# Using a real corpus of court interpreting in Criminal Proceedings to train and assess quality in court interpreting

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# TIPp Research Project:

- TITLE: Translation quality as a guarantee in criminal proceedings. Development of technological resources for court interpreters in Spanish-Romanian, Arab, Chinese, French and English language pairs.

- AIM: **Describing and assessing the reality of court interpreting** in Spain and creating resources to facilitate court interpreters' performance.

- The Court of Justice of Catalonia (Spain) granted access to recordings of criminal proceedings
- Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness
- Research team composed of seven researchers and several technicians from four universities :

UAB — Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

UPF

Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla

Universitat Jaume·I

# Corpus compiled (Criminal Proceedings in Barcelona in 2015):

| Language | Trials | Total duration (mins.) |
|----------|--------|------------------------|
| English  | 19     | 371                    |
| French   | 9      | 190                    |
| Romanian | 27     | 555                    |
| **Total** | **55** | **1116**              |

## *Ad hoc* annotation system

as text

TALK

as action

Wadensjö, Cecilia (1998). *Interpreting as Interaction*. New York: Longman.

# Talk as text: textual problems

- Accuracy of the message conveyed by the interpreter
- 1. Interval scale created to measure accuracy:

**The solution applied by the interpreter when facing a textual problem was:**
- **(A) Adequate.**
- **(M) Improvable**
- **(I) Inadequate.**

- 2. Categorical scale created to quantify types of textual solutions:

**Possible categories for "adequate" solutions:**

- **(EH)** Established equivalent.

- **(IM)** Making some information implicit.

- **(EX)** Making some information explicit.

**Possible categories for "improvable" solutions:**

- **(CR)** Change of register

- **(NMS)** Minor shift in meaning (compared to the source text).

**Possible categories for "inadequate" solutions:**

– (O) Omission

– (OG) **Serious omission**

– (AD) Addition of information

– (ADG) **Serious addition of information**

– (ITER) Inadequate terminology

– (FS) Major shift in meaning (substantial distortion of meaning from that of the original message)

– (FSG) **Serious major shift in meaning**

– (SS) Incomprehensible (message is not understandable, does not make sense)

# *Ad hoc* annotation system

**TALK** as text

as action

# Talk as action: interaction problems

- Observation of phenomena related to the oral interaction conducted by the participants in the criminal proceeding: judge, legal counsel, prosecutor, interpreter, defendant, witnesses, etc.
  - Conversation management (as defined by Wadensjö 2015)
  - Non-renditions (text analysable as an interpreter's initiative or response which does not correspond to a prior 'original' utterance, *ib*.)
  - Direct or reported speech.
- Creation of three categorical scales, created to quantify types of conversation management, types of non-renditions and speech styles.

**Types of conversation management problems:**

- **(S)** Overlap
- **(I)** Interruption
- **(DL)** Long turn

**Types of non-renditions by the interpreter (I.):**

**Possible categories for justified non-renditions:**

- **(P)** Pause (I. asks for a pause to be able to interpret)
- **(Cl)** Clarification (I. asks for clarification or explains something that was expressed ambiguously)
- **(Co)** Confirmation (I. seeks to confirm that s/he understood or heard the information clearly)
- **(R)** Retrieval (I. is aware that he or she is missing some information and asks to retrieve it)

**Possible categories for unjustified non-renditions:**

- **(A)** Warning (I. gives advice or instructions on how to behave or warns the defendant)
- **(Res)** Answer (I. answers on behalf of the defendant)
- **(Extra)** Extra information (I. gives information to any of the participants or asks questions not posed in the original utterances).

# Corpus analysis and findings used:

- To draft a series of recommendations to both court interpreters and judicial personnel regarding the interaction with court interpreters

- To create a terminological, translation-oriented database of critical terms observed, such as "final decision" (in the 5 language pairs)

- To create didactic material to train court interpreters at the MA Degree on Legal translation and Court Interpreting at the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona:

  - Short video clips based on real problems observed in the corpus

  - An assessment grid for court interpreting students based on the main pitfalls (textual and interaction) observed in the real practice of court interpreters.

