EMCI WORKSHOP

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Teaching Simulteanous Interpretation Into a "B" Language

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Summary

Introduction

Justification has been provided in the past for systematic recourse to interpretation into the interpreter's B language. However, this approach developed mainly in countries in which foreign language interpreters, able to work from the national language into their A language, were not available. The justification given – better comprehension of the A language and therefore more accurate interpreting from A into B – seems less convincing in today's world with ample travel opportunities and access to foreign media. Interpreters can be expected to have full understanding of their B (and C) languages.

Fluency and accuracy of expression are likely to be better when interpreters work into their mother tongue from a sound B language. Indeed, accuracy of content may also be better to the extent that if too much effort is required for expression, as may be the case when working into B, the interpreter may listen and process the SL speech less well.

International and regional organisations with more than two working languages have all chosen a system of separate booths with interpreters working into their mother tongue from one or several passive languages. Working back into B (eg. The Chinese and Arabic booths at the United Nations) was initially accepted as a waiver to the general rule, justified only by the shortage of interpreters with these languages as B or C.

It is also widely accepted that simultaneous instruction should begin with teaching into A so that the students can focus on processing technique rather than worrying about expression. Most conference interpreting courses introduce simultaneous practice into a B language only once the basic simultaneous technique has been taught in the A language. Training models are designed primarily to teach simultaneous into a fluent and flexible A language (although this does not apply to consecutive interpreting).

However, with increasing business and political contacts with countries whose languages are not widely practised beyond their borders (eg Vietnam, the Baltic States, etc..), recourse to simultaneous interpretation into B is at times inevitable. The European Institutions will require some accession country interpreters to work back into B, given the shortage of interpreters with a sufficiently sound knowledge of candidate country languages in B or C. International organisations with two official languages work with a single booth system, so that interpreters necessarily work back into B. Private market contracts for interpreting often require teams with the national language plus retour into an international language (usually English).

Simultaneous interpretation into B is thus likely to be widely used in the future for a variety of practical reasons. This being so, it was felt appropriate to organise a workshop to take stock of teaching practices and to reappraise the various methods used in the light of new expectations.

The EMCI workshop on teaching simultaneous into a B language was held at ESIT in Paris in September 2002. It brought together the EMCI Institutions and other training centres in Central and Eastern Europe. The participants are broadly representative of conference interpreting courses in Europe in geographical and teaching terms.

Survey of Users

Expectations and needs

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There have been numerous surveys conducted in the past to ascertain users' (i.e. conference participants') needs and expectations of simultaneous interpretation. A few names that spring to mind are Bühler, Gile, Kopczynski, Kurz, Marrone and the AIIC Research Committee report. If it is possible at all to summarize the findings of such a wide range of authors, one could note the emphasis on accuracy of content and the need to focus on the specific requirements of listeners.

Thus, Kopczynski writes « the minimum level… is practically equivalent translation, i.e. one that may not be flawless but which carries over the referential content of the original ».[1]

The AIIC report notes that the criterion most frequently mentioned by participants in evaluating SI is « accuracy of content ».

Kurz notes « the target language receiver or listener must be seen as an essential element in the process ».

Therefore, despite obvious differences, it would seem fair to say that all the surveys indicate the importance of flexibility and pragmatism. Priority seems to be given to clarity and accuracy of the message, as indeed one would expect, with synchronicity, correct use of technical terms and voice skills being rated as rather less important and hardly any attention being paid to accent or grammar.

Given the wealth of such studies and the relative overlap of results, what justification could there be for yet another survey?

The purpose of the present piece of research was to gauge conference participants' reaction to and satisfaction with simultaneous interpretation (SI) into B. The argument about the respective merits of working into A or B in SI dates back to the very beginnings of SI and has continued more or less unabated since. Seleskovitch and Lederer rejected SI into B for many years on grounds of lesser flexibity and range of expression in the B language, supplemented by personal observation of numerous conferences.[2]

"… on a pu observer dans d'innombrables conférences que, à qualité égale d'interprètes, la simultanée en langue A est toujours supérieure à la simultanée en langue B."

However, there is a general trend towards SI into B from the less widely used languages in the institutional setting and towards bilingual markets with systematic SI back into B on private markets. Indeed, the second edition of *Pédagogie raisonnée* accepts this trend and contains a section on appropriate selection and teaching methods for SI into B, whilst still maintaining that in terms of quality SI into A is preferable.[3] However, other schools of thought particularly in Eastern Europe have always maintained that quality should be better when working into B. Claims about relative

[1] Andrej Kopczynski, Problems of quality in conference interpreting, in Fisiak J. (ed) 1984, Contrastive Linguistics: Prospects and Problems, Berlin, Mouton, pp 283-300

[2] Seleskovith Danica and Lederer Marianne, 1989, *Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation,* Didier erudition, Paris, p.135

[3] Seleskovitch Danica and Lederer Marianne, 2002, *Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation,* Didier erudition, Paris, pp323 and following.

quality of SI have not been fully substantiated or disproved and this survey is not designed for that purpose, but merely to study user awareness and reaction to directionality in simultaneous interpreting.

In order to study this particular aspect of SI quality, as perceived by users, a series of interviews was conducted with conference participants at meetings in Paris (held at the OECD headquarters) over a fifteen month period (January 2002 to April 2003). The meetings included OECD Committees, but also seminars and events that attracted a broad a range of participants as possible and not just the regular representatives of OECD member countries, as well as meetings organised by other, related bodies such as the ECMT (European conference of Ministers of Transport), the IEA (International Energy Agency) and the Development Centre. Only those meetings were selected at which interpreters working into A and into B provided interpretation for the same language pair. The interpretation was recorded in most cases with the assistance of the technical staff. Interpreters included many free-lance interpreters. Experience ranged from one year to over 30, but most the interpreters had at least five years of experience. Their degree of experience and regularity of working into B varied considerably with some providing SI into B on a daily basis over many years and others just "helping out" from time to time. Participants were interviewed either during or just after the meeting with interviews lasting approximately ten minutes.

The project is observational, but interactive in that the investigator intervenes of necessity during the interviews. Any such research entails "the risk of interference by the researcher", as pointed out by Gile, who identifies more specifically for user expectation surveys three types of bias: selection of more friendly respondents by the interviewer, respondents' awareness that the interviewer is an interpreter and interpreter-interviewer's bias in recording and analysing the responses.[4] These reservations are certainly to be taken seriously. A serious attempt was made to eliminate or reduce the first two sources of bias. The interviewer did not introduce herself as an interpreter, but stated that the survey was being conducted by the conference service. Participants were interviewed firstly on the basis of whether they had used interpretation some or all of the time and secondly for reasons of ease of access in terms of seating in crowded meeting rooms. As to the third point, objectivity is undoubtedly impossible. It should however be pointed out that responses did not match the interviewer's prior expectations.

The following questions were asked:

- How often do you attend international meetings with interpretation?
- Do you need interpretation?
- What are your expectations of the interpretation?
- Do you consider that those expectations are met?
- At this meeting you have heard some (one) interpreter(s) working into their mother tongue and others working into an acquired language. Did you notice this? Did it bother you? How did you feel about the individual interpreting styles?

These questions actually took some time to formulate after a long period of trial and error, the main difficulty being to elicit valid comments about interpreters working into B, as the A-B distinction as such does not appear relevant to most participants, who were more anxious to discuss quality generally and even equipment-related issues such as background noise, comfort of headsets and the like.

The first questions were intended to gain information about the participants themselves. Participants were also asked in what capacity they were attending the meeting and how they felt about it, in order to ascertain whether they had an active interest in the proceedings.

These initial questions were intended to avoid a pitfall identified by Gile who points out that participants may have a greater or lesser interest in the meeting and would probably listen less critically to interpretation if they feel uninvolved in

[4] Gile, Daniel, 1998, "Observational Studies and Experimental Studies in the Investigation of Conference Interpreting", pp 69-93, *Target*, 10:1 p 75

the discussions.[5] This observation, although based on a single meeting, seems non-trivial and consequently participants who expressed only perfunctory interest in the proceedings were not included in the survey.

Another limitation of such surveys is that participants will presumably react to the specific interpretation they have just heard and thus tend to identify quality criteria that are lacking or on the contrary particularly appreciated in that particular instance. The survey has attempted to turn the immediacy of reaction to advantage by inviting interviewees to make comments about individual "interpreting styles" as a basis for discrimination between SI into B and SI into A evaluation.

1- Participants

Owing to the restriction mentioned above, only 38 interviews were included in the survey findings. Of these 21 listened to the French interpretation and 17 to the English. Interviewees were both native speakers of these languages and also non-native speakers. Three interviewees were chairing their meeting.

All those listening into English needed interpretation to a very large extent. Of those listening to the French interpretation about half admitted to needing the interpretation at all times. However, the remaining participants, although not totally reliant on interpretation from English, still listened to the interpretation some or most of the time. Reasons given were mainly that it is too tiring to listen to a foreign language all day (9), that interpretation was more convenient when having to take notes or respond to questions (2) and, in one instance, to have a rest when the discussion was not particularly important (1)!. Participants also mentioned that some speakers had strong accents or were too fast to understand easily.

Nearly all participants were familiar with interpretation, attending international meetings regularly at various international organisations and, to a lesser extent, on the private market. Accordingly, many interviewees had obviously given some thought to the issue of interpreting and made well-considered comments (see below, "expectations").

To conclude, 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. On the whole they attend a wide range of meetings several times a year. Their needs are the same whether they are at a conference on the private market or at an international organisation. Interpreting quality should therefore be consistent.

2- Expectations

As indicated above, interviewees were on the whole non-naïve users of interpretation. They were often able – and at least felt able – to judge the accuracy of the interpretation by comparing notes with colleagues, on the basis of the coherence of the information or by using "proxies" such as tone of the interpreter, accuracy of technical vocabulary and so on. Some even claimed to check accuracy by listening sporadically to both the original and the interpretation. Vuorikoski points out that Finnish delegates often understand English and use the interpretation into Finnish rather like "sub-titles".[6] It seems unlikely that participants are actually able to compare in any detailed way the source speech and the interpretation, but they can probably assess interpreter fidelity using various proxies such as consistency, confidence of delivery and comparison with their knowledge of topic and speaker.

Spontaneously, participants evoke two main expectations, which confirm the findings of other surveys – accuracy of content and what could be described in general terms as "quality of presentation". However, both headings have to be

[5] "L'évaluation de la qualité de l'interprétation par les délégués : une étude de cas", The Interpreters' Newsletter 3, pp.66-71

[6] Vuorkoski A-R., "Simultaneous Interpretation – User experience and expectation" in C.Picken (ed), Translation – the vital link, Proceedings of the XIIIth World Congress of FIT (vol 1, pp 317-327), London, Institute of Translation and Interpreting, p 324

defined in broad terms, as the questions posed about expectations were open and a wide range of different terms were used by respondents.
Accuracy: As one would expect, this criterion figured highest on the list of expectations. However, interestingly, it was not always the first reaction. Many respondents only mentioned "accuracy" towards the end of the interview and most seemed to take accuracy of content for granted, as being the basic service expected of any interpreter. It is worth noting that most interviewees, when mentioning accuracy or "fidelity", went to the trouble of specifying that they did not mean "word for word" translation or literal rendition. Some even used the terminology typical of much interpreting theory such as "le vouloir dire de l'orateur", "getting the speaker's point across" or "faire passer le sens". When asked about this "non-literal" expectation, respondents explained that the message transmitted should incorporate both semantics and pragmatics, should include style and should convey the thrust of the speaker's reasoning. In other words, participants wished to know where speakers stand on specific issues and how they are expressing their views.

Presentation: This covers a broad range of qualities, such as smooth delivery, synchronicity, lack of hesitation. More generally, participants used such delivery features as an indication of how much the interpreter understands what he/she is saying. Taken together these qualities could be summarised as "booth presence" in that they contribute to the impression that the interpreter understands and cares about the message. Synchronicity was frequently quoted and its importance justified on the grounds that listeners do not want to feel cut off from the meeting. It was particularly important to those respondents who were chairing their meetings.

Terminology: This was mentioned frequently and to some extent it straddles both the accuracy and presentation issues. An interpreter who uses incorrect terminology is assumed not to have any genuine understanding of the subject matter and thus lacks credibility. It is also a frequently cited source of irritation for listeners. Several respondents spontaneously mentioned the need for interpreters to have access to documentation prior to meetings and to have sufficient time for preparation. They had noted that lack of preparation was often the cause of inadequate interpreting.

In no instance did an interviewee mention spontaneously correct pronunciation or accent or other formal elements of discourse. Nor did references to voice quality (except in one case) refer to the actual sound of the voice as such, but rather to liveliness or dullness of tone and convincing delivery.

To sum up, participants want – and indeed need, if they are to participate in the meeting – to understand the speaker's meaning in all its facets, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic. They also want to have the sense that the interpreter understands, for by definition they hear the message through the interpretation. There is no evidence on the basis of this small sample that expectations differ noticeably depending on the language direction or the type of meeting (technical, political, negotiations…). Expectations of interpretation are thus fairly high. There would seem to be little leeway for downward quality negotiation (see also below).

3- User satisfaction

Most interviewees felt that interpretation was reasonably satisfactory. Only nine claimed to be satisfied in nearly all cases with another four saying they were not really happy with the interpretation. Most were satisfied on the whole with certain caveats and reservations.

Reasons given for mild dissatisfaction related mainly to elements grouped together above under "presentation". Inaccurate content was mentioned only six times and was considered very serious. It would seem that participants assume that interpretation will be accurate and focus more on other aspects. Also, despite participants' own claims to the contrary, they are perhaps better able to judge other criteria than accuracy. Finally, "hesitations", "lack of clarity" and "inaccurate terminology" could all be taken as proxies for inaccurate rendition.

No interviewee mentioned as a reason for dissatisfaction accent – regional or foreign -, incorrect grammar or a non-native interpreter.

A number of interviewees stated satisfaction with the interpretation at this particular meeting, but claimed that interpreting was often poorer elsewhere, particularly in "technical" meetings. The reasons for dissatisfaction with interpreting almost always concern the interpreters' poor grasp of the subject matter which is often felt to be very technical. Poor quality is deduced from inappropriate terminology, patent inaccuracies and a general sense of vagueness. Participants identify lack of preparation as being a primary cause of poor interpreting performance. It should be pointed out that most interpreters did have prior access to documents for the Paris meetings covered in the survey, but major efforts are required to encourage organisers to provide background material and also to convince interpreters of the importance of systematic preparation. This would seem to be particularly true of smaller, technical meetings.
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Any prior disappointing experience with interpreting seems to have long term repercussions. Only two interviewees included in the study expressed a general distrust of interpretation, in both cases due to a specific past incident of inaccurate rendition. One interviewee not included also quoted a specific example of unacceptable interpretation that dated back some years and had led to permanent distrust and rejection of interpreting. The three participants had subsequently adopted a new approach to listening to interpretation, according to their language understanding constraints. One – who could not be included – had stopped using interpreting passively, although continued to speak in French and rely on interpreters to render his statements accurately. Another French speaker has chosen to use interpreting for the less important parts of the meeting, so as to save his listening capacity for key statements which he listens to in English. The third, a British participant, has little option but to use interpretation, as his foreign language skills are poor. However, he listens with a critical ear and displayed a clear preference for "literal" interpretation, which he defined as simple, close to the original and generally non-intrusive. In all cases, the initial incident of interpretation failure was one where there had been gross inaccuracy in rendition with a distortion of the speaker's meaning. The long term damage of very poor interpreting is considerable. A single incident can lead to a permanent undermining of listener confidence and even a refusal to use interpreter services.

4- Assessment of Interpretation into B

It proved difficult to obtain information about SI into B as opposed to SI into A, as this distinction does not seem relevant to conference participants who "listen to the meeting and not to the interpreters", to quote one interviewee. Most respondents appeared puzzled by the question. This led to some reformulation of the questionnaire and a focus on "individual interpreting styles". Although most participants (but not all, even when the interpreter had a fairly marked accent) accepted that they had noticed one or several of the interpreters was not a native speaker, they were uninterested in this aspect of interpreting.
It was also difficult to obtain comments about individual interpreting, possibly because participants feared interpreters would be sanctioned, despite assurances to the contrary, but more probably because, unless exceptionally good or bad, interpreting is perceived as a single service. As one participant put it "I am not really interested in the interpreters, but in the interpretation".

When preference was stated, there was no clear correlation with directionality. Some participants expressed a preference for the SI of an interpreter (or interpreters) working into B. Dissatisfaction was not specifically associated with interpreting directionality in terms of poor expression in any instance. Accent is not a problem, at least in the context of the meetings in Paris. Indeed, one participant expressed a preference for a colloquial and fluent interpreter she assumed was working in his mother tongue, although the TL was in fact the interpreter's B language and colleagues considered that, although good, the interpreter's B language was certainly not close to native quality. This confirms the findings of the AIIC Research Committee.[7]

From the small sample of responses to preference, there was a slight tendency for participants to express greater annoyance with work into B, not so much in terms of numbers of replies (5 responses for dissatisfaction and annoyance as opposed to 4 for work into A), as in terms of degree of annoyance. However, 5 interpretations into B were rated specifically as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Possibly when SI into B is not successful, the quality deteriorates more markedly than for SI into A. However, the findings may also reflect the quality – of lack thereof – of individual interpreters, whether working into A or into B. It should be noted that one interpreter was cited as poor by participants listening to his work into A and into B. The reasons given for dissatisfaction with specific interpretations are inaccurate rendition of technical terms, lack of clarity, dull intonation and hesitations or gaps.

5- Interpreters' Own Assessment

The user survey was supplemented with a brief questionnaire addressed to 13 colleagues about their work into B.
The following questions were put:

- How long have you been working as an interpreter?
- How often do you work into B in the booth?
- What are your expectations for your own work in SI into B?
- Do you feel that your work meets those expectations?
- If not, why not?
- Do you prefer working into A or into B? Why?
- What are the differences, if any, of working into A and into B?

Most interpreters claim to be less ambitious when working into B, in that they attempt to concentrate more on simply getting the message across and "not worrying too much about style". Those with more experience are often less ambitious than novice interpreters who would like to do as well as into A. All the interpreters questioned, despite very different degrees of experience and B language proficiency, consider that they succeed in meeting their own expectations on the whole. The difficulties that arise are "getting stuck" for a specific word or term and having less flexibility to find an alternative than into A; anything unexpected, such as anecdotes or jokes; speed and, finally, tiring more quickly.
There would seem to be a good match between interpreters' ambitions and users' expectations and assessment is also similar (satisfactory on the whole). The fact that interpreters feel their rendition is more vulnerable to constraints such as speed, unprimed information and fatigue also confirms the tentative findings about directionality preference.

