The Position of the Verb in Germanic Languages and Simultaneous Interpretation

Lorenzo Bevilacqua

Conference Interpreter, European Parliament

Abstract

This paper reports on an experimental study analysing the impact of SOV on simultaneous interpreting from D and NL into Italian and the language-specific strategies adopted by 15 professional interpreters to tackle SOV-related difficulties. Despite the typological affinity between the two Germanic final-verb languages, the greater rigidity of the SOV structure in German appears to require more extensive anticipation efforts as well as a longer ear-voice span. Dutch is less rigid and characterised by systematic violations of the SOV order through the extraposition of a constituent. The load on short-term memory is, thus, less onerous which justifies a shorter ear-voice span and occasionally a blander approach to reformulation than is the case from German.

1. Introduction

The subject-object-verb word order (SOV) is often perceived as the most problematic feature in simultaneous interpreting (SI) from German (D) and Dutch (NL) and since early stages it has forced student interpreters to develop suitable strategies to manage their limited cognitive resources as a key for a quality performance (Moser-Mercer 1997: 259). This paper reports on an experimental study on the implications of SOV for SI from

D and NL into Italian (I). The aim is to analyze the language-specific strategies applied by professional interpreters to overcome the constraints linked to SOV and to identify differences in strategic behaviour during SI from two typologically similar languages such as German and Dutch.

The 15 professional interpreters participating in the experiment were divided into 3 homogeneous groups of five subjects depending on whether they only had D or NL or both in their combination. 4 texts were used, two original speeches in D and NL and their respective translations in the other language. Thus, each group of subjects, including those with only one requested language, was able to interpret two texts, which allowed not only a thorough analysis of the language-specific strategies, but also a cross-comparison between SI from D and from NL on the basis of the same texts, whether original or translated.

Every text contained several "target sentences" which were subjected to a preliminary linguistic analysis. Particular emphasis was laid on the relative rigidity of the Germanic word order in contrast with the pragmatic flexibility of Italian which allows for a wider range of syntactic manoeuvres. These can easily be exploited in SI in order to cope with the constraints imposed by the SOV source structure. For each target sentence a hypothetical solution was then devised on the basis of 4 interpreting strategies widely described in literature and deemed apt to overcome the syntactical gap between D/NL and Italian: *anticipation, ear-voice span management, reformulation* and *compression.* The aim was to verify whether the proposed solutions were actually applied in the performances of the 15 interpreters.

References for proposed solutions and strategies were found in contrastive linguistics and psycholinguistics, in the attempt to strike a balance between theory and praxis of SI. Admittedly, SI can not be seen in isolation from its practical dimension, but I would argue that an awareness of the typological differences between languages is crucial in improving interpreting skills and accelerating learning (Ross 2000: 8).

2. SOV

From a typological point of view, it is generally assumed that German and Dutch are basically two verb-final languages (Gerritsen 1992, Eisenberg 1994). The word order not only marks subordinate clauses as widely recognized in literature, but also main clauses which contain what is known as a *verbal brace.* In this case the finite verb takes the second place, while all the non-finite verb forms come in final position, embracing complements and adverbials (Giacalone Ramat 1992). Thus, the word order of the main clause can be described as S -finite verb- OV:

(1)

  a. Die Welt **hat** sich nach dem Fall der Berliner Mauer vor fünf Jahren und seit Vollendung der deutschen Einheit dramatisch **verändert**. (Riccardi 1996: 218)
  * The world changed dramatically after the fall of the Berlin wall five years ago and since the German reunification.

  b. Het afgelopen weekend **heeft** de Europese Raad een actieplan ter bestrijding van de dramatisch oplopende werkloosheid **aangenomen**. (Ross 1995: 51)
  * Last week the European Council approved an action plan to fight against the dramatic increase of unemployment.

In both examples, the finite verb appears in the second position and expresses the grammatical categories of person and number, while the non-finite form takes the last place and conveys the semantically most significant information (*Träger des Geschehens*, as Eisenberg puts it: 1999: 391). These verbal braces embrace a sort of syntactic midfield comprising all other complements in the sentence. The length of the syntactic midfield can obviously give rise to difficulties in SI into Italian. In fact, the syntactical asymmetry between D/NL and I is due to the long distance between the finite form and the lexical form of the predicate. Italian needs to make the verb explicit earlier than D/NL, whereas the frequent split predicates in these languages make cognitive processing more demanding (Frazier & Rayner 1988 speak of "discontinuous nature"). The position of the semantic verb focus at the end of the sentence can hamper information retention and overload the working memory of the interpreter. Hence, the importance of developing specific strategies whereby the interpreter reformulates the target text overcoming source language constraints (Riccardi 1996: 145).

Despite typological affinity between the two languages, D and NL diverge nonetheless when it comes to an important pragmatic phenomenon: *the extraposition*, i.e. a violation of the rigid brace structure whereby a constituent comes after the second verbal *pole* (ANS 1984).

  a. Anna heeft veel geld uitgegeven **aan kleren** (Snel Trampus 1993: 277)
  Anna has spent a lot of money on clothes.

  b. Wir haben in der letzten Zeit häufig nachgedacht **über dieses Problem**. (Eroms 2000: 370).
  Lately we have often thought about this problem.

The aim of this manoeuvre is to emphasize a semantically significant element by putting it at the end of the sentence. Yet, besides pragmatic considerations, cognitive processes play a role in governing this phenomenon. Speakers often perceive the verbal brace as a burdensome structure to process, therefore they tend to simplify it by extrapolating the rhematic complement, thus relieving short-term memory[1]. The main

difference between D and NL lies in the frequency of the extraposition. In fact, although both languages have in principle the same opportunities to postpone constituents, NL seems to do it more systematically than D, which tends to preserve verbal braces instead (Haeseryn 1990). In conclusion, German has a more rigid verb-final structure, while Dutch can be described as "moderately verb-final SOV language" (De Schutter 1994: 466). On the basis of this typological contrast, it is not inappropriate to assume that German with its longer verbal braces could cause more retention problems during SI. Interpreters will need to keep a wider ear-voice span and to rely much more on the strategy of anticipation than when interpreting from NL because in the latter the extraposition often makes the cognitive processing easier. This assumption will be verified in the experimental study.

3. Experimental Study

The experimental study was carried out at the SSLMIT of the University of Trieste and at the European Parliament in Brussels.[2] The interpreters involved were asked to interpret two speeches and their performances were recorded on a multi-track DAT recorder which allowed a certain degree of precision in the study of anticipations and ear-voice span management.

3.1 Subjects

Subjects tested were 15 professional interpreters who at that time were regularly working in the private market or in the European institutions. They were divided into 3 homogeneous groups of 5 subjects: the DN group with both German and Dutch as C language, the D group (only German as C language) and the NL group (only Dutch as C language). This division allowed a comparison of the performances between the 3 groups neutralizing a possible disturbing factor like the hypothetical influence of a language on the interpreting behaviour.[3]

---

1   Note that the cognitive processing of a rhematic element, i.e. of a new information, implies a greater concentration effort for both speaker and listener (Shannon 1993: 127). Taking into account that interpreters deal with the comprehension and production phases almost simultaneously, the extraposition becomes even more relevant for SI.
2   The author wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance by the Italian language unit of the EP Interpretation Directorate in finding suitable subjects.
3   Sella (1997: 290) assumes that subjects generally tend to keep a wider ear-voice span and to reformulate more if they have a language pair with strong syntactical

3.2 Source Texts

In the experimental study, 4 texts were used, 2 original speeches (TD1/TN1) and their respective translation in the other experimental language (TD2/TN2). The German speech (TD1) was pronounced by the EU commissioner for enlargement Günter Verheugen, while the Dutch speech (TN1) was pronounced by the socialist member of the European parliament Jan Marinus Wiersma. Both were held on 09. April 2003 during the plenary session of the European parliament and both were about the same topic, namely the enlargement process, which did not pose particular problems as far as terminology is concerned.

