pauses than the ST. Ahrens detected fewer pauses in the TTs than in the ST, yet their duration was longer, allegedly because they are used to listen, understand and choose how best to express a concept.

Gerver (1969) focused on the effects of the ST speech rate on the interpreters' performance. The results of his experimental study showed that a fast speech rate leads to the production of more pauses, omissions and errors by the interpreters.

The segmentation of speech carried out by interpreters is a further prosody-related aspect. In his experimental study Barik (1975) observed that interpreters process segments at a semantic level, not word by word. Also Goldman-Eisler (1972b: 69) underlines that the segmentation of simultaneous interpreters is "based on comprehension rather than perception". Furthermore, in the same paper the author noticed that interpreters ignore ST segmentation and model the TT with their individual segmentation, since they cannot always wait for a

ST information unit to be concluded by the speaker before starting to interpret. Ahrens (2004) showed that interpreters' tone units are shorter in order not to overload their working memory with too long ST segments.

A further prosodic feature is the stress on words produced by interpreters. Shlesinger (1994) found that interpreters often stress usually unstressed words, namely those lacking in semantic density, conveying an erroneous perception of new and given information (Shlesinger 1994: 231). Ahrens (2004) confirmed the excessive stress put by interpreters on grammatical categories such as prepositions and auxiliary verbs, explaining that it is due to the higher number of tone units produced by interpreters.

Shlesinger (1994) also detected the presence of several vowel and consonant lengthenings attributing them to hesitation or particular emphasis on a word. Čeňková (1989) stated that interpreters produce such syllable lengthening because they speak more slowly than the speaker and by lengthening the vowel/consonant they do not produce any real pause.

SI studies have also focused on defining what kind of text is easier to interpret. Dejean Le Féal (1982) considers an impromptu speech easy to interpret and her theories are supported by Seleskovitch (1982:16) who, in addition to prosody, also considers facial expressions and gestures an important support for the interpreter's performance. This is echoed by Kopczynski (1982: 255), who asserts that impromptu speech is rendered in a similar kind of speech which remains in the axis of orality, without the interpreter having to adjust it.

Impromptu speech is a heterogeneous category which also includes speeches delivered quickly and with misleading pauses and interruption of sentences which may impair the interpreter's performance. Giuliana Ardito (1999) performed an experiment with interpretation students and stated that "some of the characteristics of speeches delivered without a previously written text – register variation and looser text structure in particular – appear to pose difficulties to Italian students interpreting from Dutch into their native language" (Ardito 1999: 177).

The attention of the present study will home in on the prosodic elements present in an impromptu speech which might, if appropriate, support the meaning decisively. Conversely, if wrongly placed these may hinder the interpreting process.

2.   Case study
2.1   Aim of the study

The study was carried out to offer a research contribution to the German-Italian language pair by analysing a series of prosodic features during the process of SI from a non-statistical perspective using the perceptual method. Voghera (1992: 91) explained that *perception* is not the mere acoustic reaction of the speaker, but their interpretation of the linguistic stimuli acknowledged as such.

Since the text used for the study (see 2.2) is an example of impromptu speech, after collecting the data particular attention was paid to the features of the pres-

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ent impromptu speech as ST for the case study and to the reaction of the interpreters during the SI in terms of prosody.

The first objective is to verify whether the interpreters' speech rate is slower than that of the speaker (see Gerver 1969) due to the décalage and especially if the ST is too fast. Furthermore, since the interpreter is not responsible for the content, waiting for new ST material is inevitable and therefore, as second objective, we also wish to verify whether this consequently leads to longer analysis/reflection pauses in TTs (see Ahrens 2004). For the very same reason the third objective is to verify whether interpreters tend to neglect intonation, leaving sentences often open with level boundary tones (see Ahrens 2004, Shlesinger 1994). Lastly, in contrast to SI literature in general (Shlesinger 1994, Williams 1995 in Ahrens 2004, Royé 1983 in Ahrens 2004), the fourth objective of the study is to verify if interpreters actually stress words with high semantic density to support cohesion for the audience (see 3 for the presentation of the results).

2.2 Materials: ST

The ST used for the study is an excerpt (34:54 minutes out of 60:16 minutes) of the speech delivered by Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider, Professor Emeritus in Public and Civil Law at the University of Erlangen in Nuremberg, Germany. The event was the first meeting organised by a Swiss blog: *Alles Schall und Rauch*. The speech was delivered on the 30th of June 2009, immediately after the decision of the German *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court) which deemed the Lisbon Treaty to be constitutional, thereby allowing Germany to ratify it. The author opposed the Treaty and the current process of European integration and therefore expressed his opinion emphatically, producing an impromptu speech on issues with which he was very conversant. The text is thus full of information and often delivered at a fast speech rate (for the specific ST details see 3, table 2), since the author is extremely familiar with the subject. Speaking without reading leads the speaker to suddenly change intonation (often by leaving sentences unfinished) and to stress words in a non-standard way. Not having planned the speech in advance, the speaker needs to think and speak at the same time, creating a speech rich in data, information and content.

2.3 Participants

The participants were six professional interpreters who were all asked to interpret the same excerpt of text (see 2.2) in order to have a quantity of interpreted material comparable to that of Ahrens' study. Table 1 shows the details of the six interpreters.

Participants	mother tongue	German	gender	years of experience in SI
interpreter 1	Italian	C	F	2
interpreter 2	German	A	F	30
interpreter 3	Italian	C	M	16
interpreter 4	Italian	B	F	10
interpreter 5	Italian	B	F	10
interpreter 6	Italian	C	M	17

Table 1. Participants

As table 1 shows one interpreter is listed as being German mother tongue, yet the interpreter has both Italian and German as "A" working languages in the classification of a professional association.

Four interpreters work for the EU institutions, two as fulltime staff and two as freelancers; the remaining two mainly work for the private market in Italy and abroad. The average number of years of experience is 14, with a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 30 years. Four interpreters are female and two male.

2.4   Recording and transcription software

The TTs of the six interpreters were recorded with a M-AUDIO double-track digital audio recorder, model Microtrack 24/96. The ST and the TT were both recorded, but on two different channels to isolate one of the two if needed. The audio tracks were separated to facilitate the transcription. The software used was Audacity, 1.3.13 (Beta). The prosodic transcription required the TTs to be listened to several times. To facilitate the process the software ExpressScribe, specifically designed for transcribing texts, was used.

2.5   Method

To overcome the artificial conditions of a laboratory experiment, the interpreters were asked to interpret a 30-minute excerpt of an original speech (not edited for the study). A week before the interpretation they were informed by e-mail about the event in which the speech had been delivered, the speaker, and the kind of speech, to enable them to search for further details on the Internet, as would happen in a real work situation. On the day of the interpretation the first four minutes of delivery were not taken into account and they were considered as a warm-up for the interpreters.

The method chosen was the *acoustic-perceptual speech analysis*. Acoustic-perceptual analysis is when the analysis is carried out by human experts and not by software (see 2.1).

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The material to be analysed amounts to 200 minutes of interpreted texts. Software-based analysis is typically used for phonology and phonetics studies, where the segments analysed are very short and usually delivered in a laboratory setting – only exceptionally are real-life situations studied.

While the acoustic-perceptual method is often criticised because of its subjectivity, it was primarily chosen because the goal was not to understand the occurrence of prosodic elements in a *normal* speech, but in the complex context of SI. In addition, the human ear can grasp nuances that would be ignored by software (Voghera 1992: 91). The SI context was considered during the analysis, which is why extremely short millisecond-long pauses or slight changes of fundamental frequency were not considered a crucial variable easily perceptible to the audience.

Two different listeners, both involved in SI, conducted the listening phase of the transcriptions. Voghera (1992: 91) states that perception is not the mere acoustic reaction of speakers, but their interpretation of the linguistic stimuli perceived.

2.6   Analysis Criteria

In order to find a suitable method of analysis, the exhaustive experimental study on prosody carried out by Ahrens (2004) was taken in part as the methodological and structural reference (see 1.2 for the presentation of Ahren's study); especially as far as the analysis categories are concerned.

- *Speech rate:* for the present study words were used as the unit of measurement of the speech rate because the aim was not to show the absolute difference between ST and TT, but to point out the effect on the interpreter's performance of a speech rate which is too fast or too slow by analysing short excerpts of texts (Gerver 1969, Déjean le Féal 1978).
- *Pauses and syllable lengthening:* micro-pauses were not considered, whereas their position in the speech flow was. Therefore unfilled pauses <2 seconds were detected but their duration was not precisely measured. Unfilled pauses >2 seconds were noted and measured manually with the support of the transcription software mentioned above (see 2.4). Two seconds is a value already established by Goldman-Eisler (1958b, 1968, 1972a/b) as the limit-value for longer pauses. Audible breaths were considered unfilled pauses because they are actually an interruption of the phonation process. Filled pauses were transcribed as "eh, ehm, mmm" in TTs and "mmm, äh, ähm" in the ST. Syllable lengthenings were included within the filled pauses because they do not interrupt the phonation, yet are a typical example of disfluency in spontaneous speech (Rennert 2010, Pöchhacker 1994, Schwitalla 1997, Voghera 1992, Hargrove/McGarr 1994, Shlesinger 1994). The position of the pauses within the speech was also considered, in particular with respect to the tone and information units (for the definition of information unit see below). Unfilled pauses <2 seconds, unfilled pauses >2 seconds and filled pauses were added together to obtain a total value. Then, after segmenting the speeches into information and tone units, the categories of pause occurrence indicated by Ahrens (2004) were applied (see 3, figure 2).

The total occurrence of each category of pause was calculated to understand the most frequent position of pauses in natural impromptu speech and in SI.

– *Intonation and tone units:* tone units were identified in order to ascertain whether the interpreter followed the ST prosodic segmentation or created a personal one. Voghera's (1992), Ahrens' (2004) and Cruttenden's (1986) criteria were taken into account to delimit each tone unit. Cruttenden (1986) in particular asserts that external (at the boundary of a tone unit) and internal (inside a tone unit) parameters may help the detection process. The external criteria used are pauses, whose occurrence usually delimits a tone unit, and syllable lengthening at the end of a word. The internal criteria concern the definition of a tone unit by the presence of the *tonic* (see 1.1) and indicate the intonation contour of a tone unit. However, an information unit does not always tally with the tone unit in impromptu speech. Therefore, the internal and external criteria were pooled: the intonation contour inside a tone unit was considered with special regard to the detection of a boundary tone and the presence of the tonic syllable. Falling, raising and level boundary tones were considered (see 1.1), a taxonomy already applied in SI studies by Seeber (2001) for the research conducted on intonation and anticipation in SI.

– *Prominence*: all words particularly stressed within the speech were noted, because according to Shlesinger (1994) and Ahrens (2004) interpreters tend to give excessive stress to words in their TTs. Kalina (1998: 200), however, considers prominence an SI-relevant prosodic feature, because in the interest of the semantic and thematic cohesion interpreters usually use more stress than the original speaker. Not all tonics were considered as prominent words – only those actually emerging as overstressed in the speech flow. Ahrens (2004) reports that during an SI, interpreters often stress word categories that are usually unstressed in spontaneous speech, such as articles, prepositions and conjunctions, probably because of the SI-caused cognitive burden and time constraints. Cruttenden (1986) lists words usually stressed in a speech: nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs, possessive and demonstrative pronouns; and words usually not stressed: articles, auxiliary verbs, personal pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions. The prominent words were detected to see whether the interpreters actually stressed a higher number of words compared to a standard speech, and they were then put into the two categories in order to assess whether the interpreters emphasised the usually stressed words.

– *Information Unit*: in order to understand the role of pauses and the ST-TT relation, the texts were also split into information units. The units were detected by considering new versus given information. An information unit needs to be a complete clause (main clause, coordinate clause, subordinate clause etc.) which introduces a new, albeit sometimes short, concept. Even a correction may lead to a new clause: "*tutto ciò è al centro della costituzion/è al centro della nostra vita*" (all this is at the heart of constitut/it is at the heart of our life) should be considered as two information units, since they both have a complete meaning, even though the second clause is a correction of the first.

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3.   Results and discussion: ST *vs.* TTs

The results relating to the analysed parameters (speech rate, pauses and syllable lengthening, intonation and prominence) are now presented and discussed.

– *Speech rate:* table 2 shows a comparison between the ST and the six TTs along with the average TT values regarding the total duration (in minutes), the total number of words uttered and the speech rate calculated in words per minute (see 2.6).

subjects	duration (min.)	number of words in total	speech rate (words per minute)
ST	31.04	3871	124.71
interpreter 1	31.04	3534	113.85
interpreter 2	31.06	2973	95.71
interpreter 3	31.02	2398	77.30
interpreter 4	31.06	2638	84.93
interpreter 5	31.01	2853	92.00
interpreter 6	31.07	2042	65.72
average TT values	31.04	2740	88.25

Table 2. ST and TT speech rates and general features

A comparison between ST and average TT values indicates that the six interpreters had a lower speech rate than the original speaker, though there were significant individual differences as shown in table 2. Interpreters 3 and 6 made very long pauses with a remarkably lower speech rate than the ST, yet they delivered a constant speech flow, thereby confirming Kirchhoff's theory (1976/2002) according to which professional interpreters tend to adapt their segmentation strategies to the speaker's speech rate. The ST was sometimes very fast and full of hesitations, changes of planning, and filled pauses. The interpreters, especially those with more experience, tried to establish their own speech rate. In so doing they omitted small parts of sentences, but always tried to keep a constant speech rate. Indeed Riccardi (2003: 229) asserts that interpreters, instead of speaking as fast as a very fast speaker or omitting whole sentences, have a third choice: namely to establish their own speech rate, thereby omitting redundant material. During the study the professional interpreters often summed up very long ST sentences without significantly changing the meaning.