All interpreters said they preferred to work into A, the reasons given being that it is less tiring, one is less tense and has more flexibility.

Interpreters who had not had tuition in SI into B, even those who have been working for many years, still wished they had been given formal training. Training was perceived essentially, both by those who had benefited and those who had not, as important in confidence-building, with teachers providing reassurance that expressions and terms used were appropriate.

[7] « Half the persons interview said that it is un important if the interpreter has a foreign or regional accent. A further quarter rated it fairly unimportant. Only 8% replied that such accents are very irritating. » Expectations of users of conference interpretation, Moser in Interpreting, John Benjamin's, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1996, pp 145-178, p173

6- Conclusion

The reservations and risk of bias inherent to any observational study involving interviews can not be dismissed despite attempts to ensure as much objectivity as possible. This is particularly the case when requesting a quality assessment of a personal service such as interpreting. However, given the broad nature of the issues under discussion – comparing user satisfaction with interpretation into B and into A – a fairly crude approach can be justified. This point is made by Gile.[8]

It should also be pointed out that the survey can not claim to measure actual quality of interpreting, either into A or into B, but only users' perception thereof. The interviewer's own assessment of the interpreting quality often differed somewhat from that of respondents. In particular, respondents were less aware – and less bothered by – interpretation into a B language, in terms of accent, intonation and inappropriate language usage.

The survey raises many questions that cannot be answered definitively with such a limited number of respondents. The whole issue of meaning and style undoubtedly merits closer attention. To what extent can the two be separated, given that pragmatic aspects of message are judged relevant and that these are often conveyed stylistically? To what extent can conference participants really assess content accuracy?.

However, the survey does show that conference participants have fairly high expectations of interpreting. They expect not only accuracy, but also rapid and smooth delivery, correct terminology and a clear representation of the speaker's point. They are critical when they feel that the interpreter is no longer trying to get across meaning – or is unable to do so, whether this be due to lack of preparation, objective difficulty or poor expression or comprehension skills.

SI into a B language is not perceived as significant by participants, at least in the frame of this study. Conference participants make little distinction between SI into A and SI into B and SI into B is on the whole appreciated and evaluated as being as good as SI into A, with the one qualification that it is perhaps more vulnerable to deterioration under strain.

It has not been possible to assess possible psychological effects of listening to a non-native interpreter. The non-identity of shared native language could conceivably increase the psychological distance between participants and interpreters. They perceive interpreting as being a difficult task speed, accent and technicality make it harder. Nonetheless, I could also lead to a tendency to the use of simultaneous into B simplify the speakers' message, especially in the light of interpreters' answers to the brief questionnaire above. Participants would not necessarily be aware of such effects. However, the distance created by ill-prepared interpreters who obviously have inadequate understanding of the subject matter and discussions is likely to be greater than that due to lack off language community.

Finally, the importance of quality interpreting emerges strongly. Training must set high standards in terms of language proficiency and analytical skills, but also attitude. Ethics and professional working attitudes should be incorporated in the curriculum with emphasis placed on the importance of preparation and genuine interest in the topic and situation of meetings. Specific interpreter training for SI into B is considered necessary by professional interpreters.

[8] Gile, Daniel, 1998, *Target*
p 86 : "Most of the debate in interpreting research still focus not on minute differences, but on basic principles of 'doctrine' [….]. Small random differences between conditions do not contribute much to the debate, while wide, regular differences can have practical significance."

Questionnaire

How frequently do you attend meetings with interpretation ?

❑ More than six times a year	13
❑ Fairly frequently (2-6 times a year)	22
❑ Infrequently (less than twice a year)	3

Do you listen to interpreting into French? 21 *(of whom one was a non-native French)*

Do you listen to interpreting into English ? 17 *(of whom 4 are non-native English speakers)*

Do you need interpretation ?

❑ Yes	26
❑ Not really, but less tiring, convenient etc..	12

What are your expectations of interpretation (more than one possible answer) ?

❑ Accuracy	8
❑ Completeness	3
❑ Clarity	11
❑ To understand the speaker's point	11
❑ To understand the speaker's attitude and style	5
❑ Fast, fluent, synchronous	17
❑ Intonation and voice	8
❑ Sense that interpreter understands	7
❑ Accuracy of technical terms	11

Other

❑ Honesty, no bluffing	1
❑ Not literal	6
❑ Humour	1
❑ Non intrusive	2

Are those expectations met ?

❑ Nearly always	10
❑ On the whole	25
❑ Not really	3

Were you aware of the difference in interpreters working into A and into B ?

- Yes 22
- No 16

Were you bothered by interpretation into B ?

- No 36

But two had been elsewhere.
One (relatively inexperienced) participant wondered if work into B did not dilute meaning.

Did you prefer one interpreting style ?

- Yes 8

Preferences expressed in specific terms.

Good interpretation	**A**	**B**
Reasons given :		
Humour	**1**	
Clarity		**1**
Effort to convey message	**1**	**3**
Fast and fluent	**2**	**1**
Colloquial		**1***
***(respondent thought this interpreter was working into A)**		

Poor interpretation	**A**	**B**
Inappropriate connivance	**1**	
Vagueness		**2**
Monotonous intonation	**1**	**2**
Gaps, pauses	**1**	**1**
Inappropriate terminology	**1**	

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Interpreting into The B language

Krisztina Szabari

There is hardly another question which triggers as heated a debate among interpreters worldwide as interpreting into the active foreign language, the so-called B language. Dejean le Féal (1998) goes as far as wondering if the trend towards interpretation into B is actually hurting the profession. There are arguments for and against what is easier and more important: comprehension in the source language or expression in the target language. Ideally, of course, neither should be impaired. However, disregarding the issue of bilingualism in translation science, given the fact that the translator is a non-native speaker of one of the languages with which he works – either of the source language when he translates into his mother tongue, or of the target language when he translates into the non-mother tongue, the debate is a never-ending one, where certain conclusions can be drawn after a comprehensive assessment of the advantages and drawbacks of translation in both directions.

Interestingly enough, translation science has so far given rise to few research projects which address the differences between, and quality-related advantages and disadvantages of translation into the B language and into the A language on the basis of preliminarily set criteria. This paper offers a summary of all aspects of the issue and attempts to provide the structured review of sporadic references in literature. Our investigations have focused on interpreting, the term "translation" is used as a collective noun with reference to both written or oral translation, i.e. interpreting.

1 - The reality of the market

Before making any statement related to the quality or the technique of interpretation, the reality of the interpreter's job should be examined. Where, in what situation and with what languages do interpreters work exclusively into their A language and their B language respectively; which are the factors determining directionality? While research offers very little in this respect, it can be generally said that interpreting into the A language, i.e. into the mother tongue is the dominant or in certain cases exclusive direction at major international organisations, such as the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (widely known as SCIC by its French acronym) of the European Commission, and the Directorate for Interpretation of the European Parliament. Similarly, interpreting into the mother tongue dominates in the UN, the Council of Europe and NATO. These organisations work in close co-operations with AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters headquartered in Geneva, which unequivocally considers translation into the A language to be superior. Interpreter teams working with "major languages" (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, etc.) at international conferences staged in Western Europe are also composed on the basis of the mother tongue and attention is paid to eliminate interpreting from relay, which means that preferably each booth has interpreters who jointly cater for all of the official languages of the conference.

Western European free markets are not quite so rigid in requiring interpreting into the A language. Interpreters with German, English and French for their mother tongue report that in local or regional markets they are often required to work into their learned language, i.e. an interpreter with German mother tongue works into English or French and vice-versa. Graduate interpreter training in Germany has always laid a great emphasis on teaching interpreting into the B language. Working into the B language is deemed indispensable in this market as interpreters with the appropriate mother tongue are not necessarily available at all times and clients therefore do not have a choice.

Working into the B language has always been part of the interpretation practice in Central and Eastern European countries, in some cases, it has become dominant. This applies to major international events, such as the so-called Central European summits where interpreting into the B language is done through relay as the interpreters are not members of an internationally organized team but are recruited by the local organizers, who, motivated also by financial reasons, tend to have recourse to opportunities offered by the local market. At a conference where the official languages are, say, Polish, Czech, Slovakian, Hungarian, Slovenian and Romanian, it would probably be impossible anywhere in the world to provide an interpreter team which does not rely on relay and has two interpreters in each booth, who are capable of translating into their mother tongue directly from all of the other conference languages between them. Such meeting will inevitably require a relay language, which in general will be the language of the organizing country, or in cases where each delegation provides its own interpreters, the relay tends to be German or English – albeit these languages will not appear as official conference languages, nor are they likely to be the A language of any of the interpreters.

According to the findings of a survey conducted in Hungary in 2000 involving a hundred Hungarian conference interpreters (Szabari 2000), fifty percent of the respondents' work is done into their A language and fifty percent into their B language. Thirty-six percent of the respondents favour working into the B language. Several interpreters stated that the amount of work into the A language had increased since the political changeover: in the 1980's, the dominant direction of interpreting was into the B language.

In 2002, FIT and JTP, the Czech interpreters' association published a joint survey on the situation, qualification and working conditions of Central Eastern European interpreters (Katschinka 2002). The survey highlights the increasing role of international organizations in almost all of the countries of the region, resulting in a growing importance of interpretation into the A language. To the question of which was the dominant direction of interpreting, interpreters answered both directions were dominant in all of the countries, with the exception of Slovenia. Slovenian interpreters stated that seventy percent of their work is into their mother tongue.

In recent years, there has been a substantial modification in the interpreting practice of international organizations as well. With the increasing participation of Central and Eastern European countries, conference organizers were forced to involve interpreters who worked into their B language in a growing number of cases. According to an article on the quality of interpretation published in AIIC's web magazine *Communicate!* (Kahane 2000), interpreting from relay has become daily routine in the practice of SCIC and the European Parliament and is likely to be institutionalised after the enlargement in the near future. SCIC's strategy for 2004 specifically states that with 22 official and working languages it will be indispensable to employ all interpretation techniques, including relay and working into the B language (Memorandum 2002). The same applies to the European Parliament, whose Interpretation service lays a great emphasis on working with interpreters from the candidate countries, whose B languages, primarily English, French and German, is of a high standard of quality.

In summary, interpretation into the B language is definitely in demand in the market, however, its significance is conspicuous primarily in the communication between minor languages and major languages on the one hand, and among minor languages on the other hand. Securing A language interpreters is often a financial question as in most local markets A language interpreters are few and far between and the costs of higher fees (in the case of interpreters coming from "more expensive" countries) very often exceed the financial capabilities of organizers. Once less developed interpreting markets catch up with the standards of major international markets, if economic development so allows, if a uniform internal interpreting market emerges, interpreting into the B language may lose some of its significance. This, however, is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future.

2 - User's expectations

Over the past decade, research related to users' expectations has grown to become an important branch in translation science. The main intent of interpreters as language service providers is obviously to meet users' needs. This inevitably calls for familiarity with users' needs and expectations. Due to the relatively unknown nature of the interpreter profession, coupled with related misconceptions and the fact that public opinion considers interpreting no more than transcoding from a source language into a target language, hence essentially part and parcel of knowledge of a language, the expectations of users of interpretation services are extremely uncertain. Shlesinger (1997: 126) aptly states that quality is a most allusive and evasive concept for users, who in a number of cases simply do not know what they need and do not recognize what constitutes "good" or "adequate" interpretation for them.

In one of her studies, I. Kurz (2001) summarises researches into user's expectations. In the 1990s, a dozen or so questionnaire-based surveys were targeted at users at different conferences. In almost every case, users were asked to rank a range of criteria in order of importance, which generally include the following: native like pronunciation, pleasant tone of voice, fluency, logical relationships (cohesion), consistency of meaning (coherence), completeness, appropriate grammar and usage, and terminology. The surveys did not produce unanimous results and thus they underscore the hypothesis that users' needs tend to change in terms of the depth of their experience with interpretation services. Those who listen to interpretation for the first time lay a much greater emphasis on usage and grammar whereas regular conference goers unequivocally consider conveyance of the message and the logical cohesion of the text as the most important features. The priority of criteria also differed according to the topic of conference (science or social studies). Moreover, there seems to be some difference in expectations depending on users' age.

None of the questionnaires directly asked whether users accepted interpretation into the B language. In this respect, the importance of native accent and appropriate grammar and usage gives some indication. Interestingly enough these criteria are not ranked first in any of the surveys: they were given highest priority by participants of Council of Europe meetings. According to Bühler's survey (1986), when asked which criteria they used for assessing their colleagues' performance, AIIC interpreters considered native pronunciation of decisive importance.

It appears that more research is needed to explore the acceptance of interpretation into the B language. An important criterion may be the attitude of native speakers towards listening to a non-native. The level of tolerance may differ for the various languages depending on the openness of society, the proportion of non-native population, etc. In the case of Hungarian users, the level of tolerance is probably rather low as they are not used to listening, over longer periods, to professionals speaking Hungarian with a foreign accent on important technical issues. Hungarian as a foreign language is far less important than for instance, English or German.

It is often the case that users themselves are not native speakers at conferences with interpretation into major languages. In such instances, users may decidedly welcome interpreters working into their B language. This may happen at so-called asymmetrical conferences where Central European participants may contribute in their mother tongue but they can only listen to English or German interpretation. In the case of English, there may be a clash of user expectations as native speakers will have different expectations than interpreters in the other booth working from the English relay into their own languages, which again will differ from the expectations of non-English speaker participants with differing levels of mastery of English (Sunnari 1998: 319, Zauberga 2001: 283).

When examining users' expectations and interests, attention must be paid to the widely recognised fact that having to rely interpretation at all is a constraint and can be regarded as a second best to direct communication. The use of earphones will make it difficult for the user to listen for long periods of time, and while a slight accent may keep you awake, a strong non-native accent, style and use of terms are irritating (Bowen 1989).

3 - Researchers about the B language

According to Seleskovitch, founder of the Paris school, the interpreter should render the source language message with a total feel for the target language, so that the expressions he uses will sound immediately familiar to the listener, without the listener being forced to "reinterpret" or constantly reformulate the message in a way he would talk about the topic at hand (Seleskovitch 1989). This is best done in the interpreter's mother tongue or A language as the active knowledge of a foreign language can never be on a par with knowledge of the mother tongue (Seleskovitch 1989: 113). Hönig is of the opinion that interpreters and translators should produce a target language text that is "inconspicuous" (unauffällig) linguistically and culturally, in other words, a text that sounds natural (1995: 27), a requirement best met in the A language.

Conversely, followers of the Russian school have an opposite opinion. The two theories had a spectacular clash at a conference in Trieste in 1989. In the course of the debate, Danissenko (1989: 157) argued that conveying a full or near full message even if in a somewhat less idiomatic or slightly accented language serves the purpose much better than an incomplete or erroneous message albeit elegantly worded and impeccably pronounced. Even in the years of the Soviet Union, Russian interpreters preferred working into their foreign language. In their view, their determining element of interpreting is comprehension, which is strongest in the mother tongue. A clear message can be conveyed in the target language without distortion by an interpreter in possession of an adequate B language competence and appropriate interpreting techniques. The same idea is reflected in a survey by Shlesinger (1997: 127) whereby an idiomatic native like performance may give a false impression to the listener, who may not even notice that the message has been lost or distorted.

A better understanding of the issue calls for a deeper analysis including factors, such as where and how the interpreter mastered the B language. If this was done in his own country within an organised framework as was probably the case in the Soviet Union, listening comprehension was probably more problematic than speaking as he had no opportunity to gain familiarity with the multitude of native speakers. On the other hand, interpreters in Western countries generally mastered their foreign languages while living or studying in the target language country, thus comprehension is not difficult for them even if a speaker has poor articulation or complicated wording.

4 - Characteristics features and difficulties of interpretation into the B language

Seleskovitch (1989) considers interference into the mother tongue, i.e. the effect of the A language on the B language output to be the main problem of interpreting into the B language. In her opinion, transcoding between the two languages is far greater when working into the B language, if the interpreter does not deverbalise the source language text but tries to convey it in the target language with all of its dressing. This results in a target (B) language text which inevitably reflects the tools used in the source (A) language and as these tools are alien for the listener, he will find it more difficult or impossible to understand the interpretation. Seleskovitch thinks the interpreter working into the B language must have an exceptional mastery of the language, intelligence and experience to be excused stiff or unusual language and a non-native accent. Another problem is that interpreting into the B language is a greater drain on the interpreter's energies and causes the interpreter's performance to deteriorate much more rapidly than working into the A language.

The greatest challenge of working into the B language is that the interpreter has to produce target texts in a language in which composition does not come naturally. He has to learn to produce natural sounding texts using his B language repertoire, which is inevitably more limited than his A language (Campbell 1998: 57). An ordinary speaker using the foreign language only for his own communicational needs may hide his limitations more easily, as he can adapt the target text to his level of his mastery. When catering for the communicational needs of others, this is a considerably more difficult task and the interpreter may find himself in a situation where he has to express something for which he does not possess adequate tools in the B language.

Of course, native speakers also breach the code of their mother tongue from time to time. However, their errors are random and have nothing to do with knowledge of the language. Errors made by foreign language speakers occur because the target language system known to the interpreter does not correspond to the real one, and such violation of the code is unacceptable for a native speaker, or is inappropriate in the particular situation or context.

As a heuristic activity, translation is always a matter of choice from the range of possible target language solutions. The interpreter evaluates the solution occurring to him on the spur of the moment in a split second and decides to apply it or drop it (Snelling 1989:41-42). A focused enhancement of the B language helps the interpreter to consider the best possible solutions and exclude out-of-the-way or less opportune varieties. As Denissenko (1989:157) states, a well-commanded foreign language usually offers a more restricted choice. Taking his argument one step further, the interpreter may find it more difficult to choose from an abundance of possible solutions when working into the mother tongue Although this aspect has not been sufficiently researched, this may be one reason why a lot of interpreters prefer to work into their B language in which they provide a reliable if slightly less impeccable quality while their performance in their A language is poorer and less reliable, excellent solutions are interspersed with poor wording and the overall impression is that of an uneven performance.

