EVOLUTION OF PERSPECTIVES IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING: TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN PARADIGMS

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Theoretical and practical approaches to Consecutive Interpreting have been increasingly discussed since the 1950s, when practitioners and trainers in the field of interpreting proposed suggestions for optimising the Consecutive Interpreting teaching process. Since then, several publications have appeared on topics related to praxeological approaches to interpreting mainly with reference to interpreting skills, note-taking, strategies, the process and the product of interpreting, theoretical aspects combined with practical exercises, etc. The present study is an overview of the trends in interpreter training, converging on the student-teacher interaction and students' acquisition of interpreting competences in the academic environment. It brings into the spotlight House's approach to 'translation in and as interaction', Vienne's 'translation in situation', Ulrych and Nord's situational and communicational approach, Setton's 3D training model, Kiraly's social constructivism.

Key-words: *consecutive interpreting, interpreter training, theoretical and practical approaches, acquisition of interpreting competences.*

Introduction. Theoretical and practical approaches to consecutive interpreting (CI) have been increasingly discussed since the 1950s, when practitioners and trainers in the field of interpreting proposed suggestions for optimising the CI teaching process. Since then, several publications have appeared on topics about aspects related to the praxeological approach to interpreting: interpreting skills, note-taking, CI strategies, the process and evaluation of the product of interpretation, theoretical aspects combined with practical CI exercises, etc. In this regard, we mention authors of textbooks, course materials, tutorials, experimental studies, methodological publications, doctoral theses, who have tried to shed light on different interpreting-related phenomena in order to answer theoretical and applied questions and who, therefore, help teachers, students and practitioners. Some of the most prominent authors in the field of Interpreting Studies are Herbert, Rozan, Van Hoof, Seleskovitch, Beloruchev, Schweda-Nicholson, Seleskovitch and Lederer, Gile, Falbo, Igl and Lambert, Jones, Sdobnikov, Petrova, González Davies, Gillies, Nolan, Cuzakin, Spirina, Kalina, Setton, Dawrant, Woodward-Smith, Lankiewicz, Szczepaniak-Kozak etc.

The aim of this article is to make an overview of the approaches to interpreter training, converging on the student-teacher interaction and students' acquisition of interpreting competences in the academic environment.

Theoretical and practical approaches described. From a diachronic perspective, trends in interpreter training are described as follows: according to the traditional model, students translate a text, then read their own version of the translation, followed by evaluation of the translation by the teacher and other students who propose alternative translation versions. (Pym, 2009) On the other hand, modern views emphasize the interaction between the actors of the

educational process, based on active-participatory teaching-learning methods, on the diversity of learning tasks, which underscore the interaction between the actors of the educational process.

House stresses the benefits of translation in pairs or small groups according to the principle of 'translation in and as interaction' as part of the linguistic-cognitive orientation in translation studies. The linguist believes that the examination of translation should be addressed from two distinct viewpoints: a social perspective that considers both macro- and micro-contextual constraints affecting translation and the translator, and a cognitive perspective that centers on the internal processes involved in how a translator carries out the task of translation. Vienne (1994) proposes focusing strictly on discursive and social contexts according to the model of 'translation in situation', i.e., translation in the situational context and considering the communication situation. According to the theory that backs up this approach, translation is an activity that requires a wide range of skills, from analysing the translation situation and describing the translation product to producing the target text by identifying parallel texts, using resources and cooperating with the client (Vienne, 1994). Similarly, Ulrych and Nord insist on the analysis of the communication situation and the intention of the source-speech (SS). In the authors' opinion, this practice is more effective than learning through the actual translation of texts/speeches. This approach has been taken up in teaching, as it is important for students to analyse the communicative purposes of the speech. Ulyrich (1995 : 252) also argues for the importance of skills training for students in accordance with labour market requirements. Otherwise, the skills they develop will rather be academic. Therefore, the tasks proposed in class should prepare students for lifelong learning. Kiraly and Gouadec recommend that the ideas put forward by Ulrych and Nord become part of larger translation and interpretation projects, where students work in small groups according to their assigned role: translator/interpreter, evaluator, terminologist, project manager.

Nord (1991 : 55-57) emphasises a stepwise approach to CI, with learning from simple to complex, taking into account that simpler learning tasks (analysis and declarative knowledge) must precede the complex ones, as they require procedural knowledge. The author recommends diversity in the praxeological approach to teaching interpretation, by modifying instructions, using partial/complete translation, working in small groups, utilizing guided interpreting exercises, using parallel texts, sight translating, mock interpreting in the classroom, summary interpreting, documentation and revision.

Seleskovitch, Lederer, Gile, Ilg and Lambert argue that CI at the early stages in training would-be interpreters should start with interpreting exercises without note-taking (NT), and instead, concentrating on listening and analysis skills. Introducing NT at an early stage would shift the focus from noting down the idea to noting down words and surface linguistic structures mechanically. Moreover, students might prioritise the notation of whole phrases and sentences, and not concentrate on rendering the message of the speech. For these reasons, NT is generally introduced into the curriculum only after the acquisition of such skills as active listening and speech analysis. CI with notes is practised, at early stages in consecutive, through interpreting speeches into the mother tongue.

