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# Accuracy in telephone interpreting: the case of French as a lingua franca in Finland

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## Abstract

*This paper analyzes accuracy in authentic telephone-interpreting data in which the migrant and the interpreter communicate in French as a lingua franca, namely a language that is not their first language. The data consists of an interview conducted by a law-enforcement officer in Finland. The analysis is based on the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions of language theorized within systemic-functional grammar. The analysis shows that the particularities of both telephone-mediated interpreting and lingua-franca interpreting engender significant communication problems. As a result, accuracy is not achieved, and the interpreter has to use strategies that are questionable in terms of the codes of conduct of community and legal interpreters. The interpreter is an active agent in the co-construction, maintenance, and erasure of indexical meanings such as speaker identities. In addition, due to linguistic and contextual constraints, the interpreter takes a prominent role as a coordinator of turns. The paper suggests that interpreters' deontological codes are based on monolithic language ideologies and unrealistic expectations that should be reconsidered to correspond to the specific features of lingua franca and telephone interpreting.*

## Keywords

Community interpreting, public-service interpreting, legal interpreting, telephone interpreting, French, Finnish, systemic-functional grammar, equivalence, accuracy, lingua franca.

Equivalence between source text and target text has been a quintessential concept in most theorizations of translation. In fact, the questioning of the concept may be regarded as an essential feature of contemporary European translation theories (Windle/Pym 2011: 15). Many theories have concerned themselves with the distinction between strict adherence to the source text compared to adaptation to the cultural and linguistic context of the target text. Pairs describing these two poles include direct and oblique translation (Vinay/Darbelnet 1958), formal and dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964: 159), textual equivalence and formal correspondence (Catford 1965: 27), and covert and overt translation (House 1997). Several theoretical models propose categorizations of types of equivalence based on linguistic units (e.g. Baker 1992). Such categorizations, with a specific emphasis on pragmatic equivalence, have been common in studies focusing on community and legal interpreting (Berg-Seligson 1990: 2; Fowler 1997: 198-199; Hale 2004, 2006, and 2007). Accuracy is a more practice-oriented aspect of the relationship between source and target text. According to Viezzi (1996: 88), an accurate interpretation means that the interpreter transmits and reformulates the informative content of the source text accurately. This requires above all that the same information content is recognized by the target text hearer and implies taking into account the speaker's communicative intention, the knowledge gap between the speaker and the hearer, the relevance of information content for the audience, and the pragmatic dimension. Hale (1996) also emphasizes the pragmatic dimension of accurate interpretation: interpreting accurately means interpreting pragmatically.

Accuracy is the cornerstone of legal and community-interpreting practice. For example, the ethical code for Finnish legal interpreters is founded on the requirement of accurate interpretation of the information content (SKTL 2016: Art. 6): "The legal interpreter shall interpret in an exhaustive manner without omitting anything nor adding anything irrelevant". The explanatory note on this Article specifies that "the task of the interpreter is to transmit the messages present in an interpreter-mediated encounter as exhaustively as possible and without changing their content" (both translations by the author). According to the preamble to this code, the interpreter may intervene in the flow of discourse, if this is necessary, in order to guarantee "exhaustive and accurate interpretation". In addition, the code (Art. 5) considers accurate interpretation to result from adequate preparation for an assignment: the interpreter should ensure that s/he receives all background material in order to guarantee accurate interpretation.

Experienced community and legal interpreters know how difficult it is to achieve accuracy. Such problems are salient in telephone-based interpreting, which has become increasingly common and a multimillion-dollar business worldwide (Azarmina/Wallace 2005; Ozolins 2011: 34-36). Telephone interpreting is cheaper, and when interpreting is urgently needed, it is easier to find a telephone interpreter than an interpreter who is physically present in the same location. The development of mobile telephony and the decreased price of telephony in general largely explain the rise of this mode of interpreting (Ozolins 2011: 34). Telephone interpreting is particularly common in situations in which it is difficult to find an interpreter of a language of lesser diffusion (Torres 2014: 404).

However, telephone interpreting is also quite common when the interpreter and the migrant communicate in a language of wider diffusion, including global languages such as Spanish (Rosenberg 2007).

Existing scholarship has repeatedly identified the need to conduct more research on telephone interpreting in order to analyze the very nature of telephone-interpreted discourse (Wadensjö 1999: 261) and to explore the theoretical basis of telephone interpreting research (Ozolins 2011: 43). Other suggested research areas include the impact of extra-linguistic and situational demands, lack of a shared frame of reference, the interpreter's physical distance, and the contingency of accuracy upon the semantic field (Rosenberg 2007: 75).

