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## 0. Introduction

Note-taking is an integral part of consecutive interpreting and good notes contribute significantly to the success of the interpretation. Notes can be extremely varied. Symbols, abbreviations and full words can all constitute notes in consecutive interpreting, and it is likely that no two interpreters have the same note-taking habits and methods. Notes differ not only in their form, but also in their language. They can be taken in the source language, in the target language, in the interpreter's A or B language or in a third language that is not part of the interpreting task. The question of which language is the most suitable for note-taking has created a lively debate in the interpreting research community but, as there are advantages and disadvantages for all of these possibilities, no agreement has yet been reached.

Just like other forms of interpreting, consecutive interpreting is a mentally straining task. In his Effort Model Daniel Gile (1995) presented the several mental efforts that are present during the interpreting task and which interpreters need to manage in order to successfully reproduce the original text in a different language. These efforts have a significant impact on interpreters' language choice for note-taking, as certain languages require less processing capacity than others, leaving more mental energy for tackling the other efforts. Therefore, these languages are more suitable for note-taking because they prevent the interpreter from reaching a point of mental exhaustion, becoming overwhelmed and making mistakes. Due to the great scholarly interest in the language choice for note-taking, numerous empirical studies have been conducted to find out which language interpreters prefer to use for note-taking. These studies have concentrated on the source-target language and on the A-B language parameter and have taken different languages and language pairs into account.

The present thesis aims to deepen our understanding of which language interpreters prefer to use for note-taking in consecutive interpreting, and what factor or factors influence their choice. The language pair of the present research is Hungarian-German. Previous studies have found that English is a suitable and preferred language for note-taking because of its brief and concise nature. Most of these had English as part of the interpreting task. The present thesis aims to find out which language student interpreters use for note-taking when English is not

part of the task. Another aim of this study is to find out whether English words still appear in the notes.

First of all, the characteristics that distinguish consecutive interpreting from other forms of interpreting will be presented, as well as its types and areas of use. Then Gile's (1995) Effort Model will be described. The following section will give an overview of the development of consecutive interpreting and present the most well-known note-taking systems. Special attention is given to the systems by Seleskovitch (1975) and Matyssek (1989). The interpreting research community's debate on the most suitable language for note-taking will also be discussed in this chapter, first with regard to the source-target language, then to the A-B language parameter. The advantages and disadvantages of all of these possibilities will be described. After this comes the description of five previous studies. These were conducted with the aim of finding out which language interpreters use in professional practice for note-taking and what the driving factors behind this decision were. These studies found that the main factor behind the choice of language for note-taking is the language's status in the interpreter's language combination and not its position in the interpreting task. However, Dam (2004b, 2021) found that interpreters prefer to use their A language for note-taking, whereas Szabó (2006) found a strong preference for the B language, English. The reason for this was the B language's wide use in the international context and its concise nature. The short words of English, which can be written down faster compared to their longer equivalents in the A language, made the B language more suitable for note-taking.

The second half of the present thesis describes an experiment. Szabó's (2006) experiment was replicated in order to find out whether interpreters prefer to use their A language for note-taking when the A and B language show no great difference in word length. The only variable that was changed was that, instead of Hungarian and English, the language pair Hungarian-German was used. Hungarian and German are more similar in word length than Hungarian and English. Therefore, it is to be expected that the participants of the experiment will show a preference for their A language as the language of the notes. Another question that this thesis aims to answer is whether English words appear in the notes, even though English is not part of the interpreting task. Relying on English for note-taking can be explained by the language's short words, and also by its wide use in international communication as a *lingua franca*. This study will examine whether the favourable characteristics of the English language make it suitable for note-taking to the extent that English words appear in the notes even when it is not part of the interpreting task.

The experiment conducted for this thesis follows the methodology used by Szabó (2006). The participants consecutively interpreted a Hungarian text into German, and a German text into Hungarian. Their notes were collected and analysed based on their language. After the experiment the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire about their preferences regarding the language for note-taking. After the detailed description of the methods, participants and process of the experiment, the results will be presented and discussed. As the findings of this study contradict the results of Dam (2004b, 2021) and Szabó (2006), some hypotheses will be put forward to explain why this was the case and some areas for further research will also be suggested. Finally, the aims, methods, and findings of the thesis are going to be summarised.

## 1. Consecutive interpreting

The beginning of the practice of consecutive interpreting dates back to ancient times (Setton & Dawrant 2016) and consecutive interpreting is viewed as one of the oldest forms of interpreting (Déjean Le Féal 1998). Until World War II it was the primary mode of interpreting at international conferences and meetings (Gillies 2019). The other major form of conference interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, had been tested since the 1920s, but it was its successful use at the Nuremberg Trials that led to it becoming widely used (Baigorri-Jalón, Fernández-Sánchez & Payàs 2021). Technological advances and the development of new devices in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the spread of simultaneous interpreting, and by the 1970s this time-saving method of interpreting displaced consecutive interpreting in diplomatic and political settings as the primary means of making a speech accessible to an audience that did not speak the language. In spite of these developments, consecutive interpreting remains an important and often used form of interpreting, and being able to interpret in the consecutive mode is considered to be an indispensable skill for professional interpreters (Setton & Dawrant 2016).

The development of new interpreting technologies after World War II was also the time when consecutive and simultaneous interpreting became clearly distinguished (Pöchhacker 2004). One of the fundamental aspects in which these two forms of conference interpreting differ is the amount of time that separates the comprehension of the original text by the interpreter and its reproduction in another language (Gile 2009). In the consecutive mode, the speaker either delivers a short speech that is interpreted in one piece or makes pauses in the delivery of a longer speech, allowing the interpreter to reproduce the text in the target language in shorter segments. In contrast, in simultaneous interpreting the speaker does not stop and wait for the interpretation. Here the interpreter hears the target text and delivers the interpretation at the same time, without making any pauses, resulting in the overlap of the speech streams (Pöchhacker 2004).

This means that interpreting in the consecutive mode requires more time than simultaneous interpreting. In consecutive interpreting it is expected that 2/3 or 3/4 of the time of the source text will be used in the target language. Because of this, the meeting will be nearly

twice as long as if it was interpreted simultaneously (Bartłomiejczyk & Stachowiak-Szymczak 2021). The time-saving nature of simultaneous interpreting contributed to it becoming the dominant form of interpreting in conference settings, especially when interpreting is required into multiple languages. Nevertheless, consecutive interpreting does have its own advantages, such as lower costs, allowing more interaction between the participants of the meeting and the interpreter or the fact that it does not necessarily require any technical aid (Gillies 2019). Furthermore, there are numerous occasions on which consecutive interpreting comes in handy. Ceremonial speeches, guided tours, business discussions are often interpreted in the consecutive mode, and this form of interpreting is used also in community interpreting, for example in medical or legal settings (Gillies 2019). As a consequence, it is a common requirement for interpreters to be able to interpret consecutively as well as simultaneously, and both types are therefore part of interpreting training programmes (Bartłomiejczyk & Stachowiak-Szymczak 2021).

Gillies (2019) distinguishes two subtypes of consecutive interpreting. In short consecutive, the speaker stops after every sentence or every couple of sentences, enabling the interpreter to reproduce the text in the target language. In long consecutive the length of the speech can vary from a few minutes to 20 minutes. The subtype that is used depends mainly on the type of the event or meeting that is being interpreted. Short consecutive is used for example in business meetings or workshops, whereas conferences are characterised by the long consecutive mode. Regardless of the length of the speech, the speech sections are always complete and meaningful (Seleskovitch 1988).

Memory plays an important role in consecutive interpreting, especially in long consecutive, as the information of the source text will be reproduced by the interpreter relatively long after they hear the speech (Bartłomiejczyk & Stachowiak-Szymczak 2021). But as memory is limited, interpreters rely on notes to help them facilitate the mental storage of what had been heard (Kalina 1998). A pen and a notepad are essential tools of consecutive interpreters. Note-taking is an integral part of consecutive interpreting; however, notes do not substitute the interpreter's memory. Rather, they serve as a "material storage" (Kirchhoff 1979: 121) that helps to store information whose memorisation would require a significant mental effort (Ahrens & Orlando 2021). Memory and notes are connected: notes serve as a supporting tool for the retrieval of source text information that is stored in the interpreter's memory.

Notes come in different forms. Full words, abbreviations, symbols or a mixture of these are all commonly used in note-taking. Notes also vary in their quantity and in the language in which they are written (Chen 2020). When it comes to their language, one can distinguish between notes taken in the language from which the text is interpreted, in the language into which it is interpreted, in the mother tongue or the non-native language of the interpreter or in another language that is not necessarily part of the interpreting task. In the research conducted on note-taking in consecutive interpreting, at first the prescriptive stream was dominant, and the main question was how notes should be taken (Chen 2017). This line of research introduced and described note-taking principles and systems that student interpreters were advised to follow and that are still well-known today (Chen 2020). Such systems include that of Matyssek (1989) or Rozan (1956). However, learning note-taking in classroom settings poses challenges for both teachers and students, and instead of prescribing a way to take notes, scholars started to develop an interest in observing how consecutive interpreters actually took notes. Consequently, interpreting research in this area slowly shifted from the prescriptive to the descriptive stream. A popular research method of the descriptive line is collecting and analysing data gathered in simulated interpreting tasks, and a topic that has been often re-visited in the last decades is the question of the language for note-taking.

### **1.1 Daniel Gile's Effort Model**

Consecutive interpreting is a complex task and despite the fact that the interpreters do not listen to the source text and interpret it at the same time, this form of interpreting too involves numerous activities that are performed simultaneously. These tasks include decoding and encoding the source text, taking notes and later reading them, memory tasks and behaviour-related tasks, such as keeping eye contact with the participants of the meeting (Bartłomiejczyk & Stachowiak-Szymczak 2021). Carrying out these tasks concurrently requires significant cognitive effort. Daniel Gile (1995) proposed the Effort Model to explain the difficulties that arise during the interpreting task and to help find appropriate strategies that can be used to overcome them in order to achieve a better interpreting performance. The model was originally developed for simultaneous interpreting but, using the same principle, a similar model was developed for the consecutive mode as well (Gile 2009). In this model the process of consecutive interpreting is divided into two phases: the comprehension phase and the speech production phase.

In the first phase of Gile's model, the comprehension phase, the interpreter hears and decodes the source text, stores the information in their short term memory, takes notes of the pieces of information that they consider essential for a successful interpretation and divides their attention to manage and carry out these tasks at the same time (Abuín González 2012). So the four efforts of this phase are listening to and analysing the source text, taking notes, using short term memory operations, and coordination or effort management (Gile 1995). These tasks all require a certain amount of processing capacity. In order to be able to take notes that can be used effectively in the second phase of the model, interpreters need to be able to correctly understand and analyse the speech that they hear. Gillies (2019) states that interpreters listen to the source text in a different way than an ordinary listener would: beside hearing and understanding the words and the context of the text, the interpreter analyses its structure, identifies both the main as well as the secondary ideas and recognises the links between the two.

Short term memory in the comprehension phase is used in the time between the moment of hearing the original text and writing down the notes. The short term memory may come under immense pressure in this phase especially if notes are taken manually, as hand movements are slow. This can lead to the interpreter lagging behind the original text and having to rely more on their short term memory to remember what had been said before writing it down (Gile 2009). Because of this, listening to and analysing the text becomes more difficult, as short term memory operations take up extra processing capacity. Furthermore, in this phase the interpreter does not control the factors that influence the difficulty of the task, such as the density or the speed of the speech.

In the second phase of the Effort Model, the speech production phase, the interpreter falls back on their long term memory to retrieve the content and structure of the source text. Based on their memory and the notes they reproduce the speech in the target language (Abuín González 2012). This phase involves three efforts: remembering the original text, reading the notes, and delivering the interpretation (Gile 1995). In contrast to the first phase, the interpreter can control the pace of the speech production phase and is more freely able to allocate the required processing capacity to all three of the efforts. Gile (2009) argues that if the notes are good they can be of great help to perform the operations of the speech production phase and can reduce processing capacity requirements. The interconnectedness of memory and notes can be observed in the speech production phase. Memory helps to fill the notes, consisting of otherwise incomprehensible abbreviations and symbols, with meaning, and notes reactivate the memory (Ahrens & Orlando 2021).

The Effort Model also includes the processing capacity required by each task or effort. All elements require a certain amount of mental energy, which is only available to the interpreter in a limited amount, and therefore it must be adequately distributed between the efforts. Gile (1995) claims that the total processing capacity of interpreters needs to be larger than the processing capacity required to perform these tasks or efforts in order for interpreters to be able to work competently and avoid the occurrence of errors. Interpreting is an immensely demanding task and because of this, one of the most important aims of interpreter strategies is to reduce processing capacity requirements and save cognitive effort (Chen 2017).

## **1.2 Note-taking in consecutive interpreting**

Due to geopolitical changes, the number of international conferences increased in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as a result the demand for interpreters grew (Baigorri-Jalón, Fernández-Sánchez & Payàs 2021). After World War I English started to become an important language in diplomacy, especially when during the Treaty of Versailles the leaders of the United Kingdom and the United States refused to conduct diplomatic meetings in French, which was previously the lingua franca of international meetings and negotiations. Furthermore, the number of international conferences and organisations also increased in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to ensure international peace (Hankey 1946). After World War II international conferences were organised not only about political, but also on cultural and scientific topics (Baigorri-Jalón, Fernández-Sánchez & Payàs 2021). These developments led to a need for well-trained interpreters. Previously, interpreting was most commonly carried out by bilingual people without any special training (Déjean Le Féal 1998). Also in the Nuremberg trials only a handful of the interpreters had received a professional education (Baigorri-Jalón, Fernández-Sánchez & Payàs 2021).

It was realised that self-training or learning from experienced professionals was not enough for would-be interpreters and that a more formal education was necessary. The first training courses in conference interpreting started in Europe in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and they aimed to help trainee interpreters acquire discourse skills and foreign language speech production skills without the time pressure that is usually present in professional practice. With the establishment of formal interpreter education more emphasis started to be given to how notes should be taken when interpreting in the consecutive mode. Interpreters needed a well-functioning note-taking system that served as a memory-supporting tool (Pöchhacker 1999) in order to be able to completely and coherently reproduce the source text in another language.

