Challenges to quality in interpreting

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#UnivUN17
Main stressors

Main Stressors in 2010: Switzerland
Speed

- Optimal speed?
- Actual speed and impact?
- Impact of speed on quality?
Research project

• Collaboration between UNOG and FTI

• UNOG:
  Alma Barghout & Mónica Varela García

• FTI, University of Geneva:
  Lucía Ruiz Rosendo
Norming experiment

I analysis (MAS, 2012)
2 weeks of 16th session of HRC, 2 speeches/day (State/NGO).
20 speeches randomly selected.
189 wpm
106 wpm
Average: 140 wpm

II analysis (2016)
24th session of UPR Working Group
Review of Belgium & Namibia (at random speeches).
193 wpm
128 wpm
Average: 162 wpm
# Speed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I data analysis (quantitative)</th>
<th>• Analysis of omissions of redundancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II data analysis (qualitative)</td>
<td>• Descriptive analysis of omissions.</td>
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Analysis I: RQ

Do expert interpreters omit redundant information as a strategy when speeches are delivered at high speed?
The Experiment: General methodology

Design
- Single-factor design (one IV at 3 levels: speed).
- Professional interpreters asked to interpret 3 speeches (EN-FR) at 3 speeds: 120, 160 & 200. Synonyms and redundant conjunctions inserted.

Materials
- Existing corpus of actual HRC speeches: high ecological validity.
- 3 speeches representative of work at HRC.
- Divided into 3 different speed segments according to values determined.

Participants
- 10 experienced professional staff interpreters from FR booth (UNOG).
- Average professional experience: 8.9 years.
Results Analysis I

**Synonyms**

- none
- one synonym
- one synonym plus emphasis
- two synonyms

Scord (in %)

Speed (in words per minute)
Results Analysis I

![Graph showing redundant conjunctions at different speeds]

- **Speed (in words per minute)**: 120, 160, 200
- **Score (in %)**: 0 to 80
- **Columns**:
  - Blue: mentioned
  - Orange: omitted
  - Blue dashed line: Poly. (mentioned)
  - Orange dashed line: Poly. (omitted)
Analysis II: RQs

The faster the speed, the more omissions expert interpreters make.

What type of omissions make expert interpreters when confronted with moderate, high and very high delivery rates?

At high and very high delivery rates, expert interpreters omit segments that carry meaning.
Procedure

1. Identification of omissions
2. Coding: categories & subcategories
3. Classification into categories
Procedure

OMISSIONS

Words
- Redundancies
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Elements of enumeration
- Elements of cluster

Segments (informative clauses, phrases; Pio 2003)
- Links

With substitution
- OS/S
- OS/E
Results

200
Words = 30.5
Adjectives
Redundancies
ELEN
Segments = 9

160
Words = 17.5
Adjectives
ELEN
Redundancies
Adverbs
Segments = 9.5

120
Words = 14.5
Redundancies
Adjectives
Adverbs
Segments = 1.5
Results

160

Words = 22.33
Adjectives
Redundancies
Segments = 8.33

120

Words = 14
Redundancies
Segments = 3.33

200

Words = 24
Redundancies
Adjectives
ELEN
Segments = 10.33
Results

- 120 Words = 10.33
  - Adjectives
  - Redundancies
  - Segments = 2.33

- 200 Words = 25.66
  - Redundancies
  - Adjectives
  - ELEN
  - Segments = 14

- 160 Words = 32
  - Redundancies
  - ELEN
  - Adjectives
  - Clusters
  - Segments = 5.33
Discussion

= types of omissions
≠ quantity

120: very few segments omitted.

BUT: omissions of redundancies & adjectives.

160: many omissions of segments and words (redundancies, adjectives, ELEN, clusters).

200 (= 160): + more changes in meaning.
Implications for UN
Implications for Training

la première conférence...
Resources

- The experimental study
  [https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch](https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch)
- [https://benjamins.com/catalog/babel.61.3.01bar](https://benjamins.com/catalog/babel.61.3.01bar)
- Speeches norming experiment
  [www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/16session](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/16session)
- Speeches experiment from HRC
Gracias | Спасибо | Merci |
Thank you | 谢谢 | 非常感谢
Questions? Comments?

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ENGLISH | FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS DGACM ON YOUTUBE
ALL LANGUAGES

UNITED NATIONS LANGUAGE CAREERS ON LINKEDIN
ENGLISH

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