This paper attempts to contribute to telephone interpreting scholarship through an analysis inspired by critical discourse analysis and critical sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, and systemic-functional linguistics. The paper explores choices made by the interpreter during an interview conducted in Finland by a law-enforcement officer, in which the interpreter and the interviewee were both second-language speakers of French, a global lingua franca, and communicated via telephone. The choice of this data aims at drawing attention to the fact that at least in Finland, telephone interpreting is quite common in the legal field and especially in police, border-control, and customs interviews. Furthermore, the data choice emphasizes the interplay between two sources of constraints: the use of a lingua franca as a language of communication and the use of the telephone as a channel of communication. In a critical sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical framework, the paper addresses the *reasons* why constraints present in telephone and lingua-franca interpreting engender specific problems in interaction and the *consequences* of these constraints, materialized in linguistic *choices* visible in the data. These linguistic choices are related to accuracy in the sense of the accurate transmission and reformulation of source-text information content (Viezzi 1996: 88). Data transcription and micro-level analysis are based on tools borrowed from conversation analysis. On a more general and macro level, the analysis is inspired by systemic-functional grammar, which also emphasizes choice and observes meaning through the prism of the *functions* of language. These functions have shaped the categories, structures, and constructions inherent in languages. Hence, the analysis is based on the co-construction of meaning in interaction inasmuch as it relates to the ways in which language is used to: 1) construe experience, make sense of the world, and create coherent meanings (*ideational* metafunction and meaning); 2) create, maintain, and break bonds between speakers (*interpersonal* metafunction and meaning); and 3) create meaningful and cohesive discourse (*textual* metafunction and meaning). These categories are called metafunctions because they are not merely types of function but also of meaning, purported to serve as meaningful categories for the actual analysis of language use. Any spoken, written, or multimodal text can be analyzed from the perspective of all metafunctions as they operate simultaneously (Halliday/Matthiessen 2004: 29-31). Choice is a central idea in functional grammar: using language means choosing from among infinite meaning-making resources (*ibid.*: 4). Thus, translating is a process in which the translator simultaneously chooses from among different metafunctional systems (Matthiessen 2014: 277). In Translation Studies, systemic-functional theory has been used

previously for example in House's (1997) translation-quality assessment model and in Munday's (2015) study of engagement and graduation resources as signs of translator and interpreter positioning.

## 1. Data and methods of analysis

The data consists of an interview in which the interviewee was a person suspected of committing an offense. The interview lasted for approximately 27 minutes. The transcript contains 6,046 words and 38,018 characters, including spaces. This interview was preceded and followed by other meetings and interviews. All were telephone-interpreted by the same interpreter: the duration of the interpreting assignment, including a lunch break, was five hours. An officer, a lawyer, and the interviewee were present in the room in which the interview was conducted. The participants used a speakerphone with a microphone and a loudspeaker separate from the handset in order to allow several people to participate in one conversation. The physical distance between the interview room and the interpreter was several hundred kilometers. The interpreter, working from home, used a cellular phone. The data was obtained through personal contacts in the interpreter and interpreting-service communities. The voice-recording application on the cellular phone was used. The tape was transcribed by an assistant who used Praat software for phonetic analysis, after which the author verified and corrected the transcript.

In order to make the excerpts of the transcript more accessible, I have numbered the turns (rather than lines as is customary in conversation analysis), capitalized the participants' names, and italicized the English translations of Finnish and French utterances. Pauses are reproduced in the translation in order to make it easier to follow the transcript. Unlike French and English, Finnish makes abundant usage of word and constituent-order variation in the creation of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. As a result, full-fledged literalness is not possible. However, since the goal is not to analyze grammatical equivalence between languages that are quite different structurally (French and English are Indo-European languages, whereas Finnish is a Uralic language), I have not glossed grammatical features. I have used the following transcription conventions, adapted from Seppänen (1997):

?	Rising intonation at the end of a prosodic group (question mark)
documents.	Descending intonation at the end of a prosodic group (period)
ʌpayé	Pitch prominence in the following word (arrow)
<i>combien</i>	Increased loudness (italics)
<i>Payé</i>	Increased intensity of a plosive (capitalization)
c:es	Lengthened vowel (colon)
annott-	False start (hyphen)
(.)	Micropause shorter than 0.2 seconds (period in parentheses)
(1.4)	Pause longer than 0.2 seconds
tout=ce	Elements merging without clear distinction
>ouais ouais<	Passage pronounced faster than neighboring words
<dollaria>	Passage pronounced more slowly than neighboring words
*dollars*	Minor change in voice quality

**dollars**	Significant change in voice quality
(---)	Inaudible
(yé)	Significantly non-normative pronunciation or ungrammatical usage (also in parentheses in the translation if applicable, eventually with two alternative equivalents)
((in French))	Transcriber's and translator's comments
[ouais ouais]	Turn overlapping with the previous turn

First, I will analyze one extract from the perspective of ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. Second, I will analyze another extract from the viewpoint of the textual metafunction. These extracts were chosen because they illustrate recurrent communication problems that emerge from the data. While they do not contain elements that would allow for the identification of the persons involved, certain details that are not crucial for the analysis have been changed and the gender of the participants is not disclosed in order to ensure privacy. As a result, it is impossible to identify the persons involved.