5 - How to improve the quality of interpreting into the B language

Very little research has been aimed at the analysis of the quality of interpreting into B. One of the precious few attempts is an experiment by Tommola & Helevä (1998) conducted among interpreter students which highlighted a slight trend suggesting that when the subjects worked from their mother tongue into their B language, more propositions were correctly rendered. An obvious explanation is that less listening effort is required in the mother tongue. Yet the quality perceived by the listeners is reduced by grammatical errors, hesitant delivery, inappropriate expressions and register, missing coherence, false starts, etc. – even if the semantic elements of the source text are present in the target text.

Whereas interpreting into A does not require high-standard active use of the foreign language, using the B language as an active working language calls for a much higher level of command of the B language. The interpreter must make an effort to improve his accent and must pay attention to correct sentence stress and intonation. Special attention should be paid to false friends, i.e. similar or identical words that exist also in the mother tongue, to the pronunciation of international terms, company names, etc. (for example. IKEA, Nobel Prize, Siemens, etc.).

The interpreter must have a command of the B language (and of course of the mother tongue, too) which allows him to express not only his own communicational needs but enables him to produce propositions in the target language for external consumption. He must enhance and expand his repertoire in the B language on an ongoing basis and must keep stock of semantic fields, synonyms and antonyms. When working into B, he is best advised to use only previously "verified" solutions, i.e. those which he has already heard uttered by native speakers. The booth is not the place to test whether the listeners understand linguistic solutions the interpreter tries out for the first time. Secure knowledge of conference termionology, collocations and set phrases native speakers associate with a certain topic or situation is particularly important in the B language (for instance, *rogue states* translates as *Schurkenstaaten* into German, *états voyous* into French and nothing else; *sustainable development* can only be *nachhaltige Entwicklung* and *développement durable*).

Linguistic competence must go hand in hand with cultural competence. Even fluent speakers of a foreign language make the occasional pragmatic cultural mistake (form of address, degree of politeness, expression of gratitude or appreciation, intrusion on cultural taboos, etc.). An interpreter can't afford to make intercultural errors. He must be able to be at home in the culture of both source and target language and must be able to manage expression in the B language to reach the effect in the target-language listener intended by the source-language partner.

6 - Conclusions

The importance of working into the B language will increase in the European Union after enlargement. Accordingly, greater ephasis should be laid on this direction of interpreting in research, providing unequivocal proof of both its benefits and its drawbacks. In interpreter training the methodology of tailored enhancement of the B language and targeted education of working into B should be developed. German, *états voyous* into French and nothing else; *sustainable development* can only be *nachhaltige Entwicklung* and *développement durable*). In short, the interpreter must learn to produce a natural-sounding target text with his limited B language stock.

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What is a B Language?

Towards a Working Definition and Selection Criteria

Christine Adams

1- Introduction

When I had occasion to ask this question of a group of interpreters at a UoW short course this summer, I was well aware of its complexities and of the fact that I could equally be asking 'How long is a piece of string?' or 'How big is a can of worms?' To avoid our getting distracted by the history of the profession, market constraints or other questions which may arise, let me make it clear what it is that I want to do in the course of this brief presentation. It is:

- Take a practical look at the B language question from a trainer's point of view While I have a French B my experience is - unsurprisingly - with English B: CIT has acquired a lot of experience in the area over the last five years or so. I of course recognise that there may well be other points to be made where French, German or other languages are concerned.
- See if this leads to useful selection criteria we can apply when testing course applicants and examining candidates working into their 'B' in simultaneous interpreting exams.

2- What is a "B" ?

This is the AIIC definition: "A language other than the interpreter's native language, of which she or he has a perfect command and into which she or he works from one of more of her or his other languages. Some interpreters work into a 'B' language in only one of the two modes of presentation."

This definition does not go into enough detail for training purposes. During the UoW short course to which I referred earlier, there were a number of discussions on this question. It was generally agreed that a 'B' is

- a language in which you can think - in a formal, structured (*eg* an interpreting) situation;
- a language in which you can deliver a clear and accurate message to conference participants, colleagues on relay and colleagues who share your 'A' language. So we have a little more to go on than 'perfect command'.

To take matters further we need to acknowledge the difference between a language of which someone has a 'perfect command' and his/her 'native language'. A 'B' language is one you have to handle with care because it is not your native language. (A language in which you are a guest, as a colleague once put it.) You have to acknowledge that there may well be problems with - among others - your:

- Prepositions
- Articles
- Tenses
- Collocations
- Idiom
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Accent

Since the aim is to deliver a clear, accurate message to listeners, interpreters working into their 'B' must be familiar with their areas of weakness and develop strategies for dealing with them. I am referring here to interpreting strategies; ongoing language work is another issue. There was general agreement on the short course that the best place to begin was to keep it simple. Awareness of working into a 'B' should not turn out to be a distraction. Interpreters should not use try out new expressions or rephrase ideas to the detriment of their message delivery. There is a need to focus on that, on ensuring that they convey what the speaker is saying quickly, using the correct vocabulary and register.

3 - Selection : Course Applicants

I would now like to investigate whether these considerations can be of help when it comes to interviewing course applicants. At this stage all we can look for is interpreting potential. What are we looking for in those with an 'A'/'B' combination?

Let me start with what may strike you as an obvious point. Interviewing involves ascertaining people's understanding of their passive languages and command of their active language(s). It is important to fully investigate understanding of the 'B' (treat it as a passive language, if you like) because some applicants may well be able to think in their 'B' and deliver a message in words of their choosing but not have a wide enough vocabulary or an adequate sense of register.

Part of training into 'B' involves activating that vocabulary and register, so they need to be there. That is why it is important to get the applicant to do a translation from their 'B' and have their understanding of the language tested in interview as well as their interpreting potential.
This could involve an interview in which the relevant panellist addresses a variety of issues and a memory/consecutive test from 'B' to 'A' which requires familiarity with formal language.

Similarly, applicants need to have a genuine understanding of the 'B' language culture. I am not suggesting that someone offering English 'B' should be able to hold forth on the British Raj, Californian cuisine and South African diamonds. S/he should, however, have lived in English for long enough to have a sense of rootedness in the language. That connection with the language is of course built up on during the course. (This is one reason why we accept English 'B' students more readily than people with another 'B'.)

Initial selection must test applicants' understanding of English, familiarity with aspects of English-language culture and - to move on to their active use of the language - fluency. Trainee interpreters (working into 'A' as well as 'B') acquire specialised and technical vocabulary on their courses. They must start out with communication skills and an ability to deliver a coherent message.

If an applicant's delivery is marred by a poor command of the language (if the areas mentioned above present problems) that prevent them from doing so, there is a problem. It is, I think, accepted that someone using a 'B' can expect a certain amount of tolerance. However, an applicant who repeatedly uses the wrong preposition, puts in the definite article (the 'the') where none is required, and vice versa, uses the present perfect instead of the simple past or shows a poor command of common collocations probably does not master active English well enough to put it through the stress of consecutive interpreting - let alone simultaneous. Similarly, while some mispronunciation and an accent are to be expected, an applicant who is audibly tied down by his/her 'A' language, who is hard to follow, will not be successful. To put it another way, if the interviewing panel becomes distracted and starts listening for errors rather than hearing the message, there is a problem.

To a certain extent much early conference interpreter-training was instinctive, which is not surprising in what was a new profession. Now that we are moving towards more systematic approaches, it is interesting to consider whether we can agree on basic 'B' language criteria for applicants to our courses. We need to draw a distinction between interpreting/memory skills and language. We are looking for natural-sounding language, an ability to express ideas clearly (even if that involves a certain amount of paraphrasing) - along with other indications of interpreting potential. I think it is important to consider what can be improved during a course and what is a prerequisite for acceptance onto that course.

We must not forget that an interpreting booth often magnifies imperfections in delivery: generous tolerance of poor vocabulary, laboured delivery and grammatical errors at interview usually turns out to have been ill-advised. An applicant who shows resourcefulness, seems to listen to him/herself and have an awareness of language (and interpreting potential) could well benefit from the language enhancement and staff and student mobility the EMCI has to offer.

4- Selection : Exams

Exams - both interim and final - are more straightforward than student selection procedures in many ways. Whereas the initial process involves determining whether or not someone shows potential, later tests ascertain whether s/he has mastered the techniques of consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. Candidates taking interim exams should show a mastery of basic interpreting techniques at a level which depends to some extent on the timing of these exams. In some cases it could well be that the exams give priority to 'A' language performance: students should acquire their simultaneous technique in their mother tongue initially. If there are simultaneous into "B" exams, candidates have to satisfy the panel that they are able to apply their language enhancement classes (and life in English) to their ability to deliver the message and show some awareness of the problems facing those working into a 'B'.

It can occur that problems of accent or command of the language which appeared minor at interview are magnified by the interpreting situation: it is important that examiners bear this in mind during interim exams.

When it comes to final exams, selection criteria are in most respects the same for candidates 'A' and 'B' languages. User expectations in the working world are such that we have to expect equally high quality interpreting for both languages.

I would like to mention a few 'B'-specific criteria. As I have already stated, an interpreter with a 'B' should recognise the constraints placed upon him/her by working into a second language. This is important so that their command of that language does not become an issue at the expense of their interpreting. It is important that trainees develop an explicit awareness of do's and don'ts which may not all require the same form of attention in their 'A' language. Here are some of the issues that came up on the summer course:

<u>Do :</u>

- Keep it simple
- Focus on the message
- Use appropriate language and register (avoid informal language, use a variety of links/transitions
- Know the terminology you will need (international affairs, parliamentary procedure, your client/organisation) (don't refer to a 'level playground')
- Where possible/appropriate briefly explain specific cultural references that an international audience could not be expected to understand
- Anglicise the pronunciation of places and names

<u>Don't :</u>

- Offer 'multiple choice' interpretation
- Be tempted to use (too many) idiomatic expressions

It seems to me that we have to find a way of acknowledging both these 'B'-specific criteria and those which apply to interpreting across the board. We all know what we are looking for: fluent and accurate interpreters. That is going to involve training those who work into a 'B'. Improved definitions and selection criteria will make it easier for all of us.

Aptitude tests & selection criteria For interpreting students

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1 - Introduction

While there seems to be a broadly-based agreement on the knowledge and skills required of anybody wishing to train as an interpreter (see, e.g. AIIC 1993, Bowen D. & Bowen M. 1989, Gerver *et al.* 1989, Lambert 1991, Longley 1989, Moser-Mercer 1994), the tasks commonly used in assessing the aptitude of candidates for interpreter training are less specifically defined and examined.

At the University of Turku, interpreting can be studied either as a minor subject in connection with the MA in Translation Studies or as an eight-month postgraduate EMCI course. Both groups of applicants go through a selection process where the aptitude and language skills are assessed in two phases. The "pre-selection" for those wishing to study interpreting as a minor subject comprises a two-day entrance examination for the MA in English Translation studies where the written and oral language skills of about 150-200 applicants are assessed. A maximum of 35 new undergraduate students are accepted each year, who then take a short *Introduction to Interpreting* course as a part of their first-year basic studies. About 8-12 first year students usually become interested in interpreting a minor subject and they then take an aptitude test at the end of the introductory course. The applicants to the EMCI course, on the other hand, already have a university degree; their pre-selection for the aptitude test takes place on the basis of the documents they have submitted as proof of their earlier studies and language practice at home and abroad.

As we already know our undergraduate applicants, their aptitude test comprises only one part, a *recall task* from English to Finnish and vice versa. The EMCI applicants invited to the test on the basis of their applications also start with a recall task, and those who pass this part continue to an *interview* and, finally, to a *sight translation* test. All applicants are assessed individually and the whole aptitude test lasts approximately 50 minutes.

2 - Structure of aptitude test

2.1 Recall task

In the recall test, the applicant hears a 3-minute presentation and a topic of general interest and renders it in another language. Before the task, the applicant is instructed to concentrate on listening and memorizing what s/he hears. No note-taking is allowed. The recall tasks are from B and/or C to

A and from A to B, and the selection criteria include:

- comprehension of the source language
- production of the target language
- understanding and reproduction of the "internal logic" of the message heard
- concentration and memory
- presentation skills (voice, register, eye-contact…)
- ability to cope with the situation.

The assessors pay attention to how the semantic content of the original speech is conveyed in the applicant's rendering, i.e. to possible distortions of message, excessive deletions, addition and misunderstandings. It is felt that a good performance reflects the textual and discourse features described by, e.g. Mackintosh (1985) and Tommola (1995, in press). Other aspects of the performance assessed include quality of delivery in terms of pronunciation and intonation, register and style, and the candidate's stamina and ability to tolerate pressure and uncertainty.

2.2 Interview

The EMCI applicant who passes the recall test then proceeds to an interview which takes place in her/his proposed working languages. During the interview, questions are asked about, the applicant's studies, work experience, reasons for applying to the course, the European Union, and topics of current interest at home and in the countries where the applicant's languages are spoken. The selection criteria include

- the applicant's motivation and perception of her/his aptitude and skills
- knowledge of and interest in current affairs
- extent and depth of general knowledge
- language skills: free production, ability to switch flexibly from one language to another
- Interactive and communication skills.

It is not uncommon that an applicant whose language skills have been rated good and solid in the recall test show only superficial or almost non-existent interest in current affairs. There have also been cases where the applicant gives long and detailed answers – but not necessarily to the questions asked. We can then conclude that there is no proper knowledge base to enable the applicant to successfully carry out the required tasks during training. A candidate who is considered to have displayed sufficient knowledge and skills in this part of the aptitude test continues to the final sight translation task.

2.3 Sight translation

Sight translation as a form of information processing and a training method has been studied and commented on in a number of articles (see, e.g. Moser-Mercer 1995, Weber 1990, Viezzi 1990). Sight translation is considered a useful tool in aptitude testing as it resembles more closely a real situation where the applicant must cope with, e.g. time constraints and differences between source and target text syntax and linear orders, providing the assessors with additional information on how the applicant processed information in the two languages used in the task.

The text to be translated on sight deals with an international or topical issue and has a more complex syntactic structure than the recall task. The assessment criteria include

- ability to "navigate" smoothly and swiftly between two languages and two modes of presentation
- speed and flexibility of information processing
- general knowledge
- knowledge of current affairs
- language skills: rapid comprehension and production.

Special attention is paid to the candidate's ability to detach from the surface structures of the source text and to produce a fluent and natural target language text.

3 - Concluding remarks

In addition to providing the jury with information about the candidate's knowledge, skills, abilities and personality, the aptitude test can be considered to be a job interview, where the various tasks described above complement each other providing information about the candidate's training potential, and helping the assessors and future trainers to answer questions such as

- Does the applicant meet our criteria?
- Is the applicant trainable?
- Will we be able to work together?

Our aptitude test is typically a *proficiency test* looking to a future situation of language use, i.e. the test performances are regarded as indicators of how the candidate would perform on related tasks during training and, ultimately, in the interpreting booth. The distinction we need to make is that of ´enough/not enough´, and the rating system can perhaps best be considered in terms of a *hurdle* or *cut-off point* (McNamara 2000, 6, 38). The three sections of the aptitude test provide us with cumulative information of a number aspects of the applicant and her/his abilities, which then form a basis for predictions about the individual's use of those abilities in real world contexts, i.e. the applicant's potential for interpreting. The applicant, on the other hand, should gain a better insight into what the practical work during the course will be like, so that s/he has some kind of an advance idea of whether or not s/he will be able to cope with what is required during and after training. This is an important element of the selection process, as it contributes to bringing expectations more into line with reality, and helps to avoid a major source of disappointment and frustration.

We all know that a considerable problem in the rater-mediated approach to the assessment of performance is that ratings are necessarily subjective. As McNamara (2000, 37) puts it :

The allocation of individuals to categories is not a deterministic process, driven by the objective, recognizable characteristics of performances, external to the rater. Rather, rating always contains a significant degree of chance, associated with the rater and other factors.

An important way to improve the quality of rater-mediated assessment is to provide training to raters. This is usually done at least at a preparation meeting before the test begins. After the initial briefing, each performance is naturally discussed in detail before the decision is made on whether or not the applicant can continue to the next phase. Ongoing monitoring of rater performance is clearly necessary to ensure fairness of the testing process. Furthermore, as rater-mediated testing is a complex process with ambitious goals, those involved in the assessment need more information about the basic concepts and practices associated with investigating the quality of testing.

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L'interprétation simultanée en B

Les principes

Karla Dejean

1 - Problèmes spécifiques du retour

A première vue, le retour ne se distingue de la simultanée vers le A que par un aspect purement linguistique: la substitution de la langue d'arrivée. En vérité, il semble bien que cette substitution ait des répercussions sensibles sur tout le processus d'interprétation.

1-1 Dynamisme affaibli

La raison en est sans doute que l'interprétation est un processus dynamique qui, pour aboutir, a besoin d'une force motrice. Cette force consiste en l'attraction exercée par la langue d'arrivée sur la pensée qui cherche à s'exprimer. Lors du travail vers la langue maternelle, la pensée est littéralement happée par la langue d'arrivée. Le magnétisme de la langue B, en revanche, est généralement beaucoup plus faible. D'où un manque de dynamisme manifeste de tout le processus d'interprétation qui se traduit par la tendance qu'ont les étudiants à traduire des phrases au lieu de refaire un discours alors qu'à ce stade de la formation, leur interprétation vers le A ne présente pas ce défaut.

1-2 Autosurveillance insuffisante

Cette entrave du processus d'interprétation est renforcée par les deux difficultés inhérentes à l'interprétation simultanée:
1° le fait que l'interprète doit écouter non seulement l'orateur mais aussi ses propres reformulations. Cette double écoute pose souvent problème même vers le A entraînant des intonations parfois artificielles et un certain nombre d'imperfections linguistiques et de lapsus non corrigés parce que non remarqués. Est-ce parce que instinctivement l'interprète donne la priorité à l'écoute du discours au détriment du monitoring de sa propre production ou est-ce parce que pour pouvoir parler tout à fait correctement et avec des intonations justes, il faut pouvoir consacrer toute sa capacité auditive à la production de la parole?. Toujours est-il que le sens de la langue maternelle semble passagèrement affaibli (Gile 87[9]). Comme en travaillant vers le B, l'autosurveillance demande une attention encore plus soutenue que vers le A, mais est soumise au mêmes restrictions, la performance linguistique en B souffre plus encore qu'en A. (Pöchhacker 94[10]).
Il arrive certes aussi que l'on se laisse entraîner à trop s'écouter avec comme conséquence de ne plus écouter suffisamment le discours et donc, comble

[9] GILE, Daniel (1987): Les exercices d'interprétation et la dégradation du français: une étude de cas. In: *Meta* 32 (1987) Nr.4, S.420-428

[10] PÖCHHACKER, Franz (1994): *Simultandolmetschen als komplexes Handeln*. Tübingen: Narr

du paradoxe, de ne plus suivre ce qui est pourtant dit dans sa propre langue. Mais ces accidents ne se produisent que ponctuellement, dans le cas de difficultés aiguës de reformulation, alors que le manque d'autosurveillance se manifeste de manière plutôt chronique.

