Decoding information-seeking behaviors

A glimpse into SI task results of Chinese interpreting trainees with InterpretBank

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Working with computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) tools often entails an interactive, multimodal exchange of activities, such as listening to the source speech, interacting with the PC through keyboard and mouse, and orally rendering the interpretation. Prompted by the use of these multifaceted behaviors, different sensory input modalities (e.g., auditory and visual) interact with cognitive processes (e.g., source speech comprehension, memory; (Ünal *et al.* 2023). Our goal is to enhance our understanding of how interpreters' information-seeking behavior evolves during simultaneous interpreting (SI) tasks, the role it plays, and its multitasking particularities.

In this exploratory research project, we remotely conducted pre-tests and post-tests with 22 Chinese interpreting trainees who volunteered to participate in three cycles of glossary preparation and term-intensive booth tasks from English to Chinese under different conditions, namely with and without InterpretBank. We collected data through keylogging, screen recording, and SI output recordings. This multimodal data analysis, facilitated by novel constructs (such as punctual events vs span constructs, ear-key span vs eye-voice span, and sentence-initial vs sentence-final EVS) to analyze information-seeking behaviors and their impact in the informants' production flows.

Compared to the control (Excel) group, InterpretBank informants benefited at term extraction efficiency when compiling individual glossaries. However, they also displayed modest improvements in term accuracy while at booth tasks. The InterpretBank group rendered more terms accurately, but also had higher rates of dropped terms. A holistic, blind assessment by five Ph.D. raters tended to find higher quality in the interpretations of the InterpretBank group. Yet the study also reveals variations over time within tasks, highlighting the dynamic nature of ear-key span and eye-voice span. These differences may stem from task difficulty, the informants' reliance on tools, or their prior domain knowledge. Overall, this research introduces and discusses new constructs for longitudinal observation studies and their impact on cognitive processing in interpreting, aiming to yield insights that enhance research methods and to uncover patterns that will deepen our understanding of the cognitive processes underlying interpreting-related documentation behavior.

References

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