



# SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION OF POLITICAL PRESS CONFERENCES: INSTITUTIONAL VS MEDIA INTERPRETING

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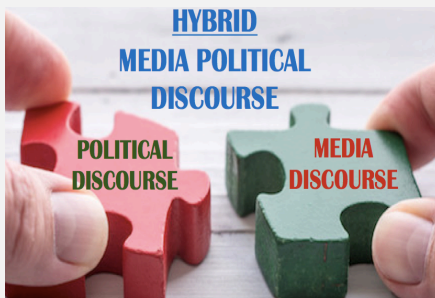
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## Abstract

Conference interpreting remains an indispensable part of the global institutional framework. One of the contexts in which it takes place is political press conferences, whose format determines practical organization of the events and the assignment of the interpreter. The generalization of simultaneous interpreting and globalization of mediaspace marked the beginning of new trends towards expanding live coverage of news conferences that require the so-called media (television) interpreting effected with a displacement of interpreters from the physical core of the meeting. As a result, simultaneous interpreting for political press conferences is frequently performed in two main scenarios: *in situ* by the official interpreters of Hence, one might hypothesize that though interpreting in both scenarios is fulfilled by professional conference interpreters, the degree of setting formality, interpreter status and target audience could affect interpreting strategies and rendition. The research database comprises video recordings of 18 press conferences following bilateral talks, which involve English-Russian language pair, and 36 audio tracks of interpretations carried out in both scenarios. The linguistic features of original speeches and of two versions of renditions for each item were thoroughly analyzed and compared in order to retrieve similarities/differences in interpreting strategies employed. The findings suggest that analyzed interpretations diverge in terms of translation equivalence, since the official interpreter is working under certain pressure to convey the form of original utterances accurately and precisely (formal equivalence), whereas TV interpreter seems to have more freedom, which makes his rendition sometimes sound more natural and idiomatic (dynamic equivalence).

## Introduction

Press conferences following political negotiations constitute samples of a hybrid political media discourse and are distinguished by a recurrent 4-part structure (opening remarks; official statements by heads of delegations; Q/A clusters; closing remarks). Interpreting for such press conferences is commonly carried out simultaneously in two main scenarios (interpreting performed *in situ* by official interpreters of delegations and media simultaneous interpreting commissioned by broadcasting channels). Among the textual features of political press conferences that may substantially impact simultaneous interpreting one could retrieve rituality, dialogicity and intertextuality. Exogenous and endogenous factors associated, on the one hand, with the institutional nature of such political media events, and, on the other, with their features described above, can global and local strategies deployed by the interpreter, which, in their turn, affect target text coherence.



## Methods and Materials

### Research corpus

18 videos of political press conferences involving high ranked Russian politicians (Vladimir Putin, Sergei Lavrov, Aleksandr Novak, Maria Zakharova)

Two separate audio tracks of simultaneous interpretations into English for each video:

- Interpretation performed by an official interpreter of the Russian delegation *in situ*

- Interpretation performed remotely by a interpreter for a live coverage on a TV channel

**in total 36 renditions** carried out by **19 interpreters**

### Methodology

Product oriented research:

-audio files extraction (Pazzero);

-semi-automatic transcriptions (Watson IBM);

-annotations (Elan);

**-linguistic and pragmatic analysis of transcribed renditions;**

**Objective:** establish the degree of interlinear correspondence (surface structure) between source (Russian) texts and target (English) texts.

-statistical analysis to verify the validity of the data collected.

## Results

### Two types of compliance

If interpreter's rendition is to be considered as a text, twofold compliance of the target text with the source text can be established:

❖ Formal equivalence i.e. correspondences between most words and phrases are easily recognisable, equivalence is systematically achieved on the lexical level.

❖ Dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1968) i.e. equivalence is achieved on the level of utterance, lexical equivalence is sporadic.

Two translation modes are retrievable (Séleskovitch, Lederer 1984).

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to see if the preferred translation mode correlates with interpreter's status (the first group comprises official interpreters of delegations, whereas the second one is made up of TV interpreters), or preferences for applying one of the modes rather result from individual style, alias, interpreting manner acquired through training and practice. The dependent co-variables do not predict the ratio transcoding/interpretation within each group in a statistically significant way ( $F_1 = 3,76, F_2 = 2,731, P_1 = 0,123, P_2 = 0,159 > 0,005$ ).

By contrast, the setting specificity (institutional vs media) seems to be a statistically significant factor in predicting the preferred use of one of the modes: the covariance between groups appears to be significant ( $F = 11,842, P = 0,004$ ).

## Transcoding vs Reformulation



## Discussion

Interpreters performing in the institutional context seem to feel less free manipulating the source text, opting for direct (interlinear) transfer of source text chunks, sometimes at the expense of "naturalness" and idiomacity of the target text utterances i.e. failing to make their rendition sound natural and idiomatic for interpretation users.

One could hypothesise that such interpreting style should be attributed to interpreter's status as a staff member of an adjacent institution (e.g. Foreign Ministry Linguistic Service).

As for media interpreters performing out of the institutional setting, they appear not to be subordinated to protagonists (speakers), which allows them not to sacrifice the source text. While being free from the expectations of institutional users, they strive for making their renditions more smoothly perceivable by manifold TV audience.

The present research allows to single out the following global strategies within the analysed corpus:

- Speaker-oriented (institutional interpreting)
- Audience-oriented (media interpreting).

## Conclusions

Pragmatics of interpreting setting (institutional vs media environment) seems to prevail in choosing both global and local interpreting strategies.

The preferred modes vary in distribution depending on the interpreting setting and *skopos*.