– *Pauses and syllable lengthening*: the presence, position and function of pauses were detected and analysed in the TTs and by comparing ST and TTs. Moreover, the role of syllable lengthening as found in the TTs was investigated.
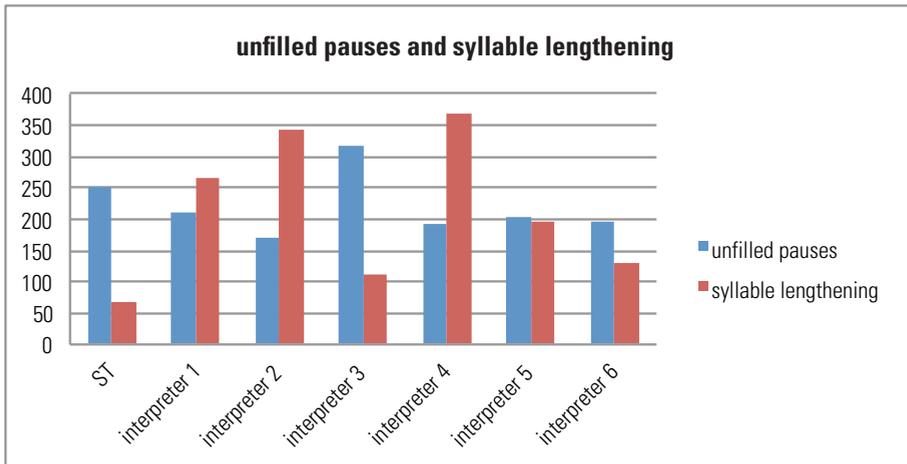
Figure 1. Relation between unfilled pauses and syllable lengthening in ST and TTs

The data concerning pauses comply with Ahrens' results (2004) and contradict Alexieva's theory (1988) according to which TTs usually have fewer pauses which are also briefer than those in the ST (see 1.2). The average number of pauses in TTs was indeed smaller than that in the ST, yet their duration was greater. There were 408 pauses in the ST, whereas the average in the TTs was 292. The ST was full of short unfilled pauses (247 shorter than 2 seconds versus 172 in the TTs), typical of the online planning of the speech. Even though the literature (Dejean le Féal 1982, Seleskovitch 1982, Kopczynski 1982) often considers spontaneous speech easy to interpret particularly because of such pauses, the contrary is true for the present ST (see 2.2). Numerous very short pauses and an almost complete lack of longer pauses for 30 minutes forced the interpreters to choose individually when to make a pause.

Filled pauses (vocalised hesitations) are present throughout the ST, yet not so often in the TTs: 156 in the ST versus 78 in the TTs. Only the interpreter with the shortest professional experience made 178 filled pauses (hesitation pauses), which shows that the difficulty of reconciling the various SI activities can be overcome through expertise and experience. The six interpreters produced an average of 42 pauses longer than 2 seconds (total duration: 257.35 seconds) versus 5 pauses in the ST (24.1 seconds). These had a mainly analytical function: interpreters often stopped during a high-density segment in order to understand it and deliver it appropriately, as explained in Gile's *Effort model* (Gile 1985). Other long unfilled pauses led to omissions.

Figure 1 (above) shows the number of unfilled pauses and that of syllable lengthening in the ST and in the TTs. Interestingly, the TTs displayed a high frequency of syllable lengthening: 235 versus 68 in the ST. Interpreters who produced few unfilled pauses delivered more vowel/consonant lengthenings.

Interpreters 3 and 6 do not follow the trend since they produced more short and long pauses which, as shown in table 2 (page 83), also affected the average words per minute and total word-count. The higher number of syllable lengthen-

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ings taken together with a smaller number of unfilled pauses might be explained as a *prosodic strategy* used by expert interpreters to maintain a constant speech rate and also to avoid short interruptions of the speech flow. Although syllable lengthening is sometimes considered a typical disfluency of impromptu speech (Čeňková 1989), it is not as clearly perceived as an unfilled pause, since it enables a continuation of the phonation activity. Detecting such features in professionals' performances shows how crucial expertise is in finding the most suitable solutions in difficult situations, such as the present ST (see 2.2) and in combining the linguistic and suprasegmental levels.
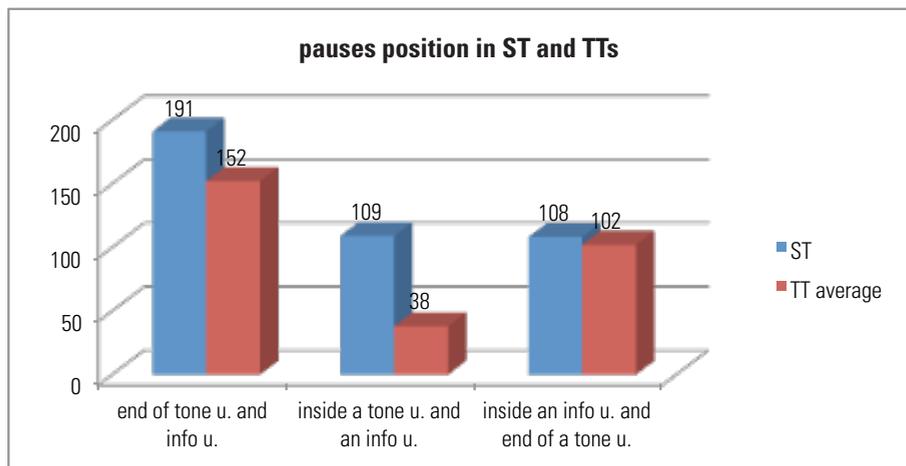

Figure 2. Pause positions in ST and TT average (u. = unit; info = information)

Figure 2 shows the last aspect analysed in the category of pauses, namely their position in the text, especially in relation to information and tone units. The blue columns report the ST's data, whereas the red columns show the average values of the six TTs.

The figure indicates the distribution of pauses with respect to the tone units and the information units in the ST and the average value calculated from the six TTs.

Pauses at the end of an information unit and inside a tone unit were never found either by Ahrens or by the present study and are therefore excluded from figure 2. Pauses at the end of a tone unit corresponding with the end of an information unit are quite usual in the ST, because the speaker decides how to segment the speech. The interpreters proved able to segment their sentences ad hoc at useful and grammatically significant points, as shown by the relatively high number of such pauses (TTs: 152 *vs.* ST: 191). Also the values of pauses inside an information unit but at the end of a tone unit are similar in ST and TTs (TTs: 102 *vs.* ST: 108). They occur when an information unit is divided into several tone units and are actually a prosodic boundary signal. A total of 34.93% of interpreters' pauses belong to this category, thereby showing that they autonomously segment the prosody of their texts for ease of communication. The two pause positions outlined above are both helpful for successful communication because they do not interrupt the

speech flow. The last category, on the contrary, produces an interruption of the speech, as the pause occurs inside a tone unit and an information unit. Such pauses were more prevalent in the ST than in the TTs (TTs: 38 *vs*. ST: 109) because before expressing a concept, the speaker of an impromptu speech hesitates while thinking, thereby creating pauses in the sentences (Goldman-Eisler 1972b).

This distribution does not imply that TTs are more fluent in absolute terms – indeed longer pauses are frequent in TTs. An analysis of pause positions was conducted in an attempt to see what interpreters do to make a ST with several disfluencies more manageable. The present study cannot draw hard and fast conclusions because the number of TTs is too small and some interpreters reacted differently. However, the overall impression is that the interpreters introduced pauses in line with the semantic and prosodic segmentation and produced fewer vocalised hesitations than the speaker.

– *Intonation*: the six interpreters produced on average fewer tone units (715) than the original speaker (840). Segmentation in tone units helps interpreters to lend their own rhythm to the interpretation and not always duplicate the original semantic and syntactic structure (Voghera 1992, Cruttenden 1986). Often interpreters break a tone unit when information is not complete, so as to save memory without risking the loss or omission of a segment. Ahrens' study found more tone units in the TTs than in the ST. The present study did not obtain the same result. The average length of a tone unit is shorter than those in the ST (TTs: 3.8 words *vs*. ST: 4.6 words). The nature of the ST may be said to lie behind this phenomenon. The speech is impromptu and linguistically spontaneous, and has fluctuating speed and several hesitations – all factors leading to the production of many tone units. Moreover TTs have longer analysis pauses produced by the interpreters to understand the ST and deliver it in a better, if pithier, fashion.

As well as the number of tone units, the related boundary tones were detected and calculated. The interpreters' intonation was found to be rich in *level boundary tones* (TTs: 63% *vs*. ST: 33%), that is to say an inconclusive intonation caused by the fact that interpreters do not produce the content and have to wait for new material (see 1.2). Shlesinger (1994: 234) asserts: "that interpretation has an intonation all its own is intuitively apparent to anyone using this medium". The results confirm her theories, as already done by Ahrens (2004). The *rising boundary tones*, often related to SI, were not found so often in TTs (8%). The interpreters probably neglected intonation because they suffered a great cognitive burden from the ST used in the study, confirming that an impromptu speech as a ST is not always easy – in fact it is a challenge for the interpreter (see 1.2). However, instead of producing false rising boundary tones, the interpreters delivered more level boundary tones, not attributing the right intonation, yet not completely misleading the audience. The speaker himself produced several incorrect rising boundary tones (about 17%), showing that a speech not planned in advance involves many simultaneous cognitive actions which might undermine its suprasegmental features. Level boundary tones increased in number towards the end of the speech, confirming that long interpretation leads to fatigue, and in such cases interpreters tend to neglect intonation in particular, and prosody in general. *Falling boundary*

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tones were, as expected, more often detected in the ST (50%) than in the average TTs (29%) since they are conclusive and can be easily produced by the speaker, who decides the content of the speech.

In order to conduct the intonation analysis, the texts were also segmented into information units (see 2.6 and figure 2, page 85). There were fewer such units in the TTs because the interpreters often summed up or omitted redundant sentences typical of impromptu speeches. The German-Italian pair also forces interpreters to anticipate the verb and therefore produce different information units. Goldman-Eisler's theory (1972b/2002) according to which interpreters independently segment their speech due also to SI-related constraints was therefore confirmed.

– *Prominence*: the number of particularly stressed words was calculated. Ahrens' study showed a higher number of stresses in TTs because the author counted the number of tonics, one for each tone unit, which were more numerous in the TTs than in the ST. In contrast, the present study aimed to pinpoint a more overt emphasis on words to detect strangely stressed words. These would be immediately perceptible at a first listening, whereas the tonic syllables were detected after more careful listening. TTs were found to be more stressed than the ST: 218 words on average versus 187 words in the ST. The interpreters (numbers 2 and 4) who showed SI-typical features (level intonation, syllable lengthening) also stressed words more often, indicating that the SI-caused cognitive burden frequently undermines the suprasegmental level. In order to be sure that the TL audience understands the TT, interpreters sometimes assume that TL audience has less general knowledge, even if often the contrary is true, and interpret bearing in mind this consideration – intonation and emphasis on words are obviously sound techniques for this purpose (Kalina 1998 in Ahrens 2004: 197). Then the words usually stressed and those usually unstressed according to Cruttenden's (1986) classification (see 2.6) were calculated. It was found that 85% of the words stressed by the interpreters belonged to the categories usually stressed in normal speech, showing that the six interpreters emphasised the words in a targeted way. Paradoxically the speaker stressed slightly more words usually unstressed than the interpreters (16% versus 15%), ostensibly because of the great effort made in producing an impromptu speech with such information density. But after a second listening the single words usually unstressed but emphasised by the speaker were analysed and found to have been stressed ad hoc by the author at crucial points (especially personal pronouns and negation). The same does not apply to the 15% of words incorrectly stressed by the interpreters: they were the result of difficult sentences or general spontaneity of planning.

4.   Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to perform an analysis of various prosodic features in interpreted texts, not only a single feature as usually carried out in SI literature (i.e.: pauses by Goldman-Eisler, speech rate by Gerver etc.).

The interpreters who participated in the study were all professional SI inter-preters, chosen because their expertise involves a more conscious use of prosodic features. Having German mainly as a "B" or "C" language (only one listed with German as "A" language) and their differing levels of experience might have in-fluenced variations in the delivery.

The speech rate was confirmed as being lower in TTs than in ST, partly because the interpreters had to wait for new material and also as a result of the applica-tion of SI strategies, i.e. condensation, segmentation and reformulation, which led them to produce a lower number of words.

Fewer pauses were found in the TTs yet their duration was greater than in the ST, confirming Ahrens' theories according to which pauses in TTs have anal-ysis functions. Therefore they might be fewer than those appearing in the ST, but their greater duration shows the interpreter's processing phase taking place while they are produced.

The presence of a high number of level boundary tones verified that interpret-ers' intonation is unnatural (Ahrens 2004, Shlesinger 1994). The deterioration of intonation is inherent to SI because of the difficulty of distributing cognitive re-sources and may come to the fore even more in the German-Italian combination where anticipation is crucial but not always successful or feasible.

In opposition to the general theory that interpreters stress usually unstressed words, the study showed that the six interpreters mainly emphasised normally stressed words (i.e. subjects, verbs etc.) in order to facilitate TT comprehension.

Moreover the study underlined that interpreters who made fewer pauses produced more syllable lengthening: it might indeed be considered as a *prosod-ic strategy* showing how interpreters deliberately use their voices to overcome SI-related obstacles.

The above-mentioned examples of word stressing and syllable lengthening used as strategies show the crucial role of expertise in the interpreting profes-sion. Interpreting is a multifaceted profession and expertise greatly contributes to refining all single aspects (i.e. language knowledge, technique, cultural knowl-edge, etc.) thereby leading to high-quality performances.

The text interpreted for the study is an example of impromptu speech, which should be easier to interpret as stated in SI literature (see 1.2). The difficulty of the ST used for the study and its excessive orality (see 2.2) suggested that definitive theories cannot be put forward, since spontaneous speeches full of hesitations, dangling sentences etc. can be extremely difficult to interpret.

The general overview obtained by the analysis of all prosodic parameters, which corresponded to Ahrens' and Shlesinger's results, suggests that universals of SI prosody might be found, irrespective of language combination.

The present study is only an initial attempt to analyse SI prosody of Italian interpreters – it would be interesting to enlarge the sample of interpreters and integrate the study with software-based analysis in order to obtain more com-prehensive results. Researching prosody in SI could lead to a definition of pros-ody-related strategies from which *would-be interpreters* could surely benefit while building their interpretation skills.

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Simultaneous Interpreting from German into Italian: the Importance of Preparation on a Selection of Cultural Items

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Abstract

According to the AIIC, the forwarding of preparation material to interpreters prior to simultaneous interpreting (SI) is a contractual term, as it enables interpreters to fully harness their expertise and provide a better service. Yet, despite being largely acknowledged as a fundamental support tool and a helpful resource by professional interpreters and students alike, preparation has been the subject of a limited number of experimental studies. This study aims to examine the importance of preparation for the SI of speeches including a number of cultural items, in order to both underline the importance of previous knowledge for achieving a higher level of proficiency in SI and to raise awareness in speakers and event managers about the need to provide interpreters with all the relevant documents.

Introduction

When confronted with the question "Is preparation in SI useful?" most interpreters (professionals and students) will instinctively and promptly answer in the affirmative. Perhaps it is because of the intuitive nature of this answer that a limited number of studies have been carried out to date on the importance of preparation in SI.

