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Cognitive Aspects of Community Interpreting Toward a Process Model

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This article discusses cognitive aspects of professional community interpreting. We give an overview of earlier research into community interpreting, arguing that cognitive aspects have largely been neglected. We propose that in building a model of the mental processes of the community interpreter, different kinds of monitoring are a crucial and pervasive component. Monitoring contributes to and enables the double function of the interpreter: translating and managing the interaction of the interpreted encounter. We furthermore stress the importance of the notion of professional self-concept for explaining the interpreter's decision-making and exemplify this by analyzing turn-taking in two Swedish-Spanish interpreted encounters.

1. Introduction

There is already a fairly long tradition of theoretical and empirical studies of the cognitive aspects of translation and interpreting, but curiously, one type of interpreting has so far escaped the attention of process-oriented scholars, namely, what is usually called community interpreting (see section 2.1 for a discussion of terms). Although there is a substantial body of research on community interpreting, it has to date focused mainly on aspects of the interpreter's role in the interactions between interlocutors/participants and in the communication process, using conversation analysis as the main research method.

This article is a first attempt to outline some aspects of the specifics of the cognitive processes involved in community interpreting. First, we present some main findings and characteristics of previous research on community interpreting. Second, on the basis of previous process models, mainly of simultaneous interpreting, we outline some salient aspects of the cognitive processes of the community interpreter, highlighting different kinds of monitoring. We also discuss the notion of professional self-concept and its role in the process. Then, we present an analysis of data from two Spanish-Swedish interpreted encounters, where longer experience and a more developed (stronger) professional self-concept leads to more successful

monitoring and hence better control of turn-taking. We conclude by suggesting some possible topics for further study.

Before moving on, however, let us first briefly present ourselves in order to contextualize this article. Both authors of this article have personal experience from community interpreting, Tiselius as a state-authorized community interpreter in Sweden and Englund Dimitrova as a provider of interpreting services and a language expert in interpreter authorization exams. Furthermore, Englund Dimitrova published one of the first studies on interaction in interpreted medical encounters (Englund Dimitrova 1991). In our research, however, our main interest has been to study cognitive processes in both translation and simultaneous interpreting (see, e.g., Englund Dimitrova 2005; Tiselius 2013). By looking at the practice of community interpreting from a new perspective, embedding it in theoretical and methodological perspectives taken from process-oriented translation and interpreting studies, we hope to widen the scope of investigation into community interpreting.

2. Community Interpreting in Practice and in Previous Research

2.1 Defining our Object of Study

Community interpreting is a form of dialogue interpreting. Such dialogue interpreting may occur in many different communicative situations whenever two people or parties need to interact but do not share a common language, for example in business negotiations, court proceedings, or everyday situations, and may be carried out by either professionals or amateurs. Our interest in this article is strictly in *community interpreters*, that is, professional interpreters who, in various communities and social settings, interpret dialogues in the consecutive mode for both parties in a given encounter between majority- and minority-language speakers, working alternately into both languages. Such interpreting is known by various terms, such as community interpreting or public service interpreting. In some countries, the terminology used focuses more specifically on the particular setting in which the interpreting occurs, for example medical/health care interpreting and court interpreting. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the different terms; we have decided to adopt the term “community interpreting” mainly because we believe that other terms are too limited. Our considerations are mainly intended for interpreting between spoken languages, although all of the defining factors enumerated above are valid for many contexts of sign

language interpreting as well, with the exception of the interpreting mode (for further discussions of terminology, see Hale 2007, 27–30).

Our main interest in this article is on professionalized community interpreting that adheres to professional guidelines and codes of ethics. Internationally, there is a growing body of professionals in this area, although the degree of professionalization of community interpreting (in terms of training, certification, working conditions, etc.) varies significantly between different countries. Sweden and Australia are among the pioneers in this respect, with long traditions of training, certification, and codes of ethics. In many countries and settings, however, it is (still) quite common that bilinguals without any interpreter training, even family and friends, are asked to perform interpreting tasks in various settings, but this communicative situation will not be further considered in this article.¹

2.2 Research on Community Interpreting

Research into community interpreting has blossomed since the 1990s. Important advances have been made by researchers studying interpreted encounters in countries such as Australia (Hale 2004, 2007; Tebble 2009), Denmark (Dubsloff and Martinsen 2007), Italy (Gavioli and Baraldi 2011),

¹ This of course does not exclude the potential relevance of our discussion also for non-professional interpreting as well.

