Robin Setton (ed.)

Interpreting Chinese, Interpreting China

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Interpreting Chinese, Interpreting China

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Edited by

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Table of contents

Book Reviews

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Robin SETTON has been a professional conference interpreter since 1979, with active English and French and passive German and (lately) Chinese, and is currently on staff at the OECD. He has trained interpreters and designed and led training courses iat schools in Europe and the Far East, including Paris (ESIT, Sorbonne), Geneva (ETI), Taipei and currently Shanghai (GIIT/SISU) where he has developed a doctoral programme in interpreting studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and separate postgraduate degrees in Conference Interpretation, Translation, Chinese Studies and Linguistics from the University of Paris (Sorbonne), and is the author of a monograph (Simultaneous interpretation: a cognitive-pragmatic analysis: Benjamins, 1999) and articles on cognitive, linguistic cultural and pedagogical aspects of interpreting.

INTRODUCTION

Interpreting China – practice, training and research

Robin Setton
SISU-GIIT (Shanghai) / ESIT (Paris)

The decision to publish a collection of recent Chinese research on interpreting was initially just a bow to serendipity – a sudden windfall of promising papers from Chinese authors. But of course this wind from the East is no more fortuitous than the rotation of the earth. In interpreting studies as in other ways, China has been putting itself back on the map with a surge of writing on interpreting past and present, training and quality, some of the best examples of which are presented in this volume.

The blossoming of interpreting studies in China is a natural by-product of its spectacular re-engagement with the world. China's size, cultural weight and present trajectory make its ideas on intercultural communication worthy of our close attention. If this is to be the century of the Pacific, English and Chinese may well be its languages.

In some ways the emergence of interpreting in China is following familiar patterns – the discovery of its relationship to translation, and to language learning; the negotiation of institutional status for training; and the initial fascination and glamour of simultaneous interpreting at international conferences. But in other ways, history, demographics and present-day demands are shaping a profession somewhat different from the one that grew up in Europe fifty years ago. Unlike the early European interpreters, who were well-travelled bi- or tri-linguals exposed fairly evenly to the cultures of their different languages, or today's EU multilinguals, perhaps 98% of interpreters of Chinese are Chinese native speakers, and fewer than one in five have lived for more than a month or two outside China (Setton & Guo 2009). Practice is fully bidirectional, requiring simultaneous into a language usually acquired only through formal schooling and personal study – and more often, in this direction, from fast, recited formal or ceremonial speeches with little or no preparation, a hazard probably still more common in China than elsewhere. Government (both central and local) is by far the largest employer, with most routine day-to-day interpreting done by civil-servant interpreter-translators with language degrees, but who often have other duties and other career plans. Professionalisation, as elsewhere, has little support from official quarters and is promoted essentially by a small but growing group of freelance conference interpreters exposed to the international scene through the UN and a budding private market. As this sector grows and China begins to host major international events, the authorities have recognised a real need for reliable, quality interpreting and have approved specialist postgraduate training programmes, though experienced instructors are still a rare commodity, and the line between language teaching and interpreter training remains blurred in the educational system generally. Research is taking its first steps, drawing on both foreign and home-grown doctrines and experience; not surprisingly, the specificity of Chinese and its differences from 'Western languages' is a prevalent theme. In Taiwan, interpreting has strong academic connections, and an official accreditation scheme for interpreters and translators is now in place. In Hong Kong, a traditional centre of academic translation studies, interpreter training and practice are still centred in the local government with its team of staff and freelance professionals.

These features of the Chinese interpreting scene, though not unique in the world, are readily explained in the historical context, and if a foreign observer of interpreting in China, 'admiring flowers from horseback', can make any contribution at all it is by helping an international readership to understand them.

The historical and cultural context

In Western eyes, China looks mysterious and exotic, its language inaccessible, and its history and culture not only ancient and complex, but also self-referential. Unlike the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds with their seemingly endless and open cultural exchanges through war, trade and foreign travel, the Middle Kingdom seems to have lived self-sufficiently through the dynasties with little need for outside contact. The Journey to the West in search of the Buddhist sutras (and their subsequent translation), the Silk Road and contacts with Persia or the Califate, and the fourteenth-century naval expeditions of the explorer Zheng He (with his interpreter-cum-chronicler Ma Huan), stand out as exceptional forays in a history in which foreign contact was limited to routine dealings with vassals, but never rivals or equals. The Middle Kingdom spread its customs and script throughout the region, as its civilization matured far from the rumblings to the West. By the time the colonial powers forced open the doors it had developed a socio-political, cultural and linguistic fabric so dense and so different that only a stubborn few have tried to penetrate it (see also Setton 1993). As a result, a re-emergent China must be interpreted to the rest of the world by its own people.

Some might estimate at a generation, perhaps two the time needed before Chinese is interpreted by independent and culturally mixed professionals on the international model; but others may not see this as necessary or desirable. What appears to Western eyes as a closed, self-referential society is proudly defended from within as a culture of self-sufficiency, refinement and self-empowerment through selective integration. Whether or not Chinese is interpreted by a significant proportion of non-Chinese at some future time, foreign models and learning are welcome in the early stages of development.

In reality, China has always had its explorers and researchers, and its learners of foreign languages, albeit from the comfort of home. Confucianism values learning and the application of what is learned, but in a spirit of historical continuity, and 'holding the centre'; for the Tao, all wisdom can be derived from the dialectical analysis of what is right here in front of us. The recent history of accelerated contact and interaction with the rest of the world has not weakened, and perhaps even strengthened the keen awareness and pride among the Chinese of being heirs to a unique and ancient civilization; and of an *integrity* to be further preserved and prolonged, now as in the past – when the border chieftains who broke through the Wall became Chinese even as they ascended the throne and founded a new dynasty – by the *integration* of things foreign. The great wave of translation in modern times, introducing the 'Western learning' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fed national renewal without shaking the fundamental distinction between 'nei' and 'wai', the inner and the outer.

This historical context – 'nei-wai', pride, autarchy, a different tradition of contacts with the outside world, and instincts of allegiance or (in)dependence vis-à-vis the work-unit or the nation – helps to understand the themes running through discourse on Chinese interpreting today: the claims for the uniqueness of interpreting from or into Chinese, the curious but critical attitude to international doctrines and models, and the issue of what kind of professionalisation is best suited to China (for different perspectives see e.g. Dawrant & Jiang 2001; Gile 2006).

The very fact of these debates nevertheless reflects the emergence and recognition of a distinct interpreting community, with its independent and staff practitioners, its training schools, conferences, blogs and journals, where thirty years ago there was none.

Profession, training and research

Both on the mainland and across the straits in Taiwan, the catalyst was a sudden demand for quality interpreting as these societies emerged from command economies and came into intensive contact with the outside world and its international organisations and multinational corporations.

On the mainland, 'opening-up' gathered pace through the 80s and 90s, reaching a climax with WTO accession in 2002. Staff interpreter-translators in ministries first gained UN experience, and some eventually took the plunge (*xiahai*) into more lucrative freelance practice. These professionals have since been joined by graduates from the new training schools to form a small community of conference interpreters, concentrated in Beijing and Shanghai, who now also serve a dynamic private market, and many of whom have joined AIIC.[1] However, in the new hybrid 'socialist-market' economy, a good deal of day-to-day interpreting is still done by staff with an institutional base, and many trained interpreters still begin their career in the relative security of a government job.[2]

On Taiwan, a much smaller market for conference interpreting is now largely supplied by two local schools, housed in a private and a government-run University respectively,[3] as well as some self-trained interpreters. On both sides of the strait, as elsewhere, private agencies and event organisers are taking significant chunks of the new market. But in contrast to Japan, where these agencies dominate and even train 'their' interpreters, in China the government has recognised the emerging industry and is exploring ways of managing and regulating it, establishing interpreter training firmly within the national educational system.

In their report, **Wang Binhua and Mu Lei** provide an overview of research and training in mainland China, as seen from Guangdong Foreign Studies University. Interpreting and translating courses are proliferating, generating intensive discussion of curricula and training methods and a wave of publications and graduate theses on different aspects of interpreting.

Interpreter training in China now finds itself in a transitional phase combining both promise and challenges. On the one hand, the authorities have shown a clear recognition of the need for proper training with the official approval and launch, in 2007, of a nationwide standardized Masters Programme, the MTI (in two streams, MT & MI); and some central and municipal administrations have developed their own short but robust in-house training courses, especially in consecutive. On the other hand, as Wang & Mu point out, qualified instructors are still in short supply.

There are also problems of definition. China's re-opening has also created a sudden need for general language skills: in 2000, interpreting was made a compulsory course for all undergraduates majoring in English, and in a historic move, translation (yi) has been added to the traditional 'four language competencies' – understanding, speaking, reading and writing – expected of students at every level. In the rush, some blurring has occurred – for example, many of the highly popular 'Certificates of Interpreting' now on offer are not clearly distinguishable from certificates of English language proficiency. All these factors make for hesitation on difficult decisions such as selection, and in some cases the temptation to compromise on selection and standards.

The training deficit varies between segments of the market. Staff public-service and in-house corporate interpreter-translators, who do the bulk of day-to-day interpreting in China, are still mostly unspecialised language graduates with at best some on-the-job training. Much hope is being placed in the new MI, which is still in its pilot phase: it is not yet clear whether its focus will be conference interpreting or upgrading skills for the larger market for public-service-oriented interpreting. One model currently being discussed is a multiple-branched 'Y' structure, in which trainees would be streamed into these different specializations after the first or second semester.

The research boom is a welcome development, although quantity is not, of course, a guarantee of quality. As Wang & Mu (and Gile 2008) point out, much of this production still takes the form – as elsewhere in the past – of speculative discussion, practitioners' personal narratives about practice or training, and many repeat publications. Graduate students write theses (from 12 to 18 every year since 2004) in a difficult environment where conditions for research are still rudimentary, international bibliographic sources are expensive and hard to come by, and qualified, experienced advisors and instructors are few and far between. If the six papers presented here stand out for their quality, it is perhaps no coincidence that five of them are based on doctoral or post-doctoral research conducted in Taiwan, Hong Kong or overseas.

A plethora of textbooks and handbooks have also appeared (over 100 in the last few years) with the word 'Interpreting' in the title. Most of these are of the DIY variety, and with few exceptions, it must be said, are indistinguishable from textbooks for advanced English learning. Two such exceptions – textbooks authored by experienced trainer-practitioners and thought to be in fairly widespread use – are described and evaluated in our reviews section, by two leading trainer-interpreters– **Chen Yanjun** of UIBE (Beijing), and **Zhou Xiaofeng**, formerly of the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Bureau and Shanghai International Studies University and now at the United Nations.

These book reviews round off a collection of contemporary work from the Chinese-speaking research community in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas. The six papers cover a range of issues, from the historical background to interpreting in China, through the linguistic and socio-cultural challenges of contemporary practice in conference, court or signedlanguage interpreting, to theoretical and practical work in training, testing and certification; and in a variety of approaches, from scholarly historiography through corpus and discourse analysis to controlled experimentation supported by sophisticated statistics.

* * *

Our selection begins in the distant past. **Rachel Lung**, of Lingnan University in Hong Kong, gives us a fascinating snapshot of translating and interpreting in China 2000 years ago, in the (uneven, tributary) relationship between the officials of the Han dynasty (first century CE) and its neighbours, as perceived by an interpreter, his immediate supervisor, and a rather special 'final user': the Emperor. These images are strongly reminiscent of the contacts between the envoy of the Pharaoh and his Nubian vassals described by Hermann (1956/2002) and Kurz (1985), except that here we have a far richer archive that paints a picture both exotic and familiar: an interpreter of lowly official rank, steeped in the culture of the border tribes, which he presents to an exceptional client curious about the oral tradition and customs of his future subjects (6 million of them, soon to be absorbed into the Empire), and between them the Inspector, overseeing our interpreter's inevitable propaganda and civilising function as the agent of the Han throne – each, as ever, with their different perceptions of the nature and functions of 'yi': interpreting and translation.

Xiao Xiaoyan and **Yu Ruiling**, from Xiamen University, describe the current status and practice of interpreting vis-à-vis a community within: the deaf. As one might expect in a vast and mostly rural developing country, this survey of sign language interpreters and their users reveals a community still 'under the radar', largely reliant on friends and family for contact with the hearing world, due to the shortage and low status of SL interpreters, and overwhelmingly on the receiving end of a distinctly asymmetrical flow of communication. One aggravating factor is worth remarking on for a more general lesson that could be drawn: the imposition of an idealised language (basically, signed written Chinese) – due partly to the fact that, perhaps uniquely in SLI, virtually all interpreting into SL is done into B (by hearing interpreters) – produces unsurprising results: resistance and consequent low expectations of interpreting on the part of users, and in the extreme case of the SLI service provided on television, almost total failure. Here again, the issue of the balanced representation of both cultures (and the interpreter's personal experience and identification with them) takes on a particular significance. However, things may be changing, and the authors end on a note of hope for progress when the rights of the deaf community, with its own culture and language, are acknowledged alongside those of China's 56 other recognised minorities.

The following two papers take us deep into the practical, linguistic challenges of interpreting 'at the coalface', in fast-moving and sometimes high-stakes dialogue strewn with potential socio-cultural traps. Both papers provide a rich array of extracts from real interpreted exchanges in international conference and criminal court settings respectively.

Chia-chien Chang and Michelle Min-chia Wu, from Taipei, describe how interpreters, often necessarily working into a B language, handle the irrational, Byzantine conventions of forms of address in Chinese and English in a complex variety of linguistic mediation parameters, depending on whether questioners, speakers, addressees and/or other passive participants are speaking or listening to their own or the foreign language – where the participants themselves, on whom the study therefore focuses, inevitably make potentially offensive errors. The situation is further complicated with occasional 'relay' consecutive for Japanese, Korean or French participants, each with their own cultural conventions – not to mention subtle variations in politeness conventions within the English- and Chinese-speaking worlds, such as between Californians and Britons, or Taiwanese and Mainlanders. With examples from an impressive corpus (110 minutes), the authors offer some tentative but intriguing observations – explicit or implicit – about register, cultural mediation, coping tactics and priorities, with clarity of communication as an overriding imperative.

Ester Leung and John Gibbons take us into Hong Kong Common Law courts in which alleged sex offenders are being cross-examined in Cantonese by overtly sceptical, sarcastic or cajoling counsel, with both questions and answers interpreted for an officially English-speaking court. Cantonese is rich in particles which speakers tack onto the end of a question or comment to express variations of mood, attitude, or illocutionary force. In the adversarial setting of the courtroom, where 'discourse is a type of warfare, in which the strategy is linguistic rather than military', these interpreters (again, working into B) seem to do an admirable job of using the available English resources – for the most part, intonation – to convey shades of attitude ranging from dismissive, threatening or exasperated on one side to uncomfortable, recalcitrant, or indignant on the other. A combined quantitative and qualitative analysis yields promising preliminary findings on the type and relative frequency of different linguistic devices used by interpreters, defendants, witnesses and counsel – with 100 hours of audio-taped proceedings to analyse, a promising start to work in progress.

The remaining two papers take us respectively into the world of training, and its corollary, testing and certification, exploring such key aspects of texts as coherence and difficulty.

Gracie Peng offers us a tool for measuring coherence in consecutive interpreting, and better still, visualising it for pedagogical (and student self-evaluation) purposes. Peng's initial investigation of 66 samples of consecutive interpretation (for her PhD at Leeds, on which the paper is based) confirmed that novices had difficulty getting beyond local cohesion, while expert performances displayed more global structure. The methodological challenge lies in seeing beyond the pervasive surface variability of performance data (in the words themselves) to a generalisable measure of structure. In Rhetorical Structure Theory (Mann & Thompson 1986), she found a way of analysing and representing the overall cohesive 'depth' of a speech segment as a structure of 'trees' and 'bushes' – a rare example indeed of theory practically applied to pedagogy with demonstrable success.

Minhua Liu and Yu-Hsien Chiu address the important but hitherto under-researched question of how to assess the difficulty of source texts and speeches, building on a series of officially-funded studies conducted over the past years, under the first author's supervision, to prepare the introduction of translator and interpreter certification/accreditation in Taiwan. This is among the most challenging topics in translation studies, and even in mere discourse comprehension, from which Liu & Chiu borrow an initial set of indicators such as word difficulty, sentence length and information density. These are triangulated with expert (peer) judgement, the more-or-less holistic method traditionally used by examiners in choosing materials or weighing performance against perceived difficulty during the exam. Like Peng faced with the challenge of measuring coherence, Liu and Chiu begin by flagging the problem of individual variability in such judgments, as well as the many contextual and environmental factors to be taken into account and the difficulty of reaching consensus, but she concludes in traditional scientific vein that this is all the more reason not to attempt to solve the problem holistically. The study, conducted with the author's well-known thoroughness and rigour, would have been suspicious if it had produced a clear straightforward conclusion on all counts. In the event, one indicator, information density, clearly emerged as significant – thus making a solid start on a vexed issue which can now no longer be dismissed as intractable.

As Editor it remains for me to thank my friends and colleagues Franz Pöchhacker and Miriam Shlesinger, editors of *Interpreting*, for their unflagging help and support, as well as the many scholars and colleagues who helped with background information and references, and especially, the authors and reviewers for their

patience and scholarship in giving us a fascinating look beyond a new frontier – one could almost say onto a new continent – in the expanding world of interpreting studies.

Robin Setton
Paris, 2009

Notes

1. AIIC membership as of January 2011: Mainland China 29, Hong Kong 14, Taiwan 8.

2. For more details on the early development of conference interpreting in China, see Dawrant and Jiang 2001 and Dawrant 2008

3. GITIS, at Fujen Catholic University (since 1988) and GITI, at National Taiwan Normal University (since 1996), both in Taipei.

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Perceptions of translating/interpreting in first-century China

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This article analyzes evidence of translating and interpreting activities (indiscriminately referred to as *yi* (譯), which also denotes translators or interpreters in classical Chinese) in first-century China between the Latter Han (25–220 AD) Chinese administration and non-Han Chinese minority tribes along the then Southwestern frontier (modern Yunnan and Sichuan provinces). The importance of this archival record to the historical study of translation and interpreting is two-fold. First, it contains crucial details pertinent to translating and interpreting activities in China in antiquity. Second, it documents concepts of *yi* synchronically, as perceived by three main participants in the interpreting events: the emperor, the frontier inspector, and the frontier clerk cum interpreter. The presentation of what they actually wrote, said, and did in the first-century interpreting setting in China, with close reference to standard histories, objectively depicts the meanings of *yi* as perceived by these figures at the time.

Introduction

The absence of a lexical term in English to refer to both translation and interpreting has been taken to be a linguistic inadequacy in the general discussion of language mediation (Pöchhacker 2004a). Paradoxically, another problem of linguistic inadequacy is present in classical Chinese for exactly the opposite reason: the term *yi* (譯) is capable of denoting, at once, translation, interpreting, translators, and interpreters.[1] In fact, concepts of translation (written) and interpreting (oral) were not meticulously distinguished until the modern coinage of *biyi* (筆譯) (literally, pen translation) and *kouyi* (口譯) (literally, oral translation) in Modern Standard Chinese,[2] deriving from the root of *yi*. However, there was indeed a reason why concepts relating to language mediation were blended, in antiquity, into the umbrella term of *yi*. The inquiry as to how and why such a process of language change took place is beyond the scope of this article. The fact is that when one goes back far enough in histories to examine language mediation, one finds interpreting somehow intertwined with translating activities. In other words, the historical study of interpreting is inseparable from the historical study of translation.

Etymologically, before the term *yi* dominated the semantic field of language mediation in classical Chinese, it was merely one of the four designations, of equal standing, used to refer to language mediators in early imperial China. Martha Cheung (2005), for example, analyses the meanings of these four earliest designations for interpreters or translators in China (to be discussed further below) and attempts to draw links between their epistemology and their potential relevance to translation theories. Likewise, in attempting to extrapolate Asian translation traditions, Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi (2005) emphasize the significance of tracing the etymological definitions of translation in different Asian contexts and maintain that

> The very terminology used in relation to translational activities today can be better understood by tracing its etymology and how these terms have changed over time and accumulated an encrustation of meanings — meanings that do not always map one-to-one onto their English "equivalents"…Although we need to be aware of placing too much credence in etymological explanations, the original concepts underpinning such terms — and how they might differ from the concept underlying the term "translation" — merit consideration. (Hung & Wakabayashi 2005: 2)

In this article,[3] the same explorative motif motivated my investigation of, first, albeit briefly, names attached to interpreters or translators in antiquity in Europe and in China; and second, synchronic perceptions of *yi* in first-century China, drawing on specific interpreting and translating events recorded in its standard history.

Earliest records of labels for interpreters

Unlike the umbrella term *yi* in classical Chinese which may loosely refer to both the *act* of translating or interpreting and the *person* who translates or interprets, the European referents for translating and interpreting are often discretely defined. As Pöchhacker (2004b: 9) puts it, "the concept of interpreting is expressed by words whose etymology is largely autonomous from that of (written) translation" in many European languages. In Germanic, Scandinavian, and Slavic languages, expressions denoting a person who interprets can be traced to the term *targumanu* as far back as 1900 BC. This is also the origin of the Arabic term *tarjumān* ترجمان or the Turkish *Turcüman*. The borrowing of terms that refer to translators across different language cultures seems to be quite common in ancient languages

(Behr 2004: 192), although the direction of borrowing is not always clear from existing evidence. A clear case of such borrowed words was put forward by Rezhake (1994: 9), who noticed that *tərjimə*, *kilmak*, and *tərjiman* are words borrowed from the Arabic with reference to translators in the Uighur lexicon. However, apart from the designation itself, the available records had little to say about the interpreter's personal experience, whether mundane or dramatic, until the documentation of illustrious 16th- and 17th-century interpreters, such as Doňa Marina and Étienne Brûlé (Bowen et al. 1995). Similarly, *dragoman* was used in the English-speaking world to refer to interpreters. In ancient Egypt, foreigners were considered "wretched barbarians", and interpreters were somewhat disparagingly labeled as "speakers of strange tongues" (Hermann 1956/2002: 15). The other title for interpreter — as well as translator — was the Latin "*interpres*," which stands for middleman, intermediary, commercial go-between and expounder (Hermann 1956/2002: 18).[4]

To be sure, the earliest records of interpreters in China do not date as far back as those of Europe, but its elaborate records about interpreting and interpreters go beyond the mere documentation of designations. In fact, more concrete information about interpreters in ancient China can be located in its historical sources, thanks to its time-honored tradition of meticulous historiography. One widely quoted reference that survives as China's earliest trace of discourse on translation, written around 1000 BC, is the following:

> 五方之民，言語不通，嗜欲不同。達其志，通其欲，東方曰寄，南方曰象，西方曰狄鞮，北方曰譯。(禮記．王制)
>
> …The people of the five regions differ in words and languages, as well as in their predilections and desires. Trusted to make accessible their will and communicate their desires, those mediating in the east are called Ji, in the south, Xiang, in the west, Didi, [and] in the north, yi… .[5] (Royal Institutions in *Book of Rites*; my translation)

Of these four designations (*ji* [寄], *xiang* [象], *Didi* [狄鞮], and *yi* [譯]) to denote translators or interpreters in ancient China,[6] only *yi* survives to modern times in the contemporary lexicon, while the other three remain historical and classical references to inter(or intra)-lingual mediators, such as (象寄之才), literally "talent [in the discipline] of *xiang* and *Ji*".[7] The exact time when *yi* first replaced the other labels and became the exclusive way of referring to translating (translators) or interpreting (interpreters) cannot be confirmed in existing evidence, but must have been sometime around 220 BC during the Qin (221–207 BC) and the Former Han (206 BC–9 AD) dynasties because those three designations were by then obsolete in references to translation officials. It was never clear, however, why there were no separate lexical items for interpreting and translating in classical Chinese. It can be argued that *yi*, as a profession, was then not so systematically understood or analyzed because of its association with the "wretched barbarians" and its inherent inferior official ranking (usually the 7th to the 9th rank in a 9-tier system). Its peripheral nature in both their scope of duties (dealing with exotic frontier peoples) and official ranking might explain why no distinction was made between written and oral translation activities as was done in western civilization. Besides, no available evidence has suggested that typical translation officials in early imperial China actually performed both written and oral translation duties. Information about their job specifications remains extremely limited to date. Nonetheless, one can also legitimately argue that the indistinctive nature of *yi* as a term in classical Chinese, in fact, aptly reflects people's vague understanding of its nature as an activity in ancient China. Indisputably, the quotation above is an anonymous but valuable description of interpreters and interpreting in the remote past. What it lacks, however, is a personal perspective against specific timeframes. This makes a synchronic analysis of the perceptions of *yi* to be presented in this article all the more important to the current literature on the historical study of translation, since it informs us about the way in which people involved in interpreting events in first-century China perceived *yi*, both as the act and as the agent of language mediation.

The following discussion is structured in three parts: first, an introduction to the historical and political backgrounds leading to the aforementioned interpreting and translating events; second, descriptions of the interpreting and translation activities surrounding a first-century tributary event; and finally, discussion of the meanings of *yi* as perceived by three principal participants in the inter-lingual encounters, namely, a frontier Inspector, his clerk cum interpreter, and the emperor.

Background of interpreting events in first-century China

Multi-ethnicity has long been a character of the existence of China since its earliest recorded activities along the Yellow River. The Central Plain has been home to peoples of different ethnic composition.[8] During the Han dynasty, the *Huaxia* (華夏) people (widely known later as Han [漢]) gradually became the most prominent of the numerous ethnic groups, since they held key positions in the central government. Elsewhere on the Central Plain, in fact, there lived many non-Han minority groups (generally labeled *Yi* [夷], literally, barbarians or exotic [ones]), whose material culture was far less sophisticated than that of the Han people.

In pre-historic China, the southwestern region was divided into the Ba (巴) and Shu (蜀) areas (around the present-day Sichuan [四川] Basin) in the east and the southwestern-barbarian (Xinanyi [西南夷]) area in the west. Our concern in this article is the southwestern-barbarian region, which includes the south and west of the Sichuan Basin as well as a large part of modern Yunnan (雲南) province. It was a region interlaced with tribes of primarily Qiang (羌) and Di (氐) ethnic origins which had scattered among numerous tribal communities.[9] Its linguistic situation was hardly known except that languages spoken there were incomprehensible to outsiders, and little remains of the written language (Wang 1986; Zhang 2004).

Interpreting encounters with frontier tribes

In order to fully integrate these indigenous peoples into Chinese civilization and eventually into the Han Chinese Empire, the Latter Han government encouraged them to develop a sedentary lifestyle. Notably, benevolent officials were often assigned to assist their social and economic development, with the ultimate goal of assimilating and civilizing them.

Zhu Fu (朱輔), who was keen to publicize the Han governance among frontier tribes, was then Inspector (or *cishi* [刺史]) of Yi Province (益州),[10] where the non-Han Southwestern tribes in question resided. As the quotation below indicates, Zhu Fu was committed to his task and was distinguished by his achievements in assimilating the tribal peoples in China. With no knowledge of the tribal vernacular, however, Zhu Fu relied on his Senior Clerk, Tian Gong (田恭), to liaise with the tribesmen. After a few years of effort, Zhu Fu had been able to integrate many of these tribes into the mainstream administration. Their gestures of submission to the Latter Han government and their wish to become Chinese subjects were documented in *Houhanshu* as follows:

> (後漢明帝)永平中，益州刺史朱輔，好立功名，慷慨有大略。在州數歲，宣示漢德，威懷遠夷。白狼、槃木、唐菆等百餘國，戶百三十餘萬，口六百萬以上，舉種奉貢，稱為臣僕。輔上疏曰："……今白狼王唐菆等慕化歸義，作詩三章……繈負老幼，若歸慈母。遠夷之語，辭意難正。草木異種，鳥獸殊類。有犍為郡掾田恭與之習押，頗曉其言，臣輒令詳其風俗，譯其辭語。今遣從事史李陵與田恭護送詣闕，並上其樂詩。"帝嘉之，事下史官，錄其歌焉，並載夷人本語為注。(Shortened by author)
>
> In the middle of the Yongping reign period (Emperor Ming of the Latter Han), the Inspector of Yi Province, Zhu Fu, aspired to be commended in his career and was known to be a generous person with vision. During the several years posted in the Province, he preached the virtues and benevolence of the [Latter] Han [dynasty], which overwhelmed the distant barbarians. Over a hundred tribes, Bailang, Pan-

> mu, and Tangqu included, amounting to more than 1.3 million households and six million people, paid tribute as a [non-Han ethnic] group and called themselves subjects and servants.
>
> In Zhu Fu's memorandum, it is said that: "…Now, Bailang, Tangqu, and other tribes composed three poems out of their utmost admiration and respect for Chinese civilization and righteousness. …The babies and the elderly rode piggyback on [the young and strong on their capital-bound trip] — a trip, which was likened to a homeward-bound journey to greet their loving mothers. The language of the distant barbarians was incomprehensible, and their vegetation, birds, and animals were equally exotic. A Senior Clerk in the Qianwei commandery, called Tian Gong, was familiar with them and therefore mastered their language quite well. Your servant (I) often had him investigate their customs and interpret their language. Now, [I] ask my general staff, Li Ling, and Tian Gong to chaperone them so they can come [to the imperial court] and dedicate their music and poems."[11] The emperor commended Zhu Fu and asked the history officer to make a record of the sung poems, with annotations on barbarian pronunciation. (*Houhanshu*, ch. 86: 2854–2855; Lung's translation, 2008: 232–3)

Thanks to the emperor's prompt instruction to keep a Chinese rendition of the sung poems and of the subsequent record kept in *Houhanshu*,[12] we are better informed of interpreting and translation activities in first-century China. Taking into account Zhu Fu's zeal to integrate minority tribes into the mainstream Chinese administration, one would be more inclined to regard the tribute mission not simply as a plain initiation of the exotic tribes, but rather as a project masterminded by the Inspector, someone known to have "aspired to be commended in his career" and "preached the virtues and benevolence of the Han" along the frontier.[13] If Zhu Fu was indeed the director of this tribute saga, it would be significant to examine his understanding of and attitudes towards *yi* (interpreting or interpreters) — a pivotal factor in his scheme.

Zhu Fu's perception of *Yi*

Zhu Fu was the patron of interpreting services provided by his Senior Clerk, Tian Gong. He regularly asked Tian Gong to mediate his exchanges with the tribal communities on the basis of Tian Gong's knowledge of their language and customs. To the Inspector, *yi* is not only a language mediator, but also a cultural go-between. In his memorandum to the emperor, he wrote, "Your servant (I) often had him investigate their customs and interpret their language." (臣輒令詳其風俗，譯其辭語。) This is of interest to historians and theoreticians of translation in two regards: first, it was an interpreting event in which cultural consideration was documented — not theoretically, but contextually — as a concern in inter-lingual encounters as early as first-century China; second, cross-cultural knowledge was considered a quality of the interpreter, apart from his bilingual skills. In line with the Latter Han's non-intervening governance in managing minority peoples, Zhu Fu might have opted for a solidarity approach to lure the tribesmen, possibly by means of material favors, into accepting the mainstream administration patterns of provinces (*jun*郡) or counties (*xian*縣) in their areas of inhabitation (one means by which Han China expanded its empire).

In addition, Zhu Fu's memorandum suggested that he had laid the necessary groundwork to impress the tribesmen with both his governing style and his overt interest in their tribal customs. As shown in "The officials and interpreters preached [to us] the peace and prosperity of the great Han." (吏譯傳風，大漢安樂), he had also preached the merits of the Han government to the tribal peoples via the ad-hoc interpreter. One can, of course, reasonably argue that Zhu Fu's interest in the exotic culture might simply have been a diplomatic gesture to pacify the tribesmen. We cannot, therefore, say with absolute certainty that enhancing Zhu Fu's cultural understanding was the ultimate goal of deploying Tian Gong's interpretation.[14] As we shall see below, the role of *yi* in the tributary event was indisputably political, considering Tian Gong's other (and original) capacity as Zhu Fu's clerical subordinate. Zhu Fu's trust of Tian Gong, based on the clerk's interpreting record, motivated him to assign Tian Gong a business trip, entailing a three-month walk to the capital, with the tribal delegates. In this regard, *yi* (understood either as an interpreter or as an interpreting act) serves not only as an indispensable "tool" to bridge communication between the Inspector and the tribal peoples, but also as propaganda to trumpet the Han governance among the indigenous population.

The argument that *yi* was a political instrument for Zhu Fu can be extrapolated further on the basis of the Chinese translation of the sung poems. The *Hou-hanshu* record quoted above indicates that, sequentially, the Chinese translation was rendered *after* the tribal event, at the emperor's instruction, but I suspect that an oral summary or a gist translation of these poems must have been produced for Zhu Fu, behind the scene, presumably by Tian Gong, well *before* the actual tribute event. In fact, Zhu Fu's memorandum, supposedly composed *before* the tribute event, presents itself as a script of the intent of the tribute mission and the poems. My conjecture is that Zhu Fu must have acquainted himself with these poems through Tian Gong's explanation or partial translation when the tribute idea was first formulated. As discussed in Lung (2008), for some peculiar and yet unknown reasons, the wording of Zhu Fu's memorandum somewhat resembled part of the Chinese rendition of the poems in which Tian Gong may have played a major part.[15] After all, it was in this memorandum that the background of the tribute event was reported to the emperor. And as a material return of favor to the interpreter, it was also in this memorandum that Tian Gong, as a humble clerk and interpreter on the frontier, was unusually mentioned, not once, but twice. Therefore, in this historical event, *yi* was highly instrumental and also served a political aim for the Inspector, apart from being, simply, a linguistic and cultural go-between.

Tian Gong's perception of *Yi*

To Tian Gong, the mechanical definition of *yi*, as an act of interpreting, was more than a straightforward activity of language mediation. He knew all along that his identity as *yi* was political in nature, given his official position as a Senior Clerk of the Inspector and the power differential existing between the Han officials and the tribal communities. Tian Gong was well aware that his ultimate patron was Zhu Fu; he had been rendering interpreting services and discharged his duties to Zhu Fu's satisfaction. Zhu Fu's memorandum indicated that Tian Gong learnt the tribal vernacular through mingling with the tribesmen. For Tian Gong, mingling with the tribal groups was the way to learn the exotic vernacular, but it was also crucial to winning their trust and blending into the tribal community. Tian Gong's interpreting competence and in-group identity naturally positioned him as *the* chaperone of the tribal delegation in its tribute journey. His unique background, understandably, might have compromised his absolute neutrality on interpreting or translation tasks assigned to him.

Nevertheless, Tian Gong's "in-group" status among the tribesmen, attained via social networking, made him the "entrusted transmitter" (Cheung 2005: 29) between Zhu Fu and the tribal groups. As a junior subordinate of Zhu Fu, he furnished the Inspector's understanding of the customs and livelihood of the indigenous tribes. As far as inter-lingual and inter-cultural encounters are concerned, Tian Gong, as the interpreter, was a pivotal figure. However, unlike the Inspector or the emperor, Tian Gong was literally a passive figure in this historical episode because there was no explicit textual trace of him writing, speaking, interpreting, or translating. In fact, he was very much a figure in the background in the tribal interaction with the Chinese officials both on the frontier and in the imperial court. His presence in these scenes was only deduced through Zhu Fu's indirect descriptions.

I mentioned earlier that Tian Gong's interpreting identity was political since he was also a frontier Clerk in the administration by profession. Through his publicity in the tribal region as depicted in the third poem,[16] the minority tribes were informed of the culture, prosperity, and peace in China. While his publicity role as an interpreter may seem incongruous in terms of the modern code of neutrality in the interpreting profession, he may simply have been "transferring" Zhu Fu's propagandistic messages to the tribesmen. In the eyes of the tribesmen, however, the impression was probably that the interpreter, who talked (and therefore preached) to them directly too was promoting Han China. Admittedly, the extent to which this "projection" argument is valid cannot easily be verified, but the pacifying policy of the time was conducive to situations in which officials *cum* interpreters, like Tian Gong, played the role of "cultural ambassadors" to trumpet Chinese culture and administration on the frontier. Tian Gong's interpreting role, examined in this light, might have been inadvertently tainted by politics.

The Emperor's perception of *Yi*

Emperor Ming (r. 58–75) was in fact the centre of the tribute event since the sung poems and indigenous dance were dedicated to and performed for him. The presence of the emperor in this historical episode was only noted after the documentation of Zhu Fu's memorandum, as in "The emperor commended Zhu Fu and asked the history officer to make a record of the sung poems, with annotations on barbarian pronunciation." (帝嘉之，事下史官，錄其歌焉，並載夷人本語為注。) Here, no textual reference to translation or interpreting was found in the emperor's instructions. It is even questionable if the emperor had any concrete ideas about translation or interpreting at the time. Conceptually, it did not seem to worry him if the history officer was sufficiently competent to carry out his instructions, which involved working with at least two language varieties. Here, the emperor was primarily concerned with an annotated documentation of the sounds and meanings of the vernacular poems (originally sung in the Qiang dialect) in history so as to celebrate his reign.[17] Emperor Ming's specific instructions for a written record of the poems and their verbatim transcriptions in Chinese might have been motivated by his literary interest,[18] if not his vanity. Either way, he only thought of the history officer, *not the translator*, in his instructions about what to do with the sung poems.

If the emperor indeed knew very little about the amount of translation entailed by his instructions, he probably would not have known how to distinguish between translating and interpreting either. Nevertheless, he was very specific about what he wanted from the history officer; namely, to make a written record of the poems presented to him. He wanted the meanings of the poems in Chinese as well as an annotated record of the vernacular pronunciation of each word in the poems. We may therefore suggest that the emperor, as the patron of the translation, had the product, but not the process, of translation in mind. Notwithstanding the absence of the word "translation" in the emperor's command, the recording of the poems in Chinese would require translation, from oral form in the Qiang dialect to written Chinese, while the recording of indigenous pronunciation would in fact have called for transliteration, using Chinese characters to approximate vernacular sounds of the Qiang poems.

Implications

1. *The interpreter as a linguistic and social go-between*

Textual analyses of the three sung poems (Lung 2008) suggest that the duties of Chinese interpreters on the frontier were not entirely confined to linguistic mediation between officials and tribesmen, but possibly also included the promotion of Chinese culture and governance in tribal communities. These combined duties, however, were not mutually exclusive at the time, given the dual identity, for instance, of Tian Gong. Such a "dual-role interpreter", in the words of Claudia Angelelli,

> has no other choice but to bring the whole self to the interaction, which in turn plays out during the interaction rather than being artificially blocked by some standard that may require that he or she merely interpret the words being uttered. (Angelelli 2004: 2)

Serving as a Senior Clerk in a border province, Tian Gong also interpreted for the Inspector in his interaction with the tribesmen. It was the kind of interaction in which Tian Gong was in fact involved not merely as the language mediator, but as a facilitator whose ultimate loyalty rested, unquestionably, with the Inspector. Undeniably, Tian Gong was instrumental in allowing speakers of the tribal tongue to be heard. His role as interpreter was indispensable in facilitating the tribute mission and ensuring that protocols were observed on the part of the tribesmen in their imperial audiences. To Tian Gong, chaperoning the tribal delegates to the capital was certainly a landmark in his life and career. In the three-month journey to the capital, he would be expected to encounter as much hardship as the indigenous delegates did. But, to an official having been posted to a remote border, like Tian Gong, the chance to chaperone a tributary delegation to an imperial audience could be a rare opportunity and was considered a personal honor. This personal honor was granted because of his knowledge of the tribal dialect, familiarity with the tribal customs, and admirable interpreting performance for his superior.

The fact that both the first and the third poems mentioned interpreters in the life of the minority tribes speaks of their contact with interpreters and attests "the existence of interpreting activities in tribal communities" (Ma 1999: 275; my translation). Besides, the nature of interpreters' interaction with the tribesmen seems to be regular and ongoing, and social rather than purely professional. Since Tian Gong actually acquired the tribal vernacular through socializing, he must have established sufficient personal rapport with the tribes for him to blend into their communities. Furthermore, Tian Gong's "insider" identity was apparently demonstrated in his knowledge of their indigenous customs, which seemed to have impressed his superior. In fact, as indicated in Zhu Fu's memorandum, this particular interpreter was named and complimented for the service he had rendered in and for the exotic communities. From the specific case of Tian Gong, at least, we may deduce that the interpreter might have been an insider of the indigenous communities before he was summoned to interpret for Zhu Fu.

Besides, this interpreting account suggests that cultural variation might have been registered as an important consideration in interpreting activities in first-century China, although a more systematic study of the relevance of culture to translation studies did not commence until almost nineteen centuries later in the west. In particular, as exemplified in Zhu Fu's memorandum, expressions, such as草木異種，鳥獸殊類…與之習押…令詳其風俗 (…[their] vegetation, birds, and animals were exotic…was familiar with them and therefore have him investigate their customs) all point to the Inspector's awareness of the exotic differences between the tribes and his own cultural features and practices as a Han Chinese. In this connection, the cultural sensitivity displayed by this frontier official in his interaction, via an interpreter, with the exotic people may well place him as a pioneer in the theoretical study of translation in first-century China. Moreover, Tian Gong's initial mingling with the tribes in his attempts to learn the vernacular and to understand the indigenous culture reflects an ethnographic method in which he was a participant in the target group, apart from being an observer. This groundwork and background research conducted to enhance his understanding of a target speech-community, either to execute Zhu Fu's instruction to inquire into tribal customs or as a self-initiated move, somehow mirror the pre-interpreting preparation often carried out by professional interpreters.

