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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING – NECESSITY RATHER THAN AID

Summary: Translation in general and consecutive interpreting in particular, are both a process and a product dependent upon the language competence of the translator in at least two language systems, obviously based on the translator's comprehensive knowledge of words, phrases and sentences in the two languages. The aim of this article is not to argue or support this claim, but rather to emphasise the necessity that the consecutive interpreter extend the said language competence and acquire the skill of linguistic analysis beyond the level of words, phrases and sentences – the domain of text and discourse. Already established in general linguistics as essential, text and discourse are related to translation and to consecutive interpreting as well. Recognition of pragmatically coherent patterns used in language and speech and their proper analysis may enable anticipation of yet new patterns and thus help the consecutive interpreter render the translated discourse faster, more coherently and more accurately. Hence the purpose of this article: to emphasise the importance of training interpreters to apply discourse analysis in the area of consecutive interpreting by illustrating some key translator training techniques to facilitate the skill. Although the implementation of these strategies would be much more effective if integrated into a methodologically structured course, they can be used as individual exercises for practice purposes as well.

Key words: consecutive interpreting, discourse, training, interpreter.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although writings on the subject of translation go far back in recorded history, "the study of the field developed into an academic discipline only in the second half of the twentieth century". (Munday 2008: 7) Obviously

there had been some translation as the practice dates far back to ancient times; there is indisputably enough proof of that. However, a system of thought, a clearly established discipline, with rules and categorizations had to wait for the twentieth century. What is more, established methods and techniques in the area of translator training are still being developed. In the area of training consecutive interpreters, methods and techniques are even less developed. Systematic and structured approaches are still in the testing phase, which is why any contribution is more than welcome.

Fact is that most of the second half of the last century was spent in finding a name for the discipline of translation studies in general which delayed the design and preparation of structured courses in both written translation and oral interpreting considerably. The different attempts to name the discipline range from the "science of translation" (Nida 1969: ix), to "translatology" (Goffin, quoted in Holmes 1988: 69) or the most widely used one these days "translation studies" defined by Baker (Baker 2001: 277). Holmes argued for the adoption of "translation studies" saying it was "the standard term for the discipline as a whole" (Holmes 1988: 70). Other scholars followed this suggestion though at one time the term "translation studies" was preferred for literary translation whereas it was denied for other forms of translation, including interpreting and the pedagogical aspect of teaching translation. With the new millennium, the term "translation studies" is being referred to as "the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation, various forms of oral interpreting, as well as dubbing and subtitling" (Baker 2001: 277). In addition, the term covers the whole spectrum of research and pedagogical activities, which range from developing theoretical frameworks to training translators and developing criteria for translation assessment.

It is more than obvious that a lot of work is ahead if it comes to

having a unified and well-established scientific system in the study and training of both translation and interpreting, let alone a valid classification of sub-disciplines and structured training courses. As the scope of this article is aimed at emphasising the link between consecutive interpreting and discourse analysis, as well as providing some practical solutions how to teach the application of discourse analysis in consecutive interpreting, the following sections shall first provide short explanatory reviews of both terms in the context of the above said and then a few illustrations of the practical application itself will be provided.

2. CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING

In its most general sense, interpreting is "the oral translation of oral discourse" (Baker 2001: 40) whereas translation may be considered as the translation of written discourse. However, matters are not that simple since another difference has been imposed, namely the one between oral translation of oral discourse and the oral translation of written discourse, the former referred to as interpreting and the latter as sight translation or translation-at-sight. Furthermore, Pöchhacker has offered a further categorisation of consecutive interpreting into classic versus short interpreting whereby consecutive interpreting "with the use of systematic note-taking is sometimes referred to as 'classic' consecutive, in contrast to short consecutive without notes" (Pöchhacker 2004: 18–19).

In addition to that, the practical implications and particular situations in which interpreting may occur have led to the emergence of specialised forms of professional interpreting, such as business interpreting, conference interpreting, court interpreting, community interpreting and sign language interpreting (Mikkelson 1999). In comparison to simultaneous interpreting, the application of consecutive interpreting seems to be more popular

because the number of professionally trained simultaneous interpreters is rather scarce and the technical limitations often prevent simultaneous interpreting altogether (Gile 2001). Another fact often crucial in deciding on one form or the other is the amount of information to be delivered and how accurate this information is expected to be (Phelan 2001: 17).

