

EST Congress 2016 – PANEL

Title of panel	Methodologies for researching interpreting as an extreme case of language processing
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Conference interpreting in general, and simultaneous interpreting in particular, may be viewed as an extreme case of language processing (Hervais-Adelman et al. 2014), where interpreters have to juggle numerous cross-linguistic tasks: listen to the source text and avoid interference from the source language while producing the target text, maintaining proper register and controlling for audiences' comprehension among other things. Examining such a complex and fascinating phenomenon has moved the boundaries of linguistic research. From the early embraces of experimental paradigms (Gerver 1969) to first flirtations with neurolinguistics (Fabbro, Gran, Gran 1991), there have always been some scholars within Interpreting Studies (IS) who were eager to try out new possibilities of looking at the task of interpreting. Only recently, however, as the research methodologies have started to be validated and technological developments have led to greater democratisation of access to new research paradigms can we speak of a true opening of new vistas in research on interpreting.

What we have witnessed in the last decade is more adventurous application of methods established in such disciplines as psycholinguistics, cognitive studies, neurolinguistics, and more specifically studies on bilingualism, multilingualism and second language acquisition, to interdisciplinary endeavours that could shed more light on language processing in general and on interpreting in particular. These methods include for instance cross-linguistic priming with language decision or word translation tasks; eye-tracking in reading or sight translation; memory span and executive function tasks; physiological and psychological stress measures including skin conductance changes, cortisol levels and psychological pen-and-paper surveys; or even such technologically-demanding methods as EEG or fMRI.

The resulting interdisciplinarity creates a synergy effect – IS provides interesting participants involved in an extreme case of language processing on a daily basis, while the neighbouring disciplines offer established research tools and language processing models to test. Thus, for example, cross-linguistic priming studies have contributed to the state of knowledge about lexical access and the structure of the bilingual mental lexicon (e.g. Yudes, Macizo, Bajo 2010). Eye tracking studies have shed more light on the nature of processing multimodal input in simultaneous interpreting (Seeber 2012). Working memory span tasks or executive control tasks (Timarova 2012, Liu 2001, Woumans et al. 2015) performed by interpreters help identify certain elements of the memory system as correlates of successful interpreting. Most recently the

application of brain imaging techniques to interpreting practice has added to the raging debates on bilingual cognitive advantage (Hervais-Adelman et al. 2014) and brain plasticity (Hervais-Adelman, Moser-Mercer, Golestani 2015).

Moving the methodological boundaries of IS is beneficial not only to interpreting scholars but also to psycholinguists, neurolinguists, education scholars and many more (cf. Chmiel 2010, Gile 2015), even if not entirely devoid of difficulties such as the shift of emphasis to statistical analysis or technological skills.

To form a better picture of how boundaries of IS research are being moved and how they can be pushed even further, this panel welcomes contributions related, but not limited to the following topics:

- Experimental and quasi-experimental studies in conference interpreting
- Specific areas of language processing (such as memory, interference, bilingual lexicon) as linked to interpreting
- Application of methodologies established in other fields (eye-tracking, priming, EEG, fMRI and other) to Interpreting Studies
- Psycholinguistic studies involving interpreters or interpreting tasks
- Validation of methodologies
- Trade-offs between ecological validity and controllability of measures
- Dangers of interdisciplinarity
- Triangulation and inventive paradigms
- Current technical (and other) limitations (and ways of overcoming them)
- Applicability of current research (to training, industry standards etc.)

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