Sight interpreting/translation

In brief

SPA *A vista (Traducción/Interpretación)* **CHI (1)** 視譯 **CHI (2)** 视译

◁◁ **other names**

Sight translation (from most relevant literature); *sight interpreting* (advocated by scholars to reflect the nature of interpreting); *simultaneous translation* (from scholars outside T&I studies); *a-vista translation* or *prima vista* (from scholars in certain regions, especially Poland and Italy).

Here the use of *sight interpreting/translation* is advocated for multiple reasons: (1) *sight translation* is by far the most common denomination; (2) the immediate nature of this activity can be duly acknowledged, while taking into consideration that at times this activity becomes an intermediate stage in the process of creating a written translation; (3) avoiding confusion with a partly overlapping

task using almost an identical name, such as *sight interpreting/interpretation* (which means SI with text for some scholars).

☰ abstract

Sight interpreting/translation is a cross-modal activity and a hybrid form of translation and interpreting. The information is received via reading, whereas the output is produced either in oral form or sign language. This mode of communication has taken on several names. Some scholars prefer *sight interpreting,* as it is mostly done in contexts that require real-time communication. *Sight translation* is also used and, aside from appearing frequently in the literature, the denomination does have some merits: it could seep into "oral translation" without time pressure as an exercise to develop interpreting skills, as an interpreting activity similar to the consecutive mode, or for language learning; it could also help quickly produce a translation and thus boost translators' productivity. Accordingly, *sight interpreting/translation* (SiT) is advocated as the hypernym to account for the widest possible range of scenarios and to avoid confusion with Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) with text—mentioned as *sight interpretation* at times. The real issue is not terminological, but our understanding of SiT, and it seems to be still preliminary.

While previous research mainly sees it as a monologic exercise, recent studies are focusing more on its interactive nature, which is largely an uncharted territory. Even with the more familiar, monologic SiT, we begin to realise that what we thought about it has not entirely been supported by evidence. Current research has established some features of SiT, and we know that the major causes of difficulties are the permanent availability of the source text, the linguistic

dissimilarities of the language pair involved, the fundamental difference between written and oral communication, and the crossover between the two. To address the issues, trainees, especially in such language pairs as English and Chinese, are encouraged to read faster and always read ahead while simultaneously producing output for previous segments. However, the suggestions have not always been supported by eyetracking studies. The behaviour that leads to better SiT output does not necessarily entail faster reading. In addition, while reading ahead is essential, the eyes are more likely to be drawn to what will be immediately rendered as reformulation takes place. That said, we only have some general picture of what SiT is and how it is done so far, without finer details about what really happens in every step along the way. To better understand this unique mode, we need to capitalise on inter-disciplinary collaboration, and we need comparisons across different language pairs as well.

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Entry

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📖 **Introduction**

Sight interpreting/translation (SiT), by its nature, is a multimodal activity (Havnen [2019](#)). The simplest definition of this task—more commonly known as *sight translation* (ST)—is the oral "rendition of a written text 'at sight'" (Pöckhacker 2016: 20) from one language into another, though we should elaborate and expand on this definition to underscore its multimodal nature and describe it as a translational activity done by receiving source information in written form and producing its corresponding output in another language, either in oral form or sign language (Chen 2015). Here the time factor should perhaps even be added to the above description, as SiT more often than not happens in interpreting contexts, in which oral translation is performed under time pressure as immediate communication is

required (Mikkelson [1994](#)). That is probably the reason why the concept of sight translation is normally introduced as a variant of interpreting (Gile 2009; Pöckhacker 2016), partly due to its oral nature and the fact that there is no need to emphasise the role of *sight* in written translation.

Although widely acknowledged as a hybrid mode of translation and interpreting (Lambert [2004](#); Mikkelson [1994](#)), SiT has acquired various denominations along the way, sometimes to a confusing degree. For example, *sight translation* has been the most common denomination in the majority of scholarly works. Meanwhile, *sight interpreting* is favoured by some scholars (Čeňková 2015) to more aptly capture the essence of the task being carried out "in real time for immediate use by an audience" (Pöckhacker 2016: 20). In addition, *a-vista translation* (Biela-Wolonciej [2007](#)) or *prima vista* (Pedersen & Dam [2017](#))—naming in a different language—and *simultaneous translation* (McDonald & Carpenter 1981) are all present in the literature.

