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VIDEO ANALYSIS: A NEW APPROACH FOR TEACHING CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING

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Abstract

The ECTS credit system, together with the rapid development of new technologies, has led to important changes in the methodologies used to teach consecutive interpreting, providing greater student autonomy and responsibility. In consecutive interpreting courses, however, students need guided activities that can be done independently and will help them develop the necessary skills to work as interpreters. Video analysis, which in recent years has emerged as a valuable tool in the field of education, can be extremely useful for students of consecutive interpreting. This article describes a teaching proposal in which this resource is combined with a learning diary that allows students to develop metacognition, with the aim of enhancing their observation, analysis and reflection skills and thus make the learning process more effective.

Resumen

El sistema de créditos ECTS unido al rápido desarrollo de las nuevas tecnologías favorece un cambio de metodologías docentes. En ellas se promueve el trabajo autónomo, pero en el caso de la asignatura de Interpretación Consecutiva, los alumnos demandan actividades más guiadas que les permitan desarrollar las habilidades necesarias para su labor de intérpretes. En los últimos años, el vídeo análisis ha ido perfilándose como una valiosa herramienta en el ámbito educativo. Por eso, se ha diseñado una propuesta didáctica en la que se combina este recurso con un diario de aprendizaje que permita desarrollar la metacognición del alumnado, con el objetivo de mejorar sus capacidades de observación, análisis y reflexión y, en consecuencia, controlar su propio aprendizaje.

Keywords: Interpretation. Video analysis. Learning diary. Metacognition. *Coding*.

Palabras clave: Interpretación. Video análisis. Diario de aprendizaje. Metacognición. *Coding*.

1. Introduction

In the curricula of most Translation and Interpreting programs the weight of Interpreting subjects is considerably lower than that of Translation subjects, in that there are many more translation classes than interpreting classes. Bearing in mind that the skills students need to develop in these two areas are very different, it seems clear that the class time devoted to interpreting skills is insufficient and must be complemented with independent work that students do outside the classroom. However, students have expressed interest in guided activities that they can do on their own but that, at the same time, provide some kind of feedback. This has prompted many teachers to develop, in the last decade, new approaches to help students do the independent work required of them (Palomares 2011; Ramón 2010; Rodríguez 2006). Although none of these new approaches deals specifically with the methodologies used to teach interpreting, looking at them does provide an overview of the evolution of methods applied by teachers. As for interpreting didactics in particular, a glance at recent research reveals that few authors pay enough attention to the reflective component and the promotion of metacognition in the classroom. However, as Arumi (2009) points out, metacognition, or knowledge of knowledge (Flavell 2000), can be part of an effective teaching strategy that helps student interpreters monitor and reflect on their own cognition, leading to improved performance. Metacognition is thus something that teachers should try to incorporate into their teaching activity. Given the importance of promoting independent work and reflective practice by students, this paper presents a didactic proposal based on the use of video analysis. More specifically, it describes a video analysis method that can be used as a self-assessment tool based on metacognition, with the use of a learning diary as a tool for reflection. The combination of these resources is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Developing in students a greater capacity for reflection, so as to promote decision making while interpreting.
- Increasing the autonomy of students through reflective teaching.

2. Evolution of methodological trends in interpretation didactics

There have been interpreters for as long as there have been borders. According to Baigorri (2000: 1), the work of interpreters has probably existed for even longer than that of translators. Kalina (2015) states that there is evidence that interpreter training dates back to quite distant times. As early as the ninth century some students would receive training in foreign languages, which they would later use in their work as interpreters. This training focused both on mastering the foreign language and on learning specific skills for interpreting (Wiotte-Franz 2001).

Efforts to train interpreters in academic institutions date back to the thirteenth century, when the Chancellor of the University of Paris was requested to establish a so-called Oriental College, in which students learned languages, law, science, mathematics, theology and medicine (Kalina 2015: 18). It is also interesting to note that Christopher Columbus procured Spanish-language training for the Native Americans he brought back with him from his travels, with the intention that once they learned Spanish they could serve as interpreters.

