

# The sociological turn in the interpreter's role

## Discourse interpreting filters

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Interpreter-mediated communication, as a complex activity that involves social interaction among all participants, is increasingly important in today's globalized world. A focus on sociolinguistic questions and on considerations associated with the interpreter's presence and actions has led to opposing views ranging from that of "verbatim" interlinguistic reproducer or "conduit" to that of "advocate," "cultural broker," or "coordinator." Still, the existing literature has rarely modeled the relationship between the parameters that influence the interpreter's on-site decisions during a specific communication event. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the interpreter's scope of action in a given communicative situation within a Triadic Discourse Interpreting Model (TRIM) by means of discourse interpreting filters, which show the interplay of static and dynamic TRIM parameters. Thus, the interpreter's role is no longer defined by the verbatim-mediation dichotomy but rather reflects a decision-making continuum that evolves as the communication develops and offers a better understanding of the interpreter's complex and important social role.

**Keywords:** community interpreting, interpreter's role, discourse interpreting filters, filtered messages

### Introduction

With the rise of globalization and the associated increase in transnational migration, research has increasingly focused on the complexity of the court and police interpreter's role, as well as the aspects of communication associated with the interpreter's presence and actions. This discussion has led to opposing views on the interpreter. On the one hand, the interpreter may be viewed as an interlingual messenger who is expected to render utterances verbatim while remaining "neutral" or "invisible" (e.g., Berk-Seligson 1990/2002; Goffman 1981; Morris 1995).

On the other hand, the interpreter acts as a cultural mediator and may be expected to actively manage communication and render services that can be described as advocacy, cultural brokering, or coordination (see Angelelli 2004a and 2004b; Baraldi and Gavioli 2012; Davidson 1998, 2000; Metzger 1995, 1999; Roy 2000; Rudvin 2007; Wadensjö 1998).

Within the realm of conference interpreting, the most widely acknowledged demand on interpreting with regard to quality is that it be faithful to the original in "message and style" (Gile 1992: 189; 1995: 26). Several studies on quality in interpreting (Bühler 1986; Kurz 2001; Moser 1996) consider accuracy as an important criterion for high-quality interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Language interpreters are, therefore, often portrayed as "conduit" language facilitators (Reddy 1979).

However, the recent literature on the interpreter's role has described mediation on the part of the interpreter as "involvement" (e.g., Gentile et al. 1996; Opraus 2003; Pöllabauer 2004; Foley 2006), which differentiates it from the "content-orientation" of conference interpreting (Gile 1995; Kalina 2002; Moser-Mercer 1996). Interpretation's involvement has been researched (e.g., Wadensjö 1998) and positioned within discourse analysis (e.g., Roy 2000). Roy claims that a number of factors influence the interpreter's potential interaction and mediation: language and cultural competence, competence in a specific domain area, and communicative competence, referred to as "people skills" (Bowen 2000) or "discourse management skills" (Roy 2000: 6; Pöchhacker 2004: 187).

It is within this context that interpreting scholars have started to research interpreting as active discourse management in social interaction and to explore the interpreter's mediation, in particular, the identity, role, and power of the mediator in the conceptual dimensions of "interaction" and "culture." (Angelelli 2004a and 2004b; Baraldi and Gavioli 2012; Davidson 1998; Mason 2001, 2004, 2012; Roy 2000; Wadensjö 1998). These researchers have devoted attention both to socio-professional and institutional dimensions and to the elemental level of interaction in social processes, that is, the way interpretation is organized in any given sociocultural context. To date, academic studies have discussed a wide range of issues associated with the interpreter's conflicting role from ethical (Metzger 1995; Roy 2000; Wadensjö 1998), linguistic (Meyer 2004; Apfelbaum 2007) and didactic points of view (Brunette 2003; Carr et al. 1997; Hale 2007; Pöchhacker 2004; Roberts et al. 2000). Previous research has indicated social factors' influence on

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1. Bühler's (1986) research of conference interpreters shows that criteria for interpreting quality includes not only accurate and complete information but also a "pleasant voice, native accent, and fluency of delivery." Moser-Mercer (1996: 50) also suggests that in conference interpreting, criteria such as team discipline, adaptability, flexible scheduling and availability may be part of the quality of interpreting.

the interpreter's role (see Angelelli 2004a and 2004b), but little interest has been shown in modeling the parameters that influence or determine the interpreter's role in actual interpreter-mediated communicative events. In the past decade, sociolinguistic questions and discourse considerations have been of increasing importance. Still, many authors associate the interpreter's various roles with the institutional frameworks in which the interpretation takes place, claiming that the interpreter's role is largely determined by the institutional setting; discourse considerations have increasingly gained prominence within this view over the past decade (e.g., Berk-Seligson 1990/2002; Wadensjö 1992, 1998; Tebble 1996, 1998; Meyer 2000, 2004; Pöllabauer 2003, 2004; Sauerwein 2006).