The translations of the first speech in NL (TN2) and of the second in D (TD2) were taken from the official website of the European parliament[4]. They were not revised or modified as they kept the essential stylistic and rhetoric features of the original versions intact. The four texts were read by 2 mother-tongue speakers at a standard speaking rate in order to try to minimize the impact of speed on the interpreters' performances.

Text	Length	Words/min
TD1	10'34"	116/min
TD2	9' 01"	106/min
TN1	7' 28"	127/min
TN2	10'16"	129/min

Each group of interpreters could deal with two texts according to the following pattern:

- · DN group: two original speeches TD1/TN1.
- · D group: TD1 and the translation of the Dutch speech TD2
- · NL group: TN1 and the translation of the German speech TN2

The final corpus of deliveries consisted of 30 interpreted texts:

- · TD1: 10 deliveries
- · TN1: 10 deliveries
- · TD2: 5 deliveries
- · TN2: 5 deliveries

asymmetries (D-I) in their combination. This is probably due to the fact that they are more used to coping with very diverging sentence structures.

4   www.europarl.europa.eu

3.3 Evaluation criteria

To pursue the aim of this experimental study, a certain number of target sentences with the typical SOV structure was identified in the 4 texts. After a short linguistic description of the sentences the accent was put on the difficulties they raised during the interpreting process (Bevilacqua 2003: 61). Finally, a proposed solution was formulated according to 4 interpreting strategies deemed essential to bridge the typological gap between D/NL and Italian: *anticipation, ear-voice span management, reformulation and compression*. In addition to the 4 mentioned strategies, the category of *omissions* was taken into account as a consequence of retention problems caused by SOV and time constraints in IS (Bevilacqua 2003: 58).

  As interpreting strategies are part and parcel of professional interpreters' skills, they are applied unconsciously and they are so closely interlinked that it is often difficult to isolate them (Riccardi 2003). Therefore, in the evaluation of every target sentence it was necessary to abstract the strategy which turned out to be more decisive at that particular moment of the SI process. At the end of every text, the use of the 5 categories was quantified in order to establish their impact on the interpreters' performances and to verify whether there were significant language-specific differences in the two language pairs D/I and NL/I.

3.3.1 Anticipation

Anticipation consists in interpreting the source text before it is completely delivered by the speaker and it can be triggered by linguistic and extra-linguistic cues. In the former case, interpreters rely on their knowledge of the source language to identify linguistic units which can help them to infer what the speaker is going to say. Linguistic anticipation is based on the probabilistic nature of language, as words do not follow one another at random, but in more or less probable combinations.

> *A high level of linguistic proficiency in individuals means not only that they know words and structures and they can recognize them, but also that they have good knowledge of transitional probabilities and can use them in comprehension.* (Gile 1995: 177)

But anticipation can be extra-linguistic as well when it is not the exact inference of the speaker's words, but rather of his ideas which are consistent in a given communicative situation (Gile 1995). During the SI process interpreters activate mental models (Johnson-Laird 1983) which contain their extra-linguistic knowledge on the topic and allow them to put the message in the right pragmatic context and to get rid of ambiguities.

Lorenzo Bevilacqua

It goes without saying that anticipation plays an important role from the cognitive point of view, as it allows interpreters to unload the working memory during the comprehension process and to achieve a high-quality SI performance (Wilss 1978). This is even more important in the light of the SOV word order where the verb, i.e. the semantic focus of the sentence, comes in the final position. In the experimental study (Bevilacqua 2003: 50) an attempt was made to determine to what extent professional interpreters relied on anticipation to overcome the obstacles of the target sentences and to establish whether it was mainly triggered by linguistic bottom-up cues or contextual top-down elements. To check the accuracy of inferences, they were classified in three qualitative categories: **exact**, **generic** and **false anticipation** (Jörg 1995). "Generic" means that the delivery does not precisely correspond to the final verb of the sentence but it is rather a generalization of the message on the basis of the interpreter's extra-linguistic knowledge. In the conclusions the incidence of the anticipation was compared in the four texts to ascertain the validity of the assumption stated in 2. according to which the rigid verb-final structure of D obliges resorting to inferences more than NL which tends to shorten verbal braces through extraposition.

3.3.2 Ear-voice span

The ear-voice span (EVS) is the distance between the acoustic perception of the incoming message and the delivery of the interpreter. By increasing the EVS the comprehension of the source text improves and misunderstandings are less likely, but at the same time it risks overburdening the short-term memory leading to omissions in the delivery. There is no precise theory governing the management of EVS, which is fundamentally a subjective choice of the interpreter. Nonetheless, Goldmann-Eisler (1980) showed in her experimental study that the SOV typology exerts an influence on that choice, obliging interpreters to keep a wider EVS in order to hear the final verb.

In the discussion of the experiment (Bevilacqua 2003: 52), the EVS was considered an alternative strategy to anticipation and reformulation (see following paragraph) and was divided into two sub-categories: **waiting in silence** and **stalling**. The "waiting in silence" EVS was measured in seconds from the moment the speaker pronounced the very first word of the target sentence until the starting of the interpreter's delivery. It is important to stress that EVS is an intrinsic feature of SI between D/NL and Italian, therefore the attention was devoted only to those cases where the EVS was remarkably wide and due to the constrictions posed by the structure of the target sentences.

The other sub-category considered was **stalling** (Setton 1999). While waiting for the significant information, interpreters can fill the time gap

with semantically neutral material like repetitions of already known elements to reinforce the cohesion of the sentence, Italian passe-partout expressions like "*per quanto riguarda, a proposito di, in questo contesto*"[5] or simple phonetic occurrences such as the lengthening of the last vowel[6] or slowing down while pronouncing a word. Another possible way to stall the sentence is the use of a "semantically pale verb" which can be integrated or rectified afterwards as soon as the verb in final position is heard. Through this strategy, the interpreter eludes the risk of a one-way anticipation in full respect of the least-commitment principle (Riccardi 1998). Even in relation to the EVS, a cross-comparison between German and Dutch texts was made to verify the assumption stated in 2 and 3.3.1.

3.3.3 Reformulation

Unlike anticipation and EVS, reformulation is not bound to the comprehension process but rather to the production of the target text. The strategy is applied to reduce the complexity of the source text on the one hand and to avoid interferences with the linguistic surface of the source language on the other by reformulating the sentence according to the typological structure of the target language (Kalina 1998).

In the theoretical part of this work (Bevilacqua 2003: 31) the flexibility of the Italian sentence was highlighted as a precious tool in the hands of interpreters to achieve the above mentioned goal. Thanks to the mobility of Italian constituents, the interpreter has the opportunity to start a sentence from a different point to the speaker, in particular when the verb in the final position is hard to infer. This strategy was called **replacement of constituents** and was seen as a prerequisite to loosen the verbal braces.

- **Die Welt hat sich** nach dem Fall der Berliner Mauer vor fünf Jahren und seit Vollendung der deutschen Einheit **dramatisch verändert**. (Riccardi 1996: 218)
  Dopo la caduta del muro di Berlino cinque anni fa e dalla riunificazione tedesca, **il mondo è cambiato drammaticamente.**

Other reformulation strategies (Bevilacqua 2003: 54) were proposed as possible solutions to the target sentences including:

- **paratactical reformulation** (Riccardi 1999) which consists in the transformation of subordinate clauses into main clauses with the aim of simplifying the source text and avoiding one-way solutions (least-

---

5   As regards, as far as, in this context.
6   Note that the perspective is always language-specific. Italian, being the target language of this study, offers the opportunity to apply this strategy, as Italian words end with a vowel.