What potentially stirs up the water is the fact that SiT does appear as a sub-task, or supplementary support, in some interpreter-mediated situations that rely on simultaneous interpreting (SI). When SiT is used in the process of SI, it picks up a different name: *SI with text* (Pöckhacker 2016), or *sight interpretation* (Lambert [2004](#)). Being a sub-task in SI with text dictates that SiT is conditioned by the speaker's pace and style of speech delivery, including how fast the speaker goes through the script and how the speaker renders it with the manipulation of pauses or lays emphasis on certain parts of the speech as messages pour in via both auditory and visual channels. What adds to the agony of the interpreter is that the written information may not always coincide perfectly with what the speaker says and, when this happens, information-searching and decision-making certainly takes extra, non-automatic efforts. That is, the

activities of trying to locate where the speaker is on the PowerPoint slide or script by mapping that to the corresponding audio message and deciding whether to engage in reading or give up on the additional visual support to focus on listening inevitably challenge the interpreter's already limited processing capacity at any given time. That said, due to the non-essential role of SiT in this special form of SI, scholars such as Franz Pöckhacker (2016: 20) proclaim that:

> **since authoritative input still arrives through the acoustic channel, with many speakers departing from their text for asides or time-saving omissions, this variant of the simultaneous mode is not subsumed under sight interpreting but rather regarded as a complex form of SI with a more or less important sight interpreting component.**

However, the importance or prominence of SiT in this specific context has been underrated. The truth of visual information playing a bigger-than-expected role even for professional interpreters when engaging in SI with text, either owing to the fear of exposing oneself to unnecessary risks or because visual information simply attracts more attention (Chmiel, Janikowski & Lijewska 2020), speaks volumes about the fact that SiT is not secondary or something that can be easily discarded in this scenario. Looking from a different angle, we can also see SI with text as a variant of SiT—in which case the auditory information competes with visual information for the limited attention of the interpreter; hence the legitimacy of subsuming SI with text under an umbrella term that adequately portrays the multimodal activity of reformulating messages from one language into another, with information retrieval and production resorting to different modes of communication.

Up until this point, we have been discussing SiT as the exercise that creates an end product directly consumed by service users to facilitate communication, rather than a means to an end; hence a strong focus on SiT happening in interpreting contexts. However, the basic definition, as stated earlier, simply denotes the "oral translation of a written text" (Mikkelson 1994: 381), or the signing of a written text. Pöckhacker (2016: 20) also claims that SiT without the time pressure "will shade into the consecutive mode or even come to resemble 'oral translation', with considerable opportunity for 'reviewing' and correction". The fact of the person executing SiT being afforded the chance to stop and think means it has the potential of becoming a training tool to facilitate the development of other translation/interpreting skills, or of being used to quickly create a draft for revision in the case of written translation, or even serving as a language learning activity. In this regard, SiT, stripped of the time factor, should be more adequately referred to as *sight translation* instead, although the basic nature of the task remains unchanged. As we will find out from the discussion on the versatility of SiT below, previous research, especially earlier ones, tend to address the topic with (uni-directional) conference interpreting in mind (e.g., Weber 1990, Gile 2009; although the importance of SiT is especially emphasised in the former), and therefore the role of SiT is normally not as prominent as that in dialogue interpreting or public service interpreting (PSI), but rather leans towards a supportive tool to master "more advanced modes" of interpreting or to boost the productivity of a translator.

This short introduction suffices to prove that the use of different terms to refer to the same activity at the core may be confusing, although each of the assortment does have merits when we consider the appropriateness of the term from distinctive angles. Notwithstanding this, *sight interpreting/translation* (SiT) is advocated here as the overarching term to cover the use of the same skill set in translation

and interpreting contexts under different circumstances. For the benefit of standardisation, adopting this term in the titles of essays and specifying the particular settings or conditions in which SiT is practiced could be beneficial in years to come when reviewing how much we have found out about this topic.

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¶⇩ Versatility of SiT

There are times when the need for SiT arises. In the arena of conference interpreting, for example, speakers or discussants may have their entire speech written out and then orally deliver it verbatim due to various reasons—the language of the conference is not their first language and a script can avoid awkwardness; reading a prepared text ensures all messages intended to be conveyed can be covered within the time limit; visual aids such as PowerPoint slides with text on them are capitalised on to facilitate delivery (Li 2014). At other times, some may wish to have a written text presented onsite for deliberation at a meeting, "such as a letter, preliminary draft of a motion, press release" (Setton & Dawrant 2016: 18).