Norway (Nilsen 2005), Spain (Valero Garcés 2007), Sweden (Englund Dimitrova 1991, 1997; Wadensjö 1992, 1998), and the United States (Angelelli 2004a, 2011). International conferences (with published proceedings) specifically dedicated to community interpreting have contributed to the development of the research area, most notably the triennial Critical Link conferences held in Canada (in 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2013), Sweden (2004), Australia (2007), and the United Kingdom (2010, and planned for 2016). The triennial Public Service Translation and Interpreting conferences in Alcalá de Henares, Spain, from 2002 on have also played an important role.

Methods used to study community interpreting include questionnaires and ethnographic studies/observations, but the predominant method is the analysis of audio recordings of authentic interpreted encounters or, in some cases, roleplays. The settings have been varied, including medical interpreting (e.g., Englund Dimitrova 1997; Tebble 2009; Angelelli 2011; Gavioli and Baraldi 2011), court interpreting (Berk-Seligson 1990; Nilsen 2005), interpreting for refugees and asylum seekers (Pöchhacker and Kolb 2009; Norström, Gustafsson, and Fioretos 2011), and police interrogations (Braun 2013), to mention just a few. Data for such studies is collected chiefly from professional interpreters, but there is also much interest in the interpreting done by non-professionals untrained for the task, such as relatives or bilingual staff (Antonini 2010; Gavioli and Baraldi 2011).

Research on community interpreting has to date been largely descriptive. Many studies set out, whether implicitly or explicitly, to question the normative “role of the interpreter,” as outlined in a highly prescriptive way in codes of ethics and professional guidelines. Such prescriptive accounts seem to have been taken as a kind of theory, and many researchers in community interpreting have set out to find examples that disprove these “theories.” The primary research method has been conversation analysis, a qualitative microanalysis of conversational moves in selected extracts from recorded, authentically interpreted conversations. Conversation analysis elucidates typical or interesting aspects of the communicative process, often when there is some kind of problem in the interaction. Part of the methodology is often an initial analysis of (linguistic) differences between source utterance and interpreted utterance, in order to identify those instances in the interpreted event that are to be further scrutinized with conversation analysis. Since the analyses are highly detailed, they tend to be based upon small amounts of data. Even though whole encounters have been recorded (and submitted to preliminary analysis and selection as part of the research process), studies frequently present only results based upon the selected extracts. This means there are few studies that address what may in fact be the main part of interpreted events.

Some key findings have been confirmed by a number of different studies. The first is that there is a discrepancy between the prescriptive codes of conduct for professional community interpreters, mainly regarding the

requirement to transmit all information (cf. the overview of codes of ethics in Hale 2007, 109–117), and the findings of many empirical studies of community interpreting. The prescriptive accounts of the (possible or necessary) role of the interpreter simply do not conform to or cohere with observed reality. It is interesting to compare this with conference interpreting, where Shlesinger (1999) discusses the norm of condensation in simultaneous interpreting:

Not every element of every proposition in the source text needs to be reproduced as such. It is appropriate for a simultaneous interpreter to produce the underlying meaning of a proposition. This is acceptable, and often even desirable, since a full rendering of each separate element in the proposition is liable to use up the cognitive resources of the interpreter and may also exceed the capacity of the listener to process the target-language input. (Shlesinger 1999, 69)

There is a clear contrast here to the requirements in most codes of conduct for community interpreting, but it thus ties in well with the findings of many empirical studies of community interpreting since, as Wadensjö points out (2004, 113), “investigations of naturally occurring interpreting show that renditions in practice never are unambiguously equivalent with the preceding originals.” Hence, several researchers point out the inappropriateness of the so-called conduit metaphor, which posits the

interpreter as a “translating machine” and which underlies many models of communication and several models of interpreting (cf. the overview of models, albeit for sign language interpreting, and their characteristics in Wilcox and Shaffer 2005).