Lorenzo Bevilacqua

commitment);
- **segmentation strategy** (Gile 1995) to break down a complex sentence into shorter clauses;
- **the left dislocation** to deal with the SOV and OVS word order (Sella 1998): Ich glaube, **dass wir diese Themen in einem Gesamtzusammenhang betrachten müssen** mit der gesamten Entwicklung des Ostseeraums. (Kommissar Verheugen 13/03/2002)
  *Credo che **questi temi, li dobbiamo considerare** nel contesto globale*
  dello sviluppo dell'intera regione baltica.
  [I believe that we have to consider these questions in the wider context of the general development of the Baltic sea region.]

3.3.4 Compression

In dealing with the time constraints of SI the interpreter tends to simplify the structure and the contents of the source text and reduce the number of syllables preserving, nonetheless, the main message (*Makropropositionen*, Kalina 1998). The compression can be triggered by different factors like the high informative density, the complexity of the source text or a high speaking rate, but it can be language-specific as well. For instance the SOV structure of D and NL, the frequency of embedded and participial clauses make the ability to compress the sentence essential to succeed in SI from these languages.

As in the case of anticipation, also the compression strategy was considered as either linguistic or extra-linguistic (Bevilacqua 2003: 56). **Linguistic compression** was observed in particular in relative clauses which often have a low informative content and are mainly used by speakers to make the message clearer and more structured. Thus they can be reduced into a single syntagm opting for a nominal style which is a congenital feature of the Italian language (Ross 1995):

- Deshalb ist das sicherlich eine Entscheidung, **die zu den wichtigsten gehört, die das Haus in seiner gesamten Geschichte zu treffen hat.** (Kommissar Verheugen 9/04/2003)
  È** sicuramente una delle decisioni **più importanti dell'Assemblea in tutta la sua storia.
  [This is certainly one of the most important decisions of this House in all its history.]

The interpreter can also compress the source text relying on the extra-linguistic context. In fact, the SI is a dynamic process whereby the interpreter and the listener constantly interact sharing a wide network of information about the communicative event, the topic, the speaker etc. The interaction grows as the speech proceeds creating "a common ground"

of extra-linguistic knowledge the interpreter can exploit to compress all redundancies of the text as in the following example:

- I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania. (Chernov 1994: 146)
  Tanzania!

3.5.5 Omissions

This term indicates a missing element in the interpreter's delivery compared with the source text. Omissions may be seen as the consequence of the interpreter lagging behind in the elaboration of the sentence, but the deletion of an element could also be a deliberate choice to pursue the need for simplicity and greater clarity of the target text. In this case, the two categories of omissions and compression overlap and any attempt to draw a line between them would be rough and subjective. Nonetheless, in the discussion of the experiment (Bevilacqua 2003: 58) an approximate distinction was proposed shifting from the interpreter's to the listener's point of view. The evaluation criterion used was the redundancy of the deleted element and the recovery capacity of the listener: if the missing information was redundant and, therefore, could be easily recovered by the listener relying on the knowledge he shared with the interpreter, the occurrence was classified as compression, otherwise it was considered an omission.

The omissions were divided into two sub-categories[7] according to their impact on the source text:

- **Skipping omission** of a single noun or adjective which in most cases does not jeopardize the communication;
- **Delay omission** of highly informative rhetoric elements or even source text segments like phrases or whole clauses. This type of omission badly distorts the speaker's message and is normally due to the interpreter's delay in the elaboration of the previous information unit.

4. Results

4.1 Anticipation

After a thorough analysis of the interpreters' deliveries (Bevilacqua 2003: 281) it was observed that the subjects often relied on their ability to infer the message in order to deal with the difficulties of the target sentences, which happened in 45% of all occurrences. It is a high percentage

---

7   See Barik (1994).

compared to the 8.03% Sella (1997) registered in a similar study conducted among student interpreters. The data confirm Moser-Mercer's expert-novice paradigm (1997) according to which professional interpreters' linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge is better structured and interlinked and, therefore, can be faster retrieved when needed. The result is a more frequent and precise use of the anticipation strategy than in students' perfomances.
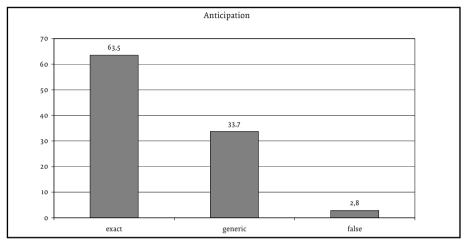

Figure 1. Anticipation

Both in the German and Dutch texts, exact inferences were predominant (63.5%) followed by generic ones (33.7%), while false anticipations were limited to few cases (2.8%). In the conclusions of the SI experiment, the inferring ability was defined as a prerequisite for an effective management of the cognitive resources and for a quality delivery (Bevilacqua 2003: 282). Both aspects are closely interlinked because the precious energy saved through the anticipation of the final verb can be concentrated on processing the other constituents of the sentence, thus improving the final product. It was stressed that besides the sensitivity to the structures of D and NL, the subjects showed a wide repertoire of cliché expressions they could activate without effort from the long-term memory (Wilss 1978) by association with a particular context. The result was an exhaustive and high-quality delivery as clearly emerges in the following example (Bevilacqua 2003: 65):

Ex. 1

TD1. [...] Ich glaube es sollte auch vermerkt werden dass das Europäische

DN1. [...] *va notato (1") che il*

Parlament wie kaum ein anderes in Europa schon in der Zeit des Kalten

Parlamento Europeo. come . nessun altro in Europa . già .

Krieges immer wieder die offene Wunde der Spaltung Europas zum

durante la Guerra Fredda . ha sempre insistito sulla necessità di sanare

Thema gemacht und für eine europäische Zukunft plädiert hat […]
*quella ferita **aperta** della divisione dell'Europa* (3") *in vista . di una . Europa* […]
[it is worthy of note that the European Parliament as no other (institution) in Europe during the Cold War always insisted on the necessity to heal the open wound of a divided Europe.][8]

The well-known question of the open wound of the divided Europe allowed the interpreter to resolve the long verbal brace by using a cliché expression like "to heal the open wound of the divided Europe". Although the delivery appears slightly generalized, the subject succeeded in conveying the message in its entirety preserving its rhetorical features. Also in the next example (Bevilacqua 2003: 253), the interpreters relied on their extra-linguistic knowledge to infer a verb which came late at the end of a long infinitive clause. Moreover their task was made more difficult by an embedded clause making the target sentence discontinuous and therefore difficult to process (Frazier & Rayner 1988).

Ex. 2
TN1. Het administratieve bestel in de nieuwe lidstaten is waarschijnlijk nog
DN4.   […] *il sistema amministrativo nei nuovi stati mem*
niet voldoende in staat om de massale geldstromen die op die landen
*bri non è ancora sufficientemente in grado per eh asso: di **assorbire***
afkomen voldoende te kunnen beheren.
eh i flussi finanziari che affluiranno in questi nuovi paesi dell'Unione Europea
[The administrative system in the new member states is still not ready to absorb the financial flows which will flow into these new countries of the European Union.]

The financial absorption capacity of the candidate countries is another recurring question in the discussions on the EU enlargement and the linguistic cue *massale geldstromen* was enough to activate the knowledge of the interpreter and to trigger anticipation. Some subjects opted for the generic inference of the sentence and then integrated their translation after having perceived the verb at the end. This strategy was registered on several occasions from both D and NL and was described as the result of the self-monitoring process whereby interpreters check the conformity of their output with the source text (Bevilacqua 2003: 255).