The interpreter's conflict, however, remains unresolved today, as the research of Angelelli (2004a and 2004b) and Shlesinger (2008) vividly illustrate the interpreter's challenge of responding to two interlocutors simultaneously. The debate regarding the community interpreter's role questions whether and, more specifically, under which circumstances the interpreter may "mediate" communication by rendering a novel, non-verbatim utterance. Even though a general Code of Ethics establishes collective conduct guidelines, in an actual situation individual interpreters are often at a loss as to how involved they should be.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, a general code of conduct cannot anticipate every possible situation that arises for individual interpreters, and a general code of ethics cannot account for every possibility. Therefore, this paper aims to model a set of parameters that influence the interpreter's decisions and to describe how these parameters' interaction determines the individual interpreter's scope of action in any given interpreter-mediated communicative situation.

### **Theoretical foundation: Triadic Discourse Interpreting Model (TRIM)**

It is suggested in the Triadic Discourse Interpreting Model system (Jiang 2011), that static and dynamic parameters interact in a triadic discourse communication when an interpreter produces a target message. This interplay is here assumed to

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2. *Code of Ethics* (also called *Code of Conduct*) is a set of rules requiring interpreters to translate closely and accurately to the standards of professional conduct. It first appeared in court interpreting scenarios and differs from one district or country to another (U.S. Code, Australian Code, UK Code, etc.). For detailed information, please see Angelelli (2007), Berk-Seligson (1990), Hale (2004) and Mikkelsen (2000).

take place in the form of a number of interpreting filters through which a source message (M) is rendered as a target message M'.<sup>3</sup>

Within the framework of discourse analysis, "texts" are not considered "as static objects, but as dynamic means of expressing intended meaning" (Brown and Yule 1983:24). Since communicative partners are traditionally responsible for uncovering implicit meanings in the coherence-establishing process, the interpreter is a cooperative partner responsible for establishing continuity of meaning. To achieve this aim, the interpreter includes his/her own assumptions and inferences in the communicative event during which the interlocutors cannot directly communicate with each other. Therefore, the interpreter's responsibility is to use the means he/she deems appropriate to ensure sense continuity (coherence). The establishment of coherence, then, in an interpreted message sequence will be paramount in discussing the interpreter's role.

TRIM identifies and describes static parameters for the analysis of interpreter-mediated communication. Static parameters describe knowledge parameters, first, as the holistic structures that relate content and functional elements in reflection of communicative partners, as well as the interpreter's, assumed world knowledge. This assumed world knowledge encompasses the linguistic, cultural, and domain elements necessary for communication. Moreover, situation-specific knowledge particular to the discourse situation is included, such as type, time, and place characterizations, the communicative partners' mutual attention (from which the communication topic emanates), the communicative purpose, and the interlocutors' interest in the discourse.

Dynamic parameters in TRIM show the interplay of these parameters in a tetradic speech act sequence of turns in interpreter-mediated communication (Min Sunwoo 2008). The original tetradic speech acts model shows the interaction of communicative partners in a monolingual situation in its four dimensions: communicative partner A's utterance; communicative partner B's reaction; the acknowledgement of B's reaction by A; the acknowledgement of A's acknowledgement by B. In the sequence, each turn influences the following turns. The reactions and acknowledgements can be positive or negative. Negative reactions and acknowledgements may stem from one partner's unwillingness to cooperate. In community interpreting, communicative partners do not communicate with each other directly and therefore may not be aware of this *prima facie*, but the interpreter must recognize these underlying dimensions of meaning. As an example,

3. *Discourse interpreting filter* is proposed by Jiang (2008, 2011) to encompass the interpreter's translation and coordination decisions during the formulation of a target message. In order to ensure the message's adequacy and coherence, these decisions may lead to variation in the source language utterance.

this awareness is important on the part of the interpreter in order to detect a communicative partner's "double bind" strategies. This article illustrates the tetradic sequence interaction of an interpreter as a "third party." All possible other turns or turn exchanges — that is, misunderstandings and the interpreter's clarification or corrections — can be explained within this recursive tetradic cycle, but these elements will not be shown in exhaustive detail in the present article. In interpreter-mediated communication, the primary speakers can only communicate with each other through an interpreter; the interpreter, therefore, assumes responsibility for understanding an utterance and making an acknowledgement with primary speakers.

Within the tetradic exchange, dynamic discourse interpreting parameters involve understanding and reproducing a message. This article assumes that interpreting is influenced by the interpreter's understanding of the message and his or her decisions regarding what source information to transfer and how to transfer the source message. The question of what is to be interpreted is assumed here to be determined by discourse objectives and coherence criteria depending on what the interpreter is able to qualify as coherent, a-coherent, and non-coherent (Mudersbach 2004: 250), both "locally" (*ibid*:260) and on the basis of the previously interpreted actual discourse.<sup>4</sup> Further criteria assumed in the interpreting filters are: (1) the general communicative goal and the discourse purpose; (2) the coherence of the source message as understood by the interpreter and measured by topic or isotopic continuity; (3) potential knowledge differentials, which the interpreter needs to balance; and (4) the partners' interest, as perceived by the interpreter in reaching the specified discourse purpose.