As Domínguez (2015: 64) indicates, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 is usually considered the starting point of the profession, as well as of the institution of preparation standards for it, since, from that moment forward, the demand for professionals increased and, as Kalina (2015: 18) points out, the need for training programs became apparent. As a result, some university institutions started offering the first training programs in interpreting, both consecutive and simultaneous. Domínguez (2015: 64) lists the following: Mannheim in 1930; Geneva, 1941; Ghent, 1941; Vienna, 1943; Gemersheim, 1946; Graz, 1947; and Saarbrücken, 1948. Specific interpreting courses also began to be offered outside of Europe.

In the 1950s, the first interpretation schools were founded: the ESIT (École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs), in 1958, and the ISIT (Institut Supérieur d'Interprétation et de Traduction), in 1959. As for the teaching approach used in these schools, Domínguez (2015: 65) points out that little is known; there was no specific methodology and the little information that has been gathered suggests that teachers simply focused on teaching the skills that they themselves had found useful in their professional practice.

In the 1970s, the so-called Theory of Sense (Seleskovitch 1975) emerged, in connection with the Paris School. This theory is considered to be very much inspired by practice. According to it, interpretation should not be based exclusively on linguistic elements; that is, interpreting is not just about translating words, it is also about restating the content of the speech. The work of Martin

(2015: 91) shows how the influence of the Seleskovitch model can be perceived in several common teaching practices, such as the dissociation of words and meaning, and also in a number of preinterpretation exercises.

Using the Seleskovitch model as her starting point, Lederer, in the 1980s, described the eight mental operations involved in the interpretation process. They are: hearing, understanding of the language, conceptualization, enunciation from cognitive memory, awareness of the situation, auditory control, transcoding of the message to another language and memory of specific meanings (Lederer 1981: 50).

Arumí and Domínguez (2013) point out that the methodologies used in interpreter training are receiving more and more academic attention, as evidenced by the growing number of PhD dissertations about this topic. In recent years it has become frequent to find contributions from authors who collect and systematize the different teaching practices, drawing from their own teaching experience. Examples are found in Baxter's (2012) and Alonso's work (1999, 2001, 2005, 2009).

2.1. *The use of technology in the interpretation classroom*

Dominguez (2015) discusses the influence that technological progress has had on the design of curricula. This influence is not something recent; in fact, the tendency to combine technology and interpretation teaching practice dates back to the 1990s, with the emergence of the CAIT (Computer Assisted Interpreter Training) tools, whose objective, says Sandrelli (2015: 116), is to improve teaching methodologies and provide support for students' independent learning.

The first CAIT tools were speech repositories. An example is IRIS (Interpreter's Resource Information System), an interactive multimedia database created in 1999 at the University of Trieste for the language combination English-Italian (Moro and Torres del Rey 2008: 113).

Before that, in 1995, De Ferra and Cervato, from the University of Hull, developed the *Interpr-it* project, which focused mainly on liaison interpreting (although a consecutive interpreting practice module was also offered). It consisted of a CD with eight interviews (Italian-English) and a series of exercises, so that students could practise both inside and outside of the classroom. After implementing this program, the authors concluded that its use contributed to a reduction in anxiety levels during interpretation (Sandrelli 2015: 122).

In 1999, at the same university, the *Interpretations* program was created by Sandrelli and Hawkins. This time, the focus was placed on simultaneous

interpreting, and the main difference with regard to the previous project was that, while *Interpr-it* was based on CD or DVD media, the new tool offered teachers a platform with which they could develop their own materials and structure them into modules and exercises (Sandrelli 2015: 122).

The *Interpretations* tool was very well received, so its creators soon turned it into a commercial program: Black Box. The commercial version had two main developments with respect to its predecessor. One, it could be used as a collaborative tool (originally, it had been conceived as a program for individual use only), and two, it included an exercise wizard to help teachers when creating tasks for their students.

In 2001, in Spain, the University of Granada created a database called *Marius* as a support tool for the aforementioned *Interpretations* or *Black Box*. According to De Manuel (2006), the main reason why the tool was developed was to offer a compilation of individual texts -all from video, analog or digital recordings- classified according to various criteria (duration, number of words, speed of elocution, speaker accent, etc.), and assigned to a certain mode of interpreting and learning phase (from initial/consecutive to simultaneous/advanced).