Also, at the initial stage in CI, it is recommended to use different types of exercises such as bilingual crossword puzzles, glossaries, etc. to acquire and consolidate linguistic knowledge. In this regard, González Davies (2004 : 17-18) lists a number of teaching-learning methods, materials and means: learning activities focused on the process and the product of interpreting, interpreting in simulated scenarios, creating and adhering to discussion forums between students, teachers and practitioners, participating in practical workshops, designing and using worksheets

and activities as a supplement to interpreting thematic speeches to improve linguistic and extra-linguistic skills, using didactic games that contribute to students' relaxation, fostering creativity and ensuring group cohesion.

In *Teaching Consecutive Interpreting* Ilg and Lambert (1996 : 76) list a series of exercises, hierarchically ordered for educating would-be interpreters: listening and memory development exercises, shadowing exercises, dual-task training (training distributive attention in performing two or more actions simultaneously), paraphrasing, summarising, clozing (fill in the gaps exercise), sight translation, processing numerical information, proper names, technical words and acronyms, lagging exercises, anticipation, listening activities. Igl points out to the gradual transition from a specific type of interpreting exercise to another. At first, CI exercises should be done monolingually, in the mother tongue, then students should be encouraged to carry out the exercises in the foreign language alone. Finally, they would switch the language code and interpret from the foreign language to their mother tongue and vice versa.

The exercises applied in CI classes at the initial stage of CI competence development, as part of the teaching strategies, are designed to train the competences that are specific to the phase of listening and rephrasing of the information. In the process of training would-be interpreters, special emphasis is placed on these two phases, since without students' ability to concentrate on understanding the speech, the production of the message in the TL will fail. Essentially, it is about training and reinforcing the skills of active listening and organising ideas in the TL in a structured, coherent way, without contravening the linguistic rules and semantics of the source-speech. Gile (2005 : 135) supports the use of interpreting exercises, considering them the main pillar in training would-be interpreters. Russell and Shaw (2010 : 114-115) also defend the significant role of interpreting exercises, arguing that after the acquisition of language proficiency, students' progress in CI can only be achieved through the systematic application of exercises for the development of cognitive and interactive processes in interpreting. According to the authors, such training, whether in the classroom or in the community, includes the following elements:

- analysing speeches by identifying and controlling linguistic aspects such as genre, register, style, cohesion, semantics, grammar and elements of prosody;

- developing auditory and visual memory;

- identifying linguistic elements in speech and interaction between speakers;

- learning note-taking and structuring techniques;

- developing the skill of identifying semantic units in the speech that act as units of interpretation;

- creating culture-appropriate cues used in interaction with the speakers, to influence them to pause and enable the interpreter to produce the interpretation;

- consecutive interpreting of speeches created by professional interpreters;

- simulating interpreting through role-play.

In addition to acquiring the skills mentioned above, the authors believe that students need to learn to manage logistical issues: use of pen, notepad and work as a team.

Setton is a proponent of a "3D" training model, consisting of three steps: observation (of the process of interpreting), diagnosis (of mistakes and errors) and treatment (of mistakes and errors) which he describes as follows:

1. *Observation (and correction)* is accomplished by the teacher listing the errors made by students, self-assessment and peer assessment of the product of interpreting through interaction and constructive criticism.

2. *Diagnosis* through intuitive and theoretical identification and argumentation of the causes of mistakes and errors.

3. *Treatment* through exercises and recommendations based on theory, research in the field of study and practical experience.

Among the topics addressed by the authors of experimental studies in the field of CI praxeology, the most common are the peculiarities and principles of note-taking, paralinguistic aspects in CI, elements of prosody in CI teaching, cognitive processes of the consecutive interpreter, issues related to the education and training of interpreters. Although there is a substantial number of publications that facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge and teachers' activity through the materials and practical exercises they contain, the amount of empirical research on the praxeology of interpreting is still very small. Topics such as determining the rate of success or failure in applying certain methods, facilitating students' management of cognitive ability, analysing their psycho-cognitive reactions, etc. can only be done through experimental studies. Carrying out such studies in as large a number as possible will help to obtain more relevant information and more conclusive data.

Although contemporary theories of interpreting attempt to distance themselves from traditional models, they are still used in many higher education institutions. (Kiraly, 2001 : 50) There are, however, researchers who vehemently argue against traditional methods for their ineffectiveness and propose new models and visions designed to help students and teachers to better understand the process of interpreting, to facilitate the educational process and make it more efficient.

Until the 1980s, linguists and those interested in teaching interpreting were mainly concerned with the content of study programmes, their duration, admission requirements and other organisational issues, and avoided addressing questions of methodology. (Weber, 1989 : 15) Delisle proposed the use of the method based on practical exercises at the very first stage of introducing students to interpreting, placing them at the centre of the learning situation.

