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NOTE-TAKING IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION

Advantages and disadvantages of various techniques

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Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to investigate which contexts should be used for different kinds of note-taking and to study the evolution of the various types of note-taking. Moreover, the final aim of this thesis is to understand which method is used most commonly during the interpreting process, with a special focus on consecutive and community interpreting in the sector of public service and healthcare.

The belief that stands behind this thesis is that the most complete method is Rozan's, which is also the most theorized and used by interpreters. Through the analysis of the different rules of this practice, the importance of this method is shown. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates how these techniques can assist the interpreters in their jobs.

This thesis starts from an overview of what note-taking means in the different settings of interpreting and a short history of note-taking is presented. The section that follows analyzes three different well-known types of note-taking methods outside the interpreting environment, that is: linear, non-linear and shorthand. Subsequent to the comparison, Rozan's 7 principles are analyzed.

To authenticate this thesis and the hypotheses herein, data was collected through a survey that was conducted on a sample of a group of graduated students in Linguistic and Intercultural Mediation at the University of Bologna "Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori".

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Interpreting Environment

Consecutive interpreting is generally linked with the concept of conference interpreting but can also be referred to “occur in public service settings, such as hospitals and courts, and may be considered a particular type of institutional talk, in that they involve at least one participant who represents an institution and are related to a task the participants need to achieve” (Drew & Heritage 1992: 3). As González underlines “Unlike simultaneous interpretation, in which the speech reception and production stages overlap, consecutive interpretation implies a greater time lag in the sequencing of these stages, the duration of which requires note-taking” (González, 2012:58). In consecutive interpreting there is no equipment such as booth, microphone or headphones but only a notepad, a pen and a good memory. Note-taking is a fundamental skill for consecutive interpreters especially those who work face-to-face, in the Public Service. Public Service Interpreters work in different sectors like health care, legal and social services. They are also called ‘community interpreters’. As Tennent points out, this definition “denotes a community of people from varied language and cultural backgrounds living together”. The aim of taking good notes in both consecutive and face-to-face interpreting is, as the quote said, to help the interpreter in remembering what has to be translated. The interpreters hear the speech in one language and take notes, then subsequently change what they have heard into the target language.

CHAPTER 2

About Note-Taking

2.1 Meaning and history

“Note taking is one of the first and most established cognitive technology” (Makany, Kemp and Dror, 2008:2).

The basics of general note-taking are attributable to the Ancient Greece with the development of the hypomnema and the following advancement during the Renaissance through commonplace books used for information storage which could be retrieved and reused by the compiler.

In the strict sense, note-taking could be defined as capturing information from a source and writing it down in order not to have to remember everything but recall the information later if necessary.

In a broader sense it could refer to the activity of writing in a personal and more detailed manner something that has been said or has been written. As experts denote “note-taking is a central aspect of a complex human behavior related to information management that involves a range of underlying mental processes and their interactions with other cognitive functions” (Piolat, Olive & Kellogg, 2005).

The mental process is extremely complex because it implies not only the understanding of what has been said but also the filtration, organization and writing of data in a rapid and effective manner. The result of this cognitive process is the representation of knowledge and memory storage.

As noted previously, there are innumerable styles of note-taking and all of them have their own history that change in relation to personal preferences. Different techniques are used in different scenarios and situations and every style has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Note-taking, defined for the interpreting job, is the written transformation of the oral text made for reproducing it in another language.

CHAPTER 3

Note-taking methods

There are numerous note-taking methods and they are different from each other. Hence, using one method and not another depends on the context, the activity and the objective of the person. The macro-methods that will be analyzed are linear, non-linear, shorthand and, Rozan's 7 principles for interpreting.

3.1 Linear

(See Annex: Image 1)

Linear note taking is the most common outline format used especially in lectures and taught by professors beginning in high school. It is one of the most effective methods because it is organized and therefore it is easy to glean the information after. It consists in reporting the information in the order it was received, with the same structure as speech and it has the appearance of a long essay.

This method is widely used among the students who are allowed to take notes at their beginning of the interpreting studies because this is the method which assures the most complete information. However, with time and practice, this habit automatically modifies.

With this method, the data are collected on a page and structured following the sequence of time through headings, subheadings and bullet points. One of the main characteristics is verticality and abundance of details.

Usually, headings are used for writing titles, keywords or main ideas and concepts. Using bullet points helps to maintain divided the topics and put the concepts in order of importance. Roman and Arabic numerals or letters are frequently encountered to divide the levels. The usage of subheadings is useful to organize the different points of a single idea as well as numbering the pages. It is common to see keywords underlined and many people number notions to have an even more organized page. One can either decide to use abbreviation or full phrases.

On the other hand, it is not convenient in case the person needs to insert more details as the available space is limited. One of the solutions could be to leave some space on the page to insert extra material if necessary, but it could be risky to lose all the original tidiness. Another solution could be to use a spiral notebook and to use the reverse side of the page to make insertions.

Linear note-taking can be more useful if it starts from a written text, for example, reports or newspaper, as there is time to identify the purpose of the work and to skim the text to extract important information from the written text. In fact, most people write notes as a way to summarize information of what they have read.

The University of Readings pointed out that linear note-taking is better for people who think in a rational and analytical way and it comes very helpful for abstract concepts.

Below are some examples of linear note-taking.