The European Commission offers free access to its Speech Repository 2.0, aimed at both interpreting students and teachers, and in which we find speeches of very different types, all classified according to languages, mode of interpreting, theme and level. There is another project by the European Commission, funded by the European Union, called ORCIT (Online Resources for the Training of Conference Interpreters) whose objective is to help design pedagogical tools for both students and teachers.

In addition, apps are now available that can be used to take notes for consecutive interpreting. Some, such as *Noteshelf*, *Penultimate* and *Evernote*, are not specific to interpretation, but can be useful for taking notes on a tablet. Research activity has also led to the design of technological tools to be used while interpreting. One example is *Cleopatra*, an app designed by interpreter Lourdes de la Torre, who has developed it as a training method in symbol automation.

All of these technological advances have inevitably led to changes in the methodologies used in the classroom, since teachers naturally wish to make use of the multiple advantages that technology can provide in class design.

3. *Coding*, a new video analysis software

Coding is a newly created video analysis tool intended for use in academic settings, to help students improve their performance thanks to the analysis of different parameters from video recordings. Therefore, it is useful not only for teachers, who can offer much more detailed feedback, but also for students, who can benefit from this program by watching their own videos and self-evaluating their work.

One of the main advantages of this tool is its user-friendliness. We simply record a video, set the parameters we wish to analyze and then, as the video is being viewed, mark aspects related to these parameters as they come up. At the end, we can extract the video clips that interest us most for our analysis.

As Baxter (2012: 65) indicates, some of the skills needed in professional consecutive interpreting are related to the interpersonal communication skills shown, to a greater or lesser extent, by students. Hence, another important function of this program is precisely to give students the opportunity to evaluate those skills, which usually receive less attention than the content-related ones.

3.1. *The advantages of video analysis in the interpretation classroom*

In recent years, video analysis has emerged as a valuable tool in the field of education. In general, it is researchers who, by analysing video images and sound, are able to reveal and document otherwise imperceptible realities (Baer and Schnettler 2014). However, it is not a resource whose sole purpose is research; it can also be used within the classroom for educational purposes.

Unlike translation, in which professionals can read, analyze and modify the target text as many times as necessary, an interpretation is volatile, that is, the more time passes, the less the interpreter will remember, which makes the process of reflecting on and evaluating one's interpretation and mistakes more difficult. The use of a video analysis tool manages to fill that gap and allows an interpreter to analyze his or her speech, detect bad habits such as poor posture or excessive gesticulation, and also the use of pet words or other errors that, due to the speed and concentration of the moment, may go unnoticed (for example, errors in meaning or unfinished sentences).

Video analysis is therefore a valuable tool for developing the skills of future interpreters, as it requires them to put into practice their abilities of observation, analysis and reflection. It also contributes to a better assimilation of theoretical content, which is necessary for effective self-evaluation.

4. A proposal for the integration of *Coding* in consecutive interpretation lessons

4.1. *Justification*

The ECTS credit system promotes independent work by students. However, in the case of interpretation, although students may be aware of the types of activities they can perform outside the classroom (exercises to improve memory, practice giving speeches, voice and breathing exercises, interpreting practice using specialized webpages, etc.), few of them actually manage to do them. Yet, since the curricula of Translation and Interpreting degrees generally have relatively few classes devoted to interpreting, in order for students to acquire the skills and competences necessary to become good interpreters, it is essential that they do independent work outside the classroom.

My proposal stems from the need to provide reinforcement activities that students can do at home in order to improve their performance in classes focusing on consecutive interpreting. As teachers, we find that students are often very concerned about transmitting the speech content and may forget about other formal elements present in any consecutive interpretation, such as posture and diction. Using the tool presented below will help students improve the quality of their interpretations. It should be noted that, due to the characteristics of the program, note-taking is not addressed, so this skill should be developed in the classroom or elsewhere through other specific exercises, proposed either by the teacher or through the use of apps, such as the aforementioned *Cleopatra*.

