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NOTE-TAKING: SKILL AND HABIT OF CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETERS

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Abstract: The notes taken by interpreters who work in the consecutive mode have a fundamental role in the interpreting process. These notes allow the interpreter not to be cognitively overloaded with remembering long segments of information or decontextualized data such as figures, names or series of elements that prove hard to retain in memory. Within the syllabuses of language majors in Cuba where translators and interpreters are trained, note-taking is conceived as a tool or a skill that needs to be automatic in order to be effective, both during formation and professional life of consecutive interpreters. Automaticity is directly related to habits and skills, whose close relationship makes it difficult to establish clear boundaries between one and the other in most situations, but skills and habits require different methodological approaches to be fostered. The aim of the present research is to determine whether note-taking is a professional skill or habit of interpreters. To fulfill such goal, the authors departed from the use of scientific observation during training sessions to continue with the critical appraisal of the documents reviewed as methods to reach conclusions and corroborate the results of the research.
Keywords: note-taking; CI; skill; habit; automaticity

Introduction

Notes are written resources that help recalling what has been read or listened to, or what needs to be said at some point in the future. Students use this technique, which is seldom taught at

school, to summarize what professors say during class, prepare for exams or public presentations and draw conclusions about a given topic. Knowing how to use this tool becomes useful for university students who go through long hours of conference and usually need to develop public speaking skills in their area of expertise.

"It is a language mechanism that implies a link between orality and writing, reception and production skills" (Borioli, 2018), as well as skills of mental and graphic representation of the contents to be studied and systematized later on by the learner. However, this tool is not only used by students. Different professionals also make use of note-taking as a tool to do their jobs: lawyers, journalists, interpreters. For each one of these professions note-taking acquires specific characteristics.

In language interpreting, it is usually associated with consecutive interpreting (CI), where the interpreter has to wait for several minutes while the speaker finishes a complete line of thought before making his or her rendition of it in a second language. In community interpreting setting, notes are also common to aid the interpreter, although a descriptive approach to them was not found by the authors. Research on the distinctive features and specific didactics of note-taking in this context is still limited.

Due to its professional and didactic importance, in Syllabus D and E of language majors in Cuba, one of the objectives that interpreting trainees have to fulfill in their first semester of interpreting studies is the development of habits and skills in the note-taking technique, as one of the basic tools of the profession. It is one of the central requirements to achieve the main goal of language graduates: solving problems within the fields of interpreting and language teaching.

Mastery of this technique has proved difficult to students who recognize its importance, but still prefer not to use it when they should, or fail to fulfill the aim of the communicative situation they mediate in, often, as a result of the notes they take. This problem could be attributed to several reasons: 1) the methodological approach followed by interpreting instructors in the University of

Holguin, has been as diverse as the number of instructors there has been, hence, the necessary scientific follow up is lacking; 2) the guidance given in the directing documents of the discipline can be perceived as insufficient in this respect.

Derived from this last element is the equivalent approach given to note-taking both in classic consecutive interpreting and short consecutive, and the lack of clarity regarding the delimitation of the concepts of habit and skill, used indistinctly to refer to note-taking within the syllabus. As a consequence, the treatment given to both is uneven and misguiding.

The present article presents the partial results of a doctoral research on the development of habits and skills in the teaching-learning process of CI in the University of Holguin. As CI instructors, the authors could observe that regardless how skillful students are in the use of this technique, the note-taking strategies most frequently practiced by them, are hard to modify even when proved to be counterproductive. The objective of this research is to demonstrate that note-taking is both a professional skill and a professional habit of interpreters, in particular those who work in the consecutive mode, as a starting point towards a deeper study on how to improve students' interpreting performance assisted by notes.