2. *The interpreter as the link to historical records*

Several written records pertinent to discourses of translation in China date back to as early as the second half of the second century when the Chinese translation of Buddhist sutras gathered momentum in the country (Hung 2005; Cheung 2006). In fact, information about translating and interpreting activities before the second century hardly came to the attention of modern scholarship apart from the nominal references for interpreters in the four directions. Hence, this evidence represents an important archive, extrapolating what ancient people actually wrote, said, or did, in the documentation of how first-century figures in China perceived *yi*. Such an original archive is instrumental in capturing the perceptions of interpreting, interpreters, translating, or translators at the time.[19]

Since Zhu Fu's memorandum indicated that Tian Gong was the mediator, familiar with the language and customs of the tribes, Tian Gong might also have been the one who actually assisted the history officer in rendering and recording the meanings and the sounds of the three poems. If this speculation holds true, then the records of the sung poems and their corresponding sounds and meanings, as annotated in the standard history, *Houhanshu*, might well be taken as translation traces left behind by the interpreter. Apparently, without the interpreter, it might have been difficult, if not impossible, to carry out the emperor's command for an annotated Chinese rendition of the poems. If Tian Gong was indeed the only one who could interpret the tribal tongue and translate the vernacular poems in the imperial court at the time, he was practically the only viable link between the indigenous poems and the historical records we hold today (Lung 2008).

Zhu Fu's decision to assign Tian Gong as the chaperone of the tribute delegation then turned out to be highly constructive. As I conjectured earlier, Zhu Fu might have masterminded the tribute idea to please the throne, but this idea was then not just realized, but also taken further in such a way that the tribute and translation events were archived as a first-century interpreting record in China. Without Tian Gong, it may have been difficult to find anyone in the imperial court sufficiently competent to comply with the emperor's instructions to annotate the poems. Before the tribute mission reached Luoyang, the capital, Zhu Fu probably had no idea that the emperor would take the art performance so seriously as to request a verbatim written record of the poems. In this light, Zhu Fu's idea to have the interpreter travel to the capital did not simply facilitate the ultimate record of the poems, but more importantly preserved the interpreter's translation records in history.

Conclusions

This archive, compiled in the "memoir of the Southwestern barbarians" in the Latter Han history, is of interest to historians of interpreting and translation because it began with the interpreting activities that Tian Gong carried out for Zhu Fu and ended in the translation of the poems as archived in standard histories. Its limitation, as a primary record pertinent to ancient interpreting and translating activities, however, is that the record was politically embedded and embellished purely from the perspective of the ruling clique. As such, it is inevitable that the interpreting events and what people surrounding these events said and did might very well have been blemished, distorted, or largely ignored, one way or another.

With this possible limitation considered, the present article has examined interpreting events and their subsequent translation records in the Latter Han dynasty during the first century.

This study not only presents historical records of interpreting activities in antiquity collected in standard archives, but also informs us of the various perspectives of *yi*, as perceived by Zhu Fu, the Inspector, Tian Gong, the Senior Clerk cum interpreter, and the emperor, based on primary data. These parties played different roles in the interpreting and tributary events, and in the process, expressed their tacit understanding, some more directly than others, of interpreting and translating. Such first-hand information about perceptions of interpreting and translation in first-century China is a treasure in the historical study of language mediation. In the reinvention of history, much has yet to be explored in relation to the primary form of interpreting and translating activities in each culture in antiquity. If we take a historical turn in our review of what it meant to interpret or translate by examining the earliest written records in national archives, we may better understand the nature of these inter-lingual activities unique to specific language-cultures.

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Notes

1. Unlike the specific referents in the English lexicon for each of these corresponding concepts, *yi* is capable of referring to all or some of the four meanings in classical Chinese. Where meanings are loosely defined, *yi* is used in this article; where meanings are clear from contexts, specific English equivalents are used instead.

2. A program for unifying the national language, which is based on Mandarin, was launched in the early 20th century and it resulted in the development of Modern Standard Chinese. In 1956 a new system of Romanization called Pinyin, based on the pronunciation of the characters in the Beijing dialect, was adopted as the standard of Chinese language.

3. I presented part of this article at a translation conference (Des Faux Amis: Tracing Translation(s) Across Disciplines) at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, 5–8 April, 2007.

4. Roger Ellis's work (1989) touches on similar issues about meanings of translation as exemplified in translations of various classical texts in the western world in medieval times. But since our concern in this article is a evidence from the first-century, Ellis's work will not be discussed here.

5. Translations of Wolfgang Behr (2004: 187) and Martha Cheung (2005: 29) were consulted before coming up with my own translation of this text. Behr's translation is discreet in not specifying whether the four terms denote translation officials, which has been a moot point in the literature on historical studies of translation in China. As Behr points out, *Didi* (狄鞮) "looks like a transcription of an underlying non-Chinese word", and it might have been borrowed from a foreign language as a word for "to translate or to interpret" (Behr 2004: 192). However, his rendition of *Didi* (literally *Di* [狄] refers to the name of a tribe, and *di* [鞮] means know, or having a knowledge of) as a verb is problematic linguistically, since this term had only been used as a noun in all the contexts in which it appeared in the Chinese archives. Cheung approached the translation of this text quite differently; most notably, Cheung asserted that the four designations were translation officials, which explains her insertion of the wording "there were functionaries for the job" and "Those in charge of," although such expressions are nowhere to be found, implicitly or explicitly, in the original.

6. An overtly simplistic worldview of the Sino-centric sentiment whereby China inhabiting the Central Plain (*zhongyuan* [中原]) considered its state the central place, surrounded by regions from the four directions.

7. Both Zan Ning 贊寧 (1987) and Fa Yun 法雲 (1990), Buddhist monks around the 11th century, conjecture that the term *yi* gained currency because of "serious troubles up in the north" (Cheung's translation, 2005: 30).

8. The Central Plain, the cradle of Chinese civilization, historically refers to a huge swath of hinterland in Northern China in the lower reaches of the Yellow River.

9. Qiang people are historically nomadic shepherds inhabiting western China and the area around Sichuan. The Qiang dialect is a branch in the Sino-Tibetan language family. Robert Ramsey (1989) estimated that there were about 103,000 speakers of native Qiang in Wenchuan (汶川) (speaking the southern Qiang dialect with six tonal variations) and Beichuan (北川) (speaking the northern Qiang dialect with no tonal variation), two major areas devastated by the Sichuan earthquakes in May 2008. These two varieties of Qiang are now so divergent that speakers of the two varieties are mutually unintelligible and have to resort to speaking Mandarin Chinese for communication.

10. Administratively, the Latter Han Chinese empire was divided into thirteen Provinces (州) — further divided into commanderies, prefectures, districts, and wards — each headed by an Inspector, assigned by the central government. A Province is a series of contiguous commanderies and kingdoms which are commonly supervised by an Inspector (Beck 1990: 192).

11. These three poems were translated into English in Lung (2008: 234–237).

12. Songs and dances were popular entertainments in early imperial Chinese courts. These sung poems were often written to be sung in dance performance, not simply for reading pleasure (Zhao 2002: 99–116).

13. This line of inquiry was examined at length in Lung (2008).

14. Martha Cheung (2006: 46) suggests, based on her analyses of ancient references to and discourses on translation, that "translation and/or interpretation in the periods before the Qin dynasty was essentially functional in nature rather than an activity inspired by a genuine intellectual curiosity about other languages and cultures". How much of it was still valid for Latter Han times, a lapse of four centuries, has yet to be confirmed.

15. One may argue that phrases in historical records, such as "…out of their utmost admiration and respect for [Chinese] civilization and righteousness" (慕化歸義) are largely stock expressions in China's Sino-centric paradigm regarding its exotic neighbor states. But the coincidental usage of "The babies and the elderly rode piggyback on [the young and strong…]" (繈負老幼), and "…which was likened to a homeward-bound journey to greet their loving mothers" (若歸慈母), in both Zhu Fu's memorandum and Tian Gong's translation of the poems might be more than incidental. Some forms of exchanges must have been conducted, and mutual understanding reached, between the two officials to have produced such identical expressions in the two written records (Lung 2008: 245).

16. "The officials and interpreters preached [to us] the peace and prosperity of the great Han." (吏譯傳風，大漢安樂). See the third poem in Appendix 1.

17. Tribal submission was not uncommon during the first few decades of the Latter Han. For example, in 69 AD, the Ailao (哀牢) chief submitted to Emperor Ming with a tribal population of over 550,000. In 100 AD, another Bailang tribe from a different region of the southwestern frontier and the Loubao (樓薄) tribe both submitted to Emperor He (和) (r. 89–105), with a combined population size of 170,000. These cases of submission, nevertheless, were notably of a smaller scale as compared to the submission of 1.3 million households from over a hundred tribes, amounting to the integration of 6 million people to the Latter Han Empire in the present submission case as documented in Zhu Fu's memorandum.

18. On hearing his brother's [Liu Cang (劉蒼) (39–83)] composition of an ode in 72 AD, Emperor Ming was "at a loss for words with which to praise the ode" and ordered Jia Kui (賈逵) (30–101), a scholar with a profound literary talent, to write a commentary for it (*Houhanshu*, p. 1533, in Beck 1990: 21).

19. Martha Cheung (2006: 15) maintains that "depth is achieved by texts that discourse indirectly on translation".

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Appendix 1

Chinese versions of the three sung poems and their English translations (the bracketed parts are the annotated sounds of the poems in the Qiang dialect)

其一曰遠夷樂德歌詩，
曰：大漢是治（堤官槐構），與天合意（魏冒逾糟），吏譯平端（罔驛劉脾），不從我來（旁莫支留），聞風向化（徵衣隨旅），所見奇異（知唐桑艾），多賜繒布（邪秕[illegible]），甘美酒食（推潭僕遠），昌樂肉飛（拓拒蘇便），屈伸悉備（局後仍離），蠻夷貧薄（僂讓龍洞），無所報嗣（莫支度由），願主長壽（陽雒僧鱗），子孫昌熾（莫稚角存）。

The first poem: *Ode to the Virtues of the Han*

The great Han governs well by Heaven's will. The official(s) and interpreter(s) were fair and proper, and never causally intervened in our lives. [We] heard of the superior [Han] civilization and were pleasantly surprised by what we saw. Bestowed [on us] were bundles of cloth, delicious wine, and food. The marvelous music and dance, which showcase [the dancers'] contracted and relaxed body movements, are dedicated to your Highness. Being poor and lacking resources, [we] barbarians do not have presentable gifts to repay your grand favors. [We only] pray for your Highness's longevity and your offspring's prosperity. (*Houhanshu*, ch. 86: 2856; Lung's translation, 2008: 234–5)

其二曰遠夷慕德歌詩，
曰：蠻夷所處（僂讓皮尼），日入之部（且交陵悟），慕義向化（繩動隨旅），歸日出主（路坦揀雒），聖德深恩（聖德渡諾），與人富厚（魏菌渡洗），冬多霜雪（綜邪流藩），夏多和雨（莋邪尋螺），寒溫時適（藐潯瀘漓），部人多有（菌補邪推），涉危歷險（辟危歸險），不遠萬裏（莫受萬柳），去俗歸德（術佚附德），心歸慈母（仍路孳模）。

The second poem: *Ode to the Blessings of the Han*

[We] distant barbarians dwell in places where the sun sets. [We] admire [the Han] civilization and submit to your Highness, who resides where the sun rises. The emperor showers us with immense kindness and generous gifts. [The Central Plain] snows in winter and rains in summer — the perfect climate for the [Han] people to prosper. [We] made a long harsh trip [to come to the capital]. We have changed [our] customs and conform to [your] virtues in a homeward-bound journey to greet [our] loving mothers. (*Houhanshu*, ch. 86: 2856; Lung's translation, 2008: 236)

其三曰遠夷懷德歌，
曰：荒服之外（荒服之儀），土地墝埆（犁藉憐二），食肉衣皮（坐蘇邪犁），不見鹽穀（莫碭麓沐），吏譯傳風（罔譯傳微），大漢安樂（是漢夜拒），攜負歸仁（蹤優路仁），觸冒險陜（雷折險龍），高山岐峻（偷狼藏幢），緣崖磻石（扶路側祿），本薄發家（息落服淫），百宿到洛（理瀝髭驁），父子同賜（捕範茵秕），懷抱匹帛（懷豪匹漏），傳告種人（傳宜呼敕），長願臣僕（陵賜臣僕）。

The third poem: *Ode to the Grace of the Han Rule*

[Our] distant land is extremely barren and dry. [We] feed ourselves with the flesh of wild animals and wear animal fur [for warmth] since we have hardly any salt, or grow any wheat. The officials and interpreters preached [to us] the peace and prosperity of the great Han. The babies and the elderly rode piggyback on [us] and [we] weathered rugged mountains and steep cliffs on the way. [We] set out in late autumn and reached Luoyang in a hundred days. [We] were all showered with gifts and bundles of cloth. The word got around in our tribes and [we] all yearn to serve [your Highness] forever. (*Houhanshu*, ch. 86: 2856–7; Lung's translation, 2008: 236–237)

Sign-language interpreting in China: a survey

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Though research into sign language interpreting (SLI) has been recognized as an integral part of general translation studies, especially of interpreting studies, SLI is yet to make its way into the consciousness of translation studies researchers on the Chinese mainland. This paper presents data collected from two surveys carried out in China, one of the sign language interpreters and one of the deaf community, covering areas including the interpreters' professional profiles, the SLI market, professional issues, interpreting difficulties, directionality, quality issues and the role of the interpreter. The paper ends with an analysis of the unique challenges facing the professional development of and research into SLI in China.

1. Introduction

It is not surprising that, as the most populous country in the world, China should also top the world list for its deaf population: 20.57 million.[1] While this figure may suggest an enormous market for sign language interpreting (SLI) services, that is not yet the case in China for historical, political and cultural reasons. SLI was not officially recognized as a profession until as recently as 2007.[2] The Chinese media report this recognition as a sign of "substantial social progress towards the realisation of a harmonious socialist society".[3] While the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics attracted the world's attention to China, the games also served as milestone events in arousing great attention within China to the severe shortage of qualified SL interpreters (Yuan 2007: 33). Despite the fact that two three-year diploma programmes in SLI have been in place since 2004,[4] given the vastness of the country and its huge population, the gap between supply and demand is believed to be as high as 95%.[5]

Thus far, the Chinese translation studies (TS) community has not shown much awareness of SLI, in general, or of Chinese Sign Language (CSL) interpreting in particular. Monographs published in TS have not included any discussion of SLI;

none of the major Chinese translation journals[6] has featured any paper on CSL interpreting to date. SLI in China comes under the area of special education research, and yet, a search of the database on the official website of the China Periodicals Association (http://www.cpa-online.org.cn) using the keywords *"sign language interpreting"*, turned up no more than 3 entries.[7] Major issues discussed in the papers and in the handful of books on CSL (e.g. Zhao 1999) or SLI (e.g. Zhang 2009) include:

1. professional development of SLI in mainland China and in Taiwan;
2. reviews of SLI research in the west, mainly the US;
3. practitioners' reports on SLI difficulties encountered;
4. interpreting tips;
5. discussion of professional issues such as working conditions, client understanding and cooperation, professional ethics;
6. linguistic issues of CSL;
7. deaf culture.

Typically, just as in the initial stages of SLI development before the 1970s (Grbić 2007), until very recently there has been a total lack of contact between SLI research and its more developed cousin TS, as can be seen from the fact that the papers on SLI barely mention any works on translation, and vice versa.

In the hope of bridging the gap and promoting contacts between the Chinese TS and special education communities, the lead author, coming from a spoken-language interpreting background and having worked as a trainer and researcher in one of China's major interpreting programmes, has reached out to the Chinese SLI community and initiated dialogues. This survey is a preliminary attempt to bring to the attention of the general TS community both in and out of China the problems and issues facing SLI between CSL and spoken Chinese (Putonghua), and to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of the current status of SLI in mainland China from the perspectives of interpreters and deaf clients.

2. The survey

For the purpose of this study, SLI refers to interpreting between CSL and spoken Chinese (Putonghua) and vice versa, as that is currently the dominant pairing in mainland China.

2.1 Participants

Mainland China is a vast territory with 32 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. For feasibility and practicality, we selected eight provinces and municipalities whose SLI and deaf communities are representative in terms of geographical location and size of population: Fujian Province in the southeast of China (deaf population: 640,000),[8] Guizhou and Sichuan Provinces in the south-west (respective deaf populations: 741,000 and 1.5 million),[9,10] Liaoning Province in the northeast (deaf population: 386,000),[11] Hebei Province in northern China (deaf population: 1.2 million),[12] Hubei Province in central China (deaf population: 829,000),[13] and Beijing and Shanghai municipalities (respective deaf populations: 227,000 and 259,000),[14,15] where the two most influential CSL dialects are used. Unfortunately there is no data available regarding the population of sign language interpreters in these regions, or in fact, in any region at all.

2.2 Materials

To give a descriptive view of the SLI profession in China, we decided that the survey questions needed to cover at least five areas of interest: the profile of the interpreters; the features of the Chinese SLI market; professional issues; interpreting difficulties and directionality; quality issues and the role of the interpreters. After pre-survey interviews with CSL researchers, interpreters and deaf clients, referring to survey samples (e.g. Winston & Cokely 2007), combining feedback from colleagues in America and Europe, the authors came up with two survey questionnaires: the interpreter's questionnaire (IQ) consisting of 18 questions and the deaf-user's questionnaire (DQ) consisting of 11 questions (see appendices 1 and 2).

2.3 Procedure

Pre-survey
In April 2008 we started compiling questions with the help of SL interpreters and deaf persons both local and distant, through face-to-face contact, over the phone or email correspondence, regarding the five major areas we intended to cover and the possible options under each question we had in mind.

Survey
In July 2008 we began sending the questionnaires to target groups by distributing them at seminars, via mail and email, and through QQ, the most popular online chat tool among the deaf community in China. By the end of October 2008, we had collected a total of 106 valid IQs and 259 valid DQs, which came in both paper

and electronic forms. The data was processed using Microsoft Excel. Frequencies are reported as valid percent, indicating the number of responses (n) for a given question. For ranking questions, the percentage score of each answer chosen was entered to indicate the frequency of the choice.

Post-survey
We interviewed twenty interpreters who had left their contact numbers on the questionnaires and fifteen deaf persons in the authors' locality of Xiamen in south-east coastal China for post-survey interviews regarding the survey results. Open-ended questions were used to solicit explanations and clarification. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, via the telephone and text messages. Records of the responses were kept in written form.

3. Results

3.1 Profile of respondents (IQ questions 1–5, DQ questions 1–2)

Age and education
As can be seen from Table 1, the interpreters surveyed were between 20 and 54 years old, with the majority of them (67.1%) between 26 and 35. The deaf population

Table 1. Age and education

Age range & distribution (IQ, n = 76; DQ, n = 233)			
Subjects	**Age range**	**Age distribution**	**Percentage**
Interpreter	20–54	< 26	13.2%
		26–35	67.1%
		> 35	19.7%
Deaf persons	15–66	< 18	3.0%
		18–25	83.3%
		> 25	13.7%

Educational background (IQ, n = 84; DQ, n = 233)		
Subjects	**Educational background**	**Percentage**
Interpreter	High school	–
	Diploma programme	41.7%
	Undergraduate	55.9%
	Graduate	2.4%
Deaf persons	≤ High school	17.6%
	Diploma programme	68.2%
	Undergraduate	14.2%
	Graduate	–

surveyed covered a wider range of ages, from 15 to 66, with the overwhelming majority (83.3%) between 18 and 25.

Most of the interpreters (97.6%) held a post-secondary diploma (41.7%) or a bachelor's degree (55.9%), and 2.4% had attended graduate courses. None of them had less than a college education. In comparison, 82.4% of the deaf respondents had received or were in the process of receiving post-secondary education. 17.6% had high school education or less, and none of them had postgraduate education.

Affiliation of interpreters

The overall majority (96.3%) of the interpreters surveyed worked in special education schools and 3.7% worked in associations for disabled or deaf persons (Figure 1). Of all the interpreters surveyed, 94.3% worked on a part-time basis, alongside their main responsibilities from their regular jobs (Figure 2).

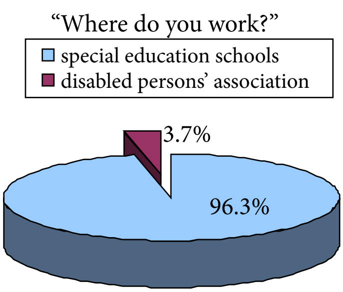

Figure 1. Affiliation (IQ, n = 81)

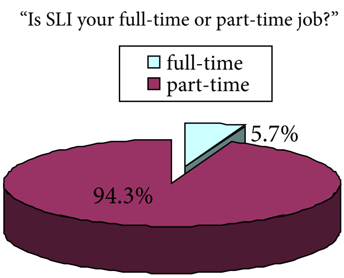

Figure 2. Type of Employment (IQ, n = 81)

Answers to the DQ question "Who most often interprets for you" (Figure 3) also indicated that staff at special education schools are the biggest source of interpreters (50%) for deaf clients, followed by family or friends (34.5%), interpreters from deaf persons' associations (14.3%), and others such as colleagues or peer groups (10.5%).

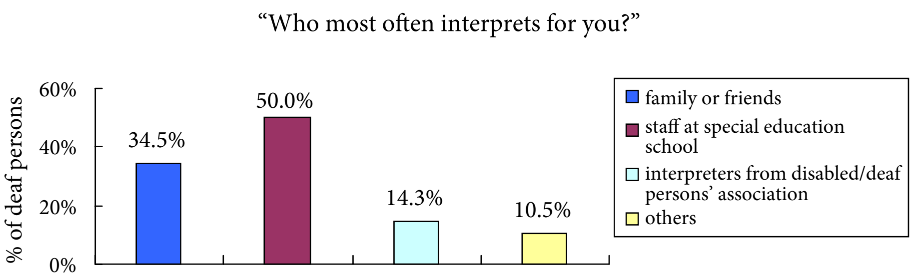

Figure 3. Source of SL interpreters (DQ, n = 259)

Qualifications of interpreters

The interpreters surveyed averaged 7.3 years of experience. For 53.2% of them, the range of experience fell between 4 and 10 years. Nearly one third (29.8%) had 1–3 years of experience and 17.0% reported over 10 years of experience (Figure 4).

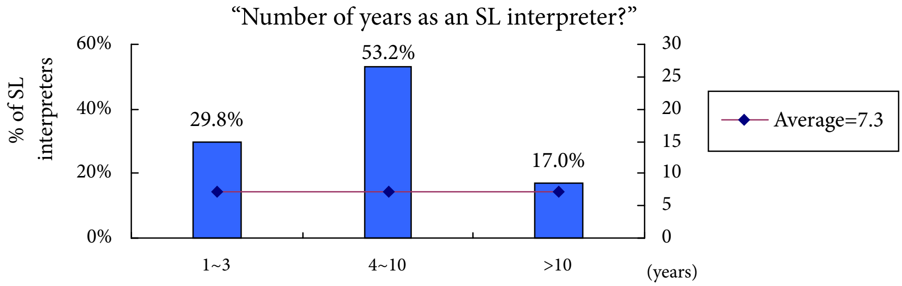

Figure 4. Range of experience (IQ, n = 94)

Less than half of the interpreters surveyed (40.8%) indicated that they had received training in SLI and only 20.4% had obtained a certificate (Figure 5). Post-survey interviews indicated that training had been confined, in most cases, to short-term seminars or workshops lasting from 2 to 7 days, rather than full professional training programmes.

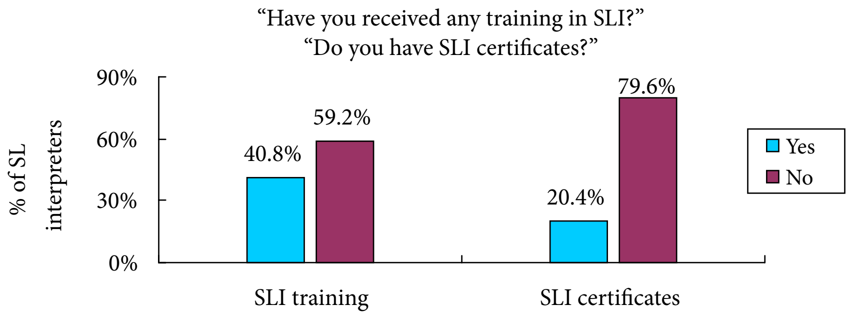

Figure 5. Training & Certificate (IQ, n = 103)

3.2 The SLI Market (IQ questions 6 & 7, DQ questions 3–5)

Supply and demand

Of the interpreters who responded, the overall majority (92.2%) thought that there was a shortage of SL interpreters in China, and some respondents mentioned an extreme lack of highly qualified interpreters. However, in contrast, 4.9% of the interpreters thought that there was an over-supply. One respondent wrote in the space after the "over-supply" option that "but there is a shortage of highly-qualified interpreters".

The DQ respondents were split in their views towards the supply and demand, with half responding that there was a shortage, and half viewing supply and demand as balanced (Figure 6).

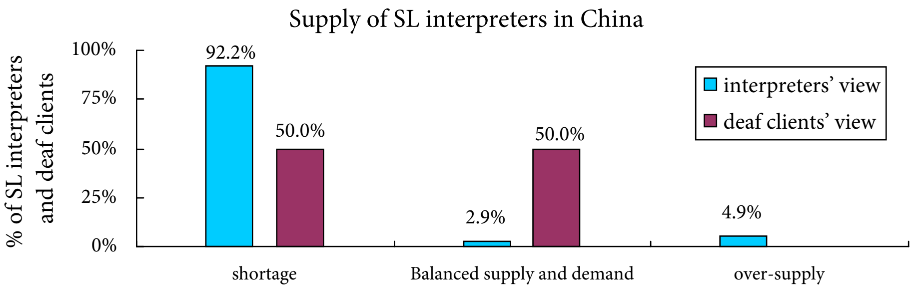

Figure 6. Supply & Demand (IQ, n = 103; DQ, n = 256)

The ways in which deaf persons in China communicate with the hearing world (DQ question No. 4) provide a glimpse of the contrast between the interpreters and the deaf persons. In the order of frequency, deaf persons communicate with hearing people:

– In writing (59.8%)
– With SLI (26.7%)
– Through lip reading (8.2%)
– With hearing aids (4.0%)

The fact that many respondents did not feel the need for an interpreter may have been related to the use of writing as the most common means of communication.

Peak season

Most (73.3%) of the interpreters did not think there was a peak season for SLI (see Table 2), partly due to the fact that the most frequent venues for SLI are police/court or educational settings (See Table 3), which are not typically "seasonal". However, 26.3% of the respondents did refer to a peak season; some mentioned International Deaf Person's Day,[16] National Hearing Awareness Day (March 3rd) and disabled persons' sports events as creating peak seasons for SLI. This is in line with the fact that entertainment performances which usually take place around holidays are major occasions for SLI (see Table 3).

Table 2. Is there a peak season for SLI? (IQ, n = 95)

Answer	Percentage
Yes	26.7%
No	73.3%

Access to interpreters
When deaf persons need an interpreter, some two thirds of them have no idea where to find one (Figure 7). Further analysis shows that more than 80% of those who were able to contact an interpreter were under 25 years of age (Figure 8), presumably due to the fact that most of them were still in high school or college and were able to access to the biggest pool of interpreters — the staff of schools or colleges.

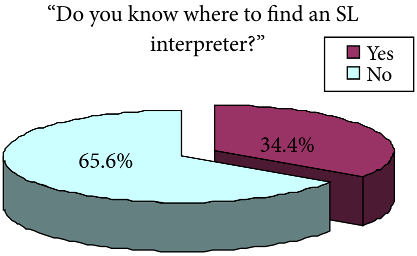

Figure 7. Access to SL interpreter

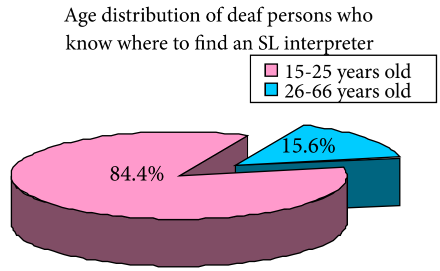

Figure 8. Age distribution (DQ, n = 253)

3.3 Professional issues (IQ questions 8–14, DQ question 6)

Professional issues involve employers and settings, work conditions, remuneration and co-ordination between all parties.

Employers and settings
In order of decreasing magnitude, the biggest employers of SL interpreters are the police and the courts (48%), disabled/deaf persons' associations (42%), special education schools (31%), others (such as deaf individuals, 26%) and translation agencies (9%) (Table 3). The most common settings for SLI are police stations and courtrooms (55.4%), entertainment performances (51.4%), educational settings (43.6%), sports events (26.7%), hospitals (17.8%) and others (including conferences at disabled/deaf persons associations or at special education schools, TV stations, welfare departments and airlines) (32.7%) (Table 3).

Table 3. SLI employers and settings (IQ, n = 100–101)

Employers	Percentage
Police and courts	48%
Disabled/deaf persons' associations	42%
Special education schools	31%
Others (e.g. deaf individuals)	26%
Translation agencies	9%

Settings	Percentage
Police and court settings	55.4%
Entertainment performances	51.4%
Educational settings	43.6%
Others (conferences, TV, airlines)	32.7%
Sports events	26.7%
Hospitals	17.8%

Working arrangements and conditions

Most SLI jobs (63.3%) varied from 1 to 3 hours, 13.2% lasted over 3 hours. A small percentage (5.1%) of interpreters said that working hours were variable (Figure 9).

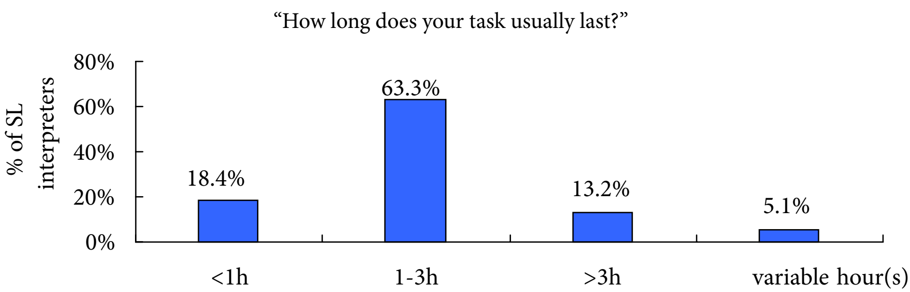

Figure 9. Length of task (IQ, n = 98)

About half (54.9%) of the interpreters were able to arrange for shifts, in cooperation with colleagues, but 41.2% said they mainly had to work alone and 3.9% indicated that sometimes there were colleagues available to take over (Figure 10).

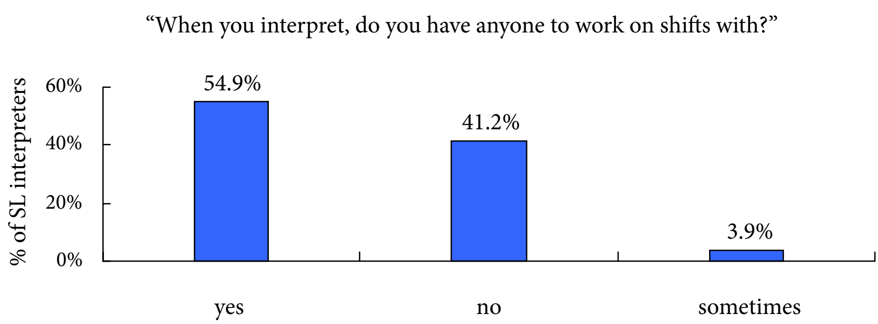

Figure 10. Work shifts (IQ, n = 102)

For the question relating to advance notice, the largest group (41.6%) indicated that they were usually booked 1 to 3 days ahead of time. 28.1% were notified one week or more in advance, while 22.4% only received notice at the last minute and 7.9% indicated that it varied greatly (Figure 11). A closer look at the "last minute" responses shows that 88.2% had the police station as their most frequent interpreting venue.

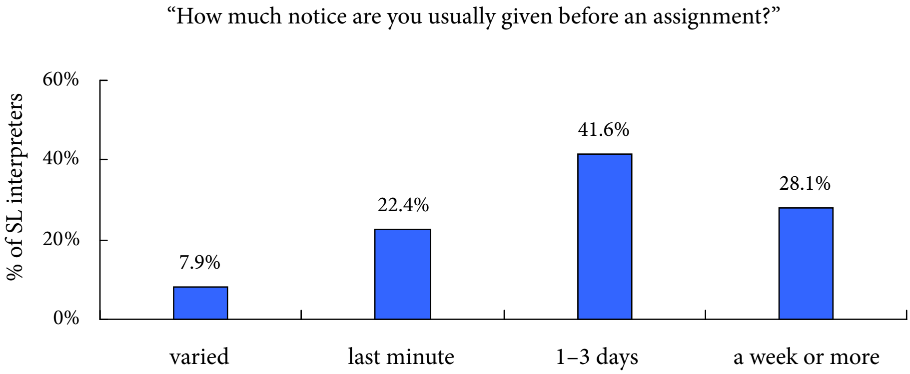

Figure 11. Advance notice (IQ, n = 98)

Remuneration

Figure 12 shows that only a quarter of the interpreters (25.9%) were happy with the remuneration. The rest were either not happy (62.5%) or "not concerned" (11.5%). In Shanghai, the average payment for SLI is the RMB equivalent of only 2 euros per hour. In Xiamen, a court SL interpreter is paid a mere 10 euros after providing simultaneous interpreting for a three-hour trial. This is in dramatic contrast with simultaneous interpreters in the spoken mode, who are paid the equivalent of 300–700 euros per day (Liu 2005). Despite the obvious disparity, some interpreters said they did not do it for the money and were not concerned about the low pay.

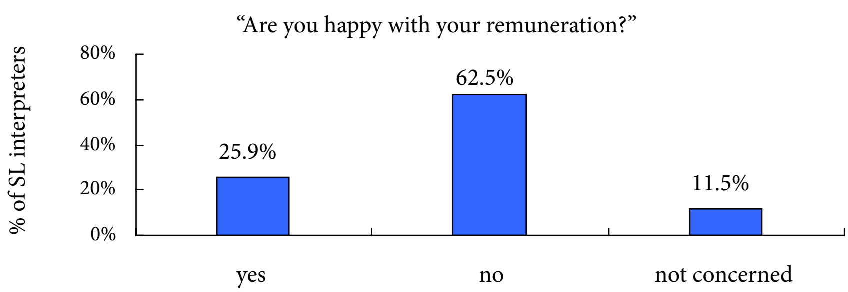

Figure 12. Remuneration (IQ, n = 96)

As for who should pay for SLI services, interpreters and deaf persons held different views (Figure 13). The interpreters thought that SLI should be paid for by (in order of frequency): the organisers (92.2%), disabled /deaf persons' associations (15.7%) and the deaf persons themselves (5.9%). Still others (5.9%) considered that the service should be considered voluntary work and be provided free of charge.

Among the deaf persons surveyed, a much smaller proportion thought that the organisers (59.8%) or the associations (8.2%) should pay the bill, and a much higher percentage (26.7%) thought it should be a voluntary and free service. A similarly small percentage, 4.6%, felt that the deaf persons themselves should pay.

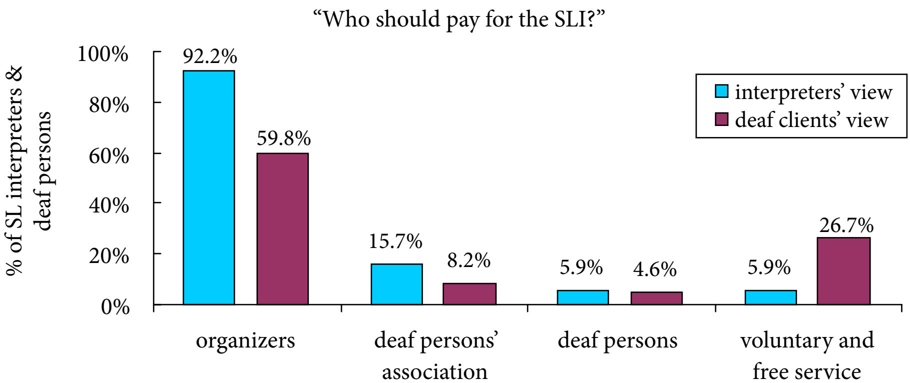

Figure 13. Who should pay for the SLI (IQ, n = 92; DQ, n = 254)

3.4 Interpreting direction and difficulty (IQ questions 15–17)

Directionality

Regarding the questions about the percentage of the interpreter's work into the signed (SL) vs. oral language (OL), over half (52.7%) of the answers fell between 60 and 80%, with a mean of 66%, into the signed language. A further 19% of the respondents indicated that the amount of interpreting into SL accounted for 80% or even more of the total (Figure 14). This striking figure shows that the predominant direction of information was from the hearing world toward deaf persons, with the deaf community mainly playing the role of recipients at public venues.

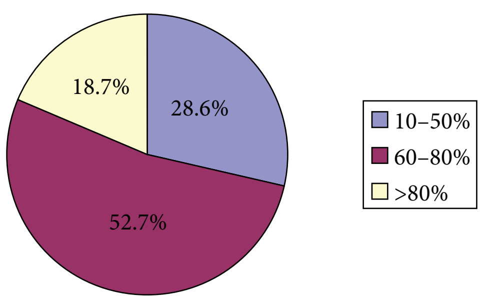

Figure 14. Percentage of OL into SL (IQ, n = 91)

Does directionality make a difference to the difficulty of the interpreter's job? More than 70% of the interpreters thought that voicing — i.e. interpreting from

SL into OL — was more difficult. In contrast, 16.7% thought otherwise and a mere 10.8% thought it did not make a difference to them. Our findings correspond with those of Nicodemus (2008), who reported that 51% of native English interpreters preferred to interpret into ASL, compared with 18% who preferred voicing and 31% who had no preference.

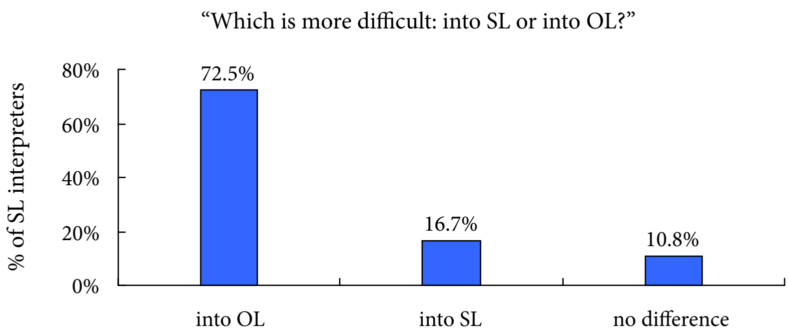

Figure 15. Difficulty in terms of direction (IQ, n = 102)

Although Nicodemus (2008) also found that novice interpreters had a much stronger preference for working into SL than experienced interpreters, we found no correlation between preferences and experience (Figure 16). Our survey asked about the difficulty of each direction rather than about preferences, but having established that interpreting into the OL was seen as the more difficult direction, we inferred that most of our respondents preferred interpreting into SL, the direction perceived to be "easier".

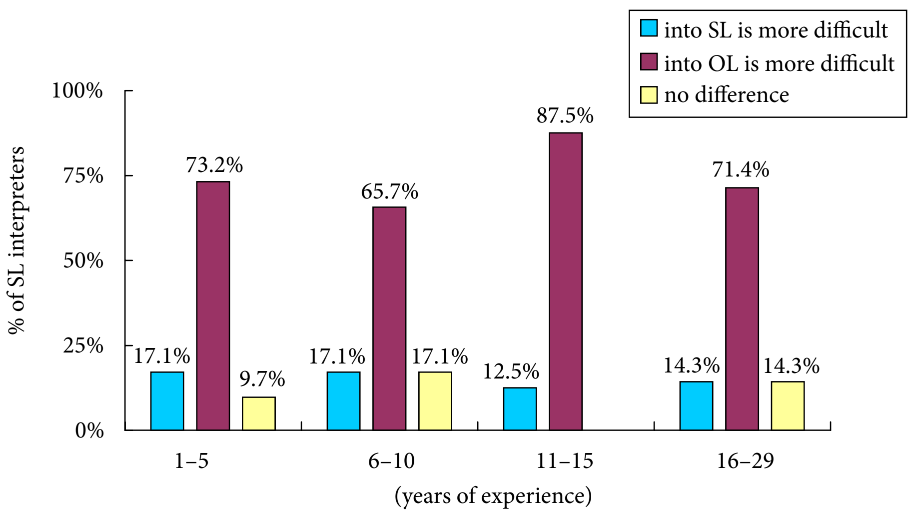

Figure 16. Relation between direction difficulty and years of experience

Interpreting difficulty
Of the difficulties interpreters encountered at work, understanding the deaf clients' signing came first (71.6%), followed by fast OL delivery (68.6%), finding equivalent expressions (52.9%), recall of information (19.6%), poor co-operation from the organisers (14.7%) and other difficulties (12.7%), including insufficient subject knowledge, regional SL differences, low educational level of the deaf users, and the sometimes hostile attitude of deaf suspects in legal settings.

Table 4. Rank the difficulties you have encountered at work (IQ, n = 102)

Difficulties	Percentage
Understanding deaf clients' signing	71.6%
Fast delivery of OL speakers	68.6%
Finding equivalent expressions	52.9%
Remembering information	19.6%
Poor cooperation from the organisers	14.7%
Others	12.7%

3.5 Quality issues (DQ questions 7–10)

Only slightly over half of the deaf clients surveyed (55.8%) were satisfied with the quality of the SLI they had experienced. 44.2% of the respondents chose "unsatisfactory" as their reply (Figure 17). When the responses were correlated with educational background (Figure 18), we found that 58.3% of those who had received or were in the process of receiving post-secondary education were happy with SLI quality, while only 38.9% of those with high school education or lower found the quality satisfactory.

