

Příloha č. 1:

Originál písemného rozhovoru s profesorem Seeberem

PB: When did you decide to become an interpreter? Was there anybody influential? Was it always your choice (considering the number of languages you are fluent in)? How did your background help you to pursue your career?

KS: I ended up studying conference interpreting somewhat by coincidence. I had never been a particularly outstanding student – and at the same time I had never had any particular difficulties in any class. Perhaps because of that, the choice of what to study at University was not easy. I decided to go for something I was interested (even though perhaps not particularly good or talented) in – biology - , and combine it with something people around me seemed to think I had a particular aptitude for (but perhaps in retrospect all they were saying is that I like to argue) – political science. It is only once arrived at the admissions office that I read about the possibility of training to become a professional interpreter, a profession I knew pretty much nothing about, and within hours or perhaps even minutes I abandoned my original plans and took a plunge into the unknown. I registered for a degree in Conference Interpreting.

PB: You are interested a lot in brain and its functions in connection with simultaneous interpreting. In your experiments you also work a lot with eyes and pupils. Where did this idea come from? Where did you get the inspiration to start doing this kind of research? Was it difficult to do something that is considered to be an older method and only recently saw its "comeback" (talking about pupillometry)?

KS: The inspiration came from Jorma Tammola, whose work I had read and whom I met personally before embarking on my dissertation. I had already developed a liking for the experimental paradigm (perhaps also thanks to Ingrid Kurz in Vienna who had collaborated with neuroscientists on early experiments on interpreters) and knew that rather than observing or inferring I wanted to measure a (if only very small) phenomenon related to simultaneous interpreting. Jorma was among the first ones to apply psychophysiological measures to the study of interpreting and I knew that if I wanted to measure online, in other words, in real time, I would need a measure that is non- or minimally invasive. I was then able to benefit from better technology and, arguably, a more refined experimental protocol to find tangible and reliable evidence for something as crucial as cognitive load. Even though at the time the method (pupillometry) was obsolete that was not really an obstacle – most people in the field (of T&I) I talked to, were fascinated and had never heard of it. It was, however, more complex than anticipated: the method is very noisy and the data analysis turned out to be tedious. This is why I have since moved on to other eye measures and paradigms that benefit from the same (or even better) features such as non-invasiveness and reliability, but that allow for easier data analysis (e.g., visual world paradigm experiments, fixations and saccades etc.).

PB: Are maybe your students inspired or motivated by your work? Is there anyone who continues to do a similar research? Or, are there any critics of your work?

KS: I derive great pleasure from my research – even though, as many academics in our field, that is the part of my job that gets pushed to the back burner all too easily by administrative duties – and I would hope that anyone working with me sees that. At the Department, I am extraordinarily lucky to be working with a small group of colleagues who all share this passion. Two of my current PhD students work in similar paradigms, and although I don't think that I should take credit for their enthusiasm, I certainly do my best to kindle that flame as best I can. This is particularly encouraging at a time when experimental methods are sometimes knocked as being too complicated, too expensive or simply ill-suited to study interpreting. There are, of course, also critics of my work – but that's how it should be. In fact, it's great.. if only because it means that someone took the time to read my work :-). On a more serious note, I get the impression that, unlike in other, better established fields of research, critically discussing others' academic work is often either not welcome or thought of as inappropriate. Even some rather well established scholars get very defensive really easily – taking critical comments personally. I blame this on the “big fish – small pond” phenomenon that is still rather widespread in a field that in my view is still too isolationist. Leaving one's comfort zone is not easy, and not always pleasant, but if you like to learn (after all, that's what research is all about) then you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Also, I am a firm believer that interpreting is a complex cognitive task, and I equally strongly believe that many non-interpreters (i.e., scholars from other fields) can intellectually grasp the concept. I would even argue that their position is often more neutral as they bring no profession-related bias to the table. Fortunately, some young scholars are much braver – venturing out there, truly cooperating with experts from other fields, learning, and in the process, becoming better scholars.

PB: What are your future projects? Do you have in mind another experiment maybe? Or any other career plans?

KS: So many projects... so little time. I assume I am not the only one who uses some of his spare time to doodle and sketch ideas for potentially interesting experiments on pieces of paper, on coasters or napkins. This means that I literally have an entire drawer full of ideas... many of them probably rubbish, others perhaps worth exploring. I try to organize them from time to time and look through them and some actually make it into the lab. As we just wrote up the results of a rather big project and I still have data from two other experiments sitting there to be written up I am not allowing myself to think of new experiments... instead, the main priority is getting those through the pipeline. As for career plans, I don't really make those anymore, as often the objective ends up being in the way of the journey. Also, I am very lucky to be working with a motivated and competent team at a place with a unique reputation. In other words, any offer would have to offer me a ludicrously lavish package for me to consider it ;-)

Příloha č. 2:

Souhlas profesora Seebera s použitím jeho kompletního seznamu publikací a rozhovoru

AGREEMENT

By signing below, I agree with the use of my list of publications and written interview in the Master Thesis of Miss Petra Bařtanov.

Date and place

11 April 2017

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Petra Bařtanov', written in a cursive style.