

Research into Simultaneous Translation

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Effect of Directionality on Errors in Simultaneous Translation An Introspective Study

1. Introduction

The decision to conduct an introspective study of myself as trainee interpreter, with the focus on the effect of directionality (from or into mother tongue) on errors, was taken due to personal experience of simultaneous translating. Initially I had agreed with the general consensus of translators that it was far easier to translate into one's mother tongue from one's less dominant language (in this researcher's case a much less dominant language) since it was assumed a fluent target language rendering of a reasonably well understood foreign source language text was preferable to a grammatically incorrect and dissonant rendering in one's L2 of a completely comprehensible L1 source text.

However, on analyzing transcriptions into mother tongue (L1), as is done in the current study, it is plainly (even painfully) evident that a great number of omissions and errors of comprehension from the Hebrew source language result in a flawed rendering in the L1 (English). What is even more surprising is that the mother tongue target language suffers "interference" from processing the Hebrew source language. The interference here is not the transference of source language grammatical constructions or cognates as is usually the case, but grammatical and stylistic errors made in the mother tongue due to the **inordinate concentration on decoding the L2 source text at the expense of linguistic performance in the L1 target language**. This is what Gile terms "processing capacity deficits". As opposed to written translation, in simultaneous interpreting **cognitive load is possibly the most important factor determining directionality differences in performance**.

2. Survey of the Literature

Candace Séguinot (1989:75) discusses errors and the individual:

“The primary explanation why even competent translators make mistakes is because **human cognitive processing capacity is limited**. Because we can only attend to so much with our conscious processes, we automatize as much as possible to leave our minds free for more difficult tasks. That means that our attention is directed to only some of the things we are doing at the same time.

A related constraint is the fact that there are limitations on short term memory.”

Shlesinger (1995:193,194) also relates to shifts in cohesion as the result of cognitive overload but these do not necessarily constitute errors if they do not detract from the informational content (sometimes they do):

“For the simultaneous interpreter, the process of recognizing cohesive ties is encumbered by various constraints which are intrinsic to simultaneous interpreting, including speed of delivery (which the interpreter cannot control), linearity (the fact that the text becomes available only gradually), and the interpreter’s own limitations in terms of accessing background information assumed by the speaker to be available to his/her audience, including the interpreter.”

Directionality and its effect on processing

The main topic of this introspective study is directionality and its effect on processing (the errors that result).

I find it strange that the aspect of comprehending the source text, especially the extra pressure of decoding an L2 source text, has been relatively ignored in simultaneous translation studies. I can understand the emphasis on translating into one’s mother tongue in order to guarantee the target audience a familiar, mellifluous and stylistically correct rendering, since dissonance can lead to the audience “switching off” and not appreciating the fact that the interpreter is (hopefully) faithfully rendering the content of the source text. However, if large chunks of the source text are omitted, and grammatical and/or stylistic mistakes are made in the target language due to the “overload” in processing, then perhaps simultaneous interpreters should be encouraged to work into their L2. One must note at this juncture that in a country like

Finland that has dealings with the European Union, in which there is a dearth of translators and interpreters with adequate B knowledge of a small language like Finnish, it is the norm to translate in both directions.

It is therefore fitting to begin with a Finnish article, “ Language Direction and Source Text Complexity. Effects on Trainee Performance in Simultaneous Interpreting” by **Jorma Tommola and Marketta Helevä (1998)**. The gist of their research is that source text complexity affects performance. Text complexity in the above article is called linguistic complexity and denotes the combined effect of syntax and meaning. It must be pointed out that for the purposes of the introspective study, **linguistic complexity is linked to the fact that an L2 source text is more difficult to process than an L1 source text.**

Language complexity is one variable, **direction** is another. With regard to direction, Tommola and Helevä (1998:178) state:

“The familiar argument is that, in the non-dominant language, the level of receptive skills and knowledge will always be higher than the level of productive skills. Accurate comprehension in the non-dominant B language will be achieved with a greater likelihood than its accurate production, and it is thus advantageous to have the B-language text as the source text to be understood, and have the message formulation stage take place in the dominant language (cf. Gerver1976). The resulting target text will thus be more likely to contain both the necessary information and the stylistic nuances needed to transmit the source-text speaker’s communicative intentions.”

However Tommola and Helevä go on to recommend the advantages of the speedy and accurate comprehension of the mother tongue. They mention Dornic (1978) whose research on bilingual language processing “indicates that the level of automatization in mother-tongue comprehension is higher than that of the less dominant language, even though communicatively the bilingual might seem to handle the two languages equally successfully. Particularly if the text to be translated is technical rather than general in content, it is possible that A to B direction can produce a more satisfactory result.”

Dornic (1978) relates to the non-balanced bilingual since in his view this type of bilingual is the norm. **Not that this is immediately evident since bilinguals use strategies and compensatory processes which they have learned to employ when using their weaker language.** An example would be simplification of speech, or paraphrasing, which still manage to convey the gist of the source text. (Compare professional interpreters who produce linguistically autonomous discourse with considerable reformulation of the message over and beyond what is required by the structures and rules of the TL. Interpreters frequently re-order the presentation of ideas, condense certain points and expand on others. It is interesting to note the extent to which interpreters explicate and add cohesive markers). **According to Dornic, stress enhances latent differences and renders them apparent.** He (1978:259) names **information overload**, environmental, emotional or social stresses and fatigue as: “factors which may unveil the hidden imbalance between the dominant and subordinate languages.”