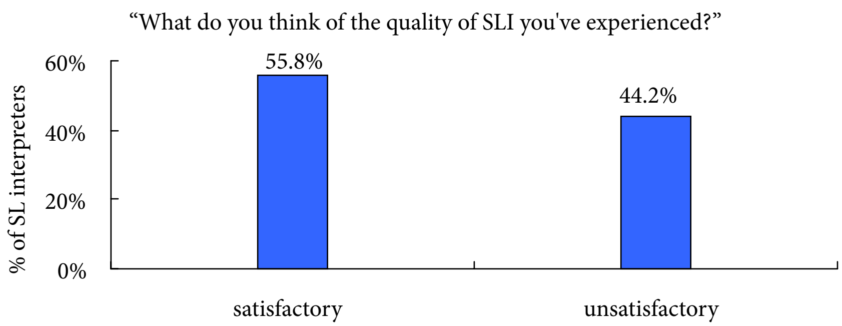

Figure 17. SLI quality (DQ, n = 256)

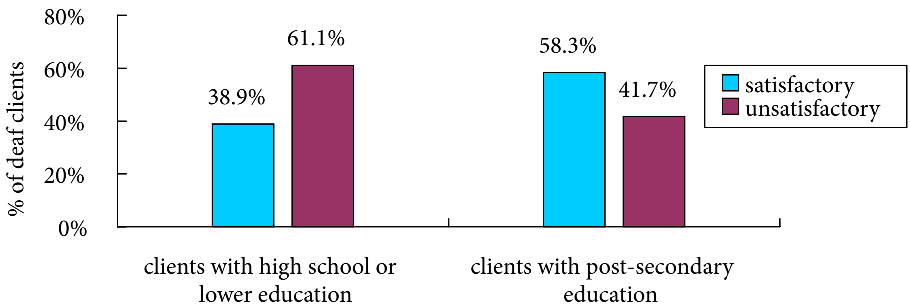

Figure 18. Satisfaction level and educational background of deaf clients

The reasons for dissatisfaction (Table 5) were lack of understanding on the part of the interpreter (48%), followed by lack of understanding on the part of the deaf client (42%), the interpreter's arbitrary addition or omission of information (31%), the interpreter's lack of respect for the deaf person (26%), and other reasons (9%), including lack of fluency and the poor non-manuals (i.e. information conveyed by facial expression, energy of gestures, etc).

Table 5. Reasons why you are dissatisfied with some SL interpreters (DQ, n = 257)

Reasons for dissatisfaction	Percentage
The interpreter doesn't get my signing	48%
I don't get the interpreter's signing	42%
Interpreters arbitrarily add or omit information	31%
Lack of respect for deaf persons	26%
Other reasons	9%

We also investigated the deaf persons' perceptions of SLI on TV (Figure 19). More than half of the deaf viewers surveyed (53.7%) were not satisfied with the quality of signing on TV, a finding that corresponds with those of Gong (2005) and a number of other reports available online.[17]

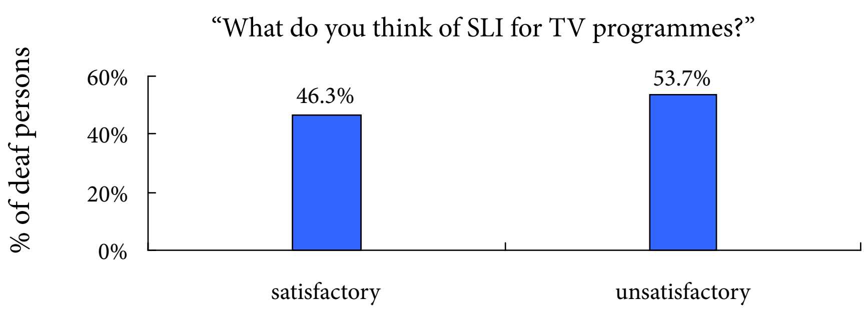

Figure 19. TV signing quality (DQ, n = 259)

The reasons cited were (Table 6): can't understand interpreter's signing (63.3%); tiny image on screen unclear (43%); speed of delivery too fast (23.0%); and others (8.2%) which included boring non-manuals and incomplete information.

Table 6. Why are you unsatisfied with TV signing? (DQ, n = 256)

Reasons for dissatisfaction	**Percentage**
Can't understand interpreters' signing	63.3%
Tiny image on screen unclear	43.3%
Speed of delivery	23.0%
Others	8.2%

3.6 Role of SL interpreters (IQ question 18, DQ question 11)

There has been an ongoing controversy in the interpreting community as to whether it is possible for interpreters to be neutral, and, if so, how neutrality may be maintained (Knapp-Potthoff 1986; Metzger 1999). In our survey, 72% of the interpreters surveyed believed their role was to remain neutral, whereas up to 66.7% of the deaf respondents thought that their interpreters should be protective of the rights of the deaf persons (Figure 20).

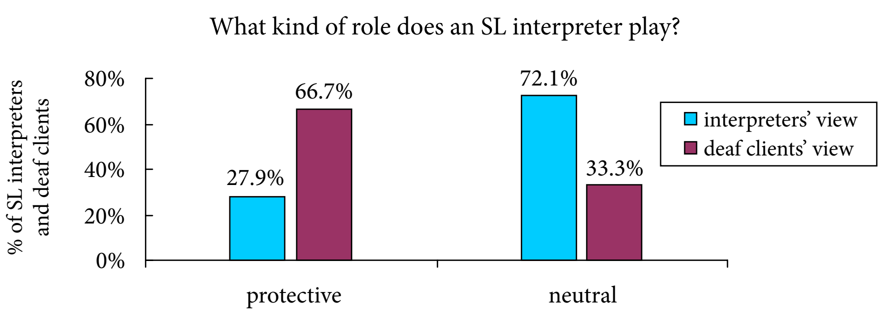

Figure 20. Role of SL interpreters (IQ, n = 104; DQ, n = 243)

4. Discussion

4.1 The pool of interpreters and training issues

Currently, active SLI practitioners in China are mostly staff at special education schools working as interpreters part-time. These typical first-generation interpreters (Kellet Bidoli 2002: 171) have received little professional training. They are asked to interpret simply because they happen to know how to sign. In terms of certification, while there is no nationally recognized professional SLI qualification, there are two related certificates. One is issued jointly by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the China Association of Employment Promotion (CAEP), and the other is the profession-specific certificate issued by the CAEP on its own. A number of local authorities such as Shanghai also have their own SLI accreditation exams.[18]

Lack of training and qualification is a matter of major concern for professional ethics, especially given the fact that SLI in China is most commonly used in police/court settings, where partiality carries heavy risks. The interpreters' background as teachers of deaf students makes it very natural for them to assume a guardian's role and become protective. The authors witnessed a signed court session during which the interpreter, a teacher at the local special education school with ten years' interpreting experience, engaged in long conversations with the accused without explaining to the judge or the prosecutor what was going on, and frequently admonished the accused about the danger of admitting to what the prosecutor had alleged. When this was pointed out to her, the interpreter admitted she had never thought of it as an issue of professional ethics.

Although there are two diploma-awarding SLI programmes in China, a closer look at the syllabus of one of them (Zhang 2009) reveals that 18 of the 56 required credits are given for signed language competence and 12 for deaf culture. As many as 24 credits are given to compulsory but less central courses such as politics, English, basics of law etc. Only 2 credits are given for SLI practice, and none for general translating and interpreting skills or TS theories. Furthermore, the programmes are hardly known outside the special education community in China.

4.2 The market

Given the currently low professional and social status of SLI, there is no quantitative data on the size of the Chinese SLI market, but the figure of 20.57 million deaf people clearly suggests a huge demand. Surprisingly, our survey shows that half of the deaf respondents thought there was a balance between supply and demand. Post-survey interviews with interpreters and deaf clients revealed two possible explanations.

First, as also revealed in the survey (Figure 7), the most common way for a deaf person to communicate with the hearing world is in writing. This does not mean that they do not need interpreters; after all, writing is a much slower mode of communicating in a face-to-face setting. (In everyday communication we speak at a rate of 100 syllables per minute, but write only at 30–40 characters in a minute.[19]) Chinese characters are by no means the easiest to write, and writing is really the last resort for the Chinese deaf community when it comes to communicating directly with hearing people. The problem is all the more severe in view of the generally low educational level of the deaf community.[20]

Second, social interaction between the deaf and the hearing worlds has always been very limited, and the deaf community has grown used to having minimal communication with the hearing world.

The survey also shows that the deaf community has poor access to interpreters. A comprehensive SLI service network and efficient supply-and-demand channel is yet to be established. For the time being, organisers of events that involve deaf persons usually just call up the local deaf people's association or the local deaf school to find an interpreter.

4.3 The Chinese sign language

On the Chinese mainland, CSL has not yet received full recognition as a language, either politically or academically. For the Chinese authorities, the recognition of CSL as a legitimate language is a sensitive political issue as it means recognizing the deaf community as an independent minority group with its own language. Such recognition will raise the issue of the political representation of this special community at all levels, which the authorities are not willing to do under the current system.

To the overwhelming majority of hearing parents and educators, as well as general public, one important measure of success in the upbringing and education of a deaf child is that he learns to voice the dominant language, not to sign.

Within the academic and the deaf communities, there are two CSLs in use, namely, the natural CSL used by deaf persons and the so-called "grammatical" CSL (i.e. signed Chinese) used by many deaf educators and some hearing people. For years, deaf people across the country have been using an indigenous signed system known as the natural CSL to communicate with each other. Natural CSL differs from spoken Chinese in terms of semantic precision, information density and word order (Gong 2009). It tends to omit pronouns, subjects and functors, and its word order is often reversed in comparison with spoken Chinese (Gong 2005: 48). For instance,

Spoken Chinese:	hei niu chi cao
	(black cow eat grass)
CSL:	Niu hei cao chi
	(Cow black grass eat)

Although there are regional differences, the varieties of natural CSL used in different parts of China are by no means as mutually unintelligible as the oral dialects can be. Unfortunately, for a long time, deaf educators in China have regarded natural CSL as the primitive and limited means of communication of the uneducated deaf. As a tool towards standardising the signed dialects, *Sign language in China*

(*Zhongguoshouyu)* was first published in 1994, with a second edition in 2000. The book is merely a lexicon of signs collected mainly from the Shanghai and Beijing sign dialects, with the addition of many phonetic spelling signs. As one might expect, it has been resisted by the deaf community around the country (Yuan 2002; Gu et al. 2005). But within the deaf education community, signs in *Sign language in China* have been regarded as the standard for the teaching of young deaf children and hearing people. Since there is no coverage at all of syntax or grammar in the book, the grammar taught simply defaults to that of spoken Chinese. To date, many hearing people still hold this signed Chinese to be the grammatical CSL.

A campaign to respect deaf people's language rights started in 2004 on a small scale.[21] In the academic world, there is an increasing, albeit still very small, call for the recognition of natural CSL as the real CSL (Gong 2004; Guo 2005; Liu & Yang 2007).

4.4 Directionality

Directionality has long been an issue of great interest and controversy in the interpreting community. In contrast to the traditional preference for interpreting into one's A language, there has been increasing support for the possibility and necessity of interpreting into one's B language (Lim 2003; Gile 2005; Wang 2008).

In the case of SLI in China, our post-survey interviews shows that 95% of all interpreters have spoken Chinese (Putonghua) as their A and CSL as their B. Data from the current survey also indicates that most interpreters prefer the OL-into-SL direction, namely, from A into B. This provides an interesting case for research into directionality. The interpreters' claim that interpreting into SL is much easier than the other way round may be explained in terms of the cognitive load for each direction. Since most interpreters have learnt to sign Chinese, understanding the natural CSL used by deaf people is a far greater challenge than the need to listen to their A language, spoken Chinese. Thus comprehension efforts for interpreting into SL are much lower. From the perspective of production efforts, interpreting into SL demands less effort in terms of syntactic restructuring, since most interpreters choose to follow the original OL structure and just transcode, "to the suffering of most deaf clients".[22] Furthermore, the succinctness of the CSL is also likely to increase production efforts when interpreting into the more 'wordy' OL. For instance:

Wo	pei	ni	yiqi	qu	kan	bing	ba?
I	accompany	you	together	go	see	doctor	–suggestion?

(Let me accompany you to see the doctor?)

In natural CSL, this can be expressed simply in two signs: "illness" (with two fingers on pulse) and "go together" (with two forefingers moved in the same direction). The signs are accompanied by a synchronized non-manual question marker.

Among the reasons Nicodemus (2008) analysed for the preference for working into SL was that of self-monitoring. In the spoken modality, the language signal is the same for both the speaker and the perceiver, but in the signed mode, it is different for the signer and the perceiver. But whether this makes self-monitoring more difficult is an interesting area for further research.

4.5 Quality

The root of the quality issue, as revealed by the survey, is linguistic: the fact of two different CSLs used by interpreters and by the deaf community explains why poor comprehension of each other's SL is the most prominent reason behind bad quality (Table 5). It also explains the correlation we found between educational level and perceptions of quality (Figure 18). For the deaf people, the higher their educational level, the better their Chinese level, and the easier it is for them to understand signed Chinese.

The poor reception of signed TV programmes among the deaf people is disheartening for the authorities, who have been working to provide SLI on television, in the hope of increasing deaf people's access to information. According to available statistics,[23] by the end of 2007, twenty-two TV stations at provincial level and 190 at municipal level had launched signed TV news or SL-interpreted programmes. Given the extensive resources invested in launching and maintaining these programmes, the fact that half of the targeted group fail to understand is discouraging. Many educated deaf persons still prefer to read subtitles rather than following a hearing person's signed Chinese.

4.6 Limitations of the study

While the educational profile of the interpreters may represent a fair view of the entire group, that of the deaf persons may not. Given the currently low socio-economic status of the deaf community, we had no access to the vast majority of isolated deaf persons living in rural areas, who have little access to any type of social life outside their homes, and are currently not SLI users.

With more time and experience, we could also have defined some questions better or included additional ones. For instance, in terms of interpreting experience, we could have asked for an estimate of the number of working hours per week or per month.

5. Conclusion

Despite China's having the biggest number of end-users in the world, SLI as a profession is still in the very earliest stage of its development.

At the political level, legislation is needed to ensure the deaf person's right of access to information. The authorities and the general public have yet to recognise and respect the deaf person's need for SLI. Some of the first cohort of 35 graduates from the only two SLI training programmes had a hard time finding a job. Even those who were originally hired as interpreters by police stations or factories that employ large numbers of deaf people were required to assume specific roles and responsibilities in addition to that of interpreting.

The failure of TV signing is further evidence of the neglect of the needs of the deaf community. In the authors' locality Xiamen, a weekly five-minute signed TV news programme was launched in late April 2009, and a native signer is invited to monitor the quality in the studio. This may offer a good solution to the issue.

Academically, though research into SLI has "filled in the empty spaces on the map of knowledge about SL Translation & Interpreting and T&I in general" (Grbić 2007: 45) and the TS community in the West has more or less reached a consensus in acknowledging SLI research as an integral part of TS, China is still lagging behind. The current survey is the very first attempt on the part of the spoken language interpreting community to dip into the world of SLI. Ideally, good research will need to involve collaboration between the TS community and SLI "practisearchers" (Gile 1994: 150).

In terms of training, the SLI community needs to step out of the box, and start talking to the more established spoken language interpreting community. There is no need to reinvent the wheel in terms of syllabi, methodologies, etc. The University of Graz has offered the world a fine example of training interpreters for spoken and signed modes in the same programme (Grbić 2007). In 2007, recognizing the great market potential of the translation industry, the Chinese Ministry of Education launched Bachelors and Masters degrees in Translation and Interpreting, known as the BTI[24] and MTI[25] programmes, respectively. The MTI is a professional degree and may serve as an umbrella for signed and spoken interpreter training.

However, the biggest incentive for SLI development must come through political channels. If the deaf community's access to information is guaranteed by law, the departments concerned will have to build mechanisms for providing SLI services. Only when the legal status of SL is affirmed can the political status of deaf people be raised and their needs recognized. And once this is in place, the market for SLI will grow, ultimately giving further impetus to SLI training and research.

With China's increasing commitment to building a harmonious society, the authors believe change is on its way.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. http://www.gov.cn/fwxx/sh/2007-01/11/content_493377_5.htm

2. http://www.molss.gov.cn/gb/news/2007-01/15/content_158811.htm

3. The portal of Chinese government, see http://www.gov.cn/fwxx/sh/2007-01/11/content_493377.htm

4. The two programmes are housed in Zhongzhou University in Henan Province and Nanjing Technical College of Special Education in Jiangsu Province.

5. http://www.ccw.com.cn/work2/corp/luntan/htm2008/20080822_488724.htm

6. *Chinese Translators Journal*; *Chinese Science & Technology Translators Journal*; *Shanghai Journal of Translators*, etc.

7. Wang (2006), Cong (2007), Meng (2008).

8. http://www.1203.org/preweb/enterprisetext.aspx?xw_id=7120086171866323

9. http://www.gzsdpf.org.cn/Info/InfoDetail.php?id=42

10. http://www.cnhoh.org.cn/redirect.php?tid=117&goto=lastpost

11. http://ln.news.163.com/06/1220/05/32OU48J00052006G.html

12. http://www.cjr.org.cn/asp/news/2009-3-1/news200931164645.asp

13. http://www.xgdpf.org.cn/News/Rank/2009/3/09-3-9-6.html

14. http://www.bdpf.org.cn/tjsj/tjdcxm/10716.htm

15. http://www.cnss.cn/xwzx/shfl/syfz/200803/t20080304_179680.html

16. International Deaf Person's Day: Last Sunday of September, designated by the World Federation of the Deaf.

17. http://www.ecqtj.com/tzpd/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=87, or http://js.tejiao.cn/Html/tzpd/lrwh/644028038889.html

18. For instance the Shanghai Oriental International Sign Language Education School. http://www.spe.edu.sh.cn/asp/sn/out/common/bl19type0.asp?JID=7596

19. http://www.syyawei.com/show.asp?aid=140&page=1&id=861

20. http://www.tejiao.cn/Html/tjnews/20070409081721847.htm

21. The China-Norway SigAm programme funded by the Amity Foundation http://www.amity-foundation.org/wordpress/?p=51

22. Private communication with Dr. Patrick Boudreault (deaf) of California State University, USA.

23. http://www.cdpf.org.cn/sytj/content/2008-05/12/content_25055966_3.htm

24. http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/translation/1215933.htm

25. http://www.cnmti.com/plus/view.php?aid=5

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Appendix 1: Interpreter's Questionnaire on SLI (IQ)

(Translated from the Chinese version by the authors)

1. **Your background**
   Age:__________
   Educational background:__________
   Affiliation: __________

2. **Is SLI your full time or part time job?**
   A. full-time B. part-time

3. **How many years of experience have you had as an SL interpreter?** ______years

4. **Have you received any training in SLI?**
   A. Yes B. No

5. **Do you have SLI certification?**
   A. No
   B. Yes (please specify____________)

6. **What's your view on the supply of SL interpreters in China?**
   A. shortage
   B. balanced supply and demand
   C. over-supply

7. **Is there a peak season for SLI?**
   A. No
   B. Yes (please specify ________________)

8. **Who commissioned most of your jobs?**
   A. disabled/deaf persons' associations
   B. police/courts
   C. translation agencies
   D. special education schools
   E. others (please specify)

9. **Where do you interpret most often?**
   A. educational settings
   B. entertainment performances
   C. sports events
   D. police/court settings
   E. hospitals
   F. others (please specify)

10. **How long does your task usually last?** ____________hour(s)

11. **When you interpret, do you have anyone to work on shifts with?**
    A. Yes B. No C. Sometimes

12. **How much notice are you usually given before an assignment?**
    ____

13. Are you happy with your remuneration?
A. Yes B. No C. Not concerned

14. Who do you think should pay for SLI services?
A. Organisers of events
B. Disabled/disabled persons association
C. Deaf persons
D. Voluntary and free service

15. What's the percentage of your work into the signed language (SL) as compared to into the oral language (OL)? ____%

16. Which is more difficult: interpret into SL or into OL?
A. Into SL B. Into OL C. No difference

17. Please rank the difficulties you have encountered at work:
A. fast delivery by speaker
B. difficulty understanding deaf clients' signing
C. difficulty remembering all information
D. unable to find an equivalent expression
E. poor cooperation from the organiser
F. Others, please specify______________________

18. What kind of role do you think an SL interpreter plays?
A. Protective of the deaf persons rights B. Neutral

Appendix 2: Deaf Users' Questionnaire on SLI (DQ)

(Translated from the Chinese version by the authors)

1. **Your background**
Age:_________
Educational background:_________

2. **Who often interprets for you?**
A. Family or friends
B. Staff at special education schools
C. Interpreters from association for disabled/deaf people
D. Others

3. **What's your view on the supply of SL interpreters in China?**
A. balanced supply and demand
B. shortage
C. over-supply

4. **In which way do you usually communicate with hearing people?**
A. With the help of an SL interpreter
B. In writing
C. Lip reading

D. with hearing aid
E. others, please specify____

5. **Do you know where to find an SL interpreter when you need one?**
A. No
B. Yes (Please specify_____________)

6. **Who do you think should pay for SLI services?**
A. Organisers
B. Disabled/Deaf persons' associations
C. deaf persons
D. Voluntary and free service

7. **What do you think of the quality of the SLI you've experienced?**
A. satisfactory B. Unsatisfactory

8. **Please rank the reasons why you are unsatisfied with some SL interpreters?**
A. The interpreter doesn't get my signing
B. I don't get the interpreter's signing
C. Interpreters arbitrarily add or omit information
D. Lack of respect for deaf persons
F. Other reasons. Please specify___________

9. **What do you think of the SLI for TV programmes?**
A. satisfactory B. Unsatisfactory

10. **Why are you unsatisfied with TV signing? Please rank the reasons.**
A. Can't understand interpreters' signing
B. Speed of delivery too fast
C. Tiny image on screen unclear
D. Other issues, please specify__________

11. **What kind of role do you think an SL interpreter plays?**
A. Protective of the deaf persons rights B. Neutral

Address form shifts in interpreted Q&A sessions

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This paper examines the use of address forms in interpreter-mediated question and answer (Q&A) sessions in international conferences. The address forms analyzed include both the names and the pronouns the questioners used to address the presenters. The data were collected from two conferences held in Taiwan during which Chinese/English simultaneous interpretation were provided. The Q&A pairs were divided into three categories: (1) bilingual/multilingual communication between questioners and presenters who spoke different languages; (2) monolingual communication between questioners and presenters who spoke the same language, (3) English-as-lingua-franca communication between questioners and presenters who spoke different language but chose to use English as a common language. The results show that (1) shifts in address forms occurred most frequently in interpreter-mediated bilingual/multilingual communication, (2) simultaneous interpreters tended to conform to target-culture conventions in their renditions of address forms, even though their decisions were still influenced by the cognitive constraints ubiquitous in the process of simultaneous interpreting.

1. Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) enables communication between speakers of different languages. With the interpreters seated in a soundproof booth some distance away from the participants, conference participants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can communicate with each other in a language they feel more comfortable with, face-to-face, in real time and uninterrupted. It is little wonder, therefore, that to people outside of the interpreting profession, the simultaneous interpreter is sometimes perceived as an "input–output robot" (Roy 1993/2002), whose sole function is to transfer words from one language to another.

People familiar with the interpreting profession, however, will argue that interpreters are "communication facilitators", rather than "invisible translating machines" (Pöchhacker 2004: 147). Despite the physical distance between them and the conference participants, the simultaneous interpreters are part of the communication event. They pay close attention to the dynamics of interaction on the floor, striving to iron out the differences brought about by cultural and linguistic disparities among the participants. To ensure smooth communication, the situation of the interaction, or the communicative context, is just as important as the text to be interpreted (Pöchhacker 1995).

This paper investigates how the interaction on the conference floor among the participants can affect the simultaneous interpreters' interpreting strategies and vice versa. We focus on one part of a conference where interaction is most frequent and obvious — the question and answer (Q&A) sessions, and the one element that is essential in every Q&A session — the use of address forms.

2. Background

2.1 Simultaneous interpreting during Q&A sessions

Question and answer sessions are a common feature in public discourse and hence a usual part of conference interpreters' work. The function of the Q&A sessions can be described as to provide opportunities of dialogue between the presenters and the audience, shifting the interaction in the conference from a mainly one-directional communication process to a bidirectional one. In bi/multilingual conferences, an interpreter's interpreting performance becomes even more pivotal during this bidirectional communication process, as the success or failure of the interpreting will immediately affect the dynamics of interaction between the speakers and the questioners (Wu & Chang 2007).

Research on academic conferences has found that Q&A sessions usually follow similar procedures (Shalom 1993; Ventola 2002a). First the chair opens the discussion and assigns a turn to a questioner who indicates the intention to speak, usually by raising hands. The questioner who is given the turn initiates the question or comment. The presenter then responds to the question or comment. After that, the chair elicits questions or comments again and gives the floor to another participant. The process goes on until all participants willing to speak get their turn or until time runs out and the chair closes the session (Ventola 2002a).

The structure of Q&A becomes more complex in international conferences where the participants come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For one thing, the conference participants may need to negotiate their language choices. In Ventola's (2002b) study of a two-day symposium held in Germany, participants code-switched between German and English, especially during the discussion stage. As English has become the lingua franca for international conferences, more code-switching phenomena may be expected. In an international conference where SI is provided, the form and function of the Q&A may be even more complicated, as communication between the questioner and the presenter may have to go through the simultaneous interpreters. Listeners in the audience who do not speak the same language as the presenter or the questioner will have to rely on the interpreters as well.

Although Q&A sessions provide opportunities for dialogue between the presenters and the audience, this dialogue is different from that found in community interpreting, where the speaker, the addressee, and the interpreter are usually physically close, giving the interpreter the opportunity to negotiate meaning or ask for clarification (Angelelli 2000). Using Alexieva's (1997/2002) multi-parameter model of interpreter-mediated events, SI-mediated Q&A sessions in most international conferences can be characterized as follows: (1) There is uninterrupted delivery of the source text (from the questioner then the presenter) and parallel production of the target text (from the interpreter); (2) The physical distance between the primary participants (the presenter on the stage and the questioner in the audience) and between the primary and secondary participants (the interpreter in the booth) is usually great so that communication requires the use of microphones and headsets; (3) Depending on the primary participants' command of the source and the target languages, amongst other things, they may or may not to use their interlocutor's language to communicate, and it may be hard to predict the language choice of the questioner; (4) The power of the speaker and the addressee is usually balanced, though the presenter sometimes has a higher level of expertise than the questioner. These characteristics present challenges to simultaneous interpreters in Q&A sessions that are different from either those presented to dialogue interpreters or those presented to simultaneous interpreters during other parts of the conference. In this study we will focus on a particular challenge to the interpreters; namely, the language choices made by the presenters and questioners in the Q&A sessions and their effects on the use of address forms.

2.2 Language choices in Q&A sessions

In SI-mediated Q&A sessions, any question and its response may take any one of at least three forms: First of all, Q&A may take place between a presenter and a questioner using different languages, requiring interpretation. Many linguistic and cross-cultural problems may arise in interpreting this type of interaction, in which linguistic and cultural differences may come into play. How the interpreter deals with these challenges has a strong impact on the interaction, and the success or failure of the Q&A very much depends on the interpreter.

Another type of communication is Q&A between presenters and questioners who share a common native language and use it to communicate directly. The function of SI in these situations is only to enable the listeners in the audience who do not share that language to follow the interaction. According to Alexieva's typology of interpreter-mediated events, when the event is located in the speakers' home country, there tend to be more "culture-specific lexis and strategies" (Alexieva 1997/2002). When both presenter and questioner are in their home country and communicating in their shared language, they may assume more shared knowledge that is unavailable to listeners who are from another country and who do not share their language. As a result, the interpreter may need to devote more effort to "explaining" the cultural aspects of the source discourse.

The third possible scenario is communication between presenters and questioners who do not share the same native language but use English to communicate with each other directly. As English is increasingly becoming the lingua franca of international conferences, more and more non-native English communication is seen in Q&A sessions. Again, because the presenter and the questioner can communicate without an interpreter, the SI is only intended for listeners who do not understand English. As is often found in the case of non-native speaker production, the questioning can be characterized by more hesitations, self-corrections, and grammatical errors, which may become another challenge for the interpreter, as the quality of the original will inevitably affect the quality of interpreter's output (Kalina 2005).

So far little research has been done on how these different forms of interaction affect simultaneous interpreters during the Q&A sessions. As our first attempt to fill this gap, in this paper we examine interactions in these three categories to see if the use of forms of address and pronouns by the interactants is influenced by the languages they choose to use.

2.3 Address forms in Q&A sessions

Many studies have shown that the use of address forms reflects the co-participants' perception of roles and relations during their interaction. The classic studies of Brown and Gilman (1960) and Brown and Ford (1964) revealed how people's choice of names and pronouns are consistently governed by power and solidarity semantics. More recent research has indicated that other complex factors such as gender, age, and attitude affect people's choices of address forms in political interviews and debates (e.g. Bull & Fetzer 2006; Kuo 2002; Rendle-Short 2007), in business organizations (Morand 2005; Poncini 2002), and in school settings (Wortham 1996).

The use of address forms, however, varies extensively in different languages and cultures (Fasold 1990). Some forms of address in one language do not exist in another language, or the usage of seemingly equivalent ones may be governed by different norms in different linguistic and cultural contexts. The highly language- and culture-specific nature of address forms can pose great challenges for translators and interpreters, who work with at least two different cultures and languages (Baker, 1992). Translators of narrative fiction, for example, often have to deal with various address forms used in literary dialogue among different characters in the source text. To reflect interpersonal relationships in the target text, the translators need to take into consideration factors ranging from the characters' gender and degree of intimacy to the target language's grammatical system and the target-readers' expectations (Baker 1992; Rosa 2000).

Compared with the translation of literary works, dealing with address forms in interpreting should be a less complicated task. Many potential problems can be avoided because of the interactants' awareness of the intercultural communication context. The speech event itself also limits the possible choices. However, the cross-cultural, face-to-face interaction that characterizes interpreting events can make the use of address forms just as complex, especially during SI, when the demand for communication is immediate. Pöchhacker (1995) argues that address forms are especially relevant for interpreting theory, as interpreting deals with personal interaction across cultures and therefore the culture and the politeness principles underlying different cultures. For example, he describes a case study in which the interpreter renders the first-name address used in the English source language into the title plus last name in German, taking into account the cultural expectations of the German target audience.

When dealing with language combinations that involve great cultural distances, the situation may become even more complicated. Take for example Chinese and English, which differ considerably in the use of general honorific titles, professional titles, personal names, and kinship terms (Qu 2005). To begin with, while in English the given name precedes the family name, Chinese names start with the family name. These differences can cause confusion for both Chinese and English audiences. For example, when an English name is translated phonetically into Chinese during a conference, the Chinese audience can mistake the first name for the last name, and English-speaking audiences can make similar mistakes with Chinese names. Differences in pronunciation may also pose a problem. Many Chinese are familiar with common English first names, but find the last names hard to pronounce. For non-Chinese speakers, Chinese names may be difficult to pronounce. Thus, addressing someone from another culture can become a face-threatening event and may result in errors or else in the avoidance of all forms of address

(Morand 2005). In this paper, we will discuss interpreters' handling of situations such as this.

The use of personal pronouns is another problematic area. Some recent studies in dialogue interpreting have investigated the use of the first, second and third person pronouns during interpreter-mediated interaction (Angermeyer 2005; Bot 2005; Dubslaff & Martinsen 2005). In these studies, Goffman's (1981) participation framework has been applied to the interaction between the primary participants and the interpreter, with personal pronouns being used to establish the interactant's footing, or stance, towards the other speakers in the interaction. Goffman classifies speaker's role according to her/his degree of responsibility for what was said, and the listener's role according to how the speaker recognizes the listener as an addressed or an unaddressed participant. These different speaker and listener roles are often revealed by the use of pronouns. For example, the use of the third person pronoun by a speaker when referring to a listener shows that the speaker has recognized that particular person as an unaddressed participant or a bystander instead of an addressed participant. Naturally, the speakers usually design their utterances for the addressed rather than for the unaddressed participants (Clark 1992, 1996). While pronoun shifts in dialogue interpreting can often be attributed to the presence of the interpreter, in simultaneously interpreted Q&A sessions, the interpreters are in a booth which is often at a considerable distance from the primary participants. We were therefore curious to investigate whether there might be similar shifts of pronouns in SI-mediated Q&A sessions.

3. The study

This study investigated how two common address forms, by personal name and by pronoun, are used in interpreter-mediated Q&A sessions, including how the primary participants and how interpreters handle these address forms in their delivery. Since names and personal pronouns are potentially important cues to determine the participation framework in an interaction, we use the participation framework to investigate the primary participants' as well as the interpreter's changing participation status. The focus of this study is on the questioners because, in contrast to presenters who are generally professional speakers, questioners in the audience often have less experience of cross-cultural communication and can present more challenges to the interpreters. Our research questions are as follows:

1. How do language choices made by the questioners in the Q&A session affect their use of address forms?
2. How do interpreters deal with these address forms?

3.1 Data

The data were collected from two international conferences held in Taipei with Chinese/English SI by the same team of two interpreters. Both interpreters had more than ten years' professional experience. The researchers were participant observers in the two conferences, making recordings and taking field notes.

The first conference was a half-day seminar on the topic of digital publishing. Of the three presenters, one was a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, one of English, and one of Dutch. The English and Dutch speakers presented and fielded questions in English. The Mandarin Chinese speaker presented and fielded questions in Chinese. Approximately 160 people attended the seminar, and a third of them listened to the SI. The Q&A session followed the three presentations and lasted for about fifty minutes.

The second conference was on the topic of floral art and culture. It lasted two days and included ten presentations. Of the ten presenters, four were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese, two of Japanese, one of English, one of Korean, one of French, and one of Dutch. All Chinese speakers presented and fielded questions in Chinese. One Japanese speaker and the Dutch speaker presented and fielded questions in English. The other Japanese speaker presented and fielded questions through a Japanese-Chinese consecutive interpreter. The Korean speaker also spoke through a Korean-Chinese consecutive interpreter. The French speaker presented in English but fielded questions through a French-Chinese consecutive interpreter. Nearly 300 people attended the conference and about four fifths of them listened to the SI. When the speaker used a language other than Chinese or English, the Chinese-English interpreters took relay from the consecutive interpreter. Q&A sessions took place after one or two presentations and were chaired by different moderators, all of whom were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese who could also speak English. Each Q&A session lasted between 10 and 30 minutes. There were six Q&A sessions in this conference, lasting for about 110 minutes in total.

Details of the Q&A sessions are given in Table 1. All recordings of the Q&A sessions were fully transcribed for analysis. In the first conference, four pairs involving questioners asking more than one presenter were further divided into sub-pairs. To avoid the added complexity caused by the relay from CI, two questions from a Korean speaker, one in Session 3 and one in Session 6 of the second conference were excluded from the analysis. In total, 36 Q&A pairs were analyzed, 15 from the first conference and 21 from the second.

In our analysis, we refer to the speaker in the conference as the Presenter, the moderator of the session as the Chair, and the audience member who raised questions as the Questioner. All questions were analyzed with their respective replies but we focus on the way the Questioners addressed the Presenter. To ensure anonymity of both Questioners and the Presenters, we have changed their names in the presentation of the data. To enhance internal validity, we presented the transcriptions and our tentative analysis to the interpreters for comments throughout the study. Comments obtained from these informal interviews will also be presented in the next section where appropriate.

Table 1. Question–answer adjacency pairs

Conference	Session	No. of presenters	No. of Q&A pairs	Languages involved	Length of recording (mins)
Digital Publishing	1	3	15*	5 C/E**, 5 C/C, 5 E/E	48:30
Floral Art	1	1	2	1 E/E, 1 C/E	10:20
Floral Art	2	1	2	2 C/E	7:07
Floral Art	3	2	4	1 C/K, 1 C/C, 1 E/C, 1 K/C	21:51
Floral Art	4	1	5	1 E/C, 4 C/C	14:03
Floral Art	5	2	7	4 C/J, 3 C/F	37:04
Floral Art	6	1	3	1 K/C, 2 C/C	10:53

*15, including sub-pairs
**C/E: Chinese-speaking questioner/English-speaking presenter; K: Korean; J: Japanese; F: French

4. Results

We divided the 36 question-answer pairs into three categories according to the languages the questioners and presenters used (see Appendix). The first category is Q&A between a presenter and questioner using different languages and therefore needing interpretation, for example, when a Chinese-speaking questioner directs a question to an English-speaking presenter who must follow through SI (**bilingual/multilingual-mediated communication**). When the presenter responds in English, the questioner and other members in the audience who do not understand English must also follow through SI, in this case into Chinese. In the second conference, which also involved Japanese, Korean, and French, Q&A sometimes had to go through consecutive interpreting first, which was then taken on relay from Chinese by the simultaneous interpreters. In this study, eighteen Q&A exchanges involved different languages, and eight of which involved consecutive and relay into SI.

The second category is Q&A between presenters and questioners who shared a native language and used it to communicate with each other directly (**monolingual communication**). Since both conferences were held in Taipei, all monolingual Q&A pairs occurred between Chinese-speaking presenters and Chinese-speaking questioners. The function of SI in these situations was to enable non-Chinese-speaking listeners in the audience to follow. In this study, there were twelve such exchanges.

The third category comprised communication between the presenters and questioners who did not share the same native language but nevertheless used English to communicate with each other directly rather than through the interpreters (**English-as-lingua-franca communication**). In this study, several Chinese questioners used English to raise questions or make comments that were addressed to the English-speaking presenters. In these cases, SI was intended only for listeners who could not understand English. Only six such pairs were found in our data.

We looked at the use of address forms by the questioners in these three categories and examined discrepancies, or shifts, if any, between the original use of address forms and the interpreter's rendition. As shown in Table 2, there are many more instances of shifts in the category of bilingual/multilingual-mediated communication, even proportionally (61% and 55%). In the following, we will discuss the shifts in address forms in the three types of interaction.

Table 2. Instances of shifts in address forms

Types of communication	No. of QA pairs	No. of address name shift	No. of pronoun shifts
Bilingual/multilingual-mediated	**18** (100%)	**11** (61%)	**10** (55%)
Monolingual	**12** (100%)	**3** (25%)	**3** (25%)
English-as-lingua-franca	**6** (100%)	**1** (16%)	–

4.1 Bilingual/multilingual-mediated communication

4.1.1 *Address name shifts*

In the eighteen instances of SI-mediated Q&A pairs, as many as eleven address name shifts were observed. Most of these occurred when the questioner seemed to avoid addressing the presenter by name, or made an error when addressing the presenter by name.

4.1.1.1 *Avoidance of address name.* Many instances of address name shifts occurred when a questioner failed to address the presenter directly and the interpreter chose to add the name of the presenter in the delivery. Compared to interactions between questioners and presenters in the same language, the questioners who did not use the same language as the presenters seemed likelier to avoid addressing them by name, possibly due to uncertainty about how to address them, often referring to the addressee's company or speech topic to make it clear whom they were addressing.

Example 1 is from the only session in the digital publishing conference in which all three presenters from the conference were fielding questions on the stage at the same time. The Chinese-speaking questioner indicates to whom the question is addressed by referring to the presenter's company. The interpreter considers that it is "more polite" to identify the presenter by name opts to add the name of the presenter, using the first name. Of the three presenters, the chair of the session had been addressing the two English-speaking presenters by their first name only and the Chinese-speaking presenter by an official title (President of a company) plus last name, following the Chinese convention of using the honorific title to show politeness. The interpreter had been following the address forms established by the chair as did all the questioners who had identified the presenters by name.

(1) **ST:** ……那請教<u>首先對Google的一個問題就是</u>……我要產生的問題是說：Google是怎麼看待<u>它</u>和出版商的關係？就是<u>它</u>選擇的出版商都是大型的嗎？……那<u>Google</u>要怎麼樣去和他們合作，還是基本上是在商言商，就是以價格取勝？
(…first, <u>for Google I have a question</u>….The question that I have is: how does Google see <u>its</u> relationship with the publisher? That is, does <u>it</u> choose large publishers to work with? …So how is <u>Google</u> going to work with them? Or will business take precedence and price be the most important consideration?)

TT: …<u>I have a question for Tom at Google</u>….But my question is, how does Google look at the relationship with the publisher? Because <u>you</u> have worked with large publishers….And do <u>you</u> work with these publishers or do <u>you</u> just work with those that can bring <u>you</u> revenue?

The address pronouns used in this example are also interesting. While the questioner uses only "it" to refer to the company Google, the interpreter uses the second person pronoun "you" four times. Furthermore, since this questioner had questions for two presenters, one English-speaking and the other Chinese-speaking, it is interesting to compare that he addresses these two presenters differently. While he does not address the English-speaking presenter by name, when it comes to the question for the Chinese-speaking presenter, he uses his official title plus last name (See Example 11).

Another way to identify the presenter is to use the topic of the presentation. In Example 2, the questioner does not address the presenter directly but refers to the topic of the presentation. The interpreter, however, elucidates the indirect reference by rendering "a question about Japanese floral art" into "a question for Professor Katsu Hashimoto".

(2) **ST:** 你好，我要問一下日本花道這邊；因為台灣的神木信仰喔，是日據時代的時候……
(Hello, I have a question regarding Japanese floral arts; because the belief of sacred trees in Taiwan, started during the Japanese occupation…)

TT: I have a question for Professor Katsu Hashimoto. In Taiwan, there is a popular belief in the holy tree. And I think this is probably a residue of Japanese influence in Taiwan…

(3) **ST:** 請教那個從庇里牛斯山來的貴賓，法國的香水不是很有名嗎？那都是用花做……
(I would like to ask the distinguished guest from the Pyrenees. Isn't French perfume famous? Perfume is made from flowers…)

TT: I have a question for Justine from Pyrenees. French perfume is famous, and perfume is distilled from flowers…

In Example 3, again the questioner avoids addressing the presenter by name but the interpreter renders "the distinguished guest from the Pyrenees" as "Justine from Pyrenees." Note that in so doing, the interpreter also changes the register ("distinguished guest") to an informal one ("Justine").

Both Example 2 and 3 are from sessions in which consecutive interpretation was provided. When a consecutive interpreter was present on the rostrum, the questioners seemed to become more aware of the indirectness of the communication between themselves and the presenters.

4.1.1.2 *Speaker's error.* When the speaker made an error in the form of address, the interpreters tended to correct the error. In our data, there were three instances of the questioner's using a title plus first name to address a presenter. As mentioned earlier, the confusion may have been caused by the different conventions in the use of Chinese and English names. According to the interpreters, this confusion is quite common in their experience and they would usually correct the error.

