

CO-MINOR-IN/QUEST



With financial support from the Criminal
Justice Programme of the European
Commission DG Justice



Cooperation in interpreter-mediated questioning of minors - JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2961



CO-Minor-IN/QUEST

Interpreting techniques



Lucie Solem
ISIT, PARIS





Interpreting techniques

- **Consecutive interpreting:**
The interpreter renders the interpretation after the source-language speaker has finished speaking or signing. Interpreters can use special note-taking techniques to help in the rendering of lengthy passages.
- **Simultaneous interpreting:**
The interpreter transfers the message from the source language into the target language while the source-language speaker speaks or signs continuously.
- **Whispering** (chuchotage):
Simultaneous interpreting without the use of interpreting booths usually provided for a maximum of three persons.





State of the art

- **Very few publications** deal with interpreting techniques in judicial proceedings.
- Excluding a couple of exceptions, they don't address the specific case of children.





Drawback of whispering

"Listening to two people talk at once can be confusing for a child. For some children it can be downright agitating."

(Phoenix Children's Hospital, 2008 : 6)





Drawback of long consecutive

"Aspects such as hesitation and repetition may be relevant and the interpreter should try to reproduce these, but note-taking techniques do not normally allow for this."

"The child may begin to speak again before the interpreter has given the whole of the rendering."

(Colin & Morris, 1996 : 54)





Drawback of short consecutive

"The child must not be interrupted by the interpreter."

(Colin & Morris, 1996 : 54)





There are considerable disadvantages in using either consecutive interpreting or whispered interpreting with children...





Interpreter 1	Interpreter 2	Interpreter 3	Interpreter 4
Whispering	Whispering	Short consecutive	Long consecutive





Police officer 1	Police officer 2	Police officer 3
Short consecutive	Long consecutive for victims Whispering for suspects	Short consecutive (especially for very young children)





Psychologist 1

Psychologist 2

**Paediatrician in a
medico-judicial
unit**

Whispering

Long consecutive

Short consecutive





Youth lawyer 1	Youth lawyer 2	Youth judge
<p>Adult→Minor: Young child: short consecutive Older child: long consecutive or whispering</p> <p>Minor→Adult: Whispering</p>	<p>Consecutive (short or long)</p>	<p>Minor→Adult: Long consecutive</p> <p>Adult→Minor: Short consecutive</p>





Advantages of consecutive interpreting

- It is easier to keep a written record of the interview (I4, P3).
- It gives the victims time to think about their answers (P2) and for the child's interlocutors to carefully analyse the child's body language (P3, Psy2).
- It enables the interpreter to be more precise (P1).
- It enables the suspects to hear the tone of the police officer's voice (P3).
- It enables the child to better understand the role of the interpreter (I4).





Drawbacks of consecutive interpreting

- The interpreter tends to **alter the content and the style** of the original speech to “make it sound better” (I1, I2, L1, Psy2).
- The interpreter is tempted to **summarize** the original speech (I2, L2, J).
- It extends the length of the interview (P3, J).
- It hinders the therapeutic process (Psy1).
- The dynamic of the exchange is often lost (I1).





Advantages of short consecutive interpreting

- It is more suitable for discussion sessions (P1, P3, M).
- It is more precise and complete (I3, P1, J).
- It does not require note-taking techniques (I3).





Drawback of short consecutive interpreting

- The interpreter needs to interrupt the child if s/he talks for too long (I3, P3).





Advantage of long consecutive interpreting

- The interpreter does not need to interrupt the child (I3, P3).





Drawback of long consecutive interpreting

- The child may lose patience (L1).





Advantages of whispering interpreting

- The exchange is more **dynamic and spontaneous** (I1, I2, P2, Psy1).
- It prevents delay in communication and enables the interpreter to better analyse the body language of the child (Psy1).
- The translation is more exhaustive, which strengthens the policeman's trust in the interpreter (I2).
- It enables a more literal translation of the speech (I2, L1, Psy2).
- It is fast (P2).





Drawbacks of whispering interpreting

- Whispered interpreting **can be difficult** for the child to handle (I4, P1, P2, P3, L2 and Psy2). It is a very tiring technique for the child (Psy2).
- Whispered interpreting is impossible when the interview is being video-taped (P3).
- Many police officers refuse to use whispered interpreting (I4).





