

EXPERIENCE WITH MULTI POINT VIDEO CONFERENCES

Clare Donovan, ESIT, November 2008

FORUM on MULTILINGUALISM

- The Interpreter : a Multicultural Mediator?

Depriving Others of a Voice

- “We may formulate in precise language the beliefs [.....] that the Andaman Islanders themselves are quite incapable of expressing [...] in words and are probably only vaguely conscious of [...].” (1922:

They all speak English...

- « The need for lingua francas is obvious, and pressure to find a **single lingua franca** is a consequence, the alternative being **expensive and often impracticable multi-way translation facilities.** » Crystal
- House: « powerful translators' lobbies that defend the costly and cumbersome illusions of multilingualism. »

Intercultural mediation: a broad remit

- « ranging from **pure language interpreting** to other tasks, such as culture brokering, or provide health care education.” (Verrept, 2008).

Any place for intercultural mediation in CI?

- “At first, he was rather popular, particularly with young people in Akihabara who like reading mangas”.
- “popular, particularly in fact with the young geeks of Tokyo”.
- “Voters think he is not fit to be PM. He is outspoken, has made a number of daring statements and that he has misread kanji in his speeches.”
- “He often makes politically incorrect statements and voters feel he is not really up to the job intellectually after a number of incidents of misreading the kanji characters in his written speeches”.

Interpreting as « reworking »

- : “there is an economic crisis currently. The crisis will end. Companies will expand again”
- “The crisis will come to an end one day and then retailers must be ready to expand to new markets.”

“The feasibility of role combination is questionable, in principle, because it is, in fact, difficult to be a helpmate to and even an advocate of those not speaking the language of the country and still to retain the objectivity and impartiality required to interpret well.” (Roberts, 1997, 20-21)

, “interpreters cannot be expected to bear the whole burden of the inter-lingual, intercultural communication” (Hale)

A User's View

- Tant qu'on me proposait des « interfaces », je me sentais en position d'assisté. Le jour où j'ai eu des interprètes professionnels, j'ai retrouvé ma dignité et je me suis senti sur un pied d'égalité.

There is no free lunch!

-
- Invest in resource-intensive training
- Pay interpreters well

Use of Video Conferencing : Objectives

- Teaching tool, providing access to more speakers/trainers/listeners: enriching the pedagogical environment
- Exposure to new working conditions, preparation for the profession
- EMCI multi-site mock conferences: combine both objectives

EMCI Distance Teaching Project

led by Barbara Moser-Mercer

Multi point video conferences are part of the EMCI distance teaching project

Objectives:

- Pool resources across the Consortium
- Exchange best practice in interpreting pedagogy
- Exploit new technologies
- Develop best practice for use of new technologies in training and professional practice

Participants

Geneva ETI

Paris ESIT

Graz

Lisbon

Prague

European Parliament

Choice of Topic

- March 2007 : Mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS
- October 2007 : the Middle East
- May 2008 : Biofuels
- (planned) November 2008: Poverty reduction

Prior preparation

- Detailed script with precise times
- Summary of interventions
- List of speakers
- Interpreting assignments



Example: List of participants and speakers

Graz

Teachers:

Ursula Stachi-Peier, Yannick Quero, Dijana Glova*, Erich Prunc (TBC)

ETI

Teachers:

Barbara Moser-Mercer, Sarah de Senarclens, Grégoire Bali, Ana Casades, Thomas Bernath

Speakers:

Barbara Moser-Mercer, Grégoire Bali

ESIT

Teachers:

Clare Donovan, Karla Déjean, Fatima Khallouk, Andreja Montani

Speakers: Salim Benbraham*

EP

Speakers/assessors:

Laurent Bernhard, Milena Kremljak

** Summary: Salim Benbraham*

Mon intervention sera une réflexion sur une éventualité assez peu évoquée en Occident (si ce n'est pour s'en indigner) lorsque l'on parle du conflit israélo-palestinien: la disparition de l'Etat d'Israël, et la création d'un seul Etat, l'Etat palestinien. Je parlerai d'abord sommairement des solutions habituellement évoquées, pour ensuite passer à cette hypothèse et les arguments en faveur de sa plausibilité, dont des exemples pris dans l'histoire (Européens aux USA, Musulmans en Espagne, Français en Algérie, Britanniques en Inde), certains aspects de la situation actuelle, et quelques évènements plus ou moins récents, dont les accords d'Oslo et la guerre contre le Liban de l'année dernière.

** Summary: Grégoire Bali*

My intervention will be a general overview of the political situation in the region in view of the upcoming Annapolis Peace Conference proposed by the US. It will focus mostly on the countries of the Levant: Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, and Iraq. Students are advised to research the recent events that took place/are taking place in this region, the Israeli violation of Syrian airspace and bombing in the Northern city of Deir ez-Zor, the Lebanese presidential elections and the key players in the ongoing debate (the Zaïms on the Lebanese political scene, namely Saad al-Hariri, son of the assassinated ex-PM Rafic al-Hariri, Waleed Jumblatt, Samir Geagea, Michel Aoun, Speaker of the House Nabih Berri and the leader of HizbAllah, Hassan NasrAllah). Focus on Palestine/Israel will deal with the division of Hamastan vs. Fatahland, the ongoing negotiations between President Mahmud Abbas and PM Ehud Olmert in the run up to the Annapolis Peace Conference. On the Iraqi issue, I will concentrate on the resurging matter of Kurdish independence, and the propositions of Iraqi federalism.

Student Assessment

- Students relatively relaxed – visibility good
- Sensitive to economic justifications
- “...tant que les conditions techniques (son, transmission) étaient bonnes, il ne nous semble pas qu’il y ait une différence fondamentale entre interpréter un orateur présent dans la salle où se trouve l’interprète, et un orateur qu’on voit sur écran. »
- « ..l’interprétation à distance promet des économies, même si c’est aux dépens d’une des « joies » du métier d’interprète, le déplacement et les voyages. »

Preparation for profession: lessons learnt

- Relative vulnerability of interpreter in VC set-up (especially in remote interpreting)
- Possibility to review performance
- Working with on-screen image
- Learning how to react in VC situation: technical hitches

Therefore, importance of prior briefing and coordination.

Pedagogical Tool

■ Training Benefits

- Exposure to an authentic, stimulating working situation
- Opportunity to practice techniques taught in classroom setting
- Wide range of speakers (and listeners)
- Input and feedback from trainers at other Institutions and from recruiters

Key Features: Checklist

- Choice of topic: realistic, topical, of interest
- Thorough preparation
- Structured, well scripted conference design
- Technicians – alert system
- Speakers' brief
- Mix of interpreting modes and relay
- Care in exposure of students
- De-briefing

Coordination and Human Resources

- Intensive coordination and preparation
- Availability and class times
- Presence of technical and teaching staff
 - Resource-intensive
- Aversion to new technology

Developments

- Frequency of such VCs: regular feature
- Web streaming for wider dissemination
- Involvement of other institutions
- Student participation in debriefing
- Transmission of floor and one/several booth channels

General conclusion

- - opportunities for students to adapt to new working conditions, to consider consequences and appropriate responses
- - take advantage of new technologies to create stimulating interpreting experience