Submission Title

Sight translation in L2: evidence from eye-tracking

Abstract

The study aims to answer two questions: does reading type (oral vs. silent) contribute to L2 text perception quality, and what type of reading is more advantageous for successful sight translation. According to Andrea D. Hale et al. (2007), reading aloud facilitates understanding of the text, despite the fact that it requires to exert more cognitive effort for a reader. Fuchs et al. (2001) suggested that aloud reading fluency represents the overall reading competence. In our two-group experimental design, 20 Russian native speakers were reading two English texts (aloud or silently). They were asked to translate them from English into Russian. Both texts were of the same length, topic and readability. The participants eye movement patterns during the pre-reading task have been recorded. We have measured the reading duration (RD), total fixations amount (TFA), average fixation duration (AFD), and total amount of regressions (TRA). The sight translation quality of each participant have been assessed with the use of Gilmullina's (2016) sight translation quantitative analysis method. Mann-Whitney U test has shown that when subjects were reading aloud, they were reading significantly slower (RT: p=0,008; TFC: p=0,027; AFD: p=0,036; RC: p=0.134), as opposed to silent reading duration. No significant correlation between sight translation quality and subjective difficulty of text perception (oral reading vs silent reading) was found. However, we have found that despite the fact that aloud reading does not affect text perception significantly, though it delays the promptitude of sight translation, since it requires more time on text processing. This way we have found that aloud reading type is less time efficient and therefore the least preferable for this type of action. We also assume that aloud pre-reading type does not threaten the overall quality of sight translation. This means that the text availability does not affect the interpreter’s performance, but contributes to it. The study is supported by the research grant no. ID92566385 from St Petersburg University.

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Keywords

eye-tracking
oral vs silent reading
text processing
sight translation