### Discourse interpreting filters

Within TRIM, discourse interpreting filters are defined as the process by which a source message *M* is rendered from its original state into its interpreted message as target message *M'* through the application of several interpreter-applied interpreting filters. The interpreted message *M'* reflects the interpreter's own perception of information and therefore may differ from the primary partner's understanding

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4. The distinction between "coherent," "incoherent," and "a-coherent" messages depends on whether the elements of a turn exchange are explicitly related (coherent), are incompatible (incoherent), or are completely unrelated (a-coherent). This differentiation results in the interpreter's manipulation of a message through deletion, addition, or condensation. Coherence is here understood as depicting the continuous relationship between themes and rhemes in an interpreter-mediated communication turn exchange (Mudersbach 2004).

of the original message M due to the participation of the interpreter. Wadensjö (1998) first developed a scale, which Rosenberg (2001) later adopted, to categorize these types of messages in order to examine the interpreter's role. This scale is: *zero* (totally deleting the original message); *partially invariant*, comprised of the restructured *partially invariant 1* (substituted — expanded or reduced — rendering) and the clarifying *partially invariant 2*; *variant* (coordinated or mediated) and *invariant* (verbatim rendering). This scale reflects the continuum of the interpreter's scope of action which can now be described as being motivated by a series of interrelated interpreter decisions.

### Classification of filtered messages (M')

#### *TYPE I: Zero target message M' (zero rendition)*

*Zero target message* refers to a message that is not reproduced in the target discourse, that is, the deletion of a source message in both content and function. The term derives from Wadensjö's understanding of "zero renditions" as "cases when 'originals' are left untranslated" (1998:108). According to Rosenberg's research (2001), certain utterances, such as banter, phatic expressions, repetitions, and anything unrelated to the interview goals, can sometimes be omitted without negatively impacting the interpreted speech event.

#### *TYPE II: Partially invariant target message M', Category 1 (restructured)*

Most interpreted messages are *partially invariant category 1* messages, which may include any lexical, syntactic, or stylistic modifications made as necessary when interpreting between languages and cultures. This category encompasses reduced, expanded, paraphrased, and summarized renditions that may be necessary for coherence and that derive from linguistic, cultural, and domain knowledge differences. These modifications serve to achieve the discourse purpose and include "expanded renditions," "reduced renditions," "summarized renditions," and "substituted renditions" (Wadensjö 1998: 107–108); "qualifier[s]" and "elaboration additions" (Barik 1994: 125–126); and "explanat[ions]" (Jakobson 1990:75).

#### *TYPE III: Partially invariant target message M', Category 2 (request for clarification)*

*Partially invariant 2* target messages appear when a message presents the interpreter with coherence problems, that is, an implicit, isotopic meaning that is unclear

to either the interpreter himself or the other communicative partner.<sup>5</sup> With a view to achieving the discourse purpose, the interpreter may request that the original message producer clarify the unclear meaning so as to secure proper coherence in communication.

*TYPE IV: Variant target message M' (mediated)*

The term *variant target message* includes all interpreter interventions under Wadensjö's (1998: 107–108) “zero rendition,” “non-renditions,” “expanded renditions,” “reduced renditions,” and “summarized renditions” categories, which strive to achieve the discourse purpose despite the discourse partners' potentially conflicting interest.

*TYPE V: Invariant target message M' (close and verbatim renderings)*

Lay persons in communication and translation or interpreting areas tend to value *invariant* interpretation. The general code of ethics and many community interpreting guidelines demand invariance — “accurate” or “verbatim” interpretation — and invariant interpreting is particularly common among and relevant to police hearings and court interpreting discourse although court representatives openly concede that an interpreter, of course, needs to make sense of a message before interpreting. Language and communication specialists agree that requests for invariance are naïve. Indeed, renditions that do not deviate from the source utterance cannot be provided; a number of factors, including the interpreter's coherence-building strategies and the interactions between individual hypotheses, world knowledge interactions, and the verbalized contents of a message, have not been clearly documented in the existing literature. Therefore, here a verbatim rendition will not be assumed to be realistic and will refer to invariant target messages instead of the idea that invariance exists only as far as meaning is concerned. *Invariance* refers to all meaning dimensions included in Schulz von Thun's communication model (1981), as well as in Wadensjö's “close rendition” category, according to which “the propositional content found explicitly expressed in the

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5. *Isotopy* is a firmly-established text linguistics concept indicative of text coherence. It is from this discipline, specifically from text analysis, that the concept of isotopy entered the field of translation, mostly as a means of ensuring full source text comprehension (Thiel and Thome 1988, 1996). Nevertheless, isotopy transfer conditions, including potential invariance in translation, have hardly been discussed in translation literature (see Mudersbach and Gerzymisch-Arbogast 1989).

'rendition' must be equally found in the preceding 'original,' and the style of the two utterances should be approximately the same" (Wadensjö 1998: 107).