Both short term and long term memory play an essential role in both phases of the interpreting task. Consecutively interpreting a speech, which can last up to several minutes, puts a strain on the interpreter's memory (Ito 2017). Note-taking is a complementary memory support tool that helps to reduce this cognitive pressure and therefore plays an important role in both interpreter training programmes as well as in professional practice.

As the main purpose of the notes in consecutive interpreting is to help retrieve the source text information (Abuín González 2012), the aim was to develop a note-taking system that interpreters could effectively use in order to recall the content of the source text. The first handbooks by Herbert (1952) about conference interpreting and by Rozan (1956) about note-taking techniques were published in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and to this day they play an important role in the training of consecutive interpreters. Both of these books are practical and are based on the experiences of interpreters (Gile & Barranco-Droege 2021). According to these handbooks and therefore to the experiences gained in professional practice, the most important information of the source text is its main points and the connections between two or more trains of thoughts. It is recommended that information that cannot easily be memorised should also be written down. Furthermore, van Hoof (1962) emphasises the importance of a note-taking system that helps interpreters remember the main thread of the source text in the speech production phase.

Interpreters make choices, both consciously and unconsciously, when it comes to different aspects of note-taking and there are differing opinions in the interpreting research community about these variables, which include the desirable quantity of notes, whether they should mainly be made up of language-related notes or symbols or in which language they should be taken. Among these, one of the most widely debated aspects is perhaps the note-taking language (Chen 2017). Before turning to the empirical research conducted in this area, the most influential views and some of the note-taking systems will be described.

### **1.2.1 Basic principles of note-taking**

In the literature there are some principles of note-taking that most authors agree on (Herbert 1952, Rozan 1956, Seleskovitch 1975, Matyssek 1989). These include the clear separation of speech segments in the notes, the importance of the logical links between trains of thoughts, and negation and temporal markers (Ahrens & Orlando 2021). Based on the existing literature on note-taking, Albl-Mikasa (2017) formulated three basic principles of note-taking. Firstly,

notes are individualised. Over time every interpreter develops their own note-taking system that is tailored to the individual needs and preferences of the interpreter. However, these individualised notes should still be able to fulfil their primary function, that is, to function as a memory-supporting tool and allow for the quick and complete transfer of the source text from the source to the target language. Secondly, notes should be economical. The interpreting task requires several cognitive efforts and by covering as much information of the source text as possible with as few notes as possible the interpreter can save processing capacity. It has been shown that the quantity of notes is not in proportion to the quantity of words that have been said, but rather, it is proportional to the amount of required memory support (Setton & Dawrant 2016). For instance, the interpreter may take fewer notes as a conference or meeting progresses and as they become more familiar with its topic and ideas. Thirdly, notes should be taken in such a way as to be understood at a glance, instead of the interpreter having to dedicate time and effort to reading and deciphering the notes and understanding what they refer to. This way the interpreter will be able to deliver a spontaneous and fluent interpretation, and also to keep eye contact with the audience. If the notes do not fulfil this principle, they cannot function as a support tool for the memory and can even impede the interpreting process (Albl-Mikasa 2007).

Albl-Mikasa's note-taking principles are partly based on the features that Matyssek (1989) attributed to efficient notes. He too claims that notes should be taken as simply as possible so that the meaning they carry can easily be deciphered and understood in the speech production phase. He advises interpreters to use as few notes as possible and to focus on the most important pieces of information of the source text and only write down these. This helps with the management of efforts: if interpreters take brief notes of the most important ideas of the source text there is a smaller chance of them becoming mentally overwhelmed while trying to take extensive notes of everything that is said. Here is where memory comes into play. Notes store the information and trigger the interpreter's memory. Moreover, the notes should be clear so that based on them the interpreter can understand the structure of the text and the connections between its different parts. In addition, notes must not be confusing. When seeing a note the interpreter should immediately know what word or idea it refers to. This means that the interpreter should avoid taking notes that could refer to two or more different words, ideas or pieces of information. This way the interpreter does not need to take extra effort to understand the notes in the speech production phase. As a consequence, more processing capacity remains available for the other efforts, and stress and loss of time can also be avoided.

### 1.2.2 Language-(in)dependent note-taking systems

Another main principle of note-taking is that, just like in every form of interpreting, in consecutive interpreting the interpreter's task is not to just translate the words of the source text, but to understand, process and reproduce its conceptual content (Albl-Mikasa 2008). Notes are neither the "word-for-word record of what the speaker said" (Setton & Dawrant 2016: 139) nor a summary of the main points of the speech. Rather, they show the interpreter's analysis of the source text and trigger the interpreter's memory by presenting ideas of the source text in a condensed and structured way. However, notes alone do not guarantee a successful rendition of the source text in the target language. For the interpretation to succeed it is vital to comprehend and analyse the message of the source text (Ahrens & Orlando 2021). Based on her own observations and on the experience of professional interpreters, Seleskovitch (1968) claimed that interpreters remember the content of the source text because they understood it, not because they remember the individual words. In the interpreting process they hear the speech, immediately discard its wording and keep only its mental representation, its ideas and concepts, in mind. Based on this theory, Seleskovitch (1975) proposed the *théorie du sens*, which is a language-independent, sense-based approach to note-taking. In this method the interpreter deverbalizes the source text, disregards its wording while processing its message and then reproduces it in the target language (Kalina & Barranco-Droege 2021). In the traditional literature on note-taking great emphasis is placed on the sense of the source text; if the content of the text is well understood the interpretation will be much more successful than if the text was just rendered word-by-word into the target language. Therefore, the source text needs to be carefully analysed, its sense needs to be grasped by the interpreter and instead of taking notes of the words of the source text, information relating to its content should be written down (Seleskovitch 1975).

Seleskovitch (1975) distinguishes two methods of interpreting: transcoding and interpreting proper. Transcoding means substituting a word in one language with a word in another language without any change in the meaning. In contrast, interpreting proper means the careful analysis and reproduction of the sense of the text. In interpreting proper sticking to the linguistic form of the source text is not necessary. Seleskovitch suggests that in the case of words that can be translated properly, such as numbers, names or technical terms, transcoding should be used, and this information can be written down using language. However, all other information should be noted in a non-language-specific way in which the ideas and the sense

of the source text are separated from language. In Seleskovitch's note-taking model the notes function as a prompt for interpreters and help them remember the sense of the speech. Interestingly, the Paris School of interpreting led by Seleskovitch rejected systematic note-taking training as they claimed that too much training makes the interpreter focus on their note-taking technique and diverts their attention from the source text in the comprehension phase (Kalina & Barranco-Droege 2021). Nevertheless, Seleskovitch's note-taking model greatly contributed to the raised awareness of the cognitive processes that take place during interpreting.

Despite the consensus among the members of the interpreting research community about the importance of understanding the source text's sense, conflicting views about different aspects of the note-taking process emerge when scholars try to implement this theory in practice (Albl-Mikasa 2008). These aspects range from the quantity of the desirable words, symbols or abbreviations to the language of the notes. Seleskovitch's system is not universally accepted; for instance, Matyssek (1989) rejects this note-taking model, but he agrees that note-taking should be independent from language. He claims that interpreters should distance themselves from the language and view words as simple carriers of meaning that support the understanding of the text. The interpreter is not a machine whose sole task is to find the equivalent of each word of the source text in the target language, but rather to reproduce the text's meaning. The notes should reflect this transfer of the sense and meaning.

However, in contrast to Seleskovitch (1975), he argues in favour of a notation system in which symbols play the main role. By using such a system he hopes to overcome the constraints that words impose. Ilg (1980) also argues against Seleskovitch's (1975) language-independent note-taking system. He states that for instance in international meetings a highly formalised language is used, which needs to be mirrored in the interpretation. This cannot be achieved by completely disregarding the wording of the original speech. Another point on which Matyssek did not agree with Seleskovitch was the importance of formal training in note-taking (Kalina & Barranco-Droege 2021). While Seleskovitch deemed such courses unnecessary, Matyssek (1989) developed a catalogue of symbols that could be learnt by trainee interpreters.

Gillies (2019) also argues in favour of using symbols as they are easier and quicker to write down and to read than words, they can save space on the paper and can make the structure of the notes clearer and thus the interpreting task easier. This economic aspect of note-taking is also mentioned by Matyssek (1989). He claims that by taking notes of only the most important

pieces of information of the source text the interpreter spends less mental energy on writing and thus more energy remains for the other tasks of the interpreting process presented in Gile's (1995) Effort Model. However, Herbert (1952) points out the dangers of an excessive use of symbols in that he argues that during the speech production phase the interpreter may not remember the meaning of each symbol, potentially leading to errors in the interpretation. He strongly advises against using improvised symbols that the interpreter has not previously used, as they are even more difficult to decipher in the speech production phase.

Kohn and Albl-Mikasa (2002) agree with Matyssek (1989) and state that compactness is one of the basic principles of note-taking. Notes have a supporting function and therefore they should contain only the most important keywords of the source text. In so doing, the processing effort can be minimised in the speech production phase, as it is more difficult to process and understand a large quantity of notes and too many notes can lead to the interpreter getting lost in them. In order to avoid this problem, the interpreter should use as little an amount of notes as possible to cover as big part of the speech as possible. Matyssek (1989) shares this view and suggests that interpreters should only take notes of the most important ideas of the text. He connects this argument to Gile's (1995) Effort Model: by writing down only the most important pieces of information the interpreter does not have to spend an excessive amount of mental energy on note-taking in the comprehension phase and therefore has more energy available for the other tasks and will not be overloaded. Taking too many notes can be distracting and can confuse the interpreter as it is harder to understand and organise them into a coherent text in the speech production phase.

Matyssek is not the only one who does not agree with Seleskovitch's (1975) language-independent note-taking system. For example, Kirchhoff (1979) claims that in order to use a system that is independent from every natural language, a level of abstraction would be required that would be similar to that of a universal language. According to Kirchhoff (1979) this is not necessary; rather, a system consisting of the two languages present in the interpreting task should be found. Gillies (2005) is also against a language-independent notation system. Writing down the sense of the source text is a difficult task in itself. Finding a completely language-independent note-taking system would only make the task harder.

### 1.2.3 Source vs target language note-taking

Beside the question of whether notes should be language-dependent or not and to what extent the use of symbols is desirable, another topic that has been widely discussed in interpreting research is whether the information should be written down in the language it is interpreted from or the language it is interpreted into. The former will hereafter be referred to as source language, the latter as target language (UNIVERSITAS Austria 2009). There is no clear answer to the question of whether the source or the target language should be used for note-taking. The advantages and disadvantages of both options will be described in this section.

As the question of the note-taking language has an influence on the mental energy required by the interpreter, Gile (2009) addresses this question in relation to his Effort Model. Even though he acknowledges the advantages of target language notes, he argues that coming up with translations in the target language while listening to the source text and taking notes requires extra processing capacity. This diminishes the amount of mental energy that can be used for listening and note-taking. The listening phase is a critical part of the interpreting task because at this point the interpreter needs to understand the meaning of the text in order to be able to deliver a correct interpretation. Spending extra energy on finding the target language equivalents of words or phrases can lead to the interpreter becoming mentally overwhelmed. In the speech production phase interpreters have full control of the pace of the task. They can work as fast or slow as they like and can slow down if they need extra time to find an equivalent in the target language. Because of this, translating the source text in the speech production phase has a smaller risk of jeopardizing the performance. Furthermore, taking notes in the target language while simultaneously hearing the source language, which in many cases has a completely different grammatical structure, can be risky because “the interpreter may get stuck at a certain point because of syntactic and grammatical differences between the languages” (Gile 1995: 166). Getting out of this “stuck” state would require extra mental energy that would most likely lead to the interpreter not being so attentive to the source text for some time and therefore possibly missing important information.

Ilg (1988) also favours the use of the source language. Based on practical experience he argues that interpreters do not always automatically understand the meaning of the source text. Because of this he also criticises Seleskovitch’s (1975) language-independent note-taking system, for which the immediate understanding of the source text would be a must. In relation with Gile’s model, if the interpreter takes notes in the source text, more mental energy can be

used to analyse and better understand the text. Student interpreters have been advised to use the source language for note-taking because of its less cognitively demanding nature (Abuín González 2012). This way more processing capacity remains for the other three efforts of the interpreting task in the comprehension phase.

On the other hand, Rozan (1956), Willett (1974), and Seleskovitch (1975) argue for the use of the target language for note-taking. Their argumentation is connected to Seleskovitch's (1975) language-independent note-taking system: if interpreters take notes in the target language they distance themselves from the grammar and language-specific words of the source text and reduce its content to its ideas and sense. This way they understand the source text better, are able to memorise it better and this makes the interpretation easier. Moreover, if interpreters take notes in the target language, it can facilitate the production of the interpretation, as they already have the key points of the speech in the language into which they are interpreting (Abuín González 2012). By not having to translate the content in the speech production phase, more processing capacity is available for the other efforts.

Arumí Ribas (2012) suggests that the reason why interpreters may take notes in the target language is that sometimes they start encoding the text into the target language even before the source text ends. This can particularly be true when the target language is their mother tongue. Furthermore, Seleskovitch (1968) argues that interpreters take notes not of what they heard, but of what they want to say when producing the interpretation. Notes are a tool that triggers the interpreters' memory to remember what they understood when they heard the source text. Willett (1974) agrees with this idea and argues that interpreters do not take notes of everything they hear but only of the elements of the source text that are definitely going to be included in the interpretation. This way they will feel more self-confident in the speech production phase as they already have the information they want to deliver in the target language on the paper in front of them.

Nevertheless, taking notes in the target language requires the conversion of the source language into the target language in the comprehension phase while listening to the speech, analysing its content, taking notes, and coordinating between these different operations (Abuín González 2012). All these efforts can easily lead to the interpreter becoming mentally overwhelmed by the cognitively demanding tasks that need to be carried out simultaneously. As no definite answer can be given to whether the source or the target language is more suitable for note-taking, Ilg (1988) advises student interpreters to decide whether they will take notes in

the source or in the target language while they are still in their studies and then use that language consistently in their future career.

