Quaderns. Revista de Traducció 26, 2019 **287-305**

Style versus strategy in simultaneous interpreting: different approaches and their effects

Robert Neal Baxter
Universidade de Vigo. Facultade de Filoloxía e Tradución
Campus das Lagoas-Marcosende
36310 Vigo
jstefanlari@yahoo.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-9484-5001

Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the frequently mentioned yet highly under-researched field of what is generally referred to as "style" in simultaneous interpreting. Following a presentation of the concept of style in written translation and a review of the scant specific literature available in the field of interpreting, the author argues in favour referring to a general strategic and tactical approach rather than style *per se*. The paper goes on to present the findings of a preliminary pilot study designed to test the viability of a simplified methodology for potentially gauging such differences between interpreters and the impact different approaches may have on several key quality parameters, ranging from delivery (pauses, self-corrections, false starts, diction), omissions and the correct and accurate transmission of the key ideas conveyed by the original to grammaticality, contradictions and mistranslations. The tentative results confirm those of previous studies, tending to indicate the existence of abundant versus lean approaches, with predominantly lean interpreters encountering difficulties when attempting to deploy an abundant approach. The relative advantages and disadvantages of these opposing approaches is discussed in the light of differing audience needs and expectations.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting; style; lean/abundant; strategy; quality.

Resum. *Estil contra estratègia en la interpretació simultània: enfocaments i efectes*

Aquest article té com a objectiu contribuir a aclarir la qüestió infrainvestigada del que en la interpretació simultània s'anomena habitualment «estil». Després de presentar aquest concepte en la traducció escrita i de repassar l'escassa literatura específica que hi ha en l'àmbit de la interpretació, l'autor argumenta que s'ha de parlar més aviat de tàctiques i d'una estratègia general en comptes d'un estil pròpiament dit. A continuació, es presenten els resultats d'un estudi pilot preliminar dissenyat per comprovar la viabilitat d'una metodologia simplificada per provar d'avaluar les diferències entre intèrprets i l'impacte que les maneres de treballar poden tenir sobre diversos paràmetres de qualitat bàsics, des de la producció (pauses, autocorreccions, falsos començaments, articulació), omissions i la correcta i fidel transmissió de les idees principals de l'original, fins a la gramaticalitat, els contrasentits i les traduccions errònies. Els resultats provisionals confirmen els d'estudis anteriors i tendeixen a indicar l'existència d'una manera de treballar explicitadora i una

ISSN 1138-5790 (paper), ISSN 2014-9735 (digital)

altra de concisa, i que els intèrprets del tipus concís troben més dificultats quan intenten treballar de manera més explicitadora. Finalment, s'aborden els avantatges i inconvenients de les dues maneres de treballar oposades atenent les necessitats i expectatives del públic.

Paraules clau: interpretació simultània; estil; concís/explícitador; estratègia; qualitat.

Summary

1. Introduction

Conference-goers can often be heard to say that they prefer this or that interpreter, referring to the way they work. Similarly, any interpreter who has ever shared a booth will be aware that we do not all perform alike, often speaking of different styles. Over the years, my colleagues and I have been struck that, despite receiving exactly the same training, while the majority of proficient trainees adhere to a way of interpreting similar to the one they have been taught, a minority of students diverge and adopt a way of working noticeably different from that of their cohorts. This should perhaps come as no surprise, given that it is generally accepted that different people tend to translate in measurably different ways. However, while much has been made of "style" in written translation since the turn of the century, hardly anything has been written about interpreting, despite the fact that its existence is acknowledged and mentioned, albeit in passing, in much of the published literature.

The aim of this paper is three-fold: firstly, to define what should and should not be considered as style in interpreting on a par with written translation style as applied to the specifics of simultaneous interpreting; secondly, to propose a streamlined quantitative methodology whose viability is tested using a preliminary pilot study intended to systematise and either endorse or refute the observational impressions accrued over more than 20 years' experience in the booth and in the classroom as a professional interpreter and trainer; thirdly, to correlate any "stylistics" differences detected with a series of quality criteria in order to gauge the potential bearing that they may have on the overall quality of the final product expressed in terms of interpreting as a consumer-oriented activity, i.e. whose prime aim should be to fulfil audience expectations and needs.

2. Style in translation and interpreting

Although Hermans was one of the first to mention "the translator's voice" in 1996, ground-breaking work really began with Baker's seminal paper published four years later, where she introduced corpus-based stylometrics with a view to establishing a quantifiable methodology to define the style of a translator rather than that of a translated text: "a kind of thumb-print that is expressed in a range of linguistic – as well as non-linguistic – features. [...] style [...] is a matter of patterning: it involves describing preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behaviour [...]" (Baker 2000: 245).

This paved the way for Malmkjær's "translation stylistics", "defined as a consistent and statistically significant regularity of occurrence in a text of certain items and structures, or types of items and structures, among those offered by the language as a whole" (Malmkjær 2003: 38). Later work in a similar vein carried out by Saldanha restricted itself to "look[ing] for consistent patterns in very different works translated by the same translator" (Saldanha 2011: 33) rather than comparatively between translators:

> a 'way of translation' which is felt to be recognizable across a range of translations by the same translator; distinguishes the translator's work from that of others; constitutes a coherent pattern of choice; is 'motivated', in the sense that it has a discernible function or functions; and cannot be explained purely with reference to the author or source-text style, or as a result of linguistic constraints.

