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硕士学位论文

从听众角度看副语言对同传效果的影响

On the Impact of Paralanguage on SI Performance: An Audience's Perspective

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Abstract

Nonverbal communication is a crucial part of human communication, which, however, has been ignored as a subject of research for quite a long time in comparison with verbal communication. In reality, in normal communication, meanings are sometimes conveyed solely by nonverbal components. Interpreting can be seen as a special type of communication whose ultimate goal is to facilitate the effective communication among people speaking different languages. To ensure the communicative effects, both verbal and nonverbal messages are involved. Paralanguage and bodily activities like facial expressions, gestures are the main components of nonverbal behavior. However, in interpreting studies, paralinguistic factors are explored as a kind of input variables of interpreting and the research focus lies in their influence on the interpreters' comprehension of the source language, with less attention paid to its impact on the information transmission from interpreters to the audience. In simultaneous interpreting (SI), when interpreters can only convey information through microphones to the audience wearing headphones, paralanguage stands out from other nonverbal components and deserves more attention to its impact on the listeners.

Quality evaluation is a significant topic in interpreting studies and has been explored from different perspectives. The perspective of listeners can help interpreters better understand the needs and expectations of users and improve their interpreting performance. Through various surveys, consensus has been reached that listeners tend to attach more importance to content related criteria over form related ones. However, it does not mean that form related criteria can be neglected, since the expectations of users are not always in conformity with their feedback. Expectations may explain what is believed to be important by the audience, while feedback can tell what really matters in a real situation.

This thesis aims to explore the impact of paralanguage on the evaluation of

simultaneous interpreting from the perspective of the audience. The paper adopts a questionnaire to investigate the audience's real feedback of interpreting quality, trying to find out whether paralinguistic factors can influence their evaluation of the overall interpreting performance or not. The participants are invited to rate the interpreting they hear on the whole and on six paralinguistic aspects. In total, 80 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 74 valid ones were collected. The research findings show that all six paralinguistic factors can influence the evaluation of the overall interpreting performance to some extent. Intonation, filled pauses and tempo are found to have a strong correlation with interpreting evaluation. Some interrelations also exist among paralinguistic factors. According to the audience's feedback, although content remains the first concern of the participants, bad paralinguistic performance in the interpreting output can impair the understanding process of the audience and even lead to loss of information. It is therefore of significance for interpreters to pay more attention to the paralinguistic factors in the interpreting output.

In this thesis, the author starts with the explanation of the research background, research purpose and research significance in Chapter One. Following the literature review and theoretical framework in the next two chapters, Chapter Four contains the research design and data analysis of the thesis. The last chapter provides a summary of the research findings and presents some implications for future research and training of interpreting.

Key Words: nonverbal communication; paralinguistic; interpreting quality evaluation; feedback; expectations

摘要

非语言交流是人类交际的重要组成部分。与语言交流相比，非语言交流长期以来未受到足够的重视。事实上，在正常的交际活动中，信息有时是通过非语言行为来进行传递的。口译是一种特殊的交流形式，其终极目的是实现不同语言的人们之间的有效交流。为了达到交际效果，语言和非语言信息都需要包含在内。非语言行为主要包括副语言和诸如面部表情，手势之类的身体活动。然而在口译研究中，研究者将副语言看做一种输入变量，并重点探究其对译员理解源语的影响，而副语言对译员和听众之间信息传递的影响没有得到足够的重视。在同声传译中，译员只能通过麦克风向佩戴耳机的听众传递信息，因此与其他非语言因素相比，副语言的重要性也得以突显。副语言对听众的影响也值得更多的关注。

口译质量评价是口译研究中的重要议题。研究者们从不同角度探索口译质量评估。听众角度能够帮助译员更好地了解用户的需求和期待并提升口译效果。一些研究发现，比起形式相关的标准，听众普遍更重视口译的内容。但是，这并不意味着与形式相关的标准应该被忽略，因为用户的期待和实际的反馈常常并不一致。期待反映的是听众认为重要的标准，而反馈能呈现出真实情况。

