TÜRKÇE'DEN İNGİLİZCE'YE SİMÜLTANE ÇEVİRİDE FIİL TAHMİNİ

Öz


Anahtar kelimeler: fiil tahmini, simultane çeviri, sözlü çeviri stratejileri
VERB ANTICIPATION IN TURKISH-ENGLISH SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING

Abstract

This study was designed as an explorative, descriptive, and observational/experimental study. Following a review of the existing literature on anticipation, it aims at presenting and discussing the results of an experiment designed to explore verb anticipation in Turkish-English simultaneous interpreting. In addition, the self-perceptions of interpreting students regarding their own interpreting performance and their use of anticipation as an interpreting strategy obtained through post-experiment interviews will be discussed. Verb anticipation will be analyzed under two categories which are successful anticipation (exact anticipation and more general anticipation) and incorrect anticipation. Sentence length and complexity will also be considered as a factor which might potentially affect verb anticipation.

Keywords: verb anticipation, simultaneous interpreting, interpreting strategies

1. Introduction

Anticipation refers to the production of a word or group of words in the target language in simultaneous interpreting before the group of words is uttered in the source language. The simultaneous interpreter predicts the content of the speaker’s utterance before it has been completed.

In this study, following the review of existing approaches to the strategy of anticipation, material consisting of Turkish-English simultaneous interpretation is analyzed. The study suggests that simultaneous interpreters resort to anticipation very often, usually predicting the verb in the target language. Due to the fact that the source language in this study – Turkish – is a head-final language and the target language – English – is a head-initial language and taking into account the position of the verb in both languages, frequently anticipated verbs indicate that anticipation is a language-specific strategy.

2. Anticipation as an Interpreting Strategy

Simultaneous interpreters anticipate words or phrases strategically in order to deal with the cognitive load imposed by the multiplicity and simultaneity of the efforts (Gile 1995) involved in the task of interpreting and the differing syntactic structures in source and target language. The performance of various tasks – listening/analysis, memory, and speech production) is required in SI (Gile 1995: 162). The adequate performance of these tasks require the allocation of sufficient processing capacity to each task. The interpreter needs “to minimise the individual efforts so as to optimise his or her overall performance” (Jörg 1995: 218). Hence, anticipation, “defined as the strategic interpretation (utterance) of a word, idea, message in the output (i.e. the target language) before it actually appears in the input (i.e. the source language)” (Hodzik 2013: 1), is considered as a very important simultaneous interpreting strategy (Chernov 1994; Gile 1995; Kohn and Kalina 1996). The ability to anticipate “greatly facilitates the interpreter’s task”, saving processing capacity (Moser 1978: 359).
Many authors differentiate between linguistic and extralinguistic anticipation when it comes to the information that interpreters use in order to predict what is to come next (Gile 1995, Lederer 1978, Lederer 1981, Seleskovitch 1984, Wills 1978). With respect to extralinguistic anticipation, “the interpreter uses his/her situational and general knowledge. In the case of linguistic anticipation, the interpreter predicts the appearance of a constituent on the basis of the syntactic and/or semantic information provided by the source language sentence” (Van Besien 1999: 251). Thus, linguistic and extralinguistic anticipation refer to “speech unit prediction based on linguistic and extralinguistic clues respectively” (Jörg 1995: 217). Extralinguistic anticipation is based on sense expectation whereas linguistic anticipation is based on language prediction (Setton 1994: 194). Thus, the interpreter hypothesizes about the content of the speech based on either situational and general knowledge, or syntactic and/or semantic information given in the source speech. Linguistic proficiency and sensitivity increase linguistic anticipation skills whereas with extralinguistic anticipation, “the anticipator has to rely on his or her knowledge of the speaker, the subject matter, and the situation” (Jörg 1995: 218). Wills (1978) talks about anticipation cues that trigger linguistic and extralinguistic anticipation and classifies these cues as co-textual (intralingual), extralinguistic (situational), and context-independent cues, “such as those based on a knowledge of standardised communication processes” (Setton 1994: 194). Co-textual cues are intralingual and depend on syntactic and/or semantic information whereas extralinguistic cues depend on the context and situation. Context-independent cues do not vary depending on the context as the name suggests. Opening and closing remarks, cliches, parts of idiomatic expressions, verb-complement collocations, and standard phrases can be given as examples (Van Besien 1999: 252). Likewise, Chernov (1994) distinguishes between linguistic, cognitive, situational, and pragmatic inferences, suggesting that redundancy allows for “the predictability of meaning and sense in the message” (Chernov 1994: 145). Van Besien also refers to structural anticipation as a special type of anticipation, defining it as a method that “enables (the interpreter) to postpone the moment when the verb must be produced” (Van Besien 1999: 252).