Example 4 and 5 are from the same Q&A session, with English-speaking presenter. Both questioners use the general title plus first name (Mr. Raul) to address the presenter, though in the first example, the questioner mispronounces the presenter's first name when trying to pronounce it in English. It should be noted that in the Chinese version of the conference program English presenters' names were translated phonetically into Chinese (e.g. Raul as '勞爾', pronounced 'Lao-er') while keeping the original First Name + Last Name order, making it easy for a Chinese speaker to mistake the first name for the last. In fact, the chair of the session had been addressing the presenter in this way, and the questioners may have been following the address form established by the chair.

(4) **ST:** Rouly先生，謝謝你，非常精采，那我們都收穫很多，但是我們最想要知道說你設計圖這麼漂亮，那你如何來…
(Mr. Rouly, thank you. That was excellent. We learned a lot. But we would really like to know, since your drawings are so beautiful, how…)

TT: Sir Ramirez, thank you. Thank you for a wonderful presentation. We learned a great deal. What we would like to know is, you have such beautiful drawings, so how do you…

(5) **ST:** 我是來自嘉義的愛花朋友，很感謝勞爾先生提供這麼美妙的創意….
(I am a flower-lover from Chiayi, I want to thank Mr. Raul for the wonderful creativity…)

TT: I came from Chia-yi. I want to thank you Raul, for such wonderful creativity and we really learned a great deal….

In Example 4, this Title + First Name is rendered as Title + Last Name. The interpreter explained that, realizing mistake made by the questioner, (s)he decided to change the address form to Title + Last Name in conformity to the English norms, but apparently did not notice that the use of the title "Sir" with Last Name might not be appropriate either. In example 5, the same use of Title + Last Name is rendered by the same interpreter as First Name only. According to the interpreters, since it takes less effort to repeat the sound made by the source language speaker, they sometimes adopt a strategy of eliminating the title while keeping the first name. This strategy can again be observed in Example 6, in which the questioner addresses the presenter twice. The first time, she uses Title + First Name + Last Name in English, and the interpreter opts to change the general title "Madame" to the professional title "Dr." as the presenter holds a doctoral degree. When the questioner addresses the presenter for the second time, using Title + First Name, the interpreter opts to repeat the first name while omitting the general title. The interpreter admitted not being confident about the pronunciation of the French last name and had therefore used the first name instead. Again, it should be noted that this strategy alters the interpersonal relationship between questioner and presenter. Whereas in Chinese the questioner had intended to show respect by addressing the presenter with a general honorific title plus last name, to the SI users the questioner would seem to have addressed the presenter in a casual way.

(6) **ST:** ……我想要問那個 Madame Justine Bergues 一個問題喔……那我現在想要問賈斯丁女士的就是說：那在花藝方面，你覺得法國的花藝有沒有受日本當時的影響？
(…I would like to ask Madam Justine Bergues a question….What I want to ask Madam Justine is: in floral arts, do you think France has been influenced by Japan?)

TT: I have a question for Dr. Justine Bergues.…So I would like to ask Justine, do you think French floral arts has been influenced by Japan?

4.1.2 *Pronoun shifts*

In the eighteen interpreter-mediated Q&A pairs, ten pronoun shifts were observed, four of them from no use of pronoun in the Chinese source text (which is possible under the null-subject construction in Chinese), to use of the second person pronoun in the English target text. The remaining instances are all shifts from the third person to the second person pronoun. The reason for the primary speaker's choice of third person perspective is uncertain. One possible explanation is that the questioners were trying to show deference to the presenters by not addressing them too directly. This explanation, however, cannot hold as we do not see similar ways of showing deference in the other two categories of communication. A more probable explanation may be that these questioners were aware of the indirectness of the communication between themselves and the presenters, and therefore, instead of addressing the presenters directly, chose to address the Chinese-speaking chair, who had given them the floor. The presenters here became unaddressed recipients of the messages; that is, instead of being "talked to", they were "talked about," as the third person pronoun has turned them from an interlocutor into an *exhibit* (Wortham 1996).

As demonstrated by the following examples, interpreters consistently dealt with this use of third person pronouns by questioners by shifting them into the second person, in an apparent interpreter's attempt to re-impose the "correct" participation framework on the interaction, as if the questioner had addressed the presenter directly. The recurring pattern of shifting from the third to second person pronoun also reflects the interpreter's goal of *facilitating* the communication process.

(7) **ST:** 就今天早上那個朴美羅女士她談到的那個韓國宮廷的那個彩花喔，我忽然有一個、有一個、不曉得，臨時想到的就是……但是我剛剛聽到她的PowerPoint的時候，我忽然想到……
(This morning Ms. Park Mi-la she talked about Korean palatial flowers. It suddenly occurred to me that….But when I was listening to her PowerPoint, I suddenly thought of…)

TT: I would have a question for Professor Park Mi-la. You talked about palatial silk flowers, and it suddenly occurred to me that….We were looking at your PowerPoint, we know that…

In Example 7, the Chinese-speaking questioner commented on the Korean-speaking presenter's presentation. The questioner refers to the presenter in the third person ("she talked about", "her PowerPoint") but the interpreter changes the perspective to second person ("you talked about", "your PowerPoint") as if the questioner were addressing the presenter directly.

(8) **ST:** ……我想要特別請問那個橋本教授。就是那個，日本在那個十九世紀到二十世紀初期他們的那個城市發展……那花藝，就是花道想必是受到很大的衝擊，那他們是如何復出他們的那個這樣子的傳統文化這樣，謝謝。
(…I have a question especially for Professor Hashimoto, that is, Japan in the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, their cities developed….so the floral arts must have been greatly impacted, so how did they revive their traditional culture, thank you.)

TT: …I have a question for Professor Hashimoto. From the 19th to the 20th century in Japan, we saw rapid urban development in Japan….I'm sure that floral arts was negatively impacted. So, how did you revive the floral arts in Japan after World War II?

In Example 8, notice that after saying to whom the question is addressed, the questioner refers to the presenter's country three times in the third person. The interpreter omits the first of these third-person references, and shifts the next two into second-person.

Pronoun shifts can also be observed on the part of the presenters, though only rarely, as they are usually more experienced with cross-cultural communication. Example 9 is an interesting and telling example. Here, the presenter is responding to a comment made by an English-speaking questioner, who was a presenter the day before.

(9) **ST:** 各位都有同步口譯可以知道他剛剛大概在談什麼，老實說我的看法跟他不完全相同啦……那我所考量的方向是你這樣買一束花回去看半年都不會來買[台語]，這是我們這個是從另外一個角度來考量……
(You have all been listening to the simultaneous interpretation so you know what he was just talking about — honestly speaking my views differ from him…But my consideration is that *if you were to buy a bouquet like that you wouldn't return to buy flowers for another half year* [in the Taiwanese dialect], so we should think about this from another perspective.

TT: So <u>you</u> have all been listening to simultaneous interpretation, I am sure <u>you</u> understood what <u>Mr. Balman</u> was saying…. However, from my personal perspective is that this will be bad news for flower growers. So, of course there are pros and cons…

Unlike many presenters in our data who started their responses to the questions or comments by recognizing the questioner in the second person (e.g. "thank you for your question"), in this case when responding to the questioner's comments, the presenter starts by addressing the Chinese-speaking audience in the second person, referring to the English-speaking questioner in the third person ("*You* have all been listening to the simultaneous interpreting so know what *he* was just talking about"). With this change of perspective, or "footing" (Goffman 1981), the Chinese presenter has aligned with the Chinese-speaking audience, while excluding the English-speaking questioner, turning the questioner into an unaddressed receiver of the response. We would like to suggest that this change of footing is not unmotivated. As the questioner actually made a comment that was at odds with the presenter's point of view, the presenter's change of footing may be regarded as an attempt to influence the audience in favour of his own point of view (Brown & Gilman 1960; Brown & Ford 1964). This change in the participation framework is further strengthened by the presenter's code-switching between Mandarin Chinese and the Taiwanese dialect, two languages that are shared by his Chinese-speaking audience. When we look at the interpreter's rendition of the response, one obvious shift is the explicitation of the pronoun "he" to "Mr. Balman". The interpreter reported in retrospect that (s)he considered it more polite to refer to the questioner, who had been a presenter on the previous day, by title and last name instead of just using "he".

4.2 Monolingual communication

In the 12 instances of monolingual Q&A pairs, three address name shifts (all of them related to differences between Chinese and English address conventions) and three pronoun shifts (two of them were from no pronoun in Chinese to second person in English and one from third person to no pronoun.) In the following, we first present a typical example of monolingual communication and then some examples of shifts.

4.2.1 *Address convention in Chinese*

In accordance with the Chinese convention, in all instances of Chinese monolingual pairs, including those involving shifts, questioners addressed presenters using title plus last name. When the presenter had an official title, that title was used; otherwise, a general honorific title such as "Mr." plus last name was used.

In Example 10, the questioner used the honorific title "Director" plus last name to address the presenter.

(10) **ST:** ……請問那個<u>張處長</u>，剛剛講到那個蘭花喔那個以及基因轉植那個，**可以和我們說一下** [台語]，大約它那個是什麼花種，或者是那個什麼時候可以出來，**跟我們說一下好嗎** [台語]？謝謝。
(…I would like to ask <u>Director Chang</u> about the orchid that has been genetically modified, *is it possible to tell us* [in Taiwanese dialect], what kind of orchid species, or when they will come out, *is it possible to tell us* [in Taiwanese dialect]? Thank you.)

TT: …I would like to ask <u>Director Chang</u>. You talk about the genetically modified orchid that can bloom for over six months. Can you maybe tell us when these genetically modified orchids will be hitting the markets? I am very curious to find out.

It should be noted that the presenter in this example, "Director Chang", is the same official described in Example 9. As we mentioned earlier, this Mandarin-speaking presenter sometimes code-switched to Taiwanese in his presentation to seek solidarity from the Mandarin-Taiwanese bilingual listeners in the audience. The questioner in this example also code-switched into Taiwanese twice when addressing the presenter ("can you tell us?"). Code-switching, however, is difficult to convey through SI. Hence the subtle changes in the affective aspect of the interaction can go unnoticed by the English language listeners.

4.2.2 *Differences in address conventions between Chinese and English*

Example 11, from the digital publishing conference, is an instance of shift in interpreted monolingual communication. It should be noted that the chair of this conference had been addressing the three presenters in different ways, the two English-speaking presenters with first name ("Tom" and "Thomas"), and the third Chinese-speaking presenter, the president of a technology firm, as "President Yang". In Q&A, members of the audience seem to follow the chair's lead; in this example, the Chinese-speaking questioner addresses the presenter as "President Yang", but this is rendered in SI only as "Mr. Yang". When asked about this change, interpreter explained that it would have been hard for the English listeners, mainly the two English-speaking presenters, to identify "President Yang". (It might also seem strange to have three people sharing the same stage represented as "Tom", "Thomas", and "President Yang", though the interpreter did not give this as an explanation.) Another questioner also addresses the presenter as "President Yang", and the SI again changes the title to Mr., though this time with the presenter's full name, as "Mr. Kevin Yang".

(11) **ST:** 那第二個部份就是我想請教楊董就是說，我們在數位化的過程中，在台灣這部份，跟大陸這方面，兩方面是怎樣去看待彼此的數位化……
(The second part is I would like ask President Yang, that is, in the process of digitization, in Taiwan and in mainland China, how do both sides view each other's digitization process…)

TT: My second question is for Mr. Yang. In digitization Taiwan as compared to China, are there, how do we see how do we look at each other's digitalization process?…

Because the questioners in both "President Yang" instances raised questions for two presenters in their turn of questioning, first to the English-speaking presenter from Google ("Tom") and second to the Chinese-speaking presenter ("President Yang"), it is interesting to contrast the way they address the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking presenters (e.g. Example 1 vs. Example 11). Whereas they both address the Chinese-speaking presenter with official title plus last name, they either use the company name to refer to the English-speaking presenter or do not address the English-speaking presenter at all.

It is worth noting the lack of consistency in the interpreters' choices and strategies toward the use of address names in this category (see Appendix). While in the bilingual category the interpreters had consistently chosen to conform to the target language convention, in this category, they sometimes changed the Chinese forms of address to conform to English-language conventions ("Teacher Chuang" to "Mr. Chuang"), but sometimes kept the Chinese form ("Director Chang" and "Director Lin"). When we presented this data to the interpreters, they said they were aware that using "Teacher" as a professional or honorific title is uniquely Chinese and had therefore dropped it in their English rendition. But they did not consider addressing people with job titles such as "Director" or "President" plus last name to be inappropriate, since this is commonly seen and widely accepted in the English used in the Chinese-speaking community, and hence in conference settings in this part of the world whenever English is the conference language. In other words, from the interpreters' point of view, they had consistently conformed to the target language convention in this category as well.

Among the three pronoun shifts, there are two instances in which the shift is from no pronoun in Chinese to second person pronoun in the English interpretation, a necessary step when translating null-subject Chinese sentences into English. The only "real" pronoun shift in this category is described in Example 12, where the questioner used the third person to refer to the presenter. A possible explanation for this use of the third-person perspective is the pragmatic function of the questioning — that is, making comments. The questioner was speaking from the perspective of the audience, or at least on behalf of his floral art association, as can be seen by his use of the first person plural *we* perspective from the very beginning. The use of the third person pronoun, however, was not rendered into English.

(12) **ST:** ……我們很有幸，在這段時間裡面，共同閱讀了<u>莊先生</u>的內心之美。同時，我們也跟<u>他</u>共同分享了這個美麗的世界，我們這個時間，也共同閱讀了，那個一部的佛經，這就是佛經，就是經典。
(…We are very honored, to have been able, in this period of time, together to have read, the beauty of Mr. Chuang's heart, also, we have shared with <u>him</u> this beautiful world, in this time, we have read together, a part of the Buddhist scripture, that is the Buddhist scripture, the classics.)

TT: …We are so fortunate in this short period to have the opportunity to read the inner beauty of <u>Mr. Chuang's</u> heart. We also, we shared this beautiful world together. And actually we also read some of the important essence of Buddhism, of the mantras.

4.3 English-as-lingua-franca communication

Our data included a total of six instances of English-as-lingua-franca Q&A pairs. All of the questioners were native speakers of Chinese. Except for pair 12, between the chair of a session and the presenter in the floral art conference, all pairs occurred in the digital publishing conference. Only one instance of address name shift was found, and no pronoun shift was observed. In contrast with the situation in bilingual/multilingual-mediated communication, those who used English to put questions to the English-speaking presenters all consistently addressed the presenters by name. Furthermore, in contrast to the many uses of the third person pronoun found in bilingual/multilingual-mediated Q&A pairs, all questioners in this category used the second person to refer to the presenters.

Example 13 is typical of this category. The questioner addresses the presenter by first name and consistently uses the second person pronoun to address him.

(13) **ST:** Sorry. I have one question for <u>Tom</u>. Regarding to the uh the Google Book Booksearch….And the second one is, <u>do you</u> accept all the publishers or do <u>you</u> make any selections? …

TT: 我有一個問題要問<u>Tom</u>。有關這個Google Booksearch……第二個問題是：<u>你</u>接受所有的出版社嗎？還是說<u>你</u>有一個篩選的一個過程？……
(I have a question for <u>Tom</u>. This is related to Google Booksearch…. The second question is: do <u>you</u> accept all publishers? Or do <u>you</u> have a screening process?…)

As mentioned earlier, the chair of the Q&A has been addressing the two English-speaking presenters by their first names. This may be the reason why all questioners followed suit and addressed the two English-speaking presenters by their first name. In the Chinese rendition, the interpreters also used the presenters' first names, pronounced in English. When we consider the interpersonal relationship between the presenter and the questioner, however, we see that the use of the first name may not be appropriate here. While the chair and the presenter may have known each other on a first-name basis, it is more appropriate for the questioner to address the presenter with title plus last name. However, the questioners may see themselves as following "Western" norms of using first names when addressing people.

It should be noted here that the two presenters' last names may also play a role in explaining why the questioners chose to address them by their first name. The first presenter, Thomas, for example, has a rather unusual last name and this may account for the questioners' use of his first name instead of title plus last name; they prefer not to risk misusing or mispronouncing the presenter's last name or lose face both for themselves and for the presenter.

The only instance of shifts in forms of address in this category is when a questioner mispronounces the presenter's name "Thomas" as "Toms" — which sounds similar to the name of the other presenter ("Tom"). The interpreter apparently realized this and immediately corrected it to "Thomas". This example of repair also illustrates the many challenges interpreters face as an increasing number of non-native English speakers choose to use English at international conferences even when interpretation into their native languages is available.

5. Conclusion

In an international conference where SI is provided, participants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can use different languages to talk to one another, directly, and without interruption. A close look at the interaction on the floor, however, reveals that although the provision of interpreting services may create the appearance of direct, smooth communication, interaction among the participants is still shaped by the languages they choose to use. This is particularly true during Q&A sessions, when the general audience, often less experienced with cross-cultural communication, is invited to take part.

This study investigated how address names and pronouns used by the questioners may be influenced by the languages they use, hence creating different challenges for the interpreters. The results have demonstrated the complexity of simultaneous-interpreted Q&A sessions, as well as the interpreters' efforts to "optimize the interpreting product and make an event more communicative" (Kalina 2005).

When the communication is between questioners and presenters using different languages, the use of address forms can be influenced both by the different address conventions of their respective languages and their awareness of the cross-cultural nature of the communication event. The different conventions of address in the languages may result in the wrong use or avoidance of forms of address, especially among audiences with limited experience in cross-cultural communication. Having a better knowledge of the conventions in the target language and recognizing the importance of clearly identifying the addressee(s), the interpreters may choose to correct the speakers' errors, adapt their rendition to conform to target language conventions, or add addressees' names explicitly. However, the decision may also be influenced by immediate cognitive constraints and the results may not always be successful, as the variation in address form systems in different languages can be hard to master, even for cross-cultural communication experts such as professional interpreters.

In addition, even though SI services are available, the questioners may still be aware of the indirectness of the communication between themselves and the presenters. This awareness may manifest itself in their use of the third person to refer to presenters, thus framing them as unaddressed recipients of their messages. Again, the interpreters, who are experienced cross-cultural communicators, may try to impose on the interaction the "appropriate" framework of participation, shifting from third to second person, thus creating the illusion of direct communication.

When the communication is between speakers of the same language, the interpreters may feel more relaxed, as they are now providing a "running commentary" of what is going on. However, different challenges may present themselves, as the questioner and the presenter may become less aware of the cross-cultural communication situation. This assumption of common knowledge may make the interpretation more challenging as the interpreters need to overcome these "culture-specific lexis and strategies" (Alexieva 1997/2002). One of the challenges in the use of address terms is manifested when the presenters and the questioners follow the conventions of a source language that lacks direct equivalents in the target language, which the interpreter may cope with by providing no translation at all. Even when an equivalent term exists, the interpreter may also choose to render it differently depending on the situation. Another complicating factor in the interpretation is the code-switching used by questioners and presenters who share more than one common language, since such code-switching cannot come across through the interpretation, making it impossible for target language listeners to detect the socio-cultural function of code-switching in the interaction.

With the increasing use of English as the lingua franca of international conferences, more audiences may choose to use English. Questioners using their second language may make more mistakes grammatically, semantically, or phonologically, which would require the interpreter to divert more effort to the comprehension of the source language message. The resulting common use of first names in this study suggests that non-native speakers of English may regard the norms of American English as the ones to follow whenever English is spoken, regardless of the speakers' native languages and cultural backgrounds. How interpreters deal with this situation may depend on how important they believe the style of their interpretation is. One interesting characteristic of this type of communication is that, although the use of English seems to make communication between the questioners and the presenters more "direct," at least judging by the use of the second person pronoun, the questions tend to be shorter and the types of pragmatic functions they cover also seem to be rather limited, as compared to the communication enabled by the interpreters. Although it is unfair to draw any conclusion from the small sample of English-mediated Q&A pairs in this study, this possible "diluting effect" of English-as-lingua-franca communication as compared with interpreter-mediated communication may merit further research.

The analysis of the small corpus of professional SI in this paper has shown that interpreters are conscious of their goal of facilitating the bi-directional communication during Q&A sessions. The way they deal with the address forms used by the questioners and presenters represents their effort to facilitate, or even "manage", the communication. The interpreters' inconsistency in dealing with the same address forms also supports the claim that the interpreter's decision-making process is both norm-based and cognitively constrained (Shlesinger 1999; Chang & Schallert 2007).

We hope this study will contribute to the understanding of how interaction works in multilingual conferences, and how the interaction on the floor impacts simultaneous interpreters; we also hope to generate more interest in the study of interaction in conference interpreting.

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Appendix

1. Bilingual/multilingual-mediated communication

Session	Pair	Questioner language	Presenter language	Address Name		Pronoun	
				Source text	Target text	Source text	Target text
DP	3–1	C	E (D)	Google	Tom from Google	它[it]	you
DP	4–1	C	E (D)	飛利浦[Philips] Thomas	Thomas Thomas	你們[you-plural]	you
DP	4–2	C	E	Tom	Tom	你[you]	you
DP	5–1	C	E	Google	Google	( )	you
DP	6	C	E	Google的Tom [Tom from Google]	Tom from Google	他們 [they]	you
FA1	13	C	E (J)	木村先生[Mr. Kimura]	Professor Kimura	他的[his]	your
FA2	14	C	E	Rouly先生[Mr. Rauly]	Sir Ramirez	你[you]	you
FA2	15	C	E	勞爾先生[Mr. Raul]	Raul	( )	you
FA3	16	C	K [w/ CI]	朴美羅女士[Ms. Park Mila]	Professor Park Mila	她[she] 她的[her]	you your
FA3	18	E (D/F)	C	Professor	( )	you	您[you-honorific]

Session	Pair	Questioner language	Presenter language	Address Name		Pronoun	
				Source text	Target text	Source text	Target text
FA4	19	E	C	( )	( )	you	你[you] 您[you-honorific]
FA5	24	C	J [w/ CI]	橋本教授 [Professor Hashimoto]	Professor Hashimoto	他們 [they] 他們的 [their]	( ) you
FA5	25	C	J [w/ CI]	那位日本來的先生[The gentleman from Japan]	( )	( )	you
FA5	26	C	J [w/ CI]	那個日本花道這邊[about Japanese floral art]	Professor Katsu Hashimoto	( )	you
FA5	27	C	J [w/ CI]	橋本教授 [Professor Hashimoto]	Professor Hashimoto	你[you]	you
FA5	28	C	F [w/ CI]	1. Madame Justine Bergues 2.賈思汀女士 [Ms. Justine]	1. Dr. Justine Bergues 2. Justine	你[you]	you
FA5	29	C	F [w/ CI]	庇里牛斯山來的貴賓[the distinguished guest from the Pyrenees]	Justine from Pyrenees	( )	( )
FA5	30	C	F [w/ CI]	( )	( )	他們的 [their]	your

2. Monolingual communication

Session	Pair	Questioner language	Presenter language	Address Name		Pronoun	
				Source text	Target text	Source text	Target text
DP	3–2	C	C	楊董 [President Yang]	Mr. Yang	( )	( )
DP	5–2	C	C	楊董 [President Yang]	Mr. Kevin Yang	你[you]	you

Session	Pair	Questioner language	Presenter language	Address Name		Pronoun	
				Source text	Target text	Source text	Target text
DP	8	C	C	( )	( )	你[you]	you
DP	10–1	C	C	王先生 [Mr. Wang]	Mr. Wang	您[you-honorific]	you
DP	10–2	C	C	吳先生 [Mr. Wu]	Mr. Wu	您[you-honorific]	you
FA3	17	C	C	張處長 [Director Chang]	Director Chang	( )	you
FA4	20	C	C	莊先生 [Mr. Chuang]	Mr. Chuang	你[you]	you
FA4	21	C	C	( )	( )	你[you]	you
FA4	22	C	C	莊老師 [Teacher Chuang]	Mr. Chuang	您[you-honorific]	you
FA4	23	C	C	莊先生 [Mr. Chuang]	Mr. Chuang	他[him]	( )
FA6	31	C	C	林館長 [Director Lin]	Director Lin	你[you]	you
FA6	32	C	C	林館長 [Director Lin]	Director Lin	( )	you

3. English-as-lingua-franca communication

Session	Pair	Questioner language	Presenter language	Address Name		Pronoun	
				Source text	Target text	Source text	Target text
DP	1	E (C)	E (D)	Thomas	Thomas	you	你[you]
DP	2	E (C)	E (D)	Toms	Tom.. Thomas	you	你[you]
DP	7	E (C)	E	Tom	Tom	you	你[you]
DP	9	E (C)	E	Tom	Tom	you	您[you-honorific] 你[you]
DP	11	E (C)	E	Tom	Tom	you	你[you]
FA1	12	E (C)	E (J)	Principal Kimura	木村校長 [Principal Kimura]	you	你[you] 您[you-honorific]

Interpreting Cantonese utterance-final particles in bilingual courtroom discourse

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This paper examines an unusual feature of spoken Cantonese — the utterance-final particle — to see how it is deployed and rendered by interpreters in courtroom discourse. The data is based on five rape trials heard in the Hong Kong courtrooms. It is a known fact that different participants in the courtroom construct their version of the truth utilizing different linguistic devices. However, different language systems have different linguistic phenomena which may be common in one language but non-existent in another. Utterance particle is one of those unique language devices in Cantonese which is not available in English. Court interpreters often find themselves facing the task of maintaining the coherence and modality of all the participants' languages while interpreting for these different language systems.

Introduction

There has been extensive analysis of courtroom interaction in various European languages, particularly English. However there is limited information on the use of non-European languages in the courtroom, particularly in those aspects where non-European languages are notably different. This paper examines an unusual yet commonly used feature of spoken Cantonese, the utterance-(final) particle — one of the features in which Cantonese differs from European languages. They mark aspects of the speech act force, and the speaker's attitude. For example, there are utterance particles which support, evaluate and question statements uttered by the participants in the courtroom when giving evidence, so they can be expected to play an important role in courtroom proceedings. At the same time courtroom proceedings are an ideal site to investigate the discourse functions of these utterance-final particles.

The opposing sides in Common Law trials are attempting to establish different and competing accounts or representations of the same reality (Bennet & Feldman

1981; Gibbons 2003: Chapter 4). To do this, they need to construct coherent and convincing narratives of events and situations. This entails establishing linkages within the testimony, with other testimony by the same person, and the testimony of other people. It also involves making their case in as firm and convincing a manner as possible. Cross examining lawyers have the opposite objective, attempting to prevent hostile witnesses from sustaining their account. "Two layers of reality are manifested in the courtroom: that of the courtroom itself: the courtroom reality, and that of the events under examination in the case, the external reality. Both realities are represented through the language used in the courtroom. " (Hale & Gibbons 1999: 203) Therefore, courtroom discourse is a type of warfare, in which the strategy is linguistic rather than military.

In most language examined so far, courtroom discourse does not deploy linguistic resources that are not used in other contexts. Rather it is the **strategic deployment** of normal linguistic features — tag question, for example — that is of interest. This paper explores the strategic deployment in Hong Kong courtrooms of a common feature of everyday Cantonese, utterance-final particles, to see (1) how they are used to construct and sustain witnesses' accounts (2) how interpreters render the force of these particles and (3) their potential impact on audiences. Work of this type is rare, so this paper is programmatic. Our intention is to provide an initial description, opening the way for other, more extensive work.

The Cantonese utterance-final particle

There is a syntactic slot for an utterance particle at the end of Cantonese utterances. We refer to these particles as utterance particles rather than sentence particles, because they may also be found after sentence fragments and exclamations (see Gibbons 1980; Matthews & Yip 1994). Utterance particles should not be confused with "topic particles" (Matthews & Yip 1994) such as /a/ and /ne/ which are pausal phenomena found in the middle of utterances. Because they occur at the end of an utterance, in Conversation Analysis terms utterance-(final) particles mark completion, and indicate a 'transition relevance point' where other speakers might possibly take a turn. However this discourse role can be overridden by other indicators of incompletion of the turn such as intonation or unfinished meaning. Cantonese utterance-final particles carry a range of meanings, but they serve "primarily to convey speakers' attitudes and emotions" (Chan 1998: 117). Chan (1998) has also pointed out in her study that these particles are often used in casual conversations or among close friends. Relatively, their use may be a bit less frequent in courtroom discourse, yet they are not uncommon, as shown in our data. The specific meaning of individual particles will be discussed later. More than one particle may occur at the end of an utterance, so meanings may be accumulated, for example the particle 喇喎 /la wo/ in the following excerpt:

> Witness: [咁而家唔係事發嗰陣時吖嘛(1.0)咁我一年前俾人強姦我一年前喊唔通我喊一年到今日都仲喊緊<u>喇喎</u>]
> [so now it is not at the time the incident took place right? (.) so I was raped a year ago I cried a year ago so I should still be crying a year after till today /**<u>la wo</u>**/?]

The particle 喇 /la/ is used to mark the ending of the utterance and it is reinforced by another utterance-final particle, 喎 /wo/. When the two are combined, they emphasise the emotive element of the utterance; the speaker is expressing her discontent and frustration at answering such a question, as is also apparent in the wording of the response. This example is particularly clear, however in many cases the allusive quality is difficult to explain in English.

If the syntactic slot is not filled; that is, if there is a zero particle, this is also meaningful. In fact Cantonese speakers, especially politicians, are sometimes trained to omit the particles in order to reduce qualification and to sound more decisive. As the paper progresses, the nature and meaning of the utterance-final particles will, we hope, emerge in the description. Readers who wish to learn more about this topic are referred to Gibbons (1980), Luke (1990), and Matthews and Yip (1994).

Utterance-final particles are frequently 'demanded' by the preceding semantic content, with speakers seeking the appropriate filler for that slot. However, they may also be used independently to 'colour' or shape the meaning in some way.

It is the purpose of this paper to reveal the varied ways in which utterance-final particles are strategically deployed in the courtrooms to present or challenge witnesses' accounts and the ways in which they are interpreted may impact the interaction between different participants involved in the proceedings.

The context

Part of Hong Kong's British colonial heritage is a Common Law legal system. Because Hong Kong is around 95% Chinese, and predominantly Cantonese speaking, lower courts operate mainly in Cantonese. However, the colonial heritage also means that courts can operate in English, and this is still quite common in higher courts, particularly when non-Chinese judges or lawyers are involved as in the cases referred to in this study. Since witnesses are mainly Cantonese speaking, when courts operate in English there is extensive Cantonese interpreting; in Berk-Seligson's (1990) terms, many Hong Kong courtrooms are bilingual. All five of the interpreters observed are native Cantonese speakers with English as their second language, interpreting in consecutive mode. The jury in Hong Kong normally consists of local Chinese who are expected to have at least some knowledge of English. Such a bilingual context has the advantage for the researcher, in that we often have an English source for the utterances marked by particles, making their analysis less problematic.

The data

The five cases that we will discuss were heard in Hong Kong Common Law courtrooms. All of the defendants had been charged with sexual assault on (female) minors. The data consist of 100 hours of audio recordings of courtroom interaction, transcribed into a machine-readable format and later fed into a database to construct the corpus for the research project "From legislation to translation, from translation to interpretation: the narrative of sexual offences in the Hong Kong Courtroom".[1] The transcription conventions are given in Table 4 at the end of this paper. Interpreting took place between English and Cantonese, with Counsel speaking English and the witnesses mostly speaking Cantonese. More detail is given in the tables.

Analysis and findings

We first adopted a quantitative approach by using the corpora to generate a statistical guide as to the utterance-final particles on which we would focus, and then a qualitative approach was used to examine individual particles as they occurred in context.

Since there are dozens of different particles we focussed our description on those that were most common in our data.

Table 1 presents the most common particles in our data, as well as those which had a significant impact on the courtroom discourse.

Individual use of utterance particle in context

Luke (1990: 275) pointed out that "whatever basic, decontextualized properties a particle may be construed to have, these underlying properties will need to be contextualized within the particulars of an interaction, before definite sense can

Table 1. Utterance particles used in the Hong Kong bilingual courtrooms

Utterance particle	**Total No. of Occurrences in 101 hours of tape (Rate) = [Total Occurrence / 101 hrs]**	**Stance (Interpersonal attitude)**	**Modality**	**Back Referencing: Frequency / Degree**
1. 啦 /laa/	4031 (39.91 / h)	—	mitigator: reduced imposition/assertion	sometimes / medium
2. 嘞 /lak/	2091 (20.70 / h)	—	affirmative	seldom / strong
3. 吓 /haa/	1764 (17.47 / h)	authoritative, speaking down	certain	seldom / medium
4. 囉 /loh/	1277 (12.64 / h)	resistance; subtly sarcastic	certain	always / strong
5. 喎 /woh/	652 (6.46 / h)	discomfort	doubtful; but going along	always / strong
6. 啩 /gwa/	44 (0.44 / h)	interpersonal reservations	doubtful; but going along	often / strong
7. 咋 /jaa/	40 (0.39 / h)	Resistance; reservation	certain	always / strong
8. 添 /tim/	5 (0.05 / h)	interpersonal	certain;	always / strong

be made of it". In the examples that follow, the particular particle is examined in the context of its occurrence and the particle is indicated in **bold underlined Arial** to identify it.

1. 啦 /la(1)/

In order to distinguish the utterance-final particle 啦 /la(1)/ from the other forms (in particular from low-tone /la(4)/, which indicates completeness), it is marked with the tonal marker (1), which is used for a high tone. 啦 /la(1)/ is one of the most frequent utterance-final particles and is used for a wide range of meanings; for example, according to Luke (1990 : 55), it is used "(1) in request, commands, and 'urgings', and in some way 'demands' or 'requires' a response; (2) it may express 'agreement' of some kind; (3) it has a certain element of 'indefiniteness' and 'incompleteness'; (4) in a story or account, it indicates that the speaker has not yet reached the end." In our data however, 啦 /la(1)/ is also commonly used to mark the preceding utterance as something obvious, that listeners could be expected to know. This particular usage of 啦 /la(1)/ is especially significant as, when used in formal contexts such as the courtroom, it may be understood as a challenge to the listener's knowledge of the obvious content of the utterance.

In Example 1.1 (turn 287), when it seems that the interpreter is uncertain about which Cantonese term to use for 'bathroom door', she pauses for a little while (as shown in line 287, which is marked with a stretched pause ::) and after finding the word she also adds the utterance-final particle /la(1)/ to mark the end of the first half of the clause, which signified that the meaning of the first half of the clause is complete. However, though the second half of the clause is a question of its own, 'did you lock it', the object 'it' is ellipted. Note too that it immediately follows the utterance-final /la(1)/ of the previous clause, and is in fact a complement of the previous clause to finish the question.

Example 1.1
Case IV (Interpreter) Tape 3

281:	BPE	how long did you take=for the shower
282:	ICT	=妳嗰陣:咁樣沖涼沖咗幾耐時間啊 [at that time how long did you take the shower /a/]
283:	WC	我:冇為意個時間m:實質都(.)幾耐吓啦比平常(1) [I didn't pay attention to the time in fact it was longer than usual /ha la/]
284:	IC	係
285:	IET	e:r i didn't::: count the time er but er it was quite long it's longer than usual
286:	BPE	did you lock the door of the bathroom while you were bathing

287:	ICT	妳沖緊涼嘅時候呢個廁所嗰個::門啦妳有冇鎖上去 [when you were taking shower (.) the toilet the::: door /**la(1)**/ did you lock]
288:	WC	有嘅 [I did /geh/]
289:	IET	i did

In Example 1.2 below, the interpreter has summarized turns 527 and 529 with "that's it" for the utterance-final particle /la(1)/ to reconstruct a slightly sarcastic element in the utterance similar to that conveyed by a reverse polarity tag in the idiomatic English expression: "I wouldn't be sitting here arguing, **would I**?"

Example 1.2
Case III (Witness) Tape 12

527:	WC	咁起碼上嘅堂數已經少咗啦如果我有收過錢嘅.起碼我而家坐喺度我唔會爭嗌咁耐啦 [so at least the sessions/classes could be less /la(1)/ if I had received the money (.) at least I am sitting here I would not argue for SO LONG /**la(1)**/]
528:	IET	Well
529:	WC	因為我要講事實 [because I have to talk about the fact]
530:	IET	that the time being engaged would be much less well at least i would not be sitting here for so long because i would have to tell the FACT (1.0) that's it

In Example 1.3, turn 629, the defendant uses啦 /la(1)/ in a slightly defensive way, similar to the tag 'didn't we'. The interpreter has retained the factual information in the interpretation but has apparently not produced anything to render the affective element of the utterance particle /la(1)/.

Example 1.3
Case IV (Defendant) Tape 18

623:	BDE	alright after putting down the stuff you said you you you you would after or before you embrace her behind near the microwave is that you put down this stuff or when
624:	ICT	好嘞而家想問你呢幾時擠低呢啲物件喺:::啫係:餐枱度嘅.係喺你係::微波爐嗰度[emphasized]錫[normal]完佢之後吖抑話幾時擠落去嚿 [alright now (I) want to ask you /ne/ when did you put this stuff on the table /ge/ that was after you kissed her at the microwave or when did you (put it) down /ga/]
625:	DC	哦之前嘅.入門口吖閂咗門之後咁就放低銀包啊鎖匙電話之後先除鞋跟住之後先錫

		[oh that's before /ge/ after (I) entered and shut the door (I) then put down the wallet /a/ the key the mobile and then took off shoes and then we kissed]
626:	IET	before that in fact after i entered the flat i er closed the door i put down the key and the wallet etc and then e:r wo we took off our shoes and then we we kiss
627:	BDE	what next
628:	ICT	咁:跟住呢 [so what next /ne/]
629:	DC	咁之後喺嗰度錫啊攬啊大概十分鐘左右<u>啦</u> [so then over there (we) kissed and embraced (each other) for about ten minutes /<u>**la(1)**</u>/]
630:	IET	then we: kissed and embraced each other there for about ten minutes
631:	BDE	yes
632:	ICT	係跟住呢= [so what next /ne/]

In the context of courtroom discourse /la(1)/ can be an important resource for the witness to get a story across. It may sound slightly defensive, and asserts a particular version of events, a particular 'story', in a similar way to English question tags. By omitting the emotive element of /la(1)/, the interpreter has reduced the air of defensiveness of this defendant. In fact by depleting the emotive elements, the interpretation often sounds like a statement of the factual information alone, and the addition or omission of 啦 /la(1)/ has also changed the tempo of the discourse.

2. 嘞 /lak/

This utterance-final particle is often used as part of a narrative recounting a series of events, marking each event or element as complete. It also carries a notion of affirmation. Thus, in Example 2.1, in turn 382, the interpreter uses /lak/ to show pieces of information as complete elements of the narrative, and also to affirm them. Using Labov and Waleletsky's (1967) model of narrative, the first is an 'orientation' element, and the second is an 'event'.

Example 2.1
Case II Tape 3 (Defendant)

381:	BPE	alright? you said at four ninety eight (1.0) a: well we just jump we don't need to go all the (.) details about a: now just the (1.0) this a:: let me look at this em: (.) the officer was asking you to explain (1.0) a: on the ejaculation four ninety one (.) question (.) okay after you finished after you ejaculated what happened then }then I wiped IT with my HAND{

wiped with my hand are you referring to your own seminal fluid are you

382: ICT 嗱咁呢四百九十一嘞咁當時呢[someone coughs]警察呢就係a::要你解釋一下呢你完事之後呢你射精之後咁a:跟住又點啊咁你嘅答覆就話嘞跟住攞手抹囉咁話(.)搵手抹?咁啫係話呢你將你自己隻手去抹你射咗出嚟嘅精液係咪啊
[okay so 491 /**lak**/ so at that time the police asked you to explain after you were done /ne/ after you ejaculated then what happened next /a/ so your answer was /**lak**/ then wiped IT with HAND so you said (.) wiped it with HAND? So that means you used your hand to wipe the seminal fluid that you ejaculated right]

383: DC1 係啊
[yes /a/]

384: IET that's right

In Example 2.2, turn 567 the lawyer's question begins with 'then', indicating that it is a temporally sequenced element of a narrative. This meaning is captured in part by the use of 好嘞 okay /lak/ and final /lak/, when the question is interpreted in turn 568.

Example 2.2
Case II (Interpreter) Tape 1

567: BPE Then you confronted by a (.) double door

568: ICT 好嘞跟住見到呢有一個啫係雙門嘞
[okay /**lak**/ (.) then you saw there is a double door /**lak**/]

569: DC1 係

570: IET Yes

571: BPE Now was this door locked (.) = at the time

572: ICT =呢一度門(.)當時(.)有冇鎖住
[this door at that time was it locked?]

573: DC1 冇鎖嘢=
[it wasn't /gak/]

574: IET No

This narrative element meaning is perhaps best illustrated by longish narrative sequences, such as those in Examples 2.3, which show how this particle follows utterances that are part of an ongoing account, and are also affirmative in tone.

Example 2.3
Case II (Defendant) Tape 3

328: BPE question is (.) just now you mention you have sex with this girl (.) when the COURSE of your having sex with her did she put up any resistance answer (.) at the beginning }she pushed me from time to time?{ (.) and a later stage I carried on with it there was no further resistance that means (1.0) not withstanding her pushing you repeatedly (.) you carried on through that's what you're saying isn't it

329: ICT 噚咁呢四百二十一嗰度問你嘅咁喺正話呢講嘅同嗰個女仔發生性行為啦噚咁喺呢個發生性行為嘅過程吓咁a::係佢有冇反抗過啊你當時就話a::一開始嗰陣時囉有少少: /ngung/我囉跟住呢就一路都冇嘞咁跟住呢阿sir問你嘞咁你正話所講嘞傾吓傾吓跟住又攬攬錫錫咁啦咁你話係嘞

[so in 421 you were asked about what we just then mentioned that the girl you were having sex with /la/ so in this process of having sex /ha/ so had she resisted /a/ so you at that time said a:: at the beginning there was a little bit of pushing me /lo/ and then there wasn't any more /**lak**/ and then the police officer asked you /**lak**/ so what you just said /**lak**/ chatting for a while then cuddling and kissing like that so you said yes /**lak**/]

330: BPE the PUSHING from time to time clearly indicated more than one push doesn't it

Narratives play a core role in courtroom discourse (see Bennett & Feldman 1981; Gibbons 2003: 153–161). The interpreter's rendition with the utterance-final particle /lak/ is used both to construct these narratives, and to affirm them.