Ex. 3
TN1. Het administratieve bestel in de nieuwe lidstaten is waarschijnlijk nog
DN2.   […] *il sistema ammin*
niet voldoende in staat om de massale geldstromen die op die landen
istrativo nei nuovi stati membri probabilmente non è ancora in grado:

---

8   The English translation tries faithfully to reflect the Italian word order in the interpreters' delivery.

afkomen voldoende te kunnen beheren.

di fronteggiare in maniera ottimale i flussi di denaro che si riversano sul paese e
di sap e di gestirli correttamente [...]

[The administrative system of the new member states is probably still not ready to cope in an effective way with the flows of money which flow into the country and to manage them correctly]

The few cases of false anticipations seem to have a common cause, i.e. an excessive focus on the top-down dimension of the speaker's message to the detriment of the linguistic surface of the source text. It is interesting to note that these occurrences were observed in target sentences with an apparently high anticipation potential. But this very factor induced some subjects blindly to rely on their knowledge and to opt for solutions well anchored in the communicative context, but far from the speaker's intentions (Bevilacqua 2003: 197).

Ex. 4
TN2. [...] en hebben tientallen jaren wanhopig geprobeerd om hun nationale en
NL4.   [...] *e per* ***decenni*** *hanno dovuto*
culturele identiteit ondanks het heersende 'Russificatiebeleid' te *soffrire (1")* <u>*e rinunciare alla loro* ***identità*** *culturale e nazionale*</u> behouden.
(1")   <u>*e a <non sono riusciti a mantenerla> e sono mm hanno lottato per mante-*</u>
<u>*nerla*</u> [...]

[and for decades they have suffered and they had to give up their cultural and national identity and they could not preserve it and they struggled to preserve it]

After self-monitoring the subject realized his mistake and tried to improve his delivery with an addition. A similar occurrence was observed in the same target sentence of the German text (TD1), but in this case the interpreter did not succeed in recovering the original meaning probably because of his delay (Bevilacqua 2003: 95):

Ex. 5
TD1. [...] die sich verzweifelt bemüht hatten, über Jahrzehnte ihre nationale

und kulturelle Identität gegenüber einer Russifizierungspolitik aufrecht
D3.   [...] *e per decenni* <u>*hanno visto calpestata*</u> *la loro*
zu erhalten.
identità culturale [...]

[and for decades their cultural identity has been repressed]

The conclusion drawn from a careful analysis of the aforementioned mistakes was that while student interpreters' performance often reveals a "spasmodic concentration on the linguistic elements" (Riccardi 1999:

166) and a decontextualization of the message, professional interpreters seem rather to run the opposite risk, i.e. to underestimate the bottom-up dimension and to deliver a translation mainly underpinned by their extra-linguistic knowledge often motivated by the need to optimize the cognitive resources and to reduce the burden of linguistic processing, but it may be misleading if their own expectations are not matched by a constant monitoring of the incoming segment (Bevilacqua 2003: 282).

Turning now to the contrastive analysis of the two language pairs German-Italian and Dutch-Italian, in par. 2. the Dutch word order was defined as "moderately verb-final" compared to the more rigid SOV structure of D. In particular, the accent was placed on the frequent extraposition of a constituent after the second pole of the verbal brace in the Dutch sentence. The shortening of the verbal brace has significant implications for the comprehension phase as it reduces the syntactic distance from the final verb which is the semantic focus of the sentence. Thus, it was assumed in par. 3.3.1 that interpreters would be obliged to anticipate more and to keep a longer ear-voice span from D than from NL as result of this typological difference.

The comparison between the original Dutch speech and its German translation showed a gap of 6% in the frequency of anticipations (TN1 6%, TD2 12%) speaking in favour of the assumption previously stated. The extraposition played a decisive role in the strategic choice of the 2 subjects in the following example (Bevilacqua 2003: 231, 127):

Ex. 6
TN1. Mijnheer de Voorzitter, toen ik in 1997 door het Europees Parlement
DN2.   […] *Presidente   >quando:*
     werd aangewezen <u>als rapporteur voor de EU-lidmaatschapsaanvraag</u>
     nel novantase:tte<   <u><son stato nominato</u> dal Parlamento Europeo></u>
     <u>van Slowakije</u>[9] keken sommige collega's mij meewarig aan.
     come relatore per . la . richiesta di adesione all'Unione Europea da parte della Slovacchia [respiro] >alcuni: colleghi mi hanno: guardato: con sufficienza<[…]
     [President when in 1997 I was appointed by the European parliament as rapporteur for Slovakia's EU membership application some colleagues looked at me condescendingly]

Ex. 7
TD2. Als das Europäische Parlament mich 1997 zum Berichterstatter für den
D2.   […] *quando il Parlamento Europeo> nel novantasette <u>mi</u>*
     Antrag der Slowakischen Republik auf Aufnahme in die Europäische
     <u>ha nominato</u>[10] relatore per la richiesta dell'adesione della Repubblica
     Union **ernannt hatte**, haben einige meiner Kolleginnen und Kollegen
     Slovacca (3")   *alcuni dei miei colleghi (3")*

---

9   Extraposition of the constituent after the verb.
10 The interpreter anticipates the verb in final position.

mich mitleidvoll angesehen
mi hanno guardato con **compassione** *quasi* [...]
[when the European parliament 1997 appointed me as rapporteur for Slovakia's EU membership application some of my colleagues looked at me with pity]

It could be objected that the longer verbal braces in TD2 are merely the consequence of the written style of the German translation, but the argument is contradicted by the data relating to the second pair of texts. In this case the gap was limited to 1% (TD1 23%, TN2 22%), but it turned out to be wider taking into account the whole text and not only the target sentences. In fact, TN2, although a written translation, registered 10 cases of extrapolation more than the original TD1. In conclusion, it is not inappropriate to state that the rigid SOV word order of German demands a greater predisposition to anticipation than Dutch. This language-specific difference in interpreting behaviour will also be verified in relation to the ear-voice span in the following paragraph assuming a longer EVS in the SI from D.
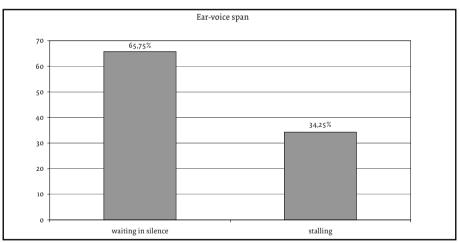
4.2 Ear-voice span

Figure 2. Ear-voice span

The SOV word order of D and NL often obliged the subjects to wait for the verb coming in final position. The most burdensome sentences appeared to be the transitive ones where the typological divide between the Romance SVO and the Germanic SOV was particularly constrictive. In dealing with these sentences, the interpreters strongly felt the close semantic and syntactic link between the object and the verb and, thus, the necessity for Italian to release V before O which clearly contrasted with SOV in D and NL.

The waiting in silence (65,75%) prevailed over the stalling (34,25%) in every text and the gap between interpreter and speaker could be quantified in an average interval of 2-5 seconds (Bevilacqua 2003: 100).

Ex. 8
TD1. Sie, meine Damen und Herren Abgeordnete, haben den Weg dieser
DN3.   [...] *voi onorevoli deputati (5")*
  Länder in die Europäische Union über viele Jahre begleitet.
            per molti anni <avete accompagnato la
  strada di questi paesi verso l'Unione Europea> [...]
  [you, honourable members, for many years have been following the path
  of these countries towards the European Union]

The discussion of the results highlighted the interdependence between EVS and the other interpretation strategies like anticipation, compression and reformulation. In particular, a long EVS was usually followed by a strategic intervention of the interpreter on the source text, while a shorter gap led in most cases to a delivery closer to the original (Bevilacqua 2003: 157).

