

Temporal Characteristics in Interpretation and Translation

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1. Introduction

The contents of interpretation and translation can be analyzed and compared in different aspects of performance. Since the two areas involve various processes such as decoding, destylization, and transformation (Song, 1975:17), it is assumed that such tasks would demand highly developed capacities on the part of the interpreter and translator, particularly for languages involving Korean and English.¹⁾ The structural properties of English are different from those of Korean, best characterized as a topic-oriented language. Thus, the linguistic description of Korean structures does not correspond to that of their English counterparts. It is assumed that time constraint, along with these typological differences, will influence the processes of both interpretation and translation. It

1) Korean is viewed as having a basic sentence construction of topic and comment, while English is regarded as having a basic sentence construction of subject and predicate.

is necessary, therefore, to conduct in a systematic manner a contrastive analysis of the two forms of communication if one wants to know how performance is affected by time limit.

The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent time constraint will affect the process of interpretation and translation. This study focuses on the temporal factor as a variable in interpretation and translation. More specifically, focus will be placed on how Korean-speaking interpreters and translators express Korean (their source language) topic-oriented structures in English (their target language), given the typological contrast between the two languages. The primary concern of the present study is to develop new insights into varying degrees of time constraints in interpretation and translation, and consequently to help develop new techniques, which may facilitate the education of interpreters and translators.²⁾

2. Characteristics of Korean Syntax

This section provides some distinguishing features between the topic-comment relation in Korean and the subject-predicate relation in English, outlining their differences in the syntactic domain.

2.1. word order

Korean is generally classified as a canonical SOV language, consisting of S(subject) - O(object) - V(verb), while English is recognized as an SVO language, made up of S(subject) - V(verb) - O(object):

2) The Yale system is used in the Romanization of Korean. Refer to the abbreviations chart for all the abbreviations used in this paper.

- 1) a. Korean: S O V
 na-nun coffee-lul masi-ess-ta
 I-TM coffee-AM drink-pt-Decl
- b. English: S V O
 I drank coffee

As can be observed in (1), the word order in Korean is head-last, while the word order in English is head-first. Korean permits relatively free word order with an abundant casemarking system, whereas English has far more limited options in word order with no rich casemarking. Therefore, scrambling is more permissible in Korean than in English. Let us take a look at the following examples.

2) Korean

- a. Cheolsu-nun coffee-lul achim-ey masi-ess-ta.
 Cheolsu-TM coffee-AM morning-in drink-Pt-Decl
 ‘Cheolsu drank coffee in the morning.’
- b. Cheolsu-nun achim-ey coffee-lul masi-ess-ta.
 c. Achim-ey Cheolsu-nun coffee-lul masi-ess-ta.
 d. Coffee-lul Cheolsu-nun achim-ey masi-ess-ta.
 e. Coffee-lul achim-ey Cheolsu-nun masi-ess-ta.
 f. Achim-ey coffee-lul Cheolsu-nun masi-ess-ta.
 **g. Cheolsu-nun achim-ey masi-ess-ta coffee-lul.
 **h. Masi-ess-ta Cheolsu-nun coffee-lul achim-ey.

3) English — S + V + O

** Rigid (Fixed) Word Order

- a. Cheolsu drank coffee in the morning.
 b. In the morning Cheolsu drank coffee.

2.2. Case-marking

Choi (1992) states that case in Korean is observable after the NP, while case in English is not marked overtly, but manifested in the form of the structural position. The functional status of an NP in Korean is expressed by the case marker.

The following are some of the markers distinct from one another.

- * Nominative: ka, i
- * Accusative: ul, lul
- * Postposition: eyse 'in', ulo '(in)to'
- * Genitive: ui
- * Topic: nun, un

2.3. Pleonastic Elements

2.3.1. the impersonal it

1) English: It snowed last night.

Korean: Kan pam -ey nwun-i o -ass-ta
last night at snow-NM come pt Dec
Lit. 'Last night snow came.'

2.3.2. the expletive it

1) English: He found it easy to learn English.

Korean: ku-nun yenge paywu-ki-ka
he-TM English learn-to-NM
swywun-kes-ul al-ass-ta
easy-Comp-AM know-pt-Dec
Lit. 'For him, to learn English is found to be easy.'