1-3 Interférences linguistiques accrues

Il s'y ajoute la deuxième difficulté inhérente à l'interprétation simultanée: le risque d'interférences linguistiques (Nieke 86 et 88[11]). Ce risque, qui semble être dû à l'absence dans notre cerveau de séparations étanches entre les langues sur le plan des signifiés, est accru en simultanée du fait que les deux langues en présence se trouvent activées en même temps. Curieusement, ces interférences ne semblent jamais se produire au niveau de la compréhension mais uniquement à celui de l'expression où c'est le plus souvent la langue la plus forte et la plus active qui déteint sur celle qui l'est moins. Le B est donc plus exposé aux interférences que le A. D'où la tendance à être plus littéral lorsqu'on travaille vers le B que vers le A ce qui ne nuit évidemment pas seulement à l'esthétique de l'expression mais aussi à l'intelligibilité de l'expression.

1-4 Fatigue prématurée

Compte tenu des efforts particuliers que l'interprète doit déployer pour lutter contre toutes ces adversités du retour, il n'est pas surprenant qu'il fatigue plus vite qu'en travaillant vers le A. Cette baisse de la performance due à la fatigue risque de passer inaperçue pendant les cours si l'on fait travailler les étudiants sur des passages relativement courts. Mais on ne peut pas ne pas la remarquer en réunion lorsqu'on travaille en relais sur un pivot B. Même si celui-ci n'intervient que très ponctuellement, on constate une baisse sensible de la performance au cours de la journée au point que les interprétations deviennent de plus en plus difficiles à comprendre, alors que vers le A, l'interprète parvient généralement à s'améliorer au cours de la journée grâce à l'accroissement du présavoir. Chez le B, en revanche, s'il y a également amélioration de la prestation, celle-ci ne porte le plus souvent que sur la terminologie spécifique alors que par ailleurs il y a accumulation de calques.

2 - L’approche pédagogique

Que faire pour aider les étudiants à surmonter toutes ces difficultés?

2-1 Maîtrise de la méthode

Si la maîtrise de la méthode d'interprétation simultanée ne protège pas de toute contre-performance en simultanée vers le B, elle représente indubitablement un préalable absolu à l'initiation au retour puisque tous les préceptes méthodologiques s'appliquent autant sinon plus encore au retour qu'à la simultanée vers le A. C'est pourquoi nous pensons à l'ESIT qu'il faut structurer le cours de telle façon que le retour n'est abordé que lorsque la méthode est tout à fait maîtrisée vers le A. L'expérience montre, en effet, que si l'on commence le retour trop tôt, les étudiants sont inéluctablement amenés à prendre la mauvaise habitude de s'accrocher aux mots, ce qui non seulement compromet d'avance tout progrès en simultanée vers le B, mais a aussi comme conséquence de les faire régresser dans leur travail vers le A. Une initiation prématurée s'avère donc clairement contre-productive.

2-2 Préparation thématique et terminologique

Le deuxième moyen de faciliter le retour consiste à insister plus encore que pour le travail vers le A sur la préparation thématique et terminologique, car plus on est familiarisé avec le sujet traité et plus on maîtrise le jargon qui lui est propre, moins on a tendance à s'accrocher au mots de l'orateur. Au

[11] Nieke, Ingeburg (1986): « Die sprachliche Interferenz als Fehlerquelle. » Teil I. *Fremdsprachen* 3, 192-194
Nieke, Ingeburg (1988): « Die sprachliche Interferenz als Fehlerquelle. » Teil II. *Fremdsprachen* 1, 32-36

delà du travail de préparation requis pour l'interprétation vers le A, il faut, pour le retour, prêter une attention particulière aux caractéristiques linguistiques du jargon, les collocations, par exemple, ou encore les prépositions, que l'on sait généralement manier d'instinct comme il faut en A, mais qu'il faut le plus souvent apprendre en B.

2-3 Progression

Compte tenu des difficultés inhérentes au retour, il s'avère utile lors de son enseignement de respecter la même progression que pour l'interprétation simultanée vers le A tant en ce qui concerne la nature des exercices, leur durée et le débit des orateurs que le choix des textes (exposés improvisés avant discours lus).

2-4 Monitoring par un locuteur natif

Comme lors du travail vers le B, l'autocritique est aussi peu fiable que le sens de la langue, tous les exercices vers le B doivent se faire sous la surveillance d'un locuteur natif afin d'éviter la formation ou le renforcement d'automatismes d'expression erronés; car une fois ancrés dans la mémoire, ces automatismes s'avèrent très difficiles à corriger surtout s'ils sont nombreux. Nous avons constaté qu'il faut parfois des mois de lutte acharnée pour en venir à bout. Mieux vaut donc, afin d'éviter ce gaspillage de temps et d'énergie, prévenir d'avance leur formation.

2-5 Perfectionnement linguistique

Last but not least il faut perfectionner le B. Mais comme cet aspect fait l'objet d'un point différent de l'ordre du jour, je ne le mentionne ici que pour mémoire dans l'espoir d'avoir l'occasion d'en dire un mot lorsque ce point sera abordé.

Teaching experience of simultaneous into B

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I would like to start my paper by posing three questions.

1) Is there any difference between interpreting into A and into B?

2) If so, how is this difference translated into our interpretation training programmes?

3) Is retour/relay necessary a "double evil"?

Danica Seleskovitch (1978) in her book Interpreting for International Conferences defines interpretation as a triangular process of transfer from one language to another during which the language is perceived - perception stage -, reduced to meaning - comprehension stage - and finally expressed in another linguistic form - expression stage. She goes on to say "One could say that interpreting is first and foremost COMPREHENSION."

In 1995 Padilla concludes that : "In interpreting it is estimated that at least 80% of the effort or cognitive resources is devoted to listening and understanding the discourse and only 20% to speech production".

Bajo and Padilla (2000) in Comprehension Processes in SI: "The results of our experiments suggest that training and experience in interpreting develop a set of cognitive skills involved in comprehension."

"From a theoretical point of view, these data suggest that interpreters develop specific strategies to extend their memory capacity and efficiency. Similarly, they enhance their comprehension processes."

Tommola and Heleva (1998) carried a small-scale study where they examined the effects of two independent variables - language direction and the linguistic complexity of the source text.

The term linguistic complexity denotes the combined effect of syntax and meaning. One conclusion of the study is truly interesting - "When texts are linguistically simple, the per cent accuracy score is identical in both directions of interpretation, but with more complex material, there is a hint of the A to B direction being more easily manageable for trainee interpreters."

Kees de Bot (2000) in his article Simultaneous Interpreting as Language Production says the following: "The fact that word translation is faster from the weaker language into the dominant language than from the dominant language into the weaker language is an information processing fact. The other fact, that interpreters are more sucessful when translating from their dominant into their weaker language than the other way round, shows that choice of strategies has a larger impact on the whole process of interpreting than the retrievability of words from the lexicon. In other words: even though it takes more time to find the right words, the advantage of a better and deeper understanding of the incoming speech more than compensates for this." He goes on to say that "The preference of interpreters to translate from their weaker language into their DL may not be as widespread as it is claimed. As Williams argues ... it may be that

the preference claimed in the literature for L2 to L1 is prescriptive rather than descriptive!!"
All these quotes - and many more - suggest that the answer to the first question is quite clear - interpreters, interpreter trainers and researchers are aware of a set of features differentiating interpreteting from the dominant language to the weaker language, i.e. from A to B.

Let us have a look at these features:

1)We will all agree that when working from A to B, perception and comprehension are on our side. Which is not to say that production is our enemy that should be approached with fear and anxiety. But once we have perceived and comprehended the incoming message correctly - which by definition is an easier task in your dominant language than in our B - our task is to produce the message as clear, complete and easy to comprehend as possible. I would argue that decisions about different techniques - condensation and summarization, intentional omissions all take place during the first two stages.

2) Anticipation, which is absolutely key, relies on successful perception and comprehension of the source text - and it goes without saying - on extralinguistic skills and general knowledge. Factual knowledge is more profound in the dominant culture, and a lack of knowledge about the target culture will have a negative effect on communication. This is a fact that is always stressed in interpretation courses but often not enough, and yet it represents another potential risk not only at the comprehension end when interpreting from B to A, but also at the production end when doing retour , and perhaps even more so in the retour/relay situation. It is essential that conference interpreters and students alike are well versed in what I call "static" facts - history, geography, literature of the coutry/countries the language of which they interpret from and into, and in the more "dynamic" facts - current affairs. Retour interpreting is usually from a "small" or "less widely used" language to a "big" language. Katan in his book Translating across cultures: an introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators" says that "the act of translating is understood as an act of double matacommunication, as the translator/interpreter is required to mediate communication which is already bound to its own culture through experential-cognitive models". He goes on to say that "mediators should be able to mindshift between possible frames through which reality is perceived, represented, interpreted and "distorted". I believe that while this is true of any interpreting, it is "more true" of interpreting between a "more widely used" and a "less widely used" language. There are two reasons for this - a) "large" cultures are always present in school curricula of "small culture schools", and b) professional interpreters/native speakers of "widely used languages" coping with the difficulties and intricacies of a "small" frame may be more prone to "distortion".

3) As I have already pointed out when interpreting from one's own language, the interpreter should make the most of the fact that 2 of the 3 stages, i.e. perception and comprehension are, as it were, his/her own. However, after the perception and comprehension stage comes the client's/user's - in case of relay interpreting the colleague's - perception and comprehension, and unless the interpreter has mastered his/her B language to a near native level, the client's/user's/colleague's perception and comprehension is negatively affected and communication is hampered. Kees de Bot (2000) makes this comment: "There is one point that deserves further study: in our study we found shorter translation times from the weaker into the dominant language, and this effect diminishes with increased proficiency. Although it is extremely difficult to compare levels of proficiency in different studies, there is a suggestion that the translation asymmetry decreases with increasing level of proficiency."

From what I have said so far one recommendation can be drawn - we as interpreters and interpreter trainers when working into B and teaching CI/SI into B should always try to make the maximum of our strengths (perception and comprehension) and minimize the risks of "hampered communication" due to less than desirable production. This is particularly critical in the "learning/teaching situation. Linguistic risks will always be the particular language pair specific. Examples of some general risks would be grammmatical errors, syntactic interference, stylistic nuances not successfully conveyed (incorrect register, wrong intonation), terminological errors, hesitant delivery etc. These are all extremely important and ways of overcoming or avoiding these risks should be included in our training practice.

Let us have a look at the "strengths" and "risks" involved one by one.

When interpreting from A to B , we usually (not always of course, because there are very bad speakers speaking in the interpreter's mother tongue) find it very easy to provide answers to the question "what is he/she saying ", "what is it that he/she wants me to get across" ? Consequently, it is much easier to choose the right technique - this can be summed up, this can be left out, this can be condensed, this can/should be expressed differently, I can anticipate what comes next. When the choice of your technique is successful - there is more chance your production will contain fewer grammatical errors, false starts etc. provided linguistic proficiency of B is up to the task.

In the classroom situation : when your students produce a chunk of text that is full of mistakes, the syntax is more Czech than English, the subcontext is all wrong - you invite them to listen to that particular passage and ask them to "process " it outside of the booth in a "brainstorming" situation. Usually such a chunk will contain a difficulty or two - you help students identify these difficulties and design a "strategy" or a "technique" to cope with them. This of course is an equally useful and important exercise for B to A, and is included in the tool kit of every interpreter trainer, but students must be made aware that without "analysis" the actual production is bound to be less successful or totally unsuccessful. Perhaps this is the right time to say a few words about teaching material for SI training.

Students need to be exposed not only to wonderfully structured and embellished spoken texts but also to all sorts of ad hoc texts that contain a lot of redundant information, anacolutha, are too fast or too dense, or even delivered by ESL speakers. All these can be used to help students decide about what strategy they should apply in this or that particular situation. The ability to make a clever decision about a correct strategy is crucial for the production of the target text. The tapes we use in class are usually recordings from conferences or seminars. As rule "similar" texts are available, some prepared, some delivered ad hoc, produced in Czech and English. Usually only a couple of texts are used from the whole conference. The tapes we use are always "fresh" - fresh in the sense that students have not been exposed to them before - I myself consider this absolutely essential for teaching SI, because as I often tell my students interpreting and life cannot be rehearsed. But the more you know, the more lessons you have drawn from your experience, the better the result will be. And "fresh" in the sense of "updatedness". Once the tape has been "made full use of" during seminars it is made available to students, who can use it also for language enhancement. We all know that language proficiency is absolutely crucial for successful retour. However, only in an ideal world could we expect to have all students with the same level of proficiency. Those students showing very good analytical and extralinguistic skills but whose proficiency in the B language is not what we would like it to be should be encouraged to use these tapes to enhance their linguistic skills. These tapes can be used - to quote Karla Dejean - "to attentively examine, classify, label and store the linguistic packaging." By consistently working with these tapes, trainers and trainees can identify risks that hamper communication on the one hand, and ways and means that enhance comprehension of the target text they produce.

All these different aspects must be included in lesson planning. Each text we use should serve a general purpose (developing skills and strategies, enhancing comprehension) and a specific purpose: e.g. a text rich in colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions can be used to train students to cope with these in the B-A and A-B situation etc., terminology, information density ...). It is important to make sure students are aware of what particular problem the lesson has focussed on.

I believe retour and relay have a lot in common. Those of you who are familiar with Richard Fleming's questionnaire on the use of relay will remember that under LANGUAGE AND SYNTAX he quotes the following recommendations for pivot/interpreters working into their A languages:

- try to speak in short sentences
- use clear finished sentences
- simplify idiom and structure
- avoid highly colloquial expressions
- add an explanation after the idiomatic phrases, proverbs etc. that cannot be dropped

The first three points are immediately relevant for retour interpreting, the other two should be slightly modified: - stay away from colloquial expressions, they may be either too colloquial or simply wrong for the native speaker of the language (including the interpreter relying on your input), and - replace idiomatic phrases, proverbs etc. with a more straightforward, less embellished message. By making students practice their retour as if it were to serve as an input for a pivot, you make them use means that enhance comprehension, thereby converting the double evil into a double benefit.

It goes without saying that feedback is key in the learning/teaching process. In our interpretation courses feedback is of two types - there are always general comments made by both the students and trainers immediately after the passage has been interpreted - in CI the rendered interpretation is scrutinised by everybody (peers, trainer, native speaker whenever possible), in SI the trainer invites students to comment on the difficulties they have encountered, discusses these with other students - and preferably with a native speaker in case of retour - and then assesses (again together with the native speaker in case of retour) those renditions that he/she/they have listened to. Students can record their renditions and submit them to the trainer/native speaker for comments. Once or twice every term students are obliged to record their renditions and the assessment is included in the general assessment of the student's performance. The assessment is structured around three components - content, language, delivery allowing for discussions to be fruitful, poignant and problem awareness raising.There is a lot of advantage to be gained from having feedback provided by a native speaker, i.e. a true client.However, when assessing retour interpreting we should not dwell too much on the linguistic component while ignoring communication. This may create problems when untrained native speakers are asked to make comments on trainers 'renditions - there is usually too much emphasis on grammaticality rather than communication. This is not to say that native speakers should not comment on the linguistic quality - on the contrary - we should be grateful to them, it is more a question of proportion. Another assistance native speaker can provide is to reformulate, often stressing the KISS principle, what students are saying. In conclusion , drawing on my own experience with teaching retour, I would be inclined to conclude that there are certain lessons one can learn from having to do retour or even relay/retour that are relevant for interpreting into A and that can be translated into effective interpretation techniques and teaching methods.

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Language Interpreting into B

Some conclusion gathered From experience

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What follows are some thoughts based on my experience of teaching into B gained in courses and classes given at ESIT, in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Korea and Vietnam between 1977 and 2002.

The ESIT position is long established and well known and can be summarised by a quotation from Danica Seleskovitch " On peut affirmer qu'à qualité égale d'interprète, l'interprétation en A (langue maternelle) est toujours supérieure à l'interprétation en B (langue acquise) ("L'interprète dans les conférences internationales –1968 – p. 224). Seleskovitch's position at the time can be seen as a reaction to a widely held belief (notably by what could be termed "the Soviet school") which holds that interpreters do a better job when working into their B languages because they alone have an adequate understanding of the source language. As recently as 1999, ESIT teachers reiterated the Seleskovitch doctrine of 1968 in a joint submission to JICS on the future of the profession. "ESIT has always considered that simultaneous interpretation reaches the highest level of quality when performed into the interpreter's A language » and « We strongly feel that any attempt to generalise the use of B booths would be detrimental to the quality of interpretation (text adopted by the Commission Pédagogique Interprétation of ESIT on 08/10/99)

However, we fully realise that the accession of new member countries to the EU as well as the overall phenomenon of globalisation will increasingly bring on to the multilingual market many interpreters whose experience has so far been more or less limited to interpreting both ways in their national markets (cf. Cenkova 1999 and Rejskova 1999) This will mean more interpreters working into their B languages ("retour") and providing relay in their B language in multilingual meetings in Brussels and elsewhere. There is therefore a continuing need to select and train young interpreters with a good "retour", potential until such time as globalisation encourages interpreters and future interpreters with an English, French, Spanish or German A to gain a sufficiently sound grasp of languages like Czech, Estonian, Korean or Vietnamese to be able to interpret from those languages professionally. This is not nearly as fanciful as it sounds and the movement has already started but it will take time to develop further

What therefore should be the teaching strategy designed to accommodate and foster these inevitable developments in the best possible conditions? I would summarise them under a number of headings.

1) **A commitment, first and foremost, to maintaining high standards of training**.