Anticipation is mainly caused by the difference in syntactic structure between the source and the target language in simultaneous interpreting. An empirical study was conducted by Jörg (1995) on the anticipation of the verb in SI from German into English. According to Jörg, “complex German verb phrases can be split by objects, complement phrases, participle constructions, relative clauses, etc. and thus do not correspond to the English subject-verb-object pattern” (1995: 218). These two languages have asymmetrical syntactic structures in terms of the position of the verb in the sentence. The fact that the verb is uttered late in the source language but needed early in the target language causes problems for the interpreter when interpreting from German into English or French (Lederer 1984). Similar problems occur when interpreting from Chinese and Japanese into English and French. However, it is important to note that the differences between these languages are not limited to sentence level, and a discourse-analytical approach could be useful to develop a wider and deeper understanding of anticipation (Setton 1994: 194). One can talk about a similar case with respect to SI from Turkish into English. While interpreting from Turkish which is a head-final language into English which is a head-initial language, interpreters often have to wait until the end of the sentence in order to translate what is said in Turkish. For example,

(1) Turkish: O beni dün aradı.

She me yesterday called.
English: She called me yesterday.

As interpreting is a very demanding task in terms of cognitive resources and imposes a lot of load on memory resources, interpreters cannot usually afford to wait until the end of the sentence in Turkish in order to start interpreting. Thus, they anticipate the sentence-final verb before it is produced in the source language. In the present study, Turkish and English will serve as source and target language respectively. Consequently, the study will focus on the anticipation of the sentence-final verb in Turkish-English SI through empirical investigation.

3. Methodology

This study aims at gaining an insight into the following three research questions:

1. Does verb anticipation take place in Turkish-English SI?
2. Are there any differences in terms of the use of anticipation between SI from a ST consisting of short and simple sentences and one consisting of long and complex sentences?
3. What are the self-perceptions of interpreting students regarding their own performance and anticipation in Turkish-English SI?

In order to seek answers to these questions, data collection consists of two phases: recordings of interpreting performance and post-experiment interviews. The study was designed as an explorative, descriptive, and observational/experimental study, producing controlled conditions not in order to test a specific hypothesis, but aiming at making inferences based on the results of the experiment as a whole (Gile 1994: 50).

3.1. Participants

The participants in the study consist of 8 senior Translation and Interpreting students from Dokuz Eylül University. Similar background knowledge is significant therefore the participants were selected among the students at the same grade. The level of the class and the competence of the students are more or less comparable. The performance of the students was recorded in university SI booths. The students were given prior briefing and they were informed that their performance would be analyzed in the framework of a research project. Although it should be kept in mind that it was a simulated SI situation, the conditions were similar to that of a real conference. The texts to be interpreted were not given to the students.

3.2. Experiment

Two texts in Turkish were selected in the same subject field. The texts were considered appropriate for SI because they were topical and they did not require preparation from the interpreters. The first speech was given originally on the 27th of May, 2016 in the opening session of UN Least Developed Countries Meeting by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. This speech consisted mainly of short sentences. The second speech was given on the 14th of June, 2017 at the opening session of a panel organized by Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and Koç University Economic Research Forum by a member of the Executive Board of TÜSİAD Barış Oran. This speech consisted of longer sentences including relative clauses in order to explore whether the frequency of anticipation varies depending on the length and complexity of the speech to be interpreted. The first ST consisted of 41 sentences whereas the second ST consisted of 25 sentences. The source texts were not technical in nature.
and befit the occasion of an opening speech in terms of style, vocabulary, and register. The syntax of the second source text was more complex compared to the first source text.

In order to remove the variable of unfamiliar terminology, a vocabulary test including possible new terms in the texts was given to the students two weeks in advance. The students were asked to send the audio-recordings of the meanings of the new terms to their professors. Also, the students were given vocabulary tests right before the experiment in order to make sure that the variable of terminology is removed.

3.3. Post-experiment Interviews

Semi-structured post-experiment interviews were conducted with the students right after the experiment in order to get immediate feedback and detailed information regarding their use of anticipation as an interpreting strategy and self-perceptions of their own performance.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Anticipation at work

The Çavuşoğlu speech consisting of 41 short and simple sentences and the Oran speech consisting of 25 long and complex sentences were transcribed. The Oran speech included relative clauses and complex phrases which had to be kept in memory unless the verb is anticipated. In order to find out whether anticipation takes place, if yes, how often, and whether there are differences with respect to source texts with short and long sentences, three categories devised by Jörg (1995: 222) were used. The first category consisted of the successful anticipation of the verb (successful anticipation), the second category consisted of situations where no anticipation takes place (no anticipation), and the third category consisted of cases of incorrect anticipation (incorrect anticipation). The first category was examined under two sub-categories as exact anticipation and more general anticipation (Jörg 1995: 222). This sub-categorization was considered as necessary as the two types differ in that one is the exact anticipation of the verb based on inferences from linguistic and extralinguistic clues whereas the other is an approximate, more general but still correct anticipation. In this study, the cases where there is no anticipation will not be analyzed. Thus, only the cases of anticipation will be examined according to the type of anticipation at hand.