本文旨在从听众角度探索副语言对同声传译评价的影响。本文采用问卷调查的形式获取听众对口译质量的真实反馈，试图了解副语言因素是否会影响到听众对口译整体效果的评价。听众将对所听到口译的整体表现和六个副语言方面的表现打分。本次研究共发放问卷 80 份，有效问卷为 74 份。研究发现，所有的六项副语言因素都对口译效果产生了影响，程度各不相同。其中，语调、有声停顿和语速与口译评价之间存在强相关关系。副语言因素之间也存在相互联系。从听众的反馈中可知，尽管听众最关注口译的内容，但口译产出中副语言的不良表现会影响到听众的理解过程甚至造成信息丢失，因此关注口译产出中的副语言十分必要。

在本文中，笔者在第一章阐述了研究的背景、目的和意义，并在随后两章中进行了文献综述和理论框架的建立。第四章包含了研究设计和数据分析。最后一章对研究结果进行了总结并为今后口译研究和训练提出了一些启示。

关键词：非语言交流 副语言 口译质量评估 期待 反馈

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Nonverbal Communication

Human communication consists of verbal and nonverbal communication. For a long time, overwhelming attention has been paid to verbal communication, while nonverbal communication has been ignored in the research. In reality, language is only a part of human communication, and possibly not the most significant part. With deeper studies on human communication, more researchers discover that the importance of nonverbal communication may be undeniable if quantity is taken as the only measure. According to a study conducted by Birdwhistell, “in a normal two-person conversation, the verbal components carry less than 35 percent of the social meaning, while more than 65 percent is carried on the nonverbal part” (Knapp, 1972: 12). Considering its proportion in human communication, it is reasonable to attach greater importance to nonverbal communication and take it as an indispensable part of communication. Therefore, communication can be understood as “being carried out by means of signs, which are verbal or nonverbal behaviors associated with a concept or meaning by the producer, the receiver, or both” (Nord, 2001: 22). In this case, nonverbal communication is worthy of further research just like verbal communication.

The term “nonverbal communication” usually refers to “all the ways in which communication is effected between persons when in each other’s presence, by means other than words” (Kendon, 1981: 3). It may include bodily activities, facial expressions, gestures, orientation, postures, spacing, touch and smell. Therefore, nonverbal communication can be defined as “the process through which nonverbal behaviors are used, either singly or in combination with verbal behaviors, in the exchange and interpretation of messages within a given situation or context” (Malandro, et al., 1989).

The categories of nonverbal communication can be summarized as follow: paralanguage, kinesics, object language, and environmental language. Nonverbal communication is closely related to verbal communication and can take different functions to support verbal behavior. In general terms, nonverbal communication can repeat, contradict, replace, complement, accent, relate and regulate verbal messages and behavior. Moreover, nonverbal messages are sometimes supposed to be more trustworthy, and more likely to reveal the real purposes and emotions of the speaker.

1.1.2 Interpreting as a Type of Communication

Interpreting, seen as a special type of communication, is regarded as “an ancient human practice which clearly predates the invention of writing” (Pöchhacker, 2004: 9). In ancient society, when people from different tribes speaking no common languages wanted to communicate for trade, negotiation or other purposes, besides using sign language for simple interaction, an intermediary or middleman who happened to understand the languages of both parties might be in great need to facilitate inter-lingual communication. This can be seen as an early form of interpreting. With the development of human civilization, interpreters can not only help people from different cultures to break down the language barriers, but also shoulder various responsibilities while playing different roles in different context and situations. The interpreters’ contribution to promoting the interaction of human thoughts as well as the development of society can not be denied.

The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 is considered to be a crucial milestone in the history of modern international interpreting. Before that, interpreting was usually performed by “chance interpreter”, some bilingual people who happened to take the job (Pöchhacker, 2004: 28). During the meeting, the use of both English and French provided a great opportunity for the professionalization of interpreting (张维为, 2011: 3). After the World War Two, the growth of international organizations and the expanding needs of communication in politics and trade further propelled the demand of interpreting. Schools were set up for the training and education of interpreters. Since then, more and more people became a member of specially skilled professional

interpreters working in various situations.