Experts in SI have asserted that knowledge of the SI context enables the interpreter to activate relevant mental frames or schemes, which help to anticipate the content of the Source Text (ST) and overcome difficult passages (Palazzi 1990, Kalina 1998, Riccardi 2001). Moreover, adequate preparation influences comprehension, translation and production processes, therefore it can be considered a

strategy in SI (Kalina 1998). Since the ability to combine strategies flexibly and correctly is considered a hallmark of expertise (Riccardi 1998), investigating the way preparation influences SI could represent a contribution for defining the concept of expertise itself.

The aim of this study is to examine whether preparation influences the SI of speeches with quite a high density of cultural-specific items (*realia* or *cultural items*), which, like technical terms (Gile 1984), are not always easily inferred based on the context alone, thereby leading to disruptions in the interpreter's output during SI.

Cultural-specific terms have been defined as

> [...] words and combinations of words denoting objects and concepts characteristic of the way of life, the culture, the social and historical development of one nation and alien to another. (Florin 1993: 123)

For this purpose, a number of interpreters (both students and professionals) were asked to simultaneously interpret two STs on similar topics from German into Italian, both including several cultural items. Relevant preparation was introduced as a variable and was provided to a group of interpreters beforehand.

1. Strategies, creativity and intercultural aspects in SI
1.1. SI as a strategic and creative process

Despite a number of shared features, the setting and conditions of SI lead to message comprehension and elaboration processes that are unlike those of monolingual interaction. Both types of processes are dynamic and share two main comprehension strategies: "knowledge-driven" strategies (based on context and selection and implementation of encyclopaedic knowledge) and "data-driven" strategies (based on information provided by ST words and syntax). According to such strategies, the information processing direction can be either top-down or bottom-up (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983: 4, 84, 154, 205, 351).

At the beginning of SI, due to the difficulty in predicting how the ST will develop, interpreters need to select and process relevant information. To this end, they tend to rely more on morphological and syntactical elements, i.e. using more bottom-up information at first (Riccardi and Snelling 1997: 144). The use of strategies then unfolds in a specific manner during SI, with top-down strategies being integrated later due to the interaction of the interpreter's knowledge with linguistic data.

SI differs from monolingual communication as the latter is made possible by similar cultural and language knowledge shared by participants (Kalina 1998: 102-113), whereas interpreters often suffer from an "information deficit" (especially during technical SI), as they do not possess an equal share of the specific and lexical knowledge of participants.

Such differences, together with the simultaneous nature of SI processes, require interpreters to adopt specific strategies in order to build a mental model (or scheme) of the ST, starting from its superficial and initial traits (i.e. combining top-down and bottom-up processes). Strategic processes have been defined

as "*intentional auf die Erreichung eines bestimmten Ziels ausgerichtet*" (Kohn 1990: 110), i.e. intentional processes based upon cognitive experience aimed at overcoming an obstacle and saving cognitive resources.

Kalina (1998: 115) divides strategies in SI into two main categories: strategies for ST comprehension and strategies for TT (Target Text) production. Only the former will be closely examined here, as they pertain to the subject of this paper.

In order to fill the "information gap" separating interpreters and primary participants, the former adopt strategies aiming to harness any available knowledge in order to understand the ST (*Wissensaktivierung*) (Kalina 1998: 115). This group of strategies includes preparation (e.g. collecting information about the SI context, analysing similar texts, drafting glossaries etc.) and inferences. The latter help overcome knowledge gaps caused by implicit information included in the ST and/or poor audio input quality and enable the interpreter to formulate hypothesis about how the ST will develop, thereby anticipating what will come next.

In his analysis of cognitive processes underlying expertise, Reason (1990: 43) identified two categories of strategies applied by humans when confronted with problems: *skill-based* and *knowledge-based* strategies. Riccardi (1998: 174) linked this classification to SI and inferred that the former are based upon the interpreters' abilities and development of automatic mechanisms, which enable them to save cognitive resources, whereas the latter are based upon previous knowledge and require extra cognitive effort. When combined, they help interpreters use and structure their encyclopaedic knowledge in order to create a frame of mind for the ST by making balanced use of cognitive resources while creatively adapting such frames or schemes to the ST. SI thus becomes a creative process during which the interpreter combines and connects linguistic and extra-linguistic information to find appropriate solutions by keeping the cognitive burden at an acceptable level.

1.2.   SI as an interlinguistic and intercultural activity

Since the context of SI is a one-time event and as such the interpreter makes linguistic choices based upon relevant elements, SI cannot be examined without considering the context in which it takes place (Riccardi 2001: 88). In order to make such choices, being familiar with the event helps the interpreter activate the relevant mental schemes to understand the ST. As already anticipated, preparation is required beforehand for the schemes to be applied, and this can be strengthened and enhanced during the event.

Pöchhacker (1994: 46) also points out that by being familiar with the event, the interpreter can become more aware of the aim of the conference, the participants and the real target of the SI (audience and target do not always coincide, e.g. during press conferences).

SI can also be considered a service provided in order to enable mutual comprehension and satisfaction of the speaker's and audience's communication needs (Viezzi 1996: 42). To correctly express the communication aims of the speaker and to enable the listener to understand them, the interpreter must be aware of what the speaker's objectives are – and, once again, preparation can be a good way to understand and anticipate them.

1.2.1. Cultural items

Since it involves two (or more) languages, SI is unavoidably an intercultural activity; the greater the distance between the cultures of the ST and the TT, the greater the effort the interpreter must make to fill in all possible gaps (Viezzi 1996: 63).

Culture-bound terms (together with rhetorical style, norms for social interaction, etc.) constitute cultural elements that the interpreter must be aware of in order to fill the knowledge gap, as his or her aim is to produce a TT that has a similar effect on foreign listeners as it would on listeners belonging to the same cultural community of the speaker.

Culture-bound terms belong to a larger category of cultural items, which also includes proper nouns, names of institutions and geographical names. Since cultural items differ according to culture, they may represent an obstacle in SI, requiring the interpreter to acknowledge and fill possible information gaps by adapting the cultural item to the target culture. Moreover, according to Viezzi (1996), such gaps can also include an additional, connotative meaning that the cultural items may have acquired in a given culture:

> [...] possono assumere uno specifico valore culturale [...] nella misura in cui in una o più comunità essi sono contraddistinti da un valore connotativo accanto a quello denotativo; nella misura, cioè, in cui non hanno esclusivamente un valore referenziale, ma implicano qualcosa di più. Sono associati ad eventi specifici, determinano una qualche risposta emotiva: [...] (Viezzi 1996: 65)

Proper nouns make up a specific group of cultural items which often recur in SI and may well be a hindrance, as pointed out by Gile (1984: 79). They can either be simple ("*noms propres simples*", identifying a person, a place or an object) or composed ("*noms propres composés*", made up of a number of words). Irrespective of their nature, they require the interpreter to adopt specific strategies in order to overcome such obstacles and to achieve three main aims: giving the audience the same complete information, limiting any loss of information and saving cognitive resources.

2.   The importance of preparation in SI

One of the main reasons most interpreters agree that adequate preparation facilitates and improves SI is that it enables them to identify a specific number of possible topics, thereby activating relevant mental frames. As Taylor states (1990: 25):

> [...] studying a subject prior to listening to it (and in our specific case prior to interpreting it) makes that listener better able to process and understand the discourse he hears. [...] The gradual absorption of general world knowledge and the specific absorption of temporary information when required will help to [...] render the interpreter's inferential processing times, understanding and consequent performance that much more effective.

If the interpreter's preparation is not adequate, he will have to integrate his knowledge during the event itself, with an increased cognitive effort during the SI (Riccardi 2001: 91).

The interpreter's preparation can be either general or task specific. According to Snelling (2009), all interpreters should be provided with general linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language pairs; a diversified knowledge of the specific event type requiring SI is, however, equally important (Palazzi 1990). Depending on the nature of the conference, the interpreter may, therefore, be provided with dossiers or documents before or during the event, and may have the opportunity to discuss problems directly or ask the speakers questions during an introductory briefing organised for this purpose.

According to Riccardi (2001: 92), knowledge about the event framework can be improved by acquiring information about five basic aspects: first, the topic, which helps identify a limited number of subjects of the speech and creates expectations in the public. Second, the speaker, as communication aims and rhetorical style are closely linked. Third, the audience, depending on whom the interpreter may be required to make implicit information in the ST explicit and adapt the TT. Fourth, the ST, as written speeches and off-the-cuff discourse have very different prosodic features. Finally, the languages involved, as they include both language and cultural information.

A further aspect was identified by Gile (1989) and Pöchhacker (1994: 52): the "conference type". The event can be considered as a "hypertext", including all contributions by different speakers, featuring a number of characteristics: structure, density of information, visual material shown during the conference etc.

2.1. Preparation as a variable in SI experimental studies

Anderson (1979) carried out three experimental studies in order to study both the cognitive and linguistic aspects of interpretation and to further investigate the parameters involved in SI and the conditions underlying the process. Two of these studies were aimed at observing the contextual conditions and the environment surrounding the performance of SI: one was aimed at ascertaining if the visual context has any effect on SI, while the other aimed to verify whether prior information about the context or the content of the speech to be interpreted makes any difference to the interpreting process. The latter study involved 12 professional simultaneous interpreters with a minimum of 5 years' experience; all of them were given the possibility to perform a warm up SI. The input material was taken from videotape recordings.

The interpreters were split into three groups, and each group was provided with a different level of preparation (or none): the first group was given a written copy of the speech shortly before the SI; the second group received a summary of the speech introducing the context, while the third group had no preparation at all. Anderson analysed two main aspects of the TT, namely intelligibility and information content, by means of the two scales assessing intelligibility and informativeness developed by Carroll (1966) (not specifically for SI).

The results did not show any statistically significant influence of preparation on the SI as interpreters with different levels of preparation achieved similar results. According to Anderson, the study could have been affected by three main weaknesses: high variability in the test subjects (the only parameter was five years or more of experience), different degrees of difficulty of a number of passages of the ST, and the interpreters being used to interpreting "from scratch", without being provided with any preparatory material beforehand.

Anderson (1979: 109) then suggested that the nature of the STs themselves used in the study may have influenced the results, as the speech dealt with general topics and did not contain any specific scientific or technical terms.

Kalina (1998: 114, 202) affirmed that scientific conferences require the interpreters to be provided with specific material a number of days before the event. As a result, preparation becomes both a way to fill the knowledge gap between the interpreter and the audience and to prevent incorrect interpretation, as well as a strategy to take correct lexical and syntactic decisions, to adapt the rhetorical style and to support skill-based strategies.

The aim of SI is to convey what is being said; therefore one could claim that the ST alone should be enough for the interpreter to produce a TT. However, the interpreter must start producing the TT without having listened to the whole text. "External" knowledge may then help fill this gap by supporting the comprehension process, i.e. helping the interpreter to understand what is being said more readily.

This hypothesis is supported by the study carried out by Kalina (1998: 202) on the *Würzburg-Korpus*, i.e. a collection of data (recordings of SI by professionals and surveys) gathered during the foundation symposium of the Association for European Criminal Law, which took place in Würzburg, and during the experimental study organised two years later at the University of Heidelberg: a "replay" of the Würzburg conference during which the speeches were interpreted by SI students. The results were then compared and analysed.

The preparation strategies adopted by one professional interpreter and five SI students were analysed. The materials collected by the interpreters for the task were analysed and the interpreters were asked a number of questions about their preparatory process (start time, type, duration of preparation, use of the material collected in the booth, preparation during the event, etc.).

The study then focused on the recordings of the SI of six speeches whose transcripts were available and were given to the interpreters beforehand, and on the notes the interpreters had made on the transcripts themselves.

The study resulted in a number of findings: first, it was observed that preparation was linked to the anticipation strategy on the one hand, but led to an increase in the use of word-by-word interpreting on the other (i.e. the process was more semantically-oriented) (Kalina, 1998: 203). Secondly, the study highlighted that the professional interpreter reacted more promptly than the students whenever the speaker "deviated" from the written text. Thirdly, as preparation interacts with other strategies and influences them (i.e. segmentation and anticipation), it contributes to saving cognitive resources. Basic cognitive processes are thus "moved" to the phase preceding the SI, which means the cognitive burden on interpreters during SI is "lighter".

3.   Experimental study

Intercultural communication is a process including a wide variety of factors, which go well beyond the purely linguistic aspects (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 2). The concept of culture is one which is intuitive yet hard to define (Žegarac 2008: 49), as it includes both physical and abstract objects. However, in order to focus our investigation on a selection of countable and easily identifiable items which could work as a litmus test to check the influence of preparation, in addition to giving the experimental study as defined a structure and scope as possible in order to allow it to be replicated, if required, we deliberately selected only a few categories of culturally connoted items. This choice was primarily to narrow down the topics for the study by concentrating on a small number of representative items, and secondarily to continue the exploration of a research field already examined by other scholars (Gile: 1984).

Moving from Anderson's study of the relevance of prior information in SI and from Kalina's study of the *Würzburg-Korpus* and her findings concerning preparation, an experimental study was carried out in 2011 at the SSLMIT in Trieste within the framework of the author's unpublished thesis.

The study aimed at a further examination of several aspects with respect to the studies mentioned above. The main weaknesses of Anderson's study were the nature of the ST (general greetings) and the short time the interpreters had to prepare for the SI (they were given the material shortly beforehand). As for Kalina's study, the number of SIs analysed was quite small (five SI students and one professional interpreter).

Before carrying out the experimental study described in this article, the author decided to choose recordings of speeches including topics over and above formal greetings (i.e. with a higher informational content), to provide the interpreters involved with the preparatory material one week before recording the SIs, and to recruit a slightly larger sample of interpreters. Unlike Anderson's and Kalina's studies, no transcripts of the speeches were provided to the interpreters beforehand, thus creating a rather different context (the effects of the availability of a transcript of the speech to be interpreted were not tested). In this respect, the study clearly differs from those of Anderson and Kalina, as it focuses on the forms of preparation an interpreter can undertake starting from general references (names of speakers, topic, general context etc.).

3.1.   Method

The study was mainly centred on the observation of SI students, i.e. novices. Differences in TTs were analysed according to the different levels of preliminary preparation of the (SI) students. Though it was not considered a variable *per se*, a warm up SI was carried out by all participants and its incidence with respect to preparation was later observed.

Two professional interpreters were also involved in the experimental study, and their results were used by way of comparison. The sample size for these professionals is certainly quite small, and it was not meant to be introduced as a control group

in the study. Nonetheless their participation was the only way to observe whether preparation affects the performance and final product of SI students in terms of making it more "professional"-like. By gaining an insight into how experienced interpreters deal with cultural items, it was possible to observe possible analogies and differences with the approach taken by the students. In this sense, this study can be considered a pilot study that helped outline a number of trends, which could be verified in future research investigating the expert / novice paradigm.

