



International Conference; Meaning in Translation: Illusion of Precision, MTIP2016, 11-13 May 2016, Riga, Latvia

## Problem trigger classification and its applications for empirical research

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### Abstract

Researchers trying to identify factors that influence the quality of simultaneous interpreting usually focus on one type of problem triggers (e.g. numbers, names, technical terms). This paper presents a different approach by analysing a group of problem triggers together. It allows not only to establish the impact of a particular problem trigger, but also to find new ones. To achieve this, a communication model has been applied for the classification of problem triggers and a study of lexical problem triggers has been conducted. It has confirmed the negative impact of well-known problem triggers and allowed to identify language-specific lexical ones.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of MTIP2016

*Keywords:* Simultaneous interpreting; problem triggers; classification of problem triggers; communication model of interpreting.

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### 1. Introduction

Translation and interpreting are capturing the attention of sociolinguists, for not only linguists but also representatives of other disciplines increasingly view the process of translation as a communicative act in a specific situational context (Silis, 2007, p. 211). Similarly, Kaminskienė and Maskaliūnienė (2013) state that consciously or not we understand a text as an act of communication, as a certain phenomenon that is defined by its context. Only within the act of communication do words, phrases, collocations and idioms acquire the meaning that is understandable

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to the addressee (ibid., 2013, p. 60). Therefore an interpreted text is considered to be a new type of text – “an autonomous text within the communicative event” (Riccardi, 2002, p. 23) and should be analyzed as such.

It is important to note that interpreting differs from other forms of communication studied in linguistics in that it involves at least one participant who is neither the initiator nor the addressee of the message (Setton, 1999, p. 8). This complex communication has a number of challenges for interpreters which Daniel Gile (1995/2009) named “problem triggers”. He defined problem triggers as “anything that increases the processing capacity requirements of an interpreter (more effort needs to be put into listening/understanding, short-term memory or production) or increases signal vulnerability” (ibid., 1995/2009, p. 171). Understanding these interpreting difficulties may help solve problems of communication through an interpreter.

As Gile (1995/2009) mentions, problem triggers in interpreting have not been analyzed in the past using a common conceptual framework. Moreover, they have not been analyzed in all their complexity. Only separate problem triggers have been studied, such as: physical noise (Gerver, 1971), numbers (Mazza, 2001; Liu, & Xiao, 2010), idiomatic expressions (Cattaneo, 2004), names (Meyer, 2008), accent (McAllister, 2000; Kurz, 2008; Lin et al., 2013), and rapid speeches (Gerver, 1969/2002; Gile, 1995/2009; Dailidėnaitė, & Noreikaitė, 2010). Due to the broad definition of problem triggers, it is impossible to list and research all of them at the same time. Therefore to narrow down the object of a research project, a classification of problem triggers is required which would enable the analysis of a group of problem triggers and their interaction with each other. The purpose of this paper is to introduce a simultaneous interpreting problem trigger classification based on a communication model and to show how this kind of classification could be beneficial for empirical research. The presented study is part of an on-going research project based on the interpreted texts from English into Lithuanian.

## 2. Theoretical background

The first communication models dealing with interpreting were based on the mathematical communication model of Shannon and Weaver (1949) (Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 84). In their model, the sender/source sends an encoded message through a channel to the receiver/receptor who decodes it. In the 1970s, this model was further developed by Ingram (1974/2015) and Kirchhoff (1976/2002). Kirchhoff’s (1976/2002) model of communication is based on the same logic, i.e. the message is encoded and decoded, however, it also prominently features the sociocultural background of the source language, from which the message is sent, and the sociocultural background of the target language, in which the interpreted message is received. It is important to note that this model, as well as the very first communication model of sign language interpreting presented by Ingram, emphasized the fact that the message being sent is made up of many interconnecting codes (i.e. not only linguistic) (Ingram, 1978, p. 111). In Fig. 1, which presents an elaborated communication model for interpreting, and which combines the latter two models into one, these codes are noted as K1, K2, K3, etc.:

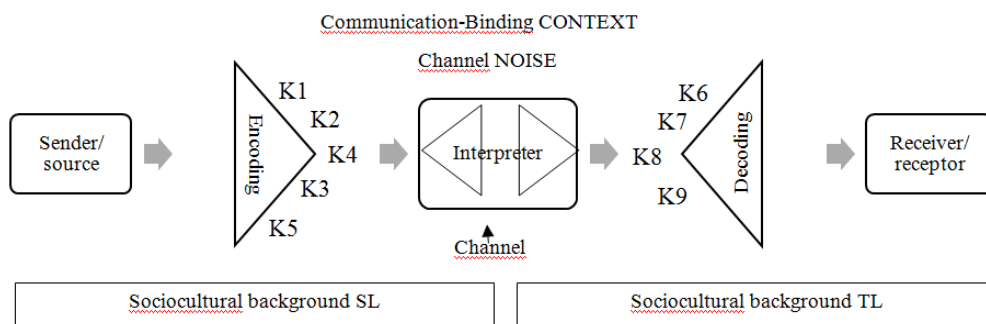


Fig. 1. Interpreting communication model based on Ingram (1974/2015: 97) and Kirchhoff (1976).

For the purposes of this paper, the role of noise in the communication model needs to be emphasized. As the message is being sent through a channel, it can be interrupted by external noise. This, in turn, could result in the

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