The above possible scenarios prompt some interpreting trainers and professionals to assert how crucial sharpening SiT skills is for interpreters. Wilhelm K.Weber (1990), drawing on personal experience, describes in detail how SiT can help the interpreter prepare for real-life interpreting tasks by familiarising oneself with the technical content and jargon used by specialists and building quick reflexes and muscle memory. On top of that, the reading skills required for SiT can be useful when the need to read extensively about a topic in a short time materialises. Weber (1990: 47) also mentions that "sight translation is an ideal tool for teaching students to read their notes smoothly and naturally" in consecutive interpreting

(CI) and could help buoy the interpreter in SI when swamped with a daunting amount of information or technical detail.

Aside from the above advantages and its usefulness in boosting the level of language proficiency required to fulfill an interpreter's responsibility (Viaggio 1995), the overlap of the cognitive (sub)activities with other modes of interpreting is probably a major reason many scholars in our field believe SiT has something to offer. Pöckhacker (2016: 20) specifies that, without time pressure, "[i]n sight translation, the interpreter's target-text production is simultaneous not with the delivery of the source text but with the interpreter's real-time (visual) reception of the written source text". The simultaneity of cognitive components that is required by SiT points to its similarity to CI in terms of reading notes and producing output smoothly and to SI in listening and speaking almost at the same time. Stanley Zhongwei Song (2010: 121) also bases his study of facilitating skill transfer from SiT to SI on the premise that "the two processes require shared complex skills: meaning unit identification, chunking, anticipation, and a quick response".

In addition, SiT is believed (by some) to be less demanding than CI and SI in that the source text is permanently available and the pace of rendition is controlled by the interpreter (Gile 2009; Li 2014), and therefore serves well as introductory training to help students improve their skills to a sufficient level for more advanced training. Looking at interpreter training from a different angle, SiT quite often appears as a sub-task of the aptitude/admission tests when admitting candidates with great potential to training programmes in higher education, probably because SiT demands rapid analysis of the source information, the ability to refrain from word-for-word translation, quick reformulation, and masterful public speaking skills (Lee 2012), although some scholars argue against using SiT at this stage and

claim that the skills involved do need to be taught (see Russo 2011 for an overview).

The list of merits SiT bears does not stop at interpreting-related scenarios. The identical way of receiving information compared to written translation gives this special mode some leverage to ascend to a more visible position on stage, especially in this era in which clients demand not just the quality of the translation, but the speed of delivery. As successful SiT entails rapid analysis of the source text and smooth and immediate reformulation, which

Interpreters, sight translation		Translators, sight translation		Translators, written translation	
Interpreter	*WPM*	*Translator*	*WPM*	*Translator*	*WPM*
I1	147	*T1*	35	*T1*	11
I2	133	*T2*	79	*T2*	11
I3	160	*T3*	66	*T3*	12
I4	127	*T4*	114	*T4*	34
Mean (SD)	142 (14.77)	*Mean (SD)*	74 (32.70)	*Mean (SD)*	17 (11.34)

Speed of production by interpreters and translators in words per minute from Exploring Translation and Interpreting Hybrids by Dragsted & Hansen (2009).

sounds as if the interpreter were merely reading a transcript in the target language out loud (Angelelli 1999), its training may be able to improve the speed of translation without sacrificing too much quality, according to scholars interested in the potential role of SiT in the language services industry. Dragsted & Hansen (2009) conducted a small-scale comparative study between SiT and translation done by four interpreters and four translators, all professionals with at least ten years' experience. While the results corroborate the fact that training in SiT is necessary, the authors found that SiT considerably helped participants reduce the time for producing a translation without suffering a blow in the quality. On a similar note, Dragsted, Mees & Hansen (2011) recruited 14 translation and interpreting students to perform (1) written translation, (2) SiT, and (3) SiT coupled with sound recognition technology. The results attest to the previous claim that SiT can boost translators' productivity while maintaining an acceptable level of quality, and sound recognition technology even offers an additional competitive edge. In this study, using SiT in fact shaved off

the task time to almost a quarter of that compared to translation. Although the traditional way of translating led to better quality, the difference was not significant enough to justify the time spent. The authors accordingly speak highly of the potential of SiT and sound recognition technology. The same promising features are recognised by 36 out of the 41 professional practitioners in Dragoș Ciobanu's (2016) study, albeit a few do have reservations about the change of work modality. All the while, outside the realm of translation and interpreting, SiT as a form of translation activity is becoming more visible in the language classroom. A case in point is the experiment conducted by Moslem Fatollahi (2016). The results show that SiT improved reading comprehension significantly for students that engaged in reading activities plus SiT practice, compared to those who only received reading instruction.