As their names suggest, the types of interpreting are determined by the location and the purpose of the interpreting assignment. Accordingly, there are differences in the form and way of realisation. Bearing in mind that the interpreter does not have the luxury to think long, to rewrite, polish or change the translation and that there is little possibility to change anything, it may be concluded at this point that all the issues mentioned up to now lead directly to the justification of the necessity that interpreters should train in discourse analysis just as much as they do in the area of vocabulary, register, morphology and syntax because it will not only speed up the final production but also enhance the quality of the final performance considerably.

3. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Various, even contradictory, definitions may be found about the term discourse, none of them wrong, though. The various attempts at defining discourse and discourse analysis have one thing in common – they all acknowledge the fact that it is the study of language beyond the level of the sentence. From the point of view of translation studies, discourse analysis that is translation-oriented has been shaped along equally varied and diverse lines since the moment translations studies were established.[1]

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[1]   A major problem that translation studies has to deal with before determining a purposeful application of discourse analysis is to decide on the difference between discourse and text, both terms obviously applying to segments of language larger than a sentence. In that sense, two major approaches have developed. On one hand, linguists are inclined to support the attitude that discourse analysis "focuses on the structure of

A more precise definition refers to discourse analysis as being a "detailed exploration of political, personal, media or academic 'talk' and 'writing' about a subject, designed to reveal how knowledges are organized, carried and reproduced in particular ways and through particular institutional practices." (Jupp 2006: 74) Furthermore, the same source points out that "discourse analysis is a generic term covering a heterogeneous number of theoretical approaches and analytical constructs" and that "it is primarily a qualitative method of 'reading' texts, conversations and documents which explores the connections between language, communication, knowledge, power and social practices. In short, it focuses upon the meaning and structure (whether overt or hidden) of acts of communication in context." (ibid.)

Regarding the fact that translation studies is a sub-discipline in the field of applied linguistics, i.e. the study of spoken and written language, discourse and/ or text analysis within translation should be allowed their duality, i.e. occurring both in speech and writing.

4. TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING

Again from an applied linguistics perspective, two basic approaches to discourse analysis have been derived that can directly be linked to consecutive interpreting as well as adequate forms of training in applying discourse analysis in consecutive interpreting. The first deals with the way segments of language larger than a sentence are put together focusing on

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naturally occurring spoken language, as found in such 'discourses' as conversations, interviews, commentaries and speeches" (Crystal 1997: 116) On the other hand, text analysis "focuses on the structure of written language, as found in such 'texts' as essays, notices, road signs and chapters", (ibid.) However, this distinction causes disagreement whenever applied because both the term 'discourse' and 'text' may refer to spoken and written units used for communicative purposes, i.e. used to convey meaning.

product and form, sequential relationships, intersentential structure and organisation, whereas the second deals with the way segments of language larger than a sentence hang together focusing on interpretation of sequence and structure as well as the social relationships emanating from interaction.

Obviously, training interpreters presents a clear challenge for both course designers and the trainers expected to conduct a course and produce skilled professionals able to interpret and render oral discourse successfully. One of the challenges is to convert theory into practice taking into account both universal rules and individually determined talent, performance and competence. Therefore, designing a certain interpreter training course, setting out clear aims and objectives and expecting it to yield effective results has now, more than ever, become an imperative on the tertiary level of language studies (Boyd and Monacelli 2010, Kornakov 1996, Setton 2010).

The objective of any training for consecutive interpreters should be to develop the profound skill of anticipation within a given context based on solid knowledge of language as a whole – from the phoneme to the text. It is doubtlessly of utter importance to develop a high level of proficiency in both SL and TL, which means knowledge of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, semantics, etc. However, from the point of view of translation studies, discourse analysis included, the knowledge of extra linguistic elements, such as social relationships, culture and the like, may prove essential. Overall knowledge of the culture of the SL and the TL community may thus aid the apprehension of the entire discourse in a given context because it is realised in that particular context and thus tightly related to it.

Although many different training strategies can be implemented into an interpreting course, not many training books have been published so far to provide a trainer with ready-made lesson plans. Common practice is the so-called classic conference interpreting course based on

the apprenticeship model and it "usually comprises three successive and incremental phases:

General initiation: discovering how an interpreter must listen, how (s)he is expected to speak (register, presence, coherence, and what is expected in a B language), what (s)he should know, or be expected to learn about temporarily;

Consecutive interpretation;

Simultaneous interpretation." (Setton 2010:10)

Within this mentioned structure, discourse analysis can be incorporated in the form of occasional exercises. The following strategies can easily be implemented into any consecutive interpreter training course.[2]