Ex. 9
TD2. [...] stelle ich fest, dass alle Vorhaben, die in den vergangenen Jahren
D4. [...] *devo constatare (2")*   *che tutti i progetti che negli*
  formuliert wurden, in der Praxis vor Ort noch zu wenig umgesetzt
  anni passati sono stati formulati elaborati >   *in pratica non hanno*
  wurden.
  trovato attuazione [...]
  [I must say that all the projects formulated and drawn up in the past
  years have not been concretely implemented]

Ex. 10
TD2. [...] stelle ich fest, dass alle Vorhaben, die in den vergangenen Jahren
D5.
  formuliert wurden, in der Praxis vor Ort noch zu wenig umgesetzt
   [...] *(2")* **vedo** *che tutti i progetti degli ultimi anni poi >concretamente<*
  wurden.
  sono stati applicati troppo poco [...]
  [I notice that all the projects of the past years concretely have been
  insufficiently implemented]

The subject D4 keeps a very tight EVS and delivers the relative clause in its entirety. On the contrary D5 was obliged to lengthen the EVS because he lagged behind the speaker. Thus, in order to regain ground he carried out a compression (see 4.4) of the relative clause in one single constituent "degli ultimi anni". This example shows how the SI can be considered the constant swinging of a pendulum whereby the lengthening of the EVS is offset by the implementation of another interpreting strategy to reduce

the delay accumulated with the speaker. On the one hand, a longer EVS gives the interpreter a wider perspective of the text and increases the potential use of other strategies (Gile 1995), but, on the other, it can overburden the short-term memory leading to a loss of information. In the latter case, the subjects applied emergency strategies (Kalina 1996) like the compression[11] and the generalization of the message to overcome a difficult situation. They showed the ability to extract the relevant information avoiding a total break down of the communication as in the following example.

Ex. 11

TD2. [...] stelle ich fest, dass alle Vorhaben, die in den vergangenen Jahren

D1.

formuliert wurden, in der Praxis vor Ort noch zu wenig umgesetzt

wurden.

[...] *non sono stati attuate le in loco le misure che sono state proposte* [...]

[the measures which were proposed have not been locally implemented]

Stalling (34,25%) represented the alternative to EVS. To avoid a long (and sometimes embarrassing) wait the subjects filled the gap adding semantically neutral material like repetitions of already known elements or Italian passe-partout expressions like *per quanto riguarda* in the following example (Bevilacqua 2003: 104).

Ex. 12

TD1. [...] dass wir die europäischen Völker, die sich nun seit 13 Jahren auf

D5. [...] *però mi rendo anche conto >che noi<*   *per quanto*

den großen Moment vorbereiten, nicht länger warten lassen konnten.

riguarda questi . po:poli <che si stanno preparando> da tredici anni

a questo grande momento bene non li possiamo fare aspettare oltre [...]

[but I realize that we as regards these peoples who have been preparing for this great moment for 13 years well we can not leave them waiting anymore]

In other cases, to stall the sentence the subjects released "a semantically pale verb" which was then modified or integrated after having monitored its compliance with the source text. In this way, the typological transition from SOV to the Italian SVO was facilitated by an intermediate step: S-neutral verb-O-V (Bevilacqua 2003: 93).

Ex. 13

TD1. [...] die sich verzweifelt bemüht hatten, über Jahrzehnte ihre nationale

D4.   [...] *e che*

---

11 See 4.4.

und kulturelle Identität gegenüber einer Russifizierungspolitik
>*per decenni hanno cercati di:* <u>*trovare una propria*</u>
aufrecht zu erhalten.
identità   culturale< <u>*mantenendola*</u> *nei confronti de: una tentata russificazione*[...]
[and for decades they have tried to find their own cultural identity preserving it from a policy of Russification]

Evidently this strategy involves an inevitable manipulation of the source text which could give rise to deontological objections. It would be legitimate to wonder whether the end always justifies the means even when they imply a strong intervention on the source text. It is an open question which would deserve a thorough case-by-case analysis taking into consideration the possible consequences for the equivalence and the accuracy of the message (Viezzi 1996)[12]. It goes without saying that the interpreter's sensitivity in the choice of the stalling material is decisive to avoid distorting the speaker's message.

The role of EVS was more prominent in the German texts that in NL, thus validating the assumption formulated in 2. Waiting in silence was recorded in 54,41% of the cases in the German texts against 45,59% in TN1/TN2, while the gap was wider in relation to the stalling 63,30% against 36,70%, which is symptomatic of the higher cognitive stress interpreters perceived interpreting from D. Stalling can be seen as a defensive strategy the subjects applied to cope with long verbal braces and to avoid the overburdening of the short-term memory.

In the next example (Bevilacqua 2003: 77) the subject interpreting from D stalled the sentence by adding a neutral verb and storing the long object in short-term memory. By contrast the same sentence in the Dutch translation did not demand a great cognitive effort since extraposition of a constituent shortened the syntactic midfield. This can explain the absence of omissions in NL5 delivery.

Ex. 14
TD1. [...] die aber auch mit Mut und Entschlossenheit den Weg für ein freies
D1.   [...] <u>*si tratta di popoli*</u>
und geeintes Europa geebnet haben.
<u>*anche che hanno deciso*</u> *eh fermamente di* <u>*avviare*</u>*(1″) una strada <di intraprendere una strada di democrazia>* [...]
[these also are peoples who firmly decided to initiate a way to embark on a path of democracy]

---

12 Viezzi's model of quality assessment is based on four principles: equivalence, accuracy, adequacy and usability. An interpreted text can be considered equivalent to the source text when it fulfils the same illocutionary act, while accuracy concerns the extent to which detailed propositional content is conveyed in the interpreter's delivery.

Ex. 15
TN2 Deze mensen hebben ook zelf moedig en vastbesloten het pad geëffend
NL5.   [...] *persone che*
voor een vrij en verenigd Europa.
hanno <u>*aperto*</u> *la strada con molto cora coraggio per una Europa libera e*
unita [...]
[people who paved the way with a lot of courage for a free and united
Europe]

The following target sentence in TD2 (Bevilacqua 2003: 133) forced the
subjects to lengthen their EVS substantially to escape a particularly
restrictive and unpredictable verbal brace, while in TN1 the task was once
again facilitated by the extraposition:

Ex. 16
TD2. Sie steht den anderen für den Beitritt im nächsten Jahr auf der Liste
D4.   [...] *la: Slovacchia (3")*
stehenden Ländern keineswegs nach.
        è (1")   <u>*non è*</u> *<arretrata rispetto agli altri paesi che verranno> eh*
entreranno nell'Unione Europea l'anno prossimo [...]
[Slovakia is does not lag behind the other countries which are joining the
European Union next year]

Ex. 17
TN1. Het doet niet onder voor de andere kandidaten die voor volgend jaar op
DN1.   [...] *la Slovacchia* <u>*non: fa minor*</u>
de ledenlijst staan.
<u>*figura*</u> *rispetto agli altri paesi candidati per l'anno prossimo* [...]
[Slovakia is not worse than the other candidate countries for next year]

The conclusion is warranted that a good management of EVS is a
prerequisite for a high-quality SI from both D and NL considering their
SOV typology. Nonetheless, the more rigid verb final structure of D
imposes a greater burden on the working memory and demands a higher
retention capacity.