From the above discussion, it is not difficult to see the versatility of SiT, which is probably its biggest blessing and woe. On the one hand, many conference interpreters consider SiT as a supportive tool, as spoken language is the main, if not the only, medium via which messages are sent across in most interpreting contexts, and therefore the interpreter can always loosen their grip on the written material in hand and simply listen to the speaker. On the other hand, translation done with SiT, with or without automatic speech recognition, is more often than not a job half done, which makes revision necessary; that aside, many translators are still not used to working in this modality, and they can rightly return to the traditional thinking-and-typing method. This perceived supplementary role of SiT partly explains why it remains a relatively under-researched area (Li 2014).

SiT as the *have-to* reality

Recently, research on SiT has picked up some momentum, as more scholars and even users of interpreting service start to recognise its fundamental contribution from the perspective that sees SiT as a "communicative" interpreting activity (Jiménez, cited in Vargas-Urpi 2019; Li 2014). What this means is that the interlocutors of a conversation or the information receivers do genuinely rely on an interpreter to bridge the gap of communication, which at some point depends entirely on quality SiT service to ensure the conversation can continue or the goals of the encounter can be achieved.

Essential needs for SiT frequently occur in public service interpreting (PSI), also known as *community interpreting.* For example, in the legal context, transcripts of police interviews, indictments, affidavits, exhibits, witness statements, writs, and even financial statements and emails could all sit in the hand of the interpreter at any stage of the legal process. In medical settings, test results, medical records, medication instructions, patient education brochures, information pamphlets, admission and discharge forms and surgical consent forms—to name just a few—can readily be expected to rely on SiT to get the message across. In other settings that involve government services, from education to birth registration, consultations about social services, or recourse to public funds, anything that leaves a paper trail can potentially invoke SiT service (Čeňková 2015; Spitzl & Hlavac 2017).

The inevitability of SiT in the aforementioned contexts has come to the awareness of not only practitioners in this field but also professional organisations. The (USA) National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC 2009: 6) not only reiterates the visible role of SiT in the medical and legal contexts, but emphasises that this mode "requires different skills[…] and sight translating long documents can consume quite a lot of time, fatigue the interpreter and increase the risk for error", and therefore guidelines have to be

followed when deciding whether using SiT will be appropriate, in addition to the necessity of ensuring the interpreter tasked with the mission has received training and been tested in this respect. Similar discussion and reminders about the importance of and when and how to best use SiT service have also been recorded in the International Medical Interpreters Association's (IMIA) guide on medical translation (Txabarriaga 2009), while another interesting example about rendering texts on social media in court comes from a blog post published on 27 July 2018 on the website of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT), which points out the unavoidable encounter with SiT and, along with it, the difficulty of tackling series of short messages embedded with innuendo, implied threats, sarcasm, or insults disguised as compliments out of context.

The reality in PSI and ever more frequent situations in conference interpreting and business interpreting that make use of written information to facilitate communication have prompted practitioners and scholars to rethink the status of SiT and what this activity actually entails. As a matter of fact, when done in the context of conference interpreting, in which the delivery of information mostly travels in a single direction with almost no interaction along the way, SiT is portrayed as a monologic exercise that demands perfect coordination of information retrieval and reformulation by constantly reading ahead and avoiding pauses that are jarring to the ears (Chen 2015), thereby creating a smooth flow of messages and projecting a professional image. However, in dialogue interpreting scenarios, including PSI and business interpreting, SiT has rid itself of the monologic façade and taken on an interactive feature. Five participants in the study conducted by Mireia Vargas-Urpi (2019: 8) faithfully reflect the reality:

> **ST is not a monologic task in any of the experiments, and this is not only because the user asks questions while she is receiving the translated information, but**

also because the interpreters or mediator actively engage the user while trying to ensure her comprehension and seek to co-construct the message and negotiate meanings with her.