#### **1.2.4 A vs B language note-taking**

It is not only the question of whether notes should be taken in the source or the target language on which scholars cannot come to an agreement. The issue gets more complex when the decision needs to be made not only between the source and the target language but also between the A or B language of the interpreter. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) divides the working languages of interpreters into three categories: A, B and C language. The A language is the interpreter's mother tongue, in which they can understand and express even the most complex thoughts and ideas and can interpret into this language from all other languages of their language combination. Interpreters must have a near-native proficiency of their B language and be able to interpret from and into this language. A and B are the interpreter's active languages, whereas the C language is referred to as a passive language. It is an acquired language that interpreters understand perfectly but do not speak as fluently as their B language. Therefore, they only interpret from the C language into their A or B language, never into it. It is possible to have more than one C language; interpreters can have as many C languages as they feel comfortable with working from. This language classification applies to both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting (AIIC 2015).

Despite propagating a heavily symbol-based note-taking system in which language-based notes do not play a significant role, Matyssek (1989) argues that if interpreters do take notes using language and not symbols, the language of the notes should be the mother tongue of the interpreter. He approaches the question of the note-taking language from a different point of view from the ones discussed so far in that he claims that it does not matter whether the interpreter's mother tongue is the language of the source or the target text. According to him, by using their native language for note-taking the interpreter will have their notes in front of them in the speech production phase in a language that they know better than any other language. Consequently, they will feel more confident than if they took notes in a foreign language. Many interpreters use abbreviations in their notes and there is a chance that if notes are taken in the B language interpreters will not understand these abbreviations, especially if they are under a lot of pressure. Matyssek (1989) argues that A language based note-taking reduces this risk because the chance of the interpreter not understanding an abbreviation in their mother-tongue is significantly lower.

Gile (1995) agrees with the advantages of taking notes in the interpreter's native language. The risks of B language note-taking are similar to the ones of target language note-taking. No matter how well the interpreter speaks their B language, taking notes in their mother-tongue is easier and requires less mental energy. This way the risk of becoming overwhelmed is lower and the interpreter is under less pressure, which will help to avoid making mistakes. Studies have shown that the principle of minimal effort plays an important role in the choice of language for note-taking (Dam 2021); however, using the A language may not always allow for less effort. In certain cases and with certain language pairs the B language may prove to be more economical, shorter or less complex.

Source or target, and A or B language may not be the only languages that can be used for note-taking in consecutive interpreting. It is possible that the expressiveness or the grammatical features, such as word length, of a third language that is not part of the interpreting task are more adequate for the task (Herbert 1968). Dam (2021) agrees with this proposal and highlights English as a special language in this regard. Not only are English words shorter than words in other Indo-European languages, such as Hungarian, but it is also widely used in international communication (Szabó 2006). Therefore, using a third language for note-taking may be beneficial with certain language pairs (Błaszczuk & Hanusiak 2010). Empirical studies have shown that this is often the case in professional practice and using a third language, especially English, is not uncommon for professional interpreters.

Furthermore, Andres (2002) conducted a study in which the notes of 14 student and 14 professional interpreters with the language combination German-French were compared. Andres found that even though both groups showed a preference for the source language, experienced professionals took more notes in the target language than students did. This indicates that beside the characteristics of different languages, another aspect that has an impact on the language choice for note-taking is the level of expertise and experience of interpreters.

Abuín González (2012) conducted similar research and reached a similar conclusion. She analysed and compared the notes of 30 interpreters, whom she divided into three groups: beginner students, advanced students, and experienced professional interpreters. All participants had the language combination Spanish-English. This study found that even though the source language served as the primary language of the notes, experienced professionals were more likely to take notes in the target language than student interpreters. A difference could be observed not only between these two groups, but within student interpreters as well.

Advanced students with more experience took more notes in the target language than their beginner peers.

Andres' (2002) and Abuín González's (2012) results are explained by Gile's (1995) Effort Model. It is likely that student interpreters took notes in the source language because their ability to manage the efforts in the comprehension phase was not fully developed. Using the source language as the language of the notes removes the extra effort of simultaneously translating the original text into the target language while listening to and analysing the speech, taking notes, using short term memory operations and coordinating these tasks. The speech production phase involves fewer efforts and is also free of the time pressure present in the comprehension phase, so it is plausible that student interpreters opted to postpone the translation of the source text to this cognitively less demanding phase. Abuín González (2012) argues that the effort management of professional, experienced interpreters is more developed and they are able to carry out the interpreting task in a much more automated way. Because of this, they are more comfortable with taking notes in the target language without risking missing any important information. These findings therefore suggest that the level of expertise also plays a role in the choice of language for note-taking.

Despite the differing opinions and the different systems that have been proposed, there is agreement among scholars that note-taking in consecutive interpreting is highly individualised (Albl-Mikasa 2017). There are no fixed rules as to how notes should be taken and according to Thiéry (1981), all notation systems are adequate as long as they function as a memory supporting tool and help the interpreter retrieve the content of the source text. Consecutive interpreters are encouraged to find and use a method that works best for them. This is also true when it comes to making a decision about whether the source or the target language should be used for note-taking.

Even if one note-taking method would seem theoretically better, interpreters would not necessarily use it in professional practice. Seleskovitch (1975) claims that in professional practice interpreters tend to use a mixed system that includes notes taken in both the source and the target language. As no definite answer can be given to the question of which language works best, this mixed-language note-taking combines the advantages of both methods (Thiéry 1981). Gile (2009) agrees with this view and concludes that the best method would be to take notes in the target language when the cognitive pressure is not too high and extra mental energy can be spent on translating in the comprehension phase, and to use the source language when the task

gets more difficult and there is a risk of saturation. Examples from professional practice also show that notes are almost never taken exclusively in the source or the target language, but rather a mixture of these languages is used (Ahrens & Orlando 2021).

Ilg (1958) suggests that interpreters should decide on the note-taking language based on expressiveness and word length in the given languages. Albl-Mikasa (2017) agrees with this proposal in that she states that economy is a key principle in note-taking. In order to keep the processing effort as low as possible, notes should be brief and concise. Another aspect that Albl-Mikasa (2017) considers crucial in note-taking is that notes can be grasped instantly. This means that interpreters should need no more than a glance to read and understand their notes instead of making an extra effort to decipher them. Combining these two principles it is clear that a language with shorter words is more suitable for note-taking. Of course, longer words can be abbreviated, but in this case they cannot be read and understood immediately, but the interpreter needs to take time and mental effort to remember what the abbreviation stands for.

Word length does indeed play an important role when it comes to choosing a note-taking language. This theory has been confirmed by several empirical studies, which will now be described. Nevertheless, despite the large scholarly interest, research so far has failed to give an unequivocal answer to the question of which language is the most suitable for note-taking. The next chapter will make it clear how divided not just the opinions, but also the professional practices are when it comes to choosing a language for note-taking.

## **2. Empirical studies on note-taking language**

Notes in consecutive interpreting can be analysed in several different ways and they can be of great help to learn more about the performance of conference interpreters (Szabó 2006). Areas in research on note-taking include, for instance, the quantity of notes, the condensation techniques used (such as substitutions or omissions) and the language of the notes. This last field especially has aroused the interest of the interpreting research community, and the question of the most suitable language for note-taking has created an extensive debate. Therefore, it is only natural that numerous studies have been conducted to find out which language interpreters use in professional practice. Scholars have not yet reached an agreement on this issue and have listed advantages and disadvantages for all of the possibilities. As a consequence, it is to be expected that a similar undecidedness can be observed in interpreting practices as well, and that interpreters are divided based on the language or languages they use for note-taking. This chapter will present five studies by three different authors who conducted research in this area. The background and methods of the studies will be described briefly, and the results will be discussed. Special attention will be given to the work of Csilla Szabó (2006), as the experiment conducted for this thesis is based on her work.

### **2.1 Helle Dam**

In 2004 Helle Dam published two studies about two experiments which aimed to find out which factors influence conference interpreters' choice of language for note-taking when interpreting in the consecutive mode. Traditionally, the primary focus in this question was given to the source and the target language and Dam does not reject the importance of this parameter. Referring to Gile's (1995) Effort Model she claims that taking notes in the source language is faster and less mentally straining, as the interpreter can write down the words that they hear and is not required to immediately translate the content into the target language. However, the results of her studies show that although the position of the language in the interpreting task did play a role, the deciding factor was the language's status in the interpreters' language combination.

### **2.1.1 Pilot study**

Dam's first experiment was a pilot study, which had two aims. On the one hand it tried to find out whether consecutive interpreters used the source or the target language for note-taking. On the other hand it aimed to determine the form of the notes, that is, whether the interpreters used full words, abbreviations or symbols. Despite taking symbols into consideration for the second research question, they were ignored for the first one, as symbols cannot be assigned to any language and are therefore of no importance when it comes to determining the language of note-taking.

The participants of this pilot study were professional interpreters with the language combination Danish (A language)-Spanish (B or C language) who were asked to consecutively interpret the same Spanish text into Danish. Dam organised the notes into four categories: notes made in the source language, in the target language, in a third language and in a non-identifiable language. After this she analysed what percent of the notes were taken in these four categories. The results indicated a preference for note-taking in the target language, Danish, which was also the mother tongue of the participants. Based on the results Dam claimed that the participants tended to take notes in the source language mainly when the content of the source text got more difficult. This theory is perfectly in line with Gile's (2009) suggestion that a good note-taking method is to use the source language when the interpreting task becomes difficult, for example because of the speed or the density of the source text, and the cognitive pressure is high. This way the content of the source text does not need to be immediately translated into the target language, which saves the interpreter mental energy. Nevertheless, Dam acknowledged that this pilot study was conducted with too few language variables and thus no decisive conclusions could be drawn.

### **2.1.2 2004 study**

In order to obtain more decisive results, Dam repeated the experiment with more variables. This time the four participants were student interpreters, three Danish and one Spanish native speaker who interpreted the source texts bi-directionally, from Danish into Spanish and also the other way around. After completing the task their notes were divided into the same four categories used in the pilot study. The analysis of the notes showed that when interpreting consecutively from Spanish into Danish the three Danish native speakers all took notes in the target language. This result confirms the hypothesis of the dominance of the target language from the pilot study.

However, the last interpreter took notes in Spanish, which was the source language and also the interpreter's mother tongue. When interpreting consecutively in the opposite direction, from Danish into Spanish, the Danish native speakers took notes in the source language and the Spanish native speaker in the target language. The data was organised into two tables based on both the A-B and the source-target language parameter. There were only small differences to be found between the two tables. The participants took some, but not many notes in their B language when the B language functioned as the source language, and nearly none when it was the target language. Overall, the data showed a strong preference for using the A language when taking notes, regardless of whether it is the source or the target language.

Dam's explanation for the preference for the A language in note-taking is that interpreters opt for using their A language in order to minimise cognitive efforts, as taking notes in one's native language is faster and easier. This reasoning is based on the Effort Model and supports the position of Matyssek (1989) and Gile (1995), who favour an A language-based note-taking method. If interpreters put less effort into note-taking, they have more mental capacity for other elements involved in the interpreting task, such as listening carefully and analysing the source text. However, Dam acknowledges the advantages of source language-based note-taking too, which can also require less effort since the interpreters only have to write down what they hear. This suggests that deciding on the language of note-taking does not only come down to a choice between mother tongue and foreign language, but the status of the language in the interpreting task also plays a role. Therefore, the main preferences in note-taking are the A language and the source language. When these coincide, it is clear that this language is the most suitable for note-taking. However, when they do not coincide, interpreters seem to prefer using their A language. Nevertheless, Dam emphasises that this is only the case when all other aspects, such as the grammatical features of the two languages, are the same. The study by Csilla Szabó (2006), which will be discussed later, shows that Dam's findings can be contradicted when one language is grammatically more suitable for note-taking than the other; for instance, when words in the A language are longer than those of the B language, and if it therefore takes longer to write them down.

### **2.1.3 2021 study**

In her most recent study Dam (2021) repeated her previous experiment and this work also functioned as a reaction to Szabó's (2006) study. This research was conducted in a similar way to Dam's previous experiments. One notable new element was the use of a questionnaire, which

was inspired by the one used by Szabó (2006). Therefore, a qualitative element was added to the quantitative analysis of the notes and thus a mixed-methods design was introduced. Another change is that Dam used a larger database, involving four language pairs, all of which were Indo-European languages. Studies that changed this variable and included a non-Indo-European language are those of Chen (2017, 2020), which will be discussed later.

The ten participants were divided into two groups. One group consisted of student interpreters who were just about to graduate from their post-graduate interpreting course, therefore possessing advanced interpreting skills close to professional level. The participants in this group were all Danish native speakers and had English, Spanish, French or German as their B or C language. The second group consisted of experienced professional interpreters who had different A languages (Danish, Spanish, English or German), had already obtained a Master's degree in conference interpreting in either Denmark, Spain or Finland, and had several years of professional experience in interpreting. Their language combinations varied, but Danish was present in all of their combinations, whether as A, B or C language.

The methodology used in this study was the same as the one in Dam's previous research. Danish was part of the consecutive interpreting task in each case, sometimes as the source, sometimes as the target language. The texts mirrored the difficulty of the European Union institutions' interpreting accreditation tests. After the task was completed the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire in which they were asked one question about the language they normally use for note-taking and one about the factors that have an influence on their choice of language.

The notes were divided into the categories used in Dam's previous study based on their language. Notes written in a third language that was neither source nor target and neither A nor B language formed an additional category. Interestingly, the notes in this category were written primarily in English. The participants seemed to use English to take notes of connectors that are only two or three letters long in English; for instance, 'but' and 'so' often occurred in the notes.

The result of the analysis of the notes clearly showed that experienced professionals preferred to take notes in their A language, regardless of other factors, such as the language's position in the interpreting task or the direction of the task. Especially interesting is the fact that when the same task was performed by two interpreters with different language combinations, one interpreter took notes in the source language and the other in the target language, but both

of them showed a preference for their A language. Therefore, it could be concluded that for experienced professional interpreters the main determinant of the choice of the note-taking language was the language's status in their language combination and that the participants preferred to use their native language as the language for note-taking.