## 2. Ideational and interpersonal meaning

The extract analyzed below starts about 12 minutes into the interview. Prior to the interview, a meeting had been held between the interviewee and his/her counsel. Hence, the telephone interpretation had been ongoing for almost 40 minutes by the beginning of this sample:

- 1)
  - 1 OFFICER *∧*paljon nämä asiakirjat *∧*maksoivat sinulle  
*how much did these documents cost you*
  - 2 INTERPRETER combien est-ce que tu as *∧*payé pour ce:s documents?  
*how much did you pay for these documents*
  - 3 INTERVIEWEE pardon?
  - 4 INTERPRETER combien est-ce que tu as *∧*payé (1.4) ça t'a coûté combien?  
*how much did you pay (1.4) how much did it cost you*
  - 5 INTERVIEWEE (yé) *∧*n'entends pas  
*(I) cannot hear*
  - 6 INTERPRETER combien est-ce que ça t'a coûté ? (1.3) tu as *∧*Payé combien?  
*how much did it cost you (1.3) how much did you pay*
  - 7 INTERVIEWEE (4.2) répétez >(per) moi ces questions< s'il vous plaît  
*(4.2) could you please repeat these questions (for) me*
  - 8 INTERPRETER hän pyytää mua *∧*toistamaan *∧*combien est-ce que tu as *∧*Payé  
pour ces documents (.) tu comprends?  
*he wants me to repeat ((in Finnish)) how much did you pay for these documents (.) do you understand ((in French))*
  - 9 INTERVIEWEE ah (.) l'argent que je paie?  
*oh (.) the money I pay*
  - 10 INTERPRETER [-ouais ouais< *∧*l'argent] ((annoyance)) (.) oui (.) combien  
*yeah yeah the money (.) yes (.) how much*
  - 11 INTERVIEWEE ah l'argent (qui) m'avait demandé donc éh j'avai:s? (.) j'avai:s ééeh (le le le) somme-là donc eh (0.3) il *∧*m'a demandé que eh de (dé) donner? (.) eeh (1.0) deux mille dollars

oh the money (who/he) asked me for so er I had (.) I had erm the the the that sum so er (0.3) he  
 asked me that er to (to) give (.) erm (1.0) two thousand dollars  
 12 INTERPRETER ↗deux mille dollars  
 two thousand dollars  
 13 INTERVIEWEE oui  
 yes  
 14 INTERPRETER hän pyysi minulta ↗kaksituhatta dollaria  
 he asked me for two thousand dollars  
 15 OFFICER \*>eli< maksoit ↗kaksituhatta dollaria näistä asiakirjoista\* ((annoyance))  
 so you paid two thousand dollars for these documents  
 16 INTERPRETER et tu as ↗Payé deux mille ↗dollars alors  
 and so you paid two thousand dollars  
 17 INTERVIEWEE pardon?  
 18 INTERPRETER et tu as ↗payé deux mille dollars  
 and you paid two thousand dollars  
 19 INTERVIEWEE (2.8) (yé) ↗n'entends pas  
 (2.8) (I) cannot hear  
 20 INTERPRETER est-ce que tu as ↗payé deux mille dollars  
 did you pay two thousand dollars  
 21 INTERVIEWEE la personne m'a dit (qui) non non que pour <m'aider> pour m'aider là  
 the person told me (who/that) no no that to help me help me there  
 22 INTERPRETER (6.6) donc tu n'as ↗pas payé. (2.3) la question c'était est-ce que tu as  
 ↗payé deux mille dollars  
 (6.6) so you did not pay (2.3) the question was did you pay two thousand dollars  
 23 (4.5) ((It is not clear whether someone speaks here.))  
 24 INTERPRETER hän ↗sanoo ö ö öh pyytää ö ↗toistamaan kysymyksen (8.8) donc ↗ce  
 monsieur qui t'a donné ces documents. est-ce que tu lui as ↗payé deux mille dollars  
 ↗est-ce que tu lui as ↗donné (.) ↗deux mille dollars (.) d'argent  
 he says er er erm asks me er to repeat the question (8.8) ((in Finnish)) so this man who gave  
 you these documents did you pay him two thousand dollars did you give him (.) two thousand  
 dollars (.) of money ((in French))  
 25 INTERVIEWEE (---)  
 26 INTERPRETER ↗kyllä (.) mulla ↗oli kaksituhatta dollaria  
 yes (.) I had two thousand dollars  
 27 OFFICER (5.5) \*\*↗maksoitkos <sen kaksituhatta dollaria tälle henkilölle>\*\* ((anno-  
 yance/impatience))  
 did you pay two thousand dollars to this person  
 28 INTERPRETER >donc ↗encore une fois< (.) ↗est-ce que tu as donné (.) deux mille  
 dollars (.) à ce monsieur  
 so one more time (.) did you give (.) two thousand dollars (.) to this man  
 29 INTERVIEWEE (y) ↗m'ont pris deux mille dollars  
 (they) took two thousand dollars from me.  
 30 INTERPRETER he ö (0.3) h-he: >↗ottivat minulta< kaksituhatta dollaria  
 they er t-they took from me two thousand dollars  
 31 OFFICER (4.9) \*(j)joo\* ((disbelief/resilience))  
 okay.

