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Corpus-based Interpreting Studies: a booming research field

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Abstract & Keywords

Keywords:

Corpus-based interpreting research has gained considerable momentum over the last few years. Indeed, an increasing number of scholars have developed corpora using data from different settings or taken advantage of existing ones. After refining the methodology to address the many challenges involved in the corpus-based approach, investigations carried out within this research paradigm are providing insightful observations about the interpreting process and product, including comparisons between different Translation modes, that is oral interpretation and written translation. In addition, corpora are now being developed and used as educational resources, thus giving trainee interpreters access to principled sets of materials for targeted practice as well as opportunities to reflect upon the skills they are acquiring.

This special issue presents novel investigations that are pushing corpus-based interpreting research to the next level. Some of these are based on, or are deeply inspired by, existing Corpus-based Interpreting Studies (CIS) projects, such as the pioneering European Parliament Interpreting Corpus (EPIC), while others endeavor to embrace other types of interpreting from more sensitive communicative settings, such as health care and court interpreting.

The aim of this special issue is to provide a forum to share the results obtained and the efforts being made in a booming research field, which, as editors, we believe deserves even further support and dissemination.

The seven contributions included here are organized into two main sections relating to two complementary research areas: interpreting practice and interpreter training.

Section 1 *Interpreting practice: developing and using corpora to study interpreting* includes papers focusing on simultaneous interpreting, with the exception of the essay by Sara Castagnoli and Natacha Niemants "Corpora worth creating: A pilot study on telephone interpreting". Notwithstanding the many limitations entailed in the creation of this small corpus, the two authors experiment with different types of annotation and lend support to the usefulness of applying the corpus-based approach even to limited collections of data. Turning to simultaneous interpreting, three papers are based on European Parliament (EP) simultaneous interpreting data. In her study "The translation challenges of pre-modified noun phrases in simultaneous interpreting from English into Italian: A corpus-based study on EPIC", Serena Ghiselli draws on EPIC to analyze professional interpreters' performances in dealing with a well-known mnemonic challenge when working between non-cognate languages with a reversed lexical order. In "On anaphoric pronouns in simultaneous interpreting" Ana Correia aims to achieve a better understanding of cohesion in interpreter output by looking at anaphoric reference in a language combination not present in EPIC, that is English-Portuguese. Finally, in "Interpreting universals: A study on explicitness in the intermodal corpus EPTIC" Niccolò Morselli sets out to investigate the occurrence of interpreting universals by querying the intermodal corpus EPTIC (European Parliament Translation and Interpreting Corpus, supplementing EPIC with the corresponding written translations) developed at the Department of Interpreting and Translation of the University of Bologna.

Section 2 *Interpreter training: developing and using corpora to train interpreters* opens with the contribution by Andrew Cresswell "Looking up phrasal verbs in small corpora of interpreting: An attempt to draw out aspects of interpreted language". This study relies on data from various existing corpora of English, both as a naturally occurring language and as simultaneous interpreting output to inform the teaching of English phrasal verbs in language lessons in order to improve fluency in non-native trainee interpreters. Next is the contribution by Michela Bertozzi "*Anglintrad*: Towards a purpose-specific interpreting corpus". This study looks at the strategies implemented by simultaneous interpreters and translators working into Spanish when dealing with anglicisms in Italian source speeches. The study adopts an intermodal perspective, that is contrasting interpreted and translated language, with a pedagogic aim. The last paper in this section is "The TIPp project: Developing technological resources based on the exploitation of oral corpora to improve court interpreting" by Mariana Orozco-Jutorán. It shows how leveraging on multilingual corpora, based on genuine court interpreter-mediated interactions, it is possible to build additional resources to improve court interpreting.

This special issue and a parallel edited volume (Russo et al. 2018), both sparked by the First Forlì Workshop on Corpus-based Interpreting Studies held in May 2015 and attended by numerous researchers engaged in this innovative field world-wide, show the geographical spread of the corpus-based approach in interpreting studies. What started as an Italian enterprise centered on the University of Bologna and the University Trieste, has found followers in many European and Asian countries. In this issue, the University of Bologna, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy), the University of Minho (Braga, Portugal), the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB, Spain) are represented. The parallel edited volume also presents work from other European countries (Poland, Belgium), China and Japan.

We hope these works can serve as an inspiration to other scholars who may join in the effort of creating further language resources such as corpora. These are proving useful in both interpreting and translation research and education as a result of systematic observation afforded by CIS methods.

References

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