#### *Discourse interpreting filters*

During the interpreter's filtering process, a number of filters operate on the original message and influence the target message's content and function. These filters are described herein as purpose, coherence (in the sense of topical and isotopic continuity), knowledge, and interest filters, and are activated in that order.

#### *The discourse purpose filter*

The *discourse purpose filter* verifies whether a message is compatible with the agreed-upon discourse purpose. This first filter presupposes the cooperation of all discourse partners by means of Herbert Grice's maxims (1975) in the form of a "contract" (Tebble 1996) that the interpreter has clearly defined and targeted *skopos* in mind as a base from which to adopt and adapt appropriate strategies.<sup>6</sup>

The following question guides the interpreter's decisions as he filters the original message M in view of the discourse purpose: Is the source message compatible with achieving the overall communicative goal and the specific discourse purpose?

The following example is taken from the author's experience interpreting at an international auto mechanics fair in Frankfurt am Main (Jiang 2011: 120). In the course of a Brazilian purchasing manager introducing his factory to a Chinese supervisor, the purchasing manager stares at the interpreter and says, "You're a beautiful woman." The male Brazilian client's remark about the female interpreter's looks fall under the discourse purpose filter category. Therefore, utterances similar to those expressed in this example can be left out by the interpreter due to its incompatibility with the general communication goal and discourse purpose.

#### *The coherence filter*

The *coherence filter* contextualizes an individual message exchange, that is, it links an individual message to its topical continuity and its factual, appellative, relational, and self-indicative isotopy dimensions in previous and successive tetradic exchanges. Thus, the coherence filter allows overall continuity of the discourse.

6. *Skopos* is Greek for "purpose." Vermeer's *skopos* theory (1978: 100) postulates that, in general, it is the intended purpose of the target text that must determine translation methods and strategies. From this proposal, Vermeer derives the *skopos* rule: Human action (and its subcategory of translation) is determined by its purpose (*skopos*) and is, therefore, a function of its purpose.



Moreover, coherence influences the target message by requiring judgments as to whether the many dimensions of a message are mutually comprehensible and, thus, relevant in the light of the entire interpreted event.

The coherence filter poses the following questions to the interpreter:

1. Are the topic and the source message's factual, appellative, relational, and self-indicative dimensions compatible with the overall discourse purpose?
2. Are there signs that indicate that one of these dimensions is characteristic of a particular message (and thus may be negligible and result in zero rendition) or that it is a continuously- and coherently-developed dimension that is coherent with previous or anticipated discourse exchanges such that it must be interpreted?

The coherence filter is a powerful filter for the interpreter and involves decisions regarding the restructure (summarization, expansion, or reduction) or deletion (zero rendition) of messages. In the reproduction dimension, a coherence filter also verifies the local meaning dimensions to be transferred (separate isotopies) against global coherence. Coherence in the reproduction filter focuses on message transfer that closes gaps between different isotopies while including the top-level isotopy. Thus, interpreters may downplay a message by omitting the relational and self-indicative dimensions (see Schultz von Thun 1981), by structuring a message in order to be fully comprehended by the other communicative partner, and by using additional information to clarify the original message.

#### *The topic continuity filter*

The *topic continuity filter* uses topic development in discourse as an indicator of coherence. Explicit or implicit theme progression may establish topic continuity. Explicit theme continuity develops via recurrent or derived topics and implicit theme continuity by establishing thematic progression via textual or world hypothesis with the recipient or analyst. Topic identification derives from the Fan Fixation Communication Model (FFCM) and integrates the interpreter who, with his/her on-site decisions about the communicative partners' shared focus and perspective, establishes coherence within the actual discourse purpose.<sup>7</sup>

Shared focus, therefore, is a vital coherence-establishing element in all phases of the interpreting process. This shared focus serves as a reference for the

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7. Fan Fixation Communication Model shows the components of a message and the message's themes and rhemes from both the speaker's and hearer's points of view. Gerzymisch-Arbogast (1987, 2003) and Gerzymisch-Arbogast and Will (2005) have applied this model to monologic texts and simultaneous interpreting, respectively.

interpreter when preparing for or reworking a particular assignment as Martin Will (2009) suggests for simultaneous interpreting. Similarly, this focus is an orienting element during the interpretation process: it helps prevent unethical extensions of the interpreter's job, as in lawyer-plaintiff interactions outside the courtroom (Hale 2007:79), and rejects working conditions that are not conducive to coherent discourse, as when courts allow only partial interpretations of the proceedings that undermine coherence (Kadric 2000:162). During the interpretation process itself, a shared focus limits distractions, sudden topic changes, or unconscious linguistic mistakes.

The following questions guide the topic continuity filter:

1. Is there a change in the original message that must be reproduced in the target message?
2. Is there a shift in theme, shared focus, or perspective in the original message that must be made explicit or that requires clarification?

