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TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

- ABSTRACT-

Cultural Transfer, Discourse Quality and Error Management in Conference Interpreting

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(Abstract)

I. Introduction

Our research aims to study the strategies that along the way have proven to be the most efficient, used by interpreters in their daily work, to accurately convey the main speaker's message. In this context, we will be analyzing simultaneous interpreting specifically, the method preponderantly used to communicate within the European institutions, where despite the fact that everyone expresses their opinions using their own native language, representatives from different countries manage to communicate effectively and make decisions through interpretation and translation services. Within our mission, understanding the most useful interpreting techniques, we will also analyze the phenomena that occur beyond linguistic transfer to pinpoint the methods that the interpreter consciously applies with the aim of creating links between two or more communities.

Theories promoted by Seleskovitch and Lederer, Chernov, Gile, Jones and other researchers which considerably changed perceptions in this profession will be discussed to understand the stages that interpretation had to go through to become the profession that we all know today and which is practiced within European institutions with the purpose of communicating despite linguistic and cultural differences. Through our research, we hope to convey what are the new challenges faced by the discipline in the near future.

II. Conceptual and theoretical framework

Over time, due to its oral and free-ranging nature, interpreting has not been considered a field worthy of research. Historically, translation became defined as a prestigious science, while interpretation was perceived as a lesser profession, practiced on an occasional basis. However, several historic events, including the

Nuremberg era, have contributed to reshape beliefs concerning the profession of interpreting, which is now considered essential today within the European institutions. We will therefore realize the role that history has played in the development of interpretation which, even if though it has existed in various forms since the done of humanity, remains a young discipline, still lacking in academic research.

The theoretical part of the thesis will focus on the evolution of interpretation techniques which adapt according to expectations or the original speech type. We highlight the reformulation strategies on which professionals rely in their work, thus succeeding in producing a high-quality speech in the language understood by listeners. In order to achieve this goal, the anticipation theory, providing additional explanations, the intentional exclusion of secondary ideas, the simplification, the Salami Technique and the discursive autonomy represent some specific primary tools analyzed in detail in order to show various ways to convey a message accurately pronounced in another language while keeping the same intended nuances in communication. Alongside the most audible linguistic transfer, cultural notions lacking analysis come to the surface, and we are going to discuss various methods to maximize adaptations instantly made, so that an understandable message reaches the target audience. Opinions from practitioners are at the forefront of our work because whatever the case, even if the theory provides an incontestable support to this profession, interpretation remains mostly practical, requiring split second decisions, where every moment counts.

III.   Hypothesis and obbjectives of the research

Our main focus involves the modifications, adaptations, and decisions that the interpreter faces in real time with the aim of creating a similar result that the speaker would have obtained by using the mother tongue of the audience. The central hypothesis of our research consists of applying reformulation and mediation techniques frequently and consciously, raising the quality of the interpreted speech significantly. The methods that interpreters put into practice to refine a speech are on the one hand, planned, prepared and conscious but on the other hand, intuitive reactions with the aim of surviving by producing a satisfactory result in a profession surrounded by time constraints. To achieve this goal, the changes that the discipline

has gone through will be emphasized, to understand the evolution of reformulation and mediation strategies which also depend on the type of the source discourse. Fundamental differences among various communities are highlighted, so that readers notice the extent to which cultural distinctions are reflected in spoken discourse, without the awareness of the main speaker regarding any changes.

Alongside the theoretical notions analyzed in detail, answers provided by practitioners still working on the job market are presented, to emphasize the tools most used in the interpreting profession today. We will understand on the one hand, how these adaptations are perceived from a theoretical perspective and on the other hand, what really happens in real life, including what constraints push professionals towards certain decisions.

The gradual transition from a free speech to a text red aloud, prepared in advance, represents a substantial challenge requiring professionals to rethink discursive strategies, to capture and convey the main message.

In the context of this profession, practiced only by a limited number of people, we have identified a smaller category, to note, , blind interpreters, who will tell us through testimonies if this job is adapted to their needs, highlighting the tools and methods they use to achieve the same high quality of work as their sighted peers. Through this research, the reader will realize the additional challenges and difficulties that some interpreters must face and the measures they take to ensure that their work remains excellent.

IV.   Methodology

To achieve our initial objectives, after a theoretical examination, where we tried to cover the key concepts which have contributed to the evolution of conference interpretation, we chose to listen to testimonies of interpreters' real stories who have been practicing this profession for a long time and who are still active on the labor market. On the one hand, we created interviews which were responded to by ten practitioners, with the aim of understanding the decisions they are making when interpreting a speech including their perceptions of certain subjects controversial in the academic Literature. On the other hand, however, we recorded and transcribed interviews with blind interpreters who told us about their tips and tricks to achieve the same work as sighted interpreters.