Dornic’s paper deals with language dominance on an elementary level: it is concerned with the parameter of speed, and focuses mainly on decoding (comprehension) and encoding (production) spoken language. ‘Automaticity’ is the speed of the bilingual’s linguistic performance, and in the context of simultaneous interpretation is concerned with functions of short-term and long-term memory. **Dornic relates to the relative slowness of comprehension in one’s second language compared to automatic comprehension of one’s mother tongue** (although he notes that research reported in recent years does yield ambiguous results).

When stress, especially noise stress is added, together with high information load, there is a more detrimental effect on performance in a weaker language.

Dornic (1978:266) maintains: “A task, if performed in a weaker language, can be thought of as possessing a higher degree of complexity than a corresponding task performed in the dominant language.”

An obvious advantage of decoding (comprehending) in one’s L1 is that it frees up “channel capacity” for memory search, translation and monitoring of output.

However one has to weigh the stress factors that might adversely affect the encoding (production) efficiency. Such stress would result from the effort at finding the correct collocations and phrases in the L2 target language under pressure of time. Even experienced translators have been known to express frustration at not always

finding ‘the right word’ and having to paraphrase. Any hesitation over finding that evasive collocation at the tip of one’s tongue usually leads to **loss of information from the source language and the subsequent loss of coherence and/or cohesion in the target language**. Of course this phenomenon manifests itself more frequently with inexperienced translators such as trainees who are working into their B language. **Seguinot (1989:79)** has the following to say on this topic:

“First and Second Language

Just as there are errors which seem to come from the process of skill learning, there are errors which seem to come from the way second languages are stored and accessed. Leaving aside the obvious problems of lack of knowledge of the second language, there are errors which seem to be specifically translational in character. For example, both first and second language students tend to associate focus with words with the most semantic weight”(Séguinot, 1988).

Séguinot (1989:79) gives an example from written translation, where the larger conceptual meaning was missed due to concentration on words or phrases. However many studies have noted this phenomenon with trainee simultaneous interpreters (I know it is one of my shortcomings) because “second language learners do not establish connections between parts of collocations as do native users of a language.”

Another interesting point mentioned by Dornic is the **“takeover” by the dominant language of the subordinate language under conditions of task and emotional stress**. Unexpected stimuli, requiring prompt verbal response, or linguistically neutral symbols requiring prompt naming, **will tend to elicit a response in the dominant language**.

Mental fatigue will also lead to a selective deterioration in the bilingual’s performance in the non-dominant language; while output i.e. encoding efficiency appears to be affected in the first place, decoding can suffer as well, “Mental fatigue reduces the bilingual’s ability to keep his language systems distinct. Uncontrollable intrusions from the dominant language into the weaker language become more frequent.” (1978:267)

“Occasional spontaneous switching from one language to the other frequently goes unnoticed by the subject. It looks as though the bilingual partly loses control over his

“output switch” whose functioning tends to be affected by the accessibility of words in the long-term store or by other random factors. Intentional switching between languages becomes more difficult. This is particularly conspicuous if two or more nondominant languages are involved.”

Lastly Dornic refers to individual differences with regard to various aspects of bilingualism.

Another point is that there has not been a great deal of research on this subject and evidence often comes from incidental comments from researchers concentrating on error analyses. As in Tommola and Helevä’s study, errors will be judged in relation to **the amount of content information** conveyed. The stylistic efficiency of the delivery, or the requirement of linguistically faultless output, although important in practice, does not constitute the main focus of this paper.

In this connection, **Caterina Falbo’s** article: “Error Analysis: A Research Tool” (2003) deals with the two above topics of informational content and linguistic efficiency of output together but separately. The interpreted text is analyzed **as an autonomous unit** (with no connection to the source text) for cohesion and coherence, and **a separate analysis is made of the informational content of the interpreted text compared to the original source text.**

My hypothesis is, like Tommola and Helevä, (178): “ If comprehension is central for the transmission of informational content, one might expect that, for trainees, going from A to B might result in a more accurate performance than going in the standard direction of B to A.”

3. Method

Two texts, one from Hebrew to English and one from English to Hebrew were simultaneously translated, recorded and transcribed. Each interpreted text was then analysed (separately) for errors. According to Catarina Falbo (2003, 111)

“Error analysis (EA) is a tool for the classification of whatever is unsuccessful in the interpreted text (IT) and may affect the overall quality of the IT itself. In the field of research, the aim of EA is to achieve an objective and quantifiable description

of how an IT differs from the corresponding original text (OT). The differences between the IT and OT are identified and described: any lack of correspondence between the language used in the interpreted text and the rules of the target language (i.e. the language in which the IT is expressed), and between the development of the ideas in the IT and the rules of coherence, is then highlighted, as this can to a greater or lesser degree jeopardize the overall performance.”

EA is a research tool for just one aspect of IT, i.e. everything in the IT that does not conform to what is considered a good performance or is simply unavoidable in interpreting (Shlesinger 1995:211). Falbo stresses that one must make the methodological distinction here and separate EA from the different strategies used in interpreting.