After determining the particular deficiencies interpreting students presented on the study of note-taking, the authors first reviewed the research conducted by Jean François Rozan (1956); Seleskovitch & Lederer (1989); Ilg & Lambert (1999); Pöchhacker (2004); Ouvrard (2013); Vázquez y del Árbol (2005); Abuín González (2009); Blaszczyk & Hanusiak (2010); Orlando (2010); Medina (2014); Russell & Takeda (2015); Santamaría Ciorda (2015); Gillies (2017); Rivas (2020); Kohn & Albl-Mikasa (2021) on the origin and evolution, didactic treatment and cognitive implications of this technique in CI.

The concept of automaticity becomes central in the process of mastering this professional technique that is widely appreciated as a skill, but in a lesser degree associated to the professional habits an interpreter must acquire. On analyzing the relationship

between automaticity, skill and habit, the literature reviewed on the psychological, didactic and pedagogical nature of such elements showed a direct relation between automaticity and habit and an indirect one between automaticity and skill, given by the conscious control that skills have over corresponding habits.

The article presents the delimitation of the distinctive features of habits and skills and the operationalization of the habit of note-taking as the results of the research.

Overview of the origin and evolution of note-taking in consecutive interpretation

Note-taking is commonly associated with long or classic consecutive interpretation. It is defined as "a graphic symbolization technique that helps the interpreter to register signs, terms and words. It allows him/her to recall linguistic and informative aspects of the speech with the aim of rewording it. This technique is used simultaneously with memory operations" (Abuín González, 2009, p. 1, our translation). "It is the visual representation of the interpreter's analysis of the source speech" (Gillies, 2017, p. 9) and "makes it possible for him/her to summarize and write down the information likely to be forgotten" (Vázquez y del Árbol, 2005, p. 186, our translation).

The Conference of Paris in 1919 marked the beginnings of conference interpretation. At that time, this type of interpreting meant the inter-linguistic mediation of speeches that could last for more than an hour without interruption. There were renowned interpreters who could recall and reformulate what was said during those hours without graphic aid thanks to their extraordinary memory skills. However, most interpreters resorted to the notes they took to assist in their recollection of the information given by the diplomats. The experience gathered during the time where CI prevailed in the work sessions of the League of Nations and the first years of the United Nations, gave way to the creation of

functional systems of notes that made interpreting in this modality more efficient and less cognitively exhausting.

Interpreting hour-long speeches is in the past. As of today, segments to be interpreted can last two minutes (Russell & Takeda, 2015), 7 or 8 minutes (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989; Santamaría Ciorda, 2015) in short consecutive and up to 20 minutes in long consecutive (Gillies, 2017, p. 5); yet, note-taking remains an essential part of CI teaching-learning process in the majority of interpreting training programs. "In the context of conference interpreter training in higher education, CI usually means 'long consec' with systematic note-taking and is taught accordingly, with a focus on monological communication" (Rusell & Takeda, 2015, p. 106). To this interpreting mode several benefits are attributed:

- "Physical and mental endurance given by the ability to interpret long speeches or segments" (Jones, 2002 *apud* Russell & Takeda, 2015, p. 106);
- The varied skills that are developed: "discourse analysis, synthesis of it, or discrimination of main and secondary ideas" (Vázquez y del Árbol, 2005, p. 186);
- Speech comprehension and production competences.

Consequently, "note-taking has been a major topic in CI teaching and research" (Russell & Takeda, 2015) and a variety of scopes of actions has been explored, among them the relationship between cognitive processes that depend on or support note-taking (memory, comprehension, listening, speech production, graphic representation, reading of notes), morphologic and syntactic aspects of notational systems and the didactics of note-taking and its impact on the interpreting skill of students as opposed to professional interpreters.

"Formalization of notational principles, methods and procedures has resulted in the creation of a considerable number of note-taking systems and methods" (Abuín González, 2009, p. 1, our translation), among them, Rozan (1956); Gran (1982); Matyssek

(1989); Allioni (1998); Gillies (2005). However, the foundation for the overwhelming majority of them is the one defended by Jean François Rozan in 1956. "He based his note-taking on a thorough linguistic, semantic and cognitive analysis of the original, together with his own perceptive way of dealing with equivalent reformulation and effective communication" (Ilg & Lambert, 1996, p. 70).