Despite differences in definition and approach, translator style has now become a well-established field of study, integrated into the mainstream of stylistics (Boase-Beier 2014). Given the essential similarities between translation and interpreting, there is no reason to suppose that style is not also present in interpreting: "Style in simultaneous interpretation (SI) is one of the fundamental aspects of the interpretation performance" (Yagi 2000: 520). Fleeting references are made to interpreter style in the published literature, albeit couched in rather vague terms such as "wordiness" and "vanilla style" (Riccardi 2005: 756; Nolan 2005: 174). As tends to be the case, interpretation lags behind written translation and there is a notable dearth of specific published research on the subject, possibly ascribable at least in part to the difficulties involved in collecting, processing and analysing the one-off oral data produced by interpreters. Nevertheless, several notable exceptions do exist.

In 1990, Alexieva very briefly discussed creativity in simultaneous interpreting. While not strictly synonymous with style *per se*, creativity can at least be seen to be ostensibly akin to it. However, this remains far too nebulous for any serious research and the key authors presented below attempt to move towards a more objectively quantifiable approach to style on a par with the way that Baker introduced stylometrics to written translation.

In 2000, Yagi published the earliest paper to address the issue from a methodologically coherent quantitative position, approaching style not only from the point of view of the characteristics of the interpreted speech, but also in comparison with the source speech. The research focusing exclusively on two basic assessment parameters: fluency, a lack of which is indicated by incomplete sentences, drawn-out delays (décalage) and long periods of inactivity (pauses); and chunking (also known as "segmentation" or the "salami technique"), where long segments are cut up into several shorter ones or, alternatively, short segments can be merged. Lag is given as a third, very minor parameter. However, rather than measuring lag directly, the paper argues that lag can be correlated to fluency variation, reflected in "excessive delay" and the "systematic arrangement of pauses and speech bursts" (Yagi 2000: 525). Measuring these variables enables the author to conclude that they are effective tools for gauging interpreter style based on chunking/reformulation and broad/narrow tempo expressed as tribulation versus composure, revealing notable differences between the different groups of test subjects, in this case professional versus novice interpreters.

Several years were to elapse before Van Besien and Meuleman returned to the topic in 2008, this time using a sophisticated corpus-based methodology. Unlike the other two studies discussed here, these authors incorporate a wide array of 18 different parameters,[1] some of which, such as "identification of the speaker" are specific to the interview-type of source text and are not globally applicable to conference interpreting. Relying heavily on the concept of "repairs" developed in an earlier paper (Van Besien & Meuleman 2004), the authors conclude that global strategies are more important for distinguishing between the two main interpreter styles: "[Interpreters with a lean style] produce less material than the speaker; offer shorter formulations; omit redundancies, meta-communication, comments and other source material deemed irrelevant; and have a lower speech rate than the input rate; adopt intonation that is neutral and creates a feeling of control and detachment. [Interpreters with an abundant style] add material to the input by readily inserting appropriateness repairs, clarifying parts of the source text that are felt to be vague, and identifying the speaker; have a greater speech rate; adopt intonation that is lively and dynamic and that creates a feeling of engagement." (Van Besien & Meuleman 2008: 152).

Finally, in her study based upon her doctoral research, Kajzer-Wietrzny (2013: 40) defines interpreting style as: "[...] a way of interpreting manifested by a consistent prominence of one or many linguistic features in interpretations from different source languages that makes one's interpretations distinguishable from those of others, as well as from one's own speaking style." This author subjected the performance of two professional conference interpreters to a corpus-based, statistical stylometric analysis, in order to determine their interpreting style *per se* in contrast to their spontaneous speaking style. Kajzer-Wietrzny analysed three parameters, namely: repetitiveness, measured by the percentage of the corpus

1. The parameters are as follows: 1. Global: number of words and speed of delivery; lag; diversity of vocabulary (expressed as Type Token Ration, TTR), intonation ("lively and dynamic" vs. "creat[ing] a feeling of calmness and detachment"), non-verbal behaviour (i.e. how concentrated the interpreter appears, not measured in the study), additions (in turn subdivided into cohesive ties and cultural information, appropriateness repairs, clarifications, identification of the speaker), omissions, shorter formulations, omission of redundancies, omission of meta-communication, omission of modulating expressions, omission of entire sentences deemed irrelevant; 2. Local: waiting in silence and stalling, anticipation, chunking, transcoding, backtracking and correction of content.

covered by its list head, i.e. the one hundred most frequently occurring words; informativeness, indicated by lexical density, i.e. the proportion of lexical words to running words; and lexical sophistication, defined as the proportion of high frequency words in the corpus. The results of this stylometric methodology once again tend to indicate the existence of potentially stylistic differences between interpreters.

Despite the differences between these three studies, a general consensus emerges that style, defined as the idiosyncratic patterns that make one interpreter's production identifiably different from that of another interpreter working in similar conditions, does exist in objectively measurable terms. These papers hope to contribute to answering the question that remains regarding what to measure and how to measure it.

Importantly, a clear link can be seen to exist between an interpreter's style on the one hand and interpreting quality on the other (Van Besien & Meuleman 2008: 152; Yagi 2000: 520). For example, at a rather caricatural level:

> [...] an exaggerated attempt to sound cool and calm. This can lead interpreters to sound totally bored, if not supercilious (which is very irritating for the public) [...] some go to the other extreme, providing too much stress, emphasizing words that do not deserve it, and general hamming it up [...]. (Jones 2002: 116)

Unlike the lack of research dedicated to style, considerable attention has been paid to the question of quality in interpreting over the years since Kopczyński's seminal paper in 1994 and the watershed Turku international conference (notably Shlesinger 1997), with a plethora of international conferences (Hale, Ozolins & Stern 2009), monographs (e.g. García Becerra, Pradas Macías & Barranco-Droege 2013; Errico & Morelli 2015) and papers dealing with various aspects of quality in interpreting.