4.1. Discourse analysis and the title of a text

A consecutive interpreting trainee should learn that even the title of a discourse may indicate the structure of the segment to follow and it should help the interpreter organize the translation in advance. For instance, if several approaches/ attitudes/ solutions/ etc. are announced, there will be several paragraphs. A particular word may be recognised as a clear marker of the source language speaker's intention and this marker will determine what the interpreter might say in the target language.

e.g. The translations of the following title into Serbian and German might show consecutive interpreting trainees how discourse analysis can influence the interpreting of an entire segment:

English source text: "Accident in sawmill harvested numerous victims"
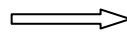
cause $\Longrightarrow$ consequence

Depending on the particular marker identified by the interpreter as

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[2] All the mentioned examples are strategies that the author of this article is using in her tertiary courses at the Department of English, at the Faculty of Law and Business Studies Dr Lazar Vrkatic, Novi Sad. The courses are Oral Interpreting at the Bachelor level and Consecutive and Conference Interpreting at the Master level.

crucial, the rendering of this short sample to the target audience might take the discourse to follow into two different directions:

a) If the interpreter understands that the emphasis in the article following the title should be on the large number of victims, the result of the accident, both the Serbian and the German translations might sound better with the consequence put at the beginning of the title.

Serbian target text: „<u>Brojne žrtve</u> posledica <u>nesreće u strugari</u>"

                consequence $\Longrightarrow$ cause

German target text: „<u>Mehrere Opfer</u> nach dem <u>Ungliick in der Sagerei</u>"

                consequence $\Longrightarrow$ cause

b) If the rather obvious marker recognised in the verb *harvested* is emphasised, the indication might be that the text is reporting on a great tragedy suggesting thus a particular tone of voice and level of seriousness. The interpreter might opt for the following translation:

Serbian target text: „<u>Nesreća u strugari</u> *pokosila* <u>veliki broj radnika</u>"

                cause $\Longrightarrow$ consequence

German target text: „<u>Ungltick in der Sagerei</u> *brachte* <u>mehrere Opfer</u>"

                cause $\Longrightarrow$ consequence

Obviously, the interpreter has to be able to anticipate the context of the source text being announced like this. Of course, the particular place and audience may contribute to the interpreter's decision considerably. In time and with enough practice, an interpreter develops this ability to a significant level.

4.2. Discourse analysis and the beginning of the text

To some extent, a proper discourse analysis of the opening to a speech can help the interpreter outline the structure of most of the speech to follow. In addition, in case the interpreter is taking notes, the ability to analyse a discourse can improve the consecutive rendering considerably. Certain discourse markers, such as 'unlike that', 'as opposed to that',

'similarly', 'in addition', 'furthermore', etc. can clearly indicate the further development of the segment to follow, i.e. is it going to discuss *opposed* attitudes, is it going to compare *similar* things, is it going to add *further* information, etc.

e.g. The following samples are illustrations of certain discourse markers indicating a certain meaning of the segment to follow:

a) "We are now going to examine **three different approaches** to this problem ..."

The interpreter can immediately make three different columns in their notepad, put some titles or state the announced approaches above each of it and distribute subsequent notes into the respective column.

b) "The following **analysis** is based on ..."

Obviously, the interpreter has to anticipate a systematic analysis, which is why they should organize their notes accordingly by planning a bulleted list or a step-by-step presentation of the facts leading to logical conclusions.

c) "Gentlemen, the **figures in this case** are highly indicative ..."

Here the interpreter has to be ready for many numbers, which is why a pen and piece of paper should by all means be ready.

4.3. Detailed discourse analysis and larger samples of text

The following excerpt from a sample article shall illustrate a more detailed approach to a

particular segment of discourse to be translated consecutively as based on discourse analysis.[3]

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[3]   For the sake of easier representation, the units of language underlined with a single line are the keywords of the sample of discourse to follow whereas the units underlined with a double line are the ones of crucial importance in terms of discourse analysis as related to this sample of text to be interpreted consecutively. As this article is in English, to make matters simple, the example provided here is presenting notes in the source language although most arguments are in favour of notes in the target language.

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> The <u>law in Afghanistan</u> is based on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which states that <u>Sharia law</u> – <u>the Islamic legal system</u> – is based on the <u>Koran</u>, <u>Hadith</u>, <u>Ijma</u> and <u>Qiyas</u>.
>
> <u>Sharia</u> is based primarily on the <u>Koran</u> and, secondly, on the <u>Hadith</u>. or the collection of teachings, actions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. The third source of <u>Sharia law</u> is known as the <u>Ijma</u>, which is the body of rules developed by Islamic scholars. Simply, Ijma is a decision made by the majority of Muslim scholars based on the Koran and Hadith. When these three main sources on their own fail to provide enough guidance, Islamic scholars can make a decision by comparing one case to another based on the Koran and Hadith. This system of comparison is called <u>Qiyas</u>.