4.2. *The consecutive interpreting process*

Although numerous studies have looked closely at the interpreting process, there is no consensus yet regarding the phases it comprises. For example, Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) conceive it as composed by three operations: understanding, deverbalization, and restatement. On the other hand, Vanhecke and Lobato (2009) speak of four phases: listening, understanding, analyzing, and re-expressing. In his work, Gile (2009) makes reference to three types of efforts: listening and analysis, memory effort, and production effort. Finally, Bosch (2012) divides the cognitive processes performed in any interpretation into three large blocks: listening, understanding, and reformulation. However, he points out that, for consecutive interpreting, these phases vary, and distinguishes one more: discourse analysis, which takes place just before reformulation.

For our proposal, we will be adopting Bosch's triangular division, although our focus will be placed on the reformulation part, since it is in this process that students can benefit most from the use of video analysis as a learning tool.

4.3. *Self-assessment as the central axis of the learning process*

In traditional teaching methods, teachers act as transmitters of knowledge and, certainly, their contributions to, and assessments of student work are necessary. However, as mentioned above, in the case of interpreting classes, they are not sufficient. Self-assessment should play an important role as a learning resource for Translation and Interpreting students because it allows them to develop the skills and abilities that are necessary for the work of an interpreter.

Following Boud and Falchikov (1989: 529), by self-assessment we refer to the process by which students become involved in making value judgments about their achievements and the results of their learning. Although the ability to self-evaluate is not often addressed in lessons, it is one of the most important skills for the professional development of students, because interpretation competences can only be improved if we are aware of our mistakes. Self-assessment activities place students at the center of the learning process. It should be noted that, for a successful implementation of this learning resource, it is necessary to train students in its use. This is due to the fact that students often feel reluctant to evaluate themselves, because they believe they do not have the knowledge and necessary skills, or because they lack self-confidence. Thus, it will be imperative that teachers strengthen their students' intrapersonal intelligence in class. In fact, Article 9 of the UNESCO *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action*, conveys this idea by saying that "Higher education institutions should educate students to become well informed and deeply motivated citizens, who can think critically, analyse problems of society, look for solutions to the problems of society, apply them and accept social responsibilities." Therefore, the objective of higher education institutions should be to train autonomous, reflective and cognitive professionals who are able to reflect on their own learning process, assess themselves and monitor their own learning. In this way, the teacher adopts the role of a mentor, and provides support in the learning process, meaning that he/she becomes more of a *facilitator* of knowledge, while the student is responsible for the process, understanding that learning occurs not only in the classroom, but also outside it.

Monereo i Font (1995) believes that promoting metacognition in the classroom favors student learning, and Corsellis (2005) agrees with this assertion,

as metacognition contributes to the development of autonomy and constitutes of the basic skills required of every professional interpreter. However, in education, the ability of students to monitor their own cognitive activity is not sufficient, and another fundamental variable comes into play, which is motivation (Pintrich and De Groot 1990). García and Doménech (1997) speak of two types of motivation: an intrinsic motivation, that comes from the learner, and an extrinsic motivation, that comes from outside and is more related to forms of satisfaction alien to the activity itself, for example, getting good grades.

4.4. Evaluating quality in interpretation

The earliest investigations into the quality of interpretation identified content as the main evaluation criterion, as indicated by Errico and Morelli (2015). Later on, Collados (1998) empirically demonstrated that other aspects, such as a monotone voice, can have a negative influence on the overall assessment of an interpretation, even if the transmission of meaning has been totally correct.

To ensure the effectiveness of self-assessment when students use our video analysis tool, we have developed a rubric to guide them in their evaluation. The rubric reflects the competences that an interpretation student must have, as proposed by Vanhecke and Lobato (2009). According to these authors, in order to become a good interpreter, the following skills are required:

- Knowledge of the working languages.
- Analysis and synthesis capacity.
- Ability to extract intuitively the sense of the speech.
- Ability to concentrate.
- Good short- and medium-term memory.
- Acceptable voice and presence.
- Intellectual curiosity, intellectual honesty and broad general culture tact, and sense of diplomacy.
- Good health, physical endurance, and the ability to withstand stress.