Despite the on-going lack of a clear consensus regarding quality and norms (Garzone 2002: 108), there is, nevertheless, a general agreement that interpreting should be seen as a consumer-driven or user-oriented activity. What this means in practice is that style must be measured against this basic yardstick, whereby any style that fails to fulfil user needs and expectations could fairly be deemed to be inferior to other styles which cover these needs better, however much an interpreter may happen to find such a style natural and comfortable. The following anecdote illustrates the possible conflict that can arise between users' needs and practitioners' preferences. The author once shared a booth with an interpreter who opted for a very "lean" style involving an exceptionally long décalage that caused considerable consternation of the part of the audience, who assumed (rightly or wrongly) that information had been omitted. When challenged by the organisers, the interpreter replied that this was her chosen personal "style", which they countered by stating that they, as her paying clients, did not like that particular style. In a word, what can loosely be described as an interpreter's "style" can determine whether an interpretation is perceived as good or bad by the audience, to all effects and purposes potentially rendering it unfit for the purpose for which it is intended.

3. Style vs. Strategy

Logically, the few authors who have ventured into the field of style in interpreting implicitly concur that it would be meaningless to limit such studies to a merely stylometric analysis of a transcript of the target text, and that aspects directly related to the quintessentially one-off, oral nature of interpreting must be taken into account.

While any attempt to pin down and analyse the elusive notion of style in interpreting using an objective, quantifiable methodology is to be welcomed, a certain amount of confusion exists in the scarce published research available involving different levels of analysis which it is important to identify and separate, further raising the question whether all of the parameters cited should be actually be taken as stylistic indicators.

Comparable to the difference between "strategy" vs. "tactics" (Gile 2009: 14, 191-217), the crux of the matter lies with the key distinction between two different levels:

> Global strategies [...] concern higher level decisions on how to interpret the source text in general [...]. We might think of them as an individual interpreter's 'default settings' as opposed to 'Local interpretation strategies' [which are] problem-triggered and geared to problem-solving: they are resorted to in order to solve problems that suddenly crop up in the source text and need to be dealt with quickly. (Chesterman 2016: 88)

As such, however much pure stylometrics is adapted to take into account the specifics of interpreting versus written translation, both global strategy and local tactics are too far removed from a recognisable, idiosyncratic repetition of patterns or structures to be construed as being synonymous with style.

The exact relationship of such elements to "style" is blurred, with several of the criteria used to assess style, such as lag, unwarranted pauses, speed and smoothness of production, etc., serving not as indicators of style, but rather as evidence of a breakdown in the online tactics or strategy when dealing with a cognitive overload. In fact, lexical density relative to that of the source text (TTR) is the only true indicator of an interpreter's style *per se* in any widely accepted sense of the term.

In the same way as spelling mistakes or disjointed syntax would not be taken as indicators of a translator's written style, any such features detected in an interpreted target text should be seen as the consequences of a malfunction rather than an interpreter's "style".

This by no means invalidates the finding of the scant research published to date, calling instead for a rethinking of the terms in which they are couched, referring instead to an interpreter's "approach" rather than "style", primarily involving their global strategy, but also including elements of their online, local tactics, retaining pace and/or word count and correlative pauses and chunking as indicators of an abundant versus a lean approach.

4. Preliminary pilot study

This paper reports on the results of a preliminary pilot study designed to test the viability of a simplified, objectively quantifiable methodology for gauging different overall approaches to interpreting.

The material analysed was produced by two proficient final year translation and interpreting students, both of whom had successfully completed a practical introduction to dialogue interpreting, together with basic courses in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, followed by a course in advanced interpreting (48 hours each, totalling 96 hours of specifically practical simultaneous interpreting), deemed to be excellent novice interpreters based on their continuous assessment and their final marks. These students were chosen because of the highly contrastive way they had been seen to perform throughout the course, one of whom had stood out owing to their markedly lean approach. In line with the results of the similar landmark study by Van Besien & Meuleman (2008), while the number of subjects is minimal, it is sufficient for the purposes of such a pilot test intended to quantify and compare possible divergences in the overall approach to interpreting.

Despite any possible reservations regarding the use of students as test subjects as a reliable reflection of professional practice, it is generally unfeasible to recruit significant numbers of seasoned professionals to interpret several speeches of a suitable length at the same place and time and there is, therefore, a solid tradition of experimental research in the field of interpretation studies which relies on student participation. Furthermore, as all of the students had received identical training geared towards a clearly "abundant" approach, any deviation towards a lean-type approach would tend to indicate that an interpreter's overall strategy and tactics were is at least partly innate rather than simply learned, with possible implications for interpreter training.

In order to analyse performance in normal working conditions, the material analysed was taken from the students' course work produced towards the end of their training when they were assumed to be at their peak, rather than being produced as part of a specifically designed *ad hoc* experiment. The additional stress produced by the knowledge that the performance was later to be evaluated as part of their continuous assessment to a certain extent stands in lieu of the lack of a target audience.

The first source text (Text A) was a 17-minute long extract taken from the central part of a speech[2] on EU migration to the UK by the then-Prime Minister, David Cameron, delivered at a factory in Staffordshire in 2014, selected based on the fact that it was of a type and theme familiar to the subjects. The rate of delivery of the original was slightly over average (Seleskovitch in Widlund-Fantini 2007: 59), at approximately 161 words per minute.