A second major finding is the central role of the interpreter for managing the interaction of the encounter. Wadensjö (1992) points out that the interpreter is both translator and coordinator of the interaction. Englund Dimitrova (1991, 1997; cf. Roy 1993) characterizes the interpreter as the hub of the turn-taking process. The interpreter can be characterized as a “communication cop,” underlining the “traffic regulator part of the interpreter’s role” (Frishberg 1990, 27) or as a gatekeeper (Wadensjö 1998).

Theoretically and methodologically, there seems to be a general agreement that the interpreter cannot be studied in isolation; the whole communicative situation must be studied, albeit with a focus on the interpreter. Roy (1993, 343) claims that in order to understand the interpreter-mediated event, the naturalistic behavior of all the participants must be studied. She goes on to say that the responsibility for the success or failure of an interpreter-mediated event lies, in differing degrees, with all participants in the event (Roy 1993, 360). Wadensjö (2004, 107) stresses that it is crucial for an understanding of the work that interpreters perform not to see them as disconnected from the other parties of the conversation. Thus Wadensjö emphasizes that “primary parties’ and interpreters’ utterances *co-exist in*

sequences of embodied utterances” (Wadensjö 2004, 108, italics in the original).

Perhaps as a result of the focus on the event as such, the (individual) interpreter tends in certain respects to be moved to the background in the studies. Thus, little information is often given on the participating interlocutors, and more specifically on the interpreter, her education, length of interpreting experience, and so on.² Such information can be found in a few studies (e.g., Angelelli 2004a 2011) and in survey studies (e.g., Angelelli 2004b), but then not related to data on actual performance. This makes it difficult to generalize from studies presented so far regarding, for instance, what characterizes interpreters with more or less experience or training. To date there has been little systematic study of what actually characterizes the “normal,” “unproblematic” interpreting process of the competent and experienced interpreter. In fact, the denomination “interpreter” is often used in a very wide sense, in some studies also to refer to relatives acting as interpreters/language mediators, whereas in other studies individuals who would be regarded as professional interpreters in most countries are labeled as language brokers or mediators. Hence, conclusions and generalizations

² Another reason for this is of course that research on community interpreting so far has only to a limited extent aimed at studying or characterizing interpreters’ behavior in terms of their previous experience, in contrast to process-oriented studies where this has been a very prominent topic.

regarding “interpreters” from different studies may in fact refer to practices of people with widely different background and experience in language mediation.

3. The Process of Community Interpreting

3.1 Models of the Interpreting Process

Some of the conclusions mentioned above, regarding the need to study the whole communicative situation in community interpreting, seem to contradict the possibility of studying cognition and the interpreting process only from the interpreter’s perspective, or at least they indicate that such a study would disregard such important factors of the interpreting situation as to become uninteresting. Clearly, a model of the interpreting process that includes the cognition of several participants may become so complex (depending upon the level of detail) that it risks not fulfilling its intended task, that of visualizing central components in the model and the relations between them in order to test them empirically. Despite such potential objections, we believe that in view of the interpreter’s central role in the complex social activity of community interpreting, his or her cognition and problem solving merit further study. We consider that studying the interpreter’s cognition in

community interpreting is perfectly possible and relevant, as long as the other participants' cognitive behavior is also appropriately accounted for in the models and data. However, we believe that this can actually be done from the perspective of the interpreter and his or her central position as an acting and reacting human and professional, in an interaction with at least two other primary parties. This is the topic of this section.

Pöchhacker (2004, 86) posits seven layers of modeling of interpreting: anthropological, socio-professional, institutional, interactional, textual, cognitive, and neural, pointing out that most of the models have been proposed at the cognitive and interactional levels. For community interpreting, the most important model has been the interactional model proposed by Wadensjö (1998). When it comes to cognitive processing models of interpreting, which would have been useful in the context of the present article, they are either of a general nature, for interpreting without specification, or of more limited validity, for example for simultaneous interpreting. Early models are flow-chart types (Gerver 1975, 1976; Moser 1978), outlining the cognitive process of the interpreter. Pöchhacker (1992) and Vik-Tuovinen (2006) have proposed componential models of both internal and external factors affecting the process (an overview is given in Pöchhacker 2004, 95–106).