Being a proponent of an open and cooperative learning environment, Kiraly (2001 : 51) supports social constructivism in the training of would-be interpreters. This approach is explained by the advanced level of motivation and active participation of students and the role of the teacher as a guide in their heuristic journey. According to the linguist, the acquisition of CI in the light of social constructivism implies joining community groups such as multilingual users, those familiar with specialized domains, and users of traditional and modern technologies utilised for communication purposes. The relevance of social constructivism in the praxeological approach of CI also implies encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. (Kiraly, 2001 : 53)

González Davies (2004 : 11) rejects traditional teaching methods such as instructivism and the Grammar-Translation Method in language learning. The latter is described as a trap set for students, since it uses translation to test complex grammar and vocabulary rules, using literary texts while distancing too much from the communicative function it is supposed to fulfil. On the other hand, the approach on which González (2004 : 12) grounds her conceptions, derives from the humanistic approach to education, the communicative approach to language teaching, cooperative learning and social constructivism. The author considers these theories are much more effective in that they favour group learning and highlight the positive effects of students' emotional nature in defining the quality of their performance. Other strengths of these theories regard the autonomy of the student, who is no longer considered an object that 'absorbs' the knowledge delivered by the teacher, as was the case in traditional education. With

these approaches, students are the subject of teaching and learning and can actively contribute to the formation of self- and group-competences. Hence, the role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate the learning activity of the students.

Hurtado Albir, likewise, moves away from traditional content-based teaching models, advocating open and integrative approaches to curriculum planning that take into consideration the purpose, means, time and ends of teaching. Following the directions of the modern paradigm in education and the trends in translation and didactics of interpreting, the researcher argues the following essential principles in the praxeological approach to interpreting:

1. *Apprendre en faisant (learning by doing)*. With this principle, students memorise information better by performing actions and learn more effectively through procedural activities that actively involve them in learning.

2. *Apprendre à parcourir des processus (learning by going through processes)*. This is a principle of cognitive-constructivist orientation. According to J. Delisle, teaching interpretation means making understood the intellectual process by which a message is transposed from one language to another, placing the student at the centre of the didactic activity in order to make them feel its dynamics.

3. *Apprendre d'une manière holistique (learning in a holistic way)*. Hurtado Albir (2008 : 18) joins Escotet in criticising current university teaching for following the outdated teaching models of the early 20th century and the unidisciplinary or, at best, multidisciplinary path of students. The researcher believes that the emphasis should be placed not only on training professionals but also on training individuals capable of learning to learn, being able to cooperate, being empathetic, self-critical, self-motivated individuals, having autonomous knowledge formation, etc.

Cognitive psychology is a relatively new field in Interpreting Studies. The first references were made in the 1990s, and the exponents are Hoffmann and Moser-Mercer. According to the authors, many of the characteristics of the subject field are oriented towards cognitive psychology. A high degree of situational awareness, high mental workload and high levels of stress, are also found in Interpreting Studies. From this perspective, competence can be defined as the acquisition and exercise of superior abilities and the achievement of success in a domain of activity, reflecting well-developed and organized fundamental knowledge. (Roman, 2014 : 289)

Research grounded in the cognitive psychology of competence by R. Hoffmann provides a theoretical framework for describing in detail the processes governing the acquisition of CI. Research methodologies based on observational and empirical studies emphasise the role of students' motivation and psychological state of mind in the educational context. (Sawyer, 2004 : 30) In this regard, Moser-Mercer is interested in analysing the paradigm 'expert-student' in order to determine and explore differences between professionals and would-be interpreters. The researcher believes that it is of utmost importance to develop skills of understanding the speaker's message before integrating all the other CI skills. On the one hand, this requires a thorough understanding of the process of interpreting itself, the timeline of the stages in this process, and the resources allocated to the interpreter. On the other hand, it is important to understand how student interpreters address more complex cognitive skills.

According to Nord teaching interpreting must be similar to the practice of this activity. In this regard, the researcher proposes a functional approach to CI, which is based on criteria for the selection of speeches used in real interpreting situations, teaching-learning methods and techniques, monitoring students' progress and using methods of evaluating the product of interpreting. In addition to the ideas set out by Nord, Gile argues that teaching should be

process-centred. The author recommends initiating discussions with students about translation and interpreting-related concepts such as communication, quality, fidelity, comprehension and knowledge acquisition.

Conclusion. Research indicates that the field of didactics of Interpreting Studies is evolving from traditional models based on the transmissive approach to modern models that propose new visions: learning by doing, cognitive-constructivist oriented methods, functional approach in CI, holistic learning, socio-constructivism, methods based on practical exercises, etc. Therefore, the authors of modern approaches to teaching interpreting encourage distancing from traditional approaches and, instead, adhering to new visions in order to make the process of teaching interpreting more effective. Modern theories prove to be more efficient, as they support collaborative learning and emphasize the positive impact of students' emotional engagement in shaping the quality of their performance, fostering thoughtful and motivating learning experiences, among other benefits.

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