The results of this first text were weighed against those of a second, 21-minute-long speech (Text B) delivered by Professor Anne Martín Otty of

2. A video of the entire speech as broadcast by BBC news is available on-line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRHndNop4ao>.

the University of Granada on the subject of community interpreting. This text was selected owing to the anomalous abundant approach adopted by one of the subjects (S2), thereby offering potential insights into the performance of a usually lean interpreter when adopting an abundant approach. While the accent is clear and native as in the first text, unlike Text A this second speech involved a more spontaneous style, punctuated with a considerable number of false starts and hesitations, which had a clear bearing on the pauses, registered in the interpretations.

The analytical framework employed here is based on the three main categories proposed by Alonso Bacigalupe (2013: 11):

> [...] contents, expression and technique/production. Contents refers to fidelity, ST-TT equivalence, and intertextual and intratextual consistency and involves the right, accurate and complete transfer of the general ideas of the ST (including the author's intentions) plus all the details of the original text (thoroughness). Expression is about the quality of the language used, including grammar, register, acceptability, collocations and terminology. Technique/production describes the external components of the TT [...]. These are the features which make the interpreter's output fluent, credible and, above all, convincing and cogent for the TT audience, such as clarity of articulation, appropriate speech rate, absence of disturbing noises and hesitations, etc.

Firstly, in order to provide a general overview of the extent to which an interpretation can be deemed to be abundant or lean relative to the original text, Tables 1 and 2 provide a total word count, directly related to the average overall pace (expressed in words per minute). As smooth delivery is one of the metalinguistic aspects to which the target audience attaches significant importance (Déjean Le Féal 1990: 155), sporadic speech bursts marking a break in an otherwise smooth production are also further commented on later in the analysis. Table 1 also indicates the number of sentences/words per sentence registered for each interpreted text, indicative of chunking/reformulation. Finally, lexical density is expressed in terms of Type-token ratio (TTR), directly associated with style *per se*.

Tables 3 and 4 show a series of data concerning the quality of the interpretations in order to determine to what extent a specific approach (abundant vs. lean) can be seen to correlate with final quality and, if so, in which areas:

— Pauses (major and minor)
— Self-corrections and false starts
— Unclear diction
— Grammatical errors
— Omissions (major and minor)
— Minor omission
— Contradictions
— Mistranslations

Together with false starts and hesitation, drawn out delays, pauses and long periods of inactivity and incomplete sentences are taken to be indicative of a lack of fluency.

We concur with Yagi (2000) that it is not necessary to measure lag directly, because pauses are equally – albeit indirectly – indicative of lag. Furthermore, unlike lag, pauses are immediately perceptible to the audience and, as such, are, therefore, more salient from the point of view of consumer-oriented quality. Pauses are classified as minor or major, depending on whether they interfere with the general flow and pace of the interpreted text, with major pauses (often accompanied by an omission) clearly perceptible for the listener as breaks in the texts that cannot be accounted for.

Examples:

Major pause
1. When trust in the European Union is already so low, we cannot leave injustices like this to fester.
(S1) [...] confianza en la Unión Europea no podemos permitir que estas injusticias continúen.

Minor pause
2. (S1) And yesterday's figures show that the scale of migration is still very great.
Estas cifras muestran que [...] el nivel de esta ola migratoria es enorme.

Self-corrections and false starts
3. (S2) And we'll introduce a new residency requirement for social housing,
Vamos a tener una nueva... un nuevo requisito de residencia
4. (S1) Now, that doesn't mean a closed door regime or a fundamental assault on the principle of free movement.
Esto no significa un régimen de puertas abier... cerradas ("ope.. closed")

Pauses have been seen as especially significant for users for at least the last twenty years:

> [the audience] want interpretation to be truly simultaneous, i.e., without interruptions in the interpreter's speech that cannot be accounted for by pauses in the original speech, and without delays in the onset of interpretation whenever someone takes the floor. Rightly or wrongly, they assume that any such silence reflects a loss of information. (Déjean Le Féal 1990: 155)

We take the view that pauses and disruptions in fluency in an interpreted target text are highly perceptible and salient for an audience regardless of the source text. Indeed, the empirical results of a recent experiment "suggest that there is a link between perceived fluency and perception of the interpreter's accuracy, confirming previous studies that suggest that lower fluency may impact negatively on the perceived quality of an interpretation [...]. It appears from the results of the study that fluency is more than just a matter of style and may, in fact, impact users' and clients' opinion of the quality of an interpretation in terms of performance and intelligibility" (Rennert 2010: 112-113).

As far as intelligibility is concerned, Tables 3-4 also include a total of the number of unclearly pronounced items. It was initially expected that the greater speed of production associated with an abundant approach might potentially have a negative impact on both diction and grammar, although this finally proved not to be the case.

Examples:

Unclear diction
5. (S1) Some of the most ardent supporters of the European Union will say it's impossible, fearing that if an accommodation is made for Britain, the whole European Union will <u>unravel</u>.
Algunos de los que apoyan más ardientemente la Unión Europea dirán que es imposible. Tendrán miedo de que el Reino Unido quede [anclado?] ("anchored")
6. (S2) And its legal status means that we can regain control over who <u>we pay it to</u>.
y así podremos tener control son los que [incomprehensible].

Grammar
7. (S1) Si <u>un demandante</u> de empleo de la Unión no ha encontrado trabajo seis meses después de llegar, se <u>les</u> pediremos que <u>abandonen</u> el país. (Wrong number concord: singular subject with plural anaphoric pronoun and verb).
8. (S2) para que <u>los estados miembros</u> como el Reino Unido <u>pueda</u> frenar (Wrong number concord: plural subject with singular verb).

