ABSTRACT

Can the field of simultaneous interpretation be a window to understanding the underlying mechanisms of the brain? By investigating the process of making decisions in the production of speech, more specifically, the production of self-corrections, and by identifying the different assigned variables which underlie different types of self-corrections, we are probably reflecting the mechanisms of the brain. This research will focus on linguistic utterances which are produced in the process of simultaneous interpretation and which indicate the activation of a self-correction by the interpreter. The underlying objective of this research paper is to identify common patterns of self-corrections, acknowledge the factors which cause them and analyze their linguistic attributes thus enabling a better view on the mechanisms of the brain.

Conceptual Framework

The present research is based on the conceptual framework of applied linguistics, a field which focuses on the research of linguistic patterns, which goes into minute investigation of cognitive patterns governing the utterances produced by speakers of a language in a certain context; of linguistics, a field which focuses on the research of linguistic patterns used by speakers of a certain language; of simultaneous interpretation, a field which investigates the environmental conditions and personal characteristics that are shared by interpreters and affect the quality of the interpretation. The underlying assumption in this research paper is that simultaneous interpretation is a profession which is uniquely characterized by specific linguistic patterns which are typical to the interpretation process itself. These patterns are formed by the very fact that a message is transferred from a source language into a target language. Taking the above mentioned facts into consideration, this research paper draws upon relevant literature regarding linguistics, applied linguistics and simultaneous interpretation.

The literature which wraps this research paper leads to three basic dogmas which leave their mark on the linguistic patterns produced by interpreters in the process of interpretation: First, the source language from which the interpreter receives the message; second, the target

language into which the interpreter translates the message and third, directionality, that is, whether the interpreter translates into her mother tongue or into her second language.

Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to report and analyze self-corrections which are produced during simultaneous interpretation between the languages Hebrew and English, basing the report on both a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Based on the relevant literature which deals with the production of self-corrections, the following research questions were formulated:

1. In the realm of self-corrections

    a. How are the different types of self-corrections distributed in the different languages investigated in this research?

    b. How are the different lengths of self-corrections distributed in simultaneous interpretation?

2. In the realm of directionality

    a. Does interpreting into one's mother tongue mean producing less self-corrections?

    b. Is there a certain type of self-correction which is more typical when interpreting into a mother-tongue?

    c. How does the variable of directionality affect the variable of the length of self-correction?

In the realm of the target language

    a. How does the variable of target language affect the distribution of types of self-corrections?

    b. How does the variable of target language affect the variable of the length of self-correction?

Method

The current research analyzes a corpus of 690 minutes of simultaneous interpretation provided in 16 occasions by nine professional interpreters. The analysis of the corpus, which consists of 758 self-corrections, was possible following a meticulous transcript of a syllable, a word or a sentence that were repeated with a minor change or substituted altogether. Thirteen categories

were formed following predetermined salient features which reflect patterns discussed in the literature of linguistics (such as: subject verb agreement) and in the literature of psycholinguistics (such as: producing a word from the same semantic field) and which are relevant to the data in our corpus.