3.1.1 The Outlining Method

With this method the visual impact is the same as a long list of phrases, similar to the one of indexes. The general idea starts from the upper-left hand side of the page. Every indentation marks more specific details. In the same way, the levels of importance are indicated by the distance from the first point. All levels must be related to the previous one and this creates order and linking. This method is relatively complicated and requires concentration and time. Nevertheless, once it is done, editing is almost unnecessary. (See Annex: Image 2)

3.1.2 The Sentence Method

Every new topic is written progressively on a separate line. It is chronologically divided but relations are not immediate and neither are levels of importance. The advantage of this method is the speed because no time is needed to create the layout.

3.2 Non-linear

The term 'non-linear' includes many note-taking techniques such as graphs, concept or mind maps, and spider diagrams, and they use a large amount of symbols, images and keywords.

As linear note-taking, this technique presents positive and negative aspects but more importantly it is a mechanism considered effective by many interpreting students. It is also a good way to represent knowledge in the short term.

This method is a good alternative to the linear method especially when the time pressure is high, i.e., in all those situations where a high speed in writing is needed (like interpreting, both consecutive and simultaneous).

The majority of researchers agree that graphs and concept maps are convenient to select and arrange information that needs to be remembered, thanks to the connections that are visual and immediate. One of the best characteristics is that visual memory is very stimulated with this method and this helps to memorize the concepts easier and for longer periods. Moreover, similar concepts can be grouped together in order to help the interpreter to structure the speech better.

Usually, in most of the styles of non-linear methods, it is rarely necessary to change page during note taking since every topic is related with the others. This implies, however the usage of a big sheet that, concretely, is less handy than a smaller note-pad.

As previous studies demonstrate "important points, actions or future questions can be highlighted with different codes and colors, but, in general, the use of graphics or contrast marking is kept to a minimum." (Makany, Kemp and Dror, 2008:7).

Considering a situation of community interpreting, the non-linear method can be very effective because the situation will probably be a bilateral conversation. The problems arise, in situations of consecutive interpreting when maintaining the same order of the original speech is fundamental. Therefore, notes must be organized in term of sequence of time and not only in accordance to similar meaning, hierarchical importance or association.

Non-linear notes allow the interpreters to include more details at the moment of the exposition of the speech as the semantically level is very low and it is not necessary to use time to write with complete grammar.

On the other hand, this kind of note-taking requires more effort under a cognitive point of view. The amount of information that needs to be remembered is higher compared with linear note-taking. Researchers demonstrated that non-linear note-takers, are more comfortable recording notes from a single spokesperson than from any other situation with multiple speakers, such as a meeting. Organizing the speech is easy with this technique because it does not require effort. As Makany, Kem and Dor point out: "Often, the most important pieces of information are closer to the centre of the page, while details are on the periphery. As the starting position is always associated to the upper right-hand corner of the page and the direction of recording is clockwise, the sequence of the base units guides both the encoding and the review processes." (Makany, Kemp and Dror, 2008:15).

Hereafter there are some well-known techniques.

3.2.1 The Clustering or Mapping Method

This method was first theorized by Gabriel Rico. It consists in structuring free association of ideas. In this method each notion and thought is related to others. It is a method that is used to generate ideas, create connections and patterns, and make associations of concepts in various situations. With this technique the note-taker starts placing the nucleus (the main subject of the speech) at the center of the page. All the ideas are connected to the nucleus by drawing lines from the center. Subsequently, other lines are drawn from the main ideas for adding secondary notions and so on. The entire note is a structure composed principally by key words which help to generate and collect ideas. It is helpful because the relationship of each notion is simply visible, easy to understand and to edit. Also, by using different colors the interpreter can trace back the construction in the review process. Mind maps, similar to other diagrams, can be used to classify ideas and summarize. This system is based on hierarchy and tree structure (See Annex: Image 3)

3.2.2 The Cornell Method

Walter Pauk was the creator of this method which provides a system for organizing notes without recopying them. The page is divided into two columns: the main column is on the right, which is larger, and the secondary, on the left, which is narrower (around 3-4 cm). The most relevant notes are written in the main column, whereas, on the left every note is labeled with a key word. Every new topic is recognizable from a new line. It is useful for extracting the main concepts from a detailed discourse. (See Annex: Image 4)

3.2.3 The Charting Method

The format of this method is the same as a table. The structure could be done in advance by dividing the page in various columns and rows, each one with its own label depending on the category of information. The space for writing is limited and it is guaranteed by the annotation of relevant content; locating the appropriate category could be difficult. It is simple to review and it helps visual memorization.

(See Annex: Image 5)

3.2.4 The Semantic Network method

This method, known also as frame network, creates a scheme based on semantic relations between concepts. The vertices of the graphs are key words, whilst the arrows connecting the edges represent the concepts which indicate the relations between them. Semantic networks are useful when the knowledge of a topic is already developed and it is easy for interpreter to understand because the view of the network shows how concepts relate to one another. However, it is difficult to use this method if the domain is wide or there is more than one topic. In addition, negation or emphasis cannot be expressed in this technique. (See Annex: Image 6)

3.3 Shorthand

The term 'shorthand' indicates all systems of rapid handwriting that are generally used for transcribing what is said orally. Another term to indicate the same concept is stenography (narrow writing) from the Greek. It includes a variety of systems such as one that simplifies existing letters or the one that uses special symbols. Generally speaking, with just one symbol or abbreviation, it is possible to represent a word or even a phrase and so, to reproduce an oral speech in a written manner at the same speed of speaking.