Finally, in order to provide an indication of the overall quality of the final interpreted texts, Tables 3-4 include the number of major and minor omissions, contradictions and mistranslations detected. In combination with the number of key ideas transmitted (expressed in terms of the most frequent key words), this helps provide an estimation of the extent to which each interpreter faithfully reproduces the main ideas and elements of the original, i.e. an indicator or completeness and fidelity.

Examples:

Major omissions
9. There are Accident and Emergency departments, as we know, under serious pressure. (Entire segment omitted by both subjects)
10. And all this in a country with a generous, non-contributory welfare system, all of this is raising real issues of fairness. (Entire segment omitted by S2)

Minor omissions
11. <u>And I want to be clear again</u>: Britain supports the principle of the free movement of workers.
ø El Reino Unido apoya el principio de la libre circulación de los trabajadores (Omitted by S1. No actual information is omitted.)

Contradictions
12. On this, at least, they will agree.
(S2) En esto puede que estoy de acuerdo ("I may perhaps agree on that")
13. That is the highest proportion for any EU country.
(S2) Es la mayor proporción de cualquier país del Reino Unido ("country of the United Kingdom")

Mistranslations
14. when they signed the Single European Act in 1986.
(S1) al firmar el acta única europea de 1988. (Incorrect date)
15. Accepting the principle of free movement of workers is a key to being part of the single market.
(S2) Exceptuando este principio, la clave es ser parte de un mercado único ("accepting" mistranslated as "excepting")

5. Results and analyses

Table 1 provides a general comparative overview of Texts A and B by both subjects (S1 and S2) vis-à-vis the original using the basic parameters of total word count, the total number of sentences and the number of words per sentence and the rate of delivery (words per minute). All analyses were conducted using the free on-line tool Advanced Text Analyser.[3]

As the data in Table 1 shows, there was a significant difference between the number of words interpreted for Text A. While S1's count is very close to the original, S2 displays a significant difference in the total word count in comparison to

Table 1. General comparative overview (Text A)

	Original	S1	S2
Words:	2,731	2,529	1,925
Sentences:	150	147	136
Words per sentence:	18.2	17.2	14.2
Pace (words/min.)	160.7	148.8	113.2
TTR	29.00 %	29.15 %	33.09 %

Table 2. General comparative overview (Text B)

	Original	S1	S2
Words:	2,221	2,252	2,299
Sentences:	103	130	131
Words per sentence:	21.6	17.3	17.5
Pace (words/min.)	105.8	107.2	109.5
TTR	27.74 %	27.22 %	26.49 %

3. Available on line at: UsingEnglish.com <https://www.usingenglish.com/members/text-analysis/>.

the original (806 words less, i.e. almost -30 %). Similarly, S2 displays a significantly higher reduction in the number of total sentences (15 sentences less, i.e. -10 % compared with the original) and significantly shorter sentences than both the original and S1, who has a minimal difference in the number of sentences (only 3 in total, i.e. only -2 % compared with the original) and sentences of a similar length to those of the original.

Table 2 reveals that both subjects behaved differently when interpreting Text B, with more chunking (inversely proportional to the number of words per sentence), e.g.:

> Original:
> Then I'm going to move on to research and I'm going to offer a chronology and talk about the characteristics of research in community interpreting, to subsequently move on to try to identify the main research topics that have been dealt with.
>
> S1
> Luego voy a pasar a hablar de investigaciones. Voy a ofrecerles una cronolog/ía. Voy a hablar de las características de la investigación sobre invest... interpretación en [servicios públicos].
>
> S2
> A continuación intentizaré identificar los temas principales que se han investigado.

While it is unclear why S1 should have opted for more chunking, in the case of S2 it is most probably linked to the change in overall strategy, deviating from the subject's usual lean approach to a far more abundant one, indicated by the increased total number of words (+3.5 % with regard to the original) and pace relative to the original. This shift by S2 was possibly motivated by a series of factors, including the slower rate of production of the original, coupled with a greater familiarity with and mastery of the subject matter. The results reveal that this switch in strategy was not without consequences in certain key areas regarding the quality of the final interpretation (see Graphs 1 and 2).

As far as lexical density is concerned, both subjects maintained an essentially similar lexical density across both texts (A and B) with negligible differences with regards to the original, despite slight variations, i.e. S2 displaying a slightly higher TTR score (+14.1 %) in Text A than the original, possibly accountable to two factors: firstly, the lower number of total words; and secondly, the on-line tool used to measure lexical density is designed for English and may produce errors when automatically processing other languages. It seems fair to conclude, therefore, that lexical density was apparently unaffected by the particular interpreting approach adopted.

When interpreting Text A, both subjects displayed a generally even pace throughout with practically no noticeable speed busts, with only slight and occasional accelerations to catch up after a slight pause when searching for an appropriate translation. However, echoing the distinction between "lively and dynamic" vs. "creat[ing] a feeling of calmness and detachment" (Van Besien & Meuleman 2008: 141), the pace is quite distinct between the two subjects; S1 maintained a pace closely timed with the original with very few noticeable pauses (Table 3), indicative of what can be described as an abundant approach, whereas S2, adopted a leisurely pace with more and longer pauses, indicative of a clearly leaner approach.

S1's interpretation of Text B was slightly jerkier overall than Text A, with several slight speed bursts to catch up, punctuated by occasional word stretching (9 incidences) and hesitations. However, many of these features can be accounted for by the irregular pace of the original, with most of the pauses in S1's interpretation of Text B tallying with the pauses and hesitations that abound in the original. As such, only extraneous, unwarranted pauses are counted in Table 4. Of the three major pauses registered, one coincides with a prolonged hesitant pause in the original (not included in the table) and the remaining two with an omission and a problem with proper names.