This system is based on the use of symbols and the adherence to seven principles: transposition of ideas instead of words, abbreviation rules for words of more than five letters, linking words to denote the relation between ideas, negation by crossing out the graphic representation of concepts and words, emphasis by underlining once or twice according to relevance, verticality for elements with equal function within the sentence, and shifts or representing in paper or tablet the order of the ideas as they are presented. "Regardless the number of existing systems, none has been demonstrated to be the best in absolute terms" (Gile, 2005, p. 141).

The ever present debate on how systematically to teach note-taking dwells on two main opposites: 1) note-taking should be taught and trained in class; and 2) the responsibility of acquiring the needed dexterity to interpret aided by notes lies in each student. There is consensus regarding one aspect of note-taking, though: "any system should be highly individual but based on common sense rules of efficiency and economy" (Ilg & Lambert, 1996, p. 78).

Kohn & Albl-Mikasa (2021, p. 257) propose the following principles for consecutive interpreters. Their notes should be:

- *Economical* to reduce the information processing effort of each interpreter. Thus, their notes have to be as brief as possible depending on the motor coordination of each interpreter, the strategies used to mentally represent the information processed and the technique used to convert such mental representation into a graphic one that will become the note to be read;
- *Instantly seizable* so that the interpreter can comprehend his/her notes effectively, at a glance, and hence relieve the

memory effort. That is why notes are to be read and not decoded;

- *Individual*. Everything is valid when it comes to mastering the technique albeit all the rules and requirements created to date, as long as the interpreter understands his/her notes and the interpretation is effective.

To achieve such goal, "trainees should first get acquainted with a relatively universal and structured notational system to be able to take distance from it later on, and make it his/her own" (Rivas, 2020, p. 33-34, our translation). In the English Language Major at the University of Holguin, such universal system has been Rozan's.

With such elements in mind, "the didactics of note-taking is generally based on the segmentation of the CI process linked to the different stages of the skill acquisition" (Abuín González, 2009, p. 18, our translation), even though, teaching a particular system and interpretation as such separately, still presents trainers with a challenge. Another key question refers to the best moment to introduce note-taking within the curriculum. A number of authors (Gile, 1991; Ilg & Lambert, 1996; Pöchhacker, 2004; Abuín González, 2009; Orlando, 2010; Russell & Takeda, 2015; Santamaria Ciordia, 2015; Domínguez Araújo, 2015; Gillies, 2017) coincide that note-taking should not be taught in the first stages of interpreting training because it derives in the habituation of the student to the indiscriminate use of this tool even in short consecutive (when it is not strictly required).

"Gile's 1991 study points out that note-taking diminishes focus and processing capacity available for different tasks, and, therefore, impairs memorization" (Orlando, 2010, p. 74). That is the reason why there must be a thorough period of practicing the skills and operations necessary to CI prior to introducing note-taking. Its basic principles should be internalized, to keep note-taking from becoming an obstacle rather than an aid to memory and, ultimately, interpreting.

In teaching-learning contexts internalization is a synonym of automaticity. "Automatizing an activity means repeatedly using a consistent method for the completion of a task so that it requires less intellectual effort (becomes automatic), thus leaving time and capacity for other tasks" (Gillies, 2017, p. 10). "Automaticity is evidenced by the behavior displaying some or all of the following features: efficiency, lack of awareness, unintentionality and uncontrollability" (Bargh, 1994 *apud* Lally *et al.*, 2010, p. 998).

Jamshidifarsani *et al*. (2021, p. 2) associate "an ever lower consumption of time and energy, as well as the liberation of the cognitive load that could be engaged in parallel activities" with the automaticity process. However, they do not establish a relation between all these features of automaticity and the lack of conscious control in the execution of the activity. On the contrary, Lally *et al*. (2010, p. 998) assume that "efficiency and lack of awareness, intention and control of behavior are the manifestations of automaticity".