The term “error” is not one easily accepted by interpreters. **Again Falbo points out that the differences arising between the IT and the OT, on the one hand, and the linguistic rules (target language) and coherence, on the other, are seen as the price to be paid for the conditions, sometimes adverse, characterizing all simultaneous interpretation.** These conditions often force the interpreter to resort to specific strategies and may be defined as the way in which the interpreter tackles the OT and proceeds with his/her reformulation in the target language, thereby creating the corresponding IT (Riccardi 1999, Falbo 1999b). Falbo deems it useful to distinguish between “ordinary” and “emergency” strategies. The former are used on a regular basis during the interpreting process, above all in simultaneous interpretation, to tackle the linear and fragmentary reception of the OT, and are based primarily on the re-formulation of the message (Falbo 1999a). “Emergency” strategies are used when specific difficulties are encountered at whatever level: problems in hearing the OT, unintelligibility of the OT etc (Gile 1995: 129-143). **These strategies are a way of performing the translation and should not be confused with the actual result of their application. The result may be positive or negative and EA is concerned with just one part of the outcome of that passage.**

Clearly the terminology used in these two fields does not facilitate theoretical clarity. Barik (1971) describes **omission** as parts present in the OT and missing in the IT, while Gile (1995:132) defines tactical omission as a conscious action taken by an

interpreter if he/she has not completely understood a certain section of the OT. Here the emphasis is on the interpreter's actions rather than on the outcome.

Given that EA is situated at the level of **the analysis of results** and taking into consideration all those factors that contribute to creating the OT (situation context, textual and prosodic features), **the goal of EA can only be the description, and therefore classification, of what in the IT is different from the OT, and from the linguistic norms and norms of coherence.** It is clearly **not** a judgment on the level of preparation or ability of the interpreter.

3.i. Error Analysis: theoretical basis and methodological approach

According to Falbo (2003: 115):

“Having outlined the field of application and goals of EA (error analysis), it is now possible to examine the various components of EA. EA can be subdivided into three distinct stages:

- a) recording and classification of errors;
- b) evaluation of the incidence of the error on the unit analyzed (i.e. the text as a whole);
- c) search for possible causes.

This division respects both theoretical and methodological requirements.

In the grids present in literature (Barik 1994; Altman 1994; Russo-Rucci 1997), the classification of errors often includes what was considered to be the cause of the error and the seriousness of the error as well. This approach, in addition to increasing the number of categories of analysis, may become highly subjective as a result of the fact that the error recorded in one segment of the text is attributed a degree of seriousness before determining the importance of that segment (and obviously of the information it contains) in the overall economy of the OT and then the IT. Moreover, as far as the cause of the error is concerned, it can be clearly stated that a single cause may have various textual consequences and that, no less importantly, in order to identify the causes it is very often necessary to use conjecture in relation to what has happened in the interpreted text, unless one is able to question the interpreter concerned.

For this reason, and with a view to making the analysis as clear and objective as possible, an attempt has been made to **separate each stage from the other. The grid produced regards only the first stage, i.e. the collection of the data.**

To carry out the second stage, it is necessary to **analyze the OT in relation to the information it contains and see which nuclei of primary and secondary information are created.** Only in this way is it possible to distinguish objectively between essential and secondary information, and determine the influence an error recorded in the IT has on the overall information economy of the OT.”

The search for the possible causes (third stage) requires a rigorous methodological approach and access to what the interpreter experienced during the translation process (very hard to attain in simultaneous translation, since the simultaneous interpreter obviously cannot produce a verbal protocol as she interprets.)

In this paper, since it is introspective, causes are given for various omissions and errors, as postulated by the interpreter.

3.ii. Definition of certain parameters and the levels of analysis

This paper will take Falbo’s position (2003, 116):

1. “ The interpreter in his task as mediator is called upon to produce a cohesive and coherent text, i.e. **a text that is “correct” at a formal level and “logical” at the level of the links between the ideas expressed.**” (This can be judged by a native speaker of the target language used in the IT, without any knowledge or understanding of the OT).”

2. **“Then there is the degree of correspondence to the contents of the OT, the existence of which is necessary for the IT to exist.”**

It is useful to define what is meant by IT, **or rather the point of view from which it is being examined.**

The IT is considered from a **pragmatic** viewpoint as the **product of the entire interpreting process**, i.e. as the concrete crystallization of everything that conditions and determines a single performance in interpreting.

The concept of cohesion adopted here refers to the observation of the linguistic norms of the target language, all those rules that determine the correctness of an utterance. And one must remember that the IT is analyzed on the basis of rules of **oral** language.

The logical sequence of the ideas expressed is provided by coherence.

The comparison between IT and OT is situated at the level of the information contained in the two texts – and not at the level of linguistic equivalence. **Thus one can say that the IT reveals two basic dimensions**: it is an autonomous text intended for specific listeners, but it is also a text that depends on the corresponding OT. Error analysis, like any analytical approach to IT, must take these **two** aspects of the IT into consideration. The non-success on which the EA concentrates can therefore appear as a **divergence from the contents of the OT**, but also as a **divergence from the norms of correctness of the target language, and/or the rules of coherence and logic that make production (whether written or oral) a text.**

There are thus two complementary, **but theoretically and methodologically separate** levels of analysis.

First Level of Analysis

As the first level of analysis, the two transcripts (my English version of Peres' speech in Hebrew and my Hebrew version of Shula Haran's reading in English of the "Keren Klita" speech) were read without access to the OT, in order to assess their cohesion and coherence. I listened to the recording of the English IT and transcribed it. Two native Hebrew speakers (my husband and daughter) listened to the Hebrew IT which I had transcribed and afterwards read (and corrected) the transcript.

There are **three** categories of errors as regards the analysis of **cohesion**:

- a. Morphosyntactic errors (ME), which include the violation of morphological agreement, verbal agreement, anaphora, cataphora, and connectors.
- b. Lexical errors (LE): non-existent words, violation of fixed collocations,
- c. Inappropriate formulations (IF), such as shifts of register and ill-formulated utterances. This third category includes errors that concern rather the **acceptability** of the IT. "Such expressions have nothing to

do with the breaking of grammatical rules as their meaning is intelligible, but the linguistic formulation is abstruse, complicated or heavy for the listener.” (Falbo 2003)

Coherence is assessed by analyzing the logical sequence of the ideas expressed in the IT and their understandability. Classification consists of one category: ‘lack of coherence’ (LC). Sometimes these are outright contradictions.