A similar pattern can be observed in the case of three of the student interpreters whose preferred note-taking language was also their A language, regardless of the other factors. However, the notes of the fourth student interpreter were dominated by the target language and those of the fifth by the source language. Therefore, in these two cases the determining factor was the status of the language in the interpreting task. This indicates that the status of the language in the task also plays a role, albeit not such an important one as the language's status in the interpreter's language combination. It is worth mentioning that when we disregard the notes of the fourth and fifth participant we find that 86% of the notes of the student interpreters were written in the A language. This number is consistent with the ratio in the case of the experienced professionals. As a consequence, it can be seen that even though the two groups differed in their level of expertise in interpreting, they used similar note-taking techniques and strategies. Overall, it clearly emerges from the results that there is a strong preference for the A language as the language for note-taking. Notes in the B language occur when it coincides with the source language, which can be explained by Gile's (2009) proposal: taking notes in the source language requires less mental energy and it seems that the participants preferred to opt for this easier way than to immediately translate the source text into their native language and take notes in their A language.

The analysis of the notes was followed by the analysis of the questionnaires. In the first question the participants were asked about their choice of language for note-taking. Different answers emerged in the two groups. In their answers experienced professionals mainly concentrated on the source and target language, whereas the note-taking language's status in their language combination did not seem to be a determining factor to them. They focused on the fact that they used a mixed language for their notes and did not indicate one main language preference. Nevertheless, from the analysis of their notes it is clear that their A language dominates their notes. Therefore, behavioural data and self-reports do not fully support each other, and the qualitative part of the study revealed the interesting fact that experienced professionals cannot fully account for their choice of note-taking language.

Interestingly, most of the experienced professionals mentioned English as a special language and stated that when taking notes in a third language that is not part of the interpreting task, they use English. Their reasoning for this was the economy of expression and conciseness of the English language as well as its important role and frequent use in international contexts. This statement supports the data gathered from the analysis of the notes. Both quantitatively and qualitatively it was found that when it comes to using a third language, English seems to be a popular choice. The participants' reasoning is completely in line with the data collected from the interviews in Szabó's (2006) study, in which the interpreters gave similar answers to why they opted to take notes in English.

Student interpreters gave more attention to the categories of A and B language in their answers in the questionnaire. They gave shorter answers than the other group but instead of explaining their use of a mixed-language system they gave concise and clear answers as to what their preferred note-taking language was. Based on their answers it could be seen that they were aware of their language choice, as their answers were in line with the findings from the analysis of their notes. Not only did the first three participants indicate their preference for their A language, but the fourth and fifth participant showed an awareness of their tendency to use the target and source language, regardless of the language's status in their language combination. Therefore, student interpreters showed a higher level of awareness of their language preference than experienced professionals, a finding which Dam explains by the fact that student interpreters had recently been trained and took classes that made them familiar with the research in this field. They had also previously consciously experimented with using the different language categories for note-taking. Just like experienced professionals, they also mentioned English as a good third language option due to its conciseness and accessibility.

The second question of the questionnaire focused on the factors that influence the interpreters' choice of note-taking language. In contrast to the first question, the answers to this question were consistent across the two groups. Both student interpreters and experienced professionals claimed that time and effort played the most important role in their decision. The answers indicate that the resources of the interpreters are limited, and these limits need to be taken into account when deciding on the language of note-taking. This means that interpreters often have to decide between what is desirable and what is necessary. Both groups stated that ideally they would use the target language, as this would make the reproduction of the text more fluent; however, they acknowledged that in real-life interpreting situations time and effort are the determining factors and they often lead to the use of the less-desired but less-demanding

source language. Furthermore, participants from both groups emphasised the importance of the A language in the comprehension and analysis of the source text, which again sheds light on the importance of the interpreters' native language regardless of its position in the interpreting task.

To summarise, in all three of her experiments Dam aimed to find out how relevant the A-B distinction was for the choice of the note-taking language. In all of her studies she found that this classification played a significant role and that it was even more important than the categories of source and target language. Her results showed that there is a very strong preference for the A language as the language of the notes. This is followed by the target language, which is another popular option, but not nearly as much as the A language. These findings were reinforced by the participants' self-reports, which added a qualitative aspect to the otherwise quantitative study of the notes. Consequently, the results of these studies support Matyssek's (1989) argument in favour of the use of the A language as the most effective language for note-taking in consecutive interpreting. Dam's studies also found evidence for the English language's status as a special language due to its concise nature, and this is consistent with Szabó's (2006) findings.

## **2.2 Csilla Szabó**

Csilla Szabó's (2006) study also focused on the language choice for note-taking in consecutive interpreting. It aimed to find evidence for or against Dam's (2004b) research that concluded that the main factor determining the language of note-taking was the language's status in the interpreter's language combination and not its status in the interpreting task, although this aspect also played a role.

Eight interpreters participated in Szabó's experiment and all of them had Hungarian as their native language and English as their B language. The participants were student interpreters; however, they already had previous interpreting experience in professional practice, and could therefore be considered semi-professionals. The methodology was similar to that used by Dam for her 2004 study. The participants consecutively interpreted two Hungarian source texts into English and two English source texts into Hungarian. Sixteen sets of notes were produced and analysed: half of them came from four students' final-year interpreting exam at the university they attended and half of them were made by the other four participants in an ordinary classroom setting. Therefore, the settings differed in that in the first one the

participants were in an exam situation and under significant stress, whereas the second setting was less stressful, but in this case the speaker could not personally attend the experiment, thus the participants only heard the recording of the source text. Despite the differences, Szabó claims that the settings were similar, and so the results of the two groups can be compared.

In the quantitative part of the study, the notes were first categorised based on Dam's (2004b) procedure. First, the note units were determined; second, the language-based units were divided into source, target, A, and B language categories. The category of the third language was also used. Apart from the quantitative analysis of the notes, Szabó asked the participants to fill out a qualitative questionnaire about their own perceptions in order to triangulate the results. The questionnaire consisted of three questions. The participants had to reflect on which language they used for note-taking in this specific task, which language they usually used for note-taking, and what they thought the determining factor was in their choice of note-taking language.

Firstly, Szabó analysed the notes based on the source and target language categories. She found that when interpreting from English to Hungarian four participants took the vast majority of their notes in the source language, three used a mixture of the source and the target language and only one subject dominantly used the target language. However, when interpreting in the other direction, from Hungarian to English, different results were reached. With the exception of one participant, all interpreters took the majority of their notes in the target language; that is, in their B language. Secondly, Szabó analysed the issue from a different angle and reorganised the data based on whether the notes were taken in the interpreters' A or B language. This analysis shows that seven out of the eight participants preferred to take notes in their B language, regardless of it being the source or the target language in the task. When comparing the results of the two analyses it can be seen that half of the participants preferred taking notes in English regardless of the direction of the interpreting task, and that the language choice of the other four subjects was governed by the source and target language parameter.

The questionnaire answers of the participants were partly similar to those in Dam's (2021) study. Firstly, the participants in both Szabó's and Dam's (2021) studies claimed that they tended to take notes in their A language especially when the source text got more difficult or when the equivalent of a word did not automatically come to mind. This empirically supports Gile's (2009) proposal about the difficulty of the source text having an effect on the language of the notes. In this case, it was desirable to take notes in the A language when the source text

got too difficult in order to avoid the exhaustion of the available processing capacity and mental overload.

Furthermore, like in Dam's (2021) study, from the questionnaires it emerges that not all (in this case only half) of the participants showed an awareness of their note-taking preference. The claims of the other subjects' about their preferred language were not supported by their notes. For instance, one participant claimed that she only took notes in English, but her notes made in the experiment did not confirm this statement, as she also took notes in Hungarian. However, it is interesting that she highlighted that she often used English as a note-taking language, even when it was not part of the interpreting task. Overall, six out of the eight participants pointed out in the questionnaire that they found English to be a useful language for note-taking because of its compactness and the shortness of the words, especially compared to Hungarian. Therefore, even though interpreters have a better command of their native language they do not necessarily use this language for note-taking.

While the participants in Dam's (2004b) study showed a strong preference for their A language, the subjects in Szabó's (2006) experiment preferred to take notes in their B language. Szabó suggests that the different results can be due to the different setup of the two studies in regard to the languages involved. Dam's research featured three participants with Danish and one with Spanish as the A language, whereas in Szabó's experiment all participants were Hungarian native speakers. Another possible explanation for these differing results could be the nature of the language involved in the tasks. This proposal is further supported by Chen's (2017, 2020) findings. Szabó briefly compared Hungarian and English to find out what makes one of these languages more suitable for note-taking. She concluded that the English language can be abbreviated more easily, consists of shorter linguistic units, and many English acronyms and contractions are well known because of the large importance of the language in international contexts. She admitted that documenting the claim that Hungarian words are longer than English ones is difficult; however, there is evidence that translations from Hungarian to English are shorter than the other way round (Szabó 2006).

Dam (2021) also briefly looks at the special position of the English language and states that much of the research on the choice of language for note-taking in consecutive interpreting focuses on English and that in most research experiments it functions as one of the languages in the interpreting task. In order to broaden the scope of the studies, English was not part of the languages involved in Dam's experiment. As a conclusion to her description of the differences

between Hungarian and English, Szabó (2006) also suggests that it would be useful to conduct more experiments with different language pairs in order to get a clearer picture and further verify the idea that the grammatical structure of a language has an impact on its likeliness to be used as the language for note-taking in consecutive interpreting. This is the reason why the present study is conducted with the language pair Hungarian-German, two languages in which words are more similar in length.

Another explanation that Szabó found for the increased use of English for note-taking is that Hungarian is an exotic language that is rarely spoken by people who are not native speakers. There are not many interpreters with Hungarian as a B or C language and therefore interpreters who have Hungarian as their A language are often required to work into their B language more than would be desirable. As a consequence, Hungarian native speaker interpreters are required to have an excellent command of their B language, not only because it is a prerequisite to obtain a qualification in conference interpretation but also because they frequently have to interpret into this language. This profound knowledge of the English language combined with the language's convenient grammatical characteristics make it a good choice for note-taking in consecutive interpreting.

Finally, a third explanation for the widespread use of English as the language for note-taking is that the participants of the study were trained in English. Many handbooks and course books for conference interpreting are written in English; in comparison, the number of Hungarian interpreting course books is negligible. Moreover, the participants studied at university in English, so they had an excellent command of this language.

In conclusion, Dam's (2004b) proposal that the language choice for note-taking in consecutive interpreting is mainly governed by the language's status in the interpreter's language combination was supported by Szabó's (2006) findings. Nevertheless, Szabó also stresses the importance of the source-target language parameter, and this was also verified in her experiment by participants for whom the deciding factor was the language's status in the interpreting task. In Dam's study the participants showed a strong preference for their A language. In contrast, the subjects in Szabó's experiment took the majority of their notes in their B language. This result was explained by the special status and features of English, the participants' B language. Chen's (2017, 2020) studies further support the proposal of English as a special language for note-taking.

## 2.3 Sijia Chen

### 2.3.1 2017 study

Chen's (2017) study approaches the question of the choice of note-taking language from a cognitive perspective. Her work is not limited to the language of the notes but also concerns itself with the form of the notes and the connection between note-taking and cognitive load. Chen used pen recording and a special software to collect and analyse her data. This is one of the aspects in which this research differs from the previously described ones, in which the participants used a traditional notebook and pen to take notes. Nevertheless, such pen data and the other research questions of Chen's work about the form of the notes and the participants' cognitive load are not relevant to the topic of this thesis, therefore only her findings related to the language of note-taking will be described.

The participants of this study were experienced, certified interpreters. Chen described the motivation for this decision by claiming that trainee interpreters have perhaps not yet reached the desirable maturity in interpreting. By involving professional interpreters in the study, Chen claimed that the results would be more generalisable. The language combination of the subjects was Mandarin Chinese, which was also their native language, and English, which served as their B language. All participants had an interpreting qualification (a degree or an intensive training course) and had been working as professional interpreters for years. They mainly worked in Australia, where English is spoken as the national language.

This study included two tasks: the consecutive interpretation of a Chinese source text into English and that of an English source text into Chinese. Chen emphasises the importance of carrying out the task in both directions in order to be able to analyse the data from both the source-target and the A-B language parameter. First the participants had the chance to go through a practice round in which they familiarised themselves with the equipment. Then the actual tasks took place and finally the participants were asked to make retrospections about their notes and note, among others, whether they used symbols or language-based notes, what certain symbols meant, or whether they used English or Chinese. The reason for this extra step in the study was that the stressful nature of the consecutive interpretation task has an impact on the interpreters handwriting, which sometimes becomes very hard to decipher. Thus, comments made by the participants helped to analyse the notes.

Similarly to Dam's and Szabó's studies, the notes were first categorised based on whether they were numbers, language-based notes or symbols. The language-based notes were further subcategorised according to their language (Chinese or English). The analysis of the language-based notes showed that the participants preferred to take notes in English, their B language. This was consistent throughout the whole experiment, regardless of whether the B language served as the source or the target language. What is more, the preference for the B language was even higher when it was also the source text. In this study no special attention was given to the categories of source and target language, so it could not be determined to what extent this parameter played a role in the choice of the note-taking language. However, these findings confirm Szabó's (2006) results, which showed that despite the fact that taking notes in the interpreter's A language may seem easier at first, in practice there seems to be a preference for the use of the B language. Chen agrees with Szabó in that the nature of the languages involved in the task may be responsible for this.

What makes Chen's study especially interesting is that in contrast to Dam's and Szabó's work, a non-Indo-European language was involved in the task. Chinese is fundamentally different from English in that it does not use the Latin alphabet, but rather symbols. Chen argues that for many interpreters taking notes in English using Latin letters is easier and faster than writing down the Chinese characters. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the interpreters participating in this experiment worked mainly in Australia, an English-speaking country. Therefore, they were used to working in an environment in which their B language was primarily spoken, and they most likely had an excellent command of this language, which could also have an impact on them opting for using English as the language of their notes. The importance of being surrounded by the B language had already been addressed by Szabó (2006), whose participants were trained in English.