3. 吓 /ha/

Most occurrences of this word are not particles, but are an abbreviated form of "一下" /yat ha/, meaning "a bit". When used as an utterance-final particle, /**ha**/ ensures that the listener is attending to the speaker. Sometimes it is used to get a listener to attend to a piece of known information, so that some appropriate element of the listener's knowledge schema is activated. The 'checking' aspect of this particle tends to be associated with power asymmetry, in a similar way to teachers' 'checking' questions.

The utterance particle /ha/ is used twice in the following extract, after "interview" in turn 250, and in turn 252, and in both cases its deictic nature is shown by the fact that it is used to refer to the transcript that the defendant has, to check that he has found the right part of it.

Example 3.1
Case II (Interpreter) Tape 3

247: BPE have a look =
248: IET = right =
249: BPE = at the second record of interview (.) exhibit (.) page fifty two
250: ICT 噚請睇吓你第二份嘅會面嘅供詞吓係第五十二頁控方證物嚟嘅

[okay (.) please look at the second record of the interview /**ha**/ exhibit from the prosecution on page fifty-two]
251: BPE paragraph one seven two and the preceding paragraphs
252: ICT 係a:第一百七十二頁(1.0)同埋之前嗰段吓
[on page one hundred and seventy-two and the preceding paragraph /**ha**/]

In English this 'checking' meaning is predominantly performed by means of tags. It is an important part of courtroom discourse, used to ensure that all the parties are focusing on the same item, or the same piece of information. Thus, the interpreter's use of /ha/ in turn 250 is comparable to the tag 'okay?', to make sure that the hearer is paying attention to her.

Example 3.2
Case II (Interpreter) Tape 4
329: BPE the fact is (.) d one (.) you know very well you raped her you're now in the witness box in front of the jury trying to think of some explanation some lie you can evade your responsibility for what you did
330: ICT 第一被告吓事實係咁嘅嗱你心知肚明呢你嘅(.)行徑就係你強姦咗呢個女仔而家你呢面對法庭面對陪審團你呢嘗試呢提供一啲嘅解釋嚟到呢逃避自己強姦咗佢呢個罪行嘅責任同唔同意啊
[defendant one /**ha**/ the fact is that /ge/ /na/ you know it very well your behaviour that was you raped this girl and you're now facing the court facing the jury you're trying to provide some explanations so that you can get away with the responsibility of this crime you committed that you raped her do you agree /a/]
331: DC1 唔同意
[disagree]
332: IET I don't agree

In turn 330 in Example 3.2, /ha/ is used to demand the listener's attention to the speaker.

In Example 3.3 turn 580, /ha/ functions rather like the English confirmation tag 'right', so a loose translation would be "she is a very ordinary girl, right, she is a very typical Hong Kong type. Girls at her age like to go to places like chatrooms, **right**". By the use of this utterance-final particle the interpreter has captured the tone of the barrister's question.

Example 3.3
Case II (Interpreter) Tape 3
579: BPE = and about teenage girl (inaudible) prospect (inaudible) she's a girl she seems to like a:: (.) playing on the CHAT LINE and she seems to like going OUT (.) a:: a:: she talks a lot on her mobile PHONE: em: (.)

JUST a a-a-a-a (1.0) an ordinary type of girl that a:: (.) very typical of that (.) type of teenage girls today in hong kong

580: ICT 啊咁(.)再問吓呢咁(.)就係話呢a:呢個女仔呢啫係你嘅感覺就係(.)佢好佢一般嘅啫吓佢:啫係呢個香香港呢典型佢咁嘅年齡嘅女仔都係又鐘意呢就係(.) a:去啲咩聊天室啊吓同人聊聊天吓嘅(.)咁a:鐘意出街嘅(.) a:去街啦咁亦都呢鐘意呢就係去用個電手提電話啊就同人傾電話嘅(1.0)啫係你感覺係咪就係咁呢一個好普通好典型嘅(.) a:十幾歲嘅女仔

[/a/ so ask you again that is to say /ne/ this girl that is your feeling about her is that she is a very ordinary girl /ha/ she is a very typical hong kong type (.) girls at her age like to go to places like chatrooms /a/ /**ha**/ to chat with people /ge/ and like to go out /ge/ go out and hang out /la gum/ and also like to chat with people with mobile phone /ge/ that is to say your feeling is like this (.) this is a very ordinary and typical type of teenage girl]

581: DC1 係啊

[yes /a/]

In terms of courtroom discourse, the utterance-final particle /ha/ performs two functions. It establishes coherence between elements of information, and it may also help to assert the speaker's story by pressuring the listener to agree with it, in a similar way to English 'agreement tags' (Gibbons 2003: 102–103).

4. 囉 /lo/

This utterance particle may have a stance element of opposition, and may be subtly sarcastic. It may be used as a "completion proposal" (Luke 1990: 123) from the speaker to the listener to suggest an end to the topic of conversation, as part of that opposition. It contains backward reference, capturing a combined meaning somewhat like "I've already said this once", "why are you doubting what I already said?", "of course" — in other words presupposition. Example 4.1 is an example of this use. Notice in particular the witness's use of 咪 'simply', which implies 'if the police ask the question, I naturally give them the answer'. Also, the use of 咪 'simply' in conjunction with /lo/ is a good example of how utterance particles are frequently demanded by the preceding semantic content. Since utterance-final particles do not exist in the English language, the interpreter would have to use other devices to capture the meaning of /lo/ in her interpretation in English. In this case the interpreter used 'that's my answer' to capture part of the defendant's defiance in her interpretation.

Example 4.1
Case III (Witness) Tape 2

611: BDE so that's er that's correct is it that's what you voluntarily told to the police (.) before you start telling you that about the allegation you voluntarily told them you have high tolerance of alcohol

612: ICT 呢度講嘅嘢係啱同埋呢呢度啊(.)呢度嗰啲消息啊入便嘅資料係妳自願講俾差人聽嘅未講到嗰件a:嗰件案之前嗰件事之前呢妳講呢啲嘢講俾差人聽啫係話妳話俾差人聽}妳嘅酒量相當好{
[what is said here is correct and here /a/ in this information here /a/ it's that you voluntarily told the police /ge/ not yet mentioned about the case /ne/ you said this to the police that is to say you told the police } your tolerance of alcohol is quite good{

613: WC {因為}個差人問我酒量點樣吖嘛我咪(.)答佢囉
[because the cop asked me about my tolerance of alcohol /a ma/ so I simply answered him /**lo**/]

614: IET because the officer asked me how good was my tolerance of my alcohol that's my answer

In the Example 4.2 turn 573, the interpreter emphasises the sarcasm of the lawyer's question by adding /lo/ "*of course* she'd have more fun", and captures some of the meaning of the question tag.

Example 4.2
Case II (Interpreter) Tape 3

570: BPE I (.) }if this girl such a (.) wild sexy crazy girl:{ loves having sex with strange guys she won't mind if d two does it as well?? will she. =

571: ICT =好:=
[=okay=]

572: BPE = she just {that will be given more FUN for her wasn't it?}

573: ICT 如果呢個女仔呢啫係嘩好狂野啊啫係好啊性感啊(.)吓非常呢啫係a:a:嗰個(.)性慾係好強嘅一個[emphasized]咁樣[normal]嘅女仔吓(.)喂佢都:唔介意呢多個嚟啦第二被告(.)咁啊佢多啲樂趣囉
[if this girl (.) that is WOW very wild (.) that is very sexy (.) okay. just very em very strong sexual desire AS SUCH this kind of girl okay. hey she didn't mind one more to come (.) like defendant 2 so she'd have more fun /**lo**/]

574: DC1 但我唔知佢點諗喎=
[but I don't know what she was thinking /wo/=]

575: IET = well I don't know what was on her mind?

In the Example 4.3 turn 413, the witness uses /lo/ to say that these facts are self evident, that she would obviously not have submitted voluntarily to the sexual act.

Interestingly after she is asked the same question in turns 415–416, she replies in turn 417 without using an utterance-final particle, which makes her reply abrupt, firm and entirely unmitigated.

Example 4.3
Case I (Witness) Tape 2

409: BPE why did you do that (1.0) =
410: ICT =咁但係當時=
[= so but at that time =]
411: BPE why let him do it
412: ICT 當時點解妳容許佢咁做啊
[at that time why did you allow him to do so /a/]
413: WC 因為我真係痛得好犀利<u>囉</u>(.)我:(2.0)我有(.)捉住佢嘅手臂係(3.0)好痛好痛(.)就係諗住(.)a:(1.5)希望唔好咁痛啦(.)快啲完啦咁樣<u>囉</u>
[because I was feeling great pain /**<u>lo</u>**/ I did grab his arm it was very very painful so I thought I hoped it wouldn't be too painful and I hoped it could be over soon that's it /**<u>lo</u>**/]
414: IET because I was really feeling great pain at that time (1.0) I grab his (.) arm when I was in great pain (.) I hoped (.) the pain would lessen and I hoped that it would be over soon
415: BPE well are you saying that (2.0) you just (1.0) you weren't willing (1.0) but you felt you had to do this (is that right)?
416: ICT 咁妳意思係咪即係}係話{eh妳係唔願意咁做但係妳一定要咁做定係點啊
[so is that what you mean you were unwilling to do it but you had to do it or what was it actually /a/]
417: WC 即係(.)我係唔願意(.)但係a:(2.0)無力反抗
[that is I was unwilling but I had no strength to resist]
418: IET I was unwilling but I did not have the force to resist

Utterance-final particle /lo/ is a useful tag in courtroom discourse, in that it enables speakers to assert the reliability of what they are saying, in part by assuming that what is said is in some way self-evident and ask the listener to stop questioning on this topic.

5. 喎 /wo/

喎 /wo/ is used to refer back to a previous utterance, and has strong cohesive force. It also expresses the speaker's attitude to the utterance referred to, expressing an element of doubt, and implying that the speaker is going along with it with some discomfort.

This meaning can be deployed to interpret the sarcasm of lawyers when saying 'you are contradicting yourself'. It may also be used by interpreters to distance themselves from the utterance, implying 'that's what the other person said, but I'm not comfortable with it'.

In Example 5.1, turns 409 and 410 both contain forms of projection (reported speech) "saying that", "do you mean". The defendant's reply could be broadly translated "I really didn't have my arms round her as you are implying".

Example 5.1
Case I (Defendant) Tape 10

409: BPE are you saying you don't have your arms round L H Y
410: ICT 咁你意思係咪啫係話呢響七號嘓張相入便你唔係攬住L H Y啊
[so do you mean that (.) that is (.) in picture number seven you were not embracing L H Y /a/?]
411: DC 我真係唔係攬住佢喎
[I really was not embracing her /**wo**/]
412: IET i really was not having my arms around i was not embracing her

In Example 5.2, turn 28, the witness's reply could be loosely translated as "*are you really suggesting that* I should still be crying a year later?" with a sarcastic stance that the lawyer's proposition is ridiculous. The meaning of /wo/ is added to the 'confirmation' meaning of utterance-final particle /la(4)/. The interpreter has not rendered this utterance-final particle, but merely states part of the information 'having my arms around' and elaborates on it by adding the phrase 'embracing her' at the end. It is not clear whether this is an attempt to capture the emphasis of the defendant's use of /wo/ by adding the phrase 'embracing her' or simply a self-correction.

Example 5.2
Case III (Witness) Tape 10

26: BDE so you've stricken me you are a certain person as well you are the sort of person who anybody just imposes an inch (1.0) you'll retaliate [tone falls gradually] you are not the one who takes things lying down missing from what i can see in last three days
27: ICT a::對上嘓三日啊由禮拜一到今日啦禮拜一禮拜二禮拜三資深大律師就話由佢觀察妳所得啊妳唔係咁易屈服嘅人吳小姐如果人哋啊喺妳身上便(1.5)得到一吋嘅利益啊妳都會復仇嘅:?
[the three preceding days /a/ from monday to today /la/ monday tuesday wednesday the senior counsel said his observation on you suggests that you are a person who does not easily surrender miss Ng if people have got an inch of benefit from you you will retaliate /ge/?]
28: WC 咁而家唔係事發嘓陣時吖嘛(1.0)咁我一年前俾人強姦我一年前喊唔通我喊一年到今日都仲喊緊喇喎

[so now it is not at the time the incident took place right? (.) so I was raped a year ago I cried a year ago so I should still be crying a year after till today /**la wo**/?

29: IET NOW::: it was not (inaudible) I was raped (.) a year ago i was crying a year ago are you saying that i (.) should cry now (1.0) my crying should last for a year?

30: BDE these are your words

31: ICT 呢啲係妳講嘅啫=
[these are what you said only /ze/]

In Example 5.3, turn 452, the lawyer is showing a bit of impatience with the repeated answers of the defendant who has been saying that the girl was willing to have sex with him. He has stopped the defendant by putting another question to him as to whether the defendant was suggesting that the second defendant was violent and had tried to use force to have sex with the girl, making clear his disbelief by repeating three times "you're saying"; in other words this is the defendant's version, but the lawyer does not go along with it. In the interpreted version, in turn 453, the interpreter captures the implied reservation of the lawyer by adding 喎 /wo/ at the end. She makes her personal reservations even more explicit by adding the exclamation 嘩 /wa:/ [wow] to underscore the absurdity of the defendant's claim. It is worth mentioning here that the article 啫/ze/ though is not common in this corpus, and is usually used to downplay the significance of the utterance. It is particularly used here to belittle the value of the evidence presented by the barrister.

Example 5.3
Case II (Defendant) Tape 5

448: DC1 a:我相信佢係自願同我發生性行為囉嗰陣時
[a: I believe that she was willing to have sex with me /lo/ at that time]

449: IET I believed (.) she was willing to have sex with me then

450: BPE well well we heard that over and over=

451: ICT =得嘞我哋聽咗好多次=
[okay /lak/ we have heard this so many times]

452: BPE = we'd better let the jury to to decide let me just to say this (.) you you you're saying that you're saying on the other hand you're saying that D2 (.) is the violent guy (.) the guy who tried to forcibly rape the girl right

453: ICT 嗱好嘞你你講過啫係你相信個女仔呢係自願呢你好多次嘞得嚹嘞呢個留番呢陪審員自己決定嘞但另一方面呢(.)你呢(.)就(.)好似(.)講到呢(.)阿第二被告就係一個呢嘩好: a:暴力嘅咁呢就係(.)夾硬呢要同個女仔進行性行為喎
[now okay /lak/ you said that you believed the girl was willing /neh/ so many times that's about it leave the decision to the jury /lak/ on the

hand you seem to be saying that defendant two is WOW ve::ry violent that he wanted to have sex with the girl forcibly /**<u>wo</u>**/

454: DC1 嗰日我淨係睇到呢啲咋嘛
[that day I only saw these]

455: IET er I only saw how he acted as I've told the court

As these examples show, in courtroom discourse the utterance-final particle /wo/, whether used by witnesses or interpreters, performs two functions. It establishes cohesion between elements of the discourse, and also helps speakers to express a modal meaning of uncertainty or doubt about a preceding statement.

6. 啩 /gwa/

Usually 啩 /gwa/ is used to signify a degree of uncertainty about a preceding utterance, which allows the speaker to be non-committal concerning what s/he has said. The speaker is indicating compliance in general but at the same time reflecting some reservation. This meaning resource may be important in the testimony of witnesses who wish to register their uncertainty about the propositional content, particularly when a counsel puts a proposition to them for confirmation. Example 6.1 illustrates clearly the meaning of this particle.

In turn 308, the hostile barrister quotes the witness saying in her police interview that she did not usually wear a brassiere. This is interpreted, but the witness is not prepared to give full support to this proposition, and in turn 311, she makes her uncertainty clear by saying "I don't know /ah/ yes /gwa/". This meaning is well captured by the interpreter, who interprets it as "I said maybe I don't know" — in which the "yes /gwa/" part is translated as "maybe".

Example 6.1
Case III (Witness) Tape 3

308: BDE e::m not sure I'm just taking this from the statement tonight look at page: (.) four first paragraph (4.5) last senten::ce i do NOT have a habit of wearing a brassiere or knot alright that's what the police officer written about (5.0) page four first paragraph (1.0) last sentence

309: JE thank you

310: ICT 一向習慣(1.0)唔著(.)胸圍一向習慣唔著胸圍(.)呢啲妳講俾個差人聽嚿係咪啊
[as usual not wearing bra as usual not wearing bra you told the police that right /mai/ /a/]

311: WC 佢問我嗰日係咪冇戴胸圍我話係咁跟住佢話咁啫係習慣唔戴圍啦我話唔知啊係<u>啩</u>咁樣囉

[he asked me if I was wearing bra that day I said yes then he said so that means a habit of not wearing bra /la/ I said don't know /a/ yes /**gwa**/ that's it /lo/]

312: IET the question from the officer was on the da:::y you have strips (2.5) well you're not wearing a bra my answer that's right then (1.0) the next question was do you have a habit of not wearing a bra then i said maybe i don't kno::w

In example 6.2, as a response to the question statement in turn 1001 which consists of a description of the degree of force that the defendant has used on the witness, the witness marks the uncertainty of her reply in turn 1003 by using the utterance-final particle /gwa/.

The interpreter captures this meaning in turn 1004 by interpreting 'yes gwa' as "perhaps".

Example 6.2
Case II (Witness) Tape 4

999: BDE1 did he use a lot of PREssure=
1000: ICT =係咪:=
[=was that=]
1001: BDE1 =did he apply a lot of pressure on your shoulder?
1002: ICT 啫係佢好大力咁壓住妳嘅: a:兩邊膀頭嘅
[that was he was pressing hard on both of your shoulders /ge/]
1003: WC 係**啩**
[yes /**gwa**/]
1004: IET perhaps

In Example 6.3 turn 141 the interpreter makes the barrister's question much more explicit than the original. In her reply in turn 144 the witness expresses her uncertainty about her faith in KP by the use of /gwa/. The interpreter uses a modal to qualify her interpretation by inserting "I would not say that …".

Example 6.3
Case III (Witness) Tape 9

140: BDE how is that relevant to her decision to stay there at that time
141: ICT 咁啊:妳妳同之間妳同K P之間嘅友情同妳當晚決唔決定留底(.)有咩關係呢
[so what's the relationship between the friendship between you and K P and the decision you made whether to stay or not that night /ne/]
142: WC 咁我信任佢
[so I trusted (him/her)]
143: IC 邊個佢先
[which (him/her)]

144:	WC	我信任K P選擇得呢一兩個人去做朋友應該佢都(.)唔會去棟一啲壞人去做朋友**<u>啩</u>** [I trusted K P would choose one or two people to be friends and she would not choose some bad people to be friends /**<u>gwa</u>**/]
145:	IET	i trusted in K P and K P chose one or two guys to be her friends i would not say that K P would choose BAD guys to be her friends?

Utterance-final particle /gwa/ is then a useful semantic resource in courtroom testimony, because it enables witnesses to express uncertainty, when there may be great pressure on them to be certain. It means that they can express the reality that people are not always certain about events, or even their own habits.

Differences in frequency of use

There are notable differences between the overall frequency of these six utterance-final particles in the interpreters' renditions, compared with the discourse of witnesses and defendants. These are given in Tables 2 to 4. It should be remembered that in the context of Hong Kong bilingual courtrooms, Cantonese utterances by interpreters are nearly always translations of Counsel's questions. When defendants and witnesses speak, it is almost always in Cantonese, which interpreters translate into English.

In our data interpreters use far more utterance-final particles than do other participants in the courtroom since they are responsible for most of the Chinese utterances. For example, they interpret all of the counsels' utterances from English into Cantonese. Another explanation for this difference is that the discourse of the courtroom is predominantly of the question-and-answer type, and the answers of the witnesses are often shorter than Counsel's questions, containing one utterance only, while many questions raised by counsel are polar and contain multiple elements (Leung & Gibbons 2007). In general, the rates of occurrence of the utterance-final particles used by the interpreters (1. 啦 /la(1)/; 2. 嘞/lak/; 3. 吓 /ha/ and 5. 喎 /wo/) outnumber those of the witnesses and the defendants, by a factor of 2 to 11 times.

Interestingly, utterance-final particle 4. 囉 /lo/ is used far more frequently (12.64/hr) by the witnesses and defendants; i.e. about 12 times higher than the overall rate (0.05/hr) of use by the interpreters. This notable difference may be attributed to the fact that it is often used to imply some degree of resistance on the part of witnesses and defendants in going along with a proposition. The rates of individual speakers also suggest that the witnesses tend to use it slightly more often than the defendants, which in a way indicate a stronger resistance or uncertainty concerning the questions. It is, on the other hand, hardly used by the lawyers

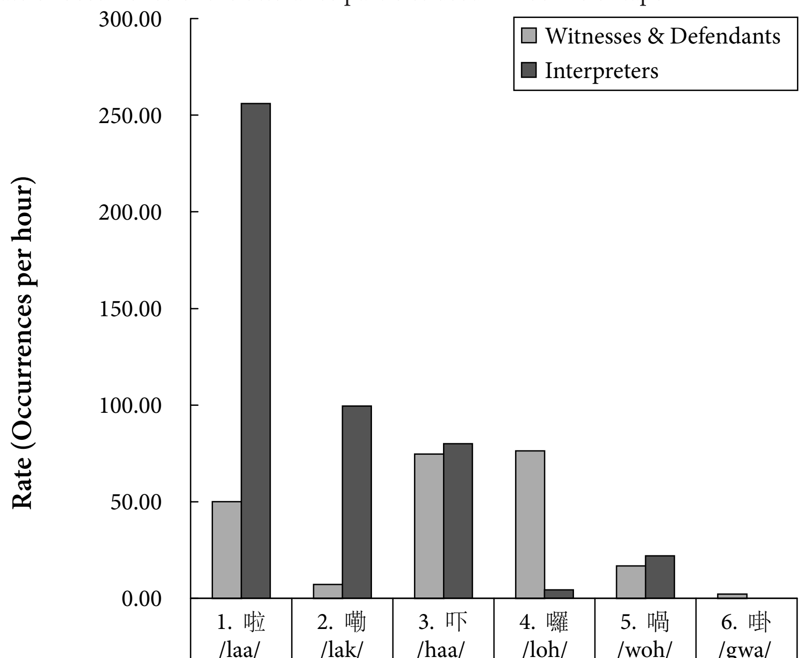
Table 2. Utterance particles (UP) used in the Hong Kong bilingual courtrooms

UP	Number & Rate of Occurrence for Witnesses, Defendants & Interpreters														
	No. & Rate of Occurrence in 101 hrs of tape [Rate] (= # of occurrences / # of hrs)	Case I (18 hs)			Case II (15 hs)			Case III (14 hs)		Case IV (29 hs)			Case V (25 hs)		
		Wit (6 h)	*Deft* (12 h)	*Interp* (18 h)	*Wit* (7 h)	*Deft* *1 &2* (5 / 3 h)	*Interp* (15 h)	*Wit* (14 h)	*Interp* (14 h)	*Wit* (17 h)	*Deft* (12 h)	*Interp* (29 h)	*Wit* (16 h)	*Deft* (9 h)	*Interp* (25 h)
1. 啦 / laa/	4025 39.85/h	123 20.5/h	68 5.67/h	287 15.94/h	14 2/h	53/8 10.6/ 2.67/h	341 22.73/h	123 8.79/h	257 18.36/h	178 10.47/h	63 5.25/h	359 12.38/h	135 8.44/h	114 12.67/h	1902 76.08/h
2. 嘞 / lak/	2091 20.70/h	14 2.33/h	26 2.17/h	124 6.89/h	2 0.29/h	34/4 6.8/ 1.33/h	617 41.13/h	37 2.64/h	249 17.79/h	26 1.53/h	22 1.83/h	376 12.97/h	7 0.44/h	32 3.56/h	521 20.84/h
3. 吓 / haa/	1762 17.45/h	5 0.83/h	34 2.83/h	88 4.89/h	14 2/h	11/3 2.2/ 1/h	454 30.27/h	45 3.21/h	210 15/h	25 1.47/h	17 1.42/h	299 10.31/h	30 1.88/h	42 4.67/h	485 19.5/h
4. 囉 / loh/	1277 12.64/h	96 16/h	68 5.67/h	1 0.06/h	137 19.57/h	64/8 12.8/ 2.67/h	45 3/h	213 15.21/h	13 0.93/h	232 13.65/h	159 13.25/h	10 0.34/h	191 11.94/h	37 4.11/h	3 0.12/h
5. 喎 / woh/	651 6.45/h	10 1.67/h	8 0.67/h	9 0.5/h	33 4.71/h	6/18 1.2/ 6/h	155 10.33/h	55 3.93/h	74 5.29/h	96 5.65/h	36 3/h	54 1.86/h	14 0.88/h	7 0.78/h	76 3.04/h
6. 啩 / gwa/	44 0.44/h	1 0.17/h	—	—	5 0.71/h	2/1 0.4/ 0.33/h	—	7 0.5/h	4 0.29/h	12 0.71/h	5 0.42/h	1 0.03/h	2 0.13/h	1 0.11/h	3 0.12/h
7. 咋 / jaa/	39 0.38/h	—	—	3 0.17/h	5 0.71/h	12/8 2.4/ 2.67/h	2 0.08 /h	5 0.2 /h	2 0.08/h	5 0.2/h	2 0.17/h	2 0.17/h	7 0.44/h	3 0.17/h	3 0.17/h
8. 添 / tim/	— 5 0.05/h	—	1 0.08/h	—	—	—	3 0.2/h —	—	1 0.07/h —	—	—	—	—	—	—

because they understandably have other strategies such as repeating the question or using polar questions to obtain a similar effect.

1. 啦 /la(1)/ is the utterance-final particle used most frequently (39.91/hr) in our data and also in other studies such as those of Li (1998), Deng (1991) and Tang (2002). Courtroom interpreters are not supposed to express a personal stance towards what is said in the courtroom; therefore /la/ seems to be the most obvious choice to signify the completion of the utterance. It is sometimes used to reduce the imposition by Counsel and mitigate their often strong assertion, making the utterance sound more neutral and impersonal.
2. 嘞 /lak/ is often used by speakers to affirm the preceding proposition. Therefore, it often implies a degree of certainty on the part of the speaker. In cross-examination lawyers try to construct and support their particular version of the story. Our data indicates that the use of this utterance-final particle by the interpreters (99.55/hr) is 4.6 times higher than by the witnesses and defendants (21.59/hr), which may be related to the fact that interpreters are

Table 3. Rate of occurrence of the utterance particles used in 100 hrs of tape



	1. 啦 /laa/	2. 嘞 /lak/	3. 吓 /haa/	4. 囉 /loh/	5. 喎 /woh/	6. 啩 /gwa/
Witnesses & Defendants	50.20	7.23	74.71	76.37	16.84	2.22
Interpreters	256.11	99.55	79.96	4.45	22.02	0.44

Utterance Particle

interpreting for lawyers who often speak with affirmation, or with the purpose of affirming certain facts.

3. 吓 /ha/ is rather authoritative when compared with 啦 /la(1)/ and 嘞 /lak/. Therefore, when working for Counsel, the interpreter uses far more /ha/ (about 6.5 times higher) than the witness and defendants, especially where interpreters (as in case II, refer to Tables 2 and 3 for details) reveal a somewhat patronising attitude towards the witnesses or the defendants, who are either young in age or resistant. Interpreters use this utterance-final particle in the courtroom discourse to engage the attention of the listener.
4. 囉 /lo/ is often used to imply some degree of resistance on the part of the speaker towards a proposition. It is rather unusual for the witness and defendant to use utterance-final particles which carry such a strong stance and sarcastic tone. It is also hardly used by the counsels because they have other strategies such as repeating the question or using polar questions to attain similar effect. Therefore, the occurrence of /lo/ is significantly less than that of other utterance-final particles except 啩 /gwa/. Some witnesses and defendants tend to use it more often than the other utterance-final particles, as in Case II (refer to Tables 2 and 3 for details) — which may indicate a stronger resistance or uncertainty on the part of that particular speaker, especially in the context of the courtroom.
5. 喎 /wo/ is primarily used by the speaker in courtroom discourse to show that s/he is not comfortable with the preceding proposition of the other speaker. Sometimes it is used in a reported speech format with an added sarcastic element. It is not common in courtroom discourse, but when it is used, it often creates a noticeable impact on the utterance while posing a challenge to the listener. Interpreters use it approximately twice as often as witnesses/defendants. This difference is presumably due to the power asymmetry in the courtroom, where lawyers are not uncommonly sarcastic to witnesses/defendants, but the reverse is less common.
6. 啩 /gwa/: Although the rates of occurrence of this particular particle are considerably lower than those of other utterance particles (a total of only 44), it is used in the courtroom with some reservations, thus often undermining the definiteness of the preceding utterance. It therefore tends to be used more by witnesses to express their reservations about a proposition put to them by a lawyer, rather than by the lawyers themselves.

We would expect some differences in the use of different types of utterance particles between individual interpreters and individual witnesses/defendants. Even with the same particles, the type of speech act, modality and meanings will not be the same between witnesses/defendants and lawyers. For instance, the interpreter of Case IV tends to use 啦 /la(1)/ more than any of the other interpreters. The witness in this case is fluent in both English and Cantonese, and switches to English from time to time. Thus, the interpreter was mostly working from English to Chinese, with much greater use of the popular utterance-final particle /la(1)/.

In Case II almost all of the Cantonese speakers including the interpreter use many more utterance-final particles than the participants in the other cases. We are not sure if the speech style of one individual is affecting the other interlocutors of the same event.

We can see from the above that the frequency of these utterance particles varies considerably, and from individual to individual, but also according to whether they occur in lawyers' interpreted questions or in testimony. The different speech acts, modality requirements and relative power expressed through the utterance-final particles may explain much of this variation.

Conclusion

While different in form, the nature of the meanings, concerns and objectives of courtroom discourse in Hong Kong are very similar to those in other Common Law jurisdictions. As we have seen, Cantonese utterance-final particles are used to establish different types of cohesive links within courtroom discourse, and also to express the level of modality that the speaker is attempting to create in relation to the semantic content of the speaker's utterances, or the utterances of others.

In focussing mainly on European languages, particularly English, the existing literature may have unwittingly created a picture of courtroom discourse centred on grammatical structure and vocabulary. In this paper we have pointed to another type of linguistic resource which, although seemingly insignificant, sometimes even to native speakers of the language, may have a significant impact on courtroom discourse. We hope to have shown that when interpreting from Cantonese into English, interpreters can capture most of the factual and emotive information by resorting to alternative linguistic — very often intonational — devices in English to render the meanings and impact of the utterance-final particles. This may be difficult for less proficient interpreters: in this data the Chinese interpreters often interpret in a rather monotonous tone and use statement-like intonation, rather than the contour that the situation would appear to demand. However, even interpreters need to apply their background knowledge, experiences and understanding to understand the original utterances. Inevitably, the interpreter will take on certain roles either expectedly or unexpectedly, knowingly or not. (For a more detailed discussion of the roles of the interpreter in the courtroom, refer to Leung & Gibbons 2008)

This work is essentially programmatic. There is a very large amount of extra work to do on Cantonese utterance-final particles in courtroom discourse, and indeed on the courtroom linguistic resources offered by other languages around the world.

Notes

1. Tone level is generally unmarked in this study unless meanings are distinguished by different tone levels.

2. In both turns 283 and 287, there is a case of right-dislocation, whereby the constituent 'than usual' [比平常] and 'have you locked the door' 妳有冇鎖上去 are displaced to the end of the utterance, soo the particle /la/ can still be considered to occupy an utterance-final position.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

Symbols	Meaning	Example
=	latch (no pause between turns)	C. could take it = J. = yeah =
+	Interpreter's added information	+[you were standing by the bedroom door right]+
CAPITAL LETTERS	emphasis	FIVE … ONE
colons	drawn out syllable	so different in he:re?=
{ } } {	faster slower	for a reason {not that I'm gonna win or anything like that} but oh (.) }I? do.not. know{ =
( )	unintelligible / inaudible	cuz Curtis (sat and) talked
?	upward intonation	said take it?
.	downward intonation	What? would your mom and your sister have told you about tonight with the cash.
[ ]	describes nonverbal features of talk	[whispered] Yeah.
(2.5)	pause, timed in seconds to the "rhythm" of the talk	y'know (.) a few pieces of candy (3.5) still? I never seen that kinda money before.
(.)	brief pause	

Abbreviation	Meaning
BPE	Prosecution Barrister's English Utterance
BDE	Defence Barrister's English utterance
IC	Interpreter's Chinese Utterance
IE	Interpreter's English Utterance
ICT	Interpreter's Chinese Translation
IET	Interpreter's English Translation
JE	Judge's English Utterance
WC	Witness' Chinese Utterance
WE	Witness' English Utterance

Using Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to describe the development of coherence in I trainees

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Making global sense has long been seen as one of the most important criteria for judging the success of a given interpretation. For consecutive in particular, special emphasis is placed on the coherence and structure of the rendition. This study addresses the question of how to investigate coherence in interpreting and observe its development in trainees. We propose Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST), as a framework for exploring how coherence is realised in interpretations produced by professional as well as trainee interpreters. A corpus of 66 consecutive interpretations, by eight novice and three professional interpreters, of three Chinese and three English speeches, was transcribed, segmented into functional units, and mapped into a tree-like RST description. The analyses and results reveal that novices tend to focus on local cohesion while professionals tend to emphasise the global structure of the discourse. This difference can usefully be addressed in training.

1. Introduction

Coherence is an essential attribute of a good interpretation, and indeed of any discourse or text (Beaugrande & Dressler 1981). Yet trainee interpreters often have great difficulty in producing coherent output. Thus for training purposes there is a need to find a way to describe how a given interpretation is more or less coherent and to compare two interpretations of the same source, for example one by a novice and the other by a professional. This need is complicated by the fact that we cannot even expect two interpretations by experienced professionals to be identical: there can be many equally acceptable interpretations of a given source. Our approach must therefore be revealing of coherence without being sensitive to the specific wording of the texts. Moreover, on the premise that conscious knowledge of the differences in coherence between professionals and trainees will eventually help trainees be more coherent, it should be accessible to the trainees themselves.

With this in mind, we experimented with RST as a descriptive framework (Section 3.3). We collected a corpus of source texts and their interpretations by both professionals and trainees, which we annotated in RST terms (Section 4.3). The RST analyses provided the input for an algorithm that assigned a coherence score to each interpretation.

From this data, we derived various parameters for comparing performances (Section 5). First, we observed that interpretations by professionals, although different in length and in wording, were very similar along the derived parameters, not only to one another but also to the source text. On the basis of these parameters, we were able to develop a 'profile' of interpretations by professionals which we then used as the benchmark of a good performance (Section 5.3). Two groups of trainees were recruited for this study. One of them (Test group) received training exposing the trainees to RST and visualisations of their own interpretations. In contrast to the Control group, the performance of the Test group converged quite rapidly towards the professionals' profile (Section 5.6).

2. Coherence in interpreting

In interpreting studies, Seleskovitch's (1978/1994) theory of sense asserts the legitimacy of meaning-based (as opposed to word-based) interpreting and has been accepted and put into practice by interpreters and interpreter-trainers worldwide (Gile 2001). A review of the literature shows that 'making sense', or 'sense consistency' is one of the most frequently proposed attributes to be considered when evaluating the quality of interpretations, both consecutive and simultaneous, in professional settings (e.g. Kurz 1993).

Making sense is important both at the point where the interpreter receives the speech and at the point where the audience receives the target text produced by the interpreter. Pöchhacker describes the two major steps of the interpreter's work as: 'understanding ("making sense of") what has been expressed in a source language, and expressing the ideas grasped, i.e. the "message", in another language so that they "make sense" to the target audience' (2004: 56).

How sense consistency and logical cohesion are actually achieved in interpreting becomes, therefore, an important issue. At this point, it is useful to appeal to a notion of 'texthood' that transcends interpreting studies. Following Halliday and Hasan's definition of a text as 'any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that […] form[s] a unified whole' (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 1), we view interpretations as texts, or at least as products that aspire to texthood. Shlesinger observes that a text is held together by a 'network of relations which establish links between its various parts; these links, or cohesive ties, enable the reader or hearer to process the text in a coherent way' (Shlesinger 1995: 193).

Coherence, as Blum-Kulka describes it, 'can be viewed as a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text, made overt by the reader or listener through the process of interpretation' (Blum-Kulka 2000: 299). Hatim and Mason suggest that successful consecutive interpreting, in particular, should show 'a clear outline of the way a text is structured' (2002: 262). In short, for an interpretation to 'make sense', it needs not only to be clearly signposted with cohesive links, but also structured at the macro level so that it is easy for the target audience to comprehend.

It is, not easy, however, for trainees to demonstrate their grasp of this concept in their interpretations. As a trainer, I often have heard colleagues complain that while trainees might be able to preserve most of the information they receive from the speech, they still fail to deliver the message coherently. Such informal observations, together with what has been suggested in the literature, motivate the need to investigate the possibilities of describing coherence in interpreting in more formal terms. Specifically, it seems important to compare how coherence is manifested differently in professional and novice interpretations.

Many studies suggest that one way to decide the quality of a text is to see how easy it is for readers or listeners to comprehend the intended message (Beaugrande & Dressler 1981; Scott & Souza 1990; Shlesinger 1995). Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) suggest that a text, whether oral or printed, should serve as a communicative discourse, mediating between the intentions of the speaker and the needs of the listeners. If the text is not comprehensible for the listeners, it does not fulfil its communicative function. In this sense, in the case of texts which are translated or interpreted, it might be said that two-fold mediation takes place. Shlesinger observes that 'successful translation, after all, will depend on whether target text recipients can achieve second-degree interpretation with minimal extra processing effort' (1995: 209).

Scott and Souza explain that 'the more structured the input is, the easier it will be for the reader to derive its underlying message' (1990: 53). This ease of understanding has been shown to depend, more specifically, on 'cognitive relationships such as contrast, equivalence, cause and consequence, and temporal sequence, which present and organise information in a logical manner' (Higgins et al. 1999: 347). Moreover, Reinhart believes that a coherent ('ideal') text needs to be 'connected', that the clauses of a text should be formally connected, such that each 'adjacent pair is either referentially linked, or linked by a semantic connector' (Reinhart 1980 cited in Sanford & Moxey 1995: 162). Also each sentence needs to be logically consistent with the previous one, and sentences need to be 'relevant' to both the discourse topic and to the context of the utterance.

Specifically, with respect to interpreting, Ficchi observes that the discourse of poor consecutive interpretations by trainee interpreters can be confusing and imprecise, 'lacking coherence and cohesion', with sentences not linked but juxtaposed (1999: 202).

Advice on remedying such shortcomings is offered in various pedagogic works. Jones (1998), for example, strongly recommends paying special attention to distinct types of relationships in order to analyse the 'links', and adopting a different strategies for handling the different types of connectors, depending on the nature of the textual link.

We have explained the dual significance of 'making sense' for interpreters. First, they try to identify coherence relations in the incoming discourse in order to grasp the speaker's intended message. In turn, to facilitate their listeners' comprehension of the outgoing interpretation, interpreters have a duty to signal the structure of their own discourse with linguistic markers of cohesion.

It appears that 'there has not been very much research on coherence related to interpreting and translation' (Ahn 2005: 699). We are aware of only one study (Shlesinger 1995) that investigates the shifts of cohesive devices in translation by comparing the source text (speech) and the target text (simultaneous interpretation).

In the absence of any suitable framework in interpreting studies to describe systematically how coherence is displayed in interpretations and how trainees progress in this respect, we set out to establish just such a means of making comparative qualitative judgements about interpretations produced both by individuals and also by groups of interpreters. Assuming we can make generalisations about the structural features of interpretations produced by professionals, we might then see how interpretations by trainees compare. Our aim is to move beyond intuitions to quantifiable observations based on a rigorous linguistic analysis.

In subsequent sections, we analyse the consecutive interpretations produced by both professional and trainee interpreters, with a view to capturing any differences in their handling of textual coherence. First, however, we discuss the potential of Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to serve as a suitable framework.

3. Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST)

Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) is specifically designed to show how different parts of a text relate to each other in terms of function, and how they contribute to the overall coherence of the text. It enables analysts to represent the coherence relations between the parts of a text in a hierarchical structure. This facilitates comparison of texts that are similar but different, such as various interpretations of the same source text. Moreover, RST confines itself to the text itself. In Mann and Taboada's (2005) words, 'RST is intended to describe texts, rather than the processes of creating or reading and understanding them.'

3.1 RST relations and definitions

While it was originally used primarily to analyse monolingual written texts, from its early days RST has also been used to draw comparisons across languages. In particular, Mann and Thompson (1987) cite its application in a contrastive study of rhetoric in Chinese and English essays. More recently, RST has proved useful in describing the structure of spoken discourse (Tappe & Schilder 1998) and dialogues (Taboada 2004). Significantly, texts of any size or type, including ill-formed speeches, can be analysed using RST.

The 'building blocks' of RST are spans of text. Adjacent spans are linked by one of a set of relations defined by reference to rhetorical goals which 'correspond with the intentions of the speaker' (Bateman & Delin 2006: 590). Typically, one of the spans is identified as the 'nucleus' and the other as the 'satellite'. Bateman and Delin further explain that the identification of a nucleus is determined by its contribution to the rhetorical goals of the text as a whole:

> A nuclear element cannot be removed from a text without damaging its coherence, whereas satellites can often be removed without compromising overall coherence (i.e. the text would still be perceived as attempting to fulfil the same broad communicative function).

In other words, if the satellites are deleted from a text, it still tends to make sense though it will lose some of its content, while deleting the nuclei from a text destroys its texthood by rendering it incoherent. In terms of nuclearity, there are two kinds of rhetorical relations: 'asymmetric relations, where one of the related rhetorical units is singled out as the rhetorical head, or nucleus, and symmetric relations, also termed multinuclear, where all of the related units are of equal status' (Bateman & Delin 2006: 590).