## 2.1 Ideational meaning

At first sight, the fact that the interviewee does not hear and/or understand the interpreter's questions seems to be the main problem in this passage: the same question has to be repeated five times (turns 2 through 10) before an answer emerges. The interpreter uses different techniques to ensure understanding: reformulation, repetition, and prosodic strategies such as pitch prominence and increased loudness affecting the verbs *payer* and *coûter* ('cost') and the adverb *combien* ('how much'). These strategies suggest that the interpreter deems the problem to reside in divergent linguistic resources between the interpreter and the interviewee: the interviewee does not recognize or know the verbs *payer* and *coûter*, although they are common verbs in French. Starting from turn 16, the interpreter seems to assume that the verb *payer* is now familiar to the interviewee. The interpreter uses similar prosodic strategies as in previous turns to emphasize this key word. However, it is only in turn 24, in which the interpreter reformulates the question by using one of the most frequent French verbs *donner* ('give') and the noun *argent* ('money') in an unidiomatic construction (*deux mille dollars d'argent*, 'two thousand dollars of money'), that the interviewee appears to understand the question.

While lexical problems seem to constitute a major issue in this exchange, there are also interesting phenomena related to transitivity, namely process types and participant roles. Many analyses of experiential metafunction and ideational meaning have concentrated on these phenomena (Eggins 1996: 76-77; Caffarel 2006: 14; Halliday/Matthiessen 2004: 301). In turn 1, the officer inquires how much the documents cost, presenting the process as relational, namely a process of being. The interpreter (turn 2) uses the verb *payer*, describing the process as material, namely a process of doing (*ibid.*: 179). While relational processes describe a relation of being or having between two entities, material processes imply an active doer. In turn 4, the interpreter reformulates the question by using both verbs *payer* and *coûter*, thereby presenting the process as both material, with an active doer, and relational, with a passive participant.

At least two hypotheses can be ventured as to the reason why the interpreter mixes relational and material processes. First, the interpreter may have regarded the material process as simpler and more explicit both semantically and syntactically and, therefore, easier to understand. In fact, the relational process implies that since the person has the documents now, a price has been paid. The fact that the officer emphasizes both the word *paljon* ('how much') and *maksoi* ('cost', simple past) in turn 1 with a higher pitch may have triggered this interpretation. Second, the interpreter may have neglected the fact that active participation or the lack thereof could be important, although the distinction is essential from the viewpoint of judicial consequences.

Subsequently, it becomes clear that the officer actually wanted to know both the price of the false documents and whether the interviewee was an active doer in the process (turn 15). In the turns that follow, the interpreter no longer mixes process types and repeats the question three times (turns 16, 18, and 20). In turn 21, the interviewee's speech is incoherent and ungrammatical, which clearly confuses the interpreter (turn 22). First, there is a long pause (6.6 seconds) followed



by a request for confirmation that the interviewee had actually not paid anything (triggered by the negation word *no*, repeated twice in the interviewee's seemingly incoherent turn). After a short pause (2.3 seconds), the interpreter decides to reiterate the question. It is not clear whether the interviewee reacts to this or whether there is another rather long pause (turn 23) before the interpreter chooses to inform the officer about an explicit repair initiation. At this point, the exchange between the interpreter and the interviewee has lasted 33 seconds and covered 3 adjacency pairs without the officer's intervention. Judging from the interpreter's turn 26, the interviewee presumably answers "Yes, I had 2,000 dollars", thus using a relational process describing possession (turn 25 is inaudible). When the officer reiterates the question (turn 27), the interviewee finally answers with a material process in which the active doer is someone else: the interviewee is represented as a passive participant who suffers from the action. The interpreter's hesitation sounds and pause in turn 28 suggest discomfort with the word-for-word translation of the construction, as the verb *ottaa*, 'take', connotes a violent exchange of money in this particular context in Finnish.

## 2.2 Interpersonal meaning

While the analysis above initially indicates that the problem is mainly lexical, scrutiny of transitivity patterns suggests otherwise: the interviewee may not want to be represented as an active participant in the process. Marking oneself as knowledgeable or uninformed is part of the construction of speaker identity, which links the analysis to interpersonal meaning. In this section, I will analyze speaker identity in connection with stance, mood (interrogatives), and turn-taking.