In research on simultaneous conference interpreting, an important topic has been how the interpreter allocates his or her (limited) set of attentional resources. Gile's formulaic effort models (e.g., Gile 1985) focus

on the interpreter's capacity management, postulating that interpreting requires effort and that the available resources for this effort are limited. Hence, the different postulated efforts have to compete for available processing capacity, and problems in one of them may affect processing in another. By contrast, Seeber's (2011, 2013) recently proposed model of cognitive load in simultaneous interpreting, based upon general research into cognitive processes, assumes that the different processes need not necessarily compete for the same capacity, since parallel processing can be assumed. Timarovà (2012) investigates the functions of working memory and performance in simultaneous interpreting in professional conference interpreters, and concludes that simultaneous interpreting is chiefly related to the central executive functions and that different sub-processes in simultaneous interpreting are predicted by different working memory functions (2012, 119). There is, thus, not a clear one-to-one correlation of specific working memory functions and specific sub-processes in simultaneous interpreting.

None of the cognitive processing models mentioned has been suggested primarily with community interpreting in mind. Several models focus solely on the interpreter, not including other parties of the communicative event. The utterer of the source utterance and listeners to the interpreted utterances are present only implicitly in the models, as implied producers of utterances to be interpreted or listeners to interpreted utterances.

In some models, Gile's for instance, the utterances/messages also remain implicit.

3.2 The Community Interpreting Process

Hale (2007, 14–25) discusses the interpreting process in community interpreting, dividing it into three steps: comprehension, conversion, and delivery. The main thrust of her discussion is concerned with aspects of language and discourse processing (but see also below). She claims that interpreters with different levels of competence work at different linguistic levels: word, sentence, or discourse, and that only the most competent interpreters will convert the message pragmatically, taking the top-down approach, understanding the text as discourse rather than as words or sentences strung together (Hale 2007, 22–23). Her words echo Hoffman (1997, 197), who states that “the development of expertise involves a progression from a superficial and literal understanding of problems (a qualitative mark of the cognition of novices), to an articulated, conceptual, and principled understanding (a qualitative mark of the cognition of experts).”

In this context, it must be taken into account that community interpreting requires advanced language competence (Hale 2007, 177) in two languages and the ability to work into both languages alternately. Language competencies comprise necessary linguistic competencies in both languages, including fluency, a wide range of vocabulary and the ability to understand

and reproduce register variation (Frishberg 1990, 25). However, most community interpreters have a weaker competence in one of the interpreter languages, a factor that can be assumed to influence the process, for example regarding interpreting strategies, length of turns, and information transfer. To our knowledge, however, this has not been systematically investigated.

Contrary to other types of translation, whether oral or written, the community interpreter's renditions are (potentially) both a target text of a preceding utterance and the point of departure for the next source text, namely, the upcoming utterance by one of the primary parties, which is in its turn in some way a response to the preceding (target) text/utterance.³ In that respect, it can be claimed that community interpreters are more privileged than other translation/interpreting professionals, in the sense that they receive immediate feedback on their work: from the response, they are able to see whether the responding primary party has (or seems to have) understood the (target) text in the way the interpreter intended. Furthermore, the community interpreter's interpreting context is that of a three-party dialogue. These two conditions change the processing requirements in community interpreting, as opposed to other types of interpreting, in three ways: by changing the way

³ In some encounters with an interpreter, the interpreter and one of the primary parties engage in a longer stretch of monolingual talk, which is subsequently summarized and rendered for the other party (see, e.g., Bolden 2000; Angelelli 2011). Such stretches of monolingual talk are not captured by this description.

source and target texts are monitored, by adding an increased need for coordination, and by increasing the interpreter's need for ethical awareness. These unique processing conditions also mean that traditional models of interpreting are not wholly applicable to community interpreting.

Within the process step of conversion, Hale (2007, 22) outlines factors involved in the conversion process: knowledge of the target language, interpreting skills, and a theoretical underpinning approach. Under interpreting skill, she mentions the following "technical skills": note-taking, mastery of different interpreting modes, situational management, ability to deconstruct and construct messages quickly, ability to make complex choices under pressure, and the ability to concentrate and to make use of long-term and short-term memory. Although described as skills and hence part of the interpreter's competence, this is clearly a description that could form part of a process model of community interpreting.