Who decides?

No briefing before the interview, but:

The four interpreters and two psychologists think that such a meeting could be useful.

L1, P2 and P3 admit that it would be useful but impossible to set up due to a lack of time.

J thinks that other aspects of the interview are more important.

M and L2 declare that it is up to the interpreter to decide which technique is most suitable depending on the child's reactions.





What about simultaneous interpreting?

Out of the 9 professionals interviewed, 7 said that they were **not really satisfied** with the technique used by interpreters:

P1, P2, L1, L2, Psy2: sometimes interpreters and children have a private conversation from which they are excluded.

P2, P3, L2, Psy1, Psy2 J: consecutive interpreting takes too much time.





Arguments against simultaneous

- The **physical presence** of the interpreter next to the child is important (I1, I2, I3, M).
- Simultaneous interpreting can **annoy** the child (L2, Psy1).
- Simultaneous interpreting is said to be too complicated to implement in police stations (P2).
- The equipment is too expensive (P3).





Arguments in favour of simultaneous

- Simultaneous interpreting saves time (I4, P2, Psy2).
- It could contribute to **better understanding** by the minor of each person's role (I4).
- It could help the interpreter be less emotionally involved (I4).
- The police officer would have more control over the situation (P3).
- The interpreter would have the possibility of providing cultural clarifications (L1).
- This interpretation technique could reduce the interpreter's influence on the minor (L2).

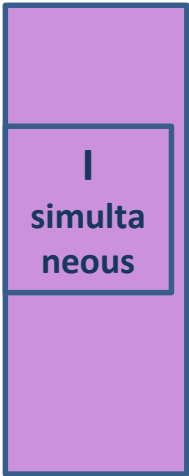




Pilot study

- Does the child take part in the exchange when whispered interpreting is used? What about when simultaneous interpreting is used?
- Does the child clearly understand the content of the exchanges when whispered interpreting is used? What about when simultaneous interpreting is used?
- Which technique does he prefer? Which technique is the most efficient according to the parents, the speaker and the interpreter?
- Does the child understand who his/her main interlocutor is with whispering interpreting? What about with simultaneous interpreting?







Results

- Communication appears to be possible through whispering and simultaneous interpreting with young children.
- Children appear to understand the content of the interactions through whispering and through simultaneous interpreting.
- We cannot establish if the interpreting technique influences the children's comprehension of the Interpreter's role.





Results

Which technique (whispering or simultaneous) do you think worked better?

	P1	P1'	P2	P3	P4&5	S1	S2	S3	I1	I2
Whispering		X								X
Simultaneous					X				X	
Both	X		X			X	X	X		
No answer				X						





Results

What did you like?

- “The headset” (two children)
- “The red light of the microphone when it turns on”
- “It’s fun, especially with the headset”
- “I liked everything”
- “It’s not tiring”

What didn’t you like?

- “It’s weird” (two children)
- “It’s too hot”
- “The stairs to go up to the second floor”