From the beginning of written history, human beings have always taken notes, and therefore have always sought the best way to be quick and efficient. Ancient Egyptian, for example, had two alternatives to Hieroglyphics, which simplified its symbols. The Greeks created various symbolic systems to represent a word or a suffix or prefix. As Ager underlines "Such systems are generally referred to as stenography (narrow writing), *brachygraphy* (short writing) or *tachygraphy* (swift writing). Their purpose was to make writing more compact and/or faster" (Ager, 1998).

Shorthand systems have their roots in the Roman period when Tiro, secretary of Cicero, had to record his speeches; other types were found in China too, even if their complexity made those systems much less common. One of the main characteristics of stenography is that it is not frequently used for later transcription or long term usages.

Nowadays, this writing system is used only by certain categories of professionals and in certain situations (for example, during trials or in the political field); In the past, before the achievements of computers and recording machines, it was taught to secretaries, journalists, health care professionals and other figures.

The current and most popular system includes the Pitman Shorthand and the Gregg Shorthand.

3.3.1 *The Pittman shorthand*

Pitman Shorthand is a shorthand system that was developed in the middle of 19th century by Isaac Pitman for the English language, but over the decades it was improved and adapted for almost fifteen different languages. It has become very popular in the UK and the USA but, like most shorthand system, it lost its prominence with the upcoming of recording systems. Many have been the versions of this technique but originally it consisted in a sort of alphabet composed only by consonants. (See Annex: Image 7)

This style of stenography implies a deep knowledge of linguistic subject since it is a phonetic technique, which means, that rather than representing letters, it represents the phoneme, the sound. For instance, the sound [f] is written in the same way in words like 'film', 'phenomena' and 'enough'.

Vowel sounds have small importance and the predominant way to write them is with dots, dashes or other marks next to the principal strokes. (See Annex: Image 8)

Very relevant are, instead, voiced and unvoiced sounds and length and thickness of them.

In the beginning, shorthand was written with nibs and it was simple to distinguish light and tick strokes from the thickness of the mark but today it is common to use pencils. The note pad must be lined and when an error is made, it is recognizable because it is circled and rewritten.

Another general rule is to write symbols from left to right and top to bottom.

Punctuation is almost the same as in the English language but, given the fact that dots and other shapes are used also for representing vowels, sound modifications have been made during the years in order to avoid confusion.

3.3.2 *The Gregg shorthand*

The inventor of this pen stenography system was John Robert Gregg in the early 20th century. It gained popularity especially in the United States and then also extended to other languages, such as Latin American Spanish. Like Pitman's, it is phonetic because it does not record spelling but sounds. This system is based on oval or spherical shapes and vowels are written on consonants, with circles or other marks. (See Annex: Image 9 and 10)

Even though shorthand technologies have increased, the Gregg shorthand is still practiced nowadays. If Pittman distinguishes two similar sounds by position and thickness, Gregg distinguishes them through the different length of the stroke. A peculiarity of this technique is that there are almost no angular shapes. This system is especially apt to business dictation.

CHAPTER 4

A focus on interpreting and Rozan's 7 principles

4.1 Why not to use common methods

All the previously described methods are, however, rather inadequate for the field of interpretation for various reasons:

4.1.1 *Linear method*

- This method guarantees a complete way of writing information but the process for doing it is extremely slow.
- The details are very important and the interpreter is brought to write too much, hence losing concentration and attention on the general discourse.
- The easiest thing to do in this method is to use the same words of the speaker and this could preclude the interpreter of the possibility of writing directly in the target language.
- Another weakness is that, even though chronology is assured, no space between lines for adding is often present. Furthermore, an oral speech does not always follow chronological order and this could cause confusion when reading back the notes.

4.1.2 *Non linear method*

- This method is often disorganized for the interpreting job. The notes are not rapidly clear and comprehensible.
- Links are necessarily omitted and there is no immediate chronology.
- Much time is spent creating the map or scheme and it is not handy if it is needed to change page because at the moment of producing the target speech it is difficult to remember where to find which information.

Moreover, these two methods are easier to use in note taking from transcripts rather than speeches. With spoken words everything is done in less time, without the possibility of thinking too much as the process of noting and listening happens at the same time.

4.1.3 Shorthand method

- In interpreting courses, professors highly discourage students to use shorthand because during interpretation, ideas are translated, not words. With shorthand, instead, every word must be noted.
- Another aspect to take into account is that when a person reads his/her own shorthand, he/she must do a translating job (from notes to the first language); in the sector of interpretation the job would be doubled since after the first translation, the text must be produced in the target language.
- The purpose of note-taking in interpreting is to write a minimal amount of notes that is easily understandable: the opposite of shorthand.
- As it would happen with linear method, being too concerned in writing down everything creates a distraction from the general meaning.

4.2 The history of Rozan's 7 principles

The note-taking system according to Rozan's 7 principles, was born in Europe where conference interpreting began and is still most commonly used. It is a system that can be adapted to various types of languages but it is more suitable to Indo-European languages.

