Modes of Interpreting and Digital Pen Technology

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2013 – 2015 Research Project
Research Project

- 2013 – 2015

- Monash University and Oncall Interpreters and Translators

- Aims at investigating the use of digital pen technology (the Livescribe Smartpen) in training and research and its implementation in interpreting curricula and interpreting practice.
More specifically, the project aims at comparing interpreting performances delivered in two different modes, namely the “traditional” consecutive mode and the new dual hybrid mode, *Consec-simul with notes*, whereby the interpreters performing in a *consecutive* setting can interpret *simultaneously* from their notes as well as from playing back the recorded source speech.

It specifically focusses on comparing the interpreting performances of professional interpreters on the basis of various indicators.
Use of Digital Technology in the Profession

- Various fora and sites online report on the use of digital technology in interpreting practice
  - #IntJC The Interpreting Journal Club
  - Websites for Translators.
  - Interpreting.info.
  - Endless Possibilities Talks.

“…those in the profession who are not aware of digital devices like the Smartpen somehow choose to be left behind”.
Need for Research

- Digital pens are currently used during training in the development of note-taking systems (Orlando, 2010 and 2014-in press), and offer very valuable features for trainers and trainees in allowing assessment of the process of note-taking during a consecutive interpretation.

- They are now also being trialled as a means of offering a hybrid mode of interpreting – consecutive and simultaneous or Consec-simul with notes - by recording source speeches and allowing immediate playback from the notebook into earplugs, giving the interpreter the possibility to provide a simultaneous interpretation while listening to the source text for a second time and reading from their notes.
A hybrid mode of interpreting SimConsec and ConsecSimul with notes

- Ferrari 2002; Lombardi 2003; Hamidi-Pöcchacker 2007; Hiebl 2011

- New Pilot in 2012: higher accuracy, better fluency and better comfort in performing, interest from professionals to use it if they were more trained (Orlando, in press 2014)
# Accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interpreter 1</th>
<th>Interpreter 2</th>
<th>Interpreter 3</th>
<th>Interpreter 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facts, ideas and meaning units in speech 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;(traditional consecutive)</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facts, ideas and meaning units in speech 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Consec-simul mode)</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>83,50%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disfluencies – Hesitation phenomena

![Bar chart showing disfluencies in different interpreters.](chart.png)
**Oculesics – Eye contact Instances**

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<th>Interpreter 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short eye contact instances Speech 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long eye contact instances Speech 1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short eye contact instances Speech 2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long eye contact instances Speech 2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Need for a larger study

- Should these results be backed up on a larger scale, the impact of the use of digital pen technology on interpreting pedagogy and training could be of wide-ranging importance.
What Applications?

- Everywhere simultaneous equipment is not possible and there is a need for long consecutive

- Courts
- Business meetings
- Diplomacy / delegations meetings (speeches)
- Mental health
- ...

So far...

- Implementation of the technology in the Monash program (note-taking classes and new hybrid mode – since 2010)

- Pilot Study on the hybrid mode (results published in *Trans-int*, vol 2, 2014)

- Invitation to present and implement the technology at Germersheim (Gutenberg Teaching Council grant) – Over two weeks+ in June 2013

  > case study and results to be published in 2014 in publication on didactics and interpreter training
Next…

- Broader data collection with Australian professional interpreters (July 2014)
- Data collection at the European Commission DG Int (cancelled or postponed?)
- Data collection elsewhere?
- Analysis of data > publication of results 2015
International Symposium
Monash University, Melbourne, 23-26 June 2015 (CFP to be sent soon)

*International Symposium on the History of Interpreting and of Interpreting Training*