Studies of these and other aspects must take into account the other parties to the interpreted event, which means that the appropriate research designs and methods may differ, at least partly, from those used in other process-oriented translation studies.

3.3 Monitoring as a Crucial Part of the Community Interpreting Process

Our own perspective as researchers can be said to be twofold: from the main vantage point of cognitive processing, we want to also incorporate interactive

aspects into a potential model. In other words, we want to capture how some aspects of interaction are managed cognitively by the interpreter. We suggest that a more elaborate (i.e., in comparison with other process models of interpreting) concept of monitoring may be useful to describe the specifics of the community interpreter's cognitive processes.

Monitoring our own utterances is characteristic of speakers in general. By monitoring (observing, evaluating, possibly correcting) our speech when speaking, we compare our utterance with our plan, detecting and possibly correcting (repairing) slips of the tongue, inadequacies, and so on. Monitoring is also included in several process models (e.g., Lederer 1978; Setton 1999) to account for the observed fact that (simultaneous) interpreters monitor their own interpreted utterances, as evidenced by their corrections and repairs, while still also listening to continuing source utterances. Apart from repairs and corrections in the product, empirical evidence for monitoring comes also from retrospection (see, e.g., Ivanova 1999; Tiselius 2013). Hence, we assume it to be characteristic also of the process of the community interpreter, though we also assume there are other kinds of monitoring involved in community interpreting.

The functions of the interpreter's different kinds of monitoring in the interpreted event can minimally be described as follows. When *a primary party speaks*, the interpreter

- 1) monitors his or her comprehension of the primary party's utterance,

- 2) monitors the relation of the primary party's utterance to the interpreter's previous interpreted utterance (i.e., does it seem to have been understood by the primary party as intended?), and
- 3) monitors his or her memory and processing capacity, in order to interrupt and take the turn, if necessary.

When *the interpreter speaks*, he or she

- 1) monitors his or her own utterance, as an utterance in the given language,
- 2) monitors, when relevant,⁴ the relation of his or her own utterance to the primary party's previous utterance, and
- 3) monitors the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the primary parties.

Compared with simultaneous conference interpreting, several of these processes are specific to community interpreting, for example monitoring in relation to primary parties' previous utterances and reactions, as well as monitoring one's own process in relation to memory and processing capacity in order to take the turn. Compared with the conference interpreter, the community interpreter is in a privileged position, since he or she can stop the

⁴ Research on community interpreting shows that not all utterances by the interpreter are in fact renditions of a previous utterance by a primary party.

speaker's flow of speech by claiming the turn from the speaker. This means that the interpreter not only monitors his or her own process, but also the coordination of the turn-taking⁵ and the planning ahead of the interaction. The increased need for co-ordination means that the interpreter needs to plan ahead by taking into account both cognitive load and the communicative event. Hence, the successful interpreting of dialogues, as in professional community interpreting, is a highly complex cognitive task.

Positing different kinds of monitoring in the process can help explain some of the complexities of the process of community interpreting. But assuming its existence does not explain how interpreters act in different situations (i.e., what they do and why they do it) as an outcome of their monitoring. Here, we need another concept, and we turn to the notion of *professional self-concept*.

3.4 Professional Self-Concept

As mentioned in the introduction, our main interest here is in professional community interpreting, and therefore the notion of professional self-concept seems to be of relevance. This notion has been discussed for interpreting by Andres (2011), although with a main focus on conference interpreting. She

⁵ Cognitive aspects of turn-taking in different types of conversations are beginning to attract attention in cognitive psychology, see Holler et al. 2015.