As summary of the purposes of note-taking, quotes from Albl-Mikasa: "Since 'the output should resemble the original pragmatically, logically and semantically, but not syntactically, morphologically or phonologically and since, at the same time, the output should be both idiomatic and terminologically accurate' (Setton 2003: 150) the relevance theory construct of the explicators is particularly appropriate, as it captures the pragmatic, logical and semantic dimension of the message' (Albl-Mikasa, 2008:224). This means that taking notes is necessary to the interpreter for accuracy and also because it allows him/her to avoid interrupting the spokesperson very frequently for short consecutive interpretation. The spokesperson may, in fact, lose track of what they are saying or even getting nervous and confused if memory of the interpreter is not adequate. Every interpreter can use Rozan's principles as basis for building his/her own technique and style. The most relevant aspect to take into account is that the interpreter must translate a concept rather than words and all those suggestions help him/her in the process.

As Gavioli and Baraldi (2011:211) suggest: "In interpreter-mediated talk, the interpreter is the only participant who is assumed to fully understand both languages"; this is a big responsibility and the job of the interpreter must be very meticulous. Developing a good note-taking skill is necessary for the interpreter in order "to support memory and ensure accuracy and completeness" (Kelly, 2008:3). It is important, to take into account that, interpreters have to develop their memory and to do that, listening skills and concentration are prerequisites.

The note-taking process during an interpreting session is very complex because it is not easy to write every single idea that one has heard. The objective is, however, to recall 90% of a speech thanks to the notes, but writing minimal quantity of them. Taking notes properly requires a lot of practice and it is a very personal process. The interpreter must be capable of understanding his/her own notes at first glance.

Sometimes, especially at the beginning of an interpreting career at a university, note-taking is not taught for a long period, whereas the biggest importance is given to developing memory skills. The reason behind this is that if students are not trained to take notes and to listen at the same moment, it is frequent that a great amount of information gets lost during the process. The interpreter often ends up forgetting part of the speech because they are too concentrated on writing information on his/her note-pad and not having time to transcribe enough data. Consequently there is a lack of quality of the interpretation due to the frequent requests of repetition and various hesitations. If, instead, memory is well trained, the mediator will be capable of storing a huge amount of information because he/she will be focused only on the meaning of the phrase without the problem of thinking how to write it down in an easy, efficient and rapid way (this is, in fact, an already consolidated fact).

On the other hand, there are situations in which not taking any note will cause confusion and misinterpretation. This is common when many numbers or proper nouns are essential, when the speech is based mostly on lists or even when the speech is longer than 2 or 3 minutes. Other cases arise when professional notes of the interpreter are requested during a job (in the UK, during trials, the notes of the interpreter are often included in the official documentation).

Consequently, taking-notes in this field is a more difficult issue than it seems. There are some common techniques used in the interpreting field in order to obtain comprehensible and useful notes. The most basic is to use a note-pad, preferably a 15cm X 20cm and a gel-ink pen to speed up the writing. It is easier if the interpreter writes on just one side of the page so that, when it is full, he/she can quickly go on the next page and thus be less susceptible to lose concentration and time by having to turn the notepad.

A way for practicing note taking is starting the process from mother tongue to mother tongue, i.e., listening to a speech in the interpreter's first language, writing notes in this language and reproducing the speech in the same language. This is useful both to auto-evaluation and to train memory.

4.3 Rozan's Principles

As anticipated, two main difficulties that arise from note-taking are:

- If the interpreter is thinking too much on how to write something, he/she will pay less attention to what he/she is listening to.
- If the notes are unclear or illegible, the reproduction of the speech will suffer due to lack of quality because too much effort will be put into reading and decoding the notes.

To solve these two main difficulties, there have been many theories about note taking. The one that is analyzed in this paper is Rozan's. A large amount of interpreters use to follow the so called 'Rozan's Seven Principles' (from the name of the beginner) which consists of a mixture of all the different note-taking methods used in other sectors and are highly adaptable to everyone's necessities.

4.3.1 Noting the General Idea

The first principle of note-taking is focused not on the annotation of the text word by word, but rather on the general idea in the clearest and easiest way possible. It is not simple, however, to recognize the 'idea'. An idea is the part of a message but also the general meaning of a word that can be summarized in one extensive concept. The words that the interpreters use could be shorter and synonymous of the word used by the speaker so to save time.

One of the best abilities that the interpreter must have for this principle is the capacity to summarize and extract the most relevant topics of the speech. Because he/she will have to produce a version of a text in another language immediately, it is more important to pass along the general message with coherent words instead of using a perfect literal translation. To be sure of doing it right, the best way is to always maintain the SVO structure: Subject + Verb + Object, and this is a general rule which is applicable to most Indo-European languages. (See Annex: Image 11)

Before applying it, the interpreter must look at the bigger picture. They should have a general idea of the situation in which he/she is working so that, based on previous experiences, he/she can have a notion of the general structure or framework of how the speech is constructed.