In reformulations and prosodic strategies highlighting key words, the interpreter's intentions are certainly good: the necessary information needs to be extracted. At the same time, the interpreter's speech is represented as more precise and more adequate than the migrant's speech (cf. Kurhila 2001: 179), which may convey an implicitly negative stance towards the migrant: the interpreter categorizes the interlocutor as a lingua-franca speaker of French with deficient linguistic resources.

Initially, the interpreter does not demonstrate an explicitly negative stance towards the interviewee: while key words are stressed, the general tone remains neutral. However, in turn 10, the interpreter shows overt annoyance by starting the turn before the interviewee has finished and by repeating the colloquial *ouais* ('yeah') as a sign of impatience. Subsequently, the interpreter quickly switches back to the more polite form *oui* ('yes') and a neutral tone, and continues doing this throughout the rest of this extract.

According to the code of conduct for Finnish legal interpreters, the interpreter's own opinions and attitude should not be heard. At the same time, the interpreter should use the same tone as the original speaker (SKTL 2016: Art. 6 and 7). However, it is not in the interpreter's interest to adopt a negative stance: the communication setting is quite fragile due to mismatching linguistic resources, poor quality of sound, and lack of non-verbal communication. The way in which the interpreter treats the officer's negative stance is quite illustrative in this respect.

The officer's frustration and annoyance are audible throughout the encounter (especially in turns 15 and 27). There are no attempts on the part of the interpreter to convey this dimension in any of the encounters constituting the interpreting assignment from which the data is extracted. In fact, the perlocutionary effect of interpreting such a stance would be quite perilous. There is no direct indication as to the object of the officer's negative stance: the interviewee, the situation, the story, or the interpreter. In an interpretation provided over the phone, the interviewee would clearly become the target of such a stance, which could have a negative impact on the rapport between the migrant and the interpreter. In addition, this pattern of neutralizing negative affect is consistent with previous research according to which interpreters and translators have a tendency to downscale attitudinal and engagement values in the target text (Munday 2015: 419).

In addition to stance and identity, mood is an interpersonal phenomenon worth analyzing. In an interview conducted by a law-enforcement official, question-answer adjacency pairs dominate the encounter. In telephone interpreting, it is particularly important to convey mood-related information, as devices used in face-to-face situations, such as gaze and gesture, are not available. In lingua-franca interpreting, the situation is even more complicated, especially in languages in which various strategies can be used to form questions.

In French, questions can be produced either by reversing the order of the main constituents, by adding the interrogative morpheme *est-ce que*, or by using rising intonation. In the extract above, the interpreter uses both intonation and the morpheme *est-ce que*, namely informal and neutral question-formation techniques. Rising intonation is clear in three turns (4, 6, and 8) whereas in five turns (4, 10, 16, 18, 20, and 22), this feature is not clear. The morpheme *est-ce que* is used in seven turns (2, 4, 6, 8, 22, 24, and 28). On two occasions (turns 2 and 6), *est-ce que* is accompanied by rising intonation at the end of the turn, which is optional in French. (Turn 16 is not really a question.) Thus, one may argue that since the interpreter does not mark all turns as interrogatives by using clearly rising intonation, the interviewee may not have interpreted such turns as questions. In addition, while the interpreter may have favored questions formed by *est-ce que* because that morpheme clearly marks the clause as a question even in poor hearing conditions, the morpheme also adds morphological complexity, which may constitute a problem in a lingua-franca situation. Throughout the encounter, the interviewee uses only rising intonation in questions. At the same time, the fact that the interpreter uses rising intonation consistently at the beginning of this extract appears to favor the hypothesis that the problem is represented mainly as a lexical one. Indeed, in turn 7 the interviewee clearly indicates that the mood of the interpreter's questions is not a problem. However, the plural in *ces questions* ('these questions') suggests that the interpreter's strategy of reformulation may not have been felicitous: the interviewee may have perceived different formulations of the same question as different questions altogether.

As for turn organization, there are 31 turns in the extract. The officer asks four questions (turns 1, 15, 27, and 31). There are two long passages in which the officer does not take part (turns 2 through 10, and 16 through 26). In turn 8, the interpreter informs the officer that the interviewee wants the question to be repeated after the interviewee has explicitly requested this. In turn 24, it is not clear

whether the interpreter's informing the officer is preceded by a repair initiation on the part of the interviewee, as turn 23 is inaudible.

According to the code of conduct for legal interpreters in Finland (SKTL 2016: Art. 6), the interpreter should not have taken the initiative for turn-taking without informing the speaker: "If needed, the interpreter informs clearly that s/he is speaking on his or her own behalf". However, responsibility for the organization of discourse is permitted in certain cases in order to ensure "exhaustive and accurate interpretation" (*ibid.*: Preamble).