4.3 Reformulation

Reformulation ability was decisive to overcome the constraints of SOV and
it was the most frequently applied strategy in 3 texts out of 4 (TD1 24%,
TN1 32%, TD2 18%), while in TN2 it followed the anticipation with 18% of
the occurrences.
   The replacement of constituents (47,91%) stood out among the strategies
proposed in 3.3.3. In particular the elements expressing the notion of time
and place offered favourable reformulation opportunities because of their

mobility in the Italian sentence which is not bound by the *verb-second constraint* like D and NL (Simone 1990). Thus, the subjects could move these constituents at the beginning of their delivery in order progressively to empty the syntactic midfield separating them from the final verb (Bevilacqua 2003: 86).
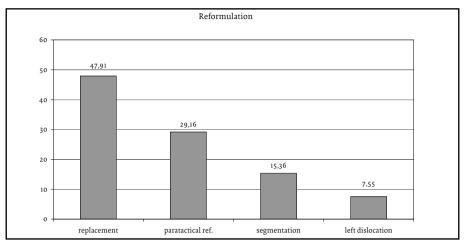

Figure 3. Reformulation

Ex. 18
TD1. Ich habe in der vergangenen Woche in Ungarn in einer Rede darauf
DN4.   [...] *e nella: scorsa*
            settimana in
            hingewiesen dass [...]
            Ungheria in un mio discorso ho indicato che [...]
            [and last week in Hungary in my speech I stressed that [...]]

In this same category, occurrences were included whereby the subjects did not only reshuffle the order of syntagms but also modified the semantic roles of the basic constituents SOV. This mainly happened in sentences beginning with a dislocated element whose semantic role was difficult to predict. To avoid inconsistencies, the subjects reformulated the dislocated syntagm into S (*Think nominative principle,* Visson 1986) and opted for a transitive construction which left the sentence open to several alternatives. In the language pair D/I the reformulation of the semantic roles was mainly used in sentences starting with a dative case (Bevilacqua 2003: 88):

Ex. 19
TD1 [...] dass wohl allen europäischen Politikern meiner Generation die
DN4.   [...] >*che: tutti i politici europei*< *della mia*
            mia

Hilferufe der Füher des ungarischen Aufstandes 1956 noch im Ohr
generazione (5")
sind.
hanno ancora ben presente la voce: della ribellione dei leader: dell:'opposizione
ungherese: <nel cinquantasei> [...]
[that all politicians of my generation remember very well the voice of the
rebellion of the Hungarian opposition leaders in 1956]

The same praxis was recorded in the Dutch text (Bevilacqua 2003: 191)
where the semantic role of the dislocated element was expressed by the
highly polysemic and ambiguous preposition *bij*.

Ex. 20

TN2. [...] dat <u>bij alle Europese politici</u> van mijn generatie de noodkreten van de
NL5.   [...] *ho detto che (1")   di tutti i politici eh <u>che</u>*
leiders van de Hongaarse opstand van 1956 als het ware nog steeds in
<u>*tutti i politici europei*</u> *della mia generazione (3")*
hun oren doorklinken.
          sentono ancora risuonare nelle loro orecchie le grida . dei politici
ungheresi del cinquantasei [...]
[I said that of all politicians that all European politicians of my generation
still hear the screams of the Hungarian politicians of '56 echoing in their
ears]

The paratactical reformulation (29,16%) was systematically applied in all
four texts and the subjects seemed to master it with a certain degree of
automatism. By transforming subordinate clauses into main sentences,
the interpreters could avoid one-way solutions and monitor the
development of the text. Then they restored the logical relations *en route*
using adverbs and other connectives in order to maintain the cohesion of
the message (Bevilacqua 2003: 238).

Ex. 21

T.N1 Omdat Slowakije vanwege het niet-voldoen aan democratische criteria
DN3.   [...] (4")   [...] >*per*
niet in de eerste onderhandelingsgroep werd opgenomen, is het meer
il non rispetto dei   criteri democratici<   la Slovacchia non era stata
dan de andere kandidaten getoetst en getest op de kwaliteit van de
inserita nel primo gruppo di negoziati (1")   <u>ma per questo</u> è stata
rechtsstaat.
*verificata **più** degli altri candidati rispetto alla qualità >della legalità dello stato*
di diritto [...]
[because of the non-respect of democratic criteria Slovakia was not
included in the first group of negotiations but therefore it has been
verified more than the other candidates as regards the quality of the
legality of the rule of law]

In the next example (Bevilacqua 2003: 153), the same strategy was applied to face a particularly restrictive embedded clause turning a burdensome discontinuous structure into a more linear one made up of two coordinates.

Ex. 22

TD2. Das Verwaltungssystem in den neuen Mitgliedstaaten ist der Aufgabe,
D2.   [...] il *sistema amministrativo nei nuovi stati membri*
die diesen Ländern massiv zufließenden Geldströme effizient zu
(3")   >*deve prepararsi pe:r*
bewirtschaften, wahrscheinlich noch nicht gewachsen.
eh poter in: gestire in modo efficiente le   eh< risorse comunitarie che
*fluiranno in questi paesi finora non **riesce** ancora a farlo* [...]
[the administrative system of the new member states must get ready to be able to effectively manage the community resources which will flow in those countries, until now it has not been up to the task]

The segmentation strategy (15,30%) was described as more congenital in D/I than NL/I. In fact, the subjects interpreting from German resorted to it more systematically (18%) than those interpreting from NL (11%). This gap can be considered a further consequence of the more rigid SOV word order of D discussed in 4.1 and 4.2. The complexity of the German sentences often induced the subjects to split them into two or more segments in order to optimize their cognitive resources. The best opportunities were offered by the German deverbal nouns (*-ung*) which abound in the typical nominal style of elevated political speeches. In the next case (Bevilacqua 2003: 97) the subjects opted almost unanimously for the verbalization of the word *Unterstützung* dividing the sentence into two shorter clauses:

Ex. 23

TD1. das mit seinem Referendum mit 90% Unterstützung für den Beitritt zur
DN4.   [...] *e con il suo referendum ha dato*
appoggio al
Europäischen Union ein Zeichen dafür gegeben hat [...]
*novanta per cento all'adesione <nell'Unione Europea> dando così un **segno***
chiaro [...]
[and with its referendum it gave 90% support to accession to the European Union thereby sending a clear signal [...]]

The left-dislocation (7,55%) had a minor impact on the interpreters' deliveries. In particular it appeared to be the last resort in the following sentence where an embedded relative clause created a remarkable syntactic distance between the object and the verb leaving the subjects no other options than starting with O (Bevilacqua 2003: 208):
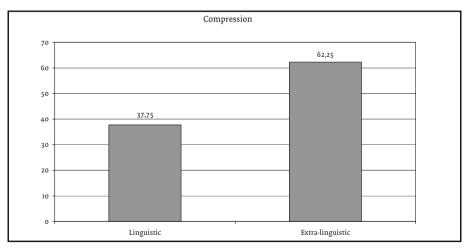
Ex. 24

TN2. Ik weet echter zeker dat wij de Europese volkeren die zich nu al dertien

NL4. [...] *io comunque so con certezza che >i popoli europei*

jaar op dit grote moment voorbereiden, niet langer meer kunnen laten

che ora già da tredici anni< si stanno preparando a questo momento

wachten.

importante questi popoli non li possiamo più lasciare aspettare [...]

[nevertheless I know for sure that the European people who have already
been preparing for this important moment for 13 years these people we
can not make them wait anymore]

During the discussion of the reformulation strategies the accent was
placed on the importance of the exemplified techniques as a valid
alternative to anticipation or to prolonging of the ESV. Nonetheless, it is
worth remembering that every intervention on the source text implies an
additional cognitive burden which can only be minimized if these
strategies are applied with a certain degree of automation.

> *Automation is essential to mastery of the interpreting skill as it allows the interpreter*
> *to bypass common processing limitations and to make optimal use of available*
> *processing capacity.* (Moser-Mercer 1997: 259)

4.4 Compression

Figure 4. Compression

Extra-linguistic compression (62,25%) prevailed in all four texts indicating
the subjects' ability to exploit the communicative situation (EP plenary
speeches) and the contextual knowledge they shared with the audience to
reduce long syntagms to few essential cues. Compression is always the
result of a strategic choice between given and redundant information and

the new contents on which the interpreter concentrates his translation effort. On the basis of this informative hierarchy, the subjects were able to abstract the essential message and compress the sentence striking the right balance between the precision of the delivery and the economy of their cognitive resources.