In some types of interpreting, it is significant to use a literal translation as much as possible (like in medical situations). But it is also true that "the correctness of a translation must be judged according to the result and not the process by which the result is obtained" (Seleskovitch, 2002:122). That is to say: if the message passes, it is not a significant problem that the translated word was not the most technical. Note-taking, especially if done in the TL, is a rapid process, so sometimes the interpreter does not have enough time to find the corresponding word and instead decides to use a synonym or another solution to transmit the concept. For example, if the word that has to be translated from Italian to English is *proteinasì* and the interpreter does not remember *protease*, it is absolutely fine (as the first principle of note-taking claims) to give a short explanation such as *proteolytic enzyme*. In this way, the party is perfectly aware of what the other said, even though the words are not exactly the same.

4.3.2 Abbreviation

The second principle of note-taking is based on the rule of abbreviation that suggests the usage of standard abbreviations, keywords, symbols and acronyms. The relevant aspect here is to note gender, number, and verb tense in order to avoid confusion.

Unless a word is short (4-5 letters), interpreters should use an unambiguous abbreviated form to speed up the process. But the meaning of the abbreviation must be clear for him/her.

It is, however, very important to try not to miss technical words. Sometimes, especially in English, many acronyms are 'officialized'. Official acronyms are a very important instrument that an interpreter has at his/her disposal to speed up the process of translation on topics such as math, science, text message language, vehicle registrations, currencies, periodic table, etc. When it comes to shortening words that have no generally recognized abbreviations, the translator has to pay attention in order to not confuse himself/herself.

For example, if a doctor is holding a conference and begins to list a series of ingredients of medications, and the interpreter misses one for some reason, it could become very dangerous and cause bad consequences. To avoid this problem, the principle of abbreviation is the easiest and most useful. Moreover, there is a large quantity of abbreviations in the health care field, and they can speed up a lot the note-taking process. Some common examples: AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), NHS (National Health Service), RCA (Right Coronary Artery), TB (Tuberculosis), etc.

This principle also includes symbols and images (sometimes included in the first principle). In many cases, it takes much less time to draw a stylized figure than to write letters. For example, the word *heart* can be represented as: ♥; to classify something as positive, the interpreter can use: 😊 and to qualify something as dangerous: ☠. A very important concept is that in people's minds, the thinking process is made through images rather than words. When a person listens to someone telling a story, he/she automatically imagines it with figures. Regardless of the language the interpreter is translating into, he/she is not always thinking in a language but in pictures or images. This is the reason why using symbols could make interpreting more effective.

It also helps the development of memory, since it is easier to remember something concrete (something that can be pictured) rather than to remember a great amount of words that are more difficult to link to each other.

Another technique could include words spelled in a phonetic manner.

The interpreter must also have the capacity to remember and use as much as possible the same abbreviations for the same words and same concepts during various interpreting situation.

4.3.3 *Links*

The third principle of note-taking is strictly connected with the first two mentioned above: links are necessary for the coherence and cohesion of the speech, and abbreviations and symbols can again be used to speed up the process.

Links are especially important for the speaker. Thanks to them he/she relates and changes the meaning of his/her speech and conditions the listener in the relation of his/her topics.

“A speech is all about two things: the ideas and the linkage between them” (Gillies, 2005:56). If a speech does not have links, it loses all its meaning. Many people run the risk of overlooking this principle, because it is taken for granted that links come automatically.

This is one of the greatest mistakes that can be committed by an interpreter. Noting all the information but omitting connection is like having written nothing. It becomes, in fact, impossible to decipher notes without connections between concepts. Especially during conference interpretation where a subject could spend only five minutes speaking, it is impossible to think that memory is enough to link the parts of the text. There are different ways to represent the connections, but the important thing is that the interpreter has the capacity to understand what he/she chooses and uses. A general rule is to write the conjunction on the left of the page before the subject (it also could be useful to divide the notepad as in the Cornell non-linear method), this will help readability at the moment of reproducing the speech as the link will be highly visible. The interpreter will have a clear idea of the meaning and organization of the speech.

There are various ways to express the same link, but one way to represent it is more than enough. The links can also be classified under some major groups, and every one of them can be represented with the same symbol: limitation (but, however, nonetheless, on the other hand, in spite of, all the same); contradiction (although, despite, even though, while); cause/effect (because, what is causing this, hence, the result of it, so that); addition (also, and, not only); purpose (to, so that); as well as other groups. In this way, even if the interpreter uses a general symbol to express the relationships, the interpretation will be successful and there will be no misunderstanding or ambiguity. Without links, the utterance would have been senseless, even if all the terminology were correct and technical. Also with this principle, it is important that the interpreter practices her/his own technique, learning to remember and use the same representation of the link every time.

4.3.4 Negation

The fourth principle of note-taking underlines the importance of noting the negations, because they can significantly change the meaning of what is said. During a translation, the interpreter cannot forget the negation. So it is important to find a quick and efficient way to note it. For instance: "The patient does not have to take two tablets per day anymore." A good way to note this could be just writing the affirmative sentence and adding "NO" at the end of the phrase. This fourth principle is another example which can be commonly assumed as obvious, but one cannot forget such a relevant aspect.