Sometimes it is difficult to say whether one is faced by lack of cohesion or coherence. One can affect the other, namely a lack of cohesion can make for incoherence and vice-versa. Even if the segment is classified in both categories, this does not result in the errors being counted twice since the categories are separate.

Second Level of Analysis

The second level of analysis is based on the **comparison between the information (contents) contained in the IT and that in the OT.** This second level is more complex for two reasons: difficulty in identifying the units of information and the need to obtain a yardstick for the comparison OT/IT.

It must be remembered that one or more words in the IT may correspond to one word in the OT. Any comparison presupposes a point of reference. **Clearly the OT must constitute a basis for the IT, since the IT is always produced from the OT and finds its justification in the very role of the interpreter, who is asked to make the OT accessible to listeners who do not know the language of the original text.** The basic assumption is that the OT is coherent and cohesive, i.e. intelligible. If it is not, we have a real problem.

Any divergence between the IT and OT may be seen as a **loss** or **addition** of content. The basic assumption is that the OT equals 100% of the message expressed by the speaker. There are two things that can happen during the passage from OT to the IT: addition or loss of information.

Falbo (Page 121) points out that:

“The ‘addition of information’ (A) is easy to identify and can be defined as information in the IT for which it is not possible to find any trace in the OT.

“This is not to be confused with the additions described by Barik (1994), Altman (1994 and Palazzi (1998). The first two authors, as already mentioned, consider the

level of linguistic correspondence, while Palazzi includes parts of the texts which can be justified by for pragmatic reasons, or can be attributed to the phenomenon of expansion (cf. Fuchs 1982).”

The ‘loss of information’ (IL) is a macro-category, which can be subdivided into a number of sub-categories:

- **loss by absence:** one or more ideas in the OT are totally missing in the IT;
- **loss by understatement:** an idea in the OT is toned down in the IT;
- **loss by overstatement:** an idea in the OT is emphasized in the IT;
- **loss by generalization:** the scope of an idea in the OT is extended in the IT;
- **loss of intensity:** emotional and rhetorical features of an OT unit are not transferred to the IT;
- **loss of textual link;** a part of the OT, well-placed in its micro-context, is placed in a different part of the IT, so that a different link is created in relation to the preceding and following units;
- **loss by substitution:** an idea in the OT is altered when transferred to the IT;

4. Analysis

A) Translation into B language

“Keren Klita” Speech from English(L1) into Hebrew(L2)

1. First level analysis as linguistically coherent and cohesive autonomous text:

Native Hebrew speakers analyzed the text **without recourse to the source text** (they listened to a recording of the target text and read the target text transcript).

An analysis was made of at least the first two pages so that the beginning and the body of the text were included, illustrating greater hesitation and false starts at the beginning of speech, which gradually diminish as the subject matter becomes clearer and there is some redundancy in text.

Transcript 1: (linguistic errors marked in blue)

Line 3: inverted collocation of ‘Ladies and Gentlemen’ in Hebrew – no doubt nerves at start of speech! Also grammatically incorrect rendering of “would like to welcome you” (לברך אתכם ל-).

Line 4: grammatically incorrect rendering of “chairman” in Hebrew: should be “יושב הראש”

Line 4: awkward rendering of “we very much appreciate”: wrong word order in Hebrew – interference of English source text in trainee’s Hebrew.

Line 5: should be: ולצוות - preposition omitted. (If I had had enough spare attention to monitor my production, I would probably have noticed this error).

Line 6: contrast: should be אלא

Line 7: (LE) wrong collocation: should be לשתף פעולה במאמצים.

Line 8: (ME) morphosyntactic error: ‘in their thousands’ refers to “families” and therefore should be in the feminine form in Hebrew – באלפיהן

Line 8: number grammatically incorrect: שלושים ושלוש אלף

Line 9: clumsy and erroneous Hebrew: מקביל למספר דומה השנה should read מספר דומה צפוי השנה.

Line 10: לשעבר should read לעבר

Line 10: מה שחשוב זאת העובדה should read שמה חשוב העובדה

Line 11: morphosyntactic and erroneous (“irrefutable” translated as refutable due to bad Hebrew, NOT because of miscomprehension) errors.

Line 11: תרם refers to עלייה and should be תרמה. The correct collocation is תרמה תרומה (Line 12 has omissions and translational errors and will be analysed at second level too).

Line 13: התגשם should be התגשמה since it refers to תחזית.

Line 13: מסורים should be מחוייבים: wrong choice of word, collocation.

Line 13: בשנה הראשונה should be בשנה ראשונה

Line 14: several mistakes of grammar and expression in Hebrew

Line 15: wrong collocation: מצרכים should be צרכים.

Line 16: תינוקות חדשות should read תינוקות חדשים

(Line 17) omissions and long intervals of ahhhhs.....).

Line 18: רעיונות should be in the masculine רעיונות as it describes רעיונות.

Line 19: clumsy and incorrect use of word לעשות; literal translation of English (interference).

Line 20: הגדה should be אגדה (Passover Haggadah).

Line 22: grammatical mistake of omission of ה before ראשונה ושנייה

Line 23: number wrong: מאה ועשרים should be מאה עשרים

Line 27: wrong collocation: the word התפשטות should have been used instead of התרחבות to render “growth of these problems”.