describes the self-concept as the (professional) understanding that interpreters have of their own ability and of their responsibilities to other stakeholders in the interpreting situation, comprising the interpreters' ethos, social responsibility, self-image, motivation, and coping tactics (Andres 2011, 86). Muñoz Martín (2014) discusses self-concept (comprising in his view self-awareness, situation awareness, and self-efficacy) in translation expertise, describing it as a basis for motivated behavior since it shapes not only who we are but also the decisions and the relationships we make, "because success in task-performance is also related to building contingent, situated selves that are adequate to the task at hand" (2014, 28). Apart from Andres, the stable self-concept is not a theme labeled as such in earlier works, even though different features are mentioned that would fit under such a concept: for example, good management skills, that is, "the ability to assess when it is necessary to intervene and how to do it; the ability to control and coordinate the interpreted situation" (Hale 2007, 177; cf. Jacobson 2009); ability to handle the power balance of the participants in the interaction (Corsellis 2008, 29); interpersonal skills, so as to get an overview of the situation (Frishberg 1990, 25); ability to understand the goals of the institution where the interpreting is taking place, as well as its discursive practices (Hale 2007, 177); cross-cultural awareness (Frishberg 1990, 25; Hale 2007, 177); and knowledge of the theories that underpin the practice (Hale 2007, 177). The interpreter's social competence also needs to be taken into account. Straniero (1999, 323) defines social competence as how "communicative competence

is enacted in the form of appropriate conversational behavior.” Ethics is clearly an important part of professional self-concept, whether you see ethics as following ethical guidelines or acting ethically on a more general level.

As Tebble (2012, 23) points out, there are so far no agreed international qualifications for community interpreting, which is no surprise, as the world is a heterogeneous place in terms of languages, cultures, regions, and nation-states. Hence, the professional self-concept of the community interpreter will presumably depend to some extent on the situation in the given country regarding, for example, training, certification, working conditions, and existing codes of ethics.

4. Monitoring and Professional Self-Concept in Two Interpreted Encounters

We demonstrate the role of monitoring and professional self-concept in the interpreting process with two examples⁶ recorded in Sweden. Earlier research has shown the challenges involved in the interpreter’s management of turn-taking (Englund Dimitrova 1997; Roy 2003; Jacobson 2009). Our examples are from interpreted encounters, where the same kind of (potential) problem

⁶ The examples are taken from two different studies, with slightly different transcription conventions.

occurs: the interpreter is interrupted by one of the primary parties before having finished the interpreted utterance.

The first example is taken from a roleplay, enacting an encounter at a public employment agency. The counselor (a female native Swedish speaker) and the job seeker (a male native Spanish speaker) improvised the dialogue on the basis of short instructions. The interpreter, whose L1 is Swedish, is a male student, and the roleplay was videotaped and subsequently formed the empirical basis for his BA thesis at Stockholm University. In his thesis, he analyzes his own turn-taking, combining this with retrospective comments.⁷ The student had interpreting experience only from the training program, which comprises both interpreting theory and practice. Although the program focuses on skill enhancement, compared with a professional interpreter this student had only limited, and no professional, experience of interpreting. In all examples below, brackets denote overlapping speech. Examples (1a) through (1c) involve the counselor (C), interpreter (I), and job seeker (JS).

⁷ Example 1 is taken from a BA thesis in interpreting by Thomas Thomsen (Stockholm University, 2014), in a simplified transcription. English translations added by the authors.

(1a)

- 023 C *Och jag har ett möjligt nystartsjobb till dig, och det jag har, det är som ekonomibiträde i ett storkök i det här fallet är det på en skola. Och som ekonomibiträde så kommer du hjälpa till å förbereda mat, du kommer hjälpa till att förbereda sallad, koka potatis, pasta, ris, vad nu för tillbehör det är, plocka fram mat, plocka undan, diska, städa lokalen och även beställa en del varor.*

‘And I have a possible reintegration job for you, and what I have, it is as a catering assistant in a cafeteria, in this case it is in a school. And as a catering assistant you will help prepare food, you will help prepare the salad, boil potatoes, pasta, rice, whatever trimmings there are, take out the food, clear away the tables, wash the dishes, clean the premises, and also order some goods.’

Example (1a) occurs as turn 23 in the encounter. The student interpreter’s retrospection, as presented in the thesis, reveals that he had already, before this turn, been worrying about turn-taking, feeling that he was not quite able to take the turn as he wanted, and being anxious that he might not be able to remember everything to be rendered. Turn 23 is quite long, and because of a variety of problems, connected to interpreting skill, monitoring, and turn-taking, it is not interpreted in its entirety until turn 44.