Chen also wanted to find out whether one language means a higher cognitive demand than the other. When the cognitive demand is high, the interpreter is more likely to lag behind and work with a bigger time lag, meaning that the time between the hearing of the source text and the note-taking is longer than when the cognitive demand is lower. By analysing this time, Chen found that it was longer when the participants took notes in Chinese than when they used English. When one assumes that the longer time span means a higher cognitive load, it can be concluded that taking notes in English is cognitively less demanding than doing it in Chinese. The study shows that in contrast to other demands (physical and temporal), which do not influence the choice of language for note-taking, cognitive demand does have an effect on this

decision. This supports the statements of the interpreters involved in Szabó's (2006) experiment as it confirms that there is a measurable difference in the cognitive effort required between languages when it comes to taking notes in consecutive interpreting.

As the main conclusion of her study, Chen states that when the two languages involved in the interpreting task show a similar economy of writing and morphological complexity, interpreters are likely to use their A language for note-taking. However, when this similarity is not present and the A language is significantly more complex or less economical than the B language, the latter is used for note-taking, especially when the interpreter's command of this language is as good as was the case in Szabó's (2006) and Chen's studies.

### **2.3.2 2020 study**

Chen's aim with this study was to address some of the methodological challenges that she found in previous studies. The experiment was organised in a way very similar to that of her previous work. The participants were experienced interpreters with professional accreditation. 26 subjects took part in the experiment, a much larger sample than the group in Dam's, Szabó's or Chen's previous studies. Their language combination was Chinese (native language)-English (B language). In this experiment more advanced technology was used: the participants took notes with a digital pen on a tablet instead of using the more traditional equipment consisting of a notepad and a pen.

First the participants were allowed to practice the use of and familiarise themselves with the equipment. After this, they performed the two tasks of the experiment, they consecutively interpreted an English source text into Chinese and then a Chinese text into English. The task was not uniform, some participants started with the English speech, others with the Chinese. After the completion of the task, the subjects were asked to retrospectively and verbally comment on their notes. As the last step of the experiment the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire that contained questions about variables, such as how familiar they were with the topic of the texts or what kind of previous note-taking training they had received.

The data collected was categorised in a similar way to that in the previous studies, first according to whether note units were numbers, symbols or language-based notes, and then the last group was further subcategorised into full words and abbreviations and English- and Chinese-based notes. The category of Chinese language notes was adjusted, taking into consideration that the language is written using symbol-like characters. The analysis of the

notes showed that when interpreting from English into Chinese the participants took significantly more notes in English than in Chinese. In the opposite direction the ratio was a bit smaller, but still more notes were produced in English. This means that regardless of the direction of the task, the participants preferred to take notes in their B language. Moreover, it was found that the direction of the task had an influence on the choice of language for note-taking, in that when English served as the source language it was used more than when it was the target language. From the questionnaires that the subjects filled out after completing the task it emerged that the reason why they opted to take notes in English was that in this language notes could be written down with phonetic spelling and even misspellings did not mean a problem.

This research confirms Dam's findings: the source-target language parameter does play a role in the choice of language for note-taking, but the determining factor is the language's status in the interpreter's language combination. However, in this study as well the participants showed a stronger preference for taking notes in their B language, which is in line with Szabó's (2006) and Chen's (2017) earlier findings. It was also confirmed that the grammatical features of languages play a role when it comes to deciding on a language for note-taking and, similarly to the language pair Hungarian-English, in the case of Chinese-English English proved to be more suitable for note-taking.

The five studies described identified a consistent pattern for the choice of language for note-taking. It was shown that the determining factor is the language's status in the interpreter's language combination. The source-target language parameter also matters, and in some cases it was more dominant than the A-B language parameter, but these instances are the minority. Dam (2004b, 2021) found that both student as well as professional interpreters showed a preference for taking notes in their native language. This finding was contradicted by Szabó's (2006) study, whose subjects took most of their notes in their B language. Chen (2017, 2020) reached similar results. In both Szabó's and Chen's research, English served as the B language of the participants and both authors reached the conclusion that the B language preference is likely connected to the characteristics of the English language.

Not only is English widely used in international communication, but it also served as the language in which Szabó's subjects were trained, and the national language of the country in which Chen's subjects primarily worked. Therefore, one explanation for this phenomenon can be the exposure of the participants to the language. Another possible explanation is that

English is more concise than either Hungarian or Mandarin Chinese, the other languages involved in the experiments. From the questionnaires it emerged clearly that participants thought that taking notes in English was easier and faster than doing it in their A language because English words are shorter.

### **3. Methodology**

The experimental part of the present thesis is based on Szabó's (2006) methodology. Eight student interpreters from the Centre for Translation Studies of the University of Vienna took part in the experiment. Their language combination was Hungarian-German. The participants interpreted a German source text into Hungarian, and a Hungarian source text into German in the consecutive mode. The participants were asked to record their interpretation. The recordings were collected but were not analysed or taken into consideration for the analysis of the notes. After the interpreting task the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire, which consisted of the same three questions as in Szabó's study. The questions focused on the participants' preferred language for note-taking in these specific tasks as well as on the language they generally used for note-taking. It also aimed to find out which factors influenced their choice of language for note-taking. After the interpreting task was completed, the participants' notes, questionnaires and recordings were collected. The notes were categorised and analysed based on the language they were written in. The quantitative analysis of the notes and the qualitative study of the questionnaires resulted in a mixed-method approach.

This chapter will present the methodology of the experiment. First, the participants are presented. Second, the Hungarian and the German source text are compared in order to show that the two texts are similar in difficulty and are therefore suitable to be used in the experiment. This is important in order to ensure that neither of the two texts was significantly more difficult than the other, which could have had an impact on the participants' choice of language for note-taking. The source texts are analysed based on Kalina's (2011) source text profile model. Third, the setting of the experiment and the analysis of the data are described.

#### **3.1 Participants**

The eight participants of the experiment were student interpreters at the Centre for Translation Studies of the University of Vienna. They were at different stages of their studies: two participants were beginners who had only just started to take classes in consecutive interpreting, one participant was semi-advanced, having already completed a consecutive interpreting class,

and five participants were advanced students who had taken more classes in consecutive interpreting. Two of the advanced students had already passed the exam that students at the Centre for Translation Studies are required to take at the end of their studies in order to obtain their degree. Three participants specialised in dialogue interpreting, the rest of them in conference interpreting. However, the specialisation should not have a significant influence on the participants' consecutive interpreting skills, as the majority of classes are the same for both conference and dialogue interpreting students. All participants had completed or at the time of the experiment were enrolled in the seminars Note-taking technique and Consecutive Interpreting I, II or both. In these courses the students are made familiar with the different note-taking methods and possibilities, including the language for note-taking. The participants confirmed that in these classes they were advised about which language they should use for note-taking, but it was not mandatory to use the language suggested by their lecturers, and they had the opportunity and the freedom to try out different languages and use the one they felt worked best for them.

With one exception all participants are Hungarian native speakers and have German as their B language. One participant is half-Hungarian and half-Austrian, she grew up in Vienna and has Hungarian as her B language in her studies but speaks both languages as a native speaker. As in her case her A language cannot be clearly determined, special attention was given to her notes. Some of the participants had a C language as well, which was English, Spanish or Croatian. All participants have either been living in Vienna for years or finished secondary school and their undergraduate studies in Vienna. Most of the classes that students take at the Centre for Translation Studies are held in German, so the participants are well immersed in the language, are used to using it on a daily basis in both professional and everyday contexts and have an excellent command of it.

### **3.2 Source texts**

Several factors can have an effect on the interpreters' attention during the interpreting task and on their understanding of the source text. Pöchhacker (2004) calls these factors input variables. Input variables can come from the environment of the interpreting task or from the interpreters themselves; for instance, their mental or physical state can influence their work. The source text's topic and characteristics can also make the interpreting task easier or more difficult (Gile 1990). There are numerous input variables in both the structure and grammatical features of the source text and in the way it is delivered. Therefore, when choosing the Hungarian and German

source text for the experiment it was of great importance to find two texts that were similar in all of these aspects. If one of the two texts had been significantly more difficult, it would have had an effect on the participants, and might have prompted them to use another language for note-taking than they would have chosen had the text been easier. Therefore, before conducting the experiment the two chosen texts were analysed and compared based on several criteria.

Hale and Campbell (2002) emphasise that the difficulty of a source text is a central issue in translation examinations and that the testing of this difficulty has generated an intense debate among the members of the translation research community. One aspect that needs to be taken into consideration when assessing source text difficulty is that interpreters do not process the text segment by segment as translators do, but they process it as a whole (Yuan 2022). Because of this, the presentation and structure of the source texts needs to be analysed, and also certain factors that, when present in a source text, have been considered aggravating for the interpreting tasks. There are no clear guidelines that could help to determine the difficulty of a source text. Moreover, difficulty is subjective; therefore, assessing source text difficulty for interpreting is not an easy task (Hale & Campbell 2002). Nevertheless, the following section will present the analysis of the most important factors that influence source text difficulty based on Kalina's (2011) model to show that the two source texts used for the experiment are similar and can therefore yield conclusive results.

### **3.2.1 Kalina's source text presentation profile**

Kalina (2011) introduced a model for creating the profile of source texts and their interpretations. In this model she created a table including various linguistic and prosodic aspects based on which the profile of the source text and the interpretation can be developed. Her aim was to assess both the source text and its interpretation based on these aspects in order to determine the quality of the interpretation by comparing the two. Measuring the quality of an interpretation is a difficult task, and is not the focus of the present thesis. However, Kalina's source text profile offers a good framework for assessing the characteristics of the Hungarian and German source texts to show that they are similar in difficulty.

The table in Kalina's work includes three main categories: target group orientation (Adressatenorientierung), linguistic features (sprachliche Merkmale) and features of the presentation (Merkmale der Präsentation). These categories, along with their subcategories, are listed on the left-hand column of the table. On the right-hand side there are columns for the

assessment and rating of the respective subcategories. In one of these columns a rating ranging from -4 to +4 can be entered based on how prominent that subcategory is in the source text. The smaller the number, the more difficult the subcategory is deemed in the source text. For example, interpreting proper names is considered to be an aggravating factor in interpreting; consequently, if the source text contains many proper names, a -4 rating would be given to this subcategory. In the last row of the table the ratings are counted, and based on this final rating it can be determined how interpreting-friendly the source text is. The maximum rating that can be achieved is 108; in this case the linguistic features and the presentation of the source text have no negative impact on its interpretability. In contrast, a lower or negative rating means that interpreters are likely to face difficulties when interpreting the source text in question.

The target group orientation category includes aspects such as the text's understandability for a source language speaking audience. This category focuses on the text's understandability for an audience that speaks and understand the source language and therefore requires no interpretation. The categories of the linguistic features and the features of presentation are more self-explanatory, and they will be presented in more detail later.

Most of the subcategories of Kalina's (2011) model serve as a good basis for comparing the Hungarian and German texts used in this experiment; nevertheless, not all of them will be taken into consideration in the comparison, as not all of them are relevant. Among the features of presentation, the following subcategories will receive attention: assessment of the native and foreign language of the speaker, prosody, hesitation, pauses, and speech rate. Among the linguistic features, the following subcategories will be discussed: register and style, number of technical terms, number of complex numbers and proper names, and number of realia.

In Kalina's work the source text's reproduction in the target language is also assessed based on the same three main categories and their subcategories, and the ratings are entered into a similar table. The final ratings of the two tables are then compared in order to assess the quality of the interpretation. However, in this experiment only the notes of the participants are important, not their interpreting performance. For this reason, it is enough for the present study to analyse the source text based on the source text profile table. If the Hungarian and German source texts show similarities in these categories it can be assumed that they are similar in difficulty and therefore the difficulty and features of the source texts should not have an impact on the interpreters' choice of language for note-taking.

### **3.2.2 Topic of the source texts**

The chosen texts are speeches that were used for the Hungarian-German consecutive interpreting exam in the Conference Interpreting specialisation at the Centre for Translation Studies in 2020. The topic of both source texts is traditional Chinese medicine. According to Kopczynski's (1982) classification of texts that can be presented at conferences, both speeches are welcome speeches, monologues that have been prepared in writing and then read out. The Hungarian text is the welcome message of the imaginary Professor Li Jun-de, the Secretary General of the Chinese Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The German text is the beginning of a presentation by the imaginary Mr. Otsuka, an expert of traditional Chinese medicine, who gives an overview about this topic at a conference. Both speeches take place at an imaginary conference that aims to spread information about traditional Chinese medicine to an audience that may have some knowledge about this field, but are not experts. The aim of the conference is to exchange information, and this makes the interpreters' job easier (Heinisch-Obermoser 2010). The members of the audience may come from different cultural backgrounds but, based on the texts' content, they are similar in their prior knowledge about the conference's topic. In the German text two people speak. First the organiser of the event greets the audience and introduces Mr. Otsuka, who then delivers his speech. Both roles are played by the same speaker and there is no change in accent or speed between the monologues of the two figures. In the Hungarian text there is only one speaker.

### **3.2.3 Prosody**

Prosody refers to the way in which something is said, and it includes linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics, such as accent, intonation, pauses, and speech rate (Bußmann 1983). These elements help to structure the content of a speech and give further information. They also have an important impact on the understanding of the source text. Kalina (2011) emphasises that linguistic features are not enough for the complete comparison of source text and interpretation, but rather extratextual factors, such as the way in which the speech is delivered, need to be taken into consideration as well. The reason for this is that these factors have an effect on the interpreting process.

### **3.2.3.1 Accent and intonation**

The source texts were read out by a lecturer who teaches interpreting classes with the language combination Hungarian-German at the Centre for Translation Studies. The texts were recorded, and the recordings were used in the experiment. The quality of the recordings is good, there are no disturbing noises, and the quality and volume are consistent throughout both speeches. The articulation is clear. Because the participants only heard the audio, nonverbal communication did not play a role in the task, and it had no effect on the participants' note-taking process. The lecturer speaks both Hungarian and German on a level similar to that of native speakers. Furthermore, all participants have taken several classes with this lecturer and have interpreted speeches delivered by her; therefore, they are familiar with her pronunciation.