Line 28: superfluous definite article: should be עתיד המדינה.

Line 31: morphosyntactic errors: גישה דו-מסלולי, הדעה מוצלח, עבודות אלפי

Line 32: “ “ : כדי לטפל בבעיה של עבודה קבועה מיקצועי נתן הקרן תשע : “ “
ימי עיון בהדרכה מומחים.

Line 33: incorrect number: מאה שלושים ושתיים עולים

Line 38: מודים be מודיים (thank).(mistake due to not monitoring)

Line 40: קרן קליטה ארגנו should be ארגנה. (not monitoring)

Line 41: מבית החולים should be מהבית חולים.

Line 51: לעזור לעולים (mistake due to not monitoring) should be לעזור את העולים

At first glance there are many linguistic errors in the Hebrew target language version. The question is whether they are serious enough to prevent the listener from comprehending the gist of the source text. My audience thought not.

B. Translation into A language

Speech of Shimon Peres (including introduction by Galia Golan) in Hebrew (L2) translated into English (L1)

1. **First level analysis** of English target text as autonomous coherent and cohesive text:

Transcript 2: (linguistic mistakes marked in blue)

Line 6: “Honored” should be “The Honorable” – wrong collocation – nervous start.

Line 8: the preposition “on” is a literal translation of the Hebrew source word “על” and should be “about” - interference of source text on target text.

Line 12: “under” should be “below” in this collocation of “poverty line”.

Line 17: “that” should be “in which” – wrong connector leads to different meaning of sentence (Israel is not advancing the conditions, they are conditions for its advance).

Line 20: “the” – definite article superfluous in English (lack of monitoring).

- Line 22: “but they rarely do they have” – ungrammatical – lack of monitoring.
- Line 30,31: “I have great honor to, introducing him” – should be “it gives me great honor to introduce him” – clumsy formulation, wrong collocation.
- Line 35: “in the future” – clumsy, better expressed as “maybe future Prime Minister.
- Line 39: Definite article “the” superfluous” with “terror”.
- Line 40: “feeling the” – no subject to sentence, leading to ambiguity
- Line 48,49: “area” should be “region” – wrong choice of word in this particular context of the Middle East.
- Lines 55, 56: Grammatical, syntactic disjointedness due to omissions.
- Line 58: definite article “the” superfluous.
- Line 61: morphosyntactic error: “there’s no borders” – should be plural.
- Line 63: “what is connected, what is disconnected” – disjointed, ambiguous, no subject (due to omissions, will be discussed with omissions).
- Secondly the word “connected” is a literal translation of מחובר and would be better rendered as plugged in, linked etc.
- Line 66: “its” doesn’t agree with correction to plural “products”.
- Line 68: “Aza” - use of Hebrew – interference of source text on target text, this time monitored and corrected.
- Line 73: “talk” should be “tell” collocated with “:truth”.
- Line 76: “Say” should be “said”. Wrong tense, lack of monitoring.
- Line 78: “from” should be “off” in this collocation.
- Line 81: double (non-existent) plural of “experienceses” – definite sign of processing saturation, lack of monitoring and exhaustion.
- Line 86: “inappropriate formulation”: those that **don’t go** into this economy” – literal translation of Hebrew “נכנס”, should be **join**, or **participate in**. Inability to find right word or phrase in time.
- Line 87: Morphosyntactic error: “**there’s** two economies: should be “there are”.
- Line 99: “it” should be “they”
- Line 99: “story” is a literal translation of ספור, would be better rendered as “business”.
- Line 106: grammatical mistake: “ to protest this” – should be “to protest against this”.
- Line 108: inappropriate collocation: “ **one inside the other**: should be “on top of one another”, result of interference by source Hebrew: “אחד בתוך השני”.

Line 115: non-English word – Hebrew interference: The Hebrew word for terror (*teraw*) creeps into the English target text in the original Hebrew, though in this case the error is caught and corrected immediately.

Line 124: “It’s talking in completely different spheres” – awkward in English, perhaps better put expressed as “talking at cross-purposes” (Line 119 in Hebrew Transcript 4 – זה בכלל דיבורים במישורים שונים –

The English in the transcript is more or less understandable except for the **glaring hesitations, fillers and spurts in delivery**.

Although target language is mother tongue, it is interesting to note that there are **grammatical mistakes and/or inappropriate terms** which I suggest point to the inordinate attention and processing capacity given to decoding the L2 source language (Hebrew) at the expense of production (not being able to hear oneself and monitor output) in the target L2 (English).

Remarks: if one compares the amount of similarly classified morpho-syntactic (ME), lexical (LE) and inappropriate formulations (IF) in both target texts, it is glaringly evident that L2 (Hebrew) has more mistakes than L1 (native English). This is not surprising, knowing at the start that this translator has a much weaker L2 (and this has been stated in the paper) and that linguistic mistakes in one’s mother tongue should be minimal.

The question is, since translation is about communicating ideas, not words as such, whether the grammatical mistakes 1) detract from understanding the informational content (ideas) conveyed and 2) whether the informational content itself corresponds to what was in the source text (are there omissions or additions from a well understood text in L1 due to concentrating on production in target language (L2).

With regards to question 1), my Israeli listeners/readers found my Hebrew mistakes amusing (my daughter thought the fact that I said "חינוקת הדשות" was very funny, why I don’t know!) but said they understood the gist of the speech about the good work of “*Keren Klita*” in helping new immigrants to Israel.