The internalization or automatizing of interpreting processes and operations has been underlined by many authors throughout the years of research into interpreting. "Note-taking as a mechanical activity that improves with repetition and practice can also be internalized" (Gillies, 2017, p. 10).

Although the vast majority of researchers and textbooks identify the action of taking notes with one of the skills to be acquired by consecutive interpreters, they also agree on the necessity to make such 'skill', or its constituent operations, automatic. The unconscious execution of an activity is directly associated with habitual behavior and thus, to habits.

Considering that skills are characterized by their conscious nature and that an internalized process demands less and less conscious attention (proper of routinely or habitual practices) as repetition increases, is note-taking really a skill or a habit?

Skills vs. Habits

It is undeniable that knowledge, skills and habits form an interdependent unit that allows learning. Knowledge becomes the basis of what an individual should learn, and skills and habits are the manifestation of such knowledge in practice. All three of them must exist harmoniously for the realization of the human activity. Skills and habits are, therefore, components of the human activity and are directly related to actions and operations.

When consulting the listed literature dealing with habits and skills, the authors could appreciate a multiplicity of concepts and opinions with regards to the relationship of these two psychological elements. Criteria are diverse: "skills are unfinished habits; primary skills are fundamental for habit formation and at the same time improved skills are the foundation of habits; skills are capacities for a given activity" (Mulet González, 2018, p. 2-3, our translation).

Many authors were consulted as to define both concepts and determine their distinctive characteristics: Petrovski (1981), Clark (2000), González (2003), Osada (2004), Ormrod (2005), Clark *et al*. (2007), Corona Martínez & Fonseca Hernández (2009), Ginoris *et al*. (2009), Montes de Oca Recio & Machado Ramírez (2009), Lally *et al*. (2010), Marina (2012), Shove (2009), Velázquez *et al*. (2015), García Rodríguez (2017), Machín (2017), Sánchez (2017), Mulet González (2018), Douskos (2019), Jamshidifarsani *et al*. (2021), Sánchez Cu (s.f.).

In order to understand the relationship between skill and habit, it is necessary to depart from the concept of human activity. It consists in the manner in which an individual contacts dynamically with his/her reality, and through which he/she establishes a relationship with the world he/she inhabits. Through such activity, "man influences nature, objects and other people" (Petrovski, 1981, p. 197, our translation). "Human activity is formed by actions and operations" (Leontiev, 1982 *apud* García Rodríguez, 2017, p. 62, our translation) that interact with context. This last element operates as "a constructive and

contingent factor of the activity" (Díaz, 2008 *apud* García Rodríguez, 2017, p. 93, our translation).

A skill is a mastered conscious action. It is the manner in which individuals interact with the object of study; "the action constituted by a series of operations and performed according to a given method and subordinated to a conscious general objective" (Mulet González, 2018, p. 5, our translation). "It is the most improved way of executing an action, and it presupposes the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of habits as their essential previous components" (Mulet González, 2018, p. 6, our translation).

It is an executive and cognitive feature of the personality. It translates into "the command of the action (internal and external) that allows the rational regulation of the activity with the help of the subject's knowledge and habits" (González, 2003, p. 44, our translation). According to Galperin (1982 *apud* Corona Martínez *&* Fonseca Hernández, 2009), skills are structurally composed by knowledge, actions and operations, and drives and objectives. "Actions and operations are executive components which guarantee that the activity is performed in accordance with the existing conditions and the goals set by the subject (Mulet González, 2018, p. 3, our translation).

Petrovski refers that "a skill is a complex system of psychic and practical activities that are necessary for the convenient regulation of the activity, the knowledge and the habits the individual possesses" (1981 *apud* Montes de Oca Recio & Machado Ramírez, 2009, p. 6, our translation). "Skills are the systematization of actions that cannot be automatized because they are subordinated to a conscious objective or end" (Brito, 1987 *apud* Machín, 2017, p. 68, our translation).