### **3.2.3.2 Pauses**

Bußmann (1983) defines pauses as short interruptions in the articulation of a speech that are present between linguistic units that follow each other. They can appear at the end of a sentence, but also within a sentence. Their primary function is to allow the speaker to breathe, but they can also be a sign that the speaker is thinking about what to say next and how to say it (Goldman-Eisler 1967). In the second case pauses are sometimes filled with voiced hesitation. Pauses make the interpreting task easier because they spare the interpreter from having to listen and speak at the same time. During pauses interpreters can focus on the interpretation or on note-taking without having to listen to the speech, so the cognitive load is reduced (Goldman-Eisler 1968). In consecutive interpreting pauses also allow the interpreter to slow down or even take a break in the note-taking process, or to catch up in case they were lagging behind. In speeches that are read out there are usually fewer pauses, fillers and hesitations than in speeches that are delivered impromptu. This is also true for the two recordings used in this experiment, as the speeches do not contain any filled pauses. Brief pauses are made between sentences and between sections, which makes the change of topic between these more explicit and help with the understanding of the text.

### **3.2.3.3 Pace**

A fast-paced source text can be problematic for interpreters in both the consecutive and the simultaneous mode, especially if they did not receive any prior information about the speech (Setton & Dawrant 2016). In consecutive interpreting interpreters take notes manually, which

is also harder if the speech is fast-paced (Heinisch-Obermoser 2010). In this case they are required to take notes faster or take fewer notes than would be desirable. Speech rate can be especially problematic when texts are read out, as in this case the speaker tends to deliver the speech faster than as if they were speaking spontaneously. Nevertheless, the Hungarian and German source speeches used for this experiment are delivered in a slow, comfortable pace. As the recordings were originally made for a consecutive interpreting examination it is likely that conscious and special attention was paid to maintaining a consistent, relatively slow speed throughout the speeches.

In order to compare the pace of the two texts the speech rate was determined based on the number of words per minute, including pauses. The German speech is 6 minutes 34 seconds long and contains 641 words, which means that it was delivered at a speed of 96,9 words per minute. The Hungarian speech is 6 minutes 44 seconds long and is made up of 489 words, so it was delivered with a speed of 72,7 words per minute.

### **3.2.4 Text structure**

Interpreting is a type of communication and, because of this, understanding the speaker's communicative purpose is vital for the success of the interpreting task. In order to understand the communicative purpose, interpreters need to obtain a clear picture of the structure of the text (Yuan 2022). Hatim and Mason (1997) argue that, when it comes to note-taking, the storage of information depends more on the structure of the text than on the single sentences, as these are too detailed to be successfully stored in the interpreter's memory.

Both source texts used for this experiment follow the structure of a traditional welcome speech. First the audience is greeted, and the speaker expresses their delight and honour to be able to participate in the event. Then, in the German text, the floor is given to Mr. Otsuka. In the Hungarian speech there is only one speaker, so the introduction of another speaker is missing. The rest of the texts is similar from a structural point of view. The speakers briefly describe traditional Chinese medicine and some of its more specific application methods. Both texts are extracts from longer speeches; therefore, they do not have an ending typical for welcome speeches, the texts end at the end of a complete sense unit. In the Consecutive Interpreting I and II seminars the students who participated in the experiment had interpreted welcome speeches that were similar in their structure to the speeches used for this experiment. As a consequence, they were familiar with the structural characteristics of such texts.

### **3.2.5 Degree of professionalism**

Both speeches are presented to an audience that has some, but not a deep knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine. The speeches are rather general, an eloquent, but easily understandable language is used. The words that could be considered semi-professional in the German text are acupuncture, blood-letting, moxibustion, yin and yang, QI. The meaning of QI is explained. In the Hungarian text the following words can be considered semi-professional: acupuncture, acupressure, feng shui, QI, Taoism, yin and yang. The meaning of feng shui is explained. Acupuncture, QI, and yin and yang are the more technical words that are present in both speeches.

### **3.2.6 Numbers**

Numbers mean a great challenge for interpreters because numbers are made up of more than one word (Mazza 2001); for instance, 153 contains the words hundred, fifty and three. Therefore, interpreters have to process and memorise more words. Mazza (2001) argues that numbers are responsible for most of the mistakes made during interpreting and that source texts that contain numbers are usually interpreted with more mistakes than source texts without numbers. The German source text contains three numbers: 2, 2 and 9. However, since these are single-digit numbers, their processing should not require more processing capacity than the processing of any other word. The Hungarian text contains only the number 2.

### **5.2.7 Names, titles and forms of address**

Proper names refer to individuals, institutions, countries, firms, names of events, etc. They can appear in full or short form or as abbreviations (Hohnhold 1990). Especially names that are made up of more words or previously not known names can mean a great difficulty for interpreters (Gile 2009). In such cases the processing of proper names requires significant mental energy. For instance, if a name consisting of multiple words (such as the name of an organisation) needs to be interpreted, it may need to be syntactically altered either in the comprehension phase, if note-taking takes place in the target language, or in the speech production phase, if notes are taken in the source language. The omission or incorrect reproduction of names is considered a serious mistake in interpreting; therefore, taking notes of names is essential.

In the German source text two proper names appear: Mr. Otsuka and Traditional Chinese Medicine. The latter also appears abbreviated as TCM. In the Hungarian source text there are four proper names: Magyar Orvostársaságok és Egyesületek Szövetsége (Association of Hungarian Medical Societies and Associations), Hagyományos Kínai Orvosszövetség (Traditional Chinese Medical Association), Magyar Akupunktúrás Orvosi Társaság (Hungarian Acupuncture Medical Society), Hagyományos Kínai Orvoslás (Traditional Chinese Medicine). The last name also appears as the abbreviation TCM.

Another difficulty regarding names arises when the source text contains forms of address that are not used in the target language. In the case of the language pair German-Hungarian, an example of this is the use of names such as Frau Müller, because in Hungarian the form of address “Frau” does not have an equivalent, and referring to someone only by their family name is uncommon and can be considered rude. Interestingly, the same is not true for addressing men. Therefore, when in the German text the first speaker greets Mr. Otsuka the address “Herr Otsuka” can be easily translated to Hungarian. The other forms of address that appear in the source texts are general (“ladies and gentlemen”, “dear colleagues”) and are often used in both target languages, so their translation should not mean any difficulty.

### **3.2.8 Cultural content**

Interpreters do not only mediate between two languages, but between two cultures as well. Realia are parts of a culture that do not have an equivalent in another (Markstein 2005). Such words and expressions can pose a challenge in interpreting because the interpreter has to make an effort to make them understandable to the audience. However, since the aim of these imaginary conferences is not cultural exchange but to provide information about a certain topic, no realia or culture-specific content is present in the source texts.

### **3.3 Procedure**

The experiment was conducted with 4 participants on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at the Centre for Translation Studies. The experiment took place in one of the seminar rooms with interpreting booths. This way all the participants could hear the source text at the same time and then interpret it without disturbing each other. Since not all participants were available on that day, the experiment needed to be conducted separately with them, but the setting in which they completed the task was similar enough to allow for comparison.

First the procedure of the experiment was explained, and the topic of the source texts was revealed. The participants did not get any further information about the content of the texts. They first consecutively interpreted the German source text into Hungarian, then the task was repeated in the other direction. After completing the task the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire in Hungarian that included three questions:

1. Which language did you use for note-taking in these specific tasks?
2. Which language do you normally use for note-taking?
3. Why do you use that language for note-taking? What motivates your decision for using that language? Which factors influence your decision?

The first question aimed to determine the participants' awareness of their note-taking habits. The second question was meant to find out the general note-taking behaviour of the participants based on their own assessment, and the third question tried to find out the reasons behind their choice of language for note-taking. After the questionnaires had been filled out they were collected along with the notes and the audio recordings.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

The data analysis began with the quantitative analysis of the notes. Following Dam's (2004b) and Szabó's (2006) methodology, first the note units were determined based on Dam's (2021: 231) definition: "a [note] unit was determined to consist of any scribble with space around it". Second, all units, including words, abbreviations and symbols, were counted. Third, the language-based units were extracted and divided into five categories: source language, target language, third language, non-identifiable notes, non-readable notes. The subcategory of non-identifiable notes stands for notes that cannot clearly be assigned to one specific language. For instance, if a participant wrote down the abbreviation "konf" it cannot be determined whether it stands for the German "Konferenz" or the Hungarian "konferencia".

There was one minor change in the grouping of the data compared to Szabó's (2006) procedure. Szabó combined the categories of third language and non-identifiable notes into one common category as notes made in a third language made up less than 1% of all notes. The reason for employing these categories in the present study separately is that on the one hand some participants' notes written in a third language made up more than 4%, which was deemed significant enough to organise them into a separate category, and on the other hand having more subcategories allows for a more detailed analysis of the notes.

## 4. Results

The purpose of this research was to observe which language student interpreters with the language combination Hungarian-German used for note-taking in consecutive interpreting and whether English language notes appeared in their notes. The aim was to shed light on the participants' note-taking habits in a task in which the two languages involved were more similar in word length than the languages in previous experiments. The hypothesis of the study is that the determining factor for the language choice for note-taking is the language's position in the participants' language combination and not its position in the interpreting task. Based on the conditions of the experiment it is expected that the participants will show a preference for their A language for note-taking and that English words will appear in their notes, but to a lesser extent than in previous studies, in which English was part of the interpreting task.

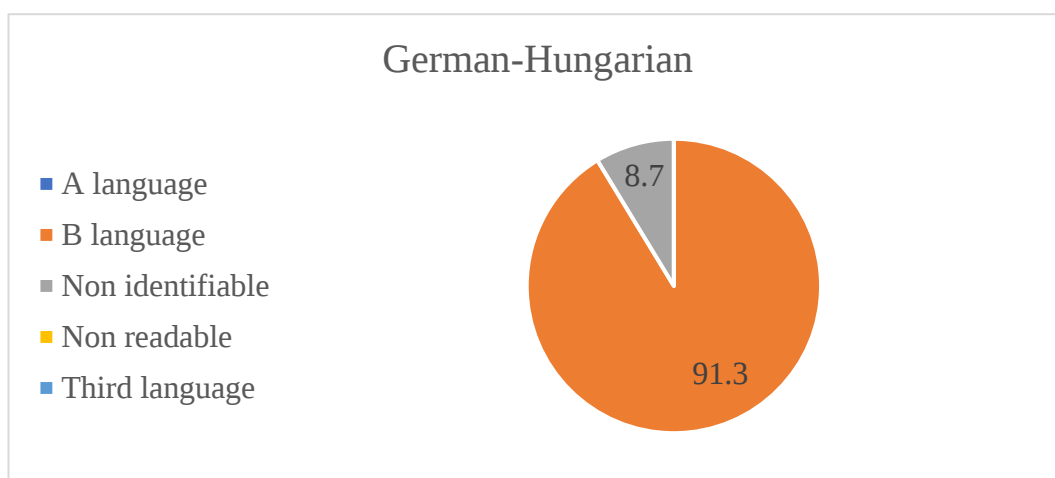
This chapter presents the results of the experiment. First the note-taking language preferences and questionnaire answers of each participant will be evaluated individually. To make the results more visible, figures are used to illustrate the results. The numbers on the figures are to be understood as the percentage of the notes in the different categories. All participants had completed or were enrolled in the seminar Note-taking technique at the time of the experiment. The purpose of that course is to teach students “rule-based memorisation strategies and note-taking principles for the development of a note-taking system consisting of language-independent and language-dependent notes” (Universität Wien 2022). As the participants did not take this course with the same teacher and at the same time, it will briefly be described what they learnt in this class and what impact it had on their note-taking language preference. Following this individual assessment, all the data will be organised into four tables based on the A-B language and source-target language parameter in both directions in order to allow for the representation and description of the results and to be able to draw conclusions.

## 4.1 Individual analysis of notes

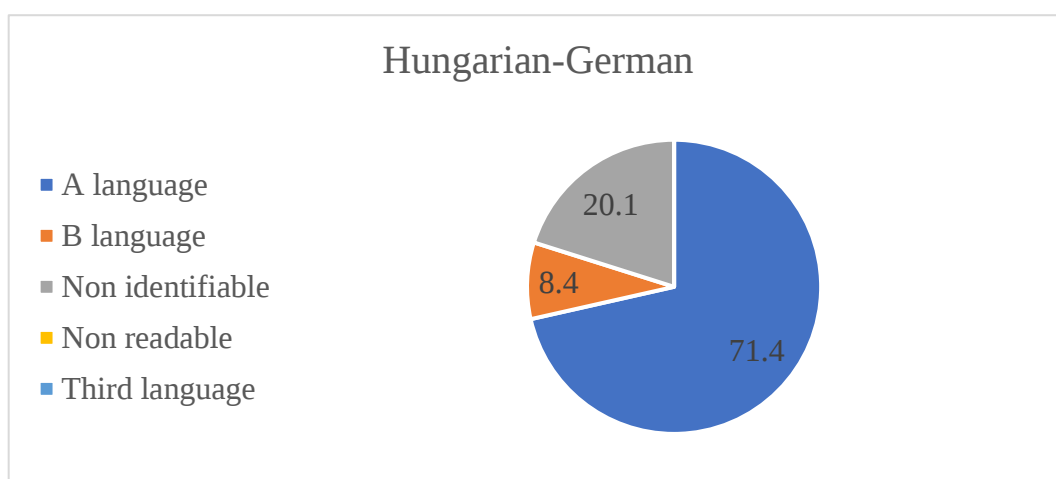
### 4.1.1 Participant 1

The notes made by the Participant 1 partly contradict the hypothesis of this study. As Figure 2 shows, in the second task she showed a preference for her A language; however, on Figure 1 it can be seen that in the first task the B language dominated her notes. In the first task she did not take any notes in her A language, whereas in the second task notes in the B language appeared. She did not take any notes in a third language. Participant 1 has Spanish as her C language, so English is not part of her language combination and despite speaking this language to some degree she claims that she is not proficient in it. This may be the reason why no English words appeared in her notes. Her notes also did not contain any Spanish words, so in this task she showed no tendency to use a language that is not part of the interpreting task.