In the same study, the service provider was at times involved in the negotiation or clarification of the meaning of the written document in question. These were the times when the dialogic task of SiT veered into a triadic event, creating a whole new dynamic for the interpreter-mediated communication. In a similar vein, Defrancq & Verliefde (2018), by discussing how the drafting of a written record is introduced during a police interview and how it affects the course of action, clearly show that the interpreter assumes a more active role to manage the communication when the phase of SiT begins, making it an interactive practice, via which the recipient of the information no longer takes on board the message silently but proactively engages in meaning construction.

It appears that SiT can put on quite a different hat when the setting varies. How this mode of interpreting is actually done or what skills or cognitive activities are involved in the process may all deserve a more context-dependent analysis, to ensure practitioners are well-equipped to rise to whatever challenges lying ahead. Indeed, as Defrancq & Verliefde (2018: 213) put it regarding the case in their study:

The special interaction status of written text being drafted, the drafting styles used by interviewers to record oral statements, the negotiation of the content of the written record are rarely covered in interpreter training. In short, there is a clear mismatch between the skills interpreters acquire during their training and the skills required by specific fields of the interpreting market.

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¶ The nature of SiT

The logical questions following the previous discussion would be: What cognitive processes are required to perform SiT (and in what context)? How effortful are they? What challenges could stand in the way of success? Bear in mind that all the discussion here is based on the premise of using SiT under time pressure—of course as a mode of interpreting in professional practice, but even as a productivity tool in professional translation because translators are literally racing against time as well to make a living. A good reference will be the effort model for SiT proposed by Daniel Gile (2009: 179) that involves four different elements, or *Efforts,* including the Reading Effort, Memory Effort, Speech Production Effort, and Coordination. In an attempt to explain why interpreting performance breaks down at times, Gile points out that the above four Efforts are non-automatic, meaning the interpreter exerts a certain level of mental effort, drawn from a reserve of cognitive capacity that is limited in nature, to engage in each of these activities. When requirements for the successful execution of any single component—or all combined—exceed the availability of the interpreter's capacity, the interpretation quality suffers.

From Gile's point of view, SiT is less demanding than other modes of interpreting, owing to the fact that the source text does not disappear, allowing back-and-forth reading and corrections to be made as necessary, and that the pace of rendition is controlled by the interpreter, thereby inducing less pressure on one's short-term memory (2009: 180). This view can be partly corroborated by the findings of Marjorie Agrifoglio's (2004) study, in which SiT, CI, and SI performance of six professional interpreters were analysed to allow for comparisons between the three modes. Errors were divided into meaning and expression failures, and the results show that the accuracy of the output is considerably higher in SiT, with only 25% of

the errors falling into the category of meaning failure, while CI and SI fare much worse—76% and 63% respectively. During the same year, Sylvie Lambert (2004) reported on the findings of another study with a similar goal. This time, SiT, SI, and SI with text (referred to as *sight interpretation* in this study) were stacked against each other. The performance of fourteen translation students with some interpreting training was marked, and SiT was found to enjoy the highest mean score of accuracy, followed in sequence by SI with text and SI, with each of the first two modes overtaking SI to a statistically significant extent.

SiT seems ostensibly an easier mode, compared to its cousins in the interpreting family. However, bear in mind that research design could be one of the factors that shape the results. The above two studies published in 2004 both gave SiT a non-negligible advantage. That is, in both cases the participants had been allowed time to make preparations before the SiT task began—so was the task of SI with text in Lambert's (2004) study—but other modes did not enjoy the same privilege. Yet, in reality, a feeling of having to start sight-translating the text sooner rather than later, even without time to prepare in advance, is often prominent due to the audience's expectations (Angelelli 1999; Čeňková 2015; Setton & Dawrant 2016). In addition, we should not forget that in the same two studies, meaning errors still occurred, even by professional interpreters, proving that SiT is not accuracy-guaranteed. Amparo Jiménez Ivars (2008) also attests to the meaning pitfalls awaiting whoever takes on a SiT task. Perhaps a more important feature of the SiT output is the prevalent expression failures witnessed in numerous studies. In addition to the soaring number of expression issues in Agrifoglio's (2004) study, Her (1997) and Chang (2008), drawing on data from trainees, both report that syntactic difficulties and sentence composition are two major hurdles constantly bothering students during SiT, and the resulting disorganised, haphazard rendition,