# Examples: Lack of consistency observed in speech style of judicial staff and interpreters :

| Language | Lack of consistency (interpreters) | Lack of consistency (judicial staff) |
|---|---|---|
| English | 74% | 74% |
| French | 67% | 67% |
| Romanian | 63% | 74% |
| Mean | 67% | 73% |

# Other difficulties faced by the interpreter:

| Language | Cases in which interpreter is introduced by judge | Excess speed in speech (more tha 180 words per minute): | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Judge | Prosecutor | Counsels | Any of them |
| **English** | 6 | 8 | 10 | 4 | **13** |
| **French** | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | **5** |
| **Romanian** | 8 | 12 | 10 | 10 | **19** |
| **Total** | 14 | 21 | 24 | 16 | **37** |
| **Mean %** | **25,5%** | 41,2% | 47,1% | 37,4% | **72%** |

# Example of didactic material created

- Video clips used at the MA Degree on Legal translation and Court Interpreting to highlight and overcome the main pitfalls observed in the real practice of court interpreters

- Filmed with actors and actresses, based on real criminal proceedings of the corpus

- Addition of teacher's comments (videos used in different teaching contexts)

# Open access videos on Court Interpreting:



**Conversation management**



**With the interpreter's permission**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMl5Wk5tSZA&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ahncM7puz8

# More didactic material created: assessment

- There are already many papers regarding quality and assessment for interpreting, and even for courtroom interpreting:

  - Pöchhacker, F. (2001). Quality Assessment in Conference and Community Interpreting. *Meta*, 46 (2), 410–425.

  - Zwischenberger, C. (2010). Quality criteria in simultaneous interpreting: an international vs. a national view. *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, 15 (2010), 127-142.

  - Feuerle, L. (2013). Testing Interpreters: Developing, administering and scoring Court Interpreter Certification Exams. *The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research,* 5 (1), 80-93.

# Assessment grids for court interpreting students:

- But not any practical approach for assessing courtroom interpreting students without a view to specific national exams

- Therefore: exam and assessment grid built for this specific context, based on real cases situations, taken from TIPp corpus

- Exam: 6 minute long recording based on real case

- Grid with rubrics for assessment using the two dependent variables from the project (based on Wadenjö's talk as text / talk as action distinction):

# Rubrics for assessment: talk as text

| Assessed Competencies | 0-4 | 5-6 | 7-8 | 9-10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accuracy | • 3 or + **Serious Major Shifts in Meaning/SO/SA**<br>• 8 or + Major Shifts in Meaning/O/A | • Up to 2 SMSM<br>• Up to 7 MSM | • Up to 1 SMSM<br>• Up to 5 MSM | • No SMSM<br>• Up to 3 MSM |
| Register | • 5 or + Changes of Register | • Up to 4 CR | • Up to 3 CR | • Up to 2 CR |
| Terminology | • 3 or - Established Equivalents | • More than 3 EE | • More than 4 EE | • More than 5 EE |

# Rubrics for assessment: talk as action

| Assessed Competencies | 0-4 | 5-6 | 7-8 | 9-10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conversation management skills | • 3 or + Inadequate Speech Style <br> • 2 or + Unjustified Non Renditions | • Up to 2 <br> • Up to 1 UNR | • Up to 2 <br> • No UNR | • Adequate Speech Style <br> • No UNR |
| Grammar, syntax, etc. | • 5 or + inadequate use of language | • Up to 4 | • Up to 3 | • Up to 2 |
| Clarity | • 8 or + interruptions of the speaking flux | • Up to 7 | • Up to 5 | • Up to 3 |

# Further research:

- Further dissemination of findings both to interpreters and judicial personnel communities
- Improving the creation of teaching materials in court interpreting

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