Table 3. Comparative overview of key interpreting defects analysed (Text A)

	S1	S2
Major pause	7	22
Minor pause	27	28
Total pauses	34	50
Self-corrections and false starts	4	12
Unclear diction	6	10
Grammatical errors	3	8
Major omission	10	25
Minor omission	7	14
Total omissions	17	39
Contradictions	1	6
Mistranslations	3	10

Table 4. Comparative overview of key interpreting defects analysed (Text B)

	S1	S2
Major pause	2	4
Minor pause	17	31
Total pauses	19	35
Self-corrections and false starts	8	44
Unclear diction	2	11
Grammatical errors	8	9
Minor omission	6	4
Total omissions	11	9
Contradictions	1	8
Mistranslations	9	27

Text B was much more uneven for S2 than all of the remaining texts by either subject, with far more major pauses (excluding minor pauses that coincide with false starts in the original) and frequent speed burst to catch up, absent from Text A, indicating that this subject was apparently more uncomfortable when working in an abundant mode.

In the light of the differences in the number of omissions, related in turn to a quicker or slower pace, the subjects can be described as displaying clearly different approaches to interpreting, with S1 adopting an abundant approach, as opposed to the lean approach deployed by S2 when interpreting Text A. S2 altered their preferred lean approach when interpreting Text 2 as attested by the decrease in the number of omissions and the increased pace.

In both texts, S1 omits very little information and most of the omissions are minor and can otherwise be retrieved through context, as opposed to major omissions containing concrete information regarding the subject of the original speech. The lean approach adopted by S2 when interpreting Text A generates twice as many omissions overall for Text A, most of which are major. As expected, however, this proportion drops substantially when the same subject adopts an abundant approach in Text B, reaching a level not only significantly lower than that for Text A, but even below that of S1 for the same text.

Omissions can be further correlated with the correct transmission of the main ideas contained in the source text by comparing the number and proportion of high frequency key words relayed by each subject. Tables 5 and 6 provide a general overview of the key concepts contained in the original speech based on a frequency count of words and phrases, regardless of the actual translation, e.g. *benefit* translated as *prestación* or *subsidio*. Although the lack of a specific item in the translated texts does not necessarily imply that the concept was overlooked or irretrievable through context, it can nevertheless be taken as a broad indicator of how faithfully each interpreter transmits the key ideas of the original.

Table 5. Comparative overview of the key ideas transmitted (Text A)

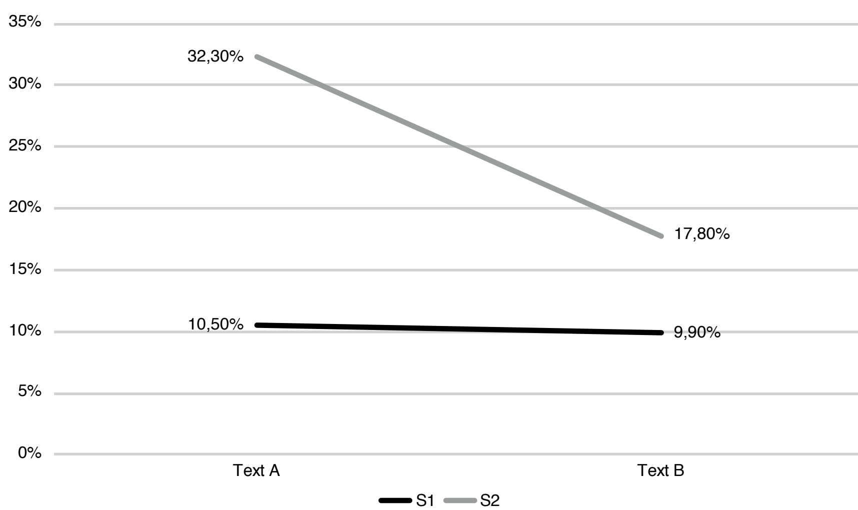
	Original	**S1**	**S2**
1. Europe / European Union / EU / Member (state/country)	31	29	19
2. UK / United Kingdom / Britain	30	30	29
3. Benefit(s) / Welfare system	20	15	10
4. Migration / EU migrant(s)	19	17	12
5. (EU) jobseeker(s)	10	9	5
6. Free movement / Freedom of movement	9	7	7
7. Change(s)	9	8	6
8. Abuse	5	4	2

Table 6. Comparative overview of the key ideas transmitted (Text B)

	Original	S1	S2
1. Research, study, studies	46	45	36
2. Community interpreting, PSI, legal, police, court	30	24	22
3. Interpreter	28	25	26
4. Role	9	8	8
5. Interaction	8	7	7
6. Profession, professionalization	7	6	7
7. Refugee, immigrant, non-majority speaker	7	7	5
8. Discourse analysis	6	5	6

In order to facilitate a direct, visual comparison, Graph 1 presents the results shown in Tables 5 and 6 re-expressed in terms of total losses of key concepts as a percentage of the total contained in the source text.