frequent and inadequate pauses, and more literal rendition which borders on word-for-word translation can also be observed in Chiang, Kuo, & Chen (2009), Lee (2012) and Akbari (2017).
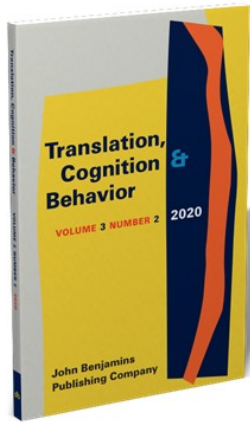
Translation, Cognition & Behavior a journal by John Benjamins.

It should be clear by now that SiT is far from easy, and the reasons are multiple. To begin with, constructing meaning via listening and reading are two very different experiences. Although the writing system was created to document transient, oral messages (Willingham 2017), the two modes of communication have gone separate ways to a large extent. While oral speech turns to more popular expressions and higher-frequency vocabulary, and uses more repetitions and simpler syntactic structures to ensure instant comprehension of ideas and arouse emotions, a writer tends to produce a text with flair, including the use of more embedded and compound sentences and a wider range of diction, and avoiding repetitions, leading to higher lexical and textual density and variability (Chafe & Danielewicz 1987). As Randi Havnen (2019: 94–95) also clearly explains:

Writing and speech differ in their production, exploitation of semiotic resources and perception. Although they share language (lexis and syntax) as a resource and both construct linear sequences, writing and speech are displayed differently and have different types of materiality. […] [T]he resources exploited in the respective modes are different. A resource from a written text does not necessarily have a corresponding resource in another mode, that is why different modes are used in the first place.

Accordingly, moving back-and-forth across the boundary between modes such as written and oral communication—exactly what SiT is

set out to do—will inevitably face unique challenges, not to mention the contexts in which SiT moves away from a monologic exercise that unilaterally broadcasts information and turns into a dialogic or triadic interaction. What makes SiT more challenging is that the interpreter is devoid of the help of "vocal indications such as the speaker's intonation, hesitations or other pauses which are found in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and which help them segment the text into Translation Units" (Gile 2009: 180). Moreover, the continued presence of the source text is certainly another major culprit for the fall of the interpreter, particularly when the differences between the language pair in question are obvious, English-Chinese being a good example (Ho, Chen & Tsai 2020). Maurizio Viezzi (1989) investigated the retention rate of both professionals and trainees across various tasks, and the results point to worse content recall in SiT than in SI, with a deeper gap for the more "distant" language pair in the study. The same syntactic influence is also corroborated by Kilian G. Seeber's (2011) study, which successfully shows a higher cognitive load for structurally asymmetrical language pairs.

Broadened scope of knowledge about SiT

SiT apparently is more complicated than the basic definition implies, both in terms of its nature and the demands required on the practitioner's part. With much of the previous research laying a firm foundation via theoretical discussion and output analysis, we can now grasp some features of SiT. Nevertheless, the picture is far
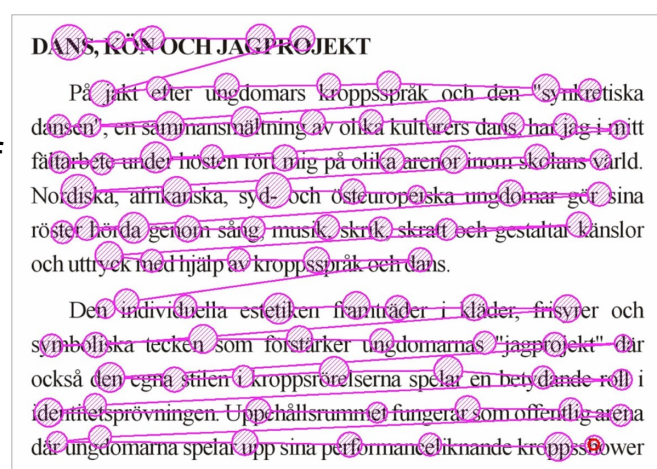
from clear, and this is where
studies from other disciplines
come in to provide new
perspectives on the nature of SiT
—with the help of eyetracking
technology, for example. Studies
looking into the reading
behaviours of various tasks find
that, first and foremost, reading
purpose does affect how one
reads in the process. McDonald
& Carpenter (1981) look into the