Several hypotheses can be put forward to explain the interpreter's strategy. First, the analysis of ideational meaning indicates that the interpreter has identified lexical problems as the main issue. Therefore, one could argue that the interpreter is following the turn-taking exception permitted by the ethical code, taking responsibility for turn organization in order to assure quality interpreting. In fact, the officer does not know French and cannot distinguish between different varieties of French, identify potential linguistic issues, or help to reformulate the questions in a form that the interviewee understands. Second, the interpreter's strategy may have been triggered by basic characteristics of repair organization in a conversation. While the interviewee initiates the repair, the interpreter adopts the position of the origin of the problem. Repairs performed by the originator of the problem constitute the preferred repair pattern in conversation (cf. Schegloff *et al.* 1977; Sorjonen 1997). Third, informing the officer about the repair entails using two languages in the same turn. There are several cases elsewhere in the data where such code-switching techniques create additional problems: when the turn starts in a language, the interviewee does not understand and active listening stops. Code-switching is especially problematic in telephone interpreting because there are no non-verbal means by which code-switching can be linked to recipient-switching. Fourth, throughout this interpreting assignment, the interviewee shows alignment mainly with the interpreter, the primary interlocutor. Thus, repair initiations referring to a hearing problem either implicitly (*Pardon?*) or explicitly (*I cannot hear*), are logically directed to the interpreter, and the interpreter informs the officer only when the request for repair does not imply hearing problems (e.g. turn 8). Rosenberg (2007: 67) has identified these phenomena, indicating unfamiliarity with the particularities of telephone-based interpreting and resulting in the interpreter becoming a full-fledged conversational participant, as being typical features of telephone interpreting. In such a situation, using the third person could help to make the communication smoother (*ibid.*: 73).

### 3. Textual meaning

While the interviewee expresses failure to understand or hear the interpreter's rather short questions, the interpreter expresses perfect understanding of the interviewee's long answers in most cases. Therefore, the interpreter processes the interviewee's answers as unproblematic (see Gavioli/Baraldi 2011: 214) and erases the identity of the interviewee as a lingua-franca speaker with idiosyncratic language resources. This phenomenon emerges clearly from a textual analysis

of the second sample. This extract is a passage interpreted eight minutes prior to the first excerpt. The question asked by the officer preceding the excerpt is: “Who gave you this passport or these false documents?”.

2)

INTERVIEWEE les documents là donc eh >je ne connais< /même pas ça donc éh (.) un quelqu'un=un /gars comme ça donc >un /blanc comme ça< (0.6) (yé) eu donc ééh (.) /même moi je ne connai- je n'ai: jamais (vi) (0.6) comme j'étais venu donc je cherchais là où je peux aller? (0.8) donc ééh (0.9) avec ces messieurs=je n'ai jamais vu< le ce (messieu) non me remet donc e:t puis que voilà et puis eh (1.6) /tout=ce qu'ils ont fait là-bas donc je n'étais /pas comment ils ont fait tout ça je ne sais même pas

*those documents er so I don't even know it er (.) a someone a guy like that so a white guy like that (0.6) (I) got so erm (.) even me I don't know I never saw (0.6) since I had come so I looked for a place to go (0.8) so erm (0.9) with these gentlemen I never saw the this (gentleman) no hands me so and then that here you are and then er (1.6) all they did there so I was not how they did all that I don't even know*

INTERPRETER (2.9) no minä en edes tiedä /kuka /kuka ne on (0.5) /kuka sen on tehnyt että tota mulle (annott-) anto tän /passin joku /tyyppi? joku /valkoihonen? (0.7) ja mä en ees /tunne sitä et mä en /tiedä kuka ne on tehny

*(2.9) well, I don't even know who who has them (0.5) who has done it like I was (gave) given this passport by some guy some white person (0.7) and I don't even know him' like I don't know who made them*

The interviewee pronounces certain sounds idiosyncratically, *yé* [je] instead of *je* [ʒø] for *T*, *vi* [vi] instead of *vu* [vy] for the past participle of the verb *voir* ('see'). There are no lexical difficulties, and the core message is clearly foregrounded: the answer is negative, as indicated by seven negations. Key verbs are repeated several times: *connaître* and *savoir* ('know') three times, *voir* ('see') twice. While frequent pauses and hesitation sounds in the interviewee's turn appear to indicate difficulties in finding words, these features can also be interpreted as cohesive devices organizing the turn into meaningful sequences. Intonation and word stress are clearly used to this end. Another salient feature is the abundance of lexical cohesive devices. For example, the adverb *donc* ('so' or 'like'), which is a frequent connector in French, is used seven times. In addition, the interviewee's speaking rate is relatively fast: 199 wpm. This creates an impression of fluency for a person who does not know French: prosodic and temporal factors have been identified as key features in the perception of fluency in the existing literature in the field of Linguistics and Interpreting Studies alike (Rennert 2010: 103-104).