The consecutive interpreter trainee learning how to take notes and deliver a professional consecutive translation should immediately recognise the type of discourse to follow – it is a detailed analysis of different aspects related to one general topic. The notes would probably be distributed as follows:[4]

Figure 1: Possible distribution of notes based on anticipation.
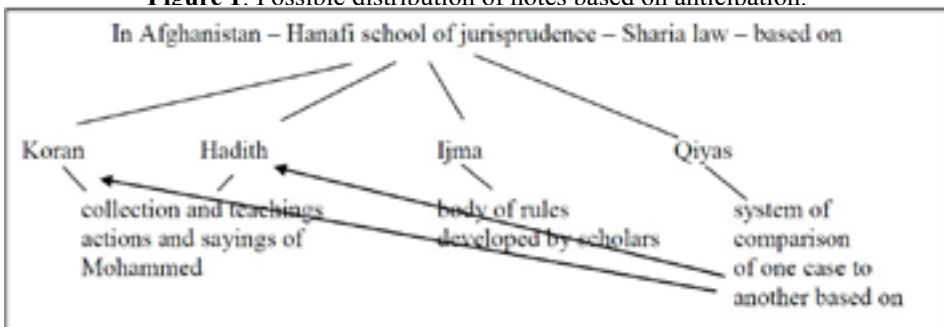
As may be seen from this example, the interpreting trainee would

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[4]   It should be pointed out that most interpreters use a lot of abbreviations in their notes. However, in this sample, no abbreviated form has been used as it would be difficult to understand the notes.

have to organise their notes as based on the first sentence, which introduces the main terminology already classified so that the trainee should make use of the classification in their note distribution.

> The <u>law in Afghanistan</u> is based on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which states that <u>Sharia law</u> – <u>the Islamic legal system</u> – is based on the <u>Koran</u>, <u>Hadith</u>, <u>Ijma</u> and <u>Qiyas</u>.

Bearing in mind that with consecutive interpreting time is of the essence and that there are source language (SL) speakers who prefer to deliver their entire discourse rather than cutting it down into chunks, the job of the consecutive interpreter may be quite demanding as they will have to rely on their memory in just the same amount as on their knowledge and skill.

4.4. Discourse analysis and notes

Further analysis of the above sample shows that, if applied properly, the skill for discourse analysis may enhance not only anticipation of content to follow but also accelerate the note-taking. The ability to put down more notes in less time is a considerable advantage as the consecutive interpreting to be delivered in the end will contain more details and be more concise than when based only on the basic meaning.
The next sample text reads as follows:[5]

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[5] The explanation presented in note No. 3 regarding the particular style used to underline pieces of text shall be applied here as well.

> Sharia law is divided into two main sections: acts of worship and actions between people. The first are: Ritual Purification; Prayers; Fasts; Charities and Pilgrimage to Mecca. The second include: Financial Transactions; Endowments; Laws of Inheritance; Marriage, Divorce and Child Care; Foods and Drinks (including ritual slaughtering and hunting); Penal Punishments; Warfare and Peace; Judicial Matters (including witnesses and types of evidence).

The notes should be organised in the following way[6]:

2 main sections of the Sh L:

acts of worship	actions between people
1. Rit.purification	1. Fin. transactions
2. Prayers	2. Endowments
3. Fasts	3. Laws of inheritance
4. Charities	4. Marriage, divorce and child care
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca	5. Foods and drinks
	6. Penal punishments
	7. etc.

Figure 2: Possible distribution of notes in the case of a list.

In some cases, when the SL speaker proceeds too fast and the interpreter cannot follow in the sense that they cannot note down everything being said, especially in lists, the trainee should be instructed that it is generally enough to mention a few items from the list just to offer a general idea. For more details, the target language (TL) speaker will have a chance to refer to accompanying material.

The following examples show the application of drawings as a possible system of note

[6]   As the content of the sample is now familiar, some of the notes are presented in abbreviated form to illustrate what a professional interpreter would probably do.

taking based on the discourse analysis of very short samples of text:[7]

1. Just as we are watching now, the aircraft is taking off

    The drawing of the aircraft is not enough. What has to be pointed out is its movement at the moment of speaking.

2. The report shows that the value of the dollar has risen considerably

    As indicated by the Present Simple Tense of the verb 'show', the value of the currency has changed (Present Perfect Tense) into a certain direction.