Thus, skills are psychological and pedagogical phenomena that regulate human knowledge, activity and behavior, making them indispensable in the learning process. Due to their subordination to conscious objectives, skills come from actions and rely on systematization, but they are in no manner synonyms. They depend on each other, but they constitute different categories. Skills are qualities individuals possess as a result of the systematization of

the related actions. If such systematization results in a fluent and efficient execution of the action, it becomes a skill; if it does not, the action remains being an action.

On the other hand, habits are by nature automatic or partially automatic. A habit is an operation executed without a conscious aim and improved through repetition. "It is a practice characterized by distinctive forms of regularity and persistence" (Shove, 2009). Clark (2000, p. 129S) defines them as "acquired predispositions to particular modes of response that equip a person with an economy of thought and action in dealing with new problems". They interact with time, agency and context and possess intrinsic repetitive force that optimize skills or thoughts in action, reduce fatigue, free attention to detect new or threatening stimuli and allow the execution of functions without the need to recall specific elements of a determined practice (Clark, 2000).

Clark *et al*. (2007, p. 13S) conceptualize them as "dispositions or tendencies to behave, act, think, or feel in particular ways and are not seen as automatic or uniform. Nor are they construed as being mostly innate, but acquired through experience in the context of doing practical activities". These stable mental schemes are learned by repetition of actions that facilitate the automatizing of cognitive, emotional, executive, and motor operations. "The ensemble of such aspects can be called *learned personality"* (Marina, 2012, our translation).

Such learned behavior patterns "appear mechanically in the event of specific situations, where the individual does not need to think or decide on how to act" (Sánchez, 2017, our translation), because "control of the behavior transfers to cues in the environment that activate an automatic response" (Lally *et al.*, 2010, p. 998).

As stable dispositions, habits can be difficult to remove and are seen as vices when deemed negative. Nonetheless, they are far from being irreversible, because in humans, habits cannot be considered completely automatized operations. "Apparently, it is possible to speak in terms of pure habits as behavioral mechanisms only when it comes to animals. In the case of men, an activity, except for

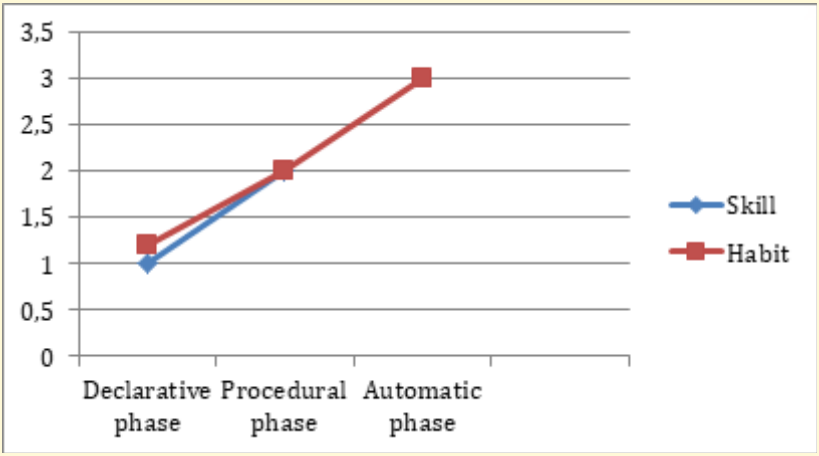
pathological instances, is ultimately controlled by consciousness" (Petrovski, 1981, p. 217, our translation). Despite the level of automaticity of a habit, "it will always be under the control of the action and the consciousness, for the actions in which they are inserted are directed by and subordinated to the conscious goals set by the subject" (Ginoris *et al.*, 2006, p. 177, our translation).

It is precisely this conscious control in the planning, execution and assessment of the activity what allows to modify the necessary ways, methods and procedures to achieve the set goal. Hence, there will always be a certain degree of conscious control regarding habits: habits and operations will always be under the conscious control of actions and skills.