#### *The isotopic continuity filter*

The *isotopic continuity filter* applies Schultz von Thun's (1981) assumption that any message contains at least four dimensions: a factual, an appellative, a relational, and a self-indicative dimension, which are equally applicable to a hearer ("four ears") and a speaker ("four tongues"). The isotopic continuity filter complements the topic continuity filter as it establishes continuity of meaning dimensions, rather than informational units, that may be implicit from the other communicative partners.

Although isotopic continuity does raise contrastive language and cultural problems, its factual dimension may seem to be the least problematic dimension; in contrast, the appellative dimension is of great importance in interpreter-mediated communication because question-answer turns (such as in court situations or asylum hearings) usually contain a strong appellative component. The relationship dimension is equally important because interpreting environments frequently involve asymmetric discourse partners — such as in doctor-patient or barrister-defendant relationships — that require the interpreter to carefully balance the unequal relationship between interlocutors. And while the self-indicative dimension may seem less crucial, it does aid the interpreter in judging a discourse partner's credibility and the potential for conflict between discourse partner interests or styles. The interpreter, therefore, has to ensure that s/he comprehends the source message in its factual, appellative, relational, and self-indicative potentials and that s/he filters the target message by deciding (a) which of the abovementioned isotopic dimensions are to be represented in the target message, (b) to what extent,

and (c) in which form they are to be represented. The present article will neglect the comprehension dimension of interpreter-mediated communication and will assume that the interpreter fully understands all four dimensions involved and that dimension decisions relate to the reproduction of the interpretation only. I will therefore concentrate on the decisions that fall within the interpreter's action latitude in reproducing a target message *M*'.

The following question guides the isotopic continuity filter:

1. Can the factual, appellative, relational, and self-indicative dimensions of a message be reproduced in a target message?

#### *The knowledge filter*

The *knowledge filter* proceeds from the concept of knowledge systems and their holistic description (Mudersbach 1991). Elements of relevant knowledge systems are "concretized" in message exchanges as linguistic and cultural manifestations (for a detailed description of the constitution of linguistic and cultural manifestation, see Floros 2003) or as domain knowledge systems (for a detailed description of domain knowledge systems, see Will 2009).

The interpreter must bear in mind the following questions when applying the knowledge filter:

2. Is the message compatible with communicative partner B's linguistic and cultural system, norms, and conventions?
3. Does B have sufficient cultural, domain-specific, norm-related, and communicative knowledge to understand the message without clarification or explanation?

The answers to these questions may lead the interpreter to make message restructuring decisions, such as restructured renditions and clarification interventions. Assumed cultural knowledge is of great importance in mediating doctor-patient interactions; patients from European and African cultures find reception of information empowering and believe that obtaining illness-related information is positive. Particularly interesting is the way in which the western physician's concern for the Chinese patients' autonomy and self-determination conflicts with Chinese patients' family-centered culture (Hsieh 2004: 19). Without understanding these cultural differences, western physicians may be troubled by a Chinese family's controlling behaviors and by the patient's indifferent attitude, whereas the Chinese patient and family members may be angered by a healthcare provider's insensitivity in delivering bad news to the patient. The interpreter thus assumes an

important role in transferring the information in a culturally-appropriate way so as to ensure effective medical communication.

#### *The interest filter*

The *interest filter* is paramount to the interpreter's filtration of the original message and answers the following question:

1. Is the source message compatible with the interests of the individual discourse partners A or B?

If the answer to this question is "No," the interpreter will have to balance the divergent interests in order to achieve the discourse purpose.

After passing through the discourse purpose, coherence (topic continuity and isotopic continuity), knowledge, and interest filters, a source message  $M$  will be interpreted into  $M'$  as a zero, partially invariant (Category 1 or 2), variant, or invariant message.

#### *Interplay of parameters: Filtered message flow and types*

The discourse interpreter's filtered  $M'$  can now be positioned on a scale from *zero* to *invariant*  $M'$ , with scalar values of partially invariant  $M'$  and mediated  $M'$  as determined by the discourse purpose, coherence (topic continuity and isotopic continuity), knowledge, and interest filters. The assumption of filters makes it possible to specify the conditions under which  $M'$  comes about.

A *zero*  $M'$  presupposes an original message  $M$  that is incompatible with the actual discourse purpose or is incoherent. A *category 1 partially invariant*  $M'$  (reduction, expansion, or summarization) presupposes that  $M$  and  $M'$  are within the actual discourse purpose; that they are incompatible regarding knowledge differentials; that they involve a knowledge differential between the communicative partners A and B that can be balanced by reduction, expansion, or summarization of  $M$  in the filtering process; and that they are devoid of conflicting communicative partner interests. A *category 2 partially invariant*  $M'$  presupposes that  $M$  and  $M'$  are within the actual discourse purpose; that they are incoherent due to a lack of explicit or implicit topic continuity, isotopic continuity, or implicit meaning; and that they are devoid of conflicting communicative partner interests. Downplaying or emphasizing a message  $M$  in  $M'$ , therefore, does not belong to the partially invariant category but is, on the basis of the above filters, a variant message. A *variant*  $M'$  (mediation) requires that the original message  $M$  and  $M'$  be within the discourse purpose; be coherent in topic continuity and isotopic continuity; be characterized by a manageable knowledge differential between the

communicative partners; and involve conflicting communicative partner interests. An *invariant*  $M'$  presupposes that  $M$  and  $M'$  are within the global communicative and specific discourse purpose; are coherent in all implied meaning dimensions; involve a knowledge differential that can be balanced by reducing, expanding, or summarizing  $M$  in the filtration process; and are devoid of conflicting communicative partner interests. Figure 1, below, illustrates the process by which the interpreter renders the messages.