4.3.5 *Emphasis*

The fifth principle of note-taking is adding emphasis in order to maintain the meaning of the sentence. A very relevant problem in interpreting is that it “needs to have conveyed not only the content of what speaker say but the way they say it” (Tebble, 1999: 179). It is essential to maintain the style in which things are said, and note-taking helps accomplish this. Another example from the medical field: a patient who had been diagnosed with a serious disease has to be reassured about the prognosis and treatment. The doctor would be very discreet and tactful doing this. If the interpreter does not find a way to write it down, it could provoke a bad reaction in the patient. The register that the interpreter uses also has to be faithful to the doctor’s own. Obviously, it also depends on the uses of the target language (e.g., the register is more informal in English than in Italian in this field). Keeping the register similar could be made through noticing some lexical, semantic and grammar aspects, such as judgments, technicality, modal verbs, repetitions and intonation. If this does not happen, there is the risk that the patient does not understand the doctor or vice versa, which is even more dangerous.

As demonstrated also by the survey, students do not always give emphasis the importance that it should be given, but one of the main causes of poor interpreting in the working environment is given by the fact that everything is reported but no particular weight or underlining elements are present. The listener, therefore, has difficulties understanding what the spokesperson is effectively trying to express. Even if for the speaker, emphasis is something based on his/her own certainties, the interpreter must be able to deliver volume, speed and intonation in the same way. What’s important must, then, be visible and immediate to the interpreter through notes as memory will, concretely, help very little in this sense.

4.3.6 Verticality and diagonal notation (or shift)

The sixth and seventh principles of note-taking indicate that verticality and diagonal notation are necessary to keep a chronological order and to group ideas in a logical way. Both principles are needed by the interpreter in the field in order to maintain logic and chronology of speech. As Gillies claims: "Notes should reflect the structure of a speech clearly so as to help interpreters reproduce that structure in their interpretation. On the basis of the fundamental subject-verb-object structure, it is necessary to separate these elements clearly and to note them always in the same position on the sheets. These positions will form a diagonal axis." With the technique of verticality, it is preferred to take notes from top to bottom rather than from left to right. This allows for the grouping of ideas logically, and a complete and immediate synthesis when the interpreter has to read the notes back. To avoid the representation of many links, which would make the interpreter lose a lot of time, verticality and diagonal notation also "holds up to any number of permutations and still offers the interpreter a clear picture of what is going on" (Gillies, 2005:79).

These two principles will help the interpreter take notes that are easier to read back because the structure is going to be visible at first glance as the amount of writing on the page is really small; The eyes will move from left to right, and the main concept will be at the beginning of each line. Moreover, with this method there will always be enough space for further addition, which is more difficult if everything is written horizontally. Thanks to diagonal notation, the risk of using a confused order of words is also avoided, thus helping the interpreter to use the SVO structure (see image 11).

Shifting lines is very important to keep the interventions divided by speakers.

4.4 How to write and to read back notes

There are a lot of arguments regarding the language of note-taking (source or target). On the one hand, using the target language is better in order to have more autonomy in the translation of phrases and structures, and also because much work has already been done at the moment of speaking. On the other hand, writing in the source language requires less effort and does not slow down the note-taking process. Nevertheless, it is up to the interpreter to choose the approach which makes him/her feel most comfortable. There is no rule which requires the use of only the source or target language. Yet switching the approach during the work is not very common, because it could bring confusion to the mind of the interpreter. This is especially true during the same extract, as the interpreter could easily forget which the language must be used.

As said previously, it could be difficult to read back notes even by the interpreter; especially at the beginning of their career, he/she must be aware of the risk of losing focus on the speech if looking at the notes too much, especially if these are not complete. Notes must, in fact, serve as support to the interpreter's memory: they must glance at them and very quickly be able to recall the speech. Moreover, interpreters must have the capacity to anticipate what comes next. The interpreters "do not wait until they finished one passage to look again at their notes [...], rather the interpreter, while still talking, is already reading ahead [...] providing an uninterrupted and efficient interpretation" (Jones, 2002:64).

4.5 Some practical techniques used by interpreters

Brackets: It is common to see elements that are not primary in brackets. They are necessary to elucidate particular concepts, but they are similar to an aside. Brackets are a good way to write those elements below the sentence to which they are connected.

Underlining: To add emphasis and relevance to any symbol, word or phrase, the simplest way is to consider underlining once or twice depending on the level of importance. This could also denote an adjective or an adverb that qualifies the word or sentence. Some examples:

- Good: very good
- Good: the best
- Good: fairly good

Writing bigger words: To mark emphasis or importance, a good technique could be writing in difference sizes or in capitals:

- This is NOT allowed; It is a good solution; A is better than B

OK/NO: These are methods used to note negation or disagreement before or after the word to be negated.

Punctuation: Symbols of punctuation can be used for adding emphasis—especially exclamation and question marks.

SMS writing: to use the abbreviation typical of young people's style could become an efficient way to speed up the process:

- Before: b4
- As soon as possible: ASAP
- You: u
- Funny: LOL
- Thanks: thx
- At: @
- Great: g8

First and last letters: These can indicate gender and tense and can also be used to abbreviate the register. Unless a word counts 4 or 5 letters, it must be abbreviated. Some examples:

- Composition: Compⁿ
- Characterize: Charac^z
- Administrative: Admin^v
- Capacity: Cap^y
- Living: Live^g
- Lived: Live^d

Symbols: To elucidate this word, a definition by the Oxford Dictionary “something used to stand for something else [...] a letter, figure, or other conventional mark naming or referring to an object, quantity, operation, function, etc”. The relevant aspect is, therefore, that a symbol represents something. Obviously, utility of symbols fails when the interpreter uses a symbol for every word. In fact, symbols must be used only when concepts are frequently repeated and for groups of words with the same meaning.

