

Style in Simultaneous Interpretation

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Abstract: Several tools are being developed to aid in the quantitative analysis of interpretation style, a topic that has previously been discussed only in broad strokes.

These tools can be used to investigate questions such as: How does an interpreter divide up a source language input, how much does he mirror a source language speaker, and how much reformulation does he practice?

In addition, an adaptive monitoring instrument is created to aid in the graphic representation of the linear developments of a source language discourse and its simultaneous interpretation equivalent.

It not only allows for the evaluation of convergence and divergence between the two discourses, but it also allows for commentary on an interpreter's tempo by characterizing the narrow and broad periodicity within his discourse, as well as his composure.

Keywords: Style, simultaneous interpretation, quantitative analysis, monitoring instrument, convergence, divergence.

Simultaneous interpretation (SI) style is one of the most important aspects of interpretation performance.

It is concerned with the characteristics of the interpreting method rather than the content of the information being rendered.

As a result, talking about it will inevitably lead to a discussion of interpretation techniques, strategies, and cognitive tasks. The issue of what constitutes good interpretation cuts to the heart of SI style. There are no steadfast stylistic norms and criteria because there is a lack of consensus among theorists and practitioners alike on the norms of SI and the quality criteria that interpreters must adhere to.

In fact, it is not an exaggeration to state that there is no reliable method for assessing SI.

The International Association of Conference Interpreters as «that elusive something that everyone recognizes but no one can successfully define» (AIIC 1982) defines quality in conference interpretation.

Similarly, SI style is an elusive concept that interpretation users can sense but cannot articulate.

They can make general value judgments about whether an interpretation's p Researchers have been attempting to identify "just what it is that makes for excellence in [SI]," as evidenced by the 1994 Turku conference on interpreting (Shlesinger 1997: 123).

Participants in that conference's workshop on simultaneous interpretation quality discussed the issue from three perspectives: market, research, and didactic.

They were critical of subjective criteria for being variable, and they expressed the need for identifying objective criteria for assessing quality. performance is adequate or not, but they cannot agree.

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Because of inconsistencies in quality perception among those whose discourse is being interpreted as well as those for whom the interpretation is being made, there is an increasing call for more objective methods of quality assessment.

There is a clear desire to identify what distinguishes one interpretation performance from another and to develop more concrete criteria for assessing the evasive aspects of quality.

Several studies, including one conducted by Gile (1991b), highlighted the need for objective methods of assessment, finding only a weak correlation between 'satisfactory quality' as perceived by a given speaker and the fidelity, linguistic acceptability, clarity, and/or terminological accuracy of the translator's output.

Cartellieri (1983: 213) suggests that we find quantitative features that may eventually develop into qualitative criteria in the development of objective methods of SI assessment.

Pöchhacker (1994: 234) advocates this idea, suggesting that the question then arises as to "how we should best go about defining and analysing the text produced by the interpreter as a 'objective', that is, physical reality.

What are the textualized parameters and variables that underpin quality judgments in simultaneous interpreting, and how can they be measured and quantified in a corpus of texts?"

Quantitative Aspects of SI Style

On many levels, one can deal with simultaneous interpreted discourse: pragmatic or semantic, intra- or inter-textual, qualitative or quantitative, and so on.

The interpreted discourse, in the words of Pöchhacker (1994: 238), is a "multifaceted whole within a communicative situation."

According to Pöchhacker (1994: 236), "in simultaneous interpreting, the text as such is [...] a multi-parametric semiotic whole, which, in its full complexity, often defies description," so he proposes "a text model with constituents in both the audio-visual and the visual channels, on a verbal-paraverbal-kinesic continuum."

Pöchhacker suggests in his model of the SI 'audio-visual text' that "one can derive a number of textual features or parameters, such as slips and structure shifts in verbal text."

Chunking

Chunking is a fundamental aspect of SI style that affects the interpreter's ability to deal with the seemingly endless flow of SL discourse.

This is a coping strategy used by interpreters to break up long stretches of TL discourse into manageable chunks.

Gile (1995: 196) promotes chunking as a strategy for "saving short-term memory capacity requirements by unloading information from memory more quickly."

Similarly, Jones (1998) encourages SI trainees to use the 'salami technique,' which is based on chunking.

It entails breaking up long sentences into several shorter ones.

"The salami technique is especially useful when working from languages that have a natural tendency to long, complicated sentences, especially those that can have Russian doll-like syntax," he says.



Lag

Lag is an inherent feature of SI performance; the interpreter must first listen to what the speaker has to say before beginning their interpretation.

Its duration varies depending on some SL and TL variables (for example, speech delivery rate, information density, redundancy, word order, syntactic characteristics, and so on).

The average lag duration varies due to a variety of factors such as language combination, discourse type, information density, idiosyncratic preferences, and so on.

Nonetheless, many researchers attempted to quantify the average delay for various language combinations: Oléron and Nanpon (1964) and Barik (1969) discovered it to be two to four seconds long, Lederer (1978) three to six seconds, Treisman (1965) four to five words, and Gerver (1972) 5.7 words.

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