2.3.3. the expletive there

1) English: There are many books on the table.

Korean: chayksang-ey chayk-i mani -iss -ta

table -Loc book-NM many -exist -Dec

Lit. 'Many books are on the table.'

The non-occurrence of pleonastic elements in Korean is ascribed to the fact that a topic can simply be dispensed with if it is not called for, whereas in English a subject is required, regardless of whether it plays a semantic role.

2.4. Korean as a Pro-drop Language

With respect to the existence of null subject, Choi (1992) points out that Korean, unlike English, is classified as a pro-drop language. Notice the difference in the following examples:

1) English: He won

Korean: [e] iki-ess-ta

win-pt-Dec

2) English: He saw it.

Korean: [e] [e] po-ass-ta

see-pt-Dec

The distribution of zero anaphora is not as restricted in Korean as it is in English. In other words, the more topic-prominent a language is, the more likely it is to drop a pronoun.

2.5. Relative Pronoun

In Korean the relative clause is placed before the head noun, while in English the relative clause is placed after the antecedent.

1) English: The apple [which Yongho has] is yellow.

Korean: [Yengho-ka kacikoiss-nun] ce sakwa-nun
Yengho-TM has RCM that apple-TM
nolass-ta
is-yellow

Korean has no relative words equivalent to English Who, Whom, or Which; instead the relativized noun and the particle are deleted. In English, a relative clause is initiated by a relative pronoun.

3. Interpretation vs. Translation

This section examines the distinguishing features between interpretation and translation.

3.1. Interpretation

Modes of interpretation can be largely classified as consecutive and simultaneous.

3.1.1. Consecutive Interpretation

In consecutive interpretation, the interpreter generally delivers the interpretation after pauses in the source language speaker's message. According to Longley (1977), the interpreter's notes for consecutive interpretation can be made up of signs and vocabulary items in the source, target, or third language. The interpreter can use anything in his notes that will bring back or trigger his short-term memory as to the original message. It is also recommended that the interpreter take his notes in a vertical manner rather than in a horizontal fashion in order for him to be able to identify the ideas at a glance.

It is generally known that notetaking in interpretation is different from stenography. An interpreter does not have to write down every word uttered by the speaker because meaning is more important than individual words. Since the interpreter cannot remember everything said in the original speech, his notes must serve to bring back his memory. It would not be desirable for the interpreter to take notes of only content words such as nouns, adjectives, or verbs because function words like prepositions, relatives, and conjunctions also play a crucial part in the process of the interpreter's performance.

Degueldre & Lichtenberg (1985) claim that the interpreter is required, in consecutive interpretation, to display a greater accuracy in the choice of words. As he has time to organize his notes, the consecutive interpreter will need only about 75% of the time taken by the speaker. Consecutive interpretation means that it is a relatively cheap option. There is no need to rent a conference room with equipment for simultaneous interpretation. The only cost will be the interpreter's remuneration which the convention organizer must pay anyway. However, consecutive interpretation is not much used today because the speaker will have to make time-consuming pauses to let the interpreter do the interpreting.

3.1.2. Simultaneous Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation is defined by Barik (1973:237) "as the process of orally converting a message from one language into another as the message is being received." Simultaneous interpretation is distinguished from consecutive interpretation, which is performed after the speaker has made an original delivery. Gerver (1976) states that the interpreter steps in at the end of the speech or after a certain agreed-upon length of time has elapsed. According to Degueldre & Lichtenberg (1985), when the interpreter is in the booth, he listens to the message through a headphone while speaking at the same time. Two interpreters normally work as a team in the same booth for a period of

about twenty minutes each. Simultaneous interpretation is not just a mechanical process. It is quite different from written translation. The interpreter performs different operations simultaneously such as expressing the idea of the speaker in another language and listening carefully to the utterance of the speaker before putting it into the target language.

Instantaneousness is the major advantage of simultaneous interpretation. However, there can be no literal instantaneousness because the interpreter can not begin his interpretation before the speaker makes a speech. As a matter of course, the speaker starts his speech and after a few seconds the interpreter performs to deliver the idea of the speaker's message in another language. Degueldre & Lichtenberg (1985) state that a time lag exists between the original speech and the interpreter's rendition.