Interpreting is not simply a kind of translational activity. According to Pöchhacker, interpreting “can be distinguished from other types of translational activity most distinctly by its immediacy: in principle, interpreting is performed ‘here and now’ for the benefit of people who want to engage in communication across barriers of language and culture” (Pöchhacker, 2004: 10). Therefore, interpreting is more like a communicative activity although it shares some similarities with translation. Interpreting and translation both involve receiving messages in one language (the source language) and conveying the information in another language (the target language), but their channels for the reception and sending of messages are different. In written translation, translators rely totally on the text in written form, trying to analyze and decode the source text through the visual channel. Their works of translation in the target language are presented in a written way as well. However, interpretation has two channels of information. Interpreters can receive information with their ears and eyes. In different settings, interpreters may acquire information in different ways. For example, in a business negotiation when face-to-face communication is needed, interpreters can not only hear the voice but also see the gestures, the expressions on their faces and other nonverbal behavior. However, in a court setting when a contract or some legal documents are required to be interpreted aloud, interpreters may only get information from the written text but still convey the meanings orally just like common styles of interpreting and usually nonverbal features are involved in the practice.

With different parameters, interpreting may have various classifications. According to the settings and contents of interpreting, it can be classified into conference interpreting, community interpreting, escort interpreting, court interpreting, media interpreting, etc. In conference interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting are usually applied to enable the fluent and effective communication at conferences or meetings. Compared with consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting can be seen far more common on such occasions since it

takes up less time and is more efficient in information exchange. In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter can take notes while the speech is being delivered. When the speaker stops, the interpreter may start giving his/her rendition of the original speech in the target language. While in the situation of simultaneous interpreting, “the listener hears the interpretation at the same time as the speech is made” (Phelan, 2001: 6). It indicates that simultaneous interpreters should begin interpreting immediately to ensure that the audience can hear the interpretation almost at the same time as the speech is being delivered. Although these two kinds of interpreting have different requirements of interpreters, they share the same goal of enabling effective communication for the benefit of people speaking different languages.

Interpreting is a special type of communication in which interpreters are included to bridge the gap between the speakers and listeners speaking different languages. It shares the features of communication which contains verbal and nonverbal communication at the same time. Like other types of communication, nonverbal communication also plays a significant role in interpreting activities. Among all categories of nonverbal components, paralanguage is of paramount significance in simultaneous interpreting. In consecutive interpretation, interpreters are usually asked to stand on the stage in front of the audience. They can use gestures and facial expressions in addition to their voice to convey the messages. However, in simultaneous interpretation, interpreters are usually invisible. Such visual channels to pass on the information to the audience are blocked. Nowadays, simultaneous interpreting is usually done with appropriate equipment. Interpreters are “seated in sound-proofed booths listening to the proceedings through earphones and speak into a microphone which relays their interpretation via a dedicated channel to headphones worn by the delegations who wish to listen the interpreting” (Jones, 1998: 5). Since those booths are commonly set up in a place where interpreters can see the speaker through the glass, the facial expressions and gestures can still be available in most cases just like consecutive interpretation to some extent. The problem lies in the channel between the interpreters and the audience. The audience can see the speaker

and only hear the interpretation through headphones. As a consequence, voice seems to be the only tool for interpreters to convey messages to the audience. Therefore, the importance of paralinguage in simultaneous interpreting is emphasized in comparison with other nonverbal factors.

1.1.3 Paralinguage in Interpreting Research

Along with the development and professionalism of interpreting, the study of interpreting grows at the same time. The western researches in the field of interpreting can be categorized into several periods: “Pre-research Period, Experimental Psychology Period, Practitioners’ Period and Renewal Period” (肖晓燕, 2002: 72). From the 1950s to the early 1960s, researches were largely focused on the requirements for qualified interpreters’ language and knowledge, the difficulties they might have, the relationship with clients and some factors like fatigue which might affect their interpreting performance. During this pre-research period, researchers usually drew conclusions from their former experience as practitioners and observers of interpretation, paying less attention to the theories. In the experimental psychology period, starting from the 1960s to the 1970s, the focus of interpreting studies shifted to cognitive issues in interpreting under the theoretical framework of psychology and psycholinguistics. Researchers proposed some hypotheses on the process of interpreting. The influence of some variants such as source language, noise and speech rate on interpreting, and the strategies interpreters frequently took to cope with were explored. It was just in this period that the effects of some paralinguistic factors on interpreting were taken into consideration.

Just as Abercrombie states in the article, “we speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies; conversation consists of much more than a simple interchange of spoken words” (1968: 55). The importance of paralinguistic components in interpreting is undeniable. In reality, paralinguage can be found through the whole process of interpreting, accompanying both the source speech and the target text. Interpreters, serving as the bridge between the speaker and listeners, usually experience the following two stages. First, the interpreter needs to be a good listener

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