



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ON SPEECH DISFLUENCIES IN ENGLISH-
RUSSIAN INTERPRETATION

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Abstract: *The paper illustrates the usage of an empirical method for identifying and qualifying disfluencies which are investigated in the context of English-Russian interpretation. As a consequence, these disfluencies are occasionally a result of linguistic differences between English and Russian, such as different sentence structure, idiomatic expressions and phonetic challenges. Interpreters may undergo extra cognitive load because of these differences, leading to delays and interruptions in speech.*

Keywords: *speech disfluencies, qualitative analysis, English-Russian interpretation*

Qualitative analysis provides a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of the nature and function of disfluencies in interpreting practice. While quantitative approaches focus on counting and categorizing disfluencies, qualitative analysis focuses on the context in which these disruptions are encountered, seeking to explore their causes, implications, and the strategies interpreters apply to manage them. This method sheds light on a more comprehensive exploration of the cognitive, linguistic, and communicative processes involved in the process of interpretation, particularly in complex language pairs like English and Russian.

One of the noteworthy strengths of qualitative analysis is its concentration on understanding the function of disfluencies. Disfluencies are not little interruptions in speech; they can serve a variety of purposes in the interpreting process. For instance, an interpreter might use a hesitation or repair to cope with complex lexical or syntactic structures, particularly when the target language (in this case, Russian) lacks a direct equivalent to the source language (English). As Jääskeläinen [1] highlights, interpreters may pause to search for the appropriate word or phrase in Russian, especially when encountered idiomatic expressions, technical jargon, or culturally specific terms that have no straightforward counterpart in the target language.

We had a survey which was conducted among the students and teachers majoring in simultaneous interpreting at different levels of theory and practice. At first, they gave a rating to the frequency of occurrence of speech disfluencies during their interpreting sessions. 20% of the participants answered that it happens to them rarely and the other 20% acknowledged that it is a way more frequent case for them. Then we decided to ask participants to emphasize on language-specific challenges, i.e., English-Russian interpreting practice. We gave questions in terms of phonetic, grammatical and idiomatic aspects of the languages.