A symbol must have the characteristic of being unmistakable (not ambiguous), quick (as Gillies pointed out, it is possible to “categorize symbols by the number of strokes of pen required to draw them. More than three is probably too slow”), already prepared (something used frequently by him/her) and automatic for the interpreter (he/she does not have to think on how to do it).

- Arrows: different arrows could mean different things such as:
 - →: progression, consequence
 - ↔: relation; dependence; exchange
 - ↗: increase; grow, rise
- =/ ≠: it is the same/ it is different
- ≤/≥: greater, superior, elder/ smaller, minor, younger
- ☺/ ☹: good/ bad; pleased/annoyed
- Organic: from one symbol, many other can be created, for example, the symbol **Θ** is used for origin, creation, start.
 - **Θ**^{al}: original
 - **Θ**^{ally}: originally
 - **Θ**^{ate}: to originate
- _____: a long line like this one is normally used to separate interventions. It is, in fact, very important to note who is speaking.

CHAPTER 5

A Survey on graduated students in Linguistic and Intercultural Mediation

5.1 Aim and organization of the survey

This section has the aim to summarize the results of the survey carried out on 16 graduate students from the University of Bologna in “Intercultural and Linguistic Mediation” as a complement of the thesis.

As the survey was conducted on bachelor graduates of Linguistic Mediation and not of Interpreting, they did not have a deep preparation on the note-taking subject but knew only the basics. The choice of this target has been made because students of Interpretation have already created a personal method for note-taking whereas this thesis has given importance to the birth and natural processes of taking efficient notes.

The survey was created by the author of the thesis and conducted first hand.

A recorded dialogue of almost 4 minutes was given to the students: they had to listen to it and to take notes as they would have done in a normal situation of bilateral interpretation.

The dialogue was a radio interview about International Adoption (for the transcription see Annex- Dialogue Transcription). The subjects were three: the Italian presenter and two experts: one Italian and one American.

Students had, then, to answer 5 questions giving examples and numbers of their works (for the survey see Annex- Survey’s Questions).

Afterward percentages and graphics were calculated and they are summarized below.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 First Question: To which extent did you feel the need of taking notes?

From question number 1, the average degree of taking notes emerges in terms of percentage at 85% and the standard deviation between the 16 participants is of 1,124.

The Standard Deviation is a statistical measure that is used to quantify the dispersion or the variation of a set of data from its expected value. A low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be very close to the expected value of the set, while a high standard deviation indicates that the data points are spread out over a wider range of values. It was calculated in order to observe how uniform the sample was. The analysis demonstrated that, though the data are essentially close to the expected value, there are a few peaks that increase the Standard Deviation value.

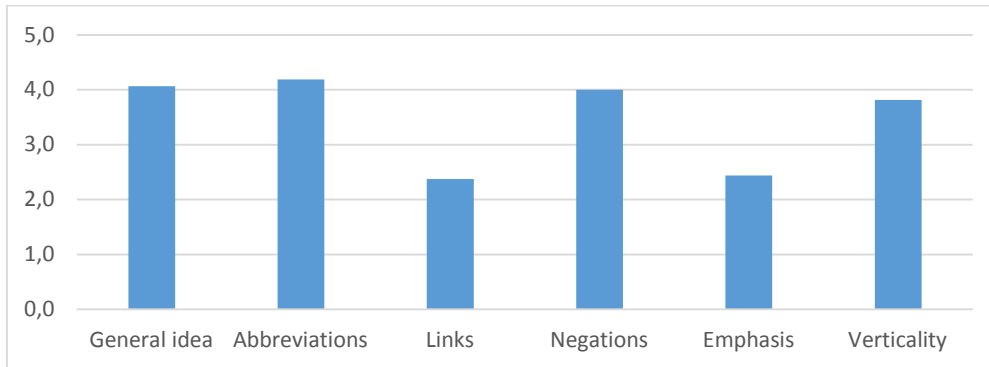
The necessity of taking notes is high even if some extracts were really short, such as the presenter's. Students claimed that even in short passages, notes were taken to ensure more accuracy. The percentage that emerges is, in fact, not very different from Rozan's principles that underline that 90% of the speech must be noted.

The cases in which some students chose not to take notes was for short extracts, redundant phrases or easily reconstructable pieces but only a few of them pointed out these details.

5.2.2 Second question: How important are the following techniques during the process of note-taking?

Rozan's 7 principle were given to the students who have to give a value on a scale from 1 to 5 speaking not just of the dialogue given but of Mediation in general.

Below, a graphic representing the average of the answers:



As gathered previously (4.3), it stands out that links and emphasis are the aspects which students give less importance to. They claim to remember these two elements without the necessity of noting them. Abbreviation is the most common technique and the one which is considered the most useful to speed up the process. All the other elements gained high importance among participants as expected.

5.2.3 Third question: Do you often use images or symbols in your notes?

Out of 16 students, 50% used a large quantity of images and symbols because they were quicker to represent and easier to recognize whilst the other 50% confirmed that, not having a personal and automatic technique for representing words with figures, they preferred not to use them in order not to get confused. It is generally accepted that symbols like arrows and emoticons can be a good substitute for entire words.