In my opinion, the English mistakes in the L1 target text (Peres) are annoying to a native listener, but do not detract from understanding the English used.

That is **not** to say that what is said in English is coherent and cohesive (as said before the long pauses and fillers are very distracting), but also the inordinate number of omissions, some additions and occasional errors in comprehension of the Hebrew (L2) source text **render the English target text incoherent and uncohesive too frequently, and definitely interfere with conveying the points of Peres' speech.**

With regard to question 2), the each target text must be compared to the its source text, and then the number and type of omissions in each direction must be compared in order to evaluate which target text has less informational content and is therefore a less faithful representation of the ideas in the source text.

2.Second level analysis: Comparison of informational content in source and target texts, based on addition or loss of information (various micro-categories).

A. “Keren Klita” speech from English (L1) into Hebrew

(L2):Transcript 3

List of omissions/additions (according to numbered lines in English source text and marked in **red** in Appendix 3)

Line 4: omission of “annual”: loss of intensity; the speech mentions several times that the fund’s meetings are annual, important to speaker, so certain loss of rhetoric.

Line 9: “annual” omitted again, probably due to nerves at start of speech.

Line 10: whole sentence omitted regarding the importance of annual meetings in order to the strengthen the efficiency and commitment in day-to-day volunteering

Line 11: “common concern” wrongly translated as “שיתוף פעולה” because previous sentence lost.

Line 13: omission of word “expected” leads to distortion of meaning: the translation implies that 33,000 immigrants did indeed arrive this year like last year, but this number is only expected to arrive this year.

Line 15: loss of intensity and rhetoric by omitting “you and I are still excited at the privilege of taking part in the miracle of the decade.” The omission neglects the role of the volunteers in making the miracle of *Aliyah* happen.

Line 17: “irrefutable” replaced by “refutable” in the Hebrew but not because of an error of comprehension. I remember having difficulty translating the word into Hebrew. more problem of production than comprehension.

Line 18: “economy” omitted, thereby belittling an important area of contribution by the Russian immigrants.

Line 19: substitution: “prospects” was translated as “expectations” (ציפיות) when the correct word to convey the meaning of the text should have been “סיכויים”. Possible that this was a linguistic mistake (not finding the right Hebrew word under pressure) rather than error of comprehension. Either way the meaning of the original has been altered, although I do not think in a drastic way.

The rest of the sentence is totally lost due to the length and syntactic complexity of the English.

Line 20: “impact” was wrongly translated in the context as “עוצמה” instead of “השפעה”. Again it is arguable that this is a linguistic error and not due to comprehension.

Line 21: omission of “ We as Keren Klita” – loss of rhetoric.

Line 23: omission: “and to help improve their day to day living” – absence of information in source text about aims of Keren Klita.

Line 25: the omission of word “welcome” before baskets leads to incongruity in Hebrew translation; “baskets” alone is out of place in the list of items given to immigrants. Unusual to be missed at beginning of list, unlike “blankets” which was omitted from end of list, probably due to processing fatigue.

Line 26: Most of this and following line omitted, reflecting general fatigue at this point. Omission of “At your requests as volunteers, *Keren Klita* has expanded our Jewish and Zionist identity” programs, omits important information.

Line 30: “For Passover” omitted, loss of important fact.

Line 31: “a voucher” omitted.

Line 33, 34: “for elementary and high school children” – loss of detail.

Line 35: omission of “*chanukkiot*” - misses out reference to Jewish religious item. This is important because Keren Klita wants the immigrants to understand their Jewish heritage and festivals.

Line 36: absence of word “may” before “know” – changes meaning and tone of address. The speaker does not take for granted knowledge of audience about this topic.

Line 37: omission of “this transition period” – omits the emphasis on the transition period of *Aliyah* – omission of generalization, replaced in the Hebrew by “מזה”.

Line 38: loss by substitution – “self” is translated as עצמאות when it should be עצמיות. Although there is a link between autonomy and sense of self, it is not quite the same.

Line 38: omission of “suspicious, critical” – string of adjectives, only “rebellious” is maintained. Translator under pressure here so skips two out of three adjectives, resulting in a loss of intensity.

Line 38, 39: Omission of “the new society” – absence of important information – the immigrants’ unsuccessful absorption leads to problems in both family and the new (for them) Israeli society.

Line 39: omission of “youth” leads to generalization of “projects” when the emphasis in the English is on the projects for adolescents.

Line 39,40: omission of reference to “trained Russian youth workers who develop close ties with immigrant youth” .

Line 41: omission by substitution – (immigrant youth who are on the street) “who are at risk of becoming serious social problems” is rendered in Hebrew as “עולים שהם בעיות סוציאליות” which implies they already are serious social problems which is not what was said.

Line 42: “by providing immediate help” – omission by absence.

Line 48: omission of important information – “Two teams were set up to find simple work for the *olim*. This program, led by Yehudith Marcus...”

The Hebrew word “דעה” was substituted for “תוכנית” (program) and is erroneous. This is not a mistake of comprehension; perhaps the word “program” was not heard properly due to concentrating on the Hebrew production.

Line 51: omission of “in the last 12 months” – probably due to concentrating on previous string “ permanent professional work” and hearing the number “nine” coming afterwards. The time definition got lost in the processing.

Line 52: “for the Israeli labor market” is omitted – loss by absence and the idea of “preparing” the immigrants for this specific labor market is translated by the Hebrew for “helping”, resulting in generalization which does not exist in the source text.