Simultaneous interpretation reduces the time required for the communication process to take place. On the part of the conference organizers, simultaneous interpretation saves time at the expense of accuracy. However, simultaneous interpretation presents the disadvantage that it is a relatively costly method because there is a need to rent a conference room with equipment for simultaneous interpretation.

3.2. Translation

In this section, discussions will be made on the definition of translation and comparison between translation and interpretation.

3.2.1. Definition of Translation

Barik (1969) defines translation as "the formal, prepared, and written conversion of a text into another language." The constraints with respect to time are not relatively inherent in translation. From the pragmatic perspective, translation is a "decision process whereby the translator is required to choose

from among a certain number of alternatives” (Song, 1975:18). The choice may be dictated on the basis of the nuances of the original and the preference of the translator. Therefore, translation tends to be more structured than simultaneous interpretation. As a result, the sentence content is presented in greater specificity in translation than in interpretation probably because translators have more time to give thought to how much they want to put into a sentence.

3.2.2. Comparison between Translation and Interpretation

It has been recognized that the differences between interpretation and translation generally correspond to the common properties between oral and literate styles of communication. Simultaneous interpretation is often characterized by instantaneousness, whereas translation provides more time and eventually more resources for the cognitive effort. It may be that the simultaneous interpreter and translator go through different processes in making relevant lexical and phrasal choices.

Chafe and Danielewics (1987) suggest that some cognitive effort is required in translation to make good lexical choices. In other words, simultaneous interpretation is performed on the fly, whereas translation, according to Chafe and Danielewics, is done with little pressure of time and the possibility of revision. Unlike the translator who has multiple options in his/her lexical choices, the interpreter may have a tendency to operate with a narrow range of alternatives. Therefore, the simultaneous interpreter often has to take the initial option that comes across his/her mind. The natural corollary of this may be that variety is quite limited in the vocabulary that the simultaneous interpreter employs. In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter always has to make a rapid production of words. But, in translation, with or without revision, the translator always has more time to choose a better alternative.

4. Methodology

4.1. Procedure

This study is built around three populations. The subjects consisted of three groups of seven individuals at three different levels: beginning students, recent graduates, and professional interpreters. Thus, the participants can be summarized in the following:

Group		Number
1. Beginning Students	(BS)	7
2. Recent Graduates	(RG)	7
3. Professional Interpreters	(PS)	7

The translation texts used in this study were based on speeches that had been used at various conferences. The Korean translators were asked to interpret and then translate Korean sentences into English.

4.2. Data Analysis

In coding the differences between simultaneous interpretation and translation, I considered two basic measures to maintain objectivity: sentences free from errors and omissions.³⁾⁴⁾ The numbers of vocabulary items, instances of contractions, and different types of clauses used in simultaneous interpretation and translation respectively have been compared to the total number of sentences examined in order to obtain percentages that would permit comparability across interpretation and translation. From the corpora, 110 samples were coded from each of the three groups to find out about contraction, sentence

3) In this study, an error refers to a substitution for the text which alters the original meaning dysfunctionally.

4) In this study, an omission refers to material present in the original text, but absent in the interpretation.

construction, and vocabulary.

5. Results and Discussion

To show a synthetic view of the data for all the results, tables are provided to give the total number and proportion of translation disruptions in these corpora.⁵⁾ In the following section, discussions will focus on the differences between simultaneous interpretation and translation documented in this study, i.e., variety of lexical choices, contractions, and sentence construction.

5.1. Variety of Lexical Choices

Unlike the translator who has multiple options in his/her lexical choices, the interpreter may have a tendency to operate with a narrower range of alternatives. Therefore, the simultaneous interpreter often has to take the initial option that comes across his/her mind. The natural corollary of this is that variety is quite limited in the vocabulary that the simultaneous interpreter employs.

As used by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), a mechanical measure of the comparison is the type/token ratio of words, referring to the number of different words in a sample divided by the total number of words in that sample. For example, the last sentence of the preceding paragraph contains 19 word tokens but 16 word types, since the words 'is' and 'the' occur twice and three times, respectively. The type/token ratio of this one sentence is thus 16/19, or .84. [Table 1] shows a type/token ratio between simultaneous interpretation and translation across groups.