Figure 1 shows that the result of RST analysis can be represented as a tree-like structure of relations. The first two spans (segment 1–2) — '*She picked up the phone*' and '*She dialled the number*' — form a symmetric multi-nuclear relation of 'Sequence', while the third span '*in order to call the airline*' is the satellite in an asymmetric relation of 'Purpose'.

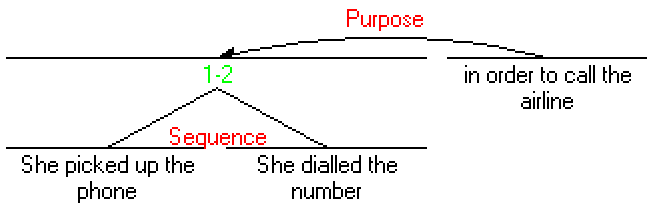


Figure 1. Sample of RST structure (Peng & Hartley 2006)

Mann and Thompson (1987) provide formal definitions for all of the rhetorical relations. Each definition of an asymmetric relation has four fields: 1) constraints on the Nucleus (N); 2) constraints on the Satellite (S); 3) constraints on the combination of Nucleus and Satellite (N+S); and 4) the Effect on the readers (R).

For instance, the relation 'Purpose' is defined as follows:

Table 1. Definition of RST relation: Purpose (Mann & Thompson 1987: 64)

Relation name: Purpose	
1.	Constraints on the N: presents an activity
2.	Constraints on the S: presents a situation that is unrealized
3.	Constraints on the N+S combination: S presents a situation to be realized through the activity in N
4.	The Effect: R recognizes that the activity in N is initiated in order to realize S

Mann and Taboada's website on RST (http://www.sfu.ca/rst/) provides a table which summarizes the relationships between the Nucleus and the Satellite in most RST relations. To illustrate this relationship, entries for three selected RST relations are reproduced in Table 2.

Table 2. RST: Nucleus vs. Satellite (Mann & Taboada 2005)

Relation Name	**Nucleus**	**Satellite**
Background	Text whose understanding is being facilitated	text for facilitating understanding
Justify	Text	information supporting the writer's right to express the text
Purpose	An intended situation	the intent behind the situation

Multinuclear relations are defined in similar terms, though clearly there are no satellites on which constraints are placed. The definition of Sequence given by Mann and Thompson is reproduced in Table 3.

Table 3. Definition of RST relation: Sequence (Mann & Thompson 1986: 73)

Relation name: Sequence	
1.	Constraints on the N: multi-nuclear
2.	Constraints on the combination of nuclei: A succession relationship between the situations is presented in the nuclei
3.	The Effect: R recognizes the succession relationships among the nuclei

As with the asymmetric relations, the relationship between spans in multinuclear relations is described in a table on Mann and Taboada's website (2005). Entries for the multinuclear relations used in the annotation of our data are reproduced in Table 4.

Table 4. RST multinuclear relations (Mann & Taboada 2005)

Relation Name	**Span**	**Other Span**
Sequence	an item	a next item
Contrast	one alternate	the other alternate
Joint	(unconstrained)	(unconstrained)
List	an item	a next item

Mann and Thompson carried out 'a detailed examination of the kinds of rhetorical relationships and corresponding rhetorical structures needed to carry out text analysis of texts of any kind' (Bateman & Delin 2006: 589). They collected and defined about 25 relations, now known as 'classical RST'. This set is reported to cover most of the relations in English texts (Hovy 1990: 19). RST has been successfully applied to the description of text organisation in languages other than English, such as Dutch, Chinese, French, Portuguese, German and Spanish (Bateman & Delin 2006: 589).

Although Mann and Thompson explicitly stated that this list of relations was open-ended, Bateman and Delin note that 'it has in fact proved very stable over the years' (2006: 589). We adopted the set of classical RST relations to annotate data, and added two of our own: Coda and Repair. A Coda is often used to mark the end of a conference speech, in wordings such as 'Thank you for your attention'. Repair is often observed in spoken texts, where speakers give up on a sentence halfway through and restart it straight afterwards. This is also true in interpretations and is observable in the corpus data.

Figure 2 presents an example of RST analysis of an interpretation from our corpus and illustrates its suitability as a framework for representing the textual coherence of interpretations.

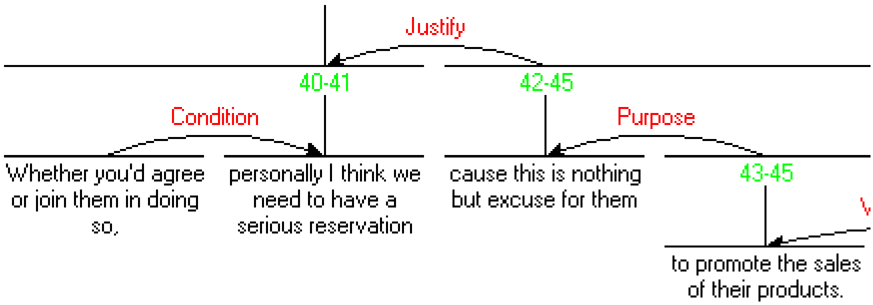


Figure 2. Example of Justify relation

The span containing segments 40–41 (‘*Whether you'd agree or join them in doing so, personally I think we need to have a serious reservation*’) is an opinion presented by the speaker (Nucleus), and the span containing segments 42–45 (‘*cause this is nothing but excuse for them…*’) supports the speaker's opinion (Satellite). It is clear that the cohesive device ‘*cause*’ (because) in segment 42 explicitly marks the relation of ‘Justify’. As we shall see, in this regard it is particularly useful in the kind of analysis undertaken in the present study.

3.2 Applications of RST

In addition to its application in text generation, over the last decade or so RST has been used in novel ways.

Significantly for our own research, Marcu in his work on automatic text summarisation (2000) designed an algorithm (Equation 1) to assign salience weightings to text spans in order to provide a principled basis for summarisation by the progressive deletion of less salient spans.

$$w(tree) = \begin{cases} 0 & \textit{if isLeaf(tree)} \\ w(leftOf(tree)) + ww(rightOf(tree)) + \\ depth(rightOf(tree)) - depth(leftOf(tree)) & \textit{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Equation 1. Marcu's algorithm (2000: 139)

It makes use of two major elements of RST annotations: the depth of the discourse structure as visualised in the branching structure of the RST diagrams above, and the total number of RST relations in a text. For our purposes, Marcu's algorithm has the useful property of assigning a weight to each complete RST tree. In essence, the deeper the branching structure and the greater the number of relations present in a text, the higher the weighting. The depth of branching of a text structure is particularly telling because it reflects the complexity and connectedness of the relations in a text.

In sum, this algorithm facilitates the comparison of texts in terms of global coherence, without regard to the specific relations that are present.

3.3 RST for comparing interpretations

Given the time and other constraints interpreters face, they often have to prioritise incoming information, possibly omitting items judged less salient or redundant or re-ordering items to produce a more coherent narrative. Such strategies partly explain why there can be many equally acceptable interpretations of a given source text. In the absence of a single gold standard against which to judge a number of interpretations, Marcu's algorithm enables us to abstract away from the wording of the text and capture in quantitative terms the degree to which it hangs together as a whole. Despite this abstraction, it appears to distinguish reliably between good and poor interpretations; and thanks to this abstraction, it provides a striking visualisation of the differences between coherent and incoherent texts, as we soon show.

4. Methodology

4.1 Subjects

In addition to six source speeches, the corpus data consisted of consecutive interpretations by eight trainee and three professional interpreters of three Chinese and three English speeches, giving a total of 66 texts. All subjects had Chinese as their A language and English as their B language. All three professionals had been active for more than ten years and are regarded as established conference interpreters.

The two groups of trainee interpreters were recruited from the one-year MA programme in Interpreting and Translation Studies (MAITS) at Leeds University from two consecutive years. Both groups of students were recruited by the same recruiting standards and procedures. They were mainly from mainland China, with some from Taiwan. None of the trainees in this study had any previous professional training or experience in interpreting before joining the MA programme.

At the start of the first year, eight students were recruited on a voluntary basis for the 'Control group'. Six students were recorded for each speech. Four recordings of each speech were used for data analysis. Recordings were selected according to practical considerations. Technical problems inevitably arose during the recording process. A few recordings were inaudible and thus impossible to transcribe.

In the following year, six students were recruited for the 'Test group', but later two decided to withdraw from the experiment. As a result, four students were recorded for each speech.

The only difference between the two groups was that the Test group had its attention drawn more systematically to issues of coherence and cohesion than the Control group. Broadly speaking, two instruments contributed to this. Firstly, a grid was introduced to encourage structured peer feedback (Hartley, Peng, Mason, & Perez, 2004). Secondly, the Test group were given sessions on RST, not only to learn about the difference between sound and poor discourse structures but also to facilitate the visualisation of analysis of the various hierarchical structures representing different levels of coherence in interpretations.

4.2 Data collection

4.2.1 *Speech preparation*

Six speeches were prepared: three in Chinese and three in English. While the topics varied, none required special or technical knowledge. All speeches were relatively short and clearly structured. Specific features of the six speeches are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Details of source speeches

Speech	Details	Speech 1	Speech 2	Speech 3
Chinese	Length	3.5 minutes	5 minutes	6 minutes
	Topic	English education in Taiwan	False travel documents	Climate change
	Notes	Without note-taking	Note-taking	Note-taking
	Delivery	Live	Live	Live
	Source	China Times (2002)[1]	Euro-China Meeting: Illegal immigration[2]	Speech notes from Isabelle Perez (2002)
English	Length	4 minutes	5 minutes	5.5 minutes
	Topic	Tiredness	Immigration & Asylum seekers	Climate change
	Notes	Without note-taking	Note-taking	Note-taking
	Delivery	Live	Audio recording	Audio recording
	Source	Boots Family Health Book[3]	MAITS mock conf. recording: 26/11/03	MAITS mock conf. recording: 19/02/03

The Chinese speeches were delivered by the same speaker working from bullet points that she had prepared for herself as lecture cues. English Speech 1 was also delivered live under the same conditions. English Speeches 2 and 3 were audio recordings of two live speeches by the same native English speaker in two mock conferences held in Leeds.

4.2.2 *Collection of interpretations*

In both Chinese and English, the subjects were not allowed to take notes during the recording of their interpretation of Speech 1. This type of practice, according to Gile, 'is very useful for the purpose of demonstrating to the students how memory works, and in particular the fact that if they listen carefully and understand the logic of the speech its content will be stored in their memory' (2005: 131).

In the interpreting programme in Leeds, note-taking for consecutive interpreting is usually introduced after the first four weeks of active listening and training in public speaking. By the time trainees interpreted Speech 2 (week 9), they had been practicing consecutive interpreting with note-taking for four to five weeks. Trainee interpretations of Speech 3 were recorded after their end-of-term exam, by which time they were expected to be able to perform successful consecutive interpreting with note-taking. In order to maintain the realistic nature of the training and reflect the trainees' progress fully, the trainee subjects were allowed to take notes in both Speech 2 and Speech 3.

The professional interpreters were recruited and recorded individually. Firstly, they were informed of the topics of the speeches and the recording arrangements in advance. Conditions were as consistent as possible with those under which the trainees were recorded. When meeting up before the actual recording, they were reminded again of the instructions. Note-taking was not allowed for Speech 1 in either English or Chinese, while it was allowed for Speeches 2 and 3. Notes were not collected afterwards. Also, each speech was delivered without a break. A two minute' break was given between each speech.

In brief, in each year trainee interpretations were recorded in three sessions over five months. As explained above, these sessions took place at certain points in the course of their training (Table 6). The professionals were recorded individually, with each of the six speeches being interpreted in a single session.

Table 6. Details of the recording of interpretations

	Speech 1	Speech 2	Speech 3
Professional	Six speeches were delivered and interpreted in one go with 2 minutes of break between each speech and instructions given beforehand.		
	3 interpreters x 3 speeches x 2 languages= 18 interpretations		
Novice	week 4/term 1	week 9/term 1	week 2/term 2
Training progress	4 weeks into memory training	4 weeks into note-taking	After term exam on consecutive
	8 interpreters x 3 speeches x 2 languages = 48 interpretations		

4.3 Data annotation

After recording, each speech and all interpretations were transcribed and then annotated. These were then segmented into spans of text (e.g. a clause which serves as a 'building block' in the text), and manually mapped into a tree-like RST description (RST trees) with RSTTool.[4]

RST annotations are sometimes criticised for their lack of objectivity. Indeed, each annotator's analysis is likely to be distinct due to subjective concerns. Den Ouden et al. (1998), however, carried out a series of studies and proved that there is high inter-coder reliability for some aspects of RST analysis. Among the analyses produced by trained annotators, the segmentation and attribution of nuclearity revealed much higher compatibility than did the identification of individual relations.

At the initial stage of data annotation, we consulted academic colleagues to validate our RST coding and in particular, to check our segmentation and attribution of nuclearity. We were thus reassured that our annotation was acceptable and we should carry on in the same manner. To ensure the consistency of our RST coding, the data were reviewed and annotated twice after all the data were assembled. This enabled us to identify some inconsistency in the early annotation which we were subsequently able to correct.

The tool can handle both Chinese and English, and it provides statistics about the variety and occurrence of the RST relations used in annotating each text. The screenshots in Figures 3, 4 and 6 illustrate the major functions of the RSTTool.

In total this resulted in 72 transcribed and annotated texts (6 original speeches, 18 professional interpretations and 48 trainee interpretations).

4.4 RST trees and tree weight

Figure 3 shows a part of an English speech (Speech 3) which was delivered for interpreting purposes.

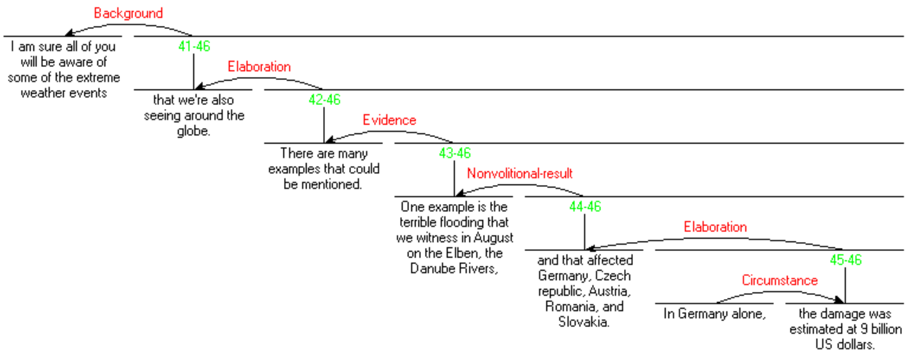


Figure 3. Example of RST annotation of English Speech 3

First of all, segment 40 (‘*I am sure all of you will be aware of some of the extreme weather events*’) is the nucleus, which is central to the whole text, and the rest of the text (41–46) is its satellite. The RST relation holding between these two text spans is that of ‘Background’. Segment 42 (‘*There are many examples that could be mentioned*’) is a satellite in relation to segment 40–41. On the other hand, segment 42 is also a nucleus, and its satellite includes segments 43–46, which provides supporting ‘Evidence’. The last two segments (45 and 46) also participate in an RST relation: segment 45 (‘*In German alone*’) is a satellite, which supports the nucleus, segment 46 (‘*the damage was estimated at 9 billion US dollars*’) as a ‘Circumstance’.

We then used Marcu’s algorithm (Equation 1 in Section 3.2) to assign a weight to each complete RST tree, thus facilitating comparison of different trees. The algorithm favours right-branching structures, following Marcu’s observation that the best discourse trees, are ‘often those that are skewed to the right’ (Marcu 2000: 137), which also corresponds to the trend of a natural text which unfolds in linear fashion.

The higher its score, the better a tree is deemed to be. Significantly, this measure of quality depends on the structure of the tree and not on the identity of any particular rhetorical relationships. Focusing solely on rhetorical well-formedness, the measure is able to accommodate the fact that there can be several different but equally acceptable interpretations of a single source speech.

The RST tree weight alone, however, is not sufficient to represent the level of coherence of a text structure. This score needs to be considered in relation to the total length of the text. For example, a tree weight of 80 for a shorter text suggests a higher degree of coherence than would be the case if the same overall weight were recorded by a longer text. The ratio of RST tree weight to total words will therefore be taken as an important indicator of the textual coherence of the interpretations in this study.

5. Results

5.1 Trees vs. bushes

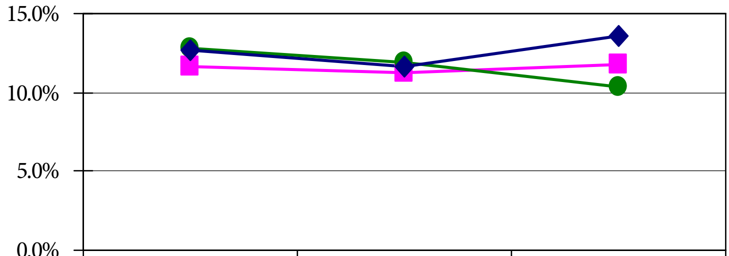
The RST trees of the professional and trainee interpretations revealed very different discourse structures. In general, the RST trees describing professional interpretations are deeper and broader than those describing student performances. In the professional interpretations, all of the spans in the text tend to be related to a single root node or very few root nodes and the internal structure of the discourse reveals complex, nested relations. In other words, the performances by professional interpreters appear to achieve global coherence. By contrast, the tree structures derived from trainee interpretations look rather more like 'bushes', exhibiting only local coherence with no single root.

Figure 4. RST 'bushes' and 'trees'

Figure 4 is intended to give a gestalt impression of the difference between the RST representations of interpretations of the same speech by a trainee and by a professional. For this illustration, we deliberately chose a genuine, if rather weak, interpretation by a trainee in order to emphasise the contrast with the professional performance. The top half represents the interpretation given by a trainee interpreter from the Control group. The bottom half represents an interpretation of the same speech by a professional.

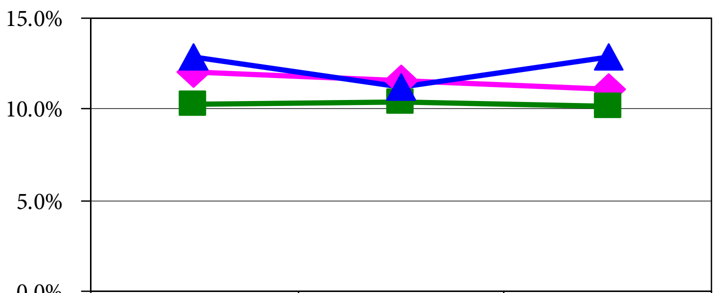
While the number of RST relations is also a major element in determining the weight of an RST tree using Marcu's algorithm (2000), the right-branching principle and depth of the structure are even more important. Greater depth means, ultimately, that a greater number of spans are subsumed under a single root relation. Significantly, in Figure 4, the RST tree of the professional's performance reaches a maximum depth of 15, while that of the trainee reaches a maximum depth of only 8.

The relatively deep tree structure of the professional interpretation (shown in Figure 4) makes a significant contribution to the total score for the RST tree. The number of relations in the two tree structures in Figure 4 is similar: 52 for the



	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	11.7%	11.2%	11.8%
Control	12.9%	11.9%	10.4%
Test	12.7%	11.7%	13.5%

Figure 5a. C>E interpretations: RST relations vs. total words



	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	12.0%	11.6%	11.1%
Control	10.3%	10.4%	10.1%
Test	12.9%	11.3%	12.9%

Figure 5b. E>C interpretations: RST relations vs. total words

trainee and 59 for the professional. However, the RST tree representing the professional interpretation scores 156 while that of the trainee interpretation scores just 41.

To clarify this point further, we investigated the ratio of the number of RST relations to total number of words in the text (relations/total wds) and found that it remained fairly constant across speeches, language combinations and different interpreter groups, with around 1% variance overall (Figures 5a and 5b).

Thus, from the corpus data, one difference between professional and trainee interpretations appears to lie not in the amount of information being retained in terms of text spans, but in the representation of this information in terms of coherence. In other words, professional interpretations do not necessarily contain more information than trainee interpretations, but the parts of the message are more richly related as a whole and more explicitly signposted (Figures 6a and 6b).

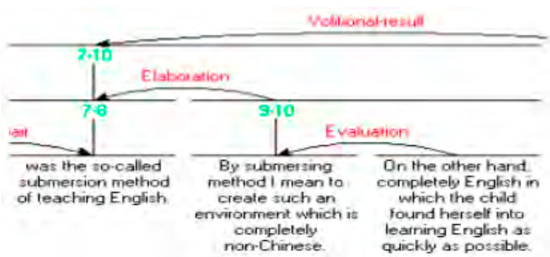


Figure 6a. Explicit signposting: professional interpretation

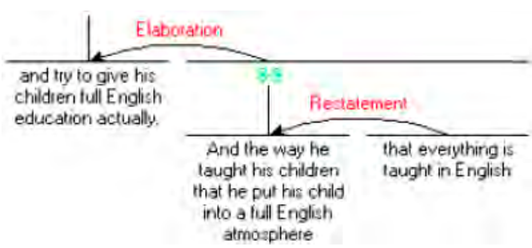


Figure 6b. Explicit signposting: trainee interpretation

In summary, it is plausible to claim that the difference between professional and trainee interpretations lies in the degree of coherence with which information is expressed. This would seem to provide evidence in support of the pre-theoretical observation noted above.

5.2 Coherence profile

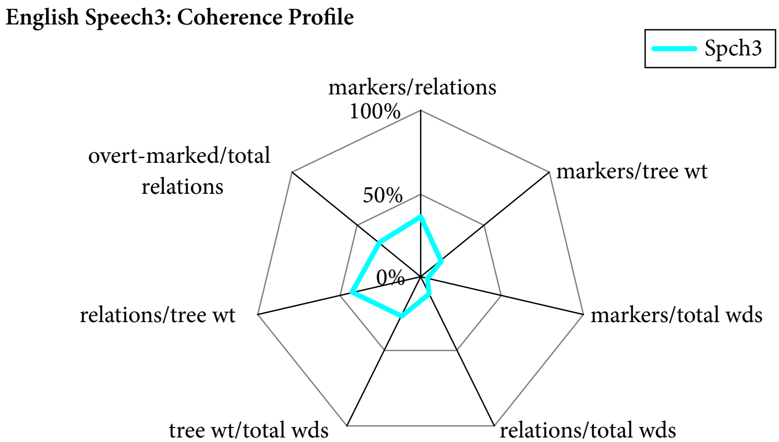
Comparison of the coherence of different texts represents a challenge, since it is the combination of factors such as the length of a text, the number of rhetorical relations within it, the number of marked relations, and many others that contributes to the coherence of a text (Scott & Souza 1990: 56).

That said, after annotating the RST relations in six source speeches by both professional and trainee interpreters, we identified five major parameters that could plausibly enable us to characterise the coherence of a text: (1) the length of a text (*total wds*); (2) the use of explicit markers (*markers*); (3) the number of RST relations (*relations*); (4) the number of relations marked by explicit markers (*overt-marked*), and (5) the weight of RST trees (*tree wt*). These parameters were combined in seven ratios (Table 7), intended to reveal a 'coherence profile' for the performance of individuals or sets of individuals. While these factors do not produce a complete picture of coherence, they are sufficient to give a general profile of the coherence of a discourse (Peng 2006).

Table 7. Seven ratios as parameters of coherence profile with rationales

<table>
<tr><th>Parameter</th><th colspan="2">Abbreviation and rationales</th></tr>
<tr><td>Explicit markers :: RST relations</td><td>Markers/relations</td><td rowspan="3">To see how the use of explicit markers contributes to the total RST relations, the RST tree weight and the total number of words of a text.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explicit markers :: RST tree weight</td><td>Markers/tree wt</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explicit markers :: total words</td><td>Markers/total wds</td></tr>
<tr><td>RST relations :: total words</td><td>Relations/total wds</td><td rowspan="2">To see RST relations and RST tree weight in relation to the total words of a text.</td></tr>
<tr><td>RST tree weight :: total words</td><td>Tree wt/total wds</td></tr>
<tr><td>RST relations :: RST tree weight</td><td>Relations/tree wt</td><td>To see how RST relations contribute to the tree weight of a text.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overtly-marked :: RST relations</td><td>Overt-marked/
RST relations</td><td>To see how explicitly RST relations are marked.</td></tr>
</table>

The seven ratios were calculated for individual performance first, and then averaged for each group for further comparison. The coherence profiles were plotted as radar charts for each group to make them easier to analyse and compare. The coherence profile of English Speech 3 is shown in the radar chart in Figure 7.



English Speech 3	
markers/relations	36.5%
markers/tree wt	15.3%
markers/total wds	4.1%
relations/total wds	11.2%
tree wt/total wds	26.6%
relations/tree wt	42.0%
overt-marked/total relations	32.4%

Figure 7. Coherence profile of English Speech 3

5.3 Benchmark validation

In order to compare different coherence profiles, we must first establish a benchmark, preferably not the source speech, since translations (interpretations in the present study) are quite different from source texts. For instance, many studies have confirmed that translations tend to be more explicitly marked (Pym 2005). For the purposes of the present study, we considered it reasonable to use the output of our professional interpreters as a benchmark against which to compare student interpretations. Indeed the radar charts clearly show a strong similarity between the coherence profile of professional interpretations and that of the original speech. This significant finding is illustrated by Figure 8, showing the match between the professionals' interpretation (Prof) and the original speech in Chinese (Speech 2, see Table 5). In contrast, the coherence profiles of the two groups of trainee interpreters, the 'Control' and 'Test' groups, present a very different picture (Figure 9). Table 8 gives the average percentage for each ratio for all the three groups of interpreters of the same Chinese speech (Speech 2C).

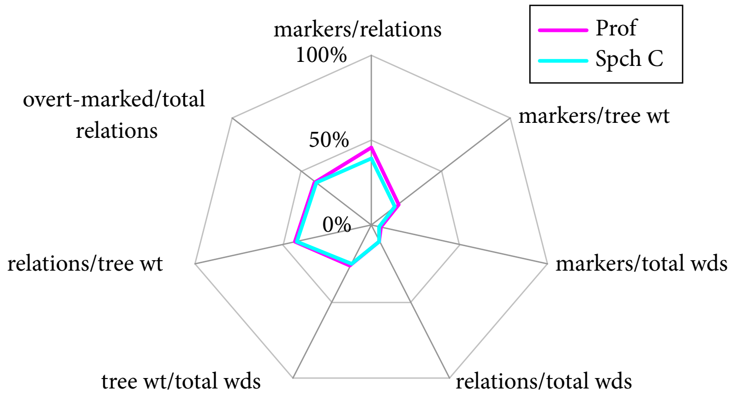


Figure 8. Coherence profiles of professional interpretation and Speech 2C

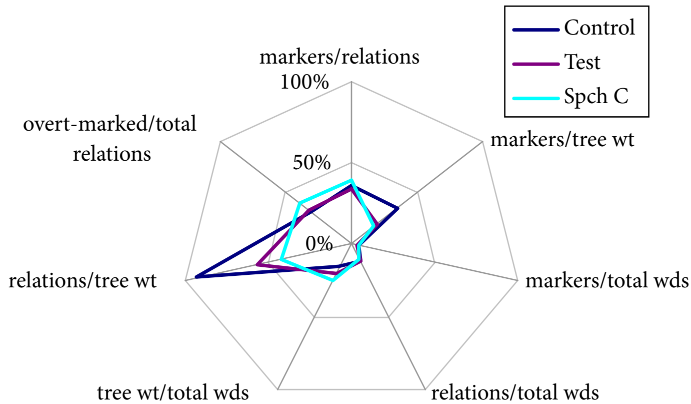


Figure 9. Coherence profiles trainee interpretations and Speech 2C

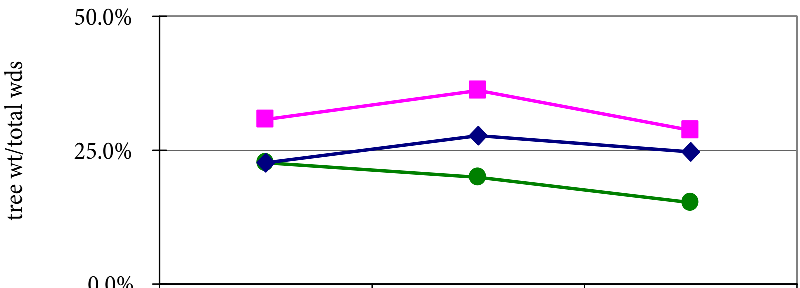
Table 8. Coherence profile data for Speech 2C & its interpretations

Spch2C>E	Speech	Prof	Control	Test
markers/relations	39.6%	45.7%	35.7%	34.2%
markers/tree wt	17.0%	20.0%	34.6%	19.3%
markers/total wds	4.3%	5.1%	4.2%	3.8%
relations/total wds	10.9%	11.2%	11.9%	11.7%
tree wt/total wds	25.3%	26.5%	16.0%	20.8%
relations/tree wt	42.9%	43.7%	93.3%	57.0%
overt-marked/total relations	39.6%	40.1%	30.9%	32.7%

5.4 'Heavier' RST trees in Chinese

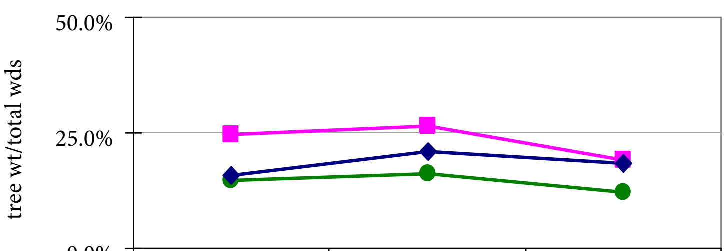
As discussed in 4.3, one of the most significant indicators of coherence is the weight of the RST tree for the text as a whole, which is calculated using Marcu's algorithm. The corpus data show a strong and direct correlation between the RST tree weight and the total words of a text: the longer the text, the heavier the RST tree. Moreover, the ratio of RST tree weight to the total number of words in a text (*tree wt/total wds*) was also higher in longer texts.

To further explore this phenomenon, we averaged the ratios for the interpretations produced by each group (Professional, Control and Test). The following figures give the average group ratios of RST tree weight to total words in both Chinese (Figure 10) and English (Figure 11) interpretations.



	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	30.6%	36.1%	28.8%
Control	22.6%	19.9%	15.3%
Test	22.6%	27.6%	24.5%

Figure 10. E>C interpretations: RST tree weight vs. total words



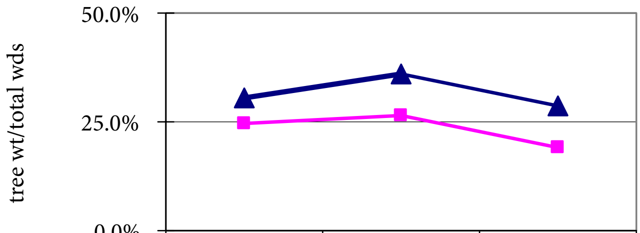
	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	24.5%	26.5%	19.0%
Control	14.6%	16.0%	12.1%
Test	15.7%	20.8%	18.2%

Figure 11. C>E interpretations: RST tree weight vs. total words

First of all, from Figure 10 and Figure 11 it is clear that the ratios of RST tree weight to total words (*tree wt/total wds*) are generally higher in the Chinese interpretations than in the English interpretations. Now let us consider the ratios for each group of interpreters in turn. Taking the trainee performances first, the average ratios (*tree wt/total wds*) were consistently higher in Chinese interpretations (around 7%) than in English interpretations. In the Chinese interpretations, the average ratios in both Test and Control trainee groups for English Speech 1 were 22.6% vs. 15% for the English interpretations of the Chinese Speech 1 by both trainee groups.

At the time of interpreting the first speech in both language directions, each group of trainee interpreters had received only four weeks of training on memory and public speaking, and had had little interpreting practice. The results suggest that, at this early stage, trainee interpreters were more capable of conveying coherence in Chinese (their A language) than in English (their B language).

As illustrated in Figure 12, the ratios for professional Chinese interpretations (Prof E>C) were also consistently higher than those for English interpretations (Prof C>E). For Professional interpretations, the difference in the ratios for Speech 2 and Speech 3 was about 10% in better cases and about 5% for Speech 1.



	1	2	3
Prof C>E	24.5%	26.5%	19.0%
Prof E>C	30.6%	36.1%	28.8%

Figure 12. Prof. C>E & E>C interpretations: RST tree weight vs. total words

While it is tempting to suspect that this is due to inherent differences between Chinese and English, Figure 13, which shows ratios for the source speeches, suggests that language difference was not the main reason for the pattern observed in the interpretations.

In Figure 13, the ratios (*tree wt/total wds*) for the Chinese speeches (Spch C) are not consistently higher than those of the English speeches (Spch E): the ratio of RST tree weight to total words in an English text is sometimes higher than that in a Chinese text.

Thus, the difference between the ratios for English and Chinese interpretations can perhaps be understood as a feature of interpreted texts. In particular, it

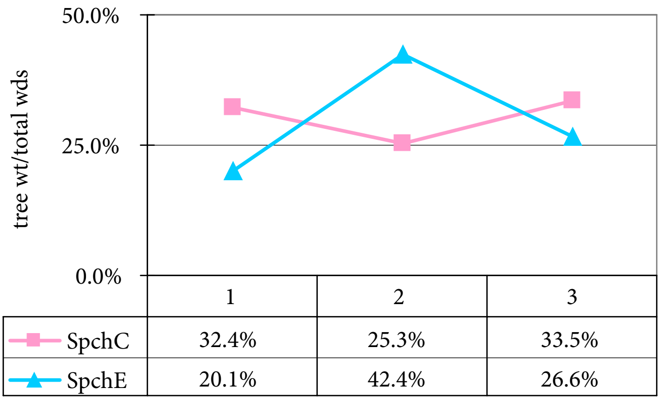


Figure 13. Chinese and English speeches –RST tree weight vs. total words

would seem that the interpreters in this experiment (both professionals and trainees) were better at conveying coherence in their mother tongue, Chinese.

Bartłomiejczyk (2004) conducted a survey of interpreters' views on the directionality of SI. She reports that professional interpreters feel more confident working into their A language. Trainee interpreters, on the contrary, often feel more at ease when working into their B language; in this direction, there are fewer comprehension problems. The findings here, whereby interpretations into the A language convey better textual coherence, substantiate the point of view of professional interpreters.

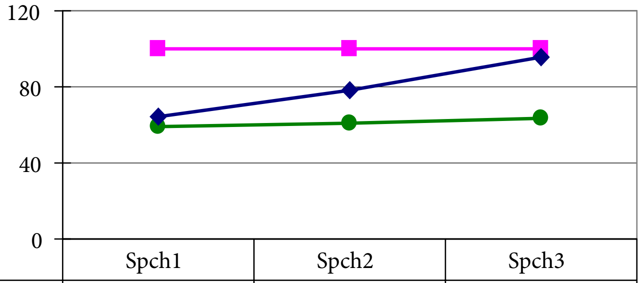
5.5 'Heavier' RST trees of professional interpretations

Another important finding is that professional interpretations have higher ratios of RST tree weight to total words than trainee interpretations into both Chinese and English. This follows from the fact that the weights of the RST trees which represent the professional interpretations are consistently greater than those of trainee interpretations.

In order to facilitate comparison, the ratios of RST tree weight to total words were normalised by setting the professional ratios to 100 and adjusting those of trainee interpretations proportionally. Let us first consider Chinese-English interpretations.

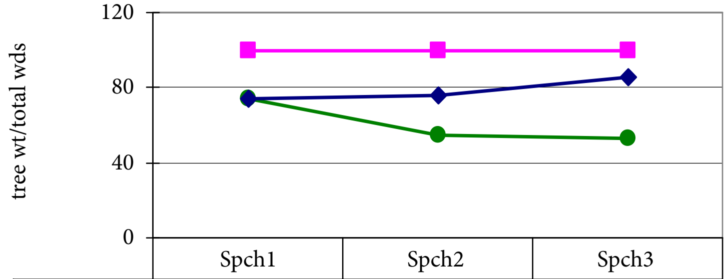
Figure 14 shows a consistent gap between the Professional group and the Control group. The interpretations produced by trainees in the Control group may have the same length as professional interpretations, but the total weighting of RST trees is around 60% that of professional interpretations of the same speeches.

Moreover, this situation does not improve through the period of training. When working into Chinese (Figure 15), the gap between the professional and the



	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	100	100	100
Control	60	61	64
Test	64	78	96

Figure 14. C>E interpretations: RST tree weight vs. total words — Professional interpretations as benchmark



	Spch1	Spch2	Spch3
Prof	100	100	100
Control	74	55	53
Test	74	76	85

Figure 15. E>C interpretations: RST tree weight vs. total words — Professional interpretations as benchmark

trainee (Control) groups was relatively narrow in Speech 1 but became wider in both Speech 2 and Speech 3.

This does not necessarily mean that the trainee interpretations were more coherent prior to training. In fact, their early success may be due to the four weeks of training on memory and public speaking that they had been given prior to being recorded for Speech 1. This enabled them to memorise the major structure and arguments of a speech. They were trained to reproduce this structure with the aim of producing coherent interpretations. They had also acquired other basic skills. As such their ability to handle simple speeches, such as Speech 1, was similar to that of the professionals.

Nevertheless, the widening gap between professional and trainee interpretations of Speech 2 and Speech 3 into Chinese warrants further investigation, given that interpreters should be able to work better into their A language.

Firstly, trainee interpreters' comprehension of the source speeches in English (Speech 2 and Speech 3) might not be as complete as that of professionals. Seleskovitch points out that, 'absence of comprehension results in immediate oblivion, whereas comprehension is synonymous with retention' (1994/1986: 32). Therefore it is plausible that, even with note-taking, trainee interpreters still failed to grasp as much information from the source speech as professionals. As a result, even in their mother tongue, they were not able to reproduce the coherence of the source speech as fully as were the professionals. What they managed to capture and convey, however, were small fragments of coherence and local cohesive features. Professionals, on the other hand, produced a more global coherence. This is reflected in the higher *tree wt/total wds* ratios of their interpretations.

When working into Chinese, professional interpreters are still better at conveying coherence than trainees. Professionals are better able to comprehend the speeches in English and are also likely to have better awareness of the subject matter than trainees. Thus professionals have an advantage over trainees from the outset, and it is no surprise that professional interpretations into Chinese are more explicitly connected and more structured than those of trainees.

5.6 Quality awareness facilitates performance

It is worth noting, however, that the gap between the Test group and the Professional narrows with training in both Chinese and English interpreting. This result supports our claim that trainees progressed faster in conveying global coherence when their attention was drawn to it explicitly.

We can see from Figure 14 that the score for interpretations by the Control group was around 60% that of the Professionals. However, the Test group showed a clear trend towards converging with the Professional profile. In Speech 1, both trainee groups achieved a similar score, while in Speech 2 the Test group showed a marked improvement, which continued in Speech 3 — the most argumentative of all, with a rather complex discourse structure — where the score was very close to that of the Professional group.

In English-Chinese interpretations (Figure 15), likewise, the gap between Professional and the Control groups was conspicuous, particularly in Speech 2 and Speech 3. Speech 1 was meant to be very straightforward, and interpreters did not need any special preparation to comprehend the speech. Therefore, the interpretations by both the Control group and Test group were not far removed from those of the professionals. In Speech 2 and Speech 3, the difference between the two trainee groups was clear. The noticeable gap between the performances by the Control group and the Professional grew, while the Test group showed a rise towards the Professional. In Speech 3, the most complicated and challenging of the three, the Test group still managed a score of 85.

As described in 4.1, the major difference between the two trainee groups lies in the introduction of the feedback tool and in the specific attention drawn to their realisation of the significance of coherence as described in informal sessions on RST. Apart from these two conditions, the Test group was recruited and trained in the same way as the Control group. We suggest that the introduction of the feedback tool and the attention given to coherence account for the significant improvement of the Test group.

Carrying out a long-term study of the positive impact of the introduction of the feedback grid and the overall progress of interpretation was beyond the scope of the present study. However, based on our RST analysis, we have witnessed the development of coherence in interpretations in the Test group. We suggest that their understanding of quality criteria and of coherence in particular, improved as a result. The results also show that awareness of coherence leads to better interpretations. Of course we do not claim that trainees can develop into professionals after a few months of training. Our analysis does show, however, that it is possible for trainees to produce interpretations with a degree of coherence similar to that of professionals, when they are explicitly guided by the peer feedback tool.

6. Conclusions

Like any research project, this study was subject to certain constraints in terms of time and materials.

However, every care was taken to ensure the validity of the not inconsiderable body of data under analysis. On the other hand, this study is the first use of RST with interpreted texts. Not only has RST proved to be very suitable for describing coherence across languages, it has also provided a useful framework for the comparison of coherence across different interpretations. Using RST, the improvement of performance over time and between groups can also be easily visualised.

Given the empirical evidence presented here in support of the notion that what distinguishes professional interpretations from those by trainees is not the amount of information, but the coherence with which it is expressed, coherence would seem to be an obvious issue to tackle in training. The introduction of peer feedback also shows great potential in raising trainees' awareness of quality. This in turn further improves their performances. The study demonstrates that this innovative approach offers interesting findings and implications for interpreter training, especially in terms of collaborative learning, as well as directions for further research in both the conference interpreting and RST communities.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the valuable comments and suggestions of the anonymous reviewers while assuming responsibility for any remaining errors or infelicities.

Notes

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2. EU-China Meeting: False Travel Documents (3–4 Nov 2003), The Hague.

3. *Boots Family Health Book* (1997: 156–157).

4. Mick O'Donnell's RST tool can be downloaded from http://www.wagsoft.com/RSTTool/section2.html

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Assessing source material difficulty for consecutive interpreting

Quantifiable measures and holistic judgment*

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Motivated by the need for better control of standards of a certification examination for interpreters in Taiwan, this exploratory study aimed at identifying indicators that may be used to predict source material difficulty for consecutive interpreting. A combination of quantifiable measures — readability level, information density and new concept density — was used to examine different aspects of three English source materials. Expert judgment was also used as a more holistic method of judging source material difficulty. The results of these analyses were compared with two groups of student interpreters' performance on consecutive interpreting of the source materials into Mandarin Chinese. The participants' assessment of speech difficulty after the interpreting task was also compared with the other measures and the expert judgment. The quantifiable measures all failed statistically in predicting source material difficulty, possibly due to the very small sample size of the materials or to the fact that the materials were very similar in the aspects assessed by these measures. A trend emerged to suggest that information density and sentence length may be potentially useful indicators for predicting source material difficulty. It was also shown that source material difficulty affected the performance of lower-skilled interpreters more than that of higher-skilled interpreters.