The need, however urgent, to find the requisite number of interpreters to service an increasing number of meetings should not allow training standards to slip. Although the need for interpreters in some languages is pressing, it must be said that both JICS and the EP, by maintaining very strict standards for interpreters wishing to work for them, ensure that a high standard of interpreting is maintained in their respective institutions and this is surely welcome.

2) **The introduction of teaching into B, particularly in simultaneous, once the basic skills of interpreting have been reasonably mastered**.

By this I mean specifically a satisfactory standard in consecutive, both into A and into B. This philosophy informs the whole of our teaching approach at ESIT and will continue to do so. It is surely consistent with the theory of meaning as initially developed by Seleskovith and Lederer to assert that students learn to interpret by mastering consecutive and that once they have learned to walk, they can start learning to run. The mastery of interpreting into a B language is an extra level of difficulty which make it even more important not to cut the corners

3) **Some teaching time must be devoted to the purely linguistic aspects of pronunciation and intonation in the B language**.

To take the examples with which I am most familiar, students with an Estonian A have few problems with this aspect of handling English but Korean and Vietnamese students almost invariably need intensive coaching and/or practice in the proper pronunciation of sound and intonation patterns in English. My own approach here is first of all to get students to define what I call "their linguistic bias" in English, in other words, the sound and style of English with which they are most familiar and most at ease – English, American or sometimes Australian. Then I help them design "drills" to properly pronounce the sounds they consistently have trouble with. A similar approach is taken in commercially available "accent reduction tapes" (ex: "The sound and style of American English" by David Alan Stern - available from Dialect Accent Specialists Inc, Lyndonville, VT. USA). Both approaches require long hours of practice by each student but experience suggests that if such an effort is made, progress can be spectacular. Another example, this time a grammatical one, concerns the extraordinary importance of tenses in English. Non-native speakers and a fortiori interpreters, who consistently get their tenses wrong have the greatest difficulty making themselves understood. This is something I have focussed on in all the language groups I have taught. Again, the approach is one based on identifying errors of tense in the production of English utterances and consistently correcting them, comparing the student's performance to that of a native speaker.

4) **A lot of effort must also be expended on making student interpreters understand that they must concern themselves more with their listeners than with the speakers they interpret**.

Most student interpreters find it difficult to adopt this emphasis at the best of times, as the main difficulty they experience is hearing, analysing and understanding the message in the source language. However, they must be made to realise that the reason they are interpreting in the first place is to get a message across to people who have not the slightest idea of what the original speaker is saying. I take the liberty of quoting from my own report of a one week teaching assignment to Estonia in February 2002.

"All of the students need to focus more on the message they are supposed to be conveying to their listeners and less on the difficulties they have in understanding the original message in Estonian. I often encountered comments like "the speaker said it like that in Estonian "or "the speaker didn't make this point very clearly". I tried to make it clear to them that the role of the interpreter is to convey a clear message to someone who has not understood the original (including another interpreter taking relay) and that their prime concern must be to make sense in English of what they have understood in Estonian. (report to the EP, March 2002)

5) It follows from what I have just said that **there is a lot of advantage to be gained from having some of the teaching into B done by a native speaker of the interpreter's B language who does not understand the source language**.

Although this assertion tends to clash with many peoples' (including many interpreters'!) understanding of how interpreter training should work, it has the advantage of putting the teacher in the position of the audience – or more relevantly in the position of the colleague on relay – and forces the interpreter to make an effort to be clear in the message and regular in delivery. Through its long standing "cas spéciaux" curriculum, many interpreters have been successfully trained at ESIT in the art of interpreting including into B in simultaneous, by teachers with little or no knowledge of their native tongue. More recently, the EP in particular has devoted a part of its training budget to funding week long missions by experienced interpreter trainers with an English, French or German A to interpreting schools in EU candidate countries. Student response to this initiative has been very positive.

6) **Another service that native speakers can provide is to reformulate what students are saying in somewhat tortuous English**.
To take an example from my Vietnamese experience, a student was interpreting the Vietnamese position on Vietnamese exports of catfish to the US, where American producers of catfish had persuaded the administration to impose import restrictions. The student was trying to express the thought that Vietnamese catfish were "more in line with preferences of American consumers ". My suggestion that he should reformulate the idea by saying that " Vietnamese catfish provide American consumers with more choice" was eagerly adopted by the class who found it a shorter and snappier way of getting this particular message across to American listeners while maintaining the essence of what the Vietnamese producers were trying to convey. The broader conclusion I draw from this and similar experiences elsewhere is that to be readily understood in English, an interpreter must constantly strive to avoid contamination by the syntax and modes of expression of the source language and keep eyes and ears wide open to gain an extensive knowledge of how this or that point is spontaneously expressed in English by a native speaker. In other words, to learn to speak "English in English" rather than "Vietnamese (or Czech or Korean or Estonian) in English". The native speaker is uniquely placed to help in this respect.

7) **However, a B remains a B and students, when in doubt, should KISS (Keep It Short and Simple !)**
Here the native speaker must help students find the appropriate trade off between being complete and faithful on one hand and clear and simple on the other. Although a speaker, or his delegation, will often try to recognise his own message in the rendering of his interpreter and will be unsettled by an interpretation perceived as too "free", there is little doubt that colleagues on relay will always prefer clarity and regularity of delivery to speed and completeness. Achieving the right balance is far easier said than done – a teacher can define the terms of the trade off and give examples of how it might sound in particular cases, but only practice makes perfect.

8) **Students learning to interpret into B should be encouraged to develop a store of stock phrases and expressions which run through all types of discourse**.
Without looking very far, it is easy to find introductory gambits and link phrases which can make an interpretation sound effortless when properly used whereas a stilted introduction or mangled link will jar in the listener's mind and detract from intelligibility. " Expression like "my subject today Ladies and gentleman is ……" or "let me turn now to my second point" ….to take just two simple examples, will probably not even register in a listener's mind if produced at the right time and in the right place but will be noticed if misused or fluffed. A well oiled stock of such simple phrase and expression can do a great deal to boost listeners trust in what he is hearing (not to speak of the interpreter's confidence in what he is saying !)

9) **Finally on a more technical point, it is important for student interpreters to develop a sound knowledge of the institutions of their own country and the way their names can be rendered in the B language**.
Many speakers make very little allowance for audiences' lack of knowledge of their country or the fact that many are listening through an interpreter and pepper their presentation with abstruse names or abbreviations known only to a native speaker. If an interpreter into B can not only recognise such names or abbreviations but also have a ready phrase up his sleeve to cope with them ("the Estonian stock-exchange watchdog" "the Czech environmental protection agency", "Korean banking regulators "the Vietnamese association of catfish producers") he will not only provide a more fluent interpretation but will also save himself precious time looking for an appropriate translation. Here again, a native speaker can be of assistance in coining an appropriate phrase but most of the spadework must be done by students themselves.

Piece of Cake – or Hard to Take?

Objective Grades of Difficulty of Speeches Used in Interpreting Training

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Interpreters are sometimes compared to performing artists. Let us pursue this analogy a little further within the context of evaluation and assessment:

Imagine a pianist in an exam who is given the task of playing a piece of music at sight. How would one assess the quality of her performance? One examiner would probably look at her fingering technique, another might concentrate more on her phraseology, yet another might listen to her *tempi*. But none of these experts, I suggest, would do so regardless of the objective difficulties of her task. Experts in the field of music not only know that generally, say, a Mozart sonata is easier to play than one by Beethoven, but they are also able to describe the difficulties of a particular piece objectively and in a differentiated way, using the appropriate terminology.

When the merits of a performance are discussed it is very unlikely for someone to come up with a statement like: "Why do we need esoteric terms like *arpeggios* and *syncopes* which nobody understands? I have been a pianist for twenty years and have played to audiences all over the world. And nobody has ever asked me what *arpeggio* means. Because people will recognise a good pianist when they hear one. And so do I. And this one is not!"
Nor will music played at sight be chosen more or less arbitrarily. The examination board will meet (and, in an intermediate or aptitude exam, discuss what skills they are looking for) and then decide on the pieces of music to be performed. It will not be left to the discretion of individual members of the examination board to choose whatever piece they like and it is not very likely for a piece to be accepted because the person suggesting it says " I played this last week in Boston, so that's a good test".

To sum up: assessment will take into account the objective grade of difficulty set by a particular piece of music; it is chosen with regard to the level of aptitude of the candidates; the choice is based on a consensual debate between examiners where the appropriate terminology is used.

As both, an examiner and an observer at aptitude, intermediate and final exams for conference interpreters, I have noticed that many assessors disregard the objective difficulties of the speech to be interpreted almost completely. This is the case regardless of whether the speech to be interpreted is presented in an *impromptu/live* setting so that each candidate has to cope with a different speech or whether video or audiotapes of one speech are used for all the candidates. In the former setting, however, the lack of objective criteria may have more negative consequences for the candidate since the assessment of her performance will not be relative to other performances.

There may be a fleeting reference to a "difficult passage" or a statement like "Admittedly, this wasn't easy", but very rarely have I witnessed an effort to objectively and systematically describe the difficulties set by the speech chosen for the exam.
The speech to be interpreted is usually chosen by one member of the examination board without any prior discussion. Efforts by individual examiners to

introduce linguistic terms in order to objectively describe difficulties or types of errors are rare and if they do occur are not often taken up by others.

The most common critical statements made by assessors are of the 'How can one ...!' type How can one produce so many false starts, how can one not know/leave out/mispronounce this word, how can one not know what gilt edged securities are...

I do have my reservations about Gile's *efforts model* (Gile: 1995), but it does describe very neatly that - particularly in the simultaneous mode - an interpreter's capacity is limited and that overloading it will necessarily lead to omissions, false starts and downright errors. Would it not be fair, then, to first take a look at the objective difficulties set by a passage before one deplores the ineptitude of the candidate (thereby underscoring one's own superior skills) ?

I shall argue that indeed one should – not only to ensure a fair assessment of all the candidates' performances but also because defining objective grades of difficulty is a central concept of didactics.

1 - Trained Trainers

The training of interpreters – like that of athletes – must be neither too demanding nor not demanding enough. If it is too hard it can irreparably damage the trainee and destroy his or her potential. If it is too easy it will not achieve the desired effect - e.g. better concentration, more stamina, a larger inventory of strategies, better technique, more self-confidence.

Self-confidence is particularly important in interpreting – as pointed out elsewhere (Hönig: 1997).

Briefly: Interpreters have to rely on their domain knowledge, their scenic inventory. Unlike translators they work 'online', i.e. they can't scroll up and down their texts, they cannot consult dictionaries or look at parallel texts, and they have little free capacity for monitoring processes. Interpreters, particularly when working in the simultaneous mode, have to get it right almost instantaneously. Their preferred strategy (cf. Hönig: 1998) is to get away from individual words and to grasp holistic concepts which are then verbalised in the target language. But one can only grasp concepts or *scenes* and commit them to short-term memory which one has re-cognised because they are embedded in one's long-term memory.

Brain physiologists and cognitive scientists tell us that comprehension processes are largely automatic. When we see, hear or smell something we know nothing of this 'some thing' – we only know how our brain has interpreted certain data. When we re-cognise and understand something we only know how our neural networks made sense of words and noises. We can, of course, examine and analyse these interpretations and we may – given enough time – come to different results after a second or third go. But in interpreting we usually do not have the time and capacity for monitoring processes and therefore are quite happy to rely on the work of that part of the brain that Garzzaniga terms *the interpreter*:

The interpreter and the memory system meet in these false recollections. As we spin our tale, calling on the large items for the schema of our past memory. we simply drag into the account likely details that could have been part of the experience. Such easily disprovable fabrications go on all the time.
A way to find memory distortions is to present someone with pictures of a likely event. Show a group of normal people forty slides depicting a person arising in the morning, getting dressed, having breakfast, reading the paper. and going to work. After the subjects view this pictorial story, send them off for a couple of hours and then bring them back to the laboratory for testing. In a typical test some of the exact same pictures are mixed in with other pictures that could have been part of story; also included are pictures that have nothing to do with the story. All the subjects have to judge is which pictures they saw before. Not surprisingly they make all kinds of mistakes, but mistakes of a certain type. They swear they saw many of the related pictures. and they are quite good at rejecting the unrelated ones. In short, they remember the gist of the story. and with that comes the schema of what logically fits the vignette. This sort of memory invention is false memory at work.
(Garzzaniga: 1998, 142-3)
:

In other words: Comprehension is a constructive process – not because we want to be constructive but because the architecture of our neural networks does most of the construction work. Interpreters, one could say, are happy to make use of Garzzaniga's *interpreter* because they have to get it right the first time anyway.

Therefore the foundation of an interpreter's efforts is for her to have the self-confidence to believe that she can get it right, that she can trust her comprehensive power and skills. To destroy a trainee's confidence in her ability to understand by badly or arbitrarily chosen speeches will not only impair her performance in this particular instance but in the long run lead to irreparable injuries.

Trainers must be aware of this responsibility. They must not waste the potential of talented and highly motivated young people by exposing them to a "survival-of-the-fittest" approach. To select only those who survive such an approach is wasteful – to claim that it is part of "didactics" is cynical. It is just not good enough to say: "This is a speech from my last assignment – if you want to become interpreters you should be able to do it."

But good will and the wish to be an efficient trainer and a fair assessor are not enough. To make an informed choice of suitable speeches for tests and in training one has to have learned how to describe different grades of difficulty objectively. Objectivity in this area, however, cannot be attained without a basic knowledge in the fields of discourse/textual analysis. And without referring to the terminology provided by descriptive linguistics.

Many trainers are trained interpreters and excellent linguists with hardly any knowledge of linguistics. Some of them are not prepared to learn the basics of textual and other linguistics because they feel that apprentices should learn the trade by copying their masters. They claim that you do not have to know about *speech acts* and *coherence* in order to be a good interpreter.

Indeed you do not, but the question is: "Can you be a competent trainer of interpreters if you are unable to describe speech and discourse related difficulties in an objective and differentiated way? Systematic training of any kind is only possible if the trainer is able to describe what she wants trainees to do and what not to do – and why. If training provides no answer to these questions it becomes, at best, trial and error and in the worst case a desperate and frustrating effort to copy the old master.

2 - A Model for the Assessment of Objective Grades of Difficulty
Topic and Structure (Ia+b)

Together with my colleagues training interpreters at the Fachbereich für Angewandte Sprach-und Kulturwissenschaft (FASK) at the Johannes-Gutenberg Universität Mainz, I have developed a model to define objective grades of difficulty for speeches used in interpreter training. It refers to training in both simultaneous and consecutive unless otherwise stated and indicated by an asterisk.

Fig. 1 Objective Grades of Difficulty –

As can be seen in Fig.I it consists of two pages and comprises four sections and 11 categories. Considering the libraries of learned books and articles written on textual and discourse analysis it is very short and perhaps too simple. Introducing only the most essential linguistic and paralinguistic categories and keeping linguistic terminology to a minimum seems, however, to have motivated users to regularly work with it and to profit from the results.

Section I (*Topic, Structure*) describes how students relate to different topics of speeches and to the way speakers structure their presentations thematically. Section II (a+b) and III (a+b) describe features of cohesion; section IV (a+b+c) provides criteria for the description of a speaker's presentation; section V seeks to establish how the use of figures and numbers objectively affects the grade of difficulty.

I shall now explain the categories used in sections I – V. After that I shall describe how trainers can work with the model and what its merits are in both assessment and training.

Section I (*Topic + Structure*) describes how students relate to different topics of speeches and to the way speakers structure their presentations thematically. *Standard ritualised speeches* like e.g. welcoming addresses where both theme and structure follow a stereotype are considered *very easy* because they can be totally anticipated and learned by heart. *Homologous* speeches (top right hand column) deal with themes students can easily relate to; *allologous* speeches (bottom right hand column) deal with themes quite outside the scope of their world knowledge. Obviously, it is easier to understand and interpret *homologous* speeches than *allologous* speeches.

How students relate to topics and themes depends, of course, to a large extent on their age and maturity. Since at Mainz/Germersheim we run undergraduate alongside postgraduate courses for interpreters we are fully aware of these differences and we choose our teaching material accordingly. Not intuitively, but based on a thorough analysis.
The structure of a presentation depends, to a certain extent, on its theme. Specialist political issues are often of such a complex nature that a simple problem/solution structure cannot be used. Generally, however, it can be said that if a speaker defines issues and problems right at the beginning of his speech and suggests solution(s) to these problems it is comparatively *easy* (in this category). If, however, a speaker does not define issue(s) at the beginning, does not suggest a solution, suggests several possible solutions or discusses several issues and solutions his speech will be *medium easy/hard.* And if he does not define any issue, suggests no solutions and only experts can recognise either issues or solutions his speech is considered to be *hard.*

Structure takes precedence over *topic.* A speech which is loosely or badly structured in the way described above will make it *medium hard/hard* to interpret – even if it deals with a topic students can easily relate to. Conversely, students will be able to somehow cope with a fairly esoteric *topic* if it is presented in a well-structured speech.

I am aware that short excerpts from speeches will be somehow unsatisfactory but I hope they will illustrate our approach. Here are the opening sentences of a commencement speech:

(1)
The future is a foreign country and we are all travellers and explorers. You, who are graduating, must be intrepid travellers. Let me explain, and offer some thoughts that I think can serve as guides to help us all be intrepid travellers in this inevitable journey. What about the landscape of the future? What type of personal equipment is likely to be most useful in our journey through this future…?

The speech is addressed to students – graduates and undergraduates**.** It deals with the question 'What happens next – after graduation?', a theme familiar to trainee interpreters. They can easily relate to this topic which is clearly and repeatedly stated. Those listening will immediately understand what problem is going to be discussed and they also know that solutions will be presented – probably in the form of guidelines.

So structurally as well as thematically this excerpt illustrates what would be a *very easy/easy* speech in this category of *structure and topic.*

Now let us look at some other opening sentences:

(2)
I am very pleased to welcome you all to this symposium convened by the Governing Body -members of the Workers' and Employers' groups and Government representatives, reflecting the ILO's tripartite structure, as well as representatives of other international organizations, NGOs and all who wished to be present at this meeting. Thank you for taking the time to be here with us and to contributing to the success of this meeting.
The Beijing + 5 process is an important re-affirmation of the globalization of a commitment to achieve gender equality. We take another step towards globalizing social progress when we champion gender equality as a matter of rights and social justice as well as efficiency and good business sense.