In the next target sentence (Bevilacqua 2003: 88), most subjects compressed the long object: *die Hilferufe der Führer des ungarischen Aufstandes 1956*. Considering that the topic of the Hungarian revolution was already known as it had already been introduced by the speaker in the previous sentence, the interpreters opted for a simplification of the syntagm to save precious resources which could be better used to cope with a particular restrictive verbal brace.

Ex. 25

TD1 [...] dass wohl allen europäischen Politikern meiner Generation die

DN5.   [...] *che tutti i politici europei*

Hilferufe der Führer des ungarischen Aufstandes 1956 noch im Ohr
della mia generazione (4")

sind.
>*si ricordano <u>le urla della: ribellione del cinquantasei</u>*< [...]

[that all European politicians of my generation remember the yells of the '56 rebellion]

Deictics played an important role in the compression of the source text replacing constituents through anaphora. Besides the Italian demonstratives pronouns *questo/quello*, the Latin *idem* was effectively used to compress a whole embedded clause (Bevilacqua 2003: 260).

Ex. 26

TN1. Daarom vraag ik van de Slowaakse regering - in het verslag over

NL4.   [...] *ecco perchè noi chiediamo al*

Tsjechië vindt men dezelfde tekst – een soort meerjarenverbintenis [...]
governo slovacco >e: idem per <u>peraltro anche al governo ceco</u> un miglioramento nel giro degli anni< [...]

[therefore we ask the Slovak government and idem for the Czech government an improvement in the course of some years]

Linguistic compression (37,75%) was observed in relative clauses which often have a low informative content and are mainly used by speakers to make the message clearer and more structured. Thus, they could be reduced into few words (Bevilacqua 2003: 62):

Ex. 27

TD1 Deshalb ist das sicherlich eine Entscheidung, die zu den wichtigsten

DN5.   [...] *ecco . perchè . sicuramente .*

gehört, die das Haus in seiner gesamten Geschichte zu treffen hat.
si tratta . di una delle decisioni <u>più importanti della storia del Parlamento</u> [...]

[therefore this is surely one of the most important decision of the history of parliament]

The opportunity to compress the source text seemed sometimes to contrast with the need to closely stick to it and to avoid reformulations demanding an additional effort. This contrast emerged more clearly in the SI from NL whereby the extraposition of a constituent favoured a more faithful delivery (Bevilacqua 2003: 294).

> Ex. 28
> TN2. Hiermee zijn wij voorlopig aan het einde gekomen van een zeer lange
> NL1.   [...] *infatti: siamo giunti così alla*
> weg die met name gekenmerkt is door de sterke wil om de Europese
> *fine di una strada   molto . lunga che è stata caratterizzata dalla forte*
> opdeling definitief op te heffen.
> *volontà: (2")di eh <eliminare le divisioni> all'interno dell'Europa* [...]
> [in fact we are at the end of a very long road which has been characterized by the strong will to overcome the divisions in Europe]

It is worth remembering that compression like other interpreting strategies is closely linked to the management of EVS. A minimal gap between the speaker's and the interpreter's speech reduces the textual perspective and makes an intervention on the source text less likely as exemplified in the previous case.

It was the same type of speech, i.e. a political speech offering numerous opportunities for the interpreter to filter out introductory clauses often used by the speaker to mark textual junctions. Clauses such as *ik ga ervan uit, we moeten ook vaststellen, ik vind het ook vermeldenswaard, ich glaube, es sollte auch vermerkt werden, wie ich feststellen konnte, ich bin mir aber bewusst* do not add any information to the text and the subjects could easily omit them.

4.5 Omissions

Omissions mostly involved single nouns, adjectives or adverbs and did not detract from the general sense of the source text (53,75%). It is interesting to note that skipping omissions were much more frequent in the first pair of texts TD1 (73%) and TN2 (75%) compared to TN1 (29%) and TD2 (38%). This difference can be explained in terms of text type. Contrary to Wiersma's more pragmatic and argumentative text (TN1/TD2)[13], commissioner Verheugen's speech belongs to the epideictic genre, i.e. it aims at strengthening the audience's commitment to the shared values of the European integration. The text displays a solemn register with an

---

13   See 3.2.

extensive use of long adjective chains solemnly to evoke the landmarks of European unification. Subjects often had to memorize long sequences of nouns, each with their respective modifiers. This caused retention problems and led to many skipping omissions (Bevilacqua 2003: 111).
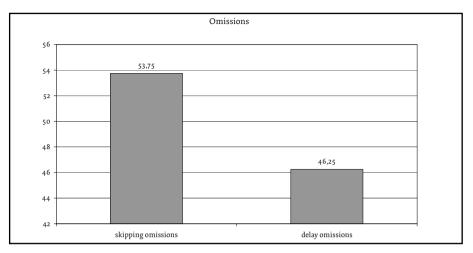

Figure 5. Omissions

Ex. 29

TD1. […] und seinen Bürgerinnen und Bürgern ein Jahrhundert der friedlichen

DN2.   […] *(5")*

Entwicklung, der persönlichen Freiheit und der individuellen
e per garantire ai cittadini europei un . secolo . di .
Lebenschancen zu schenken.
sviluppo. liber:tà . personale . e . individuale […]
[and to give the European citizens a century of development, personal and individual freedom]

In the four experimental texts, the occurrences of delay omissions (46,25%) were seen as the result of an unbalanced distribution of the interpreter's cognitive resources among the four different phases of the SI: listening, analysis, memorization and production (Gile 1997). Sometimes it was a simple delay in the reformulation of the previous sentence that put at risk the processing of the incoming segment. To re-equilibrate the four efforts, the subjects applied emergency strategies to catch up with the speaker[14]:

[…] interpreters may also find themselves in a situation where their capacity is exhausted or their competence is not in accordance with the demands made on them

---

14 See 4.2.

[…]. They will then try to overcome this situation by means of "emergency strategies".
(Kalina 1996: 130)

In the following example (Bevilacqua 2003: 205), NL1's ability to select the core information and to convey it through a generalization was the key to cope with the delay and avoid a break-down of the communication.

Ex. 30
TN2. Ik ben mij er echter van bewust dat nu de beslissing nadert, niet bij
NL1.
      iedereen in dit Parlement en ook niet bij iedereen in de Europese
                                            […] *>e credo:*
      buitenwereld de twijfels over het uitbreidingsproces uit de weg zijn
                    che eh ora che il momento si avvicina nessuno< (2")
      geruimd.
            *eh sia esente da **dubbi:** ne in questo Parlamento ne in altre **sedi*** […]
      [and I believe that now that the time is coming nobody is free from doubts either in this House or anywhere else]

A serious loss of information was registered only in few isolated cases where the subjects could not save the macro-structure of the message or they were obliged to skip an entire clause owing to the delay accumulated (Bevilacqua 2003: 253, 147).