The actual interpreting starts in turn 30 (turns 24–29 concern questions for clarification and have been omitted here).

(1b)

- 030 I *E vale, lo que tenemos aquí para para para ti es una posibilidad de un de un un empleo de reintegración un empleo de reintegración un empleo de reintegración, y es como ((swallows)) e asistente en en una cocina en una escuela y [alli]*
‘Eh OK, what we have here for for for you is a possibility for a for a a reintegration employment a reintegration employment, and it is as ((swallows)) eh an assistant in in a kitchen in a school and [there]’
- 031 JS *[¿En una cocina?]*
‘[In a kitchen?]’
- 032 I *En una cocina.*
‘In a kitchen.’
- 033 JS *A.*
‘Ah.’
- 034 I *På, i ett kök?*
‘At, in a kitchen?’
- 035 C *I ett kök, i ett skolkök.*

‘In a kitchen, in the kitchen of a school cafeteria.’

036 I *En una cocina en una escuela, sí.*

‘In the kitchen of a school cafeteria, yes.’

037 JS *Vale.*

‘OK.’

Before the interpreter has finished his rendition of turn 23, he is interrupted in turn 31 by a question from the job seeker. He answers the question in turn 32, but then remembers that he should actually have interpreted it instead, which he proceeds to do in turn 34. The question is then answered in Swedish by the counselor and interpreted into Spanish (turns 35–36). The subsequent turns are shown in example (1c):

(1c)

038 I *Y allí tendrías que preparar e [la comida]*

‘And there you will have to prepare eh [the food]’

039 JS *[¿A a cocinero?]*

‘[A a cook?]

040 I *E, kock?*

‘Eh, cook?’

041 C *Nej, det är inte kock utan det är mera som en medhjälp till kocken, assi assisterar kocken och även plocka, alltså du*

hjälper till att förbereda en del av maten och framförallt plocka fram mat och plockar undan och har hand om disk och städning och beställning av varor. Det är framförallt såna saker som du kommer ha å göra.

‘No, it’s not a cook, it’s more like an assistant to the cook, assi assisting the cook and also taking out, that is, you help prepare some of the food and mainly take out the food and clear it away, and you take care of the dishes and the cleaning and ordering of goods. It’s mainly that kind of thing you will have to do.’

042 I *No, no exactamente. Eres más como un asistente del [cocinero].*

‘No, not exactly. You will be more like an assistant to the [cook].’

043 JS *[A, vale.]*

‘[Ah, OK.]’

044 I *Y entonces lo que haces es preparar comida como ensalada, patata, arroz, e recoges las mesas, friegas, limpias, haces pedidos y cosas así.*

‘And then what you do is prepare food like salad, potatoes,
rice, and you clear away from the tables, wash the dishes,
you clean, make orders and stuff like that.’

In turn 38, the interpreter returns to interpreting parts of the material from turn 23, but is once again interrupted by the job seeker’s question in turn 39, and interprets this into Swedish in turn 40. This question is answered by the counselor in turn 41, who partly repeats and partly elaborates on what she had said in turn 23. The interpreter interprets part of turn 41 in turn 42, to give the job seeker an answer to his question, and then proceeds to interpret, in turn 44, the gist of turn 23. In his retrospection, the interpreter mentions that at that point he was so frustrated about the turn-taking problems and anxious to take control over the situation that he spoke very quickly, just to make sure that he would not be interrupted again.

The student interpreter clearly monitors the primary parties when interpreting, as shown by the fact that he yields the turn when there is overlapping speech, and as also shown by his retrospection. It is also clear from his retrospection that he is well aware of the importance of active turn-taking on his part for him to be able to interpret everything. But his professional self-concept is not yet sufficiently developed to allow him to interrupt or use other explicit means to get or keep his turn. Moreover, when he is interrupted, he yields the turn to the person who interrupted, although he has not finished interpreting. This makes his task very difficult; perhaps it

is only because the counselor in turn 41 actually repeats the main parts of the turn from 23 that he is able to produce a rendition without too much information loss.