Even if students have been told that the speaker is Mrs. Brundtland, Director General of WHO, and that this is her opening address, entitled *Gender, Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century* for a *Gender Symposium on Decent Work for Women*, they will still find it hard to relate to the theme of her presentation. Her topic is an issue for a narrow group of specialists and her opening sentences seem to neither define a problem nor suggest a solution. A closer look at the last sentence of the excerpt, however, reveals that her when-clause should really be an if-clause: Only **if** we champion gender equality as a matter of rights and social justice ... etc. will we make progress. And insiders/experts will know that these conditions are far from being fulfilled, so that the real problem is this: "How can we ensure that gender equality is seen as a matter of rights.... etc. ?"

Since, however, this is not what the speaker verbalises it is very hard to discover her hidden agenda, particularly since it is hidden in a territory which is unfamiliar to most students.

So structurally as well as thematically this excerpt illustrates what would be a *very hard* speech in the category of *structure and topic.*

Speech Acts and Levels of Redundancy (IIa+b)
Redundancy as a semantic category is self-explanatory. It is obvious that higher levels of redundancy make comprehension (and interpreting) easier. Excerpt 1 (above) provides some examples.

The term 'speech act' is less well known although it has played an important role in translation didactics for quite some time (cf. Kußmaul: 1995, 61-63). I refer readers to what has been explained there and, of course, to Searle's pioneering work (Searle: 1969).

Speech acts are an important tool to define intended communicative meaning ('illocutions'). Speech organising illocutions like e.g. *I repeat, I stress, I ask, I submit, I admit* and their indicators highlight the structure of a speech. Their absence makes it harder to mentally structure a speech.

Indirect speech acts are usually hard to process, e.g.:

(3)
More than 80% of all business decisions taken are based on non-business, non-rational reasoning. You want to have nothing to do with this? Jim Belasco is a management consultant from San Diego and he says: "People buy emotions which they afterwards rationalise.

The rhetorical question (sentence two) is not a question at all. It could be replaced by "If you don't agree with this, listen to what Jim Belasco said. He is a management consultant ....". What sounds like a question is – in illocutionary terms – an argument to brush aside any possible doubts. Obviously, a considerable amount of processing capacity is needed in order to analyse indirect speech acts.

Many indirect speech acts make speeches harder; many direct speech acts make them easier in this category.

3 - Cohesion (IIIa+b)

Before we look at syntactical features the term *cohesion* - and its counterpart, *coherence* – will be explained. Halliday and Hasan introduced this useful distinction as early as 1976.

Both concepts refer to sections and meaningful units of a speech – not necessarily to sentences.
Cohesion is the most important quality of a well-formed discourse. It gives it internal unity and stability, dovetailing, as it were, thoughts and parts of speech. Cohesion is achieved by the use of e.g. *theme-rheme* progression and interpropositional relations (e.g. conjunctions, pronouns). In the simultaneous mode it is particularly important to remember that every language has its own cohesive features. A good interpreter will not simply lexically replace cohesion features of the source language but use functional 'equivalents'.

Coherence is basically a criterion of truth in the sense that coherent statements "fit" into the world knowledge of the recipients. An interpreter who lacks the necessary world and domain knowledge will feel that a speech is incoherent and most likely will render it incoherently – albeit, perhaps, cohesively.

Cohesion and coherence are also very important evaluation criteria because any deviation from these principles constitutes a mistake which cannot be compensated for. Errors, for instance in the fields of completeness ("omissions") or exactness (figures/numbers or names), are of a lower rank as long as they do not lead to a violation of the principles of cohesion and coherence.

We dealt with coherence in section Ia of our model where we examined how students relate to topics. Now we shall look at some features of cohesion by discussing some examples:

Theme – Rheme Progression (IIIa)

(4a)
Eating when we are not hungry (T1) can also make us feel out of control (R1). In order to try to regain control (R1=T2) we often try drastic measures such as crash dieting, fasting or purging (R2) to regulate our food intake and weight. These activities (R2=T3) may seem an easier solution than learning to control our food intake by trusting our bodies.

(4b)
He [Columbus] (T1) wanted to find a short route to the treasures of India, my previous homeland (R1). Columbus (T1) did not achieve his goal (R2). Instead, he (T1) discovered our wonderful country, America, my new home (R3).

(4a) follows a very regular pattern: New rhemes (R1, R2) become given themes (T1,T2), thus creating a very secure stepping structure where every step is used twice: T1 → R1, R1 = T2, T2 → R2, R2 = T3 ....
(4b) has a tree-like structure, where new rhemes (R1,R2,R3) are branching off from one thematic trunk: T1 → R1 T1 → R2 T1 → R3. Cohesion is less marked in (4b) than in (4a).

4 - Anaphoric – cataphoric (IIIb)

Anaphora is another tool to connect sentences and thoughts and to mark cohesion. Pronouns and other pro-forms are frequently used in all kinds of texts; their function does not have to be explained in this context.

cataphoric expressions are less well known and deserve the attention of interpreters because they often pose problems:

(4c)
After one of his many failures to perfect the electric light bulb, the great inventor Thomas Edison explained that "he now knows several thousand things that won't work". In fact, most of us would be better off if we lost at least some of our fear of losing and not attaining our goals.

Whereas anaphoric expressions take up what has been verbalised before (albeit with a different lexeme) cataphoric expressions point to something which is going to be said later (and, hopefully, soon). It is not clear what *his* in the first sentence of (4b) stands for until the second part of the sentence names *the great inventor Thomas Edison*. The pronoun *his* is used as a placeholder which is explained later, thus creating a forward reference which interpreters – particularly in the simultaneous mode – often have to anticipate since their target language does not afford them the possibility to use parallel sentence structures.
Looking at the way the two sentences are logically connected we notice another cataphoric relation. Compare version (4c - above) to version (4d – below):

(4d)
In fact, most of us would be better off if we lost at least some of our fear of losing and not attaining our goals. After one of his many failures to perfect the electric light bulb, the great inventor Thomas Edison explained that "he now knows several thousand things that won't work.

(4d) is logically anaphoric because in the first sentence we are told in general terms what we should do and the second sentence illustrates this maxim by quoting Edison. In (4c), however, we are first told what Edison said and since we know that the topic of the speech is neither Edison nor the invention of the electric light bulb we also know that a message or punch line is coming, telling the audience what it is supposed to learn. The interpreter knows that he has to deliver this message to his audience because if he does not, nobody will understand the communicative meaning of the quote. In (4d), however, the first sentence makes sense by itself. The second

sentence illustrates what the speaker means by giving an example, but the audience could do without the example whereas they cannot do without the message contained in the second sentence of (4c).
Generally speaking, cataphoric forward references, whether syntactical or logical, put a heavier load on processing capacity than anaphoric backward references.

5 - Presentation (IVa-c)

Column 1 examines two important and interconnected paralinguistic features of a presentation:

Speed of delivery and the use of notes (IVa)
Most interpreters get a little nervous when they realise that a speaker is going to read out his speech from a prepared manuscript. They know from past experiences that there is a danger that he will rattle off his words at a very high speed, may get emphases wrong and may even leave out the occasional word or line.

All things being equal, they feel much more comfortable with a speaker using no manuscript or only notes. They know that from an impromptu speech they can expect a slower speed of delivery, a higher level of redundancy and clear emphases.

There is a third factor which affects the other two: it is not so rare, particularly in political and business contexts, for an expert to 'ghostwrite' the speech which is then delivered (usually read out) by a high-ranking representative or officer. It is therefore important not only to observe whether a manuscript is used but also to find out what the speaker's expertise is in the domain he is going to talk about.

In our model we rank *low speed of delivery* and *expert talks about his domain without notes* as *very easy/easy*. There is, however, a difference between interpreting modes with regard to the criterion of speed: extremely low speeds of delivery, we feel, can be a problem in simultaneous where the interpreter needs to achieve *closure* fairly quickly in order not to overload his processing short term memory with too many isolated words. (Prideaux & Baker: 1984, 86: 'closure: syntactic or semantic integration at the earliest possible point').

At the other end of the scale we deem speeches at a *high speed of delivery* and/or *manuscripts read out by non-experts* to be *hard/very hard.*

It has been the policy of many training schools (particularly those taking part in the *Euromaster in Conference Interpreting*) and of SCIC to only use impromptu speeches in tests and exams. It is not clear, however, whether the reason for this is to create a realistic scenario with 'live' speeches or to deliberately choose a uniform and easy (paralinguistic) type of presentation.

6 - Visual aids (IVb)

Visual aids like transparencies, overheads and *powerpoint* presentations have become an important part of speeches, particularly in the corporate and business world. Sometimes, however, they obscure rather than clarify the structure and thematic progression of a presentation. There are several reasons why this may happen: technical hitches (including the fact that often interpreters cannot see or read captions because of the position of their booths); unprofessionally prepared and presented visual aids; time pressure which forces speakers to hurry through their slides.

We feel that low quality visual aids make a speech harder to interpret than a speech without any visual aids. On the other hand, visual aids, if prepared and presented professionally, highlight structures and emphasise cohesive elements. The benefits for the interpreter are, however, more appreciated in the consecutive mode. In simultaneous, it is felt, visual aids almost inevitably put an additional burden on the interpreter's processing capacity, so that speeches without any visual aids are *easier* than those with high quality visual aids.

7 - Deviations from Standard (English) (IVc)

At least for freelance interpreters it has become the rule rather than the exception to translate speeches given in English by non-native speakers. Since many deviate considerably from the phonetic, syntactical and lexical norms of standard (American or British) English, interpreters may have to cope with additional comprehension problems. The same is true for varieties of other languages, e.g. French and Spanish, but in quantitative terms English is the language most affected.

All things being equal, an interpreter who is not familiar with these lexical, syntactical and phonetic variants will feel that her task is very hard whereas her colleague who may share the speaker's social and regional background might find it easy. It is therefore not possible to say that certain varieties are objectively easier than others. The grade of difficulty in this category obviously depends on how manageable the deviations are for the interpreter, given her background and experience.

While an interpreter's personal background and experience is, by definition, subjective, the manageability of varieties can at least be described as a function of the interpreter's background/previous experience and the width of the deviations in a particular speech. It is, however, not an objective criterion in the sense that it can be established independently of personal features. We feel, therefore, that speeches featuring wide deviations from the standard variety should not be used in tests and exams. On the other hand, exposing students to speeches of this kind is an important part of professional training. The more systematically this is done the less subjective assessment of the grade of difficulty will become in this category.

8 - Numbers / Figures (V)

Some schools specifically teach and test how figures and numbers are handled and remembered. They are considered to be an additional burden on processing capacity – quite independent of the contexts they are used in.
We feel that texts without any numbers and figures are easiest in this category. On the other hand it cannot be said that the objective grade of difficulty increases proportionately to the amount of numbers and figures quoted. There are other factors to be considered: Do figures and numbers all refer to the same unit; are they all part of the same scene?
To illustrate this point let us look at two excerpts from speeches:

(5a) Theme: Anorexia
Carol jogged 2 –3 miles every morning and then exercised for one hour. After a year and half of dieting she dropped from 120 pounds to 78 pounds. She reduced her daily intake of calories to 600 and exercised all the time.

(5b) Theme: Child Poverty
Between 1998 and 2002 for the family with one child, child benefit will have risen by 4.45 pounds – 26 per cent above inflation.

There are just as many figures and numbers in (5a) as in (5b): four. In (5a), however, they are related and part of one scene: 'Carol's anorexia'. I am using *scene* in the sense Vermeer (Vermeer/Witte: 1990) takes up Fillmore's concept. Although different measuring units are referred to (miles, pounds, calories, years) they are all semantically related to one central theme, e.g. weight loss: **Weight loss** through exercise and **weight loss** through reduced food-intake led to an actual **weight loss** in certain time-span.

In (5b) we have a time span (between 1998-2002), a sum (4.45 pounds), a percentage increase (26%) and a one-child family. They are all related, but in a different and far more complicated way. Sum, increase and size of the family are not semantically related and are not factors contributing to one phenomenon. The increase is measured in two measuring units: 4.45 pounds more in 2002 than in 1998 and 26% more than inflation in the period 1998 – 2002. The one-child family is another measuring unit since – as experts will know – child benefits are different for the first and second child. It could be argued, though, that for an interpreter with the appropriate domain knowledge excerpt (5b) represents a recognisable scene, too. This is true, but - as in other categories – *hard* or *very hard* does not mean that every interpreter will find this task difficult. It means that this feature requires more processing capacity than others unless the person processing it has acquired specialist knowledge enabling him or her to use what Mackintosh terms *construction*: 'any sequence of propositions may be replaced by one denoting a global fact of which the micro propositions are normal constituents' (Mackintosh: 1995, 41).

Specialist knowledge is, by definition, a rare commodity – rarer, at least, than general knowledge. Where some see global woods, others may have a hard time recognising the individual trees.

Interpreter trainers, it must be remembered, are not just experienced interpreters. They are also and at the same time comprehension veterans who have stored pictures of many a wood in their minds. There is a danger, therefore, for them to extend the territory of general knowledge as they acquire and repeatedly use specialist knowledge. Or to put it as one of my colleagues once did (tongue-in-cheek, I hope):
"General knowledge is what I know. What I don't know must be specialist knowledge!"

9 - Conclusions (V)

In conclusion I shall address the question how the results of each section (I - V) should be weighted in order to arrive at a total grade of difficulty which is valid for the whole speech. Before I do so I would like to emphasise that the process of going through each section and asking oneself how easy or hard it is (and why) is more important than awarding a total grade of difficulty.
There are two possible ways of collating results in order to define a total grade of difficulty:
Arithmetically, i.e. award one point for *very easy*, two for *easy*.... five for *very hard*, add up the marks from the ten categories and divide the result by ten. Alternatively add up the marks from the five sections and divide by five.

Weighted, i.e. award points as above by sections but multiply results for section I by three and divide by seven.

However one arrives at this total grade of difficulty it does not tell us what use one can make of it. Again, there are several possibilities:
Assuming that students are grouped as beginners, advanced and exam candidates one could say that beginners should work with 'totally' *very easy/easy* speeches, advanced students with *medium/hard* ones and that exam candidates should be given *hard/very hard* speeches. As an alternative it is also possible to choose the material according to section results, i.e. beginners should only work with speeches where no section grade is harder than *medium*, no harder than *hard* for advanced students and no easier than *medium* for exam candidates.

On the whole, however, analysing and grading speeches in each category is probably more valuable than putting them into boxes labelled easy or difficult. Both trainers and students will profit from the grading effort:
Applying the proposed model enables trainers to make an informed choice when they select teaching and testing material. And when discussing the merits and flaws of a particular performance they will be in a position to do far more than just

point out what was right and what was wrong. A trainer with an idea of what the objective difficulties are will be able to discuss how one can cope with them, i.e. discuss interpreting strategies and techniques. S/he will not just supply words and correct syntactical errors or lament students' lack of general knowledge.
more prepared to accept criticism if it is based on objective criteria (and not on personal likes and dislikes). And if the trainer systematically proceeds from easier to harder speeches they will feel that their training programme is transparent and based on a sound methodology.

When assessing performances in tests and exams the term 'correct' or 'right' will be replaced by 'acceptable' or 'adequate'. It is an important step forward to speak about adequacy rather than correctness, accuracy and completeness because the former term implies a change of paradigm. The tools to evaluate correctness are provided by (prescriptive) contrastive linguistics whereas adequacy will be established by using the tools provided by cognitive linguistics and communicative approaches, taking into account the grade of difficulty.

Since evaluation is relative to the objective grade of difficulty it is unrealistic to expect flawless interpretation of an objectively "hard" speech. This does not mean, however, that they should not be chosen. Examination boards will get a wider spectrum of performances and more differentiated results if speeches are objectively difficult to interpret. The speech given must pose challenges for the candidate in order to give him/her a chance to display a wide range of strategies and coping tactics. In these cases completeness and *verbatim* exactness must not be the only evaluation criteria employed.

Adequacy implies that an interpretation is, by definition, *relatively* successful. Relative to user expectation(s), access to preparatory material and quality of input. Within the scope of this article we only dealt with the last of these three in detail.

Objective Grade of Difficulty Page I: Topic+Structure

Standard ritualised speeches

speaker defines issue(s) at beginning and suggests solution(s)

topic is an issue for interpreter privately

topic is an issue for interpreter's peer group (same age and education)

topic is an issue for interpreter's age group

topic is an issue for most people

topic is an issue for broad age + professional groups

topic is an issue for narrow age + professional groups

speaker does not define issue(s) at beginning; does not suggest a solution; suggests several possible solutions; discusses several issues and solutions

topic is an issue for interpreter's peer group (same age and education)

topic is an issue for interpreter's age group

topic is an issue for most people

topic is an issue for broad age + professional groups

topic is an issue for narrow age + professional groups

speaker does not define any issue, suggests no solutions - experts, however, can recognise issues and solutions

interpreters are given the chance to acquire expert knowledge

interpreters are NOT given the chance to acquire expert knowledge

HOMOLOGOUS

VERY EASY

EASY

MEDIUM

HARD

VERY HARD

ALLOLOGOUS

Objective Grade of Difficulty Page II: Linguistic + Paralinguistic Features

Speech acts ***Level of Redundancy***	**Cohesion**	**Presentation**	**Numbers/Figures**	**Objective grade of difficulty**
		Low speed of delivery* **expert talks about his domain without notes**	**No numbers/figures**	***VERY EASY***
many direct speech acts organising discourse e.g. stress, ask *level of redundancy high*	**Cohesion marked; mainly anaphoric**	**expert talks about his domain with notes** expert talks about his domain reading out manuscript **layperson gives talk without notes** layperson gives talk with notes **High speed of delivery**	Few numbers/ figures; all refer to same unit; all part of one scene	***EASY***
declarative speech acts only		**layperson reads out manuscript** **visual aids clarify structure + thematic progression***	**Many numbers/ figures; refer to different units; not part of one scen**	**MEDIUM**
level of redundancy low	**Cohesion rarely marked mainly cataphoric**	deviations from (phonetic, syntactic, lexical) rules are manageable no visual aids*		***HARD***
many indirect speech acts; **few direct speech acts organising discourse**		**visual aids obscure structure + thematic progression** deviations from (phonetic, syntactical, lexical) rules are NOT manageable		**VERY HARD**

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Le perfectionnement linguistique pour les interprètes vers la langue B

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Le cours en perfectionnement linguistique pour les interprètes vers la langue B n'est pas un cours d'interprétation en B. Certains didacticiens de l'interprétation et interprètes eux-mêmes affirment que s'il y a des techniques utiles pour le perfectionnement en langue B celles-ci peuvent se révéler nuisibles pour l'apprentissage des techniques d'interprétation (cf. Déjean Le Féal 1997 : 621).