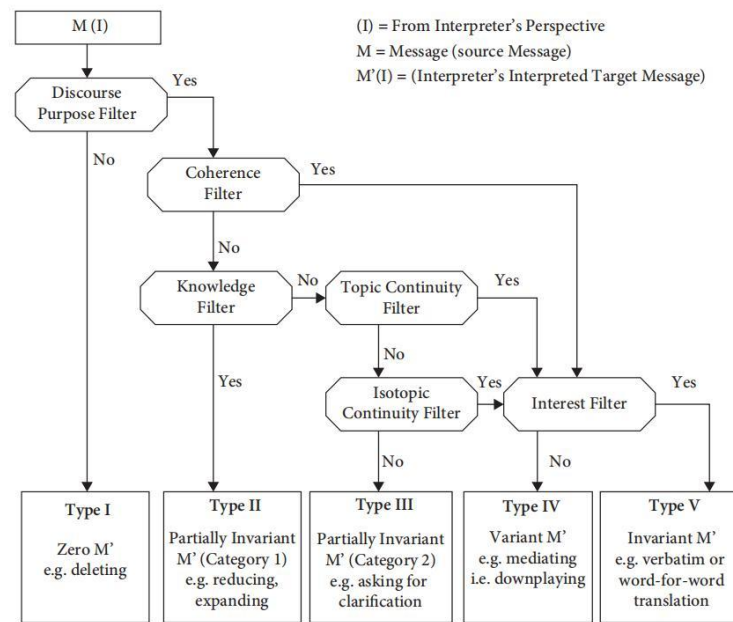


Figure 1. Interpreter's filtering process (Jiang 2011: 131)

According to Figure 1, a source message goes through different paths and yields different types of target interpreted messages, as follows:

- Path 1: discourse purpose (-): Type I (*zero*  $M'$ )
- Path 2: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (-) → knowledge differential (+): Type II (*category 1 partially invariant*  $M'$ )
- Path 3: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (-) → topic continuity (-) → isotopic continuity (-): Type III (*category 2 partially invariant*  $M'$ )
- Path 4: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (-) → topic continuity (-) → isotopic continuity (+) → compatibility of interest (-): Type IV (*variant*  $M'$ )
- Path 5: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (-) → topic continuity (+) → compatibility of interest (-): Type IV (*variant*  $M'$ )

- Path 6: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (+) → compatibility of interest (–):  
Type IV (*variant M'*)
- Path 7: discourse purpose (+) → coherence (+) → compatibility of interest (+):  
Type V (*invariant M'*)

### Application of the model

#### *Background of the data analysis*

The following analysis is based on an excerpt of Transcript/Tape Number 12 of Case I in the CERG project by Dr. Ester S M Leung (Hong Kong Baptist University) and Dr. Xunfeng Xu (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University).<sup>8</sup> The following analysis considers the primary communicative partners to be the English-speaking prosecuting barrister (BPE) and the Cantonese-speaking defendant (DC), considerations that may pose cultural knowledge differentials that the interpreter must

**Table 1.** The transcription symbols in the analysis data

Symbol or Abbreviation	Meaning
=	latch (no pause between turns, which can be considered an overlap)
CAPITAL LETTERS	emphasis
colons	drawn out syllable, which can be considered a hesitation
{ }	faster
} {	slower
[ ]	describes nonverbal speech features; also, inaudible
(2.5)	pause, timed in seconds
(.)	brief pause
BPE	Barrister prosecutor's message in English
ICT	Interpreter's Chinese interpretation
IET	Interpreter's English interpretation
DC	Defendant's Chinese message

8. In the transcript, the defendant is cross-examined by the prosecutor barrister with the assistance of a court interpreter. The complete proceedings of Case I consist of 18 transcribed audiotapes, in which six tapes are devoted to the witness and 12 to the defendant. In Case I the defendant "TCS," a 30-year-old electronics salesman currently employed as a badminton coach, was accused of raping three teenage girls ("SSK," "LHY," and "LWY") from 1998 to 1999. Witness LHY was one of the defendant's badminton students, a 13-year-old school girl who offered evidence regarding three incidents of rape that the defendant had committed against her. LMF is one of SKK's former boyfriends.

close. The Chinese and English interpretations are referred to in the transcript as ICT and ICE, respectively.

