

Book Reviews

Melichercikova, M. Kognitívne charakteristiky a tlmočnícky výkon: „Suvisia spolu?“. Banská Bystrica : Belianum. Vydavateľstvo Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2017, 186 p. ISBN 978-80-557-1290-1.

The monograph titled *Cognitive characteristics and interpreting performance: “Is there a relationship?”* represents a shift from the traditional empirical interpreting research in Slovakia as well as abroad. This interdisciplinary research draws its theoretical foundation from two fields – translation studies and psychology – and determines the possible correlation of specific cognitive characteristics with interpreting performance of students studying translation and interpreting. The author draws information from contemporary (theoretical and empirical) research in experimental psychology – specifically cognitive science – and based on the existing, predominantly theoretical knowledge dealing with cognitive models of interpreting, she defines the analogies of the aforementioned science with both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting.

The monograph is divided into four chapters. The first theoretical chapter comprehensively analyses the existing research in this area. The author defines cognitive aspects that can influence the interpreting performance. The research focuses on two of them – attention (concentration) and field-in/dependent cognitive style (unique way of processing information). The research is based on the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the field-independent cognitive style – the higher tendency of an individual to perceive parts of a field as different from the surrounding environment and pay attention to their specific traits – and the interpreter’s qualities. In terms of the hypotheses, the ideal interpreter should apply the analytical rather than holistic approach. However, as the author notes, these factors are flexible and can be trained which provides additional value to the translation and interpreting study programme.

In the following chapter, the author discusses different approaches to interpreting assessment. Although it is a rather pressing and discussed topic, there is no consensus among professionals or scholars. In general, the quality of interpreting is perceived differently by professional interpreters in comparison to different groups of clients – plus it also depends on the working mode of interpreting. In the third chapter, based on the wide spectrum of postulates analysed in the previous chapter, the author defines a model of interpreting assessment for her research purposes. The model combines both subjective and objective aspects. In the objective assessment, points are awarded based on the main/additional proposition transfer success rate; subjective assessment is performed by five professional interpreters analysing intonation, grammar, hesitation noises, repetitions, logicity, text comprehensibility, and general impression. The combination of these two approaches also provides a comparison of subjective evaluation with objective criteria and shows their interdependence.

Additional forms in which students had to fill in information concerning their preference of the interpreting working mode and subjectively assessed their study results achieved in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting are also instrumental. This information is subsequently compared with results achieved in the research itself. In the part of the research dedicated to psychological aspects, the authors used two psychological tests, the *CompACT-Co attention and concentration test* and the *GEFT test (Group Embedded Figures Test)*. The first test is a computer-based test, and the latter one is in the form of a classic paper test. According to the hypothesis, the better results students achieve, the better interpreting performance they should deliver.

The research was conducted on the sample of 81 first- and second- year students of Translation & Interpreting master’s programme in combination with the English

language at Matej Bel University. Students interpreted two different speeches (simultaneously and consecutively) with similar input variables – speed and mode of delivery, accent, topic, proportion of terms, etc. Based on the research sample the author defined five correlation hypotheses: relationship between field independence and students' simultaneous/consecutive interpreting performance; relationship between attention (concentration) (visual stimuli) and students' simultaneous interpreting performance; relationship between field independence and attention (concentration) among students of translation and interpreting; relationship between the duration of an interpreter's training (number of completed interpreting training hours) and the quality of their interpreting performance; relationship between number of correctly conveyed proposition and the evaluation of audio-recordings of interpreting by professional interpreters.

In the last chapter, the author provides interpretation and analysis of the results using standard statistical methods. She came to the conclusion that a field-independent cognitive style seems to be a relevant predictor/indicator of quality performance in simultaneous/consecutive interpreting among students of translation and interpreting. Students of translation and interpreting achieved excellent results in the CompACT-Co test and up to 75.4% of the research group achieved highly concentrated performance – these results can be considered a desirable prerequisite for the interpreting profession. These findings can prove helpful in the didactical process of interpreting, as the tested variables are flexible and can be trained.

Miroslava Melicherčíková's monograph proves that interdisciplinary research of interpreting provides many possibilities for future training of interpreters. Translation studies has been *borrowing* knowledge from other branches of science ever since it emerged. In case of this publication, the acquired knowledge can be used by psychologists as well, although it's primarily addressed to interpreting scholars. As we've stated in the beginning, it's a pioneering approach of the interpreting research in Slovakia and abroad. This unparalleled approach provides a fertile ground for further research that can verify established hypotheses. Such research could considerably improve the quality of interpreting training in the world.

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