5) In this study, a translation(interpretation) disruption refers to a substitution for the text which alters the original meaning dysfunctionally.

[Table 1] Type/Token Ratios between Simultaneous Interpretation and Translation

GP/Mode	Interpretation	Translation
BS	.47	.52
RG	.46	.53
PI	.49	.54
AVG	.47	.53

As the data shows, translation displays a higher type/token ratio than simultaneous interpretation and thus more lexical diversity. In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter always has to make a rapid production of words. But, in translation, with or without revision, the translator always has more time to choose a better alternative. In other words, the constraints with respect to time are not relatively as inherent as in translation.

In the corpus, there appeared to be only an insignificant number of irrelevant sentences in translation, in prominent contrast with the number in simultaneous interpretation performed under time constraint. As a result, the sentence content was apparently presented in greater specificity in translation than in interpretation. From the type/token ratio, one may draw the conclusion that the translator is allowed more leeway for lexical diversity than the interpreter.

5.2. Contraction

There was a disparity in the use of contraction between simultaneous interpretation and translation. In simultaneous interpretation, contractions like won't and don't were frequently used, whereas in translation, such occurrences were reduced in number. [Table 1] shows the frequency of contractions used in the two styles of communication.

[Table 2] Distribution of Contractions

GP/Mode	Interpretation	Translation
BS	23	8
RG	21	13
PI	21	9
Total	65	30

As can be seen in [Table 2], the number of contractions used in simultaneous interpretation is in sharp contrast to the number used in translation. The data shows that there is little variation across groups in terms of the frequency of contractions. As displayed in the data, roughly twice as many contractions were used in simultaneous interpretation as in translation. The interpreters tended to use contractions perhaps in order to have a sufficient amount of time to handle lengthy clausal elements or comments such as cleft and embedded sentences that followed. Notice in the following example from BS3 the use of a contraction in simultaneous interpretation and its disappearance in translation:

1) Original Version:

kwukceysahoy -nun kangdaykwuk-un
 international community-TM superpowers-SM

kaytokwuk -i kyengcayngsangtay -lo
 developing country-NM rival as

pwusanghanun-koss-ul wenchi an supnita
 emerge -Comp-AM want not Decl

'In the international community, the superpowers do not want developing nations to emerge as their competitors.'

Interpreter's Version:

'In the international society the strong countries don't want to be compared with weaker nations.'

Translator's Version:

'In the international community, weaker nations are not welcome by advanced countries to emerge as their competitors.'

Although we cannot discount the general principle that contraction is likely to be avoided more consistently in formal writing than in speech, it would seem in this case that other motivations were at work as well. It appeared that the interpreter used a contraction to cope with the verbal element as rapidly as possible and then move on to process the more complicated complement that followed. In the translation, on the other hand, the translator had the relative leisure to make his/her lexical choices. Therefore, it was assumed that there was no need for him/her to be bound by the length of the sentence.

5.3. Sentence Construction

With respect to sentence construction, the interpreters and translators had a tendency to produce more simple sentences and avoid complex clauses in simultaneous interpretation, whereas in translation the sentences were more elaborate with interclausal relations. Complex syntax may require more processing time in simultaneous interpretation than the interpreter can afford. [Table 2] shows the distribution of the number of simple and complex clauses used both in simultaneous interpretation and translation.

[Table 3] Distribution of Clauses used in Simultaneous Interpretation and Translation

GP/Mode	interpretation		Translation	
	simp.	comp.	simp.	comp
BS	39	11	32	18
RG	40	10	29	21
PI	35	15	26	24
AVE	38	12	29	21

As the data shows in [Table 3], more complex sentences were used in translation than in simultaneous interpretation, which provides evidence for the time and effort employed to form the sentences. It is assumed from the data that translation demonstrates greater specificity than does simultaneous interpretation. Therefore, one might conclude that a meaning unit is a natural unit of segmentation in simultaneous interpretation, whereas a sentence is generally a major unit of segmentation in translation. Translators have time to give thought to constructing the kind of sentence they favor, as seen in the following comparison between simultaneous interpretation and translation.