## V.	Descriptive overview of thesis chapters

Our written work starts with an introduction describing the context and the scientific and personal interest in this field, including the objectives of our research, together with the chosen methodology to achieve them. The next five chapters detail highlights past and present trends to build the quality of tomorrow. The first chapter presents a historical framework in broad terms, to emphasize the key stages that the discipline has gone through to symbolize a pillar in modern communication, and its progressive transition from consecutive interpretation to simultaneous interpretation, the predominant method in the European institutions. Although the Nuremberg Trials remain the event from which interpretation became a key factor, other stages throughout history also made significant contributions. Current definitions and up to date terminology will also be highlighted, so that we will be able to differentiate among various interpreting types and understand common terms that describe the characteristics of this profession. The relationship between interpreting and translation studies two neighbour fields, different in their nature, will be briefly described, to emphasize the perceptions that evolved through the centuries.

The following chapter focuses on the conscious strategies used by interpreters in their role as linguistic and cultural mediators. We will analyze reformulation, word for word translation, and anticipation, that is to say the most common techniques promoted by the Literature, along with illustrative examples to understand their application and value in practice. Readers will understand that reformulation is of significant importance, not only in conveying a central idea, but also in preventing and correcting errors encountered in the source speech. We will analyze the main differences between a student and a professional in practicing these strategies, and how they apply in consecutive versus simultaneous interpreting, bringing arguments in favour of kipping consecutive interpreting as part of the teaching process.

The third chapter introduces efforts that researchers have made to establish a categorization of cultures, and how cultural characteristics are reflected in spoken discourse. The idea here would be to understand the influence of stereotypes and strategies that professionals consciously use to navigate cultural differences and show to what extent the interpreter can also be considered a cultural mediator including the discursive challenges encountered at each step. We are going to learn

more about the intersection of language and culture and why the English language represents a current challenge creating misunderstandings, when it is spoken by a non-native speaker. The persuasive role of an oral speech, including redundancies and building a discourse dependent on one's specific culture represent elements that promote the mediation competency.

The fourth chapter covers how quality has been perceived over time, and what the most popular theories are that have defined, promoted and maintained high quality professional standards. We will describe to what extent the professional norms arise in the perceptions of the quality of interpretations. The main question is in which type of situations the interpreter's distance themselves from the main speaker, moving away from the image of a neutral figure. Consequently promoted by representative organizations, the interviews created by interpreters will be discussed; investigating to what extent they apply the strategies described below and what their tips and tricks are for constructing a professional speech.

In the last chapter, we discuss the accessibility of the profession when it comes to interpreters with disabilities. Through testimonies, visually impaired interpreters, tell us about what adaptations they use in their daily professional life, to work at the same level as their sighted colleagues despite certain additional obstacles.

VI.   New Elements

Through our research we have highlighted certain strategies which are carefully prepared and anticipated by interpreters, and others which are used more as an automatic reflex, helping them deal with particularly problematic situations. The new element in this context is represented by the separation between preparatory and conscious strategies, and intuitive and unconscious decisions. Likewise, the most effective techniques have been devised according to their usefulness in practice, on the one hand to maximize linguistic transfer and on the other hand to emphasize the capacity for cultural mediation neglected in simultaneous interpreting because of the actions that take place at the same time. We therefore chose to study to what extent Cultural Transfer is present in European conferences in comparison with other interpreting contexts. Our conversations with interpreters that work to and from various languages emphasize their role taking

actively part in the communication, and the shared responsibility between interpreters and speakers when it comes to presenting a precise and culturally adapted message.

As another original element of our research, we examined a category of interpreters that has been neglected and which faces additional challenges, namely blind interpreters. We collected their stories to pinpoint their ingenious and creative methods they implemented to turn this profession into an accessible job in addition, giving hope to other disabled people who wish to embark in such a career.

VII.   Conclusions

This research emphasizes universal methods that interpreters apply in real life regardless of their work languages. Likewise, mediation strategies prove that the interpreter represents more than simply copying the speaker, not hesitating to get actively involved in the source speech, by providing beneficial modifications. The interpreter is in fact a link between the speaker and his interlocutors, taking responsibility for the outcome of the communication. This profession, which is going through changes influenced by developing new technology and new discursive directions, poses accessibility challenges for certain categories of people trying through personalized methods, to stay on par with their colleagues.

The research can be continued in the future examining reformulation and cultural adaptations that interpreters apply in practice extracted from the corpus of the European Parliament and analysis of other challenges that lead to additional changes which in turn require new ways of implementing to manage future modifications.