Avant d'aborder la question de la compétence en langue B exigée pour un interprète de conférence, il est utile de rappeler les principes de la définition de la compétence en langue A. Selon Carroll (1978), cette compétence, appelée l'intelligence verbale, englobe :

- la compétence lexicale
- la sensibilisation à certains usages du lexique, les nuances des expressions idiomatiques
- la capacité de prévision des combinaisons lexicales dans les énoncés
- la reconnaissance des ambiguïtés sémantiques et syntaxiques
- la capacité de s'exprimer de façon efficace

Selon cet auteur, l'intelligence verbale en langue A est mesurée grâce à des tests du vocabulaire dans lesquels on analyse, entre autres, la connaissance de la signification des mots difficiles ou rares. Carroll (*ibidem*) remarque également que la compétence verbale en langue étrangère B se résume par les facteurs suivants :

- la correction phonétique
- la sensibilisation grammaticale

Cependant de l'interprète en langue B on attend :

- de la clarté du discours
- de la rapidité
- de la précision et de la conviction dans la prestation.

Par conséquent les interprètes doivent démontrer :

- de la souplesse de l'expression
- de la capacité de solutions des problèmes de langue et de compréhension
- de l'aisance par rapport à la langue A

Il en découle que les critères d'une haute évaluation de la prestation en B ne sont pas uniquement linguistiques mais relèvent de la technique de l'interprétation.

Cependant les formateurs en interprétation signalent de nombreux cas de fautes en langue B qui sont décisifs pour la formation de futurs interprètes. Ainsi Čenkova (2000 : 44), en décrivant l'expérience tchèque en EMCI, rapporte que, durant la simultanée « les faiblesses et lacunes en langues B étaient plus visibles (plus audibles) que dans l'interprétation consécutive » sans les énumérer. Les collègues polonais, formateurs pendant le premier cours EMCI à l'Université de Varsovie durant l'année 2001/2002 ont dressé une liste des erreurs les plus gênantes observées chez les apprenants en interprétation vers B (qui était dans ce cas-là l 'anglais) :

- les calques des structures grammaticales de langue A
- les incorrections grammaticales (p.ex. des exceptions grammaticales)
- l'emploi erroné des articles et des prépositions
- les fautes dans le système verbal
- les calques lexicaux et phraséologiques
- la méconnaissance des expressions phraséologiques
- la connaissance insuffisante du lexique courant et de la terminologie
- les faux-amis lexicaux
- la xénisation des mots (invention des mots inexistants en B mais créés suivant les règles morphologiques de B).
- les fautes de prononciation
- la prononciation erronée des noms propres étrangers
- le manque des liens logiques (manquement aux règles de cohésion et de cohérence)

Dans les études sur l'interprétation entre les langues génétiquement proches, les auteurs analysent les différents cas de faux-amis au niveau morphologique, syntaxique, et surtout lexical (cf. Fusco 1990, Giambagli 1990). Ainsi p.ex. Fusco (1990) dresse une liste des paronymes entre l'italien et l'espagnol à l'intention des formateurs des interprètes de conférence.

De ces observations on peut déduire que l'évaluation d'une interprétation en B repose toujours sur les mêmes variables linguistiques qui peuvent être regroupées selon les critères suivants :

- la correction phonétique
- la correction grammaticale
- la richesse lexicale
- le débit de la parole, les pauses et les phrases achevées

Les variables qui doivent être mesurées dans le jugement porté sur un texte produit par un locuteur non natif durant l'interprétation concernent la fluidité en langue B. A notre connaissance, l'étude de Dewaele (1994) portant sur la fluidité de l'interprétation est, pour le moment, la seule à rendre compte des recherches empiriques menées dans ce domaine. Les résultats donnés ne relèvent pas d'une évaluation subjective apportée par des interprètes et/ou linguistes et qui consiste principalement en un calcul ou simple repérage des fautes de langue. Son étude est basée sur un corpus de discours en français produits par des néerlandophones qui ont été soumis à une évaluation par des natifs. Soulignons également que l'étude de Daweale a également démontré que des variables sociolinguistiques sont tout aussi importantes pour l'évaluation des prestations en B que les variables linguistiques. Ces dernières, liées à la fluidité du discours, sont :

- la richesse lexicale : elle est mesurée grâce à l'indice de richesse lexicale de Dugast. Pour Dewaele (ibid.) il est clair que « la richesse lexicale du discours d'un locuteur semble avoir des effets déterminants sur le jugement que porte l'allocuté sur la personnalité et les capacités du locuteur. [...] Une diversité lexicale plus réduite provoque des jugements négatifs de la compétence communicative et amène l'autre à sous-estimer le statut socio-économique du locuteur :
"[Des auteurs] ont remarqué en outre qu'un allocuté perçoit très rapidement lorsqu'un discours a une redondance lexicale dépassant la moyenne » (p. 80). "
Notons en passant que selon Dewaele (ibid.) la situation est légèrement différente lorsqu'un locuteur non natif, s'adressant à un locuteur natif, se « trahit » par son accent ou par d'autres déviations par rapport à la norme de la langue-

cible. L'interlocuteur natif ne déduira pas nécessairement que la personne qui lui adresse la parole est d'un milieu socio-économique inférieur, mais cela ne l'empêchera pas de porter un jugement sur la compétence communicative du locuteur «non natif » (p. 80).

- l'omission du « ne » dans la négation : la fréquence du « ne » dans les négations du discours natif varie en fonction d'un nombre de facteurs situationnels et sociolinguistiques. Les locuteurs exposés à la langue cible dans un contexte scolaire (ou encore la langue de dimanche) ignorent que l'omission est généralement permise dans la langue orale. C'est grâce à cet emploi excessif qu'un locuteur natif peut juger négativement une prestation en B.

- **le taux d'exactitude morphosyntaxique et lexicale** : au niveau morphologique il s'agit de la violation des règles d'accord du genre et du nombre, de la concordance des temps et de l'aspect, des modes et de la personne; au niveau lexical on remarque les mots superflus au contexte, des mots impropres, l'absence de mots obligatoires, des mots de l'interlangue prononcés à la française mais n'existant pas en français.

- les hésitations et le débit : la fluidité du discours dépend en premier lieu des hésitations. Il est question ici de la proportion des pauses vides et des pauses remplies (*euh*) dans l'ensemble des occurrences verbales ; en ce qui concerne le débit, les observateurs jugent positivement les locuteurs qui parlent plus vite et plus longtemps.

- la longueur moyenne des énoncés : c'est un important indice de fluidité qui permet de mesurer la performance linguistique en B, entre autre de déceler les défaillances syntaxiques du locuteur non natif. Dans le jugement effectué par les natifs les énoncés courts avaient un effet perturbateur pour la capacité communicative en langue B.

De l'analyse de Dewaele (1994 : 83) découle le constat que le jugement sur le discours produit par des non natifs est fortement lié avec les indices reflétant directement la fluidité du discours. En résumé cette étude a permis de constater que :

1. les plus hautes corrélations apparaissent entre les notes et les valeurs du débit du discours, la proportion des pauses remplies dans l'ensemble des occurrences et le taux d'exactitude morpho lexicale globale. Certaines erreurs sont plus décisives pour le jugement final que d'autres (p.ex. les articles, les prépositions, les adjectifs qui sont sanctionnés plus sévèrement).

2. la fréquence des interruptions de la chaîne parlée, les pauses vides (moins de 2 sec.) n'exercent aucune influence sur la note finale. Comme affirment les auteurs finlandais K. Sajavaara et J. Lehtonen cités dans l'etude de Dewaele – *teaching students how to be 'disfluent' makes them sound more native-like*, autrement dit pour être naturel, le discours doit contenir des pauses et des hésitations.

3. aucune relation de signification n'est apparue entre les valeurs de richesse ou de diversité lexicale globale et la note finale. Seule la diversité des conjonctions exerce une influence positive sur la note finale.

4. l'omission de « ne » devant les forclusifs n'est pas codée comme une erreur.

5. les énoncés longs obtiennent des notes élevées.

6. la relation significative entre les notes et le degré d'explicité du discours : plus le discours est formel plus les notes sont basses.

Le choix du degré de formalité est le résultat d'un compromis entre, d'une part, le désir d'être clair et précis, au risque de violer la maxime de la quantité de Grice et de paraître lourd, rigide, « objectif », plus « écrit », et d'autre part, , le choix de produire un discours plus flexible, moins explicite, plus « subjectif », plus « oral ». Aussi les études ont démontré que les locuteurs utilisant un style plus formel commettaient significativement plus d'erreurs que les locuteurs produisant un style plus informel.

Les variables indépendantes sociolinguistiques mesurées par Dewaele, mais qui dépassent les cadres de la présente étude sont : la connaissance du français du père, le statut linguistique de la région où les interlocuteurs sont domiciliés, les antécédents sociaux (p.ex. l'origine sociale, le niveau d'éducation), le statut du français du sujet, etc.

Les conclusions de l'analyse proposée par Dewaele sont les suivantes : l'évaluation d'un discours en B semble dépendre en premier de la fluidité du discours **: un discours fluide et correct** est bien coté. **L'informalité** et **la complexité** du discours sont également liés positivement aux notes finales. La richesse lexicale (à l'exception de la diversité des conjonctions) n'affecte pas le jugement des interlocuteurs.

L'évaluation de la prestation faite par un non natif présentée par Dewaele (ibid.) était basée sur des méthodes statistiques de Pearson-Bravais. Faute d'une pareille méthodologie, dans une évaluation récente de l'interprétation du polonais en français (langue B) effectuée durant la formation à Varsovie, nous nous sommes servis d'une appréciation subjective par un locuteur natif du français. Son jugement semble confirmer ce que Dewaele a découvert dans son analyse : la fluidité de la prestation est appréciée suivant les paramètres suivants : principalement c'est le débit rapide et des hésitations signalées par le natif comme étant naturelles ainsi que l'exactitude morpho lexicale qui sont hautement notés par le natif. Les phrases longues et complexes semblent également recevoir une cote élevée par l'évaluateur : elles sont la preuve d'une bonne connaissance grammaticale et stylistique de la langue B. L'accent légèrement étranger ne semble pas perturber son jugement.

L'étude de Dewaele (ibid.) signale un paramètre important à prendre en considération dans l'évaluation d'une interprétation en B. Il s'agit de la stylistique et du choix approprié du registre dans la production en B. L'importance de ce paramètre a été soulignée dans une étude sur la formation linguistique des traducteurs et interprètes de conférence menée par Intravaia & Scavee (1994). Les auteurs ont remarqué que les étudiants arrivés à un stade élevé dans la connaissance de la langue B (dans ce cas-là l'italien) faisaient généralement « preuve d'un manque de « *je ne sais quoi* » qui eût conféré à leur expression une authenticité totale » (p. 35). Ils ont expliqué par ailleurs que « les productions de nos étudiants, comparées à celles de l'autochtone exprimant, dans une situation analogue, les mêmes intentions de communication étaient davantage marquées par des spécificités psychologiques et dialectiques de leur langue maternelle que par des particularités phonétiques, prosodiques, lexicales ou morphosyntaxiques. Pour être acceptables, elles n'en étaient pas moins inappropriées, car elles dérogeaient aux normes qui régissent le mode de sentir et de s'exprimer propre à la communauté dont on apprend la langue. Autrement dit, il était peu probable que, placé dans une situation de communication analogue, l'autochtone aurait formulé la réalité suivant les mêmes schémas. Bref, nos étudiants francophones parlaient l'italien « *à la française* » »(p.35). En conclusion les auteurs demandent une plus grande sensibilisation aux usages du style qu'ils appellent « collectif » qui rend compte de la structure psychologique de chaque langue et qui permet d'arriver à une parfaite authenticité en langue B. Ils écrivent : « Que de fois, en effet, des traducteurs inexpérimentés ne s'évertuent-ils pas à transférer dans la langue d'arrivée des marques affectives qu'il attribuent indûment à un souci de style personnel inexistant alors qu'elles ne sont , en tout état de cause, que le reflet d'une manière collective de sentir et de s'exprimer qui est celle de la langue de départ et qui en aucun cas ne demande à être déversée dans la langue-cible » (p. 42). Et ils continuent : « C'est grâce à la connaissance et à l'assimilation d'un code affectif propre à la collectivité socioculturelle dont on apprend la langue que l'on acquiert l'aptitude à créer une perméation des idées et des sentiments, à créer les conditions qui assurent à notre discours les meilleures chances d'être reçu, reconnu et estimé parce que potentiellement consonant avec la sensibilité de notre interlocuteur telle qu'elle a été formée par une tradition culturelle séculaire. Condition indispensable de la compréhension entre les peuples, c'est l'objectif qu'il faut toujours avoir présent à l'esprit quand on fait métier d'enseigner les langues, *a fortiori* dans une école d'interprètes » (p.45).

La problématique du style approprié et du registre adéquat a été récemment soulevée par Ardito (1999 : 183) qui a remarqué que pour la paire de langues le néerlandais – l'italien la situation est particulièrement complexe car : « As regards the specific Dutch/Italian language pair, there is a striking difference between the register parameters applied by Dutch and Italian speakers to the same situational context. Even in formal contexts such as plenary session of the European Parliament, Dutch MEP's adopt a much more informal language register than their Italian colleagues, characterised by colourful metaphors and idiomatic expressions which abound in the Dutch language". Ces changements brusques de registres sont une difficulté pour les interprètes car, comme écrit Ardito (ibidem) : « Students interpreting from Dutch into Italian often appear unprepared for humor and sudden register variations such as bathos". La solution proposée par Ardito (ibid. p.184) est : « In these circumstances, intonation, a precious resource for the interpreter often neglected in training methodology, can be used to maintain the ironic/critical tone of the source language without necessarily lowering the register of the target language".

Les résultats de ces différentes études et observations effectuées durant la formation en interprétation vers la langue B nous autorisent à tirer la conclusion qu'une réorientation du cursus du perfectionnement linguistique en B pour les futurs interprètes est devenue une nécessité réelle. Pour le moment il n'existe aucune méthode, aucun cursus ou stage dans le sens propre du terme adressé uniquement aux étudiants en interprétation. Il va de soi qu'il faut des exercices appropriés vu la définition des exigences envers une prestation de qualité en langue B et la tâche à effectuer. De même il est clair qu'il faut préparer une panoplie d'exercices appropriés à chaque paire de langues, et des exercices différents pour les langues génétiquement apparentées (les langues romanes, les langues slaves etc.).

Pour le moment les objectifs d'un cours de perfectionnement linguistique en B sont la production d'énoncés oraux qui, du point de vue linguistique, correspondent à :

- une correction phonétique avec une intonation similaire à l'original, avec des pauses et des hésitations naturelles
- des structures grammaticales correctes, mais sans originalité superflue car cela devient gênant et attire inutilement l'attention des auditeurs
- une correction lexicale et phraséologique – précise et adéquate

Dans un cours du perfectionnement linguistique en B on continue à sensibiliser les étudiants à surmonter les éléments gênants dans l'interprétation qui sont :

une intonation artificielle, étrangère, prononciation incorrecte, nombreuses interférences phonétiques avec la langue A,

L'inintelligibilité causée par des structures grammaticales incorrectes, le lexique et la terminologie inadéquats (p. ex. xénismes, faux-amis)

une culture générale incomplète (allusions historiques et politiques), les dénominations et les noms propres prononcés de façon erronée).

La question du style et du registre corrects (ce que Intravaia & Scavee 1994 : 37 appellent la stylistique collective et la recherche de l'authenticité de la langue B) reste encore à développer.

En ce qui concerne le débit naturel en langue B, Déjean Le Féal (1981 : 89) lie ce paramètre avec celui de l'éloquence en langue B et affirme que : « L'amélioration de l'éloquence conduit à l'accélération du débit. Cela se fait par l'acquisition d'un grand nombre d'automatismes d'expression en langue cible. Pour acquérir les automatismes, je conseille aux étudiants d'élaborer eux-mêmes des discours-modèles et d'en mémoriser les structures jusqu'à ce qu'elles se présentent à l'esprit sur commande ». Et elle continue (ibid. p. 91) : « L'éloquence doit donner aux moyens d'expression de l'interprète toute la souplesse exigée par la reformulation des messages en simultanée. [...] Cette adaptabilité de la parole ne peut être atteinte que grâce à une richesse du vocabulaire actif. En effet, si l'on dispose, pour exprimer n'importe quel fait, n'importe quel concept, de toute une panoplie de termes et de tournures différentes qui, à quelques nuances près, sont interchangeables quant à leur sens dans un contexte donné, mais qui se distinguent du point de vue des structures syntaxiques dont ils relèvent, on parvient aisément à faire effectuer à ces phrases ces « loopings » et ces « vrilles » de dernière minute que demande tel développement insoupçonné de la pensée, tout en étant assuré qu'elles atterriront sans *casser du bois* , comme disent les aviateurs ».

En conclusion les exercices de perfectionnement linguistique de haut niveau à proprement parler devraient porter sur :

la prononciation : préparer une panoplie d'exercices appropriés à chaque paire de langue en fonction des interférences possibles, et dans le but d'améliorer la qualité prosodique de la performance.

les automatismes d'expression : préparer des discours–modèles en langue B :
- à mémoriser (niveau phonétique, grammatical, lexical mais principalement stylistique propre à la langue donnée)
- à reproduire (mémorisation des structures syntaxiques, des tournures, des collocations, des idiotismes, des formules de politesse, des habitudes de registre et de style etc.).