However, the interviewee's turn is rather problematic. First, on several occasions, the rheme element of the clause is truncated (cf. Halliday/Matthiessen 2004: 64-67). Thus, at the beginning of the turn, the interviewee claims to have no knowledge of the documents. However, in previous turns the interviewee admitted being their legal owner several times. When the interviewer switches to talk about the people involved, things become even more complicated: it is not clear whether not knowing, not seeing, and never seeing refer to the documents

1 Although Finnish does not have grammatical gender in pronouns, it is clear from the context that the reference is masculine.

or to a person. As for the verb *remettre* ('hand/give'), the logical object (*documents*) is too far away to be connected with this verb. The verb *être* ('be') remains enigmatic as well: was the interviewee not "there", or rather, not aware of something? Due to these particularities, it is rather difficult to analyze the thematic progression in this turn. The fact that the cohesive connector *donc* is used idiosyncratically on several occasions aggravates the problem. All of these textual features create an idiosyncratic system of cohesion.

While it is possible to establish the content of the interviewee's turn in retrospect with some degree of probability by listening to the tape several times and analyzing textual and other linguistic features carefully, the situation must have been quite different on the spot. In fact, one may argue that according to the code of conduct for Finnish legal interpreters, the interpreter should have informed the officer that the language variety differs too much from varieties known to the interpreter (SKTL 2016: Art. 10). However, there are no interpreters familiar with this "variety": it is neither a sociolect nor a dialect. It is an idiolect.

There are pauses, hesitations, repetitions, and a false start in the interpreter's turn, which indicate that the turn is problematic. However, the interpreter manages to convey the most important elements of the interviewee's turn by raising the pitch of key words: *kuka* ('who', nominative subject case, three times), *passin* ('passport', accusative object case), *tyyppi* ('guy', nominative subject case), *valkoihonen* ('white-skinned', nominative subject case), *tiedä* ('know', 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg, negation), *tunne* 'know', (3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg, negation). In addition, the words *kuka* and *tyyppi* are stressed. The connections the interpreter establishes between these words, namely who did what to whom and so forth, are probably the result of logical reasoning about the most probable scenario based on previous information about this and other interviews, as well as guesswork perhaps.

The interpreter starts the turn using a neutral or formal register, as exemplified by the pronoun *minä* ('I', nominative subject case), the adverb *edes* ('even'), and the past participle *tehnyt* ('done'). Starting from the colloquial discourse marker *että tota* ('like'), indicating explanation or reported speech, the interpreter's speech becomes colloquial. Thus, colloquial variants of personal and demonstrative pronouns appear: *mulle* ('to me', allative dative case), *tän* ('this', accusative object case), *mä* ('I', nominative subject case), *sitä* ('he/she', partitive object case)<sup>2</sup>, and again *mä*. Verbs are also colloquial: *anto* ('give', 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg. pret.) and *tehny* ('make', 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg. pret.), as well as modal adverbs and discourse markers: *ees* ('even') and *et* ('like'). The noun *valkoihonen* ('white-skinned', nominative object case) is also pronounced colloquially, and the noun *tyyppi* ('guy', nominative object case) is typical of informal language. Furthermore, the rising intonation after these two words is a feature typical of modern informal language use, especially among young people in the greater Helsinki area. (This strange intonation pattern could also be a phenomenon of interference from French.) Overall, informal and colloquial features mark the interpreter's speech quite distinctively as modern colloquial Finnish.

The switch from a formal to a colloquial register is rather enigmatic: the discourse marker *että tota* ('like') appears to trigger a move from a stylized mode to

2 This pronoun is colloquial when the reference is to a human being.

a more literal interpretation. Therefore, one may argue that features indicating hesitation and colloquial features, as well as prosodic features that are not typical in Finnish, show that the interpreter is trying to convey the original speaker's register and style as required by the deontological code (SKTL 2016: Art. 6). However, it is rather strange to assume that modern colloquial Finnish should equate with idiosyncratic non-native French. In fact, according to another hypothesis, the interpreter renders the key message of the interviewee's turn in a neutral register and subsequently switches to a colloquial register because of the extremely high cognitive load of the situation. Indeed, research has shown that in a remote-interpreting encounter, understanding the original speaker requires massive effort on the part of the interpreter, which translates into increased and precipitate interpreter fatigue (Moser-Mercer 2005). It is extremely complex to translate a fragmentary and textually idiosyncratic turn from one language into another while constantly monitoring the other speaker's speech and making decisions about meanings. Therefore, it is less resource-consuming to use a target-language variety that comes automatically because it is used in everyday situations, rather than a formal register that requires conscious lexical, morphological, and textual adaptation.