This can be compared with example 2, which is taken from an authentic videotaped medical encounter involving a doctor (D), patient (P), and interpreter (I).⁸ The doctor is a male native Swedish speaker and the patient is a female native speaker of Spanish. The interpreter is bilingual Basque-Spanish, with two years of Swedish interpreter training; she is certified at all three available interpreter certification levels. At the time of the recording, she had around eight or nine years of interpreting experience.

At this point in the encounter, the patient is telling about a relative who has a kidney problem. Forward slashes (single or double) denote varying pause lengths, though the exact pause length has not been measured.

(2)

040 D *mmm / mmm / är det nånting som heter sån här hereditär
cystnjure eller nånting sådant // har du fått nån diagnos eller
'mmm / mmm/ is it something called hereditary cystic
kidney or something like that // have you been given any
diagnosis'*

⁸ Example 2 is taken from Englund Dimitrova (1997), where it is presented in a slightly different format.

- 041 I *te han dado diagnóstico / es algo que se llama una // un
riñon cístico hereditario / que se llama // te han dado
diagnóstico*

‘have they given you a diagnosis / is it something called a //
a hereditary cystic kidney which is called // have they given
you any diagnosis’
- 042 P *no no*

‘no no’

(Turns 43–47 omitted)
- 048 D *men det vet inte du nånting om utan*

‘but you don’t know anything about this except’
- 049 I *tu no sabes nada de eso*

‘you don’t know anything about this’
- 050 P *creo que que no saben por qué // le le vino / no es hereditario
parece // no sé // [no es seguro]*

‘I don’t think they know why // he he got it / it is not
hereditary it seems // I don’t know // [it is not certain]’
- 051 D *[mmm]*
- 052 I *[jag] / jag tror inte de
vet varifrån det har kommit /
[det verkar inte som]*

‘[I] I don’t think they

know where it came from /

[it does not seem to be]’

053 D *[men man har ko-]*

‘[but they have che-]’

054 I *förlåt mig*

‘excuse me’

055 D *ja*

‘yes’

056 I *det verkar inte som om det är ärftligt / jag vet inte*

‘It does not seem to be hereditary / I don’t know’

The patient’s turn 42 is not interpreted (during her turn, she is shaking her head, looking at the doctor), and the doctor goes on in the following turns (with interpreting) to speak about different kidney diseases and the possibility of their hereditary nature. Then, in turn 48 (interpreted in turn 49), he once again asks explicitly whether she knows the cause of the disease. The patient answers in turn 50, once again shaking her head as she is speaking. The doctor is looking at her, giving his feedback in turn 51, overlapping with the last words of the patient’s turn. The interpreter starts interpreting in turn 52, also overlapping – a triple overlap, as it were. When the interpreter starts interpreting in turn 52, her head is turned toward the doctor, but without looking at him. Halfway through her turn, she gazes quickly at the doctor,

who perhaps understands this as a turn-yielding signal, and starts speaking in turn 53, overlapping with the interpreter's continued talk. At this point, the interpreter explicitly interrupts the doctor, claiming her turn in order to finish the interpreting.

This interpreter, with her long experience and standing in the profession, has no problem managing the turn-taking process. Her gaze at the doctor in turn 52 may actually have been an instance of her monitoring his comprehension, but it was understood by him as a turn-yielding signal. She interrupts him in order to finish her interpreted utterance, an indication that she has a strong professional self-concept.

5. Concluding Remarks

We have proposed that different kinds of monitoring, both of the interpreter herself and the primary parties, are a crucial and pervasive part of the community interpreter's processing and hence a defining factor of this type of interpreting. From this follows the hypothesis that any problems in the interpreter's monitoring can lead to problems in the interpreting situation, a hypothesis that can be empirically tested. In doing that, we suggest that video recordings are necessary for studying cognitive aspects of community interpreting as gaze patterns and gestures are important factors of for instance monitoring. We have also suggested that the notion of professional self-

concept may be useful for explaining how the interpreter acts and reacts to the outcome of his or her monitoring. By combining monitoring, a more cognitive notion, with professional self-concept, a more psychological and social notion, we think it is possible to investigate how cognitive and social aspects are embodied in the interpreting process.

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