Example of eye movement during reading. [Source].

reading pattern of reading for comprehension and SiT, and liken one
to the other, with both engaging in normal reading for comprehension
in the first pass. However, in SiT the participants do go back to reread
the text in the second pass for reformulation, and return the third time
when previous false understanding has to be corrected. Macizo &
Bajo (2004) and Jakobsen & Jensen (2008) also manage to show
how purpose shapes reading behaviour; the former compare reading
for repetition and for SiT with 96 sentences used in their experiments
and report that the reading time for the latter is significantly longer,
indicating some other processes going on simultaneously, while the
latter include four tasks— reading for comprehension, reading for
translating, SiT, and reading while typing out the translation (Jakobsen
& Jensen 2008: 106)—and see close-to-significant difference in the
mean duration of fixations and reliable difference in the number of
fixations between tasks. Shreve, Lacruz & Angelone (2010) look into
the same topic but examine SiT and (written) translation and then
compare their findings with bilingual reading from a baseline study. A
dissimilar way of reading again manifests itself in SiT, with longer and
more fixations, and more regressions as well. The same study also

corroborates the agonising feature of visual interference to some extent by showing the impacts of syntactic complexity.

Most process research proves that reading behaviour changes due to the nature of the task at hand, and this coincides with many interpreter trainers' advice for learners of SiT to read faster, skim and scan the text, and read for the gist instead of every word—all subsumed under the heading of *reading ahead*. Interestingly, Ho, Chen & Tsai (2020) report that successful SiT does not seem to result from the above-mentioned approach. Rather, the secret is sufficient language flexibility shown in the form of regular chunking of sentences into really short segments. The trainees took a different approach from the untrained bilinguals in the study and began the SiT task nearly immediately without reading through the text first, but on average, they still finished the task much sooner with significantly better quality, both in regard to meaning accuracy and expression. On top of the feat is that the two groups have comparable IELTS scores, so language proficiency has been ruled out as a factor. A brief mention of the findings gleaned from some SiT process research suffices to prove the point that our understanding of this mode of interpreting is still rudimentary, and much work is still needed, as any finer detail of what happens during each step in the process has not been reported yet.

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¶↳ Conclusion

This entry set out to expound on the co-existence of multiple denominations for SiT in the research (and professional) landscape and suggest *sight interpreting/translation* as the umbrella term to better reflect the nature of the task occurring in interpreting contexts and yet inclusive enough to cover other possible circumstances, such

as SiT being used as a training tool to sharpen interpreting/translation skills, for preparations preceding real-life interpreting assignments, as an intermediary stage for quickly producing a draft for revision in the professional world of translation, or even for language learning. It has also been part of the aim here to explain that, albeit a seemingly straightforward task, SiT is never easy nor easier than other modes of interpreting, as this cross-modal activity has its own monsters to conquer. Some features of the output of SiT collated in previous studies, process- and product-wise, have been reported, and they seem to be sufficient to support the argument for treating SiT as a unique mode of communication that deserves more attention. That said, this entry is by no means a comprehensive review of the research results contributed to this topic, but intended as an introductory piece to communicate what has been found so far and acknowledge previous endeavours that help us make progress in understanding this unique mode of bilingual language use. Hopefully, the discussion also manages to show how much we still need to do to accurately capture the essence of SiT before proper training can be designed, as what we thought about SiT and about how to facilitate the development of required skills have sometimes been proven by empirical evidence to miss the mark.

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⌦ Research potential

Although we have better knowledge of SiT as a task in uni-directional interpreting settings, how different resources are capitalised on to facilitate communication during SiT as a cross-modal activity is largely an unknown territory. Even in the traditional realm of SiT, most of the current research merely provides an overall and general picture of the

aftermath of intellectual wrestling, the cognitive elements involved and what the reading pattern looks like. How the task is actually done step by step along the way remains an enigma and has at most been a matter of speculation with circumstantial evidence. In this regard, eyetracking technology is one of the essential tools to help us get to the core of SiT. A more systematic review of relevant empirical research is also preferable to ascertain where we are and how future research efforts can build on the foundation we have established. Perhaps even more importantly, comparison and contrast across findings for different language pairs will be beneficial in helping us to differentiate the universal features of SiT from the ones caused by language specificity.

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