In her questionnaire answers she showed an awareness of her note-taking habits in that she correctly stated which languages she used in these specific tasks. To the second question she answered that she usually used the source language for note-taking, she did not indicate that the A-B language parameter would play a role in her choice of language for note-taking. She elaborated her answer by writing that the language of the source text determined which language she used for note-taking or in some cases if a word came to mind in the target language she used that language. She did not mention using a third language, which is supported by the notes she took in these tasks. She stated that in the Note-taking technique seminar she did not have to follow her lecturer's suggestions regarding the note-taking language and was completely free to choose.



**Figure 1: Distribution of notes - Participant 1**

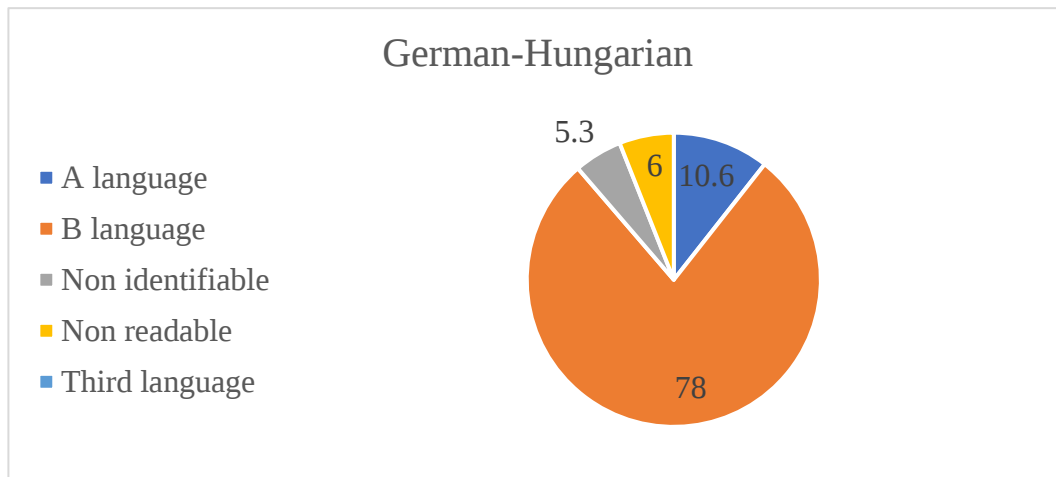


**Figure 2: Distribution of notes - Participant 1**

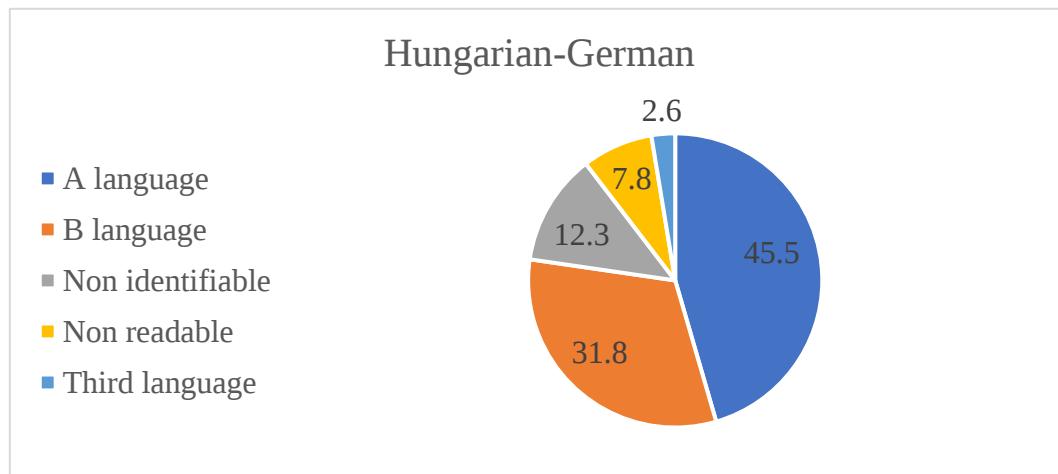
### 4.1.2 Participant 2

The notes of the Participant 2 are more proportionate, but they also only partly confirm the hypothesis of A language dominance. Figure 3 shows that her notes are dominated by the B language in the first task, and, as can be seen on Figure 4, in the second task she showed only a slight preference for the A language. She did not use a third language in the first task; however, four English words appeared in her notes in the second task.

In her answers she stated that she used both Hungarian and German for note-taking but in both tasks she took more notes in the source language. She showed an awareness of incorporating English words into her notes and she wrote that she tends to do this when a word is shorter in English than in either of the languages involved in the interpreting task. She also mentioned using Croatian, which is her C language, or Italian sometimes, but this was not confirmed in these tasks. She stated that for her the determining factor for the language for note-taking was usability: she mixes symbols, abbreviations and languages in a way she feels most comfortable with and in the way she feels she will be able to use her notes most successfully when producing the interpretation. As to what she learnt in the Note-taking technique seminar, she answered that her tutor had recommended using English for note-taking because of its concise nature, but she was free to choose the language she felt most comfortable with.



**Figure 3: Distribution of notes - Participant 2**



**Figure 4: Distribution of notes - Participant 2**

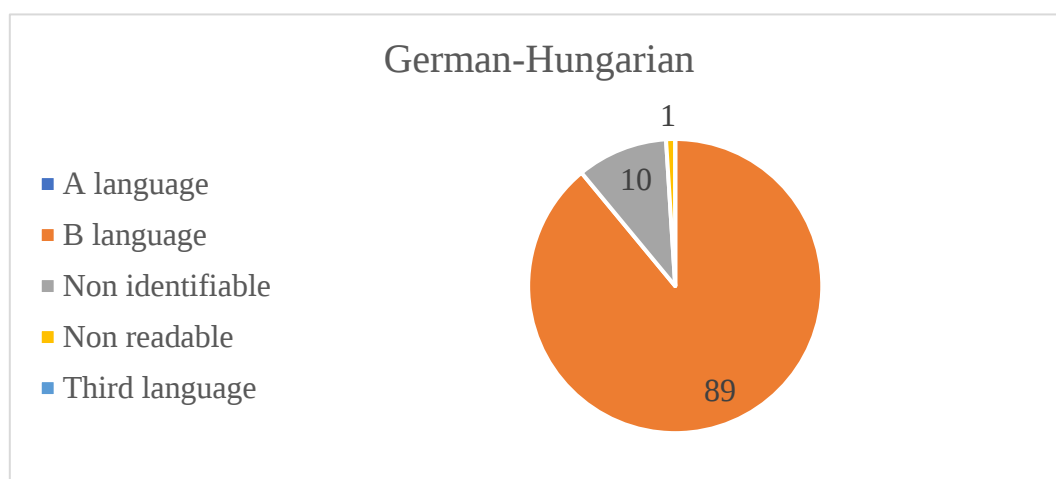
### 4.1.3. Participant 3

The notes of the Participant 3 show a similar tendency. Figure 6 shows that in the second task the A language dominates her notes, but in the first task it is completely absent, as can be seen on Figure 5. In contrast to Participants 1 and 2, who took some notes in their B language in the second task, this is missing in the notes of Participant 3, who only used one of the two languages in both tasks. English is part of her language combination; it is her C language, but she did not use English or another third language in either of the tasks.

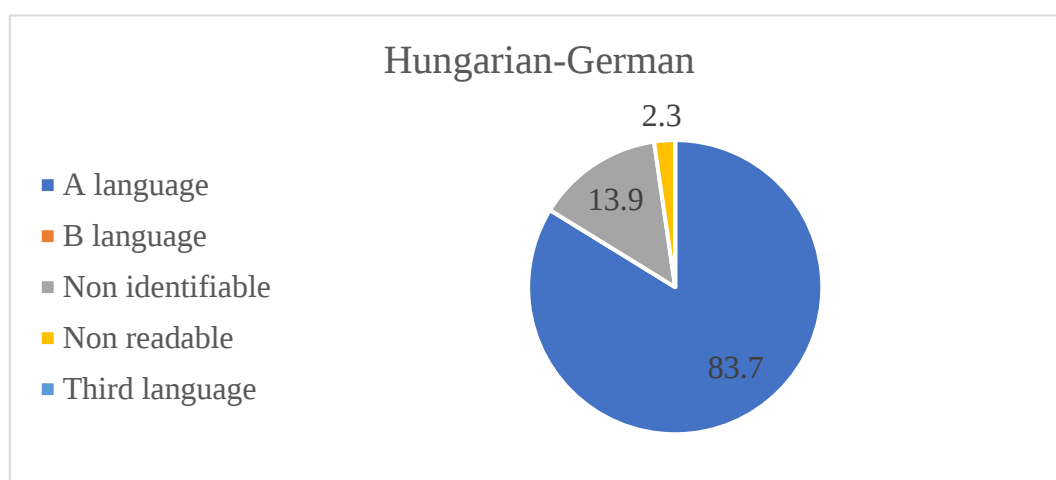
She is aware of her note-taking habits, as in her questionnaire answers she claimed that in both tasks she only used the source language, which was always the language of her notes, not just in this experiment. Her motivation for this is that she finds it the easiest to write down

the content of the speech in the language she hears it in. Seeing the notes in the source language when interpreting helps her to remember the context and any extra information.

In contrast to Participants 1 and 2, who are more advanced in consecutive interpreting, Participant 3 is only at the beginning of her studies and has less experience in interpreting in the consecutive mode and in note-taking. Based on Abuín González's (2012) findings, this could be the reason why she feels more comfortable sticking to the source language instead of using a mixed-language note-taking system. It is possible that her note-taking skills are not yet developed enough to allow her to translate the source text right upon hearing it and take notes in the target language. This can also be observed in the case of Participant 6, another beginner student.



**Figure 5: Distribution of notes - Participant 3**

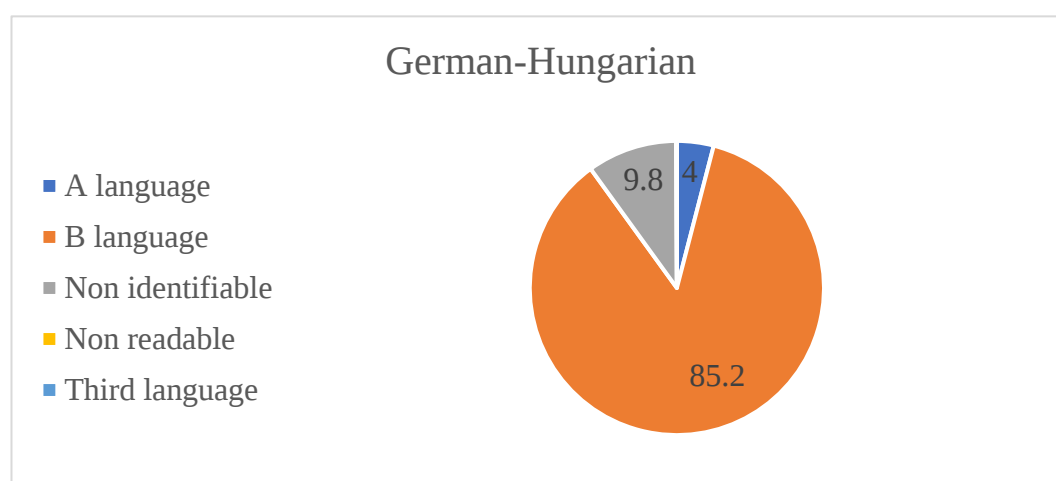


**Figure 6: Distribution of notes - Participant 3**

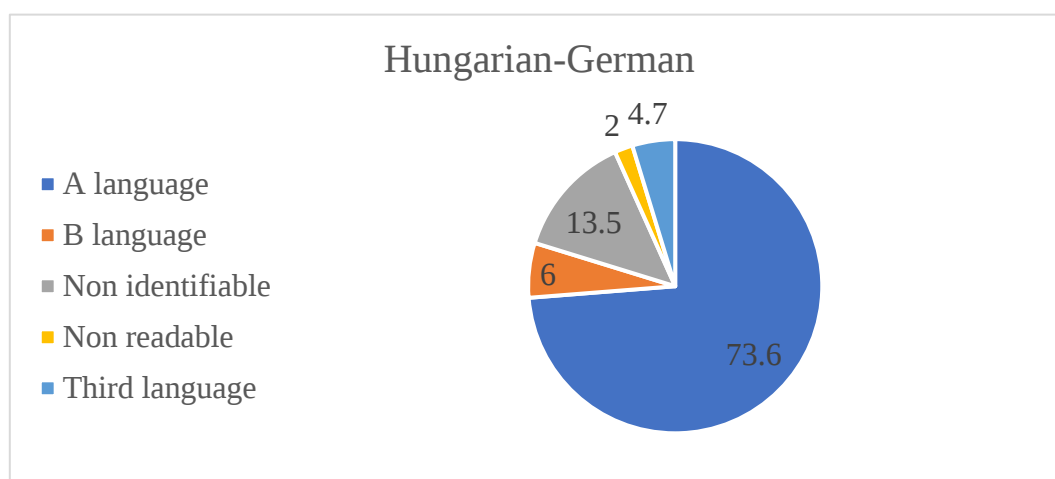
#### 4.1.4 Participant 4

The strong B language dominance in the first task and A language dominance in the second task can be observed in the notes of Participant 4 as well. Figures 7 and 8 show these findings. In both tasks she used both languages but made more notes in the B language in the second task than in the A language in the first one. Participant 4 took more notes in a third language than the previous students. In the second task she made almost as many notes in a third language as in the B language. The only third language she used was English, which is also her C language. Her English notes are similar to the notes of one of the participants in Szabó's (2006) research in that they both used English for writing down linking words, which are shorter in English than in Hungarian or German.

In her questionnaire answers Participant 4 stated that she tended to use a mixed-language system, but mainly used the source language, not only in these specific tasks but in general as well. She showed an awareness of her use of a third language in that she wrote that she took some notes in English. So her self-assessment is in line with her behavioural data. She is the only participant whose answer confirms Szabó's (2006) findings about the suitability of English for note-taking. She claimed that she took word length into consideration and opted for using the language for note-taking in which the words were shorter. A secondary factor was that when a word came to mind in the target language she wrote it down in that language. She also completed the Note-taking technique seminar and there she was advised to take notes in the source language, because doing so was faster than immediately translating the source text into the target language. However, that was only a suggestion, and she was free to choose the language.