Graph 1. Comparative results expressed as percentage losses



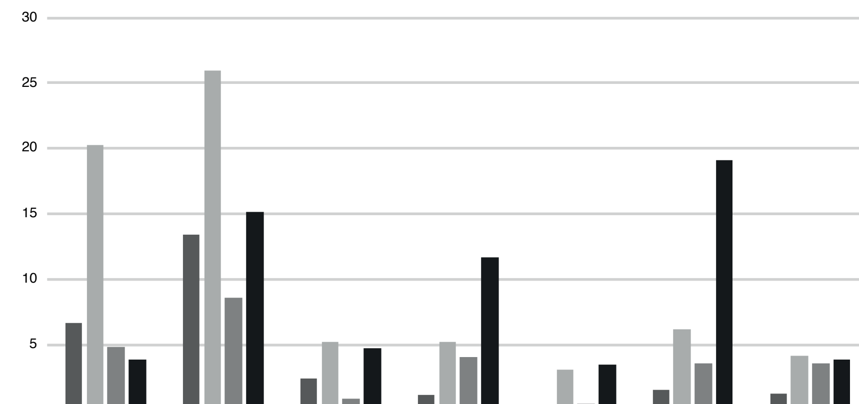
Barring the notable exception of Item 3 (Table 5), which dropped one place with respect to the original ranking in the case of S1, and with S2 also registering a higher than usual omission rate for this item, and the case of the considerably less frequent key word "abuse" (S2 Text A: item 8, table 5), both subjects appear to have performed similarly well in transmitting the key ideas contained in the source text.

That being so, Graph 1 also clearly indicates that, even with the proviso that certain key ideas may be correctly expressed in other ways, in the case of S2's lean interpretation of Text A the large number of both minor and especially major omissions does not correspond solely to a conscious, i.e. tactical, selection and suppression of minor or superfluous material, but has a bearing on and detracts from central issues. The overall percentage loss is almost halved when the same subject adopts an abundant approach. However, even with such a marked drop, the scores fail to approach those registered by S1, which remain constant for both texts, suggesting that subjects used to a lean approach tend to perform less well when applying an abundant approach than those whose usual approach is abundant, thus corroborating the findings in Van Besien and Meuleman:

> From our own professional experience, it would appear that the professional "abundant" interpreter is quite able to switch from one style to another and to apply a "lean" strategy if circumstances so dictate [...] The opposite, to all intents and purposes, does not seem to be the case: the "lean" interpreter will obviously render his or her interpretation even more "lean" when confronted with the above problems. (Van Besien & Meuleman 2008: 152)

In order to facilitate a direct comparison of each subject's performance regarding all of the variables assessed, Graph 2 based on Tables 3 and 4 displays all of the scores attained expressed as an average per thousand words.[4]

Graph 2. Adjusted comparative scores



	Omissions	Pauses	Diction	Mistranslation	Contradiction	False starts	Grammar
S1 A	6,7	13,4	2,4	1,2	0,4	1,6	1,3
S2 A	20,3	26	5,2	5,2	3,1	6,2	4,2
S1 B	4,9	8,6	0,9	4,1	0,5	3,6	3,6
S2 B	3,9	15,2	4,8	11,7	3,5	19,1	3,9

S1 A S2 A S1 B S2 B

Graph 2 suggests a "swings and roundabouts effect", whereby the extra effort invested by S2 in adapting to an abundant approach had adverse knock-on effects, involving false starts, mistranslations and – albeit to a lesser extent – contradictions, involving some sort of overload in managing and coordinating all of

4. For example: S2 Text A "major omissions" 25 / 1,925 words x 1,000 = 13 and S1 Text A "major omissions" 10 / 2529 words x 1,000 = 4.

the complex tasks involved, comparable to a juggler used to three balls constantly dropping balls when attempting to perform with five.

Finally, contrary to the initial expectation that the increased rate of production associated with a more abundant approach would negatively affect grammar and/or diction, it was in fact S2 who encountered more problems in general. However, while not having a negative impact on diction *per se*, the unaccustomed increased pace (i.e. speed of production) associated with the lean-oriented when the subject switched to an abundant approach in Text 2 did lead to many more false starts on the part of S2, whose interpretation was also peppered with fillers, wholly absent from Text 1 when the subject's preferred lean approach was adopted.

The data may appear to suggest that one of the subjects performed "better" than the other in the light of the number of errors. However, even taking into account the fact that S2 tends to convey key ideas less accurately than S1, the original messages still remained generally intact. In this respect, Van Besien & Meuleman (2008: 152) note that:

> it would appear that different interpreter styles do not have a direct impact on quality as perceived by clients. Different clients may, however, very well appreciate different intonation styles or types of non-verbal booth behaviour in a different way, without stigmatizing one or the other style.

Indeed, a target audience made up of non-native speakers, as often occurs when interpreting into English, may well find a more laid-back, slower-paced interpretation easier to process. Moreover, in the light of the remark that: "[...] smooth delivery may create the false impression of high quality when much of the message may in fact be distorted or even missing." (Shlesinger 1997: 127), certain target audiences may actually prefer a calmer interpretation, especially bearing in mind the fact that audiences are generally unable to detect all but the most flagrant errors as they have no access to the original to compare it with the interpreted version.

6. Conclusions

While only tentative in nature owing to the minimal number of subjects analysed, the preliminary pilot study carried out to test the feasibility of a simplified methodology, integrating such innovative, objectively quantifiable parameters as key words and lexical density, yielded promising results, tending to confirm the author's initial impression gleaned over two decades of professional experience that different interpreters approach their task in different ways, broadly falling into two main types: those who provide a full rendition of the text with few omissions at a pace with the original, as opposed to a calmer delivery made possible by more omissions and punctuated by more pauses. The study further indicates that while more items are inevitably lost when adopting a lean approach, the key ideas are nonetheless transmitted in a proportion similar to the original.

However, while maintaining the terms "lean" vs. "abundant" to describe this difference, this paper takes the view that, unlike previous studies, it should be couched in terms of an interpreter's overall working strategy rather than "style" *per se*.