In sum, skills and habits are concomitant elements of the personality whose development and formation processes happen in parallel, where skill is the essential element for the formation of a corresponding habit. The person, who has acquired a habit, possesses the corresponding skill, because habit results from the repetition of the act. "The inverse process is not possible, though: a person can be skillful when executing an activity, but he/she might not be habituated to do such activity routinely" (Sánchez Cu, s.f.). Habit formation is a subsequent stage of skill development where the latter constitutes the basis of the former.

Based on the automaticity acquisition model proposed by Jamshidifarsani *et al*. (2021) skill and habit development can be linked to the transit from declarative knowledge or memory to procedural knowledge or memory and ultimately to automatization. This model describes the automaticity process in three phases: fast learning, slow learning and automatization. In the last phase the subject ceases to rely on declarative knowledge to depend, not entirely, but in a considerably superior degree, on the automatic execution of the activity thanks to procedural memory as shown in Chart 1. Fast learning (declarative knowledge) and slow learning (procedural knowledge) correspond to the parallel processes of skill assimilation and habit formation and the automatic phase corresponds to the settlement of the habit.

Chart 1: Skill and habit development processes



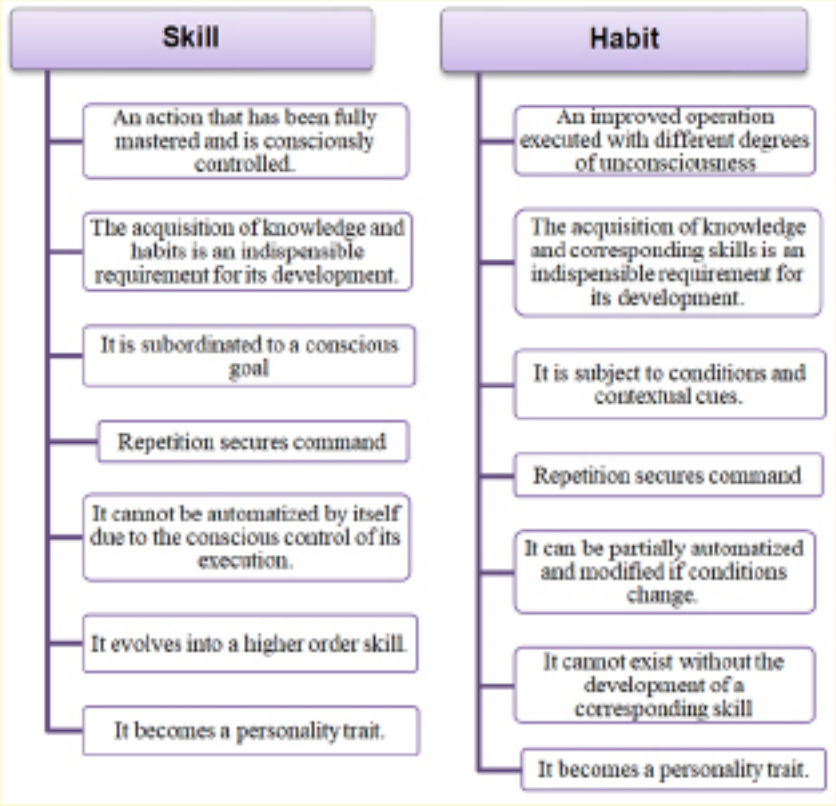
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Thus, automaticity is directly related to habits and indirectly related to skills.

Distinctive characteristics of skills and habits

From the analysis made to the different sources consulted, the main features of both skill and habit can be synthesized as follows:

Table 1: Distinctive features of skill and habit



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Nevertheless, these characteristics are insufficient to distinguish one from the other. "To determine whether an instrumentation is a habit or a skill one has to take into account what predominates in the operations, either the automatized and unconscious or the conscious regulation" (Velázquez *et al.,* 2015).

Note-taking Skill or Note-taking Habit

Note-taking, like any activity is formed by actions and operations. In order to comprehend whether it can become a skill or a habit, it is necessary to analyze its constituent instrumentations.