1) Original Version:

caknyen mwuyek hukca-ka nako pwutenun
 last year trade surplus-SM occur since
 nay-ka kipwun-i coas-supnita
 I-TM feeling-SM good -Decl

‘Since trade surplus took place last year, I’ve been feeling good.’

Interpreter’s Version:

‘Trade surplus began last year and I’ve been feeling well.’

Translation:

'I've been happy because I saw trade surplus last year.'

As the example shows, the participant used the conjunction 'and' to split the original sentence into two coordinate or paratactic constructions. It appears that this strategy can indeed be explained by the idea that it would be easier for the interpreter to process two paratactic sentences in simultaneous interpretation than to rearrange the structures into a hypotactic construction, i.e., one matrix clause and one subordinate clause preceded by a variety of conjunctions such as 'because' and 'since'.

6. Conclusion

So far, this paper has attempted to discuss various phenomena in relation to temporal limit which apparently serves as a variable in the performance of Korean-into-English interpretation and translation. The major findings of this study are as follows:

1) The results of the type/token ratio of words, as used by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), showed that more words were used in translation than in simultaneous interpretation. As expected, simultaneous interpretation displays a low type/token ratio and thus less lexical diversity. Since the constraints with respect to time are inherent in simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter has a tendency to perform with a narrower range of alternatives than the translator.

2) Contractions were more frequently used in simultaneous interpretation than in translation which is characterized by an absence of temporal constraints. It was inferred that the translator used contractions to deal with the global meaning of the sentence rather than the local aspect of it. The avoidance of contraction in translation may also reflect the greater formality

assigned to a written text.

3) In terms of the use of clausal types, paratactic sentences were generally used in simultaneous interpretation, whereas more hypotactic clauses appeared in translation. More contractions and paratactic sentences were used in translation than in simultaneous interpretation.

In the final analysis, this study suggests that time constraint may be an important factor in the processing of information in interpretation and translation. From the findings of this study, one may draw the important pedagogical implication that attention should be paid to strategies of teaching student interpreters and translators how to handle various Korean sentence structures under different types of time constraint in the training of interpretation, and translation. It may be desirable to introduce the text composed of simple structures (which appear the easiest to process) first and more complicated structures (which appear the most difficult to process) last in the training, by providing the students with plenty of examples.

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Abbreviations

AM	accusative marker	BS	beginning students
C	complement	COMP	complementizer
Conj	conjunction	Decl	declarative
e	empty	NM	nominative marker
NP	noun phrase	PI	professional interpreters
pt	past tense	RCM	relative clause marker
RG	recent graduates	S	sentence
SM	subject marker	TM	topic marker
V	verb		

[국문초록]

통역번역에서 시간제한의 특성

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(경희대)

본 논문에서는 통역번역에서의 시간제한의 특성을 다룬다. 한영 통번역 현상을 분석하기 위해 양언의 구조적인 측면을 개관한다. 즉, 화제중심인 한국어와 주어중심인 영어의 유형적인 차이에서 파생되는 특성을 다루고 통역과 번역의 차이점을 다룬다. 자료분석 결과, 통역, 특히 동시통역의 경우 통역사가 연사의 메시지 내용을 거의 동시에 대상어로 전달해야 하는 시간적 제약으로 말미암아 첫째, 어휘의 다양성이 번역보다 낮다. 둘째, don't와 같은 단축형(contraction)이나 단문의 형태의 문장사용 빈도수가 높다. 셋째, 문장구조에서 통역은 단문의 빈도가 높았으며 번역의 경우 시간적 제약이 상대적으로 완화되므로 복문이나 혼문사용의 빈도가 높았다. 이와같이 통번역에 있어서 상대적인 시간제한은 불가피하므로 번역에서도 선택의 범위를 제한할 필요가 있다. 그러므로 통번역사 교육과정에서도 기초적인 텍스트에서부터 고난도의 텍스트에 이르기까지 단계적인 학습을 통해 통번역사가 이러한 시간제약에 보다 더 효율적으로 대처할 수 있을 것이다.