3.2. Materials

The experimental material consisted of two speeches of equal duration delivered in German by two different speakers during the same event. All participants were asked to simultaneously interpret both STs into Italian, with a break of about five minutes between the two. The first ST was considered a warm up speech.

The STs chosen were two speeches by German politicians given on 9 November 2010 during the same event, the *Europa Rede* in Berlin, a yearly conference aiming to offer a discussion platform for influential politicians of all parties. The speeches are similar in content and include similar cultural items (mostly connected with German and European history), though the second speech features a higher density of cultural-bound terms (first speech: 36 recurrences of cultural items out of 1,660 words; second speech: 82 recurrences of cultural items out of 1,394 words). The keynote speech of the event was given by Herman van Rompuy; the two STs adopted for the study were given as an introduction.

The first speech lasted 12' 24" and was "traditionally" structured: the speaker first greeted and thanked the participants, then recalled historic events connected to the day before moving on to current aspects of European politics. Due to its clear structure and to the smaller number of cultural items included, this speech was assigned as a "warm up function". The second speech lasted 12' 28" and featured an original, "non-standard" structure, as it began directly *in medias res*. The speaker briefly thanked the most important participants before immediately dwelling on historical events connected to the 9th of November. He then welcomed the most famous participants, giving their names and posts held, and finally related a short anecdote about a famous European politician.

Both STs were only available as audio inputs.

3.3. Participants

The experimental study included eight interpretation students who had successfully completed their first and second year exams of German to Italian SI. Seven of the eight students had also passed their final exams at SSLMIT – Trieste. Two students were native German speakers, two students had German as their B language and four students had German as their C language.

As mentioned above, two professional interpreters were included in the study in order to investigate possible trends and analogies between preparation

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and professional results. Both have extensive experience in SI and are accredited AIIC members.

3.4. Preparation

In order to assess the importance of preparation in SI, students were divided into two groups. One group was provided with the opportunity to prepare for the SI in order to create a context similar to real life. All the members in this group were provided with the same Word® file with general information on the context one week before interpreting. The same document was handed out to the group "without preparation" and to the professionals a few minutes before interpreting. All subjects of the study were given a list of the participants at the event quoted by the speaker in alphabetical order before going into the booth.

The preparation hand-out included the subject of the event, its title and the day on which it took place, the names of the foundations which organised the conference, a description of the speakers and the name of the keynote speaker, in addition to a short reference to the 9th of November (a crucial date in German history, as the "Night of Broken Glass/Kristallnacht Pogrom" and the Fall of the Berlin Wall took place on this date).

3.5. Procedure

All SIs were carried out between February and May 2011 at the SSLMIT of the University of Trieste. The TTs of the participants were recorded on different days. All the booths were provided with Philips equipment, and the TTs were recorded with a Microtrack 24/96 M-AUDIO digital double-track recorder (DAT) and saved on a SanDisk Compact Flash® memory card. The TTs were then converted to MP3 format in order to transcribe them.

All the participants had a pen and paper in order to take notes during the SI. After simultaneously interpreting the two STs, all participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire designed to investigate whether they found the preparation (for those who had the opportunity to prepare for the SI) and warm up SI useful and if they perceived cultural items as possible hindrances.

Five types of recurring cultural items were identified: proper nouns/posts held, toponyms, dates, events and institutions. One or more possible translations of the elements were identified in *ad-hoc* charts (i.e. possible ways to transfer the original meaning of the item to the target language) and the time in which the element appeared in the ST was noted.

An orthographic transcription of the TTs was carried out to enable comparison of the results. All cultural items of the STs were inserted in tables including the type of cultural item and the time the item was quoted in the ST and in the TT. Such terms (or their absence) were then identified in the TTs together with the strategy adopted to deliver them by means of comparison with their possible previously formulated translations. The results were included in the tables which were then divided according to speech, whether or not preparation was allowed, and professional status.

	Proper nouns / posts held	Toponyms	Dates	Events	Institutions
First speech	20	2	6	5	3
Second speech	45	5	19	7	6

Table 1. Types and numbers of cultural items analyzed in both speeches.

3.6. Results
3.6.1. Strategies adopted

All the interpreters dealt with the submitted cultural items in three main ways: they included the cultural items in their TTs, they made a mistake in delivering it, or they did not deliver the item at all.

In order to compare the results of the study, the strategies adopted to deliver the cultural items were identified based on an *ad hoc* classification (see table 1), as names and definitions were taken and adapted both from Kalina (1998) and Pedersen (2007).
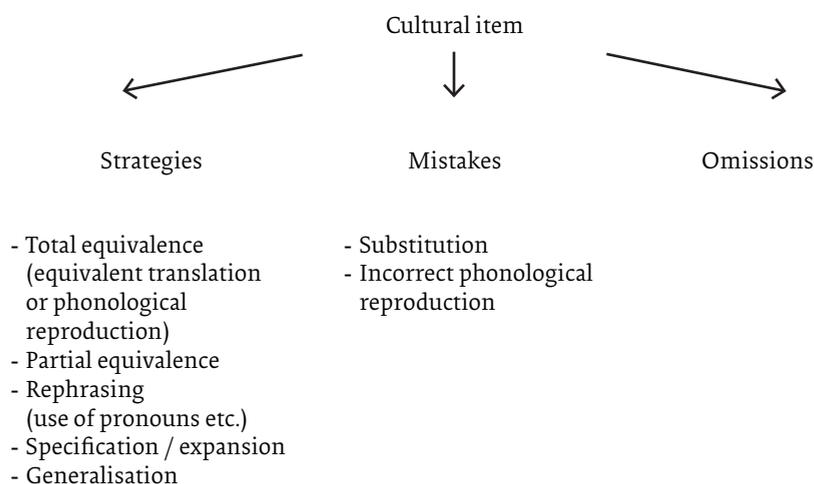
Cultural item

Strategies   Mistakes   Omissions

- Total equivalence
  (equivalent translation
  or phonological
  reproduction)
- Partial equivalence
- Rephrasing
  (use of pronouns etc.)
- Specification / expansion
- Generalisation

- Substitution
- Incorrect phonological
  reproduction

Table 2. Different ways the cultural items were (not) rendered in the target language by the interpreters

a) Total equivalence
The subjects provided an equivalent translation for the item, i.e. the cultural item was fully translated or transferred to the TT by conveying the complete original information.

This tactic was applied by the interpreters in two main ways: first, through transcoding (see Kalina 1998: 118), i.e. by repeating full proper names correctly,

by using a standard translation or "official equivalent" of the item, which Pedersen (2007: 4) describes as follows:

> For there to be an Official Equivalent, some sort of official decision by people in authority over an extra-linguistic Culture-bound reference is needed [...] (Pedersen, 2007: 4)

Ex. 1
ST: [...] und dafür möchte ich **Herman Van Rompuy** ganz herzlich danken
[and therefore I would like to thank Herman Van Rompuy for this]
TT: [...] e quindi vorrei ringraziare **Herman van Rompuy** [...]
[and therefore I would like to thank Herman van Rompuy]

Ex. 2
ST: [...] der erste ständige **Präsident des Europäischen Rates**
[the first permanent President of the European Council]
TT: [...] il primo **Presidente** permanente **del Consiglio Europeo** [...]
[the first permanent President of the European Council]

Ex. 3
ST: [...] der **Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs**
[the fall of the Iron Curtain]
TT: [...] la **caduta della Cortina di Ferro** [...]
[the fall of the Iron Curtain]

Secondly, by opting for a phonological reproduction (*retention*) of the items (when understandable by an Italian audience). According to Pedersen (2007: 4), retention is the most ST-oriented strategy, as it allows an element in the SL to "enter" the TL (e.g.: *Bundestag*).

Ex. 4
ST: [...] Herr Präsident des deutschen **Bundestages** lieber Norbert Lammert [...]
[President of the German Bundestag, honourable Norbert Lammert]
TT: [...] presidente del **Bundestag** tedesco caro Norbert Lammert [...]
[President of the German Bundestag dear Norbert Lammert]

b) Partial equivalence
The subjects omitted one or more redundant elements without changing the information content of the item (e.g. the shortened version of years).

Ex. 5
ST: [...] auch der neunte november **neunzehnneunundachtzig** [...]
[Also the ninth of November nineteen-eighty-nine]
TT: [...] il nove novembre dell'**ottantanove** [...]
[the ninth of November eighty-nine]

c) Rephrasing
The participants obtained an equivalent translation by using pronouns and other semantic elements, or by changing the order of the elements in the TT (e.g. saying "him" instead of full name).

Ex. 6
ST: [...] Hans-Gert Pöttering wäre nicht **Hans-Gert Pöttering** wenn [...]
[Hans-Gert Pöttering would not be Hans-Gert Pöttering if]
TT: [...] Hans-Gert Pöttering non sarebbe **lui** se [...]
[Hans-Gert Pöttering would not be himself if]

d) Specification
The participants added information that was not included in the ST, further specifying the cultural item. This strategy is defined by Kalina (1998: 119) as "*Expansion*".

Ex. 7
ST: [...] der **Mauerfall** [...]
[the fall of the wall]
TT: [...] la **caduta del muro di Berlino** [...]
[the fall of the Berlin wall]

e) Generalisation
The subjects substituted a cultural item with a more general one (e.g. "*der Historiker Heinrich August Winkler*" delivered as "an important historian").

Ex. 8
ST: [...] der **Historiker Heinrich August Winkler** [...]
[the historian Heinrich August Winkler]
TT: [...] uno **storico molto importante** [...]
[a very important historian]

Furthermore, two kinds of mistakes were identified in the TTs:

f) Substitution
The interpreter removed the cultural item and substituted it with an incorrect one due to an error in comprehension or translation, thereby changing the information conveyed by the ST.

Ex. 9
ST: [...] als **Haushaltsminister** [...] trug er entscheidend [...]
[as Minister for the Budget he contributed in a decisive way to]
TT: [...] <da **ministro degli esteri** ha contribuito> [...]
[as Minister for Foreign Affairs he contributed to]

g) Incorrect phonological reproduction

Incorrect pronunciation of a name (where a completely different name was invented), thereby causing the loss of the relevant information and the transfer of different information to that originally provided.

> Ex. 10
> **ST:** [...] Kardinal **Geoff Sterzinsky** [...]
>   *[Cardinal Geoff Sterzinsky]*
> **TT:** [...] cardinale **Geoff Sterzing** [...]
>   *[Cardinal Geoff Sterzing]*

A third macro category was identified, i.e. omissions. As Kalina (1998: 120) points out, omissions can be either strategic or non-strategic. The former are a way for the interpreter to "filter" and carry out a selection of the essential elements of the ST, especially if some of them are redundant. The latter involves the loss of information. Since no strategic omission was identified in the TTs representing the subject of this study, only non-strategic omissions have been examined.

> Ex. 11
> **ST:** [...] heute vor zweiundsiebzig Jahren fand in der Reichspogromnacht
>   das dunkeste, das unfassbare und unbegreifbare Kapitel der deutschen
>   Geschichte [...]
>   *[seventy-two years ago the Reich's Pogrom Night was the darkest, the
>   incomprehensible, inconceivable chapter of German history]*
> **TT:** [...] il nove novembre è anche un una giornata
>   di (.) ricordo (.) perché si è tenuta il (.) si è tenuto il capitolo più buio della
>   storia tedesca [...]
>   *[the ninth of November is also a significant day, as on this date the darkest
>   chapter of German history took place]*

3.7. Students' performance

All the data collected was divided into the five categories of cultural items identified in the STs. These were then classified according to how the elements were delivered by comparing them with an *ad-hoc* chart of previously identified possible translations and, finally, according to the presence or absence of preparation. Lastly, this scheme was also used to compare the results of SI students with those of the professionals[1]. The aim of the analysis was both to show the main trends in the two groups of students (with and without preparation) and to compare the TTs of the first (warm up) speech with those of the second ("official") speech.

The results were converted into percentages in order to enable clearer comparison. The most relevant results from the students are described below; the

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1   All detailed tables and charts concerning the analysis of the STs and the results of the study can be found in the author's unpublished dissertation (Scaglioni 2011).

results from the professionals are not fully represented here, however, they will be mentioned in the following section.

Students given the opportunity to prepare for the SI are identified with the abbreviation "*SP*" (students with preparation) and students who did not prepare for the interpretation are identified with the abbreviation "*SWP*" (students without preparation).

a) Proper nouns and posts held

When interpreting this category of cultural items during the warm up speech, *SWP* adopted total or partial equivalencies in 51% of cases, whereas they adopted rephrasing in 5%, generalisation in 1%, and specification in 8% of cases.

Omissions, incorrect phonological reproduction and substitution made up 35% of total deliveries.

In interpreting the second speech, the total number of total and partial equivalencies increased (67%), whereas the number of omissions and errors decreased (22%). However, strategies such as rephrasing and specification were less frequently adopted by the students (11% overall).

In terms of the TTs by the *SP* for the first speech, the students found a total (54%) or partial (23%) equivalent for proper nouns / posts held, and omitted or gave a phonetically incorrect equivalent in 18% of cases. As for the use of strategies, rephrasing (4%) and specification (3%) were adopted. As for errors, the highest percentage is represented by omissions (15%).

In interpreting the second speech, the *SP* adopted total equivalencies in 64% of cases and resorted to other strategies more often (e.g. specification: 6%). The number of omissions decreased as did the number of phonetically incorrect equivalents (9%).

As far as this category goes, the name and the post of Herman van Rompuy is a good example: it was sometimes omitted or, as regards the name, mispronounced by both groups (though more often by the *SWP*) in the TTs of the first speech, whereas the information was correctly transferred or even the subject of specification in the TTs of the second speech.

Ex. 12 – SWP; First speech
ST: […] und ein Europäischer Rat in dem die siebenundzwanzig Staaten […] zusammen mit dem Kommissionspräsidenten unter der Leitung von **Herman van Rompuy** die Leitlinien der europäischen Entwicklung beschließen […]
[and a European Council in which the twenty-seven states […] together with the President of the Commission under the guidance of Herman van Rompuy decide the guidelines]
TT: […] e un consiglio che insieme ai presidenti della commissione (.) stabilisce […]
[and a council which, together with the presidents of the Commission, decides]

Ex. 13 – SWP; Second speech
ST: […] wird gehalten von dem […] **Präsidenten des Europäischen Rates** […]

[held by [...] the President of the European Council]
TT: [...] viene tenuto dal **presidente del Consiglio van Rompuy** [...]
[held by the President of the Council van Rompuy]

b) Toponyms

Toponyms only represent a small number of cultural items in both speeches (2 out of 36 in the first speech and 5 out of 82 in the second speech). The names of places quoted were often repeated by the two speakers, and it should be pointed out that the second speech contained a higher number of toponyms which would be less familiar to an Italian audience (e.g. names of museums located in Berlin etc.).