In the following section, one tetradic exchange is chosen to show how the discourse interpreting filters work in an authentic situation. Recursive tetradic cycles explain all other possible turns or turn exchanges, including misunderstandings and corresponding interpreter clarification or corrections, but will not be explained in detail at present.

#### *Analysis of one tetradic turn exchange*

At the beginning of this excerpt, the barrister defendant (BDE) briefly introduces the three witnesses being questioned about their relationships and summarizes the rape cases in English. The defendant then tells the victim SKK that he was marrying someone else to get better housing.

- 1: BDE =and then the next question my lord then asked this defendant was did you tell SKK and again his answer was yes then he explained that he told SKK because em he was going to get married with l to get the unit (.) So I suppose I believe as I said and that's why I have to put forward this stop hand indeed he said he did tell S in because they wanted to get a house no matter it was a sham or whatever they leave it aside
- 2: [voices overlapped]

In the data for analysis, the barrister prosecutor, the defendant, and the court interpreter participate in the exchange. The author's literal translation, verified by Dr. Ester Leung, corpus possessor, accompanies the transcribed Chinese data. The following is the overview of the analyzing data.

- 34: BPE That sort of (.) silly little trick that is of an immature girl isn't it
- 35: ICT 咁呢一類呢係一啲好唔成熟嘅女仔玩嘅啲好傻嘅玩意嚟 略係咪?  
Literal Translation:  
(So this is the sort of very immature, very silly trick of girl, isn't it)
- 36: DC 我唔知係咪  
Literal Translation:  
(I don't know if it is)
- 37: IET I don't know if that's true or not.
- 38: BPE That's pathetic isn't it?
- 39: ICT 咁係啲好:: em:: (1.0)好傻嘅嘢嚟略(1.0)係好(.)咁樣做呢係好係好可憐嘅嘢嚟略  
Literal Translation:  
(This is very ..em.. very silly kind of things (1.0) very (.) This kind of action, is very very pathetic kind of things It's very silly. That's very pathetic.)

- 40: DC 大人有時都會=  
 Literal Translation:  
 (Sometimes adults would do that.)
- 41: IET =Some (.) Sometimes adult would do that

**Sequence 1**

Turn 34 and Turn 35

**Classifications**

Original Message M	34
Language Direction	English > Chinese
Speech Act	Question
Interpreted Message M'	35
Interpreted Message M' Type	Type IV ( <i>variant</i> target message) The interpreter draws a conclusion with the link "so," erroneously relates the attribute "immature" to "trick;" and adds the intensifier "very" to "silly" and "immature."

**Rationale**

Discourse filtration illustrates the following interpretation filters:

1. Discourse purpose filter: The discourse purpose is the court's definition of truth concerning a rape case. The relationship between communicative partners BPE and the defendant implies a certain amount of interest incompatibility, the extent of which the interpreter, and her ensuing interpretation, must feel. The discourse purpose is, therefore, considered to be fulfilled.
2. Coherence filter: From the interpreter's perspective, coherence is insufficient and partial invariance bridges the identifiable linguistic knowledge differential between Chinese and English.
3. Topic continuity filter: The BPE's recurrent reference to 'trick,' which the interpreter reproduces by altering the reference of immature from 'girl' (original) to 'trick' (interpretation), demonstrates topic continuity in the original message.
4. Isotopic continuity filter: Assuming continuity with the preceding exchange's credibility isotopy, this exchange demonstrates isotopic continuity in the BPE's suggestive trap of eliciting a negative response from the defendant. This negative response is incompatible with the defendant's desire to portray himself as an upstanding individual. Whether the interpreter is aware of this constellation is unclear. Nevertheless, she intensifies the BPE's derogatory allusion to the girl to the extent that the BPE's implicit motive (credibility question) may



have become obvious to the defendant. She thus endangers the BPE's hidden strategy in her effort to clarify the credibility issue with the defendant.

5. Interest filter: The BPE and defendant's interests are incompatible.

Summary of Filtering Results:  
 Discourse Purpose (+) → Coherence (+) → Topic Continuity (-) → Isotopic Continuity (+)  
 → Compatibility of Interest (-)

### Sequence 2

Turn 36 and Turn 37

#### Classification

Original Message M	36
Language Direction	Chinese > English
Speech Act	Answer
Interpreted Message M'	37
Interpreted Message M' Type	Type II ( <i>category 1 partially invariant target message</i> ) The interpreter produces a more explicit statement.

#### Rationale

Discourse filtration illustrates the following interpretation filters:

1. Discourse purpose filter: The discourse purpose is identical to that of Sequence 1 and has been fulfilled.
2. Coherence filter: The interpreter assumes coherence to be insufficient, as evidenced by the interpreter's addition of the phrase "That's true or not".
3. Knowledge filter: Due to the linguistic knowledge differential between Chinese and English, the interpreter bridges the gap by explication.