The figures below indicate the distribution of anticipation categories whereas the following tables show the individual anticipation scores of the students.
Source Text 1

Figure 1. Distribution of anticipation categories in Çavuşoğlu speech.

Table 1. Individual anticipation scores in Çavuşoğlu speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of anticipation</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>Successful (general)</th>
<th>Successful (exact)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter D</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter G</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter H</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first research question focused on the use of the strategy of anticipation and the third research question focused on the self-perceptions of interpreting students regarding their own interpreting performance whilst interpreting them as well as their use of anticipation. To this end, post-experiment interviews were conducted to elicit their feedback.

According to the results of the post-experiment interviews, 6 among 8 interpreters were unsatisfied with their own interpreting performance due to various reasons, such as inconsistency (Interpreter G), the difficulty of the Çavuşoğlu speech (Interpreter F), not being fast enough (Interpreter E), and long and complex sentences with respect to the Oran speech (Interpreter A, B, C, D). They all agreed that the speech was not too fast to interpret. 5 among 8 interpreters mentioned that the Oran speech was technical in nature and more difficult compared to the Çavuşoğlu speech. All interpreters agreed that the vocabulary test given in advance was very helpful. If it had not been for the vocabulary test, the speeches would have been even more difficult for them to interpret. Interpreter A and Interpreter F stated that there were too many numbers in...
the Çavuşoğlu speech. Interpreter E and Interpreter F stated that they were not fast enough to catch up with the speech and they missed certain parts whereas Interpreter D said that he missed certain parts while recalling from memory and thinking of the meanings of words. As for quality criteria, Interpreters A, B, C, E, F, G, and H mentioned accuracy and fluency. Interpreter D emphasized the importance of sense transfer without getting stuck at individual words. Interpreter A referred also to knowledge of terminology. Interpreter F said that the lack of pauses was another indicator of quality. Interpreter H mentioned the importance of accent especially in Turkish to English interpretation.

Interpreter A talked about complex phrases that she missed whereas Interpreter B emphasized that grammar and syntactic structures made it difficult for her to interpret especially the Oran speech. Interpreter D and Interpreter E also mentioned long sentences and complex syntactic structures that gave them a hard time. Interpreter C stated that the syntactic differences between the two languages also caused problems and that long sentences inevitably affected her performance negatively. She added that the fact that Turkish is a head-final language and English is a head-initial language, i.e., having the verb at the end of the sentence in Turkish and having it at the beginning of the sentence following the subject in English led to a more difficult interpretation. Interestingly, she also mentioned explicitly that she had to anticipate the verb at times and the majority of her interpretation through the strategy of anticipation was correct. Interpreter G and Interpreter H also said that the strategy of anticipation was functional at times. They added that their predictions were mostly correct and they fit the context of the speech. When they were asked, 5 among 8 interpreters said that they used the strategy of anticipation mainly with respect to predicting the verb. Thus, as seen in the analysis above, interpreters have resorted to anticipation and 4 among 8 interpreters are aware of their use of this strategy. This study has focused on verb anticipation in Turkish-English simultaneous interpretation and reached the following conclusions.

5. Conclusions

The first research question investigated the use of the strategy of anticipation in Turkish to English SI. The findings suggest that interpreters resort to the strategy of anticipation quite often. As for the second research question which focused on the differences in terms of the use of anticipation between SI from a ST with short sentences and one with long and complex sentences, according to the transcriptions which were examined, interpreters used the strategy of anticipation more often while interpreting from a ST with long and complex sentences. As Turkish is a head-final language, students interpreters often anticipated the verb in English, and most of these cases (45%) were exact anticipation or more general but still correct anticipation (34%) as seen in Figure 2 above. The third research question focused on the self-perceptions of interpreting students regarding their own interpreting performance whilst interpreting them as well as their use of anticipation. The answers of the interpreters revealed that 5 among 8 interpreters were aware of their use of the strategy of anticipation. The other interpreters, however, also used anticipation as seen in the tables above although they were not aware of their use. This experiment could be repeated with longer texts and more subjects in the same language combination as well as different language combinations, resulting in more data and a rich description of the use of anticipation as an interpreting strategy.
REFERENCES