For the first speech, *SWP* resorted to total equivalences in 38% of cases, resorted to rephrasing in 13% of cases and omitted toponyms in 50% of cases. When interpreting the second speech, the number of total equivalencies increased (75%) whereas rephrasing (5%) and omissions (20%) decreased.

SP correctly delivered 100% of toponyms for the first speech, always adopting total equivalencies.

As far as the second speech is concerned, the number of total equivalencies decreased (65%), whereas students resorted to generalisation in 5% of cases. The number of errors also increased (30%).

Despite the relatively minor representativeness of this category, it should be noted that during the SI of the first speech, the *SWP* omitted the name of the German capital city in some cases, whereas it was correctly transferred by the same group in most cases during the SI of the second speech.

Ex. 14 – SWP; First speech
ST: [...] ein Willkommen hier **in dieser schönen Kulisse in Berlin** [...]
[you are warmly welcomed in this beautiful backdrop - Berlin]
TT: [...] vorrei ringraziare Herman van Rompuy [...] sono: lieta che tu sia **qui** oggi con me [...]
[I would like to thank Herman van Rompuy [...] I'm glad that you are here with me today]

Ex. 15 – SWP; Second speech
ST: [...] auf der **Museumsinsel im Herzen Berlins** [...]
[on the Isle of the Museums in the heart of Berlin]
TT: [...] nell'**isola dei musei nel cuore di Berlino** [...]
[on the Isle of the Museums in the heart of Berlin]

c) Dates

The date occurring often in both speeches is the 9th of November, quoted in association with different years (1938, 1989, 2009, 2010, 2011). In a number of cases, this date is connected to a precise historical context probably known to the students; in other cases the dates are linked to recent or future events that may be less well known, and therefore less predictable and requiring a greater cognitive effort.

It should be noted that due to its very nature, this category was often the subject of rephrasing (e.g. "*(Heute) vor 72 Jahren*" became "*in 1938*") and rendered with partial equivalents (e.g. "*Juli 2007*" was delivered as "*2007*" etc.).

When interpreting the first speech, *SWP* adopted total equivalencies in 71% of cases and adopted rephrasing in 4% of cases. 25% of dates were omitted or wrongly transferred. As for the second speech, the number of total equivalencies decreased (54%), yet the participants adopted partial equivalents in 13% of cases and resorted to rephrasing in 8% of cases. Mistakes / omissions again equalled 25% of cases.

SP delivered 75% of dates in the first ST with total equivalencies and resorted to rephrasing in 8% of cases. No other strategies were adopted. Mistakes and errors made up 17% of cases.

When delivering the second speech, *SP* resorted to a wider variety of strategies: total equivalencies made up 68%, partial equivalencies 5% and rephrasing 4%. The participants also adopted generalisation in 3% of cases. The number of mistakes, however, increased (5%); interestingly, "new" and "unpredictable" dates were omitted (14%), i.e. items which were not closely linked to the main topic of the speech and which had probably not been included in the preparation phase.

As stated before, the category "date" is not only the one whose elements were mainly conveyed by partial equivalence or rephrasing, but a number of methods were used to apply these strategies (see examples).

Ex. 16 – SP; Second speech
ST: [...] **am oder um den neunten November** [...]
    [on or around the ninth of November]
TT: [...] i: **il giorno odierno** [...]
    [on the same day as today]

Ex. 17 – SP; Second speech
ST: [...] auch der **neunte November neunzehnneunundachtzig** [...]
    [also the ninth of November nineteen-eighty-nine]
TT: [...] anche il **nove novembre dell'ottantanove** [...]
    [the ninth of November eighty-nine]

Ex. 18 – SP; Second speech
ST: [...] **Heute vor zweiundsiebzig Jahren** [...]
    [seventy-two years ago today]
TT: [...] **nel millenovecentotrentotto** [...]
    [in nineteen thirty-eight]

d) Events
This category best identifies the activation of relevant mental frames by the interpreter, as it is the most closely linked to the context.

It should be pointed out that specifications were often used for the term "*Fall der Mauer*" or "*Mauerfall*", as a number of interpreters specified that the wall quoted was the Berlin Wall.

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In the TTs of the first speech, *SWP* adopted total equivalencies in 56% of cases. No other strategies were adopted. Incorrect substitutions made up 31% of cases and omissions accounted for 13%.

The number of total equivalencies increased by 5% in the TTs of the second speech (61%). *SWP* also resorted to rephrasing (2%), specification (5%), and generalisation (5%). The number of mistakes decreased (2%), yet omissions increased by 12% (25%).

During SI of the first text, *SP* resorted to total equivalencies in 44% of cases. They resorted to the strategies of specification (6%) and generalisation (6%), wrongly substituted 25% of items and omitted them in 19% of cases.

As for the second ST, the number of total equivalencies increased (64%) and partial equivalencies were also included (2%). Rephrasing amounted to 7% and specification to 16%. The number of errors and omissions decreased (12%).

Interestingly, the *SP* "scored" better results than the *SWP* when interpreting the events included in the second speech. Such events could have easily been included in thorough preparation.

Ex. 19 – SWP; Second speech
ST: [...] mit ihm verbinden wir [...] **friedliche Revolution und Mauerfall** [...]
[this day is linked to the peaceful revolution, to the fall of the wall]
TT: [...] <a questo giorno associamo> [...] **la caduta del muro di Berlino** [...]
[we associate this day with the fall of the Berlin wall]

Ex. 20 – SP; Second speech
ST: [...] mit ihm verbinden wir **friedliche Revolution und Mauerfall** [...]
[this day is linked to the peaceful revolution, to the fall of the wall]
TT: [...] noi colleghiamo [...] **una rivoluzione pacifica e la caduta del muro** [...]
[we associate this day with a peaceful revolution and the fall of the wall]

Ex. 21 – SWP; Second speech
ST: [...] das **Ende der SED Diktatur der Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs** [...]
[the end of the dictatorship of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), the fall of the Iron curtain]
TT: [...] ha segnato . la **fine . di una dittatura** [...]
[marked the end of a dictatorship]

Ex. 22 – SP; Second speech
ST: [...] das **Ende der SED Diktatur der Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs** [...]
[the end of the dictatorship of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), the fall of the Iron curtain]
TT: [...] **fine della** s **dittatura della SED caduta della Cortina di Ferro** [...]
[the end of the s SED dictatorship, fall of the Iron curtain]

e) Institutions

A limited variety of institutions were mentioned in both speeches: mainly the three foundations promoting the event. Their names were also included in the list given to the interpreters before the interpretation.

For the first speech, *SWP* used a total or partial equivalent in 42% of cases. They rephrased the name of the institution in 25% of cases and resorted to specification (8%). Omissions and errors made up 25% of cases.

The overall number of total and partial equivalencies increased in the TTs of the second speech (67%), whereas rephrasing decreased (4%). Specification amounted again to 8%. In 21% of cases the items were omitted; no mistake was made.

SP used a total equivalent in 17% and a partial equivalent in 42% of cases in the first speech. They adopted rephrasing in 33% and specification in 8% of instances; no error / omission was made.

As far as the second speech was concerned, total equivalencies increased (79%), whereas partial equivalencies decreased (8%). Rephrasing was never used and the amount of specifications remained the same. Omissions increased (4%). It should be underlined that the organisations omitted were not included in the list given to the novices prior to the SI, and that the *SP* achieved better results in conveying this category than *SWP*.

Ex. 23 – SWP; Second speech
ST: […] die Stiftung Zukunft Berlin, die Robert Bosch Stiftung und wir die Konrad Adenauer Stiftung […]
[the Zukunft Berlin Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation and us, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation]
TT: […] la Fondazione Futuro di Berlino Zukunft Berlin la fondazione Konrad Adenauer […]
[the Future of Berlin Zukunft Berlin Foundation the Konrad Adenauer Foundation]

Ex. 24 – SP; Second speech
ST: […] die Stiftung Zukunft Berlin (.) die Robert Bosch Stiftung und wir die Konrad Adenauer Stiftung […]
[the Zukunft Berlin Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation and us, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation]
TT: […] la Fondazione Zukunft Berlin (.) la Fondazione Robert Bosch noi la Fondazione Konrad Adenauer […]
[the Zukunft Berlin Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation us the Konrad Adenauer Foundation]

4.   Discussion

Based on the results obtained after analysing the data collected, it is possible to state that cultural items represented an obstacle in SI from German into Italian, even if they were known to the students. Moreover, when confronted with cultural items such as those that are the subject of this study, all interpreters adopted a number of strategies according to their cognitive burden when encountering the elements, knowledge of the item etc. Though only five strategies have been identified in this study, many others can be used to overcome obstacles posed by cultural items.

Furthermore, the findings are corroborated by the results of the question-naires: all the interpreters agreed that the cultural items in the STs were potential obstacles to a fluent delivery and some of them required additional mental effort. The students who were given preparation agreed on its usefulness and all the interpreters affirmed that the warm up SI played a remarkable role in helping them to familiarise themselves with the topic of the SI and supported the SI process for the second ST.

In addition to confirming the hypothesis underlying the experimental study, the results highlighted three further trends. In order to better compare the results and illustrate the trends observed, the results of the study are summarised in the table below where each category has been divided into further strategies and mistakes/omissions. The table shows the overall outcomes of the study, yet it should be pointed out that the second speech included a higher number of cultural items.

Cultural items analysed	Speech	SWP		SP	
		Items transferred through strategies	Mistakes and omissions	Items transferred through strategies	Mistakes and omissions
1) Proper nouns and posts held	1st	65%	35%	83%[2]	18%
	2nd	78%	22%	88%	12%
2) Toponyms	1st	50%	50%	100%	
	2nd	80%	20%	70%	30%
3) Dates	1st	75%	25%	83%	17%
	2nd	75%	25%	80%	20%
4) Events	1st	56%	44%	56%	44%
	2nd	73%	27%	89%	11%
5) Institutions	1st	75%	25%	100%	
	2nd	79%	21%	96%	4%

Table 3. Overall results of the study

The analysis and comparison of the data obtained from the TTs of *SWP* and *SP* for each category of cultural item, and more specifically the percentages of elements correctly delivered to those for omitted/wrongly delivered items for each category, provide an index of the comprehension of the items itself, and the interpreter's familiarity with the context. The more elements correctly delivered, the better the comprehension of the ST.

By considering the most numerous category (proper nouns / posts held, which make up more than the half of all the cultural items identified in both

2   The total amount of proper nouns / posts held interpreted by SP during SI of the second speech was 101%, as the percentages have been rounded up for easier comparison of results.

texts), it should be noted that *SP* correctly delivered a higher number of cultural items and made less mistakes / omissions during SI of both speeches compared to *SWP*. *SP* also resorted less often to strategies such as rephrasing, specification and generalisation than *SWP*, as they rendered the item through total equivalencies. Greater familiarity with the names quoted in the speeches for *SP* may have contributed to these results.

The category of toponyms also supports the theory on the usefulness of preparation: *SP* correctly delivered 100% of place names during SI of the first speech.

As for dates and events, *SP* had already developed a higher degree of knowledge of these elements before the SI, whereas *SWP* were not familiar with the context and often resorted to omission. Moreover, as for the category of proper nouns / posts held, *SP* often resorted to total equivalencies. It should be pointed out that *SP* also sometimes adopted the strategy of specification when interpreting events, which could show deeper knowledge of the context and lighter cognitive burden.

Lastly, the category of "institutions" supported the observed trend: more elements were delivered and fewer omissions and mistakes were made by *SP* during the first speech.

To conclude, *SP* not only achieved better results in terms of delivering cultural items, but they also resorted more often to total equivalencies and specification, as they were probably more familiar with the elements and had more cognitive resources at their disposal, thus being able to convey useful information and adapt the TTs for an audience with a different cultural background.

Importance of SI of a warm up speech for SI from German into Italian - In order to observe if the warm up phase has any effect on SI, the results obtained from TTs of the first and second speech were compared. A higher number of cultural item correspondence in the TTs of the second speech may point to greater familiarity with the topics and names included in the ST developed through the SI of a similar warm up speech.

The analysis of proper nouns / posts held shows that both *SWP* and *SP* achieved better results in the SI of the second speech, thereby making fewer mistakes and omissions.

As for toponyms, *SWP* certainly drew advantages from the warm up SI; yet *SP* made more omissions and incorrect substitutions. This could point to a difference in the importance of the warm up SI for the two groups: since it was the only source of relevant knowledge available, the warm up may have allowed *SWP* to achieve a better improvement margin with respect to *SP*. This hypothesis is supported by the results of the "institutions" category: the percentage of correctly translated elements during the second SI decreased slightly for *SP*, whereas it increased for *SWP*.

Dates and events displayed a different trend: *SWP* translated the same number of dates in both speeches, whereas *SP* made more mistakes / omissions during the second SI. As for events, *SP* correctly delivered a higher number of elements during SI of the second speech, whereas *SWP* did the opposite. It should be noted, however, that events and dates were not evenly distributed in the two STs: specifically, the second contained more items than the first. The second

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speech included a number of events specific to German history which were not mentioned during the first speech and which were more susceptible to adequate preparation: for *SWP* they might well have represented new and potentially "unexpected" elements.

Finally, the TTs of *SWP* registered a remarkable increase in the total equivalencies during the second speech. Such a trend may indicate both the general usefulness of a warm up SI and its importance in the absence of other specific preparation.

Similarities between SP and professional interpreters - The comparison of the results obtained by *SP* and professional interpreters (who did not receive the preparation hand out), points to a number of similarities. In terms of proper nouns and posts held in the first and second speech, there was an increase in the number of total equivalencies and a decrease in partial equivalencies for both groups. The subjects also resorted less frequently to rephrasing and more often to specification and generalisation.

Moreover, the same similarity is observed in the data collected for the "dates" category: total equivalencies and rephrasing decreased, whereas partial equivalencies and generalisation increased. Lastly, the same characteristic was also found when analysing the rephrasing, errors and omissions percentages for the "events" category.