Ex. 31
TN1. Het administratieve bestel in de nieuwe lidstaten is waarschijnlijk nog
NL1.   […] *la gestione amministrativa*
                  niet voldoende in staat om de massale geldstromen
      die op die landen
      nei nuovi paesi forse non è . ancora . in grado . di . affron .
      afkomen voldoende te kunnen beheren
      (2")   *eh di eh non sarà ancora in grado di affrontare i*
      problemi futuri […]
      [the administration of the new countries maybe is not able yet to deal it will not be able to deal with the future problems]

Ex. 32
TD2. Uns wurden Zusagen gemacht, anhand derer wir die neuen
D1.   […] *ci sono state fatte alcune*
      Mitgliedstaaten nach ihrem Beitritt stets beim Wort nehmen können.
      proma promesse (2")   *sul fatto eh sul (2") [cough]*
      sulla capacità eh di dei pae di questi dei paesi candidati di rispettare i criteri […]
      [some promises were made to us about the capacity of these candidate countries to fulfil the criteria]

4.6 Conclusion

This experimental work is meant as a contribution to the study of language-specific interpreting strategies applied by Italian professional interpreters in order to cope with the SOV word order of German and Dutch. The techniques used by the subjects were classified and analyzed taking into consideration the linguistic and psycholinguistic factors affecting the process of simultaneous interpreting. A contrastive study of the two language pairs shed light on the main differences in the SI from D and NL. Despite the typological affinity between the two languages, the data collected confirmed the initial hypothesis that D forces interpreters to anticipate more and to keep a longer EVS in order to overcome the constraints of a more rigid SOV structure. By contrast, Dutch can be considered a moderately verb-final language as it violates the SOV word order more systematically than D through the extraposition of a constituent. This syntactic manoeuvre relieves the short-term memory of the interpreter justifying a shorter EVS and sometimes a softer approach to reformulation, as appears from the data obtained in this study. Indeed, individual subjects appeared to resort to reformulation strategies less frequently when interpreting from Dutch than from German.

It is necessary to stress that this study is far from being exhaustive and besides providing some answers to the assumptions made, it also raised new questions related to the specificity of German and Dutch sentence structure and its impact on SI (Bevilacqua 2003: 302). New experimental studies would be desirable in order to collect new evidences in this challenging field. This paper attempts to isolate and observe some of the most interesting strategies and processes involved in SI. It is undeniable that these cognitive processes are sometimes complex and elusive and the border between a conscious application of interpreting strategies and the intepreters' improvisation is often difficult to trace. Nonetheless, improvisation skills are not all inborn but they always develop from acquired knowledge and experience. Hence, the importance of studies of this kind to shed light on the *mare magnum* SI is.

Bibliografia

Barik H.C. (1994) "A description of various types of omissions, additions and errors of translation encountered in simultaneous interpretation," in S. Lambert, B. Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Bridging the Gap. Empirical Research in Simultaneous Interpretation,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 121-137.

Bevilacqua L. (2003) *Posizione del verbo nelle lingue germaniche e interpretazione simultanea,* unpublished thesis, SSLMIT, Trieste.

Chernov G. (1994) "Message redundancy and message anticipation in simultaneous interpreting", in S. Lambert, B. Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Bridging the Gap. Empirical Research in Simultaneous Interpretation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 139-153.

Eisenberg P. (1994), "German", in E. Koenig and J. van der Auwera (eds.), *The German Languages*, London and New York, Routledge, 349-387.

Eroms H.W. (2000), *Syntax der deutschen Sprache*, Berlin/New York, W. de Gruyter.

Frazier L. & Rayner K. (1988) "Parametrizing the language processing system: left versus right-branching within and across languages", in J.A. Hawkins (ed.), *Explaining Language Universals*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 247-279.

Gerritsen M. (1992) "Internal and external factors in the stabilization of verb-last order in Dutch infinitive clauses", in M. Gerritsen and D. Stein (eds.), *Internal and External Factors in Syntactic Change*, Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 355-394.

Giacalone Ramat A. (1992) "The pairing of structure and function in syntactic development", in M. Gerritsen and D. Stein (eds.), *Internal and External Factors in Syntactic Change*, Berlin/NewYork, Mouton de Gruyter, 317-339.

Gile D. (1995) *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreters and Translators Training*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Gile D. (1997) "Conference interpreting as a cognitive management problem", in J.H. Danks, G.M. Shreve, S.B. Fountain, M.K. Macbeath (eds.), *Cognitive Processes in Translation and Interpreting*, vol. 3, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications, Thousand Oak, 196-214.

Goldman-Eisler (1980) "Psychological mechanisms of speech production as studied through the analysis of simultaneous translation", in *Language Production, vol. 1 Speech and Talk*, London, Academic Press, 143-153.

Haeseryn W. (1990) *Syntactische normen in het Nederlands. Een empirisch onderzoek naar de woordvolgordevariatie in de werkwoordelijke eindgroep*, Den Haag, Proefschrift Nijmegen.

Johnson-Laird P.N. (1983) *Mental models*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Jörg U. (1995) "Bridging the gap: verb anticipation in German-English simultaneous interpreting", in M. Snell Hornby, Z. Jettmarova, K. Kaindl (eds.), *Translation as Intercultural Communication*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 217-228.

Kalina S. (1996) "The strategic dimension of interpreting", in *Meta*, 41, (1), 118-138.

Kalina S. (1998) *Strategische Prozesse beim Dolmetschen. Theoretische Grundlagen, empirische Fallstudien, didaktische Konsequenzen,* Tübingen, Gunter Narr.

Moser-Mercer B. (1997) "The expert-novice paradigm in interpreting research", in E. Fleischmann (ed.), *Translationsdidaktik: Grundfragen der Übersetzungswissenschaft,* Tübingen, Gunter Narr, 255-261.

Riccardi A. (1996) "Language-specific strategies in simultaneous interpreting", in C. Dollerup and V. Appel (eds.), *New Horizons - Teaching Translation and Interpreting,* Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 213-222.

Riccardi A. (1998) "Interpreting strategies and creativity", in A. Beylard-Ozeroff, J. Králová and B. Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Translators' Strategies and Creativity,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 171-179.

Riccardi A. (1999) "Interpretazione simultanea: strategie generali e specifiche", in C. Falbo, M. Russo and F. Straniero Sergio (eds.), *Interpretazione simultanea e consecutiva. Problemi teorici e metodologie didattiche,* Hoepli, Milano, 161-175.

Riccardi A. (2003) *Dalla traduzione all'interpretazione,* Milano, LED.

Ross D. (1995) "L'interpretazione simultanea dal neerlandese in italiano: aspettando il predicato", in R.D. Snel Trampus (ed.), *Studi di neerlandistica,* Trieste, Lint, 42-62.

Ross D. (2000) *Tra germanico e romanzo. Un approccio morfosintattico,* Trieste, Lint.

Schutter G. De (1994) "Dutch", in E. Koenig and J. van der Auwera (eds.), *The German Languages,* London and New York, Routledge, 439-477.

Sella M. (1997) *Interpretazione simultanea dal tedesco e dal russo in italiano: la dislocazione a sinistra. Un contributo sperimentale,* unpublished thesis, Trieste, SSLMIT.

Setton R. (1999) *Simultaneous interpretation: a cognitive pragmatic analysis,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Shannon T. (1993) "Focus and the extraposition of noun phrase complement in Dutch", in F. Drijkoningen and K. Hengeveld (eds.), *Linguistics in the Netherlands 1993,* Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 117-128.

Shlesinger M. (1994) "Intonation in the Production and Perception of Simultaneous Interpretation," S. Lambert and B. Moser-Mercer (eds.), *Bridging the Gap: Empirical Research in Simultaneous Interpretation,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 225-236.

Simone R. (1990) *Fondamenti di linguistica,* Bari, Laterza.

Snel Trampus R.D. (1993) *Introduzione allo studio della lingua neerlandese, vol. 1,* Milano, LED.

Viezzi M. (1996) *Aspetti della Qualità in Interpretazione*, SeRT 2, Trieste, SSLMIT.

Visson L. (1986) "The interpretation of politics: some problems in Russian-English simultaneous interpretation", in A.L. Crone, C.V. Chvany (eds.), *New Studies in Russian Language and Literature*, Columbus, Ohio, Slavica Publishers, 271-278.

Wilss W. (1978) "Syntactic anticipation in German-English simultaneous interpreting", in D. Gerver and H.W. Sinaiko (eds.), *Language Interpretation and Communication*, New York and London, Plenum Press, 343-352.