Pour ce faire les formateurs disposent de différents types d'exercices comme p. ex. :
le shadowing à propos duquel Karla Déjean Le Féal (1997, p. 621) s'exprime par ces termes :

« Shadowing is an excellent way to improve a B language precisely because it draws attention to every single word of an utterance, especially structure words which normally do not even register when heard and therefore particularly difficult to get right". Cependant pour l'apprentissage des techniques d'interprétation cet exercice est plutôt à déconseiller car l'auteur écrit (idib.) : « But shadowing, and indeed B language improvement techniques in general are exact opposite of the approach needed to learn interpreting".

la dictée dite « sémantique » : c'est un exercice de mémoire mais aussi de cohésion et de cohérence qui est utilisé à Varsovie. Les étudiants reproduisent/reformulent par écrit un texte présenté oralement en langue B et qui va d'une courte description d'un personnage à un texte relatant un événement avec une certaine chronologie. La longueur varie d'une demie-page à une page entière de texte. La reproduction/reformulation a lieu à partir de mots-clés, des idées contenues dans le texte original. C'est un exercice fortement apprécié par les étudiants. Il précède la formation en interprétation proprement dite dans le cadre du perfectionnement de la langue B.

la reformulation linguistique (cf. Falbo 1995, p. 88, Ficchi 1999, p. 211) ou paraphrase. Cet exercice oral est considéré comme un moyen de développer les capacités cognitives personnelles c'est aussi un moyen de simuler la capacité d'expression aussi bien en langue A que B ; cet exercice permet également de développer la connaissance des séries synonymiques afin d'éviter un lexique « passe-partout » (p.ex. *to do, to say, problem, important*, etc.)

En guise de conclusion il faut souligner que :

- pour atteindre un niveau élevé de la prestation en langue B, il faut prévoir durant la formation des exercices appropriés pour chaque paire de langues pour sensibiliser les étudiants aux interférences phonétiques, morpholexicales et syntaxiques,

- pour rendre les particularités stylistiques propres à la langue B, ainsi que son « authenticité totale » (cf. Intravaia & Scavee 1994), il faut les sensibiliser aux techniques de traduction/interprétation spécifiques pour chaque paire de langues donnée.

Cela veut dire que le perfectionnement linguistique pour les étudiants en interprétation doit être accompagné d'une prise de conscience et d'une acquisition de ces techniques d'interprétation. Un perfectionnement linguistique limité seulement aux interférences phonétiques, morpho lexicales ou syntaxiques nous semble être insuffisant pour pourvoir juger de la qualité d'une performance en B. L'authenticité du discours en langue B, qui signifie le choix du style et du registre adéquat, ne peut être assuré que grâce à des techniques apprises au cours de la formation en interprétation.

Le perfectionnement linguistique doit s'accompagner nécessairement de l'apprentissage des techniques et des stratégies d'interprétation. La compétence linguistique en B semble être insuffisante si elle n'est pas suivie de l'acquisition d'une compétence en interprétation.

Language enhancement For interpreting into B

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Although students admitted to postgraduate training courses are expected to have a high level of general and cultural knowledge and a good command of their B language, experience shows that most of them still need some targeted practice or guidance. They usually have the necessary grammatical knowledge and vocabulary (otherwise they would not have been admitted to the course), but their B language output may still not sound natural. When it comes to improving the quality of B language, interpreting schools tend to focus on new terminology and phraseology, which should be preferably taught together with the knowledge and concepts they are related to – provided their curricula can accommodate such classes.

The following courses are currently offered at ELTE to support language enhancement:

1. **'Comparative studies of life and institutions in A and B countries'** (cultural knowledge; government and foreign affairs; social and cultural affairs; environment and transport; economic affairs)
2. **'Introduction to legal and business concepts and terminology'**: offering knowledge and vocabulary particularly relevant in interpreting situations, e.g. business, legal and public affairs, current issues.
3. **'Presentation skills'** (recently integrated into interpreting classes), aiming to improve the quality of expression and presentation in B language.

In addition to the above, however, the active use of the B-language (including production in B) also requires a high level of **textual, pragmatic and cultural competence**, in order to avoid :

- **Oversimplification**: due to limited linguistic means, as students may be unable to convey an idea accurately, in its complexity (simplistic language produces simplistic ideas).
- **Redundancy:** being aware of their incompetence, students are constantly trying to find more suitable alternatives.
- **A-language interference:** esp. at the level of sentence structures, word combinations, textual conventions, pragmatic and cultural knowledge.
- **Inconsistency:** esp. in the use of formal register.

1 - Textual competence

It can be defined as "the knowledge of the conventions for joining utterances together to form a text, which is essentially a unit of language – spoken or written – consisting of two or more utterances that are structured according to rules of cohesion and rhetorical organisation" (Bachman 1990:88). It is often linked to **sociolinguistic competence**: sensitivity to naturalness and differences in register. The greater variety of B-language speeches the students have to deal with, and the more aware they become of textual and pragmatic conventions, the easier they will find it to produce similar, natural-sounding structures themselves.

As the curriculum does not allow for a foundation course of B-language enhancement, textual competence in the B language usually has to be developed during interpreting sessions. The timing is of utmost importance, however: it should be dealt with either **before or after the actual interpreting task** (preparation or follow-up), never at the same time. Students should not be diverted by new language points while trying to develop new skills, as it would break their concentration.

In the beginning, students are provided with related background material in B (articles, documents, statements, etc.) before the A-language speech: they have to identify not only the relevant terms but also the register, some model structures and word combinations. (The use of collocation dictionaries is strongly recommended.) At a more advanced stage, they will get the B-language texts on which the speeches have been based only after the interpreting task. This will enable them to recognize 'authentic' collocations, natural-sounding speech, and compare them to their own solutions.

(I) <u>BEGINNER LEVEL</u>

Study B-lang. text

Interpret A>B (A speech=B text)

Check, discuss

(2) <u>ADVANCED LEVEL</u>

Interpret A>B

Check, against B text

As both written and oral translations into B are usually longer than either the original speech in A or similar authentic speeches made in B, comparing students' output with authentic speeches on the same topic can also help them condense their own interpretation.

2 - Presentation in B language

Speakers of a B language will always have a foreign accent to some extent. A slight accent can be acceptable, provided that there are no misunderstandings, e.g. funded – founded; three – tree. Enunciation is imperative, however, especially when speaking a B language. When students want to gloss over the difficult bits in a speech they tend to mumble, which cannot be allowed.

Marked prosodic features (e.g. stress, pauses, volume, pitch) are of utmost importance as they serve as signposts to guide the listener. Therefore, students who tend to speak in a monotonous fashion (and many Hungarians do) will be encouraged to put special emphasis on the important elements (even go a bit overboard) when making a presentation. Presentations should be taped from time to time, to give students an opportunity to see for themselves where their problems lie. Clear pronunciation of foreign names, realia, and numbers should also be practiced.

3 - Flexibility of TL expression

Students are encouraged to enlarge not only their vocabulary but also their stock of phrases and collocations, so that they have a bigger choice to express themselves with greater accuracy and correctness in their B language. A greater flexibility of expression will also enhance their note-reading, when they reproduce the speech on the basis of a few condensed notes. Therefore, students are required to work with formal written texts from time to time, looking up synonyms, paraphrasing chunks of speech, and condensing or elaborating the same idea.

4 - Targeted instead of general enhancement

As the time available for language enhancement at a postgraduate interpreting course is rather limited, we have to focus on the most common needs and requirements in interpreting situations, and the actual needs of a group or individual students (e.g. arts graduates with good grammar but insufficient knowledge of business concepts).

Experience shows that the following components of language enhancement should be given priority during interpreting sessions:

IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT
marked prosodic features (esp. stress) collocations (A-language interference) usage, structures (A-language interference) targeted vocabulary building formal register, consistency flexibility of expression completed structures, sentences conference phraseology, ready formulas TL audience-orientation (explicitations) condensation	accent (if no misunderstandings) words grammar (if no misunderstandings) idiomatic expressions (esp. for non-native audience) proverbs, sayings slang expressions any specialised terminology

Preliminary conclusions

The workshop marked a break with the past ideological discussion of simultaneous into B. It was generally accepted that for various practical reasons retour interpretation will continue to be used in a variety of circumstances. It is therefore appropriate and necessary for training institutions to identify and apply appropriate and effective selection and training protocols for simultaneous into B.
The emphasis must be on interpreting quality whatever the directionality.
Selection of suitable candidates should be based on their aptitude, their world knowledge (quantity and quality), their language skills (A and B languages), their attitude, motivation and teachability.

There is broad-based agreement on a number of teaching principles:
Courses should begin with consecutive teaching, proceed to simultaneous into A and move on to simultaneous into B once technique has been acquired in the A language. Training should focus on methodology, strategy and coping skills.
It was acknowledged that **specific language enhancement** is usually required for students having to work into B. Language enhancement should be provided separately from simultaneous instruction, although the two must clearly be coordinated.

It was also agreed that retour interpreting should not lead to lower quality standards. Interpreting technique and B language expression skills must be robust. **Selection** is thus important.

Coordination and exchange of experience between training institutions was warmly welcomed as helpful and stimulating particularly in the case of simultaneous into B.

1 - Language Enhancement for students working into B

The aims of language enhancement for students working into B were defined with the assistance of Mr Rob Williams, language enhancement consultant at the University of Westminster. They are to:

- enhance predictive ability. Language prediction (ie lexical and syntactic anticipation) is often much weaker in B than in A. This skill needs to be improved to avoid breakdown in booth. The emphasis is not on acquiring new vocabulary which students can do alone, but to work with larger units (collocations). Working from language starting points, students are encouraged to predict probable continuation. Exercises also involve study of discourse types in terms of predictability in defined situations.

- Identify errors. Students are encouraged to see how and why mistakes are made. Conventional classroom exercises are of little use, as students' theoretical knowledge of language usage and rules is good, but failure occurs under pressure. The mistakes result from the way the B language has been learnt as a series of discrete word units. A change of approach is required. Students must widen the sense unit apprehended and implement a deliberate strategy of noting how the B language is used, how the sense units are linked etc.;

- analyse the construction of speeches. Discussion of cultural expectations of how a speech should be structured. The rhetorics of speech-giving. Beginnings, endings of speeches etc using tools provided by discourse analysis. Students must produce their own speeches in B.

This approach attaches importance to lexis. It is based on a communicative grammar rather than a parsing type grammar. The tuition aims at process enhancement rather than knowledge enhancement. The underlying philosophy is that interpretation is a reconstruction of meaning and that this implies that students are able to construct meaning in their B language.

Given the time constraints it was felt that LE should be essentially guided self-study. The following principles should be borne in mind:
- Students need to be made aware of their LE needs. They must be taught to listen to the way in which each language expresses ideas.

- LE must go beyond the word-unit level. Students already feel secure with words. They need to be encouraged to move up to higher levels of language structure in both recognition and use.

- LE must be active. It is a construction process.

- LE tuition should ideally be provided by someone who has first-hand knowledge of interpreting.

- Voice coaching can be a useful adjunct to LE.

- Interpreting classes should not become language correction or LE classes. Language problems have to be identified and corrected, but the emphasis must be on interpreting skills proper.

- it can be useful to contrast speech structure and patterns in two different languages. Care must be taken not to establish comparison at lower-unit levels, but only at the higher level of relative style, conventions and expectations.

2 - Selection criteria for students expected to interpret into B simultaneous

Exams are based mainly on oral "recall" tests.
It is important to bear in mind that candidates cannot be expected to be proficient in interpreting at the entrance exam. The tests should not be presented as an interpretation or a translation exercise, which may encourage candidates to memorise and translate words, but rather as a "summary of the message", "an explanation of what has just been said" etc.. This is also true of any sight translations. Again, it is best to avoid the term "translation" which may imply a word for word rendition and to ask for an account of the content/message.

Key specific points to look out for when assessing candidates with a potential B language were summarised as follows:

Resourcefulness
This covers both use of B language and handling message rendition; Candidates must show flexibility in language use and in terms of expressing content.

Robustness of B language; Candidates cannot all be expected to have B language proficiency of professional level. Criteria are needed to test probable progress in B and likely ability of B language to hold up under the pressure of SI. The usual entrance exam tests (summary of message) are felt to be an appropriate test of B language robustness, as the candidate cannot choose the subject, register or content freely. Another method used to test B language flexibility and robustness that met with interest is to ask candidates to pick out a topic from a hat and have a couple of minutes to think it over before being required to deliver a short speech in B on that subject.
A questionnaire has been designed to record B language proficiency on the basis of robustness. One assessor (A language) is asked to fill out the questionnaire indicating any distracting features of the candidate's rendition (grammatical mistakes,

accent and intonation, idiomatic expressions). The questionnaire is structured so that mistakes are recorded in descending order of gravity to allow for rapid evaluation of B language perfectibility. The questionnaire is attached.

Motivation
An interesting approach to assessing motivation as a predictor of likely progress in the B language is to require candidates to answer questions about the country and culture.. Questions cover all aspects of life in a country – sporting results, key innovations, nursery rhymes etc.. and are designed to assess the degree to which candidates take a genuine interest in the language and culture. A possible questionnaire for students with English B is attached.

Quality of A language
Quality of A language is always vital, but particular care must be taken for candidates who have spent long periods of time abroad or have grown up in a bilingual setting, in other words precisely those candidates most likely to present an A-B combination. The A may deteriorate markedly when required to do aptitude tests.

Teachability
Teachability refers here to attitude and ability to react appropriately to advice and criticism. This is highly relevant in interpreting studies, because much comment on the students' work is inevitably of a personal nature, as it relates to language, delivery, voice and presentation. Apart from generally observing candidates during the exam it can be useful to study their reaction to assessors' comments after a first test. It is suggested that assessors systematically provide feedback and suggestions after the first recall test and observe the candidate's reaction and ability to follow the advice given.

3 - Suitability of the source language presentations used

If consistency and coherence of rendition are to be assessed, the input needs to be structured with clear reasoning or narrative rather than a series of facts. Speeches must have an obvious structure and clear links as well as a line of reasoning suitable to test processing skills. An account of a recent news item is not a good test as the applicant may or may not be familiar with the event. The subject matter should not be too predictable.
The presentation should last about three minutes. It should not contain too many names and figures..
The topic must be introduced.
The speaker must present his/her speech in a style s/he is comfortable with. It should be delivered freely (not read), which implies that it contains a certain amount of redundancy.

Biographical details and general attitude. Age, time spent in the B language country, past working experience, particularly previous interpreting experience, and knowledge of B language country(ies) and culture were all felt to be significant.
It is also felt that, given the relevance of all these factors, it is important to take enough time to assess candidates (30 to 40 minutes at least).

ANNEXES

Questionnaire for English B Aptitude Test Applicants

Please provide short answers (maximum one sentence) to the following questions :

1. What are the following:

- Uttar Pradesh
- 10, Downing Street
- The Pentagon
- The Fed
- Fianna Fail

2. Where do the following authors come from?
Can you name one book written by each?

Margaret Atwood
Oscar Wilde
Frank McCourt
D.H. Lawrence
Paul Auster
Salman Rushdie

3. Can you name the country of each of these capital cities?

- Kingston
- Cardiff
- Nairobi
- Colombo
- Ajuba
- Freetown
- Yangon

4. Put the following US Presidents in chronological order.
Carter, Nixon, Ford, Truman, Kennedy

5. Name four major religions in India.

6. What would you be given if you ordered the following:

- Bagels
- Chutney
- Chowder
- Dumplings
- Chicken masala

7. Give a short definition of the following business/economic terms:

- Bull market
- IT
- Dow Jones
- CEO
- mortgage

8. What are the following?

- Ascot
- The Grammy Awards
- Townships (South Africa)
- Camp David
- The "Proms"
- The Met
- Monty Python

9. When are the following celebrated/organised (month)?

- Thanksgiving
- Boxing Day
- Wimbledon
- St Patrick's Day

10. Who said the following?

- "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears…"
- "I have a dream today".
- "One small step for a man, one giant step for mankind."

11. What are the following?

- ❑ SUV
- ❑ Manchester United
- ❑ The Superbowl
- ❑ Silicon Valley
- ❑ Garfield
- ❑ Waltzing Mathilda

12. Who are the following?

- ❑ Whitney Houston
- ❑ Kate Moss
- ❑ Benazir Bhutto
- ❑ Desmond Tutu
- ❑ Francis Bacon

Could you indicate time spent in English-speaking countries?

Country	Dates

How long have you been learning English?

How would you rate this questionnaire in terms of difficulty?

- ❑ Very difficult
- ❑ Difficult
- ❑ Feasible
- ❑ Relatively easy
- ❑ Very easy

Questionnaire d'aptitude pour le Français B

1. Citez trois quotidiens français et deux hebdomadaires français.

2. Qu'est-ce qui a marqué les dernières élections présidentielles en France (avril-mai 2002) ?

3. De quelle tendance politique est le gouvernement actuel en France ? Citez trois ministres de ce gouvernement, ainsi que leur portefeuille.

4. Citez trois pays francophones (hormis la France) ainsi que leur capitale.

5. Qu'est-ce que :

- la SNCF ?
- Matignon ?
- le SMIC ?
- le CAC 40 ?
- les TIC ?
- un énarque ?
- le verlan ?
- Roland-Garros ?

6. Donnez deux auteurs de littérature française classique puis deux auteurs de littérature française contemporaine et citez l'une de leurs œuvres.

7. Quel est le titre du dernier film français que vous ayez vu ?

8. Qui est :

- Coluche ?
- Zidane ?
- Marianne ?
- PPDA ?
- Louis Pasteur ?
- Fernandel ?

9. Citez trois chanteur(se)s francophones contemporains.

10. Quels sont les deux grands constructeurs automobiles français ?

11. Qu'est-ce que le gouvernement de Vichy ?

12. Citez trois présidents français et trois premiers ministres français sous la Vème République.

13. Quelles sont les prévisions de croissance pour la France en 2003 ?

14. Qui a présidé les travaux de la Convention Européenne ?

15. Citez trois départements français, trois régions françaises et trois îles françaises.

16. Quelle est la durée hebdomadaire légale de travail en France ? Qui a proposé cette législation ?

17. Citez trois peintres français et trois compositeurs français.

18. Citez trois marques françaises.

This questionnaire is designed to be filled out by one English A assessor on aptitude test panels. The other assessors continue to mark the test results in the usual way. The form is not designed to note every mistake made by applicants. Assessors should note usage they find distracting.

Language Assessment Sheet for Candidates with English B

(To be used by English A assessors who are focusing on the English B of applicants or candidates)

CANDIDATE:

ASSESSOR:

1. **GRAMMAR (eg articles, prepositions, tenses, word order and any language-pair-specific issues)**

2. **LANGUAGE USAGE**

Collocations/Idiomatic expressions

Register

Resourcefulness (eg compensation & paraphrasing skills, flexibility)

3. **ACCENT/INTONATION**

4. **DELIVERY (eg pace, hesitation, communication skills)**

5. **OTHER COMMENTS**