Such similarities highlighted a further possible trend: data collected from *SP* and from professional interpreters share some similarities from a quantitative - and qualitative standpoint. These trends are not only observed in the number of equivalencies and omissions / errors, but also concern the types of strategies adopted, thereby suggesting that preparation can help SI students develop the processes of selection and application of relevant strategies used by professionals.

5.   Conclusions

This experimental study represented an opportunity to closely verify the importance of preparation in SI, under set circumstances. The results show that preparation helps activate correct mental frames relevant to the topic of the speech, thus enabling anticipation and correct translation of cultural items. Moreover, they revealed a similar trend in the use of a number of strategies by SI students with preparation and by professional interpreters with no preparation.

Preparation can thus be considered an interpretation strategy (Kalina 1998: 116) that students should adopt to achieve a higher level of professionalism by producing more complete and precise TTs. Expert *adaptive* interpreters (Sunnari/ Hild 2010) have been defined as professionals who can simultaneously interpret speeches on different topics effectively by continuing to develop the strategies adopted and improve the output quality. Students of interpretation can profit from this and try to achieve professional results by supporting constant exercise and delivery control through improvement of their general and specific knowledge by means of preparation.

The findings in this study cannot be considered definitive. The study revealed a number of weaknesses that further experimental studies could try to counter,

i.e. the sample of SI students was too small for general conclusions to be drawn, the lack of a "real" control group and the testing of only one possible way for preparing for the SI (autonomous preparation based upon context communicated beforehand). New studies could involve a larger sample of participants, i.e. three equal groups of students and professional interpreters (for professionals to make up a real control group) and a fourth group of students provided with the speech transcript (for a further comparison with the studies by Anderson and Kalina). They could also consider culture from a broader perspective (including other cultural aspects in addition to realia). A further possibility could be to repeat the experimental study by changing the linguistic variable, e.g. by choosing technical speeches to observe if the effects of preparation are even more visible in terms of the information transferred and the personal perceptions of the interpreters.

This experimental study offers a brief view of the gap dividing SI students and professional interpreters as far as SI of STs including cultural items is concerned. A study based on a similar premise could be carried out in order to investigate how experience influences ability, as well as the strategies applied to deal with the SI of cultural items. Such research could contribute to achieving a better understanding of where the gap lies between students and professional interpreters, thereby guiding students for the development of their SI skills.

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Are Interpreting Strategies Teachable? Correlating Trainees' Strategy Use with Trainers' Training in the Consecutive Interpreting Classroom

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Abstract

Since the early 1970s, interpreting strategies have aroused much interest among interpreting research scholars. Strategies should be recommended as components of interpreter training because they are useful for interpreters to solve or avoid problems resulting from cognitive and language-specific constraints. This paper reports on a small-scale study, investigating if undergraduates' strategy use is positively related to their teachers' inclusion of strategy training in the consecutive interpreting classroom. Forty-one undergraduate trainees and three of their teachers participated in the study. Retrospection was used to collect data on participants' mentioning of strategy use immediately after performing consecutive interpreting from English into Chinese. Questionnaires were administered to elicit data on teachers' inclusion of strategies in class. Data analysis shows that sixteen strategies were used by the students and that those strategies were taught by their teachers. A correlation analysis shows that there is a moderate correlation between student's strategy use and their teachers' inclusion of strategy training.

Introduction

Interpreting strategies are important aspects of interpreting expertise. Mode-specific strategies (Kalina 1994a: 221; Agrifoglio 2003: 99), for example, anticipation in simultaneous interpreting, give interpreters advantages to ease the workload caused by mode-specific constraints. Moreover, strategies allow

interpreters to use a minimum amount of processing efforts to reduce the negative effects of cognitive constraints (Riccardi 1998: 174; Gile 2009: 201), for example, high time pressure, extreme speech conditions, and less satisfying working conditions (Setton 1999: 35; Kalina 2002: 126). Furthermore, strategies such as segmentation (Lee 2007: 153), restructuring (Riccardi 1995: 216) and anticipation (Chernov 2004) lower the risk of overloading processing capacity caused by language-specific constraints, and are thus important aspects of expertise for interpreters working between languages that are syntactically different. Additionally, research has shown that expert interpreters' strategy use is different from that of novices (Kalina 1994b: 229; Sunnari 1995: 118), which support the status of strategy use as part of interpreting expertise. Therefore, strategies are crucial for high quality interpreting performance and should be seen as an essential component of interpreting competence (Kalina 2000: 7).

Since the 1970s (see Barik 1971; Goldman-Eisler 1972; Kirchhoff 1976/2002; Wilss 1978), interpreting strategy research has been the interest of many scholars. Past research on strategies concentrates mainly on simultaneous interpreting. Far less attention has been paid to strategies in consecutive interpreting. The relationship between students' use of strategies and strategy training has not received much attention.

Psychological research has proved that a minimum of six months of intensive training in tasks involving divided attention allows human beings to acquire particular procedural skills to carry out overlapping tasks (Hirst *et al*. 1980). Considering that strategies are also procedural skills, it can be hypothesized that training on strategy use enables trainees to apply them in their interpreting practice.

This paper reports on an observational study investigating if students' strategy use and strategy training are positively related. It first reviews the literature, then describes the research methodology, and moves on to analyze the results before presenting the conclusions.

1.   Studies on strategies in interpreting research
1.1   What is an interpreting strategy?

Interpreting strategies are termed differently as "coping tactics" (Gile 2009: 191) or "techniques" (Jones 1998: 101). According to the relevant literature (Kalina 1992: 253; Gile 2009: 191; Bartlomiejczyk 2006: 152), strategies are intentional and goal-oriented procedurals to solve problems resulting from the interpreters' processing capacity limitations or knowledge gap, or to facilitate the interpreter's task and prevent potential problems. The repeated and successful use of strategies leads to automatic activation. It is then that the interpreter is able to overcome the capacity limitations and make good use of available processing capacity (Kohn/Kalina 1996: 132; Riccardi 2005: 758).

1.2   Why are strategies important in conference interpreting?

There are many reasons for strategies to deserve the attention of trainers, practitioners and researchers.

Firstly, interpreting strategy as an important aspect of interpreting expertise should be a crucial component of interpreter education. It is held that "successful repeated use of a specific strategy leads to automation" and that "automated strategic processes reduce the cognitive load of interpreting" (Bartlomiejczyk 2006: 151). Trainers may group strategies into "general interpreting strategies, independent of the language pair used," or "language pair-specific strategies, taking into account solutions imposed by structural and lexical diversities of the languages used" (Riccardi 2005: 765). Then exercises can be devised to help the trainees automatize the use of those strategies before students can use them to overcome constraints in certain interpreting tasks (An 2009: 206; Lee S. 2013: 27). For example, compression should be taught to students to cope with limitations of memory and the time pressure (Viaggio 1992: 51; Dam 1993: 311). Additionally, differences in strategies employed by novice and expert interpreters can be compared and contrasted for pedagogical purposes. Both Kalina (1994b: 229) and Sunnari (1995: 118) confirm that professionals' strategic decisions are different from those of trainees. Experienced interpreters know how and when to use condensing based on macro-processing, while novice interpreters fail to produce a coherent message in the target language. According to Kalina (2000: 7), strategy application is crucial for high quality performance in interpreting and should be treated as an essential component of interpreting competence which serves the basis of pedagogical design.

Secondly, the interpreter has to allocate his or her available processing capacity strategically in interpreting practice to cope with two sources of constraints: cognitive constraints and language-specific constraints. The sources of cognitive constraints include high time pressure, division of attention, extreme speech conditions, and unsatisfying working environment (Setton 1999: 35; Al-Qinai 2002: 310; Kalina 2002: 126; Gile 2009: 192; Li 2010: 19). Such constraints require a lot of processing capacity. In Gile's (2009: 190) words, if the required processing capacity exceeds the interpreter's available processing capacity at a given time in the interpreting process, problems arise. Strategies allow the interpreter to use a minimum amount of processing efforts to get rid of the negative effects of those constraints (Riccardi 1998: 174; Gile 2009: 201; Lee M. 2013: 180). It is found that interpreters resort to a number of strategies that may ease the cognitive burden, improve the pace of delivery, and avoid the accumulation of untranslated information so that their memory and processing capacity will not be overloaded (Al-Qinai 2002: 318; Mizuno 2005: 750; Gile 2009: 190). Language-specific constraints also require the use of interpreting strategies. If the languages involved are syntactically different, the interpreter's processing capacity is more likely to be overloaded. The interpreter has to store larger segments before syntactic disambiguation and restructure the message to comply with the target language rules (Riccardi 1998: 173; An 2009: 188; Liontou 2011: 152). The use of strategies such as anticipation (Lim 2011: 59; Liontou 2012: 230), segmentation (Donato

2003: 129; Lee 2007: 153), and restructuring (Riccardi 1995: 216; Donato 2003: 129) is particularly crucial.

Interpreting mode is an important factor that impacts the use of strategies. Consecutive and simultaneous are performed under different conditions. In Gile's (2009) words, the listening, memory, and note-taking phase is separated from the note-reading and reformulation phase in consecutive. The interpreter is not paced by the speaker. By contrast, in simultaneous, the interpreter is externally paced by the speaker, multitasking between listening, producing and monitoring.

The different mode-specific constraints lead to the use of mode-specific strategies (Kalina 1994a: 221; Agrifoglio 2003: 99). Considering the more demanding working conditions of simultaneous, strategy use is more typical of and crucial in simultaneous than in consecutive (Kalina 2000: 7). In simultaneous, when linguistic and extra-linguistic cues are available, the interpreter may use anticipation; when there is a lack of such cues, the interpreter may resort to segmentation to ease the workload (Riccardi 1998: 179; Seeber/Kerzel 2012: 232). Anticipation, segmentation, and extending or narrowing Ear-Voice-Span are specific to simultaneous. In consecutive, the interpreter may be more likely to use strategies like changing order, addition, and syntactic transformation and so on. Additionally, since both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting may share constraints such as high time pressure, high information density, incomprehensible input and so on, strategies can be used in both modes, for example, inferencing, omission, transcoding, compression, addition, repair, etc.

Thirdly, strategies are of great theoretical value in interpreting research in that they contribute to the description of the interpreting process. Strategies show "which decisions must be taken in a given situation or in view of certain probabilities so as to reach a goal within a behavioral plan" (Kirchhoff 1976/2002: 114). Interpreting can be "analyzed through the strategies applied to achieve the communicative goal" (Riccardi 2005: 753). An understanding of interpreters' use of certain strategies to solve problems reveals about the relations between the original discourse, the interpreted discourse, the possible problems in interpreting, the strategies applied, the interpreter, and the communicative setting. That might be why strategy remains one of the research interests of doctoral projects (Dam 1995; Kalina 1998; Chang 2005; Wang 2008; Liontou 2012).

Most studies on strategies are concerned with simultaneous interpreting. Research on consecutive interpreting strategies is rare. Kohn/Kalina (1996) explore SI and CI from a strategic point of view by means of recording and retrospection data, indicating that real-life interpreting situations do involve a group of specific strategies. Dam (1993, 1995) provides an empirical description of the condensation strategy in Spanish-Danish consecutive interpreting. Hu (2006) discusses the use of adaptation strategies (reduction, addition, etc.) in consecutive interpreting between Chinese and English.

Since the 1990s, the proportion of empirical studies has been on the rise. Some are devoted to individual interpreting strategies like anticipation (Lederer 1978, 1981; Van Besien 1999; Chernov 1992, 2004; Lim 2011; Liontou 2012) and compression (Sunnari 1995; Dam 1996, 1998; Wang 2008). Others investigate

empirically all strategies or a group of strategies used in a given interpreting task (Kohn/Kalina 1996; Donato 2003; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Liontou 2011). Kalina (1994b) and Sunnari (1995) conclude that professional interpreters are better than student interpreters in terms of strategy use. Donato (2003) and Bartlomiejczyk (2006) confirm that strategy use is related to language pair and working direction of the interpreting task. Snelling (1992) examines simultaneous interpreting as a language pair specific task, exploring the contrast between Romance languages and Germanic languages. Other empirical explorations of interpreting strategies can be found from Kalina (1992), Kohn/Kalina (1996), and Mizuno (2005).

As far as methods are concerned, some discussions on strategies are based on personal theorizing and for pedagogical purpose (Gile 2009; Wu 2001). Some are empirical research by using retrospection (Kohn/Kalina 1996; Bartlomiejczyk 2006), a methodological tradition of psychological research. Others adopt a corpus-based product-oriented approach (Kalina 1998; Donato 2003; Wang 2008; Liontou 2012). Another paradigm is the expert-novice approach (Kalina 1998; Riccardi 2005; Sunnari 1995) which look into differences between experts and novices in terms of their interpreting problems and the different strategies they use.

Literature review reveals that scholars have not reached a consensus on the definitions of strategies. For instance, Kalina's (1998) expansion and Bartlomiejczyk's (2006) addition refers to the same strategy. Another example is the definition of omission. One defines it as: "when the interpreter decides to omit something that has been both heard and understood presumably because he or she assesses the information as redundant, not important, or not transferable due to differences between the SL and TL cultures" (Bartlomiejczyk 2006: 161). The other believes that omission is used when the interpreter encounters "incomprehensible input," "repetitive input," or "lags behind the speaker" (Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000: 553). The two definitions have something in common, but the latter is wider in scope in that it includes the condition of "incomprehensible input."

Additionally, some strategies overlap with others. For example, compression and omission have something in common. Compression happens when the original meaning is rendered by the interpreter in a more general and concise way, deleting what is repetitive or redundant. Omission is used when the interpreter omits incomprehensible input, unnecessarily repetitive, redundant, unimportant, or unacceptable utterances. Therefore, the application of one of them may entail the employment of the other.

Strategy training and the correlation between strategy training and strategy use among student interpreters have not been touched upon yet.

1.3   Strategies in consecutive interpreting and their definitions

More than thirty strategies can be identified in the literature. Only the sixteen strategies relevant to the current study will be discussed in this section.

Since the definition between scholars varies, it is important to define the strategies concerned. Table 1 presents each strategy with its names, definition and relevant authors. One strategy might be named differently by different scholars,

for example, omission, deletion and skipping all referring to the same strategy. Those strategies are not put into broad categories because they are termed differently by different scholars and the boundaries between some of them are not clearly identified. More detailed descriptions about them may be found in the relevant literature.