Introduction

Practitioners, trainers and test-developers in translation and interpreting often have to deal with source materials with different levels of difficulty. Practitioners develop strategies to tackle difficult elements in a source material. Trainers and testers gauge source material difficulty to match training and testing objectives. In these cases, judgment of the source material is often guided by intuition and experience rather than by systematic explorations. In the training and testing of translation and interpreting, it is common practice that the selection of source materials relies solely on the judgment of an individual trainer or tester. In some testing situations such as the professional examinations of a translation and interpretation training institute in which the first author has participated, when a group of jurors judge and discuss source material difficulty or suitability, there is often a lack of consensus. This situation is not unlike what has been observed and studied in language testing. When a group of experts are called upon to judge text difficulty, it is usually difficult to reach a consensus as each individual may focus on different elements of the text (Alderson 1993; Fulcher 1997).

This lack of consensus can be particularly pronounced in interpreting because of the fleeting nature of the task. A text that reads smoothly in print may be difficult to comprehend when presented orally. The working conditions of an interpreter often affect how difficult a speech is perceived to be and how well it is interpreted. In addition, the mode of interpreting, be it consecutive or simultaneous, may also make interpreting a particular speech more or less difficult. Added to the complexity is the necessary consideration of the interpreter's background knowledge and the extent to which she prepares for an interpreting task.

The interaction of these factors not only makes judging interpreting source materials difficult in practice, but also makes theorizing about input difficulty a complex task. Campbell (1999) sees the question of source text difficulty as particularly complex and notes that a lack of suitable models in translation studies may have prevented translation educators from effectively incorporating the notion of difficulty into courses and tests.

Indeed, difficulty has also been examined in a rather patchwork manner in interpreting studies. Some "input variables" (Pöchhacker 2004: 126) that make an interpreting task difficult have been identified and studied. Among these factors, those related to speaker characteristics and working conditions such as input speed, intonation and background noise are observed to make the interpreting task more difficult (e.g., Gerver 1969/2002, 1974; Lee 1999a; Pio 2003; Tommola & Lindholm 1995). Some source material characteristics are also shown to have negative effects on interpreting performance. These include information density (e.g., Barik 1973, 1975; Dillinger 1994; Lee 1999a, 1999b), syntactic complexity and lexical difficulty of the source material (e.g., Darò et al. 1996; Tommola & Helevä 1998).

While factors such as speed, intonation and noise can easily be monitored and controlled in test development, the intrinsic elements of the source material are difficult to control due to a lack of quantifiable measures. This situation is problematic in testing for the purpose of certifying interpreters, as a lack of consistent control of test difficulty can lead to a slide in standards and eventually jeopardize the credibility of the certification.

One may argue against the need for establishing quantifiable measures for judging interpreting source material difficulty due to the interaction of different factors. However, it is for the same reason that, borrowing Campbell's words (1999: 34), "the problem cannot be approached holistically," and it is worth contemplating the possibility of the source text being an "independent source of translation difficulty." This pursuit not only has theoretical merit, but also has profound practical value in training and, in particular, testing.

The exploratory study reported here was among the pilot studies of a research project that the first author and her team undertook for Taiwan's National Institute for Compilation and Translation, with the aim of establishing a certification program for translators and interpreters in Taiwan.[1] The study focused on finding quantifiable measures for estimating and predicting the difficulty of English source materials for consecutive interpreting. The measures chosen for analysis included the readability level based on a readability formula, information density and new concept density based on propositional analysis.

Readability was chosen as a potential indicator because word length and sentence length, two elements commonly factored in calculating the readability level, can be used to gauge lexical difficulty and syntactic complexity. Information density was determined by the use of propositional analysis because of this method's preciseness in representing the meaning units of a text. New concept density, also based on propositional analysis, was used because a higher redundancy level (i.e., less new information) in the source material has been suggested as a factor that makes an interpreter's task easier (Déjean Le Féal 1982).

In addition to the above-mentioned quantifiable measures, the pooled judgment of a group of ten experts was also used as a more holistic method of judging source material difficulty. The results of these analyses were then compared with the scores of student interpreters' consecutive interpreting of the English source materials into Mandarin Chinese. The interpreters' own assessment of input difficulty after the interpreting task was also analyzed, particularly in relation to expert judgment as a holistic method of assessing source material difficulty.

Method

Participants

Two groups of students from a Taiwanese university participated in the study. The first group was composed of four graduate students of interpreting (three females and one male), who, by the time of the experiment, had received training in consecutive interpreting for about half a year. The other group was composed of seven undergraduate English-major seniors (four females and three males), who, except for one without any training in interpreting, had taken a weekly two-hour consecutive interpreting class for about three months. All participants were in their early or mid twenties and had Mandarin Chinese as their first language and English as their second language.

The participants in this study are representative of the type of people who take the new Taiwanese interpreting certification examinations which currently only test consecutive interpreting. These participants are also typical of a rather large population of interpreting learners in Taiwan as most English departments at colleges and universities offer training in consecutive interpreting.

Materials

Three non-technical English texts were chosen to be the experimental materials by two experienced interpreting practitioner/trainers with Mandarin Chinese A and English B. The texts were considered to be prototypical talks Taiwanese interpreters encounter in assignments where the consecutive mode of interpreting is used.

The first text is a talk given at *Computex*, an international computer exhibition held in Taipei (*Computex*). The speaker talks about the theme and activities of the exhibition. The second text is an educational talk about user agreements that precede the installation of free software programs from the Internet (*Eula*). In the third text, the speaker talks about how different parties view a model of partnership between government and private companies called "public-private partnership" (*PPP*) (see Appendix for experimental materials).

All the texts were read out by a native English speaker and digitally recorded. The speed of the recorded speeches was adjusted to about 100 to 110 words per minute. Each speech was further divided into segments of 45–65 words, or in terms of speech time, 25–40 seconds (see Table 1). As the experiment was not meant for evaluating the participants' note-taking skills in consecutive interpreting, the division of the speeches into smaller segments allowed those participants who had not been sufficiently trained in consecutive interpreting note-taking skills to rely on their memory or their own method of note-taking to recall the content of the speeches.

Preliminary ranking of source material difficulty

The two experts who chose the experimental materials judged the difficulty of the three texts independently. They later compared their assessments and together ranked the three source materials in terms of their difficulty levels. *Computex* was judged to be the easiest and *PPP* the most difficult. The difficulty levels were assessed and determined based on the following eight categories that emerged from

Table 1. Source materials and interpreting segments

Title	Segments	No of words	Duration (sec.)
Computex (A)	whole text	178	104
	A1	57	33
	A2	62	38
	A3	59	33
Eula (B)	whole text	230	122
	B1	64	36
	B2	51	27
	B3	65	33
	B4	50	26
PPP (C)	whole text	204	112
	C1	48	27
	C2	44	25
	C3	51	30
	C4	61	30

the discussion of the two experts: words, syntactic structure, information density, coherence, logic, clarity, abstractness, and required background knowledge.

Methods of judging source material difficulty

As mentioned before, four methods were used to estimate and predict the difficulty of the three source materials. They are the readability levels based on the Flesch Reading Ease formula, information density based on propositional analysis, new concept density based on propositional analysis, and expert judgment.

Flesch Reading Ease formula for readability

Readability formulas are created out of an effort to find statistical correlations between "objectively observable features" of texts and the reading levels of readers (Davison & Green 1988: 1). The text features incorporated in readability formulas usually include average sentence length, and word difficulty, either based on the average number of syllables or occurrence of high-frequency words (Davison & Green 1988: 2). The underlying assumptions of using sentence length as an element in the readability formula is that the longer a sentence is, the more clauses it contains and thus the more complicated the sentence structure is (Anderson & Davison 1988; Kintsch & Miller 1984). As a longer sentence may generally contain more information, the average sentence length can also be used as an indicator for information density in a text (Dam 2001: 30–31).

The Flesch Reading Ease formula, a reading difficulty measure designed for adults (Harrison 1980, cited in Fulcher 1997: 499) and one of the most frequently used readability formulas, was chosen for this study. The formula is based on word length (number of syllables per word) and sentence length (number of words per sentence). The scores range from 0 to 100, with more difficult texts having lower scores. The Flesch formula has been shown to correlate at around 0.64–0.70 with such measures as cloze and teacher judgment (Harrison 1980, cited in Fulcher 1997: 501). In a study where the difficulty level of certain sentences was adjusted according to the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Tests,[2] participants' performance in simultaneous interpreting was negatively affected by the more difficult sentences (Liu et al. 2004).

Propositional analysis for information density and new concept density
Propositional analysis is used to represent the content of a text in meaning units, expressed in the form of a list of propositions. A proposition is the smallest unit that is meaningful (Solso 1998: 259–260). A typical proposition is composed of a predicate and one or more arguments, with the predicate serving to specify the relationship among the arguments (Kintsch & van Dijk 1978). Studies have shown that texts containing the same number of words but more propositions take longer to read (Kintsch & Keenan 1973; Kintsch et al. 1975). Furthermore, it was also shown that with the number of words and propositions controlled, a text containing more new concepts (i.e., new arguments) took more time to read and was more poorly recalled (Kintsch et al. 1975).

In this study, propositional analysis was performed according to the guidelines specified in Bovair & Kieras (1985). The list of propositions for each source material served two purposes: first to calculate the density of information of each source material, and second, to serve as scoring units for the rating of interpreting performance. In its first application, the proportion of the number of propositions to the number of total words was calculated for each source material to determine its information density: the higher the score, the denser the information. In addition, the proportion of the number of new arguments to the total number of propositions in each source material was calculated to indicate the density of new concepts: the higher the score, the denser the new concepts.

Expert judgment
Expert judgment is widely used in language testing as well as in translator and interpreter testing. It is often assumed that experts are able to predict test difficulty in advance of a test administration, particularly in translator and interpreter

testing where test piloting is difficult to do. We would expect that experts, with their long experience in teaching and testing, would have internalized a notion of difficulty in relation to how candidates are expected to perform. However, expert judgment has often been shown to be very unreliable. In some studies, the lack of agreement not only exists among experts (test writers and examination markers), and between item statistics and expert judgment, but also shows in intra-rater unreliability (Alderson 1993; Fulcher 1997). This situation makes the approach of using expert judgment in content validation highly questionable. The absence of commonly shared criteria and different weightings given to each criterion may contribute to this problem. Therefore, having experts work in a team can be beneficial for the purpose of reaching an agreement (Fulcher 1997: 503).

In this study, a group of ten experts composed of professional interpreters, interpreter trainers, as well as reading and language testing experts was invited to fill out a questionnaire that asked about different aspects of the testing of consecutive interpreting. As part of the questionnaire, items about source material difficulty were also included. These experts were asked to make an overall judgment of text difficulty on a five-level Likert scale, with 1 being "very easy" and 5, "very difficult." In an effort to allow more guided judgment, questions incorporating the eight categories used by the two experts who chose and ranked the source materials were also included in the questionnaire. The eight categories, as described earlier, include some criteria that are similar to the ones assessed by the quantifiable measures used in this study, such as information density, word difficulty and syntactic difficulty. Other criteria not assessed by the quantifiable measures are also included and, as a group, represent the more holistic nature of expert judgment. The experts were also asked to assess each of these eight categories by marking their choices on a five-level Likert scale. Assessment made during these two stages allowed us to compare the results of expert judgment without a guideline with those based on specific criteria.

Procedure

All eleven participants performed the interpreting task individually. The order of interpreting the three source materials was determined by a blocking strategy for each group to distribute practice and fatigue effects. Each participant sat in a simultaneous interpretation booth and was first asked to read a short statement that included a one-sentence description of the topic and content of the source material to be interpreted, the length and number of segments of that specific source material, and a reminder that they could take notes using the paper and pens provided. The participants were also allowed time to ask questions about the experimental procedure. Next, they listened to the first recorded source material through headphones and their interpretation renditions were recorded onto cassette tapes and later converted to digital sound files. Interpreting sessions of the second and third source materials followed the same procedure. The participants were allowed short breaks between sessions if they so desired. No time limits were imposed on the participants so that they could proceed at their own pace in interpreting the three speeches. All participants were observed to take notes while listening to the three source materials.

At the end of the last session, each participant was asked on a voluntary basis to fill out a questionnaire about input difficulty, the quality of their own performances, input speed, the length of each interpreting segment, and the necessity of note-taking. For each question, the participants had to mark their choice on a five-level Likert scale. The whole process lasted between 30 and 60 minutes for each participant.

Rating of interpreting performance

The quality of the interpreting performance was evaluated by using a proposition-based rating method. It was done by calculating the percentage of propositions of each source material correctly interpreted. Only fidelity of the interpretation renditions was considered in the rating as accuracy is a more clear-cut criterion for determining the effect of input difficulty on the interpreting performance.

All 33 interpretation recordings were transcribed verbatim. For each source material, the interpretation transcripts were randomized so that the order of rating for each participant was different. The accuracy of all interpretation renditions was assessed by checking how closely each transcribed interpretation rendition matched the propositions of each source material. A score of 1 was given when the meaning of a proposition was correctly interpreted, and a score of 0 when it was wrong. Two native Chinese speakers with graduate-level interpreter training served as raters.

First, the two raters did a trial rating session individually on the interpretation renditions of three randomly chosen participants. After discussing the results of their trial rating, they agreed on the following principles before proceeding:

1. Credit is given to renderings that may not be equivalents but nonetheless represent the meaning of the original propositions;
2. Renderings that do not follow the original order of propositions in a sentence are not penalized, due to word order difference between English and Chinese;
3. Added information that is not in the original list of propositions is disregarded and not penalized;

4. Erroneous renderings of the same proposition are penalized only once when they first appear.

To assure better consistency in rating, all participants' renditions of the same segment of a particular speech were rated before proceeding to the next segment. The final score for each interpreting performance was the average of the scores given by the two raters, calculated by dividing the number of correctly interpreted propositions by the total number of propositions in each source material.

Statistical Analysis

Inter-rater reliability was examined using the Kappa statistic. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for analyzing the effects of the three source materials and the two groups of participants. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the correlations of readability score, information density, new concept density and expert judgment with the scores of the interpreting performance.

Results and Discussion

Estimated difficulty of source materials

The difficulty levels of the three source materials, as assessed by the four indicators, are presented in the following three tables. As can be seen in Table 2, the readability levels represented by the Flesch Reading Ease scores show *Computex* to be the most difficult, and *PPP*, the easiest.

Table 2. Readability of source materials in Flesch Reading Ease scores

	Word length	Sentence length	Reading Ease score	Difficulty level
Computex	5	19.7	35.6	Difficult
Eula	4.4	19.2	55.3	Fairly difficult
PPP	4.4	22.5	60.1	Standard

Note. A Flesch Ease score of 0–30 is considered "very difficult," 30–50 "difficult," 50–60 "fairly difficult," 60–70 "standard," 70–80 "fairly easy," 80–90 "easy," and 90–100 "very easy" (Flesch 1948: 230).

Table 3 shows that the three source materials are quite comparable in information density, with *PPP* judged to contain the densest information. The result of the new concept density is very different. *Computex* has far more new arguments than the other two source materials, and thus should be the most difficult one to interpret.

Table 3. Information density and new concept density of source materials

	Number of words	**Number of propositions**	**Information density (%)**	**Number of new arguments**	**New concept density (%)**
Computex	178	76	**42.70**	63	**82.89**
Eula	230	96	**41.74**	37	**38.54**
PPP	204	88	**43.14**	52	**59.09**

Expert judgment exhibits a different result from that of the readability formula and propositional analysis. The score of overall difficulty and the average score of the eight criteria both show *Computex* to be the easiest, and *PPP*, the most difficult. In fact, *PPP* was rated as the most difficult in every category with the exception of coherence and logic.

Table 4. Expert judgment of difficulty of source materials

	Computex	***Eula***	***PPP***	**Notes**
Overall difficulty	**2.00**	**3.10**	**3.70**	5: most difficult
1. Word difficulty	2.00	2.60	3.00	5: most difficult
2. Syntactic difficulty	1.90	2.80	3.50	5: most difficult
3. Information density	2.90	3.30	3.50	5: most dense
4. Coherence	2.00	2.80	2.40	5: least coherent
5. Logic	1.80	2.60	2.50	5: least logical
6. Clarity	1.70	2.40	2.50	5: least clear
7. Abstractness	1.40	2.60	3.20	5: most abstract
8. Knowledge difficulty	2.10	3.10	3.70	5: most difficult
Average of 1 to 8	**1.98**	**2.77**	**3.03**	5: most difficult

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the internal consistency reliability of expert judgment. The results showed that the experts were very consistent at judging *Computex* and *Eula* with the Cronbach's α at 0.87 and 0.82 respectively. However, internal consistency was much lower for the judgment of *PPP*, $\alpha = 0.45$, indicating much greater disagreement among experts in judging this text.

Rating results of interpreting performance

Inter-rater reliability was first examined. Pearson's chi-square test showed correlation in the two raters' ratings, $\chi^2 = 2135.16$ ($p = .000$). A strong inter-rater agreement of $K = 0.86$ was further obtained using the Kappa statistic.

Interpreting performance of *Eula* received the highest score at 49.53%. A comparable but slightly lower score of 47.19% was given to *Computex*, and *PPP* received the lowest score at 39.98%. Judging by the participants' performance as a group, *Eula* seems to be the easiest material and *PPP*, the most difficult.

Graduate students outperformed undergraduates on all three source materials (see Table 5).

Table 5. Rating results of consecutive interpreting performance of two groups of participants

	Graduates ($N = 4$)		**Undergraduates ($N = 7$)**	
	Mean	***SD***	**Mean**	***SD***
Computex	67.93	16.27	35.34	12.97
Eula	59.64	08.70	43.75	08.67
PPP	62.36	15.40	27.19	11.07

A two-way mixed-model ANOVA showed a significant main effect of "group" at $F(1, 9) = 20.26$, $p = .001$, but the main effect of "material" was not significant, $F(2, 18) = 2.24$, $p > .05$. A significant interaction effect of "material" and "group" was observed at $F(2, 18) = 3.89$, $p < .05$. One-way ANOVA further showed that graduate students performed significantly better than undergraduates on all three source materials, $F(1, 9) = 13.49$, $p < .01$ for *Computex*, $F(1, 9) = 8.53$, $p < .05$ for *Eula*, and $F(1, 9) = 19.57$, $p < .01$ for *PPP*. Further analysis on repeated measures showed that graduate students did not perform differently in interpreting the three source materials, $F(2, 6) = 1.12$, $p > .05$, indicating that difficulty of these materials did not affect the graduate students' performance in consecutive interpreting. The interpreting performance of the undergraduates, on the other hand, was affected by the different source materials they interpreted, $F(2, 12) = 6.35$, $p < .05$. Further analysis, using the Scheffe test, showed that their performance on *Eula* was significantly better than that on *PPP*, $p < .05$, while the other pair-wise comparisons did not reach significance.

Participant judgment

Nine of the 11 participants filled out the participant questionnaire. As can be seen in Table 6, their assessment of speech difficulty shows that *PPP* was considered the most difficult (3.78), while *Eula* and *Computex* are similar in their difficulty levels (2.78 and 2.56 respectively). Participants' evaluation of their own performance, though generally rated low, shows *Eula* as being the best (2.56), followed by *Computex* (2.44), and *PPP* being the worst (1.78). Participants did not seem to attribute task difficulty to the speed of the source materials or the length of each interpreting segment, both rated at 3. However, note-taking seemed to be considered quite necessary (3.75), despite the limit of 40 seconds set for the length of each segment.

Table 6. Results of participant questionnaire

	Computex	*Eula*	*PPP*	**Notes**
Input difficulty	2.56	2.78	3.78	5: most difficult
Self evaluation of performance	2.44	2.56	1.78	5: best
Input speed		3.00		5: very fast
Segment length		3.00		5: very long
Necessity of notes		3.75		5: very necessary

Note. Numbers for input speed, segment length and necessity of notes represent scores for all three materials.

Correlation of estimated difficulty levels and interpreting performance

We compared the difficulty levels assessed by different quantifiable measures and expert judgment with the scores of interpreting performance to examine how effective each indicator was in predicting source material difficulty. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for each indicator and the scores of interpreting performance (see Table 7). A significant negative correlation coefficient should indicate that an indicator was effective in judging source material difficulty, that is, the higher the difficulty level the lower the interpreting score.

Table 7. Correlation coefficients of consecutive interpreting performance and difficulty levels as assessed by different indicators

		r	*p*
Readability formula	Flesch Reading Ease score	.46	.70
Propositional analysis	Information density	−.88	.36
	New concept density	−.28	.82
Expert judgment	Overall	−.60	.59
	Word difficulty	−.64	.53
	Syntactic difficulty	−.67	.53
	Information density	−.58	.61
	Coherence	.24	.85
	Logic	−.17	.89
	Clarity	−.39	.75
	Abstractness	−.58	.61
	Knowledge difficulty	−.62	.58
	Average of 8	−.50	.67

Possibly due to the extremely small sample size of the three source materials or the fact that the materials are very similar in the aspects assessed by the different indicators, none of the correlation coefficients of difficulty and performance turned out to be significant. In the case of the readability formula, the correlation coefficient came out positive, $r = 0.46$, indicating a peculiar situation where the more difficult a source material is, the better the performance in interpreting. Among all other indicators, overall information density assessed by propositional analysis has the highest negative correlation coefficient at $r = -0.88$, despite a lack of significance. However, new concept density and scores of interpreting performance only show an insignificantly low correlation at $r = -0.28$. Most of the expert judgment indicators show an insignificantly low to moderate correlation levels.

Despite a lack of significance, we tried to examine the trend of the use of different indicators in correctly predicting source material difficulty by ranking the different difficulty levels (see Table 8).

Table 8. A Ranking comparison of different difficulty levels and consecutive interpreting performance

	Readability	**Information density**	**New concept density**	**Expert judgment**	**Participant judgment**	**Interpreting performance**
Computex	3	2	3	1	1	2
Eula	2	1	1	2	2	1
PPP	1	3	2	3	3	3

Note. Difficulty level: 3 — most difficult; interpreting performance: 3 — worst.

Information density and new concept density

As can be seen in Table 8, the only indicator that shares the same ranking as the interpreting performance is information density. *PPP*, of which the interpretation renditions were consistently rated the poorest, was judged to be the most difficult by three indicators — information density, expert judgment, and participant judgment. This result seems to suggest that information density may be one of the most important factors that can affect interpreting performance. It is also possible that information density is the most perceivable difficulty factor.

Despite presenting a different result from that of information density, new concept density also shows that *Eula* is the easiest source material and thus corresponds to *Eula*'s best performance. As mentioned before, more new concepts result in longer reading time and poorer recall (Kintsch et al. 1975). In our study, *Computex* contains far more new concepts than *Eula* (with density levels at 82.89% vs. 38.54% respectively as shown in Table 3) but did not result in a much poorer performance in consecutive interpreting. This outcome can be interpreted in the following ways: Firstly, as a relatively easy text (judged by experts as the easiest, at 2.00 in overall difficulty as shown in Table 4), *Computex*'s abundance of new concepts did not seem to constitute a strong enough factor to affect the quality of interpreting. For example, *Computex*'s new concepts appear at one point as a rather long list of closely related computer terms (see A2 in Appendix), which, due to their use in everyday life, did not seem to cause much difficulty in the participants' interpreting performance. Secondly, recall, as a way to retrieve stored information, can be quite different from consecutive interpreting, which is often aided by notes taken during the process. All participants in our study chose to take notes and most of them considered note-taking necessary (3.75 out of a highest score of 5 as shown in Table 6) to produce a good performance. If the participants were asked to do recall instead of consecutive interpreting, it is quite possible that more information would be lost. Thirdly, by the time the interpreter starts interpreting, the new concepts may have already been integrated in the overall structure of the knowledge base built for the source material and thus do not cause much difficulty with their newness. It is possible that the result may be quite different with simultaneous interpreting, as interpreters need to deal with new information as it arises.

Expert judgment and participant judgment

As can be seen in Table 8, the rankings of the indicators other than information density do not correspond to the ranking of the interpreting performance. Also, they do not correspond to each other in most cases. The only exception is between expert judgment and participant judgment, which share the same ranking. However, a closer look at the results of expert judgment and participant judgment reveals that there is a rather big gap between the difficulty scores of *Computex* and *Eula* given by the experts (2.00 vs. 3.10 in overall judgment and 1.98 vs. 2.77 in the eight-category average score, shown in Table 4), while the difference between the two scores given by the participants is almost negligible (2.56 vs. 2.78, shown in Table 6). In further comparing these results to the interpreting performance scores, we see that the participants' judgment of difficulty seems to better reflect the outcome of their interpreting performance, despite the difference in ranking. The differences between the interpreting scores of *Computex* and *Eula* are minor in the proposition rating (47.19% vs. 49.53%), as well as in the participants' own evaluation of their performance (2.44 vs. 2.56, shown in Table 6).

It is interesting to note that experts made their judgment by reading the original texts of the source materials, while the participants judged input difficulty immediately after interpreting the source materials. The results mentioned above can be explained by saying that certain features of a source material may be emphasized when the assessment is based on the written text or when it is done without actually interpreting the material. When examining how each of the eight categories was rated by the experts, we see that *Computex* and *Eula* exhibit the most pronounced differences in the categories of "abstractness" and "knowledge difficulty," with a difference of over 1 point (out of 5) in both cases (see Table 4). It is quite possible that these two features are more elusive in nature and that judges may have a tendency to define them differently.

Aside from the issue of source material difficulty, it is interesting to note that the participants' evaluations of their own interpreting performance are quite accurate in the sense that they match the rating results in ranking (see Tables 6 and 8). Considering that the participants in this study were all students, this result makes pedagogical sense, in that learners of interpreting may be more actively engaged in the learning and evaluation process.

Readability

Among all the indicators, readability is the only one that does not involve information in its calculation. This may explain why the ranking of readability, using the readability formula, is the most dissimilar to that of the interpreting performance. *Computex* was judged to be the most difficult, while *PPP* was seen as easiest. Among the three source materials, *Computex* has the longest words (see Table 2), possibly due to the inclusion of a list of multisyllabic, computer-related terms in the second paragraph. However, these terms are very common in an educated adult's lexicon and, judging by the participants' interpreting performance, did not seem to cause much difficulty.

The conception and use of readability formulas have received much criticism for their limitations in reflecting some important factors pertaining to the text and the reader (Davison & Green 1988; Fulcher 1997). For example, important factors such as conceptual complexity, text organization, or reader's knowledge and strategies are ignored in the readability formulas (Fulcher 1997: 501). Despite the fact that the calculation based on a readability formula only reflects the difficulty of the surface elements of a text and not its "conceptual complexity" (Kintsch & Miller 1984: 221), the inclusion of word length and sentence length has its cognitive underpinnings in how information is processed. Word length can affect the speed of recognition of a word (Smith & Taffler 1992: 86) and may take longer to rehearse subvocally (Baddeley & Logie 1999). Chincotta and Underwood (1998) have demonstrated that in the case of professional simultaneous interpreters, the word-length effect is not completely eliminated even though subvocal rehearsal is partly or completely prevented. Therefore, the recall of shorter words in the target language is still expected to yield better results. Sentence length has also been suggested to cause an impact on "immediate processing capacity" and to affect the recall of words (Anderson & Davison 1988: 42; Smith & Taffler 1992: 86). These two factors seem to be particularly relevant to the process of interpreting, which, more than reading, seems to rely heavily on how fast information is processed and how working memory can be efficiently used.

It is interesting to note that *PPP*, with the longest average sentence length among the three source materials, is judged to be the easiest by the readability formula (see Table 2). In the Flesch Reading Ease formula, word length is apparently weighted more heavily than sentence length.[3] It is possible that in interpreting, sentence length, which often reflects sentence complexity and possibly denser information, may be a more relevant factor than word length in affecting how information is processed. In this sense, the element of sentence length in the formula, instead of the complete formula, may be a more reliable indicator of source material difficulty. However, it should be noted that not all long sentences are complex. A long sentence containing several coordinate clauses may not be as complex as a shorter sentence with an embedded relative clause. Likewise, a long sentence with a subordinating conjunction "because" may be easier to comprehend than two short sentences with a covert cause and effect relationship (Anderson & Davison 1988). As this distinction is usually not addressed in a readability formula, judgment of difficulty based on sentence length should not be blindly accepted without further analyzing the complexity of a sentence.

Another factor that may affect the usefulness of the readability formula in judging source material difficulty for the task of interpreting is its suitability for judging spoken materials. Past studies have not pointed to a consistent correlation between listenability and readability (Klare 1963, cited in Dubay 2004: 46). However, one of the very few studies in interpreting studies that used a readability formula in distinguishing experimental material difficulty has shown that sentence difficulty so judged had a significant effect on participants' performance in English to Mandarin Chinese simultaneous interpreting (Liu et al. 2004). However, it is quite possible that different modes of interpreting may produce different results because of the way information is processed. In simultaneous interpreting, the more linear information processing can result in more local comprehension of the input, while in consecutive interpreting, more global comprehension of the input is required. In this sense, it is possible that a source material judged to be more difficult by a readability formula (more difficult surface structure) can affect the performance in simultaneous interpreting more than in consecutive interpreting.

Like the other factors examined in this study, readability needs to be studied in a more controlled way using a greater variety of texts. Meanwhile, the use of readability formulas in interpreting, as in reading, should not be seen as a shortcut to solve the problems in selecting materials for pedagogic or testing purposes (Fulcher 1997: 510). In addition, the interpretation of the calculation results of readability formulas should be done with great caution.

General discussion and conclusion

The current study was motivated by the need for better control of examination standards of a certification exam for interpreters, since a more objective method of judging and controlling source material difficulty will greatly benefit this endeavor.

We used a combination of quantifiable (and thus more objective) measures that examined different aspects of the source material, such as word length, sentence length, information density and new concept density. We compared the results of these measures with the results of expert judgment. The difficulty levels assessed by these indicators were later compared with participants' performance in consecutive interpreting and their assessment of input difficulty.

Statistically, the indicators we studied have failed individually in predicting source material difficulty. The very small sample size of three source materials might have caused the lack of significance. It is also possible that the three source materials chosen for this study were all similar in the aspects examined by the indicators and thus could not be distinguished from each other in terms of their difficulty levels. The lack of statistical significance, however, does not necessarily suggest that the factors represented by these indicators are unrelated to source material difficulty. Indeed, many aspects in the results of this study show interesting trends upon which we can form hypotheses for further investigation.

We found that the difficulty levels determined by a readability formula based on word length and sentence length are not reliable. Word length may correspond generally to word complexity and abstractness (Flesch 1948: 226), but may not constitute a difficulty factor in consecutive interpreting where words and ideas are jotted down as notes to be expressed in a different language at a later time. When immediate processing of words is required, as in the task of simultaneous interpreting, it is possible that longer words may prove more difficult to process.

Sentence length, the other element in the readability formula chosen for this study, may be a relevant difficulty factor for the task of interpreting as the source material with the longest sentences in this study did elicit the poorest interpreting performance. As this particular material (*PPP*) is also considered to contain the densest information according to the ranking (see Table 8), further research employing a variety of texts is needed to determine if longer sentences with greater complexity, or denser information, or both make a source material difficult. It is also possible, as mentioned earlier, that longer sentences generally contain more information (Dam 2001). Naturally, this conclusion is only valid when redundancy of information is taken into consideration. However, our choice of measurement for the lack of redundancy (old information), i.e. new concept density, failed to correspond neatly with this consideration. While the source material with the lowest new concept density (*Eula*) turned out to receive the best score in interpreting performance and thus seemed to be the easiest to interpret, the one with the densest new concepts (*Computex*) did not seem to be the most difficult to interpret as its interpretation renditions did not receive the lowest score.

Although it is used for pedagogical and testing purposes in language education as well as in translation and interpreting, expert judgment has been shown to be unreliable (Alderson 1993; Fulcher 1997). In the present study, the pooled judgment of ten experts was used to judge source material difficulty. The result of expert judgment seems to correlate at no more than medium level with the scores of interpreting performance.

The literature has shown that the great discrepancy in expert judgment comes from the different aspects each individual emphasizes in a text (Fulcher 1997). We asked the experts in this study to also judge the source materials based on eight categories so as to allow a more guided judging experience. The overall judgment and category-guided judgment showed the same result in ranking the source materials but differed in the gaps between the scores given to the three materials. The differences in scores in the guided judgment are smaller than those in the overall judgment. It is possible that when judgment is done holistically and without guidelines, certain aspects in a source material may attract more attention and their effects may be skewed.

Individual differences such as previous experience, depth of background knowledge, and domain skills have constantly been shown to be an important factor in whether a text or a task is perceived to be easy or difficult (Anderson & Davison 1988). In our study, the graduate students who received lengthier and more intensive training interpreted the three source materials equally well, as can be seen in the lack of statistically significant differences in the scores of the three source materials. The performance by undergraduate students, on the other hand, showed statistically significant differences in two of the three source materials. Like reading, where the reader and the reading material interact to determine the success of the outcome (Anderson & Davison 1988; Bailin & Grafstein 2001), success in interpreting a speech depends not only on the material itself, but also on the interpreter. In this study, note-taking skills might be a particularly important factor in the student interpreters' performance in consecutive interpreting. While all of the participants in the study took notes, the relative efficiency and effectiveness of their note-taking could also be a confounding factor.

This study, being one of the pilot studies of a larger research project and exploratory in nature, yielded rather few results, due to its use of only three research materials and two very small and heterogeneous groups. Future studies incorporating a greater number and variety of materials or even materials specially designed for more controlled observations are needed for clearer results. The participation of a larger number of more homogenous participants would also be beneficial. Nonetheless, we hope that the results of this study have helped highlight an important research direction that has not received enough attention in interpreting studies.

Notes

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1. Taiwan had its first certification examinations for translators and interpreters in December 2007. The "Chinese and English Translation and Interpretation Competency Examinations" are administered by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education. Currently, only consecutive interpreting is tested in the interpretation competency examinations.

2. The Flesch Reading Ease formula is part of the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Tests, which also include the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level.

3. The Flesch Reading Ease formula reads as follows (Flesch 1948):

$206.835 - 84.6 \times \text{ASW}$ (average number of syllables per word) $- 1.015 \times \text{ASL}$ (average sentence length).

4. We would like to thank Shu-Pai Yeh, Chia-Ling Cheng and Hong-Yu Huang for their assistance in this study.

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Appendix: Experimental materials

Computex (A)

A1

Welcome back! I just checked into a lovely hotel in downtown Taipei, Taiwan after having spent fifteen hours on an airplane on a direct flight to Taipei from Amsterdam. The reason I am in Taipei obviously is Computex. This yearly conference was actually postponed from its original June 2003 timeframe due to the SARS threat in Asia.

A2

For those of you that aren't familiar with Computex let me briefly, by using keywords, describe what Computex is all about. Computex is all about computers, components, communications, peripherals, storage devices, software, etc. Basically a great opportunity for many of the Asian, but mostly Taiwanese and Chinese, manufacturers to show off their new products and technologies to attendees from around the world.

A3
Tomorrow morning at nine the conference starts with an opening speech by representatives from the organization behind Computex, CETRA, the China External Trade Development Council. With over 1200 exhibitors and close to 2500 booths I'm sure there will be lots to tell and to show you this week, so stay tuned and check back soon for a daily update.

Eula (B)
B1
I'm sure we've all been faced with installing a piece of software and having to accept a user agreement in order to complete the installation. Actually these user agreements have become so commonplace you'll be hard pressed to find software that does not require you to accept a user agreement. As a result I hardly give it much thought anymore and just click 'accept'.

B2
So why did I not bother to read them? Partly because these agreements usually don't limit me in the way I use the software. They're mostly meant to safeguard the developer's intellectual property. I'm fine with that, as I have no intention to use it other than how the developer intended.

B3
Because I mostly download my software instead of buying it in the store, it usually comes with a trial period, giving me time to evaluate it before I accept the user agreement. When I buy software in a store, things are different though. I obviously can't try the software out before I buy it, nor will the store give me a refund for software returns.

B4
So in fact, you have already accepted the user agreement when you decide to buy it. That's actually a violation of my rights as a consumer, I'd like to know what I agree to prior to buying the software and installing it, but most store policies do not allow it.

PPP (C)
C1
Today we will hear from colleagues who will not only share their experiences with us, but help us open our minds on ways to make PPP and BOT in Taiwan more efficient and effective than ever before. Perhaps I can start the ball rolling with three simple observations.

C2
You may look at PPP or BOT as a financing vehicle, a way to get the best from the private sector supporting the public, but other key stakeholders have very different perceptions — perceptions which could either slow down or even stop a project.

C3
For example, workers in the public sector may be concerned that bringing in the private sector in this way will automatically lead to job losses. They will not necessarily see that it is often only by PPP that you can develop new job-creating infrastructure which you otherwise could not have afforded.

C4
They may also think there is a loss of face. 'Are we not good at our jobs? Why do you need to bring in the private sector who just wants to get rich and go away?' These are issues you need to address for all PPP and BOT projects, not project by project as too many local and national governments do.

REPORT

Interpreter training and research in mainland China

Recent developments

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Against a background of favorable socio-economic conditions and the development of Translation Studies into an autonomous discipline, translation and interpreting programs are mushrooming in mainland China. This article reports on the development of interpreter training and research here in recent years through an overview of different types of training programs, curriculum designs, training models or paradigms, new textbooks and interpreter accreditation tests. Some salient examples of interpreting research in mainland China are also critically reviewed.

1. The development of Translation Studies into an autonomous discipline in mainland China

With rapid economic and social development, the need for high-quality interpreting services in China is surging, and interpreter training and research in mainland China have been booming, especially in the past decade. This development has occurred against the background of the gradual emergence of Translation Studies (including interpreting studies) as an autonomous discipline in China since the 1980s. By 2008, several top foreign studies universities in mainland China had established Graduate Institutes of Interpreting and Translation Studies. Among them were Beijing University of Foreign Studies (*Beijing Waiguoyu Daxue,* known as 'Beiwai'), Shanghai International Studies University ('Shangwai') and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies ('Guangwai'), all of which now offer both MA and PhD programs in translation and interpreting studies. In addition, nearly twenty other universities have set up Schools or Departments of Translation and Interpreting, offering mainly undergraduate programs in translation and interpreting.

Favorable socio-economic and institutional conditions have created a unique opportunity to improve the status of interpreter training programs. In 2000 interpreting was listed for the first time in the National Syllabus Guidelines as a compulsory course for all undergraduates majoring in English, and it is now taught as a two-semester course in the third or fourth year of most BA programs. In 2006 the Ministry of Education added a BA in Translation and Interpreting to its list of university degree 'majors' and authorized three universities to offer a BA in Translation and Interpreting (BTI). To date (early 2009), nineteen universities have been authorized to offer the BTI course, with an intake of 20–50 students per institution each year. In 2007 the National Degree Committee under the State Council authorized fifteen universities to launch a new Master's program in Translation and Interpreting (MTI), although in practice the two streams can and have been separated: nine of these institutions have been approved to launch the Masters in Interpreting (MI), about half of which already have students in first and/or second years.

This rapid development of translation and interpreting programs has generated a rising interest in relevant pedagogy and research, especially among university teachers, who are now grappling with such challenges as the design and development of syllabi and curricula, modes of training and teaching methods.

2. An overview of (translation and) interpreting programs

Currently, both translation and interpreting (T & I) are widely taught in universities and colleges in mainland China at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Training in interpreting falls into the following four broad categories:

1. *Translation and/or interpreting as an elective course*

Translation and interpreting are offered in some higher learning institutions as an elective course at undergraduate level for non-foreign-language majors.

2. *Translation and/or interpreting as compulsory courses*

All undergraduates majoring in English (and in several other foreign languages) are now required to take courses in translation and interpreting, usually in the third and fourth years. The main goal both of these compulsory courses and of the above-mentioned elective is to enhance foreign language competencies, traditionally listed as 'listening' (comprehension), speaking, reading, writing (听，说，读，写 'ting, shuo, du, xie') and recently expanded to include Translation ('yi', 译).

3. *Translation and/or interpreting as a 'specialization/orientation'*

In most foreign language departments, a T&I 'specialisation/orientation'(专业方向 'zhuanye fangxiang') track is offered to some postgraduate students who are selected for their aptitude to specialise in translation and interpreting. “Specializing” or “oriented” courses in translation and interpreting are offered alongside courses in linguistics and literature, usually comprising about one third of total class hours, and aimed chiefly at developing actual translation ability.

4. *Translation and/or interpreting as an autonomous subject/discipline*
Translation and interpreting are taught as an autonomous subject at undergraduate level at universities authorized to run the BTI program. T&I are also taught at (post)graduate level at many universities, including the fifteen approved to run the new MT (Masters in Translation) and MI (Masters in Interpreting) programs. In the case of Shangwai, these degrees are in addition to a separate Professional Diploma in Conference Interpreting (without an MA degree attached). In some cases these postgraduate programs and their degrees still come under Departments of English Language and Literature (see Section 4 below). In addition, Beiwai, Guangwai and Shangwai have been authorized to confer MA and PhD degrees in Translation Studies (in addition to the MTI degrees), within which a specialization in interpreting studies is possible.

Collectively, these programs add up to an independent and relatively complete system of programs in mainland China teaching translation and/or interpreting as a discipline, in which (core) T&I courses, aimed at cultivating students’ translation and/or interpreting skills, comprise over 40% of total class hours.

A significant step has been the gradual move towards institutional autonomy of the T&I programs, which had earlier been no more than a minor component of the syllabus in departments of foreign languages and literature. The independence of T&I programs may give a strong impetus to their development: institutional autonomy of T&I within academe may well bring more support from educational authorities at different levels, leading to better curricula. All in all, these developments may earn better recognition for translation and interpreting as professions distinct from other occupations requiring bilingual skills (see Gile 2008).