This list of competences clearly places great importance on the paralinguistic system, which, according to Cestero (2006), includes aspects such as phonic qualities and modifiers; sounds indicating physiological and emotional reactions; quasi-lexical elements; and pauses and silences which, based on their meaning or some of their inferential components, communicate or clarify the meaning of the verbal statements. Therefore, in addition to reproducing the content of the speech properly, interpreters must pay close attention to other

aspects, such as intonation, voice intensity and speed, as these also have an impact on the quality of their interpretation.

Keeping in mind all of these aspects, a rubric with two large blocks was designed, with one block to analyze the content of the discourse and the other, to analyze the form. As students view the video of their interpretation, they can complete the rubric.

CONTENT	Yes	No
1. Does my interpretation have inconsistent ideas due to a misunderstanding of the original or lack of concentration and which prevent the audience from understanding/following the speech?		
2. Are there omissions in my target speech? If so, what type of omissions? (figures, names, verbs, etc.)		
3. Do I end all my sentences?		
4. Are there any countersenses in my speech?		
5. Do faux senses appear in my speech?		
6. Does my interpretation contain calques? If so, which type?		
7. Do I show problem-solving competence in my speech? (I am able to apply other types of strategies when I don't know or can't remember a specific word)		
8. Am I able to correct myself?		
9. Have I benefited from prior knowledge/general culture at any point in my speech? If so, please provide specific examples:		
10. Is the target language used adequately (idiomatic expressions, naturalness, correct syntax, lack of literalness, etc.)?		
11. Am I able to transmit all the information or make a correct selection of the most important ideas?		
12. Do I use a wide and varied lexicon in my speech?		
FORM		
13. Does my speech transmit insecurity due to an excessive use of pet words, such as "eh..." or "mmm..."?		
14. Is the pace of my speech adequate/appropriate? (I speak at a speed that allows my speech to be understood easily and is consistent throughout the speech.)		
15. Is my intonation adequate/appropriate? (My intonation helps the audience to better understand the message, e.g., key parts of the speech are emphasized.)		

16. Is the intensity of my voice adequate? (Is the speech loud and clear?)		
17. Is my diction good? (e.g., no problems are identified when pronouncing certain consonants.)		
18. Do I use stylistic strategies (change of voice tone, stress, speed of speech, emphasis, etc.) effectively?		
19. Do I establish eye contact with the audience throughout the speech?		
20. Is my body posture correct?		

4.5. *The learning diary*

Many authors (García Doval 2005; Fernández Polo and Cal Varela 2011; Jiménez 2011) believe that a learning diary is a very valuable pedagogical tool because it favors autonomy, since it is the student who takes responsibility for the process through which he or she will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to improve his/her performance.

We propose that, once the video analysis is done, students reflect in writing the strengths and weaknesses of their interpretation. It is intended that students carry out this exercise every week. The idea is that, by verbalizing the aspects that they still need to improve, they will be more aware of them and, almost unconsciously, will focus on improving them in prospective interpretations.

5. Conclusions

New technologies and the demands of the ECTS credit system are encouraging teachers to rethink their teaching methodologies. In this context of change, it is essential that we make the most of technological tools. This article focuses on the independent work required of students and it advocates the use of video analysis as an effective way to draw connections between theory and practice. Video analysis is an extremely valuable tool because it places the student at the center of the learning process. Its regular use by student interpreters has the following advantages:

- It helps students develop their analytical capacity, because they must learn to detect certain parameters and evaluate them.
- It promotes students' metacognition as a strategy to improve their performance.

- It boosts students' autonomy, since, by placing them at the center of the learning process, they start controlling it.
- It motivates them, because, thanks to the learning diary, they keep a record of the progress they make. Here, the importance of the teacher's work should be highlighted, as often students focus only on the negative aspects of their speech. In those cases, it is important for the teacher to intervene and point out the positive parts.

In conclusion, the combination of video analysis and a learning diary can be a valuable contribution to the improvement of interpretation teaching practice. It constitutes an effective complement to the work done in the classroom, it can be performed autonomously by students, and allows for the integration of new technologies in the teaching practice.

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BIONOTE / BIONOTA

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