Table 2: Note-taking's constituent actions and operations

Activity	Instrumentations	Nature
Note-taking	Listening comprehension in source language	Action
	Analysis and Synthesis of what is comprehended	Action
	Linguistic code (the speech graphic representation in L1, L2, both or others)	Operation
	Divided attention 1) during the simultaneous analysis of the spoken message in source language and its synthetic graphic representation (during comprehension stage); and 2) simultaneous reading of notes and verbal production in target language (during reformulation stage)	Operation
	Abbreviation of semantically relevant terms, including connectors	Operation
	Symbolization of concepts, including crossing for negation and underlying for emphasis	Operation
	Organization of the notes on the page (linear or patterned)	Operation
	Memorization (retention and recall of the message according to individual strategies of mental representation)	Action
	Reading of the notes taken to produce an equivalent speech in L2	Operation

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the case of note-taking the criteria needed to determine whether it is a skill or a habit should encompass not only the predominant

instrumentation, but also which of those instrumentations are proper of CI and not other modalities, too.

As shown in Table 2, listening comprehension, analysis-synthesis and memorization are actions that require a high degree of attention. The three of them complement each other and happen simultaneously, and although it could be argued that it is possible to automatize the strategies used by each interpreter and not the instrumentations as such, the levels of attention devoted to the three of them require a permanent conscious control of the interpreter.

"It is impossible for the interpreter to comprehend the speech as a whole unless he or she follows permanently its logic, during the entire progression of it and during all its evolutions" (Ouvrard, 2013, our translation). Therefore, analysis becomes the foundation for this type of listening and also for the retention of the message.

"Both in terms of quality and quantity, people remember less information received through listening than reading" (Osada, 2004, p. 60), not to mention "the diminished concentration capacity which is characteristic of listening to materials for more than 2.5 minutes" (Thompson & Rubin, 1996 *apud* Osada, 2004, p. 61). Analysis then acquires a more salient relevance, for what is analyzed can be better understood and what is understood is better recalled. This is fundamental for a successful rendition of the original message.

Therefore, memory has occupied a privileged place in interpretation research that aims at explaining how it works, how it can be trained and how it interacts with other cognitive features that take part in the interpreting process. "The durability of the traces of information that remain in the different memory storages is a function of the manner in which the material is codified" (Craig & Lockhart, 1972 *apud* Lambert, 1988, p. 377). Retention of the information depends on how much analysis is required to encode the material received. "If we wish to move the information from the sensory register to working memory, the best we can do, at least in most cases, is to pay attention to it (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Cowell, 1968; Shiffrin, 1968; Cowan, 1995; Kulhavy, Peterson & Schwartz, 1986). In essence, "the information you pay attention

to goes into working memory, while unattended information disappears from memory" (Ormrod, 2005, p. 217).

Regardless the different strategies used by the interpreter to analyze the information he/she listens to and to recall it afterwards, and how automatically he/she employs them, attention to the incoming information prevails during the three concomitant processes and determines the efficiency of the corresponding actions. These actions are important in the CI process, but are not exclusive of it, though. In lesser or higher degrees, listening, analysis-synthesis and memory are relevant to simultaneous interpreting and other modalities as well. On the contrary, the rest of the instrumentations represented in Table 2 are exclusive to the notes consecutive interpreters take.

The principles defended by Rozan can be considered operations that if repeated systematically will evolve to become habits. The symbols an interpreter uses for a given context need to be analyzed, planned, revised and practiced before he/she begins to use them or even modify them in order to adapt to the changes in context. After varied periods of usage, the interpreter does not have to dwell on the symbol he/she needs in a given moment, because, due to repeated use, such symbol will be retrieved mechanically and serve to represent the concept the interpreter needs to remember. The same happens with abbreviation: after the conscious period of familiarization with the most suitable manner of abbreviating words and arranging these abbreviations and symbols on the paper or tablet, according to personal preferences, the interpreter unconsciously resorts to those he/she has used before under similar circumstances. The abbreviation methods and strategies are used mechanically.