Strategy names	Definition	Researchers
Compression/ condensation/ summarizing/ filtering	The original meaning is rendered by the interpreter in a more general and concise way, usually with all repetitive, unimportant, or redundant information deleted or omitted.	(Sunnari 1995; Kohn/Kalina 1996; Dam 1996, 1998, 2001; Kalina 1998; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Wu 2001; Al-Salman/ Al-Khanji 2002; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Chang 2005; Wang 2008; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Li 2010; Liontou 2011)
Omission/ skipping/ ellipsis/ message abandonment	The interpreter uses periods of silence and pauses in which certain messages are not interpreted at all due to comprehension, note-reading, or memory failure.	(Barik 1971; Kohn/ Kalina 1996; Kalina 1998; Niska 1998; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Wu 2001; Al-Salmon/ Al-Khanji 2002; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Chang 2005; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Pöchhacker 2007; Gile 2009; An 2009; Lee M. 2013)
Text expansion/ addition/ elaboration	The interpreter adds information or expands the source discourse, so as to better convey or clarify the message and avoid unclear information in the target discourse.	(Barik 1971; De Feo 1993; Kohn/ Kalina 1996; Kalina 1998; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Messner 2000; Donato 2003; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Liontou 2011)
Delaying response/ stalling	The interpreter produces generic utterances, absent in the source speech. They provide no new information, but enable the interpreter to delay production while avoiding long pauses when faced with reformulation difficulties from information retrieval or word choice.	(Kirchhoff 1976/2002; Setton 1999; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Riccardi 2005; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Meuleman /Van Besien 2009; Gile 2009; Liontou 2011)

Strategy names	Definition	Researchers
Approximation/ attenuation	When the interpreter is not able to retrieve the ideal equivalent of a lexical element in the source discourse, she or he provides a near equivalent term, a synonym, or a less precise version of it in the target discourse.	(Kalina 1992, 1998; Kohn/ Kalina 1996; Niska 1998; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Al-Qinai 2002; Al-Salmon/Al-Khanji 2002; Donato 2003; Bartlomiejczyk 2006)
Paraphrasing/ explaining	The interpreter explains the intended meaning of a source speech term or wording when the suitable target correspondent is hard to retrieve at the moment.	(Niska 1998; Wu 2001; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Chang 2005; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Gile 2009)
Morpho-syntactic transformation	The interpreter tries to depart from the surface structure of the original sentence and decides to express the meaning of the original message using a different syntactic construction.	(Kalina 1998; Riccardi 1999; Donato 2003; Chang 2005; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Lion-tou 2011)
Transcodage/ transcoding/ calque	The interpreter selects the word-for-word translation method because the inter-preter is not able to grasp the overall meaning of the source text.	(Seleskovitch 1978; Kohn/ Kalina 1996; Kalina 1998; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Al-Salman/ Al-Khanji 2002; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Gile 2009)
Parallel reformulation/ substitution	The interpreter tries to invent something that is more or less plausible in the context, or to substi-tute elements that are not understood with elements mentally available, because of comprehension, note-tak-ing or note-reading failure, so as not to pause or leave a sentence unfinished.	(Kohn/Kalina 1996; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Wu 2001; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Gile 2009)

Strategy names	Definition	Researchers
Restructuring/ changing order	What is conveyed by the speaker in one position in the source discourse is interpreted by the interpreter in a different place in the target discourse, which ensures more idiomatic target language.	(Kirchhoff 1976/2002; Riccardi 1995; Al-Qinai 2002; Donato 2003; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Gile 2009; An 2009)
Inferencing	The interpreter recovers lost or incomprehensible information on the basis of the speech context and his or her general knowledge.	(Kohn/Kalina 1996; Kalina 1998; Chernov 2004; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Gile 2009)
Repair	The interpreter realizes that something said is misinterpreted, or can be interpreted in a better way, and he or she decides to make a correction.	(Kohn/Kalina 1996; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Petite 2005; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Liontou 2011)
Evasion/ neutralization	The interpreter avoids committing himself or herself to a definite position where analysis of the source discourse does not provide sufficient specification, and instead of misleading the audience, he or she leaves it for the audience to decide.	(Kohn/Kalina 1996; Kalina 1998; Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Donato 2003)
No repair	The interpreter leaves the fragment in question as it is, since repairs may cause more harm than help. It is different from making an error of which the interpreter is not aware, which is then not a strategic decision. No repair is a conscious choice not to make repairs in monitoring the output.	(Kalina 1998; Bartlomiejczyk 2006; Liontou 2011)

Strategy names	Definition	Researchers
Incomplete sentence	The interpreter uses fragmented utterances, stops in mid-sentences, and omits large units of the source discourse because of comprehension, note-reading, or memory failure. This is considered as a strategic decision because it is a conscious choice, instead of an unconscious behavior.	(Al-Khanji *et al.* 2000; Al-Salman /Al-Khanji 2002)
Repetition	The interpreter repeats previously interpreted elements through synonyms or synonymic phrases as a way of enhancing lexical accuracy or generating more time to organize the language.	(Donato 2003)

Table 1. Consecutive interpreting strategies, definitions and references

This paper focuses on the strategies used by student interpreters in a consecutive interpreting task from English to Chinese. The procedure entails recording and retrospection for trainees, and questionnaires for trainers. The purpose is to explore whether students' strategy use is influenced by teachers' training.

2. Methodology
2.1 Research question

This study aims to address the following question: Is students' strategy use related to strategy training in class?

2.2 Subjects

Forty-one students, 7 male and 34 female, participated in the study. Aged between 21 and 23, they were all third-year undergraduates with Chinese and English as their A and B language. They finished 6 months of training on sight translation and consecutive interpreting in the same T&I program.

Measures were taken to ensure validity in sampling. The students' language proficiency, particularly analytical listening skills, differs. Those who are weak in interpreting will transfer to the track of translation at the end of the third year. Although all 41 students participated in the study, only those who showed good

accuracy and delivery and scored 85 or more in the consecutive interpreting task concerned were chosen as the source of data for analysis. Two raters who were also the participants' teachers scored the interpretations holistically in terms of content consistency, language quality and delivery. Only 25 recorded consecutive interpretations were selected in data analysis. Such a decision was made to ensure that all the interpretations were comparable to the interpreting quality of novice interpreters. This is consistent with Duff's (2008) homogenous strategy of case selection. The aim is to remove out cases that will exert negative impact on the results, and describe well the subgroup concerned. In the current study, the homogenous subgroup was composed of those who scored 85 or more and whose interpreting performances were comparable to those of novice interpreters.

Three female teachers who are also freelance interpreters ranging from the age of 32 to 43 were involved in this research. They were all teachers of the participants with the same working language combination. They had been teaching interpreting for more than five years. The use of three teachers is not a large sample, but considering the size of the faculty and that all the teachers must be teachers of the student subjects, three teacher subjects was the best that could be done in this study.

2.3   Instruments

The instruments to collect data involved an interpreting task and its rating criteria, a stimulated oral verbalization task and teacher questionnaires.

The main criteria in choosing the source texts were authenticity and difficulty. Two English speeches were selected, one for warming up and the other for the real interpreting tasks. They are authentic test material taken from China Aptitude Test for Translators and Interpreters Level 3 (see appendix 1). According to an interview after the retrospection, none of the subjects had heard or read the speech before. A detailed description of the input material can be seen from table 2.

<div align="center">Description of the input speech</div>

Topic	Asia's prosperity and value
Genre	Political speech
Medium	Audio
Length	371 words
Delivery speed	148/wpm
Speaker	Male
Intonation/accent	Neutral/almost standard
Concrete/abstract	Primarily abstract
General/technical	General
Vocabulary/syntax	A few hard words and complex sentences
Language function	Informative and persuasive

Table 2. Description of the input speech

Rating criteria were designed to remove the poorly interpreted versions out so that the student interpreters' performance was comparable to novice interpreters in terms of content consistency, language quality and delivery.

The interpreting process lasted for about five minutes. Immediately after the interpreting task, retrospective verbalization was used to investigate the strategies employed. The student subjects were advised to verbalize their problems and their correspondent solutions from memory after the interpreting task. This process was prompted by stimuli, namely, reading the original transcript of the speech, and listening to their own interpretations.

Teacher questionnaires were designed to check if the teachers train students in the use of strategies in class. The instructions in the questionnaire made it clear that "Your choice should depend on what you did instead of what you should do". In this way, the possibility of saying yes to strategies that sound good but which have not been taught is lowered. The questionnaires were administered when the analysis of the students' data was done. The questionnaire consists of two sections, one on background information and the other including 16 strategies identified from the data of student subjects' verbalizations and interpretations (see appendix 2). The items on strategy training employ five-point scales. The more the statement applies to the teachers' practice in class, the higher the points they give.

It should be made clear that only the 16 strategies that were used by the students appeared on the teachers' questionnaire. Though the teachers might have taught more than 16 strategies, those that were not used by the students cannot help reveal the correlation between strategy training and strategy use. Given the purpose of this study, strategies making no contributions to the current research are excluded.

2.4   Data Collection

Data collection from student subjects was done in a computerized interpreting lab. Each subject's interpreting was recorded. Immediately after the interpreting, the subjects were asked to read the transcript of the source speech, listen to their own interpretations, and recall their interpreting process. Each time they recalled problems that occurred or threatened to occur in their interpreting, and decisions to solve the problems or to prevent them from arising, they took them down. Subsequently, the subjects reported their feedback in Chinese which is their mother tongue and was recorded. The recording and retrospection data were transferred to a computer for rating, selection, transcription, and analysis.

The questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers after the students' data were analyzed. The researcher sent the questionnaires to the three teachers via email and they were all returned.

2.5   Transcription and data encoding

In transcription, only actual words were registered to avoid being time-consuming and less readable. All other aspects were eliminated from the transcript.

Data encoding started with classification of retrospective remarks into general categories. The classification system was adapted from Bartlomiejczyk (2006: 165). In encoding the retrospective data, references were also made to subjects' interpretations. Both the interpretations and retrospective remarks were characterized with variability. The interpretations varied in the quality of content and delivery. The retrospective remarks varied in terms of length, quantity, and quality.

The remarks were encoded into 1,570 segments. Over 25% were of strategic nature. The distribution of different types of segments is shown in table 3.

Segment type	Number of segments	Percentage
Product-oriented	459	29.2%
Strategic	405	25.8%
Problem-oriented	374	23.8%
ST-oriented	83	5.3%
Word-retrieval	79	5.0%
Interpreter's feeling	64	4.1%
Selection	15	1.0%
Others	91	5.8%
Total	1,570	100.0%

Table 3. Distribution of retrospective segments

Subsequently, the 405 strategic segments were classified into 16 categories of strategies. It needs to be noted that one segment may involve the use of more than one strategy because one problem may be solved by a combination of solutions. Since the subjects were advised to use their mother tongue in the retrospection, the translated versions of those retrospective remarks are presented in table 4.

Strategies	Evidence from subjects' retrospection
Compression	"Recognizing positive influences of each other despite differences among countries" in the original was not concise with regard to the target language, so I interpreted it as "seek common interests while reserving differences." This was clearer and did not distort the original.
Omission	The fourth segment was incomprehensible for me, particularly "economic development has created the conditions for the emergence of a middle class and civil society." Therefore, I only mentioned the other half of the sentence, which was "a democratic political system has been inevitable."
Addition	Since I made many divisions, I added "firstly," "secondly," and "thirdly." Then when I heard "behind peace and development in Asia," I added "we should work hard in cooperation for the peace and development in Asia." Occasionally I included some information which I felt did not alter the original message.
Stalling	While I was translating the seventh segment with the word "nationalism," the equivalent was at the tip of my tongue. I said "huh" several times during my thinking for the right word.
Approximation	"Guiding principle" was in my notes, but I could not come up with the appropriate equivalent so I said "rules people have to follow." This is somewhat different from the original but it supported the meaning.
Paraphrasing	The last segment includes a phrase "conveying Asian's voice to the world." I understood this, but did not know how to translate the surface structure. I therefore interpreted it as "make Asia understood by the world."
Syntactic transformation	A question in the source speech, "what are the specific challenges that we face?" was answered in the following text. It was interpreted as the statement, "we have to face a lot of challenges."
Transcodage	The fourth segment is long and includes an insertion. I only took down some key words and was unclear about the logical connections between them. I interpreted the sentence relying on the surface of the words in my notes.
Parallel reformulation	Towards the end of the speech, I missed the section "we thus see differences in the processes and speed of development." I replaced it with my own version that fit in the context. The meaning did not change much.
Changing order	When interpreting this segment, I put "politically," which appears at the end of the sentence in the source speech, at the beginning of the target speech. It would have been awkward if I had not done this.

Strategies	Evidence from subjects' retrospection
Inferencing	I heard, but did not understand "parochial." I guessed that it might mean limited in some way because it was followed by "nationalism and dogmatism."
Repair	When I was interpreting "leave behind," I translated it as "avoid," but then I thought it would not collocate well with "nationalism and dogmatism." I corrected it and replaced it with "abandon" which sounds good in the target language.
Evasion	I'm not quite sure about the meaning of this sentence, but I have to interpret it, obviously not based on my own invention. I relied on the context and conveyed the idea in a vague manner.
No repair	I interpreted it as "stepping forward" instead of "taking significant steps towards freedom." I thought the latter was better. Since the interpreting was completed, I did not correct it.
Incomplete sentence	While interpreting "our cooperation must not be of inward-looking closed nature," I did understand the meaning of the original, but I started with "cooperation should not be closed in nature," and I could not continue because I failed to come up with the right word corresponding to the remaining information. Therefore I did not complete the sentence.
Repetition	When I was interpreting this sentence, I saw "1" in my notes, I said "firstly," then when I was thinking about how to organize the coming information, I mentioned the point again by saying "the first point I would like to make."

Table 4. Strategies and evidence from subjects' retrospection

3. Results and discussion
3.1 Strategy use among students

The students' use of strategies is presented in table 5.

Strategy	Frequency of use	Percentage
Evasion	1	0.3%
No repair	1	0.3%
Incomplete sentence	4	1.0%
Repetition	6	1.5%
Transcodage	6	1.5%
Paraphrase	13	3.2%

Strategy	Frequency of use	Percentage
Repair	14	3.5%
Inferencing	17	4.2%
Compression	25	6.2%
Syntactic transformation	25	6.2%
Approximation	28	6.9%
Stalling	36	8.9%
Addition	42	10.3%
Changing order	45	11.0%
Parallel reformulation	57	14.0%
Omission	85	21.0%
Total	405	100.0%

Table 5. Frequency of strategy use

As can be seen from table 5, student interpreters employed strategies such as addition, paraphrase, changing order, syntactic transformation, and no repair and so on. Those strategies help communicating messages to the audience. However, there were also risky strategies such as incomplete sentence and repair, the frequent use of which may not help build the interpreter's positive image. Another group of strategies were for self-protection (Gile 2009: 213), including omission, repetition, compression, evasion, transcodage, inferencing, stalling, and parallel reformulation. The use of those strategies might have been related to the students' availability of processing capacity.