Two specific features of these T&I programs should be mentioned here. One is the distinction between “MA in T&I Studies” on the one hand, and “Masters in T&I” (and some other existing vocational interpreter training courses) on the other, the former being oriented towards academic research and the latter towards professional practice. Another feature is the specialization into translation or interpreting at postgraduate level, as seen with the creation of the MA in Interpreting Studies and Masters in Interpreting (MI). At the undergraduate level, translation and interpreting are not separated, with exceptions in one or two institutions.

3. Interpreter training: Curriculum design

At the postgraduate level, interpreter training programs in mainland China include the MA in Interpreting Studies which is more research-oriented, and those more oriented to professional practice, such as the new Masters in Interpreting (MI) and a few other, pre-existing programs.

A survey of three representative institutions in mainland China — namely the Graduate School of Translation and Interpreting (GSTI) at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), the Graduate Institute of Interpreting and Translation (GIIT) at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU), and the Graduate School of Interpreting and Translation (GSIT) at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) — shows a number of common features in their respective postgraduate interpreting studies and interpreter training programs, including the following four curriculum components, though the emphasis varies somewhat between institutions:

1. skills-based component, e.g. consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, sight translation;
2. subject-knowledge-based component, e.g. topic-based interpreting practice, specialized knowledge courses;
3. language-pair-specific component, almost always centering on Chinese–English;
4. professional-practice-oriented component, e.g. observation and appraisal of interpreting, mock conferences or internships.

In addition, interpreter training programs often include a course in written translation and/or research-oriented components (introduction to interpreting studies, basic theories of interpreting, introduction to translation theories, methodology of translation studies, etc.). The traditional MA programs also require students to complete an academic thesis, which is usually written towards the end of training.

In Table 1 we present the outline curriculum for the (vocationally-oriented) Masters in Interpreting (MI) proposed by the National MTI Commission for the MI in 2007.

As shown in Table 1, most of the compulsory credits proposed for the MI are in skills-oriented courses, including the foundation courses in interpreting, consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting, supplemented by topic-based interpreting practice and foundation courses in translation and translation theories. The additional options proposed for MI students (sight translation, mock-conference interpreting and specialized courses such as business interpreting, court interpreting or diplomatic interpreting) could be offered by any institution as desired, where feasible (i.e. depending on local faculty, demand, etc.).

Table 1. Curriculum template for Master of Interpreting (MI) in mainland China

Category of curriculum component	Courses	Semester	Credit value
Compulsory for Master courses in China	Political theory	1st	3
	Chinese language and culture	2nd	3
Compulsory for all MTI	Foundation course in interpreting	1st	2
	Foundation course in translation	1st	2
	General theory & practice of translation	3rd	2
Compulsory for MI (interpreting majors)	Consecutive interpreting	2nd	4
	Simultaneous interpreting	3rd	4
	Topic-based interpreting practice	1st	2
Additional options in MI (interpreting)	Second foreign language	1st	2
	Sight interpreting	2nd	2
	Mock-conference interpreting	4th	2
	Business interpreting/Court interpreting/Diplomatic interpreting	2nd	2
Internship	Internship	3rd	2

Towards the conclusion of the training, MTI students would be required to present an internship ('field practice') report, as a counterpart to the traditional thesis in academic MA programs.

Within the above template, the institutions authorized to launch the MTI (MT and/or MI) in 2007 have been left considerable freedom, and were expected to report back to the Ministry of Education in late 2009 or 2010, after the first student intake had graduated.

At undergraduate level, a general survey of universities offering the BTI program shows that such curricula consist of three components:

1. Enhancement of bilingual competence, including courses in both English (pronunciation and intonation, grammar, vocabulary, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and composition), and Chinese (Traditional Chinese, Modern Chinese).
2. Practical translation and interpreting, including the foundation course in interpreting, consecutive interpreting, topic-based interpreting practice, English/Chinese interpreting, translation practice, specialized translation and literary translation;
3. Knowledge-based courses in relevant domains, including a general overview of English-speaking countries, English culture, Chinese culture, English literature, and Chinese literature and linguistics.

A striking change in curriculum design for interpreting has been the shift from topic-based to skills-based teaching systematically proceeding from short to full consecutive at the undergraduate level to full consecutive and simultaneous interpreting at the postgraduate level. Some schools also emphasize the specificity of interpreting from and into Chinese. The rationale can be attributed to three factors:

1. *Students' level in their B language* — Whereas European schools in particular can draw on a large pool of bilingual or even multilingual trainees, China does not possess such an asset, and students are usually in need of language enhancement, especially in their B language.
2. *The need to interpret into the B language*. In contrast to the Western tradition of favouring interpreting into the A language (with little or no 'retour' on some markets), interpreters in China are virtually always required to interpret both ways, placing higher demands on their B language.
3. *Perceived major linguistic/structural differences*. Perceived differences between Chinese and Western languages are believed by some schools to justify a curriculum component specifically targeting language-(pair)-specific problems.

4. Examples of post-graduate interpreter training programs in leading institutions

There seems to be some variation in the way different institutions are implementing the MTI in this trial period, while other, often multiple courses in interpreting continue to be run in the same institutions, in different departments and at different levels. Here we present some of the better-known postgraduate-level conference interpreting programs (some but not all of which are now 'MI' programs) which have trained most of the graduates now working on the local or national markets, either freelance or with governmental or international agencies.

These programs have local or institutional specificities as well as some common features. For example, most have a two-stage entrance exam in which candidates are short-listed after a first test (including tasks like composition, translation, gap-filling (Cloze), summary/gist and sometimes a general-knowledge quiz or reading comprehension test), then finally selected based on an interview with improvised speeches and retelling in both languages, designed to test communicative and public speaking skills, language proficiency, and aptitude for interpreting (some programs specify this to include intellectual curiosity, personality, etc.). But they also differ in a number of points, as will be seen from these brief summaries.

4.1 Beijing University of Foreign Studies ('Beiwai')

The tradition of interpreter training in Beiwai may be traced back to 1979, with the establishment of the UN Training Program for Interpreters and Translators, which turned out 98 interpreters out of a total of 217 graduates. Beiwai still enjoys the reputation of being the *alma mater* of these interpreters, most of whom work for the UN and other international organizations, Chinese government agencies, or freelance (including some who work as instructors in interpreter training courses overseas, such as the Monterey Institute of International Studies in the US and the University of Westminster in London).

After the UN-funded program was discontinued in 1995, Beiwai continued to train interpreters in a newly established Graduate School of Translation and Interpreting (GSTI), the first home-grown program of its kind in mainland China, offering two-year professional training in conference interpreting at MA level.

Beiwai's distinctive features include (i) a large student intake — last year approximately 80 candidates were admitted for postgraduate interpreter training — and high pass rate (all trainees completing the course obtain a qualification); and (ii) provision for other language combinations than English; since 2007, Beiwai has been offering an 'MTI Plus' in Chinese–English plus optional French, German or Russian.

4.2 Shanghai International Studies University ('Shangwai')

The Graduate Institute of Interpreting and Translation (GIIT) of Shanghai International Studies University was established in 2003. It offers a two-year Professional Diploma in Conference Interpreting and is the only program in mainland China recognized by the AIIC Training Committee in 2005 as "fully meeting AIIC criteria"; most of its interpreting instructors are AIIC members. The program takes about ten trainees per year. Towards the end of first year there is an eliminatory mid-point screening test, and at the end of the second year, a graduation (diploma) examination, including both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in both directions is held with a panel of external and internal examiners including representatives of the interpretation services of the UN and European Union. The EU's DG-SCIC supports the program and since 2007 has sent grant students to GIIT and UIBE (see below). Students go on internships every year at UN agencies.

With the addition of an MTI program in interpreting in 2008, GIIT is currently running both a government-sponsored (MI) and an independent, 'special project' (Professional Diploma) course.

BUFS-GSTI ('Beiwai') and SISU-GIIT ('Shangwai') were the first two Chinese training schools to join CIUTI, in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

4.3 University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) ('Jingmaoda')

In the 1980s, UIBE began sending teachers to Brussels for training, and in 2001 UIBE's SIS (School of International Studies, formerly the Department of English) and DG-SCIC jointly established an EU-China Interpreter Training Center on their Beijing campus, leading to a two-year MA program in conference interpreting (consecutive and simultaneous) in 2004. SCIC representatives are present at the admission and at the final exam, as well as the mid-term (eliminatory) screening test at the end of first year.

A distinctive feature of the UIBE program is its use of the SCIC method, with all classes being team-taught by (at least) one native speaker of each language. Instructors are all active and trained professional interpreters with teaching experience. Since 2007, the Center has accepted European scholarship students (one or two per year) selected by its EU counterpart.

4.4 Guangdong University of Foreign Studies ('Guangwai')

Since the late 1970s, Guangwai has offered courses in interpreting to undergraduate students in the English Department. In 1993, cooperation with the British Council in interpreting curriculum design and instructor training led to the establishment of the Department of Translation and Interpreting, the first of its kind in mainland China. In 2005 the Graduate School of Interpreting and Translation (GSIT) was formally established, drawing upon the experience of the previous decade.

Alongside other programs at different levels (including MI and BA in T&I), Guangwai offers a three-year MA program in conference interpreting, which covers both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. This program takes about 10 students a year, and passing-out rate is high (all trainees completing the course and the graduation thesis obtain the MA degree).

The program in Guangwai features an admission test of applicants' proficiency and an aptitude test for interpreting, a mid-term screening test and a graduation exam (with no external examiners, however). Systematic curriculum design is a typical feature of the program in Guangwai. Four curriculum components are designed to train the different aspects of interpreting competence, with distinct foci on interpreting skills, interpreting topics and extra-linguistic knowledge, language-pair-specific transference and professional practice. In 2007, the curriculum was designated a 'National Quality Curriculum' ('guojia jingpin kecheng') by the Ministry of Education.

Guangwai has been a leading promoter of the MTI project and its President currently chairs the national commission for the MTI.

4.5 Xiamen University ('Xiada')

Xiada began offering interpreting courses to undergraduate English majors in the mid-1980s, culminating in 1991 with the creation of its three-year MA Interpreting Program within the College of Foreign Languages & Cultures. Its main overseas partners and contacts have been the British Council (in the 1990s), the Asia-Link Program of the EU (in 2004) and other schools, including Monterey and Westminster (London). Alongside a newly-launched MI (20 students), Xiada continues to offer its MA in Interpreting within the Department of English Language and Literature (8–10 students).

The curriculum includes consecutive and simultaneous interpreting (128 class hours over 2 semesters in each), frequent mock conferences with SI, as well as basic translation theories, research methods, discourse for translators and general linguistics (64 class hours each over a single semester). Final certification is granted on successful completion of all required courses, a graduation thesis and an oral defence. No foreign students had been admitted until 2009, but parallel instructors (native speakers of English and Chinese) are used for mock-conference feedback.

The Xiada program is known for its Xiada Interpreter Training Model, presented in Lin et al. (1999),[2] one of six sets of interpreting coursebooks published by members of its staff (e.g. also Lei & Chen 2006). This model was the first in mainland China to advocate a skills-led (against the then prevalent theme-oriented) syllabus as the cornerstone of interpreter training. Its core postulate is that interpreter training should be based on the cultivation of skills (analytical listening, working memory, public speaking, note-taking, etc.) and the nurturing of professionalism, with particular emphasis on the preparatory phase (knowledge and language skills) and quality control.

These five institutions are among the nine now approved to launch the MI (Masters in Interpreting) following the nationwide guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education. All these institutions are still experimenting with the new MI course in parallel to their existing postgraduate interpreter training programs.

5. Textbooks for interpreter training

One possible difference between practices in mainland China and the West is that, at least at undergraduate level, interpreter training courses within the national educational system are encouraged to use approved textbooks. As far as the authors were able to ascertain, textbooks are specified for almost all undergraduate courses in interpreting, and course instructors usually go by the book; whereas textbooks are only sometimes used in postgraduate programs: A common practice in teaching is to utilize audio and visual materials taped in authentic conferences or downloaded from the internet along with some materials from textbooks.

Close to one hundred textbooks on 'interpreter training' have been published in China since the late 1970s, but most are designed mainly for self-study applicants to accreditation tests (see below) while some target specialized domains, such as business or escort interpreting. Among those adapted for classroom use, our information suggests (see also Hu 2008), that some textbooks — in particular: Wu (1995), Mei (1996), Lin et al. (1999), Zhong et al. (2006, 2007, 2008), Lei & Chen (2006) and Wang (2006) — are used more widely than others.[3]

The textbooks fall into two broad paradigms (Hu 2008: 30): topic-based (organized around subject-matter frequently met in interpreting) and skills-based (organized around interpreting skills). Typical examples of topic-based textbooks include Wu's *Oral Interpretation: A Course Book* and Mei's *An Advanced Course of Interpretation*. Skills-based resources include Lin's *Interpreting for Tomorrow*, Lei & Chen's *Challenging Interpreting: A Coursebook of Interpreting Skills* and Zhong's textbook series *A Coursebook/Foundation Coursebook of Interpreting between English and Chinese* and *A Coursebook for Simultaneous Interpreting between English and Chinese*. Wang's *Conference Interpreting: Theories, Skills and Practice* is designed as a textbook for a new MA course in interpreting theory and practice, and comprises four major parts: a simple introduction to interpreting theories, an explanation of interpreting skills, selected authentic conference speeches for practice and tips for aspiring professionals.

6. Interpreter accreditation

As early as 1995, the Shanghai Municipal Government launched a test-based accreditation scheme entitled the Shanghai Interpreters Accreditation (SIA), which has been widely recognized by business employers, especially in the eastern provinces of China, as a valuable complementary proof of English proficiency for non-English majors. Thousands take the tests every year, preparing with the help of targeted textbooks (e.g. Mei 1996). In 2003, in view of the rapid development of translation and interpreting as a profession in mainland China, the Ministry of Personnel created a test-based, multi-level national accreditation system, the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI), which in-house civil service T & I personnel are required to pass at specified levels for promotion purposes. Several other accreditation tests have also been created in some economically developed provinces and by some universities with experience in interpreter training, such as the National Accreditation Examinations for Translators and Interpreters (NAETI) developed by Beijing University of Foreign Studies and the English Interpreting Certificate test at Xiamen University, but these have not been as influential as the SIA or CATTI.

The testing methods used in the CATTI and SIA interpreter accreditation tests may be of interest to an international readership.[4]

The CATTI test includes two stages: (1) a listening comprehension test consisting of multiple choice questions, gap filling and summarising; and (2) practical interpreting, including consecutive and simultaneous from B into A and from A into B.

Candidates for SIA accreditation are required to pass similar tests, with some differences: listening, reading comprehension and 'translation after listening' in stage 1, followed in stage 2 by public speaking and consecutive interpreting (B into A and A into B).

Interpreter accreditation tests in mainland China, as represented by CATTI and SIA, mainly assess candidates' interpreting competence, including their language competence (especially in their B language) as tested in stage 1 and interpreting skills as tested in stage 2. However, interpreter accreditation must not only assess the potential interpreter's linguistic competence (including bilingual competence, extra-linguistic knowledge and interpreting skills), but also their psycho-physiological competence, profession-related competence and professional ethics (Wang 2007; see also Chen J. 2003).

7. Published interpreting research in mainland China: An overview

7.1 Journal articles in interpreting studies

A topic search of the China Academic Journals Full-text Database[5] reveals that interpreting studies has been growing fast in recent years, as evidenced by the number of published journal articles (see Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, there has been a steady increase from the small number of publications in the 1980s to the 161 articles published in the 1990s and as many as 839 articles between 2000 and 2007.

A closer look at the research topics covered in the journal articles reveals that about three quarters of all publications focus on four different topic areas; namely, interpreter training (30%), interpreting techniques (19.4%), general theory of interpreting (15%) and quality and accreditation (10.5%). Other topics include language transference in interpreting (9%), the interpreter's role (4.7%), cross-cultural issues (3.4%), evaluation and criticism of interpreting practice (2.9%), the interpreting market (2.7%) and comparisons of translating and interpreting (2.4%).

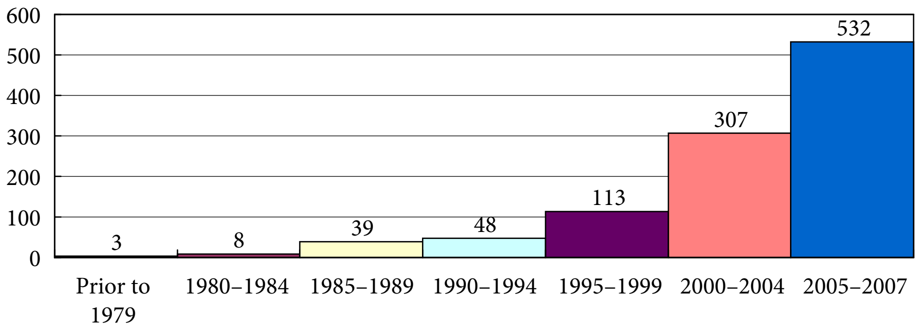

Figure 1. Journal articles in interpreting studies (until 2007)

It is important to note that the main body of many of these articles consists of introductions, reviews or borrowings of theories or research results from the West. In other words, while Chinese researchers are actively seeking to learn from colleagues in the West, they have yet to explore and develop issues and research themes more specific to interpreting in China. One topic worth noticing is "language transference in interpreting" (9%), which may imply that researchers in China pay special attention to the issue of language specificity in interpreting.

7.2 The National Conference on Interpreting

A major event in the development of interpreting research in mainland China was the launching in 1996 of the National Conference on Interpreting, which soon became a major biannual gathering bringing together interpreting teachers, researchers and practitioners from China's mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao. Since 2002 the event has become an international forum with invited keynote speakers from abroad. The first seven conferences (at Xiamen, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou) have yielded a total of 467 papers. Recent themes have included "Professionalisation in interpreting: international experiences and developments in China" (5th Conference, Shanghai, 2004); "Towards quality interpretation in the 21st century" (6th conference, UIBE, Beijing, 2006), and "Interpreting in China: new trends and challenges" (7th Conference, Guangzhou 2008). Proceedings of the 5th (Chai & Zhang 2006) and 6th conferences (Wang & Wang 2008) have been published, while the proceedings of the 7th are currently in press.

7.3 Books on interpreting studies by Chinese authors

An encouraging sign of the improving status of interpreting studies in the Chinese academic landscape is the inclusion of four monographs on interpreting in the Translation Theory and Practice Series published by the China Translation and Publishing Corporation (CTPC): Bao (2005), Liu (2005), Yang (2005) and Cai (2007).[6]

Bao Gang's (2005) book was the first monograph in interpreting studies written by a Chinese author (the first edition was published in 1998). Taking the interpretive theory (or 'theory of sense') as his theoretical foundation, Bao systematically analyzed the stages of listening comprehension, memorizing, note-taking and translating in the process of interpreting, with a special focus on training and (in Chapter 1) a summary of research methods in interpreting studies.

Liu Heping is a representative researcher of interpreter training in mainland China. Her book (Liu 2005) offers an overview with commentary on interpreter training programs here, including teaching goals, syllabi, textbooks and teaching methods.

Yang Cheng-shu, Director of the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation (GITIS) of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan, is another representative researcher in the field of interpreter training. Her book (Yang 2005) is in two parts: the first focusing on interpreting courses for foreign language students and the second covering professional interpreter training programs. The book offers a carefully designed framework for training with meticulously presented pedagogical case studies.

Cai Xiaohong is an active researcher on quality issues in interpreting. Her book (Cai 2007) provides an overview of research into interpreting quality assessment in China and overseas, with chapters on quality assessment in interpreting practice, training and research.

In addition to this breakthrough on the academic scene, recent years have seen a growing number of papers in international journals by Chinese authors, or on issues related to interpreting with Chinese.

Despite the considerable progress made in recent years, however, interpreting research in China still suffers from some weaknesses, particularly in terms of methodology. Many journal articles are based on random experiences from practice in the field or even on sheer speculation. There is a lack of empirical studies and data-based studies (see Wang & Mu 2008). Researchers still need to learn more about the latest developments in interpreting studies outside China. Another weakness is that most researchers are former foreign language teachers who now teach interpreting, but have little or no interpreting experience.

8. Looking ahead: Challenges and opportunities

While we may applaud the progress achieved in interpreter training in mainland China, we also need to be aware of the significant challenges which remain. The first challenge is how to differentiate the training goals/objectives of different programs. As we have reported above, interpreting is now taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate (MA and MI) levels; as a major in some institutions and as a "specialization/orientation" for English majors in others; courses in interpreting are compulsory in some curricula, elective/optional add-ons in others; and interpreting is combined to varying degrees with training in text translation. Currently, interpreting is taught as a major in at least four different kinds of programs: BA in Translation and Interpreting, MA in Interpreting Studies, Master of Interpreting (MI), and (at Shangwai and UIBE) a Professional Diploma without official academic status. How to differentiate their curriculum design towards serving different training goals is a challenge that must be confronted.

The second challenge is the lack of qualified staff. Presently only a few institutions (mostly those listed in Part 4) can boast instructors qualified to train interpreters. Typically, these instructors are active professional interpreters with MA-level academic qualifications. But in other institutions, most trainers are former foreign language teachers with little or no interpreting experience, and the language-teaching tradition remains strong in their pedagogical approach. In order for interpreter training in mainland China to improve, more training of trainers is needed.

The third challenge is the integration of valuable international experience into the training concepts applied in mainland China. In developed markets, the AIIC model has been a powerful tool for maintaining high-level professionalism. However, rather than assume that institutions in mainland China should adopt it, we must carefully consider whether it suits emerging conference interpreting markets like China (see Gile 2006). Some specific issues to be taken into consideration in the Chinese market include the need to interpret into a B language, the language specificity of Chinese, and the highly diversified needs of this market.

This paper has presented a general overview of the development of interpreter training and research in mainland China in recent years. The rising interpreting market, the boom in training programs and the blossoming of interpreting research all point to the potential for extensive further development, but also to new challenges facing colleagues in China — from the design and implementation of training programs to the improvement of quality in interpreting research. One way of coping with these challenges will be to communicate with the rest of the world and learn from the experience of others, with a view to greater cooperation and better recognition — all of which need not mean blindly copying authoritative "models". This paper represents a modest encouragement to this end.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1. CIUTI: International Permanent Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters (www.ciuti.org).

2. See the review in this volume.

3. Two of these — Lin et al. (1999) and Zhong et al. (2006) — are reviewed in this volume.

4. For a detailed description of the CATTI and SIA tests, see Wang (2006: 358–371).

5. The China Academic Journals Full-text Database is the largest searchable full-text and full-image interdisciplinary Chinese journals database in the world. It forms part of the CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), a national project aimed at knowledge sharing throughout China and the world.

6. Three of the four authors, namely, the late Bao Gang, Liu Heping and Cai Xiaohong did post-graduate studies at ESIT (Ecole supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs, Université de Paris III (now Paris-Dauphine).

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Reviewed by Chen Yanjun

Interpreting for Tomorrow, a two-volume course book respectively intended for students and teachers, is the result of a four-year joint project approved by the State Education Commission of China (now Ministry of Education) and Department for International Development of the UK, with interpreting as one of the components. It was first published by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 1999 and has been reprinted at least four times.

The project was started in the autumn of 1994 by the Department of Foreign Languages (now College of Foreign Languages and Cultures), Xiamen University, supported academically by the University of Westminster. Twenty-four third-year undergraduates majoring in English were selected each year, successively in 1994, 1995 and 1996, to be "guinea pigs" in the experimental interpreting course, on the basis of which the course book evolved. The project team consisted of six Chinese teachers and one foreign expert. It is interesting to notice the mix of backgrounds among team members, as introduced in the preface: English language expert; translation-and-interpretation professor; translation-and-interpretation professor with field experience; interpreting instructor, trained in language/literature and translation; listening-and-oral-English teacher turned interpreting instructor; interpreting instructor academically *and* professionally trained in interpreting. This mix is all the more noteworthy in view of the evolution of the way interpreting has come to be seen as a profession. In many ways, it also determines the pedagogical approach of the book: skill-led and theme-based, rooted in discourse analysis, text lingustics and intercultural communication, with a trace of the historical legacy of language teaching, though the compilers have tried to break free from it.

Following an informative orientation, the textbook itself offers five units (the first four on consecutive and last one on simultaneous interpreting), as well as five appendices for the student's book (SB) and reference answers for the teacher's book (TB).

The orientation part is the jewel in the crown. Both SB and TB start with "An overview of the course structure," in which the objectives and framework are set.

A "Skill progression chart" provides a helpful tool for teachers to evaluate pedagogic results and for students to monitor their own progress. The success of a career very much depends on the respect and passion for the profession, and the compilers demonstrate their appreciation of this in their "Introduction to professional interpreting," in which they elaborate on its history, linguistic and extra-linguistic requirements (regrettably, however, with no mention of the qualification of teachers), different modes of interpreting (though in a rather narrow sense and not exhaustively)[1] and professional codes of conduct. To showcase the attractions of the profession, a BBC program is also included (taped) in which a correspondent interviews an interpreter "at the shoulder of history".

In addition to all the corresponding parts, seven extra pages in TB are exclusively devoted to the theory and practice of interpreting and interpreter training. Daniel Gile's comprehension formula, which describes the relationship between knowledge of language, extra-linguistic knowledge and analysis, is explained and expanded into what is repeatedly referred to as the XiaDa (the Chinese abbreviation for Xiamen University) Model for Interpreter Training, on which the edifice of the course book is built.

The five units of the textbook itself are themed under the following headings: sociology, economic development, international exchanges, politics and diplomatic affairs, and international relations. The rationale is self-evident: expand the students' extra-linguistic knowledge as advocated by the XiaDa Model, and indeed, by trainers everywhere.. Within the five units are 22 lessons structured along the same lines: introduction of relevant theory (or theories), skills to be mastered, texts targeted at the skills being discussed and follow-up texts for interpreting practice. Such a structure is presumably intended to answer the questions of why it is necessary to train the skills, what skills need to be trained, how the skills can be trained and how they can be integrated into actual interpreting activity. The last lesson of each unit is designed to review the unit and allow teachers and students to evaluate teaching/learning against the skill progression chart.

Unit One (Lessons 1–5) first explains *Memory* and concludes that what is needed in interpreting is short-term memory (SB, p. 10). Memory skills mentioned include encoding, storage, retrieval, categorization, generalization, comparison, mnemonics and aids to memory. *The object of interpreting*, or what is to be interpreted, is made clear with emphasis on meaning (SB) at the discourse level (TB). *The process of interpreting* is unfolded as listening, understanding, analyzing and reconstructing. The role of *public speaking* is highlighted, focusing on voice projection, speed of delivery and eye contact (SB) supplemented by more tips on style, delivery and behaviour (TB). The interpreting of figures is discussed for the first time in Lesson 2 and covered in subsequent chapters as well.

Unit Two (Lessons 6–10) discusses discourse analysis, comprehension and knowledge acquisition, underscoring the complementarity and interplay between the three. Emphasis is also put on task-oriented knowledge (e.g. conference preparation, SB, p.45) and long-term knowledge build-up (TB, p.35). The core skill in this unit is note-taking, the "objective of which is to supplement memory efficiently" (SB, p.40). While encouraging individual note-taking styles, it also shares some common principles such as verticality, use of symbols and abbreviations and avoidance of the use of shorthand. For further illustration, two brief examples are given as a case study.

The title of Unit Three (Lessons 11–15) is *Pragmatic skills: paraphrasing and coping tactics*. It emphasizes the importance of paraphrasing for student interpreters, provides three rules to follow, and suggests changing parts of speech or sentence structure, or breaking long sentences into several short ones. Other tactics include reconstruction, skipping and asking. Quality and performance criteria are established; namely fidelity to speakers, fidelity to listeners and fidelity to clients. While it contributes by adding the new dimension of clients to the criteria, the topic is not entirely in keeping with the title of the unit.

Two areas are addressed in Unit Four: Professional ethics, focusing on codes of conduct; and cross-cultural communication, focusing on cultural awareness. The skills to be trained at this stage are: summarizing through analysis, sight translation (regarded as a skill rather than a mode of interpreting) and the interpreting of culturally loaded idioms, humour and jokes, which are admittedly difficult. Recommendations are provided for dealing with translatables and untranslatables: literal translation, literal translation with notes, meaning translation ("translation" is the word originally used in the book), but also skipping or apologizing honestly.

Unit Five (Lessons 21–22), a very brief introduction to simultaneous interpreting (SI), is left at the discretion of teachers as an option. It gives an account of SI, explains the SI process, compares it with consecutive interpreting (CI) and concludes, rather controversially, that the quality of SI can be below what is required in CI. The skills to be mastered are: *shadowing* to build up "powers of retention" and multi-tasking capacity; '*sight interpreting*', which is defined as SI with text and the combination of SI and sight translation (TB, p.127);[2] delaying, reconstructing, "using the boothmate's help", which are summarized as *coping tactics in comprehension*; superordinates, paraphrasing, explaining and mimicking the sound, which are summarized as *coping tactics in reconstruction*.

After revisiting professionalism, the course book ends with five appendices, including lists of the main Chinese organizations, UN agencies, reference books (dictionaries and interpreting-related monographs), countries of the world in alphabetical order and the Code of Conduct for Public Service Interpreters in Britain.

The course book opens a new window to interpreter training in China and contributes by setting a new training framework in contrast to the past. It squarely rests on the latest results of interpreting studies sourced from many neighbouring disciplines, which helps to explain the format and the emphasis on training professional skills rather than linguistic skills as such. In this sense, it marks an important paradigm shift in the Chinese interpreting research/teaching community from the language-based approach to a skill-led one. Since its publication in 1999, many new textbooks, some perhaps with new perspectives, have found their way into bookstores and/or classrooms, totaling 181 varieties in 2007 in China (Tao 2008: 154). Still, it is justifiable, and not excessive, to describe this particular work as a milestone. Notwithstanding the occasional ambiguous explanation, disputable use of concepts or inappropriate exercises, this set of books truly charts the route to interpreting, including the confusions that may occur along the way, some of which have yet to be cleared up even today.

Having said that, the reviewer must also point to some basic flaws. To begin with, the objectives of the book are all too general. The student's book states its objective as "to train you to be ready to take your place in the international community of interpreters" (p. xiii) while the teacher's book sees the goal as enabling students to learn "how to extend their knowledge on their own and how to behave professionally" (p. xv).

The XiaDa Model is intended for interpreter training, but what it illustrates is the relations and interaction between linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge, skills and professionalism, the combination of which is expected to lead to good interpreting. It rightly points out *what* skills need to be trained and *why*, but falls short of charting out an effective way of solving the long-standing problem of *how* the skills should be trained.

It is important to identify skills, and even more important to distinguish preliminary skills from more sophisticated ones and structure them in a progressive way that takes into consideration the cognitive and psychological process of learning. The training in this book, however, starts straight away with memory, without preparing students to listen to messages and identify them. The sequencing of the interpreting exercises is sometimes puzzling; thus, Lesson One offers exercises not only from English into Chinese (B-A, one passage), but also from Chinese into English (A-B, two passages)![3] While the inclusion of public speaking in Lesson Two is reasonable, one wonders why it is not preceded by any memory training which might be expected to instill the appropriate habits of speaking. Again, in Unit Five, simultaneous interpreting with text is introduced without any training in SI proper. The structure as such is liable to become problematic when the speeches get more and more complicated.

The weight of different skills in the mix is another issue. Seven out of twenty-two lessons deal with the interpreting of figures, which seems disproportionate, even though figures are notoriously difficult due to the different counting units in English and Chinese. In the same vein, two out of four note-taking lessons are devoted to describing eight types of symbols, with no mention of what to take down, how to analyze, how to mark different information units, how to position the notes on the page, how to deal with the lag between note-taking and continuously unfolding meaning units. The disproportionate weight given to this specific skill is very likely to give the misleading impression that note-taking is only about symbols and abbreviations.

The selection of speeches ("texts" in the book) is not given sufficient attention. Seleskovitch and Lederer (1995: 53) emphasize the oral nature of speeches and recommend three criteria to "classify difficulty of texts and to regulate the progression from one level of difficulty to the next", namely "familiarity with the topic, sophistication of the style and nature of the speech — narrative, argumentative, descriptive or emotional". Most of the texts included in the book are in formal written language, without much consideration for the variation in difficulty. Many are excerpts of long articles, which are then segmented for interpreting. It is not wrong to segment them, since speakers do sometimes stop after a sentence or a few sentences, but a complete speech with natural opening, development full of twists and turns in reasoning and a convincing conclusion would be better for developing students' concentration, memory and analytical ability.

It is nice to see the notes on selecting additional texts (TB, p. 27), but these are less helpful than they might be: they tell the reader where to find texts but do not discuss criteria for selecting them, which is in fact of central importance to training.

Given the three points mentioned above, the shortcomings may well be offset by adequate instructions in TB and/or didactic competence as well as professional experience on the part of instructors. Unfortunately, both conditions are often missing. A survey of 120 attendees at a 2004 workshop for interpreter trainers found that only 15% had interpreting experience (Liu 2008: 147). Lederer (2008: 109) finds the fact that "a number of schools still hire language teachers to teach translation[4] [...] problematic because to teach procedural knowledge, [they have] to master the know-how themselves." Moreover, considering that conference interpreting in China is a young profession, appropriate and adequate instructions in TB become all the more crucial. But it seems that the TB is not given its due role to play: much space is given to language issues and additional texts, mostly in written style with a list of words and expressions. It sends a misleading signal and very much tempts instructors to risk going astray into language teaching.

In addition, more rigour is needed in terms of language, logic and reasoning. The dos and don'ts meant for voice projection, which is about breath control, resonance and postures, seem more applicable to delivery (SB, p. 25). Sight interpreting and behaving professionally (e.g. confidentiality) are put under the heading of skills (SB, p. 27). Liaison interpreting is among the types of interpreting in SB (p. 3) but is omitted (intentionally?) in TB (p. 2). Liaison interpreting is described as being “unlike conference interpreting in many ways, and draws on a different set of personal skills” (TB, p. 23), but what are these different skills? How can they be trained? Students are immediately plunged into exercises before these questions are answered (in fact they are never answered).

In spite of all these shortcomings, *Interpreting for Tomorrow* is undoubtedly a stepping stone to more systematic training of professional interpreters. But the basic problem remains: how can a textbook be kept up to date and reconciled with the intrinsic orality of interpreting? If textbooks on interpreting are considered necessary and desirable, these challenges need to be addressed.

Notes

1. Under the heading of “types of interpreting” in SB are consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, sight interpreting and liaison interpreting (p. 3), while under the same heading in TB we find CI, SI and sight translation (p. 2).

2. Notice that sight interpreting is introduced immediately after shadowing, which seems to imply that it is a preliminary skill to prepare students for SI proper.

3. The vast majority of interpreting trainees have Mandarin as their A language, although in recent years a few English-A students have applied for training, one or two of whom have now graduated.

4. Lederer originally uses *translation* “on the understanding that the word also applies to interpreting” (2008: 108).

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Zhong Weihe, Zhao Junfeng, Mo Aiping and Zhan Cheng (Eds.).
A coursebook of interpreting between English and Chinese. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2006. 2 vols. 227 + 284 pp. ISBN 978-7-04-017506-6, 978-7-04-018794-6.

Reviewed by Zhou Xiaofeng

This book is one of the three interpreting course books compiled by Zhong Weihe and his colleagues at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. As suggested in the preface, it is not intended to be used for training professional interpreters *per se*, but rather for undergraduate- and postgraduate-level English language or translation programs that have an interpreting module. Nonetheless, the course book seems to be a very ambitious enterprise, evidenced not least by its sheer volume.

The authors promise many things: a comprehensive walkthrough of interpreting skills, a wide range of practical exercises, and a rich repository of real-life speech notes to help familiarize students with a broad spectrum of topics, all put together within the framework of professional interpreter training. The question then is to what extent these promises have been effectively delivered.

To answer the question, a quick rundown of the book's content is a good starting point. The book comprises two volumes, each divided into 15 chapters. Each chapter features three sections: a brief explanation about a skill or a theory of interpretation, followed by exercises and practice materials, and then by sample translations of texts used in the previous section. Topics covered include memory (Chapters 1 and 2), public speaking (Chapter 3), note-taking (Chapters 4 to 6), liaison interpreting (Chapter 7), interpreting numbers (Chapter 8), identifying the gist (Chapter 9), discourse analysis (Chapter 10), register (Chapter 11), paraphrasing (Chapters 12 and 13), vulnerable elements (Chapter 14), general qualities of interpreters (Chapter 16), coherence (Chapter 17), anticipation (Chapters 18 and 19), varieties of languages (Chapter 20), preparation before an assignment (Chapter 21), cross-cultural communication (Chapter 22), coping strategies (Chapters 23 and 24), and simultaneous interpreting (Chapters 26 to 29). Three chapters (15, 25 and 30) are devoted to revision and tests. The book also comes with two CD-ROMs containing MP3-format audio recordings of the practice materials.

The authors deserve applause for adopting a skill-based framework, i.e. organizing the training around interpreting skills, instead of going down the topic-based path, as do many of the most popular textbooks in China's mainland. Arguably, the purpose of interpreter training is better served by sensitizing students to the basic skills and principles of the profession, rather than walking them through endless texts and jargons about different topics, hoping that one day they will miraculously learn how to interpret everything. As explained above, an important feature of this book is that it provides not only a long list of must-knows, but also matched exercises that are supposed to help students practice the newly acquired skills. Equally important is the order of pedagogical progression built into the sequence of chapters, although cramming both CI and SI into one book (which is designed to be taught over a period of one year) may seem overly ambitious to some people, including this reviewer.

While the overall design of the book looks fine, there are a couple of structural deficiencies that need to be highlighted. To begin with, unhelpful overlap and duplication undermines the quality of the book. For instance, the issue of difficult accents is dealt with in three separate chapters by three different contributors: Chapter 11, p. 161; Chapter 14, pp. 201–202; and Chapter 20, pp. 58–59. Similarly, the grammatical differences between the Chinese and English languages are explained at least three times (Chapter 9, p. 132; Chapter 12, p. 174; and Chapter 16, p. 2). Moreover, the editor should seriously think about merging some of the chapters, especially Chapter 7 (liaison interpreting) and Chapter 16 (general qualities of interpreters), which do not seem to qualify as stand-alone units. Of course, repetition sometimes helps to drive home important points. In this case, however, if the dispersed comments had been pooled together, the topics in question could have been explained more clearly and in greater depth.

While some things are dealt with too many times, some others are simply not discussed enough. Although a whole chapter is devoted to the topic of coherence, the book has surprisingly missed out on many opportunities to reinforce the key messages and achieve coherence across different chapters. This problem is particularly acute in the authors' approach to teaching note-taking. After a lengthy chapter introducing note-taking techniques, such as verticality, indentation and symbols, comes a chapter (about how to note down the vulnerable elements in speeches) in which the author seems to have completely forgotten what he preached earlier, and provides a sample of notes that bear no resemblance to his own recommendation. Moreover, the authors could have given clearer expositions on certain techniques, such as "recognizing main ideas" (Chapter 10) and "speech analysis" (Chapter 11), by linking them up with note-taking instead of treating them as isolated topics and relying on abstract discussion of theories.

Some of these problems may have to do with insufficient coordination between the book's contributors, but perhaps this is the inevitable trade-off for drawing on the diverse academic strengths and experiences of multiple individuals.

Another feature in which the authors take pride is a heavy emphasis on practice with "real-life" materials as a follow-up to lectures. As mentioned before, each chapter contains a practice section, which usually begins with one or two warm-up exercises, to be followed by four longer speeches (two in each language) for more intensive practice.

The authors do go a long way towards offering students a wide variety of activities for independent practice, including retelling in source/target language (with or without notes), reading poems (to improve speaking skills), making impromptu speeches, summarizing/gisting, role-playing and shadowing (for SI). Interestingly, some of the practice speeches (both English and Chinese) were recorded by speakers with strong accents, so as to simulate the pressure that interpreters face in real-life situations. What may be disappointing to experienced trainers is that the texts used for warm-up exercises are generally too short to be effective (only one or two sentences long), especially when it comes to practicing such skills as gisting and discourse analysis. And there are times when only ambiguous directions are given concerning how the texts might be used to practice a particular skill. Nor do the authors comment on how students should select appropriate materials for practice after class or organize their own practice sessions, although this may not be a major concern for the book's target audience.

The authors have done an impressive job in assembling a sizable bank of training materials. At the disposal of students and trainers are more than 100 speech notes, mostly based on the authors' own interpreting assignments, on a variety of topics. This is no small feat, and the authors should be congratulated for their dedication and perseverance. The sample translations supplied at the end of each chapter are generally reliable and can prove valuable, especially to entry-level students. The only concern with regard to choice of texts is that some CI speeches may be too difficult at the early stages of training, and most SI texts seem to represent a huge challenge to students, given their limited exposure to SI training. The authors could consider adding links to practice materials, so as to encourage self-organized practice sessions after class.

As a final comment, the textbook could have benefited from more care in eliminating a number of distracting problems such as inadequacy of referencing, typos and errors in sample translations (e.g. Chapter 16, p. 10: "城乡两级分化: the polarization of townships and countryside"), inconsistency of terminology (e.g. "译入语" refers to source language in Chapter 15, p. 227, and target language in Chapter 26, p. 150), and certain suggestions that seem either odd (e.g. Chapter 4, p. 51: "When standing, an interpreter should use a notebook no larger than her palm.") or dangerously misleading (e.g. Chapter 16, p. 1: interpreters should be ready to take on assignments unprepared; and p. 4: in negotiations, interpreters should serve as a "filter" and tone down the speaker in order to facilitate smooth communication).

All in all, this textbook does what it sets out to do, and trainer and students alike should be able to exploit the ideas and resources of this easy-to-use package.

It not only provides an off-the-shelf syllabus to institutions that are considering adding interpreting to their curriculum, but may also prove useful as a source of practice texts for instructors of professional interpreter training programs, provided that they are discerning in the selection and use of the raw materials.

Index