Line 56: omission of “brought to us by you” qualifying the “requirements” leads to a loss of rhetoric and information about the role of the volunteers for the absorption fund.

Line 58: syntactical complexity – long list of items, most successfully rendered in Hebrew. Problem with “taxi fares for chemotherapy (radiation)” and “hearing aids”.

Line 64: omission of “*Keren Klita*” to qualify volunteers, substituted by “שלכם” detracts from importance of the fund.

Line 65: omission of “financial” – typical skipping when more than one qualifier. The concentration on this string leads to the omission of the name, Oksana Chelnikov, of the Russian immigrant injured in the attack on Rehov Yafo. The date of the attack is also omitted (“January 27”).

Line 67: Error by substitution: “Oksana” is replaced by “מישהו אחר”, an error of comprehension twice - first it is not someone else but the same Russian immigrant who is female. The word “kitchen” is also omitted in connection with the furniture bought.

Line 68: “Oksana” again omitted (problem with hearing and rendering foreign name) but this time recognized as a female (though erroneously as another female, not Oksana!).

Line 69: “for Shabbat” omitted and erroneous translation of “our volunteer went with her husband to bring her (Oksana) home” as “הלכנו לבקר אותה בביתה” (we went to visit her in her home).

The whole passage dealing with Oksana suffers from omissions and miscomprehensions resulting from problems with the Russian name. The attempts to avoid using the name do not succeed because they result in imaginary “other immigrants” appearing who do not exist! This is what Gile would describe as the translator’s saturation point (his tightrope theory of saturation, 1999). He refers to “problem triggers”, namely parts of speech requiring heightened attentional resources.

In conclusion, I would say that the omissions and miscomprehensions in the above-interpreted text are all the result of the above phenomenon of saturation of processing capacity. There is no English here that is obscure or incomprehensible. **Words and phrases are missed or misheard or misunderstood because the translator’s attention is almost totally directed at producing the Hebrew to the neglect of listening and comprehending properly.** This inordinate concentration results in whole chunks of information being either omitted or misconstrued.

B. Peres’ Speech from Hebrew (L2) into English (L1): Transcript 4.

List of omissions/additions (according to numbered lines in Hebrew source text and marked in red in Appendix 4)

Line 4: שמענו mistranslated as “said” - changes meaning of sentence.

Line 4: “economy” (of Israel) is omitted – important fact omitted

Line 4: "התפתחות" is translated as “direction” – in this context this is an error since it does not convey Israel’s and its economy’s neglect of technological development, which is the main theme of Peres’ speech.

Line 8: כל זה צריך להגיד לנו משהו is erroneously translated as “something has to be said about”, completely missing the point that the report on poverty should be setting off alarm bells about the list of priorities in Israeli society.

Line 10: omission of בתחומים שונים leads to lack of cohesion in English translation: what is going to be Israeli society’s strategy and the relations between the different fields?

Line 10: שבהם erroneously translated as “that” which changes the meaning of the sentence. Israeli society has to have conditions in which it can advance.

Line 11: אסטרטגיה פוליטית שתבטיח לנו אפשרות לשנות את סדר העדיפויות - omission of important information

Line 12: omission of "מדינית" that qualifies “strategy” and also loss of rhetorical effect by omission of "אין ספק ש..".

Line 13: omission of מרכיב

Line 14: omission of דעות ורעיונות

Lines 18 and 19: omission of connector אם (if) results in lack of coherence and cohesion of following segment. There are also glaring omissions and errors. Galia Golan first mentions Peres’ contribution when he was the Defense Minister and serving in other roles, not as Foreign Minister, which is mentioned at the end of the list together with being Prime Minister.

Line 21: זכות (privilege) is omitted, loss of opening speaker’s rhetoric and emphasis, just when building up to climax of introduction of guest speaker (Peres).

Line 23: דברי טעם omitted due to inability of translator to find English equivalent (he spoke with such logic)

Line 23: 1966 is incorrectly translated as ’96 – similar sounding numbers in Hebrew.

Line 23: הערב is rendered erroneously as “today”. Not critical to message but constitutes a certain lack of rhetoric.

Line 24: omission of Peres' title of Minister for Regional Development – due to long list of titles, only the first and last are remembered. This is a common phenomenon in student translators and occurs sometimes even with professionals.

Line 27: Peres refers to three main problems (clouds) threatening Israel: renewed terror and violence, the exposure of the poverty in Israel, and the feeling that the nation is deeply divided. Since only parts of this segment are translated correctly, the opening segment of his speech is very disjointed, lacking coherence and cohesion.

Line 27: the number (three) of clouds is omitted; the connection between the three problems and the list that follows is lost in the English translation.

Line 28: העוני שנחשף should be translated as “the poverty discovered/exposed” and NOT “we’ve discovered great poverty”. The whole point is that the Israeli public was not aware of the great poverty existing in Israel. The report revealed it.

Line 28: Omission of Peres' personal admission: אני לא יודע איך מטפלים בכל שלושת הנושים האלה - loss of intensity.

Line 30: Omission of זה לא מעבר לכוחנו, אנחנו יכולים לצאת מהעוני, אף אחד לא יוציא אותנו. Second similar sentence about violence translated.

Line 32,33: Omission of מדינה שיש בה דעות שונות אין בזה אסון. האסון הוא שהדעות האלה (למחלוקות קורעות) leaves out important statement about the differing opinions in Israel tearing the country apart due to the deep ideological differences that cannot be bridged.

Line 34,35: Omission of Peres' admission that he might be in the minority but that this does not bother him – loss of intensity.