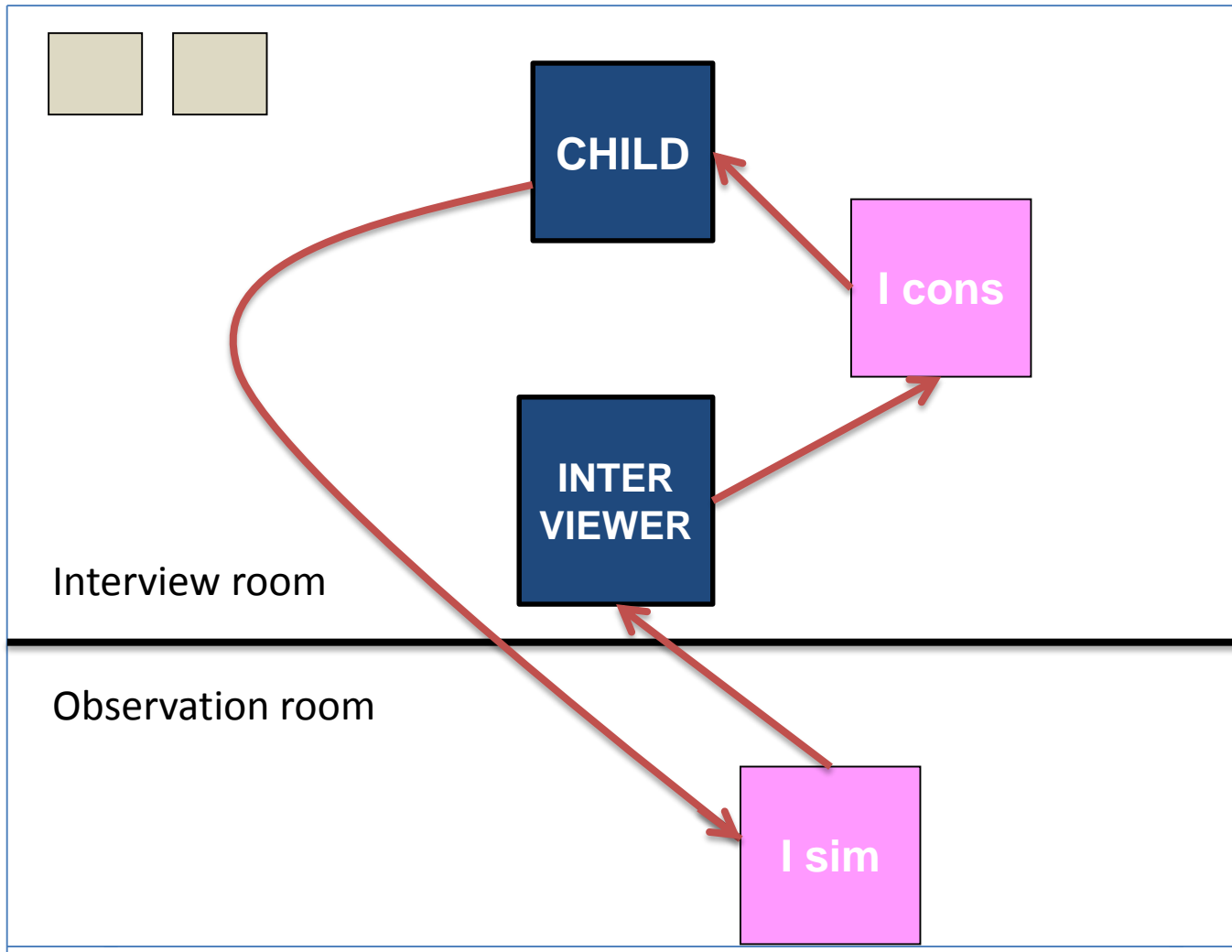




Results

- Children seem to prefer simultaneous to whispering interpreting because of its playful aspects. Parents, Interpreters and Speakers are divided on the question of the best interpreting technique.
- Perhaps the children should be given more detailed explanation of how simultaneous interpreting works before the beginning of the interview.





Colin & Morris, 2001 : 55



References

- Aronson Fontes, L. (2008). *Interviewing Clients across Cultures: a Practitioner's Guide*, New York, The Guilford Press, pp. 150-166.
- Boser, U. (2013). "So tell me what happened! Interpreting the free recall segment of the investigative interview", *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 8 (1), pp. 112–136.
- Colin, J. & Morris, R. (2001). *Interpreters and the Legal Process*, Winchester, Waterside Press, pp. 51-58.
- Jacobsen, B. (2012). "The significance of interpreting modes for question-answer dialogues in court interpreting", *Interpreting* 14 (2), pp. 217-241.
- Mikkelsen H. (2010). "Consecutive or Simultaneous? An Analysis of Their Use in the Judicial Setting", *Across the Board*, Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association, Vol. 5-1, pp. 4-7.
- Nilsen, A. B. (2013). "Exploring interpreting for young children", *The International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research*, Vol 5 (2), pp. 14-29.
- Phoenix Children's Hospital (2008). "Spanish Bilingual Assistant: Introduction to Medical Interpreting", Section 8: Interpreting for children, pp. 1-10.
- Russel, D. (2002). "Interpreting in legal contexts: Consecutive and simultaneous interpretation", Burtonsville, MD, Linstok Press.
- EULITA (2013). Code of Ethics : <http://www.eulita.eu/sites/default/files/EULITA-code-London-e.pdf>





Lucie Solem

SOLEM.LUCIE@ISITPARIS.EU