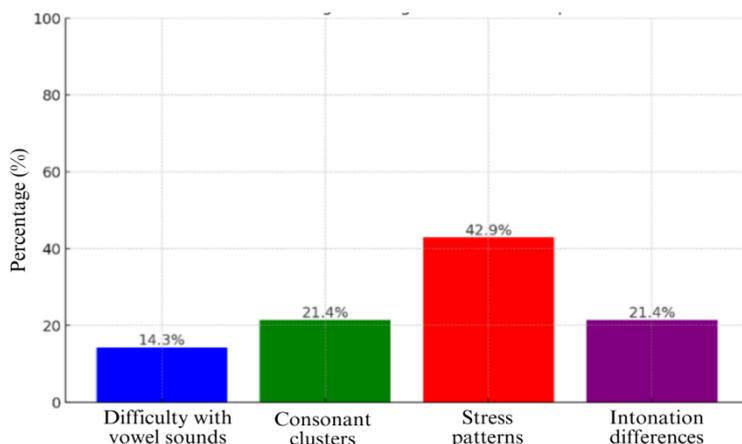


Chart 2: Phonetic Challenges in English-Russian Interpretation

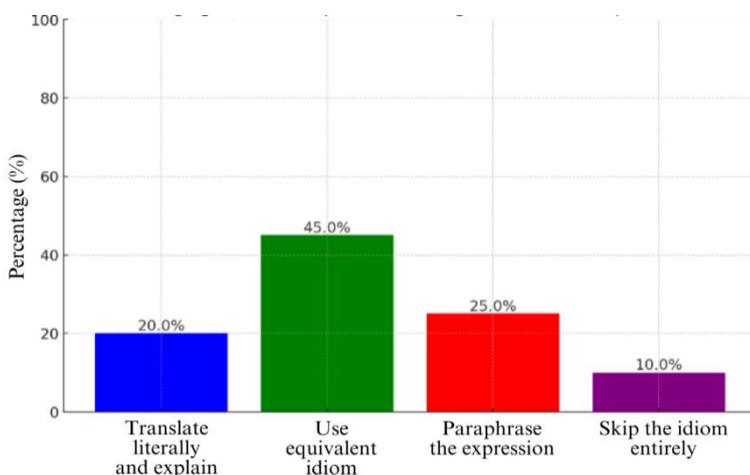


Chart 3: Managing Idiomatic Expressions in English-Russian Interpretation

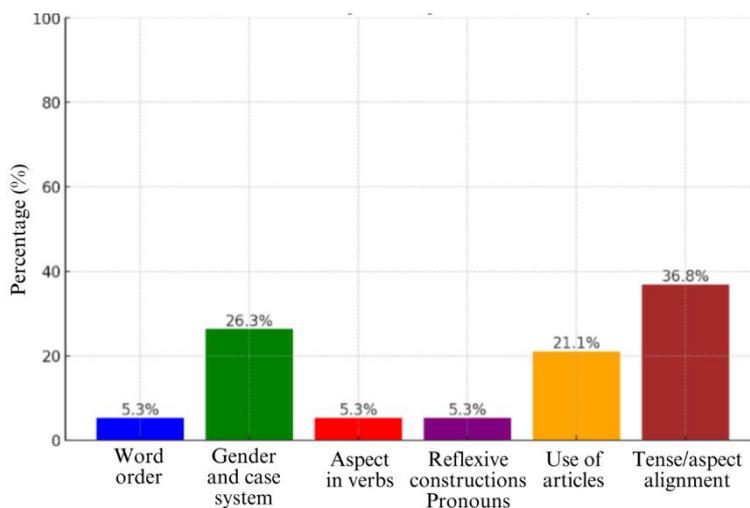


Chart 4: Grammatical Challenges in English-Russian Interpretation

The charts present the primary phonetic, grammatical, and idiomatic problems encountered by interpreters when interpreting between English and Russian languages. The illustrated data highlights distinctions in difficulty levels across these areas and



supplies insights into the strategies interpreters can use to cope with linguistic challenges.

The first chart demonstrates difficulties that are experienced with phonetic aspects of English and Russian. Stress patterns which is emerged as the most challenging aspect, reported by 42.9% of respondents. This is likely due to variable stress in English language, which contrasts with the more predictable stress patterns in Russian. On the other hand, intonation differences and consonant clusters were both considered as problematic by 21.4% of interpreters, indicating the important difference between the two languages in these areas. Meanwhile, difficulty with vowel sounds accounts for 14.3% of respondents, reflecting that vowel pronunciation poses a relatively smaller, though still notable, challenge.

When it comes to the second bar chart, it outlines the grammatical obstacles emerged in the interpreting process. Composing 36.8% of interpreters, tense and aspect alignment was the most significant challenge. This result is expected, provided the complexities of the Russian aspectual system compared to English verb tenses. The Russian gender and case system was found as the second most difficult area, accounting for 26.3% of respondents, as English lacks a similar structure. It is noteworthy that the absence of articles in Russian posed difficulties for 21.1% of interpreters, while other challenges, including word order, aspect in verbs, and reflexive constructions, each made up 5.3% of responses. These figures show that while tense and aspect pose the greatest difficulty, several other grammatical factors also require specific attention.

In terms of the third bar chart, it should be acknowledged that it is one of the most tricky issues for interpreters. It illustrates how interpreters manage idiomatic expressions. The most widely used strategy was finding an equivalent idiomatic expression in the target language, chosen by 45% of interpreters. This suggests that the majority of idioms have close counterparts in both languages, fostering smoother translation. Nevertheless, when it is impossible to find a direct equivalent that exists, interpreters resort to paraphrasing (25%) or literal translation with an explanation (20%), reflecting their flexibility in preserving meaning. A smaller portion, which is 10% of total, opted to skip idiomatic expressions entirely, indicating that, in certain situations, omitting them may be the most practical and sound approach.

In general, the data shows that interpreters encounter considerable phonetic, grammatical, and idiomatic challenges when working between English and Russian languages. Phonetic challenges are primarily centered on stress and intonation, while grammatical obstacles largely include tense/aspect alignment and the case system. The approach to managing idiomatic expressions can be of wide range, with most interpreters favoring equivalent idioms or paraphrasing. These findings pose the need for focused training in these specific areas to develop accuracy and fluency which is the main purpose of interpreting practice.

Cross-linguistic studies, such as those conducted by Kalina [2], suggest valuable insights into the ways interpreters cope with these challenges. Kalina's research accentuates the variations in disfluency patterns based on the specific syntactic and lexical challenges of the language pairs being compared.



In conclusion, by studying multiple language pairs, researchers can find out common and different aspects in how interpreters handle disfluencies and whether certain structural features—such as word order, grammatical gender, or verb morphology—tend to result in more frequent pauses or repairs. These studies can also demonstrate how linguistic distance (i.e., how similar or different the languages are) can have an impact on cognitive load and the strategies interpreters apply to overcome challenges.

REFERENCES:

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