Summary of Filtering Results:  
 Discourse Purpose (+) → Coherence (-) → Knowledge Differential (+)

### Sequence 3

Turn 38 and Turn 39

#### Classification

Original Message M	38
Language Direction	English > Chinese
Speech Act	Question

Interpreted Message M'	39
Interpreted Message M' Type	Type IV ( <i>variant</i> target message) The interpreter repeats her earlier use of "silly," adding the intensifier "very;" paraphrases the "trick" several times by saying "kind of things" and "kind of action;" and, three times, emphasizes "pathetic" by adding the intensifier "very."

### Rationale

Discourse filtration illustrates the following interpretation filters:

1. Discourse purpose filter: The discourse purpose is identical to that of Sequence 1 and has been fulfilled.
2. Coherence filter: The interpreter deems coherence to be insufficient.
3. Topic continuity filter: The topic continuity is implicit, or hypothetical, rather than explicit; the entire questioning hinges on "truth." Answering a question characterized by implicit topic continuity may conflict with the defendant's desire to portray himself as an upstanding individual.
4. Isotopic continuity filter: The interpreter has repeated BPE's descriptive word "pathetic" and added intensifiers three times, which made BPE's interrogation of the witness' credibility obvious. Therefore, we may assume that the interpreter has understood the implicit relationship isotopic dimension and made it explicit in her renditions.
5. Interest filter: There is the clash of interests between BPE and the defendant because BPE is questioning the defendant's credibility while the defendant is asserting his credibility.

Summary of Filtering Results:  
Discourse Purpose (+) → Coherence (-) → Topic Continuity (-) → Isotopic Continuity (+)  
→ Compatibility of Interest (-)

### Sequence 4

Turn 40 and Turn 41

#### Classification

Message M	40
Language Direction	Chinese > English
Speech Act	Answer
Interpreted Message M'	41
Interpreted Message M' Type	Type V ( <i>invariant</i> target message) with repetition phenomenon

### Rationale

Discourse filtration illustrates the following interpretation filters:

1. Discourse purpose filter: The discourse purpose is identical to that of Sequence 1 and has been fulfilled.
2. Coherence filter: The continuity of situation parameters as described in Sequence 1, the lack of an identifiable knowledge differential between Chinese and English, and the continuity of purpose as described in Sequence 1 demonstrate coherence.
3. Interest filter: Compatibility of interest is assumed because the defendant has the responsibility, according to legal norms, of answering questions in the court proceedings.

Summary of Filtering Results:
Discourse Purpose (+) → Coherence (+) → Compatibility of Interest (+)

The application of the discourse interpreting filters in the authentic legal interpreting scenario has shown the model's adequacy in describing unanticipated variants in the interpreter's renderings in an interpreter-mediated communication event. Furthermore, TRIM makes the interpreter's scope of action transparent and, by extension, demands that the interpreter be explicitly aware of the filter processing capacity and associated TRIM parameters. This article suggests that a previously established agreement among the involved communicative partners, including the third-party interpreter, may facilitate this explicit detailing of interpreter processes.

### Conclusion and implications

In exploring the justification of non-verbatim interpretation and the existence of criteria that determine whether a message will be rendered verbatim in an actual interpreter-mediated scenario, this paper has attempted to model the set of interdependent parameters that influence the interpreter's decisions in an interpreting situation. This paper defined these parameters as discourse interpreting filters, which show how the interpreter filters original message (*M*) to produce interpreted message (*M'*). The resulting typology of interpreted messages (Type I through Type V) illustrates the circumstantial restrictions surrounding the interpreted variations of *M'*, as well as the interpreter's production of these variations in actual interpreting scenarios.

Theoretically speaking, this study has proposed indicators for empirical studies on how the M' types apply to different discourse settings; questions regarding the quantity and quality of types related to a number of settings can be investigated. It will also be interesting to analyze how TRIM applies to the comprehension process and to multilingual settings. Moreover, the application of these filters to various discourse settings may provide insight into problems like language specificity, misunderstandings, or cultural disparities. Finally, this study provides the basis for investigation of the varieties of M' that appear in interpreted communication and of the reasons why certain variant messages predominate in specific settings, such as legal or healthcare.

In practice, awareness of certain factors and their interaction during an interpreter-mediated communication event will help the interpreter make onsite decisions. Specifically, a checklist could be developed for use in legal, medical, and law-enforcement settings; if previously negotiated and agreed upon, this checklist could be integrated into each interpreter-mediated event. With the checklist, the interpreter could work through the concretization of the parameters and filters in particular communicative situations and query the event's initiator for clarification. The answers to these questions equip the interpreter to anticipate challenges and to establish strategies that reflect the interpreter-mediated discourse type and purpose within the agreed-upon discourse purpose.

Didactically, the parameter constellation and discourse interpreting typology proposed in this paper can be used in interpreter-training courses. Both the parameters and typology will raise student awareness of the knowledge factors, skills, and situational challenges that surround the profession of discourse interpreter. Also, assignments may refer to specific situations, making the student aware of both how situation-dependent discourse interpreting is and how helpful it is to have criteria available that will reveal and justify professional interpreting decisions.

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