Since the exact content of the interviewee's turn cannot be established, it is impossible to say whether the interpreter delivers an accurate interpretation. In fact, an accurate interpretation of a fragmentary, incoherent, and confusing turn, spoken very fast, is simply impossible. However, it is evident that the interpreter provides a clear and cohesive turn, duly erasing problems present in the interviewee's turn. Fluency in the interpreter's turn (according to textual norms of spoken language) may be a means of saving face: by sounding fluent, the interpreter conveys the image of a professional interpreter. Such techniques of processing face-threatening acts are typical of conversations in which there is a power asymmetry between the participants (Pirainen-Marsh 1995). Moreover, the interpreter is probably influenced by recipient design (Goodwin 1981: 149-166) and by the goal-oriented nature of the encounter, which is a characteristic feature of institutional conversations (Drew/Heritage 1992). Thus, the interpreter delivers a turn that is appropriate for the officer, who will inevitably modify "authentic" and stylistic features of the interviewee's speech in the written record (Pöllabauer 2004: 154; Gallez/Maryns 2014).

#### 4. Conclusions

Previous research (e.g. Braun 2013) has shown that in remote interpreting, the quality of the interpretation is jeopardized because the interpreter both adds and removes information compared to the source text. As a result, interpreting is less accurate and lacks coherence. Content added by the interpreter may result from an attempt to build rapport with the interlocutor (Braun 2014: 170). Indeed, the lack of rapport has been identified as a major problem impeding quality in remote interpreting (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004).

In the data analyzed in this paper, the interpreter omits items from the interviewee's speech because the source language is incoherent and confusing,

and adds items to the officer's speech in the form of reformulations because the interviewee does not seem to hear and/or understand the questions. These particularities of lingua-franca interpreting are accentuated by features related to telephone interpreting: while the interlocutors do not share the same linguistic resources, they are also unable to monitor and assess each other's resources correctly due to the lack of non-verbal resources such as gaze, body position, and gesture. These constraints add to the interpreter's responsibility for every aspect of the encounter: understanding an idiosyncratic source language, interpreting messages accurately, coherently, and cohesively, and coordinating turns. In addition, the interpreter has to erase indexical information that could be detrimental to effective communication, such as a negative stance. Thus, the interpreter conveys a neutral image of the officer on the interpersonal level, and a fluent image of the lingua-franca speaking interviewee on a textual level, erasing negative affect in the officer's speech and idiosyncratic features in the interviewee's speech. In such a situation, it is not possible to "transmit the messages [...] as exhaustively as possible without changing their content" (SKTL 2016: Art. 6) or to transmit and reformulate source-text information content accurately, including speaker intention, knowledge divide between the speaker and the hearer, relevance of information, and pragmatic information (Viezzi 1996: 88; Hale 1996). In fact, telephone-based lingua-franca interpreting constitutes a challenge to the theories of equivalence and accuracy alike. Furthermore, the issue of accuracy creates a problem of linguistic injustice: there is no guarantee that the foreign-language speaking person is able to exercise his or her rights in spite of interpretation.

Telephone interpreters and interpreters of lingua francas certainly aim at accuracy and want to follow the guidelines of codes of ethics. However, the code of conduct for Finnish legal interpreters (SKTL 2016) depicts the interpreter as having two contradictory roles. The interpreter is a conduit that translates information accurately without interfering in the coordination of the discourse. The interpreter is also a magical converter of dialects, registers, tones, and speaking styles, conveying indexical meanings such as speaker identity. Therefore, the code reflects monolithic language ideologies and unrealistic expectations. As remote interpreting and lingua-franca interpreting are common practices, deontological codes should take into account their characteristics. First, it is necessary to acknowledge that accuracy as such cannot be achieved in lingua-franca telephone interpreting, and to accept this reality. Second, solutions aimed at guaranteeing as much accuracy as possible must be envisioned by analyzing the linguistic, structural, and technical constraints from the perspective of the *raison d'être* of community and legal interpreting: linguistic justice. Third, based on this critical reflection, guidelines must be elaborated for a standardized interactional-sociolinguistic briefing session including all participants at the onset of each encounter.

In this paper, I have combined three theoretical frameworks. First, I have approached lingua-franca telephone interpreting data from the viewpoint of critical discourse analysis and critical sociolinguistics. One of the most important elements of such a framework is to identify the constraints that govern language use in a particular situation and the consequences of such constraints. Choice is the opposite of constraint. The data analysis was based on systemic-functional grammar, a theory of language which emphasizes that using language means

choosing from among an unlimited number of possible words, structures, and constructions in order to perform functions that are meaningful to language users. Third, insights from conversation and interaction analysis were used in the transcription and interpretation of the data. The results of this multi-layered analysis show that lingua-franca and telephone interpreting can entail major problems of linguistic justice, and hence there is clearly a need for more research into such unwanted outcomes of community interpreting. In order to conduct such analyses, Interpreting Studies would benefit from more critical reflection on what is meant by language.

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