Daniel Gile and the Effort Models (EM) Simplified Overview

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2021 OHA Continuing Education for Healthcare Interpreters
June 2021
Daniel Gile

- Freelance AIIC conference interpreter (Japanese-French)
- Professor of Translation at École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT), France.
- His research interests are translator training, training of young researchers, and cognitive processes in conference interpreting.
- Author of:
  - *Insights into research in conference interpretation*. Lille University Press, Lille 1995
Observations

• Deterioration in delivery
• Fluctuation in performance overtime
• Errors, omissions and infelicities (EOIs) in target text

*Infelicities: clumsy language, not quite incorrect
Question for discussion

• When do you feel deterioration/fluctuations in your performance?
• When do errors, omissions and infelicities occur?
The Effort Model – Basic Concept

In order to perform the interpreting task, there are several efforts (functions or mental operations) the interpreter performs.
In your opinion, what are the different functions performed during simultaneous interpreting?
Historical Background (1) - Early 1980s

Simultaneous interpreting = a set of (behavioral) ‘Efforts’ which could easily be identified as ‘functions’ by students and trainers

LA – Listening and Analysis (of source speech) – later renamed R (Reception) to account for interpreting from signed languages

M – Short Term Memory Effort

P – Production (of target speech), including self-monitoring

All competing for limited processing capacity
(also called ‘attentional resources’)

Definition of interpreting

• Interpreting—the process of first fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language*.

All competing for limited processing capacity
(also called ‘attentional resources’)

\[ \text{Sim} = \text{LA} + \text{M} + \text{P} \leq \text{A} \]

A: Available processing capacity

*Note: mathematical notation used very loosely, by convention*
In other words, in order to have good interpretation:

- Good use of short-term memory
- Production & self-monitoring
- Listening & analysis

Attentional effort (processing capacity)
Historical background (2) – Automatic and controlled operations

Soon (still early 80s) started exploring cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics literature, and found out about the existence of a classification:

- Automated operations
  Require (virtually) no attentional resources, very fast
- Controlled operations
  Require attentional resources, much slower

Controlled operations become gradually ‘automated’ when repeated

Also found out that cognitive psychologists believe that attentional resources (‘processing capacity) are limited at any time in humans and that a ‘coordination’ function (‘executive’ function), which also uses up attentional resources, is important when managing cognitive activities. Added the coordination Effort C to the Model.
In other words, in order to have good interpretation:

- Coordination effort
- Production & self-monitoring
- Good use of short-term memory
- Listening & analysis

Attentional effort (processing capacity)

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What can go wrong?

If conditions are not met, this may result in:

• Incomplete/incorrect comprehension of source
• Incorrect/clumsy target speech
• Incomplete/incorrect storage/retrieval of information from short-term memory
• Slowing down of one or more of efforts
• And then chain reaction
Does this apply only to simultaneous?
(‘long’) Consecutive interpreting (with notes)

Comprehension phase: L + M + NP + C
NP: Note Production

Reformulation phase: NR + SR + P + C
NR: Note Reading    SR: Speech Reconstruction from Memory

In order to have good interpretation in long consecutive with notes (comprehension phase):

- Listening & analysis
- Good use of memory
- Note production
- Coordination effort

Attentional effort (processing capacity)
In order to have good interpretation in long consecutive with notes (reformulation phase):

- Note reading
- Speech reconstruction from memory
- Production & self-monitoring
- Coordination effort

Attentional effort (processing capacity)
Long Consecutive with Notes

**Strong cognitive pressure during comprehension phase less during reformulation phase**
Actually, during reformulation, much cognitive cooperation, as opposed to competition during the comprehension phase.

Because of cognitive and mechanical aspects of note-taking during comprehension:

Comprehension phase is origin of most EOs not of Infelicities

So note-taking is important
Sight Translation

R + M + P + C
R: Reading Effort

At first sight,
Sight Translation seems easier than simultaneous or consecutive because the information is there to see at any time,
but

P is particularly difficult in sight translation because of the permanent visual presence of the ST and the resulting risk of linguistic interference from the source language

So on balance, it seems to be just as difficult, at least for beginners who have not yet mastered the skill of mentally taking some distance from linguistic forms and retaining a highly deverbalized mental representation of what they say

In order to have good sight translation:

- Reading effort
- Making good use of memory
- Production & self monitoring
- Coordination effort

Attentional effort (processing capacity)
Community interpreting

If interpreters need to constantly pay attention to what role they should play in a particularly sensitive mediated face-to-face interaction and what reformulation decisions are most appropriate psychologically and socially

(e.g. some situations in community interpreting, diplomatic/political interpreting)

HSC: Human and social consideration effort

In other words, in order to have good community interpreting:

- Human and social considerations
- Making good use of memory
- Production & self monitoring
- Coordination effort
- Attentional effort (processing capacity)
Juggling Efforts

• Listening and analysis
• Memory
• Reading
• Production
• Coordination
• Note production
• Note reading
• Speech reconstruction
• Human and social considerations

Photo by [juan pablo rodriguez](https://unsplash.com/photographers/juan-pablo-rodriguez) on Unsplash
Which effort is taxed if:

- A baby crying during a healthcare encounter.
- Interpreter unable to decipher her notes.
- Interpreter thinks provider is mistreating the LEP
- Document to be sight-translated is poorly hand-written
A Final Word

• It is all about the balance
Thank you

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