Line 35: Omission of ואני מאמין שזה מה שיקרה. – omits Peres' conviction.

Line 36: Omission of כוחות מחוץ לאזור עצמו and incorrect substitution of “what happened in the rest of the area”, thereby missing the reference to the influence of foreign powers in the region.

Line 37: Omission of reference to many changes of empires in region.

Lines 37, 38: Omission of עוררו סכסוכים, פרנסו סכסוכים וגרמו לאזור האלימפריות האלה... is serious, because it leaves out the instigators (the empires) of all the bloodletting in the region.

Line 38: Omission of גם היום אני חושב leaves out (again) the personal opinion and comments of Peres that are an integral part of his speech, both for understanding where he stands on the issues mentioned and for conveying the rhetoric of his oratory.

Further similar omissions are made by the interpreter throughout the interpreted text. Sometimes nervousness on beginning simultaneous translation results in a “weak start” that gradually improves as the interpreter gets into the body of the speech, accessing more information, but in this case serious omissions continue throughout the speech. Just a glance at all the red ink (marking omissions) on Page 2 of the Hebrew transcript of Peres speech shows that the problem does not get any better.

In this case it is not a question of not understanding the Hebrew; sometimes it was a case of not hearing (or remembering) the Hebrew due to the very long sentences (syntactic difficulty). Peres speaks slowly and takes time to make his point (especially since there is not a lot of redundancy) and sometimes the interpreting was started too soon, resulting in long pauses till the meaning became apparent. The conclusion is that the inexperienced translator leaves a long lag/ear-voice span before beginning to translate, hoping to get more of the gist (professionals learn to anticipate and take more risks) resulting in missing the next sentence (or two!). There is such intense concentration on listening to the Hebrew that in addition to omissions, there is very little monitoring of the (mother tongue) output, resulting in linguistic errors that also add to the general incoherence and lack of cohesion.

This tendency to translate in spurts is also very hard on the listener (I say this as the translator hearing herself). Even if nothing were omitted from the source text (and in this case it is), the spurts would at the least irritate the audience and in the worst case cause some listeners to “tune out”.

5. Conclusion

This introspective study seems to confirm my hypothesis that comprehension (and by comprehension I mean fully understanding the informational content and remembering it) is easier for a trainee when going from mother tongue to second language than vice-versa.

In my interpretation of the *Keren Klita* speech, although the linguistic performance in my second language, Hebrew, leaves a lot to be desired, more informational content was transferred than in the Peres speech. The omissions were fewer and usually less serious (that is, they did not affect comprehension of the gist of the speech). In the interpretation of the Peres speech, not only were there frequent, serious omissions from the source text, but also errors of comprehension as well as mistakes in the

mother tongue target language. If all these were not enough to confuse the audience, the translating in spurts certainly did not help.

My findings correspond to those of Barik (1971:136):

“Again, less qualified Ts (translators) are characterized by generally better performance when translating from their dominant into their weaker language, showing on average fewer disruptions –and fewer “serious” ones..... Their translations, however, are to some extent even more literal when translating from dominant into weaker language).”

Here it must be noted that Barik (1971:135) does not regard literalness as a weakness **as long as it does not cause a change in meaning**. He does acknowledge, however, that trainees’ performances are not as eloquent or as intelligible as professional interpreters, but this aspect of interpreting is not the topic of this study.

I think it is a good idea, as Minns (2002:38) suggests, for more interpreters to be trained to work into their B language. His main reasons are the expansion of the European Union and the fact that only those interpreters who have mother-tongue knowledge of rare official languages can perform satisfactory simultaneous interpretation (by working into their B language). He does stress that before embarking on learning to interpret into one’s B language, the trainee must first be proficient in working into the A language, that is, having mastered the basic techniques of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation.

I realize I am an example of an “unbalanced” bilingual, in that my mother tongue, English, is much stronger than my acquired tongue, Hebrew, despite thirty years in Israel. But as Grosjean(1997) points out in his book about bilingual individuals, this is to be expected since immigrants to a new country **learn what they need to know in order to get by at home, at work, in school etc.** They do not become expert in fields with which they have do not have day-to-day contact (such as academia, literature, the army etc.).

The passive act of comprehending a B language is easier than producing in that language, unless the B language is learned at a very early age. However I feel sure

that more training in speaking and writing in one's B language would create a more "balanced" bilingual and would produce more competent interpreters and translators.

Many is the time I have refused a student's desperate plea to translate a university article from English, despite understanding the academic jargon, simply because I knew my Hebrew written translation (or oral interpretation) would not do justice to it. Most university courses, including that at Bar Ilan University, are geared to native speakers of Hebrew translating from their B language English (or French) into their mother tongue Hebrew. The students who thought they had perfect command of English from high school suddenly realize that there are nuances to English, or complicated sentence structures, which only a native English speaker understands. Does it not make sense to work on English speakers' B language of Hebrew so that they can also contribute to translating the masses of academic or press articles written, and speeches made, in English in Israel? This of course would be a good idea for any country where knowledge of English is important.

It is understandable why audiences prefer a translation in the mother tongue. It is a lot easier to listen to, but one wonders how much information gets lost on the way. I think it is preferable to hear an explanation with an accent, with some odd sounding words or idioms, as long as the gist of the source message is conveyed. Interpretation is about conveying ideas, not words, and as long as the words used in the B language interpreted text do not interfere with comprehending the A language source text, then I think it is an acceptable alternative. It would require a lot of hard work on the part of the interpreter who is working into his/her B language, but the results would, in my opinion, contribute greatly to the world of simultaneous interpretation.