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Self-repairs in Simultaneous Interpreting:

A Study into Repair Mechanisms of Trainee Interpreters

S u m m a r y

The possibility of introducing corrections to the target text in simultaneous interpreting was until recently considered a criterion that distinguished translation from interpreting. In contrast to written translation, researchers considered that correction in the case of interpretation was impossible (cf. Kade 1968, Reiss & Vermeer 1984). The first academic studies did not envisage the possibility that conference interpreters could make corrections to their own translation (cf. Seleskovitch 1968). However, studies by Gerver (1975) and later by Setton (1999) and Chernov (2004) have shown that self-corrections do occur in simultaneous interpreting and provide evidence of interpreters' conscious control mechanisms over both the source and target text.

The aim of the present dissertation is to analyse the corrective mechanisms, i.e. introducing self-repairs, in the simultaneous interpreting course of second-year MA English Philology students at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The author investigates whether trainee interpreters are able to control the quality of their interpreting: to introduce self-corrections to their interpreting output. She also focuses on designing a detailed taxonomy of self-repairs and didactic implications, i.e. designing a set of corrective exercises that can find practical application in interpreter training. Both the product (by comparing target and source texts) and the translation process (by analysing retrospective verbal protocols and retrospective questionnaires) are examined. Through the use of retrospective methods, the author investigates to what extent the corrections made were a conscious decision on the part of the interpreter, as well as what was the immediate reason for this decision. The research corpus consists of recordings and transcriptions of the interpreting output of two different source texts and the retrospective protocols of 21 trainee interpreters. Furthermore, it is worth noting that most of the available literature on the phenomenon of self-repairs focuses on the research group of professional translators. The scale of research oriented around students, adepts of conference interpreting, especially in the Polish-English language pair, is incomparably smaller. The present study is intended to fill this gap.

The first part (chapters one to five) provides a theoretical introduction to the second part, the empirical part (chapters six to seven), and the third part, which presents the didactic implications for interpreter training (chapter eight).

In the first chapter, the author describes the characteristics of simultaneous interpreting. In the following chapter, she focuses on definitions of self-repairs (e.g. Levelt 1983, Gülich & Kotschi 1983, 1987, Blackmer & Mitton 1991, Petite 2005, Bartłomiejczyk 2006, Woroch 2015, Magnifico & Defrancq 2019), historical accounts of the issue in academic studies, and in the context of cognitive processes. In this context, she also presents cognitive models of simultaneous interpreting (e.g. Gile 1985, 1995, 2009, Seleskovitch 1968, Salevsky 1987, Kirchhoff 1976, Moser 1978, Lederer 1981, Setton 2002), controlling and monitoring processes (Kirchhoff 1976, Kohn 1990, Zmudzki 1995, Kalina 1998), and the issue of self-correction in the context of spontaneous speech Laver 1973, Fromkin 1973, Schegloff 1977, Nooteboom 1980, Levelt 1983, Berg 1986, Van Wijk & Kempen 1987, Postma 2000, Petite 2005, Slevc & Ferreira 2007).

Chapter three presents existing taxonomies of self-repairs (Hieke 1981, Levelt 1983, Petite 2005, Tissi 2000, Tryuk 2007, Woroch 2015, Tymoszuk 2016). Chapter four was devoted to the method of retrospection in translation studies, with a particular focus on retrospection in the study of interpreting (e.g. Cohen & Hosenfeld 1981, Krings 1986, Faerch & Kasper 1987, Lörscher 1987, Ericsson & Simon 1993, Kußmaul 1995, Shlesinger 1995, Żmudzki 1995, Ivanova 1999, 2000, Vik-Tuovinen 2002, Napier 2004, Cronin 2005, Bartlomiejczyk 2006, Chang & Schallert 2007, Prunc 2007, Ribas 2012, Dimitrova & Tiselius 2014, Ferreira 2014, Piotrowska 2016, Gumul 2017, Shamy & Ricoy 2017). The last chapter describes the methodology of the study: the characteristics of the participants, the materials used, the detailed procedure, comments on the reliability of the study and a description of the transcription convention used in the study.

The first of the empirical chapters (chapter six) is an analysis and conclusions of the retrospective verbal protocols and retrospective surveys conducted immediately after the interpreting session. One of the conclusions is an algorithm designed by the author, illustrating the research respondent's

(trainee interpreter's) decision-making process confronted with the decision to introduce self-repairs to their own output. Chapter seven presents a comprehensive taxonomy of self-corrections designed based on a study of the product and the translation process. The first part of the taxonomy is based on text corpus analysis and retrospective verbal protocols, while the second part is based solely on retrospective protocols and surveys. In the first part, the author distinguishes corrections according to what, when, how often and how they are subject to the correction process, as well as the potential consequences of the correction. In the second part, the author distinguishes self-corrections according to the degree of awareness and the reasons for the translator's possible corrections (e.g. linguistic level, translation level).

The final part of the dissertation (chapter eight) presents a set of correction exercises designed to sensitise students to the nature of correction processes, in particular the potential consequences of correcting (or not correcting) their output, as well as to develop linguistic and translational flexibility and non-obtrusive strategies for introducing necessary self-repairs. The exercises are divided into those directly related to self-corrections (e.g. linguistic corrections, translation corrections, performances) and more general ones supporting the development of the necessary linguistic and translation flexibility and the interpreter's reaction time to potentially difficult situations (e.g. proper names, numbers: problem triggers, cf. Gile 2009). The exercises presented can be put into practice in simultaneous interpreting classes.

The dissertation concludes with concluding remarks, the most relevant of which are presented below:

(1) Trainee interpreters are able to control the quality of their interpreting and make self-corrections.

(2) Self-corrections can be linguistic, translational and performance-related (presentation of the interpreting output) (cf. Woroch 2015).

(3) They may be introduced before, during or after the utterance of the passage to be corrected - either immediately or later in the text; they may also be single or multiple.

(4) If self-corrections occur later in the text - they are often undetectable (hidden) to the listener.

(5) They may be introduced in such a way that the listener notices their presence (in a signalled or very clear way).

(6) The introduction of corrections can lead to a so-called 'failure sequence' (Gile 1995a) and also have an impact on the listener (neutral, positive or negative).

(7) The analysis of retrospective verbal protocols and retrospective questionnaires has shown that self-correction can be a conscious or unconscious decision on the part of the interpreter.

8. Self-repairs can be caused by the interpreter's insufficient expertise as well as linguistic and translation aspects (e.g. avoiding literal translation, keeping the EVS too short, generalisation).

(9) Self-repairs are not always aimed at correcting a defect (errors *sensu stricto*) (cf. Petite 2005), but also aimed at correctness (e.g. correction of stylistic register, literal translation), precision (e.g. lexical corrections), or translation fidelity.

(10) Since revisions are evidence of the interpreter's active control mechanisms, who is able to watch over the meaning (fidelity to the source text) and its form (linguistic correctness), this phenomenon should be viewed positively and given due emphasis in translator training, as is the case with revision and proofreading in written translation. It should be noted, however, that making corrections may interfere with the listener's understanding of the interpreting output. This, in turn, means that it would be optimal to introduce them in such a way that they are as unobtrusive to the audience as possible. Consequently, this should be reflected in the training process. To this end, an extensive set of exercises has been put forward to develop students' linguistic and translational flexibility and the ability to introduce corrections in a way that is as unobtrusive to the listener as possible.

The study can be extended in the future by an attempt to define an individual style of correction, including professional interpreters and comparing their correction style with that of the students, as well as incorporating other language combinations, which could significantly extend the set of exercises proposed in this dissertation.