The results are suggestive of the relations between strategy use and interpreting modes. Different working modes pose different challenges and thus require the adoption of different strategies. In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter is not externally paced by the speaker and the phases of listening and speaking are separate. Interpreters are more likely to use strategies like changing order, addition, and syntactic transformation and so on.

The direction of the interpreting task, from the subjects' weak language English into the mother tongue Chinese might have influenced the results. The frequent use of omission, parallel reformulation, compression, and inferencing, suggests that listening comprehension might have posed difficulties in working from B language into A language among student interpreters.

Students' strategy use is consistent with the findings of Donato (2003) and Gile (2009) that strategy use has to do with the language pairs involved in the interpreting task. The use of changing order and syntactic transformation is necessary in interpreting between English and Chinese in that the two languages differ greatly in syntactic features. Moreover, not a single case of transfer (the interpreter uses target language words that are etymologically or phonetically similar to those in the source language) was identified.

3.2   Teacher subjects' feedback on strategy training

The questionnaires from the teachers required no transcription or encoding but analysis. The feedback from the teachers on the teaching of specific interpreting strategies reveals that the teachers attached importance to strategy training.

As can be seen in table 6, the teachers included strategy training in class. Strategies like paraphrase, syntactic transformation, omission and compression were the mostly taught ones. A point of 4 or more means that the teachers' responses to the items "I have taught my students to …" in the questionnaire were "usually true of me" or "completely or almost completely true of me".

By contrast, strategies such as repetition, incomplete sentence, no repair, and transcodage were not taught. A point of 2 or less indicates that the teachers' choices on questionnaire items "I have taught my students to …" were "usually not true of me" or "never or almost never true of me". Those strategies were not mentioned in class because they degrade the quality of interpreting and damage the credibility of the interpreters. It makes sense that teachers only stressed the use of strategies that help build interpreters' positive image.

Strategy	Responses from teacher subjects	Mean value	Std. Deviation
Paraphrase	3	4.33	0.58
Syntactic transformation	3	4.33	0.58
Omission	3	4	0
Compression	3	4	0
Changing order	3	4	1
Stalling	3	4	0
Evasion	3	3.66	0.58
Addition	3	3.33	0.58
Approximation	3	3.33	2.08
Parallel reformulation	3	3	1.73
Inferencing	3	3	1.73
Repetition	3	2.66	1.15
Incomplete sentence	3	2.33	1.53
Repair	3	2.33	1.53
No repair	3	1.66	0.58
Transcodage	3	1.33	0.58
Valid N (listwise)	3		

Table 6. Descriptive statistics on training of interpreting strategies

Although the teachers preferred not to teach strategies that degrade the interpreter's positive image, students still used some of them in their performances.

The reasons might be that students were forced to use them when their cognitive resources were overloaded and were not able to deal with it properly. Therefore, it is important for teachers to teach students how to use strategies appropriately to ease their cognitive workload without degrading their image.

It should be admitted that the teachers' practices differed from each other. The data indicates that some taught strategies like approximation, parallel reformulation, inferencing and repair in class, while others did not. This is not surprising because teaching is quite subjective and variability is normal.

3.3   Correlation between strategy use and training

This study aims at investigating if students' strategy use and strategy training are related. To show the effect of strategy training on student interpreters, a correlation analysis between strategy teaching and strategy use was conducted. Table 7 presents the correlation between the mean of the teachers' feedback on their teaching of strategies and students' strategy employment frequency.

		Strategy training	Strategy use frequency
Strategy training	Pearson correlation	1	.501*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.040
	N	17	17
Strategy use frequency	Pearson correlation	.501*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.
	N	17	17

Note: * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. Correlation analysis between strategy training and strategy employment frequency

As can be seen from table 7, the correlation between the teachers' teaching of specific strategies and students' strategy use frequency is significant because it reaches the level of 0.05. The confidence on the positive correlation between the teaching of specific strategies and strategy employment frequency is 95%. In other words, there are five chances out of 100 where the result might be wrong. However, the positive relationship between teaching strategies and students' strategy use does not necessarily mean that there is a 100% causal relation between them. There are other factors which also determine the strategy use of student interpreters, among which are students' level of interpreting, knowledge base, the input material, memory, note-taking skills, etc. Since this is an observational study instead of an experimental research, no manipulation of variables means that the findings of this research need to be confirmed in the future.

It can be said that students' strategy use is partially attributed to teachers' teaching in class. However, since no control group who had not been taught

those strategies was involved in this study, it is still premature to conclude that the training of interpreting strategies is effective.

4. Concluding remarks

Data from the student subjects reveals that student interpreters employed 16 strategies. Some help build the interpreter's positive image, while others are risky and should only be used in emergency situations. This is consistent with the cost of using strategies which might be potential information loss, credibility loss, impact loss, or time and processing capacity cost (Gile 1997/2002: 172).

The strategies used by the students also suggest that strategy use is related to interpreting mode, language pair, and working direction, though more evidence from similar research designs is necessary to corroborate the current findings. The data from the teachers reveals that strategy training was a component of their interpreting classes. The correlation analysis shows that the teaching of specific strategies is positively related to students' strategy use.

The conclusion of this research suggests implications in interpreter education. Firstly, since strategy training contributes to students' strategy use, strategies should be a necessary component of interpreter training. The intentional and automatic use of them reduces the cognitive load, which helps to minimize the side effects from processing capacity saturation and facilitate the general interpreting process. Secondly, language pair-specific strategies may be introduced and repeatedly practiced by students. This may allow students to bridge the differences between the source language and the target language more efficiently.

The findings presented here are valid only for the language pair, interpreting mode, interpreting direction, and input speech involved in the current study. They cannot be generalized, and need to be treated with caution before they are further tested. Firstly, the data obtained for analysis is restricted because of the limited number of subjects, which may have influenced the outcome. Secondly, retrospection has its drawbacks. Some strategic decisions may not have been recalled because of the memory limitation of the subjects, the limitation of the stimulus materials, or the automatic nature of strategy use. The fact that the non-strategic fragments account for more than 70% of the retrospective remarks seems to support it. Given the above-mentioned weaknesses, it remains to be seen if the findings can be confirmed or rejected in the future.

Appendix 1 Input Material for the Interpreting Task

Ladies and gentlemen, what values should we pursue for the prosperity of Asia in the new century? I believe that the three values of freedom, diversity and openness are the driving forces behind peace and development in Asia. // First, it goes without saying that freedom refers to democracy and human rights politically. Economically, it means the development of a market economy. // Political freedom and economic freedom are reinforcing each other in the process of their development. With some twists and turns, Asia as a whole has been taking sig-

nificant steps towards freedom over the last half century. // Transition to a democratic political system has been inevitable, as economic development has created the conditions for the emergence of a middle class and civil society. I believe that the historic trends that are apparent in Asia should be a source of pride for us all. // Second, development in Asia has occurred against a background of tremendous diversity, where each country has its own distinctive history and social and cultural values. Naturally, we thus see differences in the processes and speed of development. // While respecting diversity, however, it is important for us to promote our common interests and our shared goals, recognizing positive influences of each other despite differences among countries. // In other words, we must leave behind parochial nationalism and dogmatism, and promote mutually beneficial cooperation based on equality in order to enjoy common prosperity. This should be our guiding principle. // Third, our cooperation must not be of an inward-looking, closed nature, but one characterized by openness to the world outside Asia. // In a world economy where globalization is advancing and economic integration, such as in Europe and Americas, is proceeding, cooperation both within Asia and between Asia and other regions must be pursued. This cooperation must be based on the principles of openness and transparency. // I believe Asia should set an example for the world by seeking regional cooperation that surpasses national and ethnic distinctions. // So, as we pursue prosperity in a free, diverse and open Asia, what are the specific challenges that we face? I'd like to discuss three challenges. They are reform, cooperation and conveying Asia's voice to the world. (taken from CATTI, Level 3, May, 2005.)

Appendix 2 Teacher Questionnaire

Part A Teacher background

> A01. Name:
> A02. Gender: M □   F □
> A03. Years of teaching interpreting:
> (Round up to the nearest whole number and include the current school year.)
> A04. Subject(s) taught:
> (consecutive interpreting / simultaneous interpreting / sight interpreting)

Part B Strategy training

The following items are about the teaching of strategies to your students. Please decide the degree of truth of each statement below. Your choice should depend on what you did instead of what you should do.
> 1 = This statement is never or almost never true of me;
> 2 = This statement is usually not true of me;
> 3 = This statement is somewhat true of me;
> 4 = This statement is usually true of me;
> 5 = This statement is completely or almost completely true of me.

B01. Addition: I have taught my students to add or expand something the speaker did not say in their interpreting to convey more complete and coherent target language.

B02. Repetition: I have taught my students to repeat previously processed elements in interpreting as a way of enhancing lexical accuracy or gaining more time to organize the language.

B03. Omission: I have taught my students to omit incomprehensible input or unnecessarily repetitive, redundant, unimportant or unacceptable utterances.

B04. Evasion: I have taught my students to avoid committing themselves to a definite position where source-text-based analysis fails to provide sufficient specification.

B05. Incomplete sentence: I have taught my students to use fragmented utterances, or to stop in mid-sentences and omit units of the text, if comprehension, note-reading, or memory failure arises.

B06. Approximation: I have taught my students to provide a near equivalent term, synonym, or less precise version of it in case of not being able to retrieve an ideal equivalent.

B07. Compression: I have taught my students to render the original meaning in a more general and concise way, with those repetitive, unimportant, or redundant deleted.

B08. Paraphrase: I have taught my students to explain the intended meaning of a source language term or wording when the suitable target correspondent is hard to retrieve.

B09. Changing order: I have taught my students to reformulate elements in one position in the source discourse in a different place in the target discourse so as to enable a better target language reformulation.

B10. Syntactic transformation: I have taught my students to depart from the surface structure of the original sentence and express the meaning of the original message using a different syntactic construction.

B11. Transcodage: I have taught my students to use word-for-word approach by relying on the surface structure of the source language because of not being able to grasp the overall meaning of the segment.

B12. Stalling: I have taught my students to produce generic utterances absent in the source speech which provide no new information but which enable them to delay production and avoid long pauses when faced with information retrieval or word choice problems in reformulation.

B13. Parallel reformulation: I have taught my students to invent something that is more or less plausible in the context, or to substitute elements that are not understood with elements mentally available because of comprehension, note-taking, or note-reading failure, so as not to pause or leave a sentence unfinished.

B14. Repair: I have taught my students to make corrections when realizing that something said is misinterpreted, or can be interpreted in a better way.

B15. No repair: I have taught my students to leave the fragment with the problem of misinterpretation or awkward expression as it is since correction may cause more harm than help.

B16. Inferencing: I have taught my students to recover lost information on the basis of the speech context and their general knowledge.

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Scope

In recent years, scholarly interest in Interpreting Studies has embraced broader horizons beyond conference interpreting to explore new forms of interlinguistic communication that are emerging in response to rapid transformations within our modern societies. Issue 19 of *The Interpreters' Newsletter* will focus on   Sign Language Interpreting (SLI) an exciting new research area that is developing in different parts of the world. The provision of formal training in SLI began in the second half of the 20th century in a handful of countries in response to a growing demand for qualified interpreters able to assist deaf people in a wide variety of social contexts and is spreading worldwide at an uneven pace. Some training institutions have several decades of experience in the field, whereas others are still at early stages of development or planning. Owing to national linguistic policies and political shortcomings, many obstacles to universal provision of SL interpreter training and, thus, easy access for deaf people to the services of professional Sign Language interpreters still remain. The editor invites theoretical and empirical contributions that address different aspects of SLI in any language combination. The aim of this issue is to call on practitioners, trainers and researchers to address the state-of-art in their fields of experience. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

Topics of interest

- Spoken- vs. signed-language interpreting
- Public Service Interpreting for deaf clients (research in different work settings)
- Sign Language conference interpreting
- Deaf interpreters
- SLI skills and strategies
- Quality in SLI
- SLI and the media
- SLI and new technologies

Papers must be submitted in English or French and describe original research which is neither published nor currently under review by other journals or conferences. Submitted manuscripts will be subject to a process of peer review. Guidelines are available at: http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/2119

Manuscripts should be around 6,000 words long, including references and should be sent as Word attachments to the e-mail address: jkellett@units.it (Subject: "NL 19 PAPER").

Important dates

Manuscript submission:	15th November 2013
Notification of acceptance:	30th April 2014
Publication:	December 2014

call for papers:
issue on Dialogue Interpreting
Guest Editors: *Eugenia Dal Fovo* and *Natacha S. A. Niemants*

Scope
Dialogue Interpreting (DI) has been gaining increasing scholarly interest in Interpreting Studies, revising the notion of interpreter invisibility to account for the physical and verbal participation of interpreters in the interaction. This interest has fostered discussion on the socio-pragmatic aspects of the interpreter's role in a complex, multi-party communication activity. Issue 20 of *The Interpreters' Newsletter* will offer researchers and practitioners the opportunity to share research results and aims to provide an exhaustive overview of the latest advances in this field. The editors invite contributions that address theoretical, methodological and practical issues of DI.

Topics of interest
Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Design and creation of DI corpora and methods of interrogation
- Analysis of interpreters' performances
- DI in different work settings (e.g. health care, immigration services, courtrooms, business settings, police stations, television, etc.)
- Interactional aspects of DI (interpreting as translation and coordination activity, role and identity negotiation, co-construction of meaning, etc.)
- Code switching in interpreter-mediated dialogue-like interactions
- DI *in absentia* (i.e. remote, telephone or video interpreting)
- Ad hoc, natural or non-professional interpreting in dialogue-like interactions
- Multimodality in DI
- Cultural competence and DI
- Note taking in DI
- DI quality assessment and users' expectations
- DI ethical, socio-cultural and ideological issues
- Recurring tendencies in interpreters' translational behaviour and their impact – if any – on the dissemination of DI rules of conduct and professional norms

Papers must be submitted in English or French and describe original research which is neither published nor currently under review by other journals or conferences. Submitted manuscripts will be subject to a process of double-blind peer review. Guidelines are available at: http://www.openstarts.units.it/eut/Instructions2AuthorsInterpreters.pdf

Manuscripts should be around 6,000 words long, including references and should be sent as Word attachments to the e-mail address: interpretersnewsletter20@gmail.com (Subject: NL 20 PAPER; File Name: author's name _ IN2015 _ paper).

Important dates
Manuscript submission: 15th November 2014
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