3. And if you are watching the competition, you can see the runner is just about to cross the finishing line

    The runner is presented as about to step over the finishing line.

The illustrated pieces of text, though short and out of context, should provide insight into the fact that proper discourse analysis, already during the course of listening to a text, might be helpful to the interpreter. It is not only enabling a certain level of economy of both space and time, but also useful means of presentation, provided the interpreter proceeds almost flawlessly. Either through words or drawings, notes based on

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[7] The pieces of text underlined with a double line are those pieces aiding the discourse analysis and those underlined with a single line are the ones being represented with the note and/ or illustration.

discourse analysis help the interpreter organise their thoughts and thus render a better consecutive interpreting performance.

As further analysis would take this article off topic and probably beyond the scope it belongs to, suffice it to say that consecutive interpreting trainees can only benefit from discourse analysis which is why it should be included in their training courses.

5. CONCLUSION

As has been shown in this article, consecutive interpreting, being an active sub-discipline within applied linguistics, may quite tightly be related to the application of discourse analysis. The aim of this application is clearly not to identify the patterns and systems that constitute either the SL or TL used for specific communicative purposes among interlocutors who do not speak the same language. Its aim may rather be identified in the utility of the interpreter's skill to anticipate and interpret the content of the SL speaker in order to translate it as accurately and as precisely as possible into the respective TL.

It has also been indicated that the term 'discourse analysis' carries a number of different meanings, and those who practise it operate within a range of disciplines, from the more sociological to the more linguistic. Work more strongly associated with the former tends to explore how "discursive practices [may be] constitutive of knowledge", while that linked with the latter has been termed textually oriented discourse analysis". (Fairclough 1993: 38) For the sake of bonding discourse and consecutive interpreting, the latter shall be deemed more appropriate as in consecutive interpreting the interpreter is faced with a SL textual segment they have to translate into a TL textual segment.

The consecutive interpreter is expected to deliver a clearly structured

translation of the SL discourse almost flawlessly. Yet, they are not allowed to extend the patience of their TL speakers endlessly, which imposes the pressure of time. Finally, as if the paradox of having more time and not having enough of it were not enough, the same interpreter has to be able to grasp the meaning of the textual segment almost instantly, anticipate the content and organize their notes appropriately. Only if being able to do so can the interpreter hope for a fine translation.

To conclude, the few teaching strategies presented in this article should have shown how discourse analysis can be incorporated in a consecutive interpreting training course. Yet, elaborate research is to be conducted in this area, training courses to be designed and evaluated which is why the few examples presented here should be regarded as suggestions to be taken further. However, it is indisputable that the skill of analysing the discourse of the SL speaker obviously provides the interpreter with the necessary tools to structure their consecutive interpreting in a manner based on coherence and unity, almost as a digest or gist delivered in the native language of the TL speaker.

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АНАЛИЗА ДИСКУРСА У КОНСЕКУТИВНОМ ПРЕВОЂЕЊУ – ПОТРЕБА ПРЕ НЕГО ПОМОЋ

Резиме: Превођење у целини, а консекутивно превођење нарочито, представљају и поступак и производ који зависи од језичке компетенције преводиоца у оквиру система најмање два језика, а заснива се на

свеобухватном знању, које преводилац има о речима, фразама и реченицама у та два језика. Циљ овог рада није да оспори или подржи ову тврдњу, већ да испита потребу да консекутивац прошири поменуту језичку компетенцију и усвоји вештине лингвистичке анализе која превазилази ниво речи, фраза и реченица, то јест залази у домен текста и дискурса. С обзиром на то да се и тексту и дискурсу у оквиру опште лингвистике већ приписује суштински значај, требало би сагледати и њихову везу са консекутивним превођењем. Препознавање прагматички кохерентних модела који се користе у језику и говору, као и одговарајућа анализа истих, могу омогућити предвиђање нових модела и тиме помоћи консекутивцу да превод одређеног дискурса обави брже, кохерентније и прецизније. Стога и основни циљ овог рада, да нагласи значај обуке консекутивних преводилаца у примени анализе дискурса у области консекутивног превођења. У ту сврху биће приказане неке кључне стратегије у обуци консекутиваца које могу унапредити ту вештину. Иако би имплементација ових стратегија била далеко ефективнија уколико би се интегрисала у курс са јасном структуром и дефинисаним методичким приступом, оне се могу користити и појединачно у сврху вежбања.

Кључне речи: консекутивно превођење, дискурс, обука, преводилац.