**Figure 7: Distribution of notes - Participant 4**

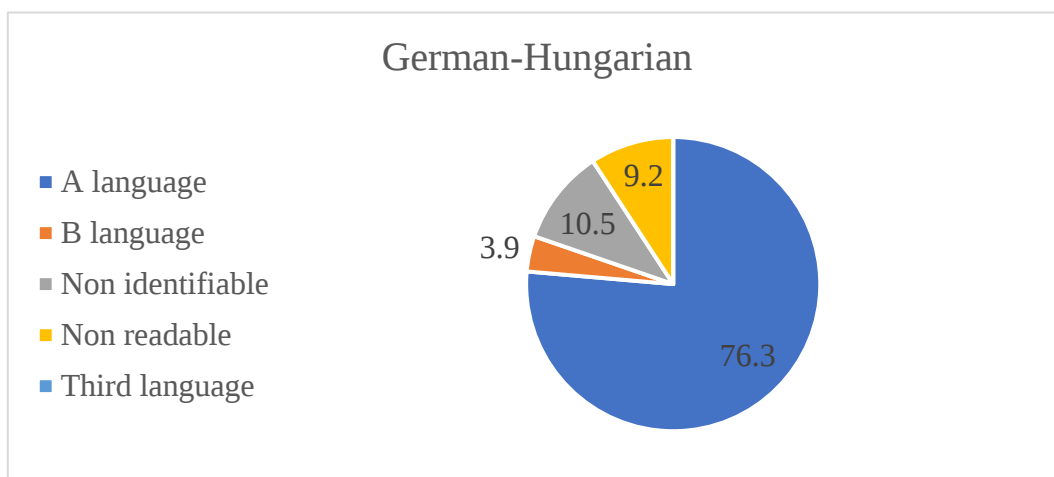


**Figure 8: Distribution of notes - Participant 4**

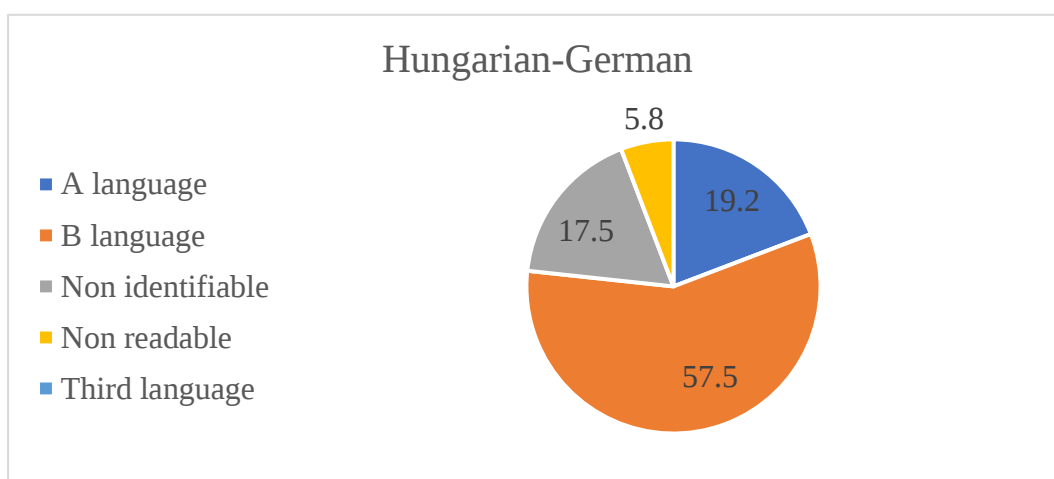
#### 4.1.5 Participant 5

The notes of Participant 5 present an interesting deviation from the trend seen in the case of other participants. Participant 5 also showed a preference for the A language in one task and a preference for the B language in the other but in the opposite direction compared to other participants. Figure 9 shows that Hungarian words dominate her notes in the first task and the majority of her notes was taken in German, as illustrated on Figure 10. In the second task she took more notes in her A language than in the first task in her B language. According to Dam (2004b, 2021), this could be due to her proficiency in her native language compared to her B language and to the fact that because of her excellent knowledge of her mother tongue, taking notes in the A language requires less processing capacity. This participant has no C language, and she did not take any notes in a third language.

Participant 5's questionnaire answers reveal the reason behind her deviation from the trend. Just like the other Participants, she focused on the source-target language parameter, but in contrast to the other subjects she claimed that she preferred to take notes in the target language. She explained that she liked to have her notes in the language into which she was interpreting because it made her interpretation more fluent. In the Note-taking technique class she was told that note-taking was highly individualised, and she was free to choose the language for her notes. In another seminar she had taken English was mentioned as a special language that was very suitable for note-taking, but she was not forced to use it.



**Figure 9: Distribution of notes - Participant 5**



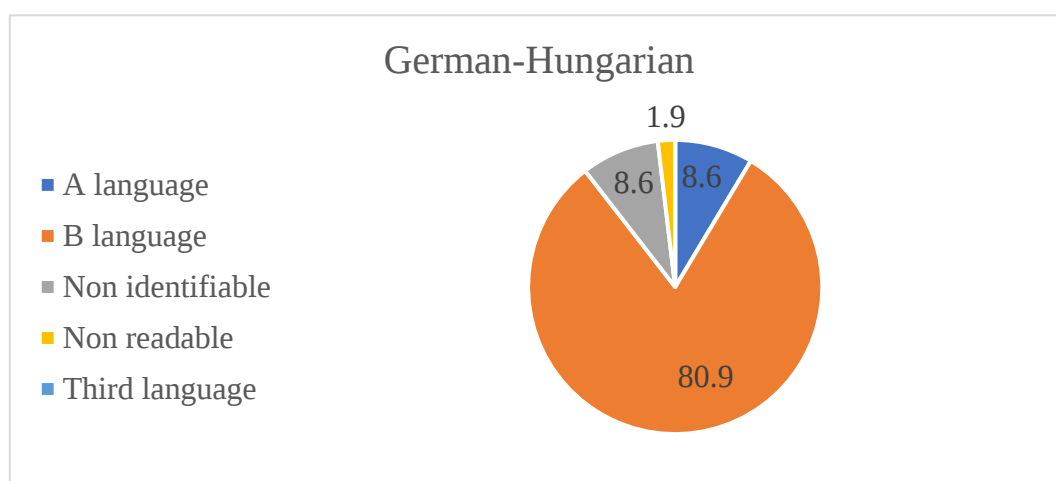
**Figure 10: Distribution of notes - Participant 5**

#### 4.1.6 Participant 6

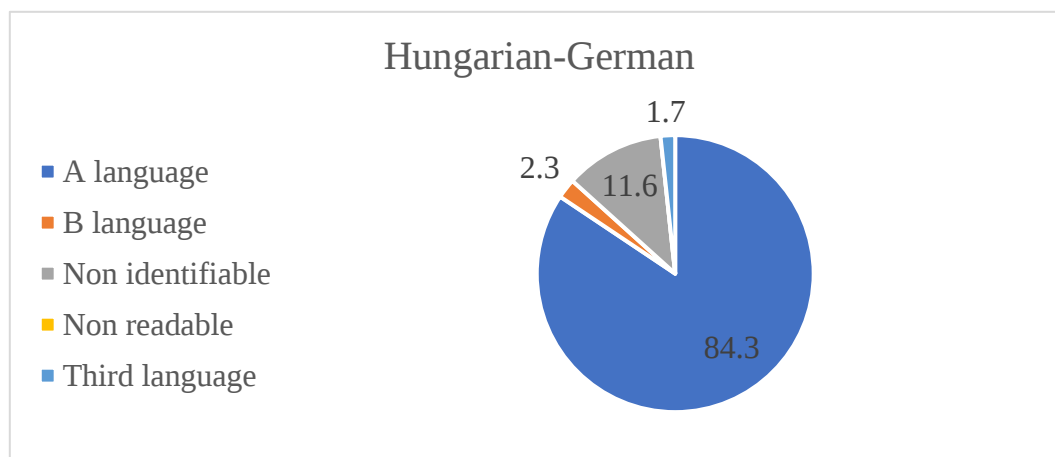
The notes of Participant 6 follow the general trend of this experiment, as can be seen on Figures 11 and 12. In the first task she made most of her notes in the B language and in the second task in the A language. Similar to Participant 4, she took more notes in Hungarian in the first task than in German in the second task, which can be due to her excellent command of her native language. Her C language is English, and she took three note units in the second task in English. Like Participant 3, Participant 6 is also at the beginning of her studies and has just recently started to gain experience in consecutive interpreting. Based on Abuín González's (2012) findings, this could be the reason why the source language dominates her notes in both tasks.

Similar to the other students, Participant 6 showed an awareness of her note-taking habits. She stated that she normally used the source language, and only relied on the target language when a word immediately came to mind in that language. Sometimes, but not very often, she uses a third language as well, which was confirmed by the analysis of her notes. The reason for her taking notes in the source language is that she is so concentrated on understanding the speech that she does not have any processing capacity left to immediately translate what she hears into another language. If she tried to take notes in the target language it was likely that she would miss important information or misunderstand what was being said. The only case in which she does not follow this habit is when a word immediately came to mind in a different language, usually in the target language.

Participant 6 was taking the Note-taking technique seminar when the experiment was conducted. She stated that they had been advised to take notes in the source language. The reasoning for this is that at the beginning of their studies students do not have the time and mental capacity to immediately translate the text to the target language while taking notes. By taking notes in the source language it is easier for them to concentrate on the content of the text.



**Figure 11: Distribution of notes - Participant 6**



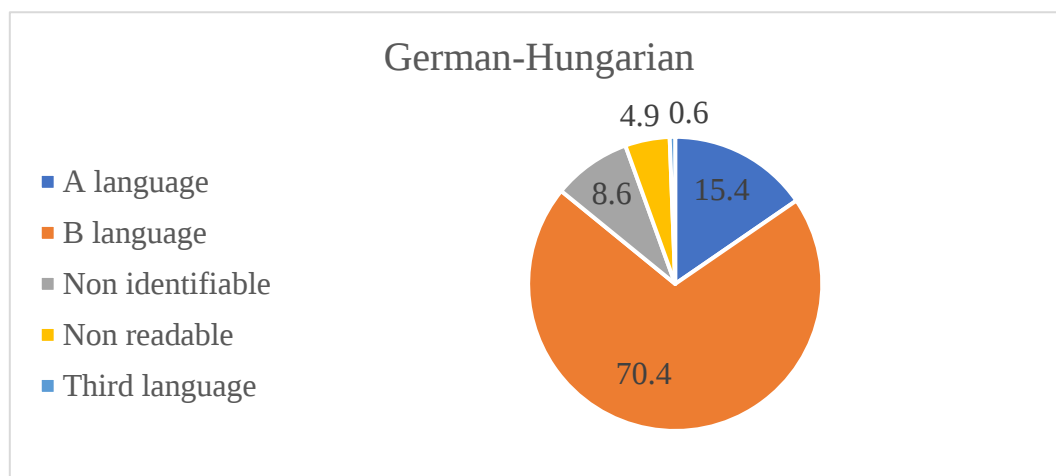
**Figure 12: Distribution of notes - Participant 6**

#### **4.1.7 Participant 7**

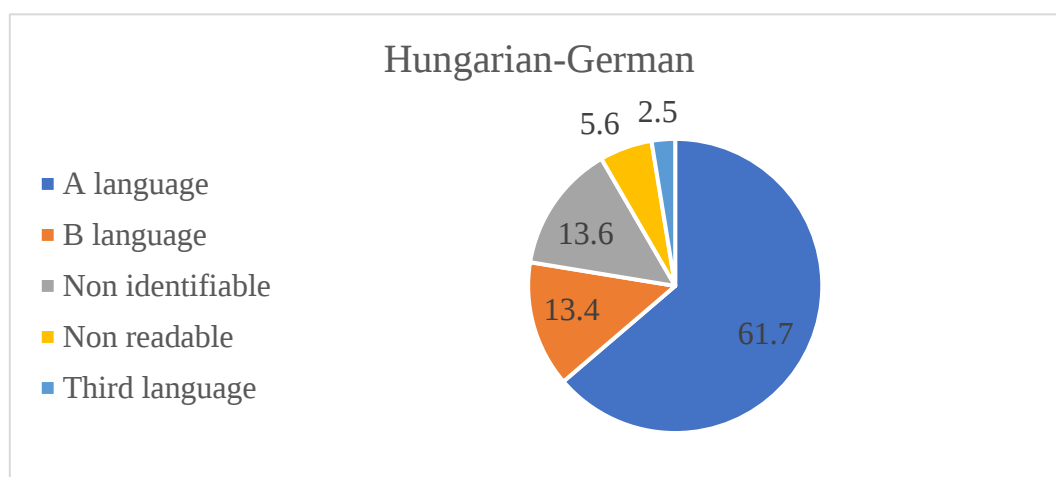
The notes taken by Participant 7 are similar in terms of their language to those taken by other participants. Figure 13 shows that in the first task she showed a strong preference for the B language, whereas Figure 14 shows the dominance of the A language in the second task. Interestingly, she took more notes in German in the second task than in Hungarian in the first. Her native language is Hungarian, so these results do not confirm the hypothesis of the dominance of the native language because of the interpreter's excellent command of it. Participant 7 took notes in English, which is her C language, in both tasks. Interestingly, in contrast to Participant 4, who used English to write down short linking words, Participant 7 used English for words such as “clarity” or “connection”, which are roughly the same in length as their Hungarian or German equivalents. Therefore, word length could not have been the driving factor for the choice of language for note-taking in this case.

The questionnaire answers of Participant 7 support the findings of her behavioural data. She is aware of using Hungarian, German, English and symbols for note-taking. She claimed that her note-taking habits did not follow any rules or systems, she mainly used the source language. Similar to other participants, she stated that if a word came to mind in the target language or in a third language, she would use that. This could be the explanation for her English notes. She referred to the highly individualised nature of notes. She used many abbreviations that only made sense to her and could most likely not be understood by anyone else. However, for her they function well, as they trigger her memory and remind her of the

context or additional information. Participant 7 claimed that in the Note-taking technique seminar she was free to use any language for note-taking.



**Figure 13: Distribution of notes - Participant 7**



**Figure 14: Distribution of notes - Participant 7**