5.2.4 Fourth question: Do you prefer to use Source or Target language in your notes?

On average, students claim that they prefer to use Source Language 81% of times because, otherwise, the note-taking would be too slow. The 19% of the times in which they used the Target Language usually happens in cases where the translation is immediate but it rarely happens for entire interventions, rather only with sporadic words. Just one person pointed out that they preferred to always write in their mother tongue because it is easier even when it is the target language.

Few people underlined that they use English abbreviation even when they wrote in the source language because English is more automatic and quicker but others claimed that they try to write acronyms directly in the target language to make it easier to read back. For some participants it was necessary to write directly in the target language only when there was the risk of calques.

5.2.5 Fifth question: How did you represent the following words?

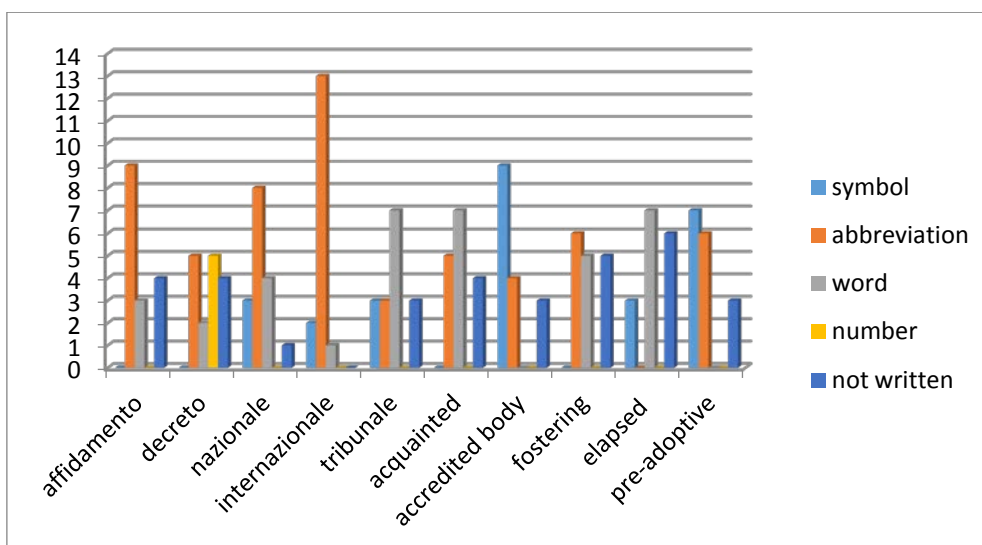
For the fifth question 5 Italian words and 5 English words were chosen.

The expectations were that, “accredited body” and “pre-adoptive” would have been written mostly with symbols as they are quickly recognizable by some drawings, for example: Ac^{ed}. o|--< or Ad^v ←;

“Decreto” was expected to be represented by its number and most of the other words by abbreviations or entire words.

“Affidamento” and “fostering” have the same meaning so it was probably a case in which students could have decided to represent the two words with an equal symbol.

Below the graphic of the results:



The expectations were more often than not confirmed by the results but only 5 participants represented “*decreto*” with a number, which does not differ much from the abbreviation or that fact that was not considered very important and so was not written.

Furthermore, even if “*affidamento*” and “fostering” mean the same thing, students decided not to use the same symbol or representation of the words; they did not even use the same language.

It appears that the most favorite techniques have been abbreviation and the use of entire words. This last method is proof that the participants of the survey were students, who do not have a strong experience and do not feel confident in writing with a shortened form which could be difficult to remember, otherwise entire words would have been almost inexistent. For the same reason, the use of symbols were relatively low.

Another noticeable element is that almost everyone wrote “*internazionale*” with an abbreviation. “*Internazionale*” is a compound word so it is easier to be abbreviated especially because earlier in the speech even the word “*nazionale*” (from which it derives), was abbreviated.

Some words, especially in English, were not represented. The causes are three: a problem of comprehension, the fact that the words were not relevant and not necessary to be reported, or that memory was a sufficient support for the interpretation.

Looking at the notes of the students (for examples see Annex- Students Notes) it is evident that almost everyone always wrote words in the Source Language.

Another principal aspect is that the principle of verticality and shift were used by almost everyone.

Conclusions

Consecutive interpreting notes are fundamental. Without them, the interpreter would not have the skills to remember everything, as the themes are very complex and specific. Notes have the aim of helping the interpreters not just in remembering the speeches but also helping them give the most faithful idea in the target language.

Following Rozan's principles could be very useful as it is a good method for achieving fluidity and completeness in order to take good notes. Every principle helps the interpreter to achieve rapidity and thanks to them, a large amount of the source speech can be noted and reproduced into target language.

Non-linear, linear and shorthand methods can be sometimes used within the 7 principles, to integrate them but these methods alone are not adequate to achieve high quality and efficiency. Linear is used, instead, by students during lectures or starting from a written text. It is more suitable for analytical subjects and jobs. Non-linear can become useful in some interpreting circumstances but it presents a lack of hierarchy and links; as the Linear method is preferable for written texts. Shorthand is rather used in working environment, such as trials, where the word-by-word transcription is needed.

Among the bachelor graduates of Mediation involved in the survey, some of the principles of Rozan are considered more useful than others but all of the participants used the basics of this method even if they were quite inexperienced on the subject. This confirms the efficiency of Rozan's theory.

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