Although it is advised to distribute notes on the paper from top to bottom, right to left and diagonally to guarantee verticality and shifts, this rule may not be followed equally by all interpreters. In the course of interpreting practice, the interpreter will introduce modifications motivated by personal preferences and given circumstances that could produce good results. Unconsciously the

interpreter will resort to that last practice which worked in the past and repeat the pattern every time he/she interprets a similar speech. The automaticity of the notes layout depends as much on the formal training received by the interpreter as his/her personal experience that includes previous habitual noting practices, preferences, linguistic traditions and his/her mental representation of the discourse to be interpreted.

The linguistic code and the division of the attention are two other operations which interpreters do not have to decide when to activate. When it comes to the choice of language of the notes, researchers advocate the suitability of the target language, where the transposition phase is completed before the interpreter reads the notes, but can impair the comprehension phase. The use of the source language on the notes has also been studied and is distinguished by the opposite advantages and disadvantages. Although less documented and advised due to the confusion it may bring to interpreters, the use of a third language is a fact for those with a good command of several languages.

Blaszczyk & Hanusiak (2010) consider it an idiosyncratic phenomenon that depends on the interpreter training and professional experience or individual preferences. If economy is one of the tenants of note-taking, the interpreter will resort to the most economical manner of representing such concept. Polyglots might associate a concept more easily with a term in a third language than with the ones involved in the interpreting situation given its shortness, its recurrent use by the interpreter or other reasons. Regardless the justification, such operation is performed automatically by each interpreter.

Divided attention, division of attention, simultaneity or dual tasking is more commonly associated to simultaneous interpreting than to the consecutive mode. However, management of attention is an integral part of note-taking and has been recognized as such (although not extensively studied) throughout the years by interpreting research. The consecutive interpreter needs to divide his/her attention in two moments during the interpreting process:

during the comprehension stage, where he/she analyzes the message in the source language while he/she represents it on the paper, and during the reformulation stage where he/she produces his/her rendition of the source speech aided by the notes that he/she will read simultaneously. This reading will be more or less profound depending on the complexity of the segment interpreted.

These operations need to become increasingly automatic to redistribute the attention invested in them towards actions such as analyzing the source text (comprehension) and in monitoring speech production (reformulation) which needs it most.

Conclusions

As a result of the analysis presented previously the authors draw a series of conclusions:

An action is inevitably a conscious instrumentation. When an action is repeated, a skill is developed to ensure the efficient performance of said action. Thus, the skill is not the action in itself. Likewise, an operation, which is an instrumentation without a conscious goal, if repeated in similar conditions, results in habituation to execute such operation in the same manner.

The more one repeats an action, more skillful one becomes to perform it; and as one repeats and operation, there will be less need to resort to the conscious objective that once guided the action, and more habituation to execute it in similar ways. Given the stability of conditions, good results can be expected. As skills and habits are always subordinated to the objectives of the action, habits are always consciously controlled by the skill that determines when it is necessary to modify the habit. Given the levels of consciousness associated to both instrumentations, automaticity is directly related to habits and indirectly to skills.

Note-taking is a habit controlled by the skill of the same name whose constituent operations not only outnumber its constituent actions but also are common of the consecutive interpreting

modality and not others. The development of the note-taking skill becomes the cornerstone of the note-taking habit formation process, and although the latter continues evolving after the former is fully developed, it will always be under its control. It is, therefore, a partially automatized habit.

Acknowledging note-taking as a professional habit, from the beginning of training, entails a well-planned teaching strategy that guides the student towards positive habitual practices and behaviors. This will lead to the formation of positive habits. Once settled, habits are difficult to remove or correct, and would require a longer process and different approaches.

Further research on the topic will be aimed at a didactic proposal to foster the formation of the note-taking habit in consecutive interpreting students.

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