Interestingly, interpreters who generally opt for a predominantly abundant approach are able to revert to a leaner strategy when required, while the converse is not true, with the subject used to a lean approach encountering more problems with false starts and mistranslations and the transmission of the main ideas when required to adopt a more abundant approach.

This is important because form is paramount in interpreting, with false starts clearly audible to the audience who are likely to take them as being indicative of a poor interpretation, while mistranslations are less easily detectable and more likely to go unnoticed if the interpreter gains the listeners' trust thanks to a smooth, confident delivery.

This begs the question whether the quality of the subjects' interpretation was actually improved when producing what could be traditionally described as a "more faithful" rendition of the original by adopting a more abundant approach, bearing in mind that the main ideas were transmitted acceptably using both approaches.

Indeed, different approaches produce different final products that may be more adapted to certain users' needs. For instance, a lean approach may be more appropriate for non-native audiences, as is often the case for English-language target audiences.

Nevertheless, bearing in mind that interpreters with a predominantly lean approach tend to fare less well when adopting an abundant approach as and when necessary than *vice versa*, it is probably advisable to train prospective interpreters primarily in the abundant rather than the lean working mode in order to equip them to deal with a range of different situations with a view to better satisfying the needs of their target audiences at all times.

Bibliographical references

Alexieva, Bistra (1990). "Creativity in simultaneous interpretation." *Babel. Revue internationale de la traduction / International Journal of Translation*, 36 (1), p. 1-6.

Alonso Bacigalupe, Luis (2013). "Interpretation Quality: From Cognitive Constraints to Market Limitations". In: Barranco-Droege, Rafael; Pradas Macías, E. Macarena (eds.). *Quality in Interpreting: Widening the Scope*. Granada: Comares, p. 9-33.

Baker, Mona (2000). "Towards a methodology for investigating the style of a literary translator". *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 12 (2), p. 241-266.

Barranco-Droege, Rafael; Pradas Macías, E. Macarena; García Becerra, Olalla (eds.) (2013). *Quality in Interpreting: Widening the Scope*, Vol. 2. Granada: Comares.

Boase-Beier, Jean (2014). "Stylistics and translation". In: Burke, Michael (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 393-407.

Chesterman, Andrew (2016). *Memes of Translation. The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Déjean le Féal, Karla (1990). "Some Thoughts on the Evaluation of Simultaneous Interpretation". In: Bowen; David; Bowen, Margareta. *Interpreting - Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 154-160.

Errico, Elena; Morelli, Mara (2015). *Le sfide della qualità in interpretazione. Ricerca, didattica e pratica professionale*. Milan: Franco Angeli.

García Becerra, Olalla; Pradas Macías, E. Macarena; Barranco-Droege, Rafael (eds.) (2013). *Quality in Interpreting: Widening the Scope*, Vol. 1. Granada: Comares.

Garzone, Giuliana (2002). "Quality and Norms in Interpretation". In: Garzone, Giuliana; Viezzi, Maurizio. *Interpreting in the 21st Century. Challenges and Opportunities*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 107-119.

Gile, Daniel (2009). *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hale, Sandra Beatriz; Ozolins, Uldis; Stern, Ludmila (eds.) (2009). *The Critical Link 5: Quality in interpreting a shared responsibility*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hermans, Theo (1996). "The Translator's Voice in Translated Narrative". *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 8 (1), p. 23-48.

Jones, Roderick (2002). *Conference Interpreting Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Kajzer-Wietrzny, Marta (2012). *Interpreting universals and interpreting style*. PhD diss. Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. <https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/2425/1/Paca%20doktorska%20Marty%20Kajzer-Wietrzny.pdf>. (Retrieved: 05/1/2017).

— (2013). "Idiosyncratic Features of Interpreting Style". *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 9, p. 38-52.

Kopczyński, Andrzej (1994). "Quality in Conference Interpreting: Some Pragmatic Problems". In: Lambert, Sylvie; Moser-Mercer, Barbara (eds.). *Bridging the Gap: Empirical Research in Simultaneous Interpretation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 87-100

Malmkjær, Kirsten (2003). "What happened to God and the angels: An Exercise in Translational Stylistics". *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 15 (1), p. 37-58.

Nolan, James (2005). *Interpretation, Techniques and Exercises*. Cleverdon: Multilingual Matters.

Rennert, Sylvi (2010). "The impact of fluency on the subjective assessment of interpreting quality". *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, 15, p. 101-115.

Riccardi, Alessandra (2005). "On the Evolution of Interpreting Strategies in Simultaneous Interpreting". *Meta: Journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 50 (2), p. 753-767.

Saldanha, Gabriela (2010). "Translator style: methodological considerations". *The Translator*, 17 (1), p. 25-50.

Shlesinger, Miriam (1997). "Quality in Simultaneous Interpreting". In: Gambier, Yves; Gile, Daniel; Taylor, Christopher (eds.). *Conference Interpreting: Current Trends in Research*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 123-131.

Van Besien, Fred; Meuleman, Chris (2004). "Dealing with Speakers' Errors and Speakers' Repairs in Simultaneous Interpretation. A Corpus-based Study". *The Translator*, 10 (1), p. 59-81.

— (2008). "Style Differences among Simultaneous Interpreters". *The Translator*, 14 (1), p. 135-155.

Widlund-Fantini, Anne-Marie (2007). *Danica Seleskovitch: Interprète et témoin du XXe siècle*. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.

Yagi, Sane M. (2000). "Studying Style in Simultaneous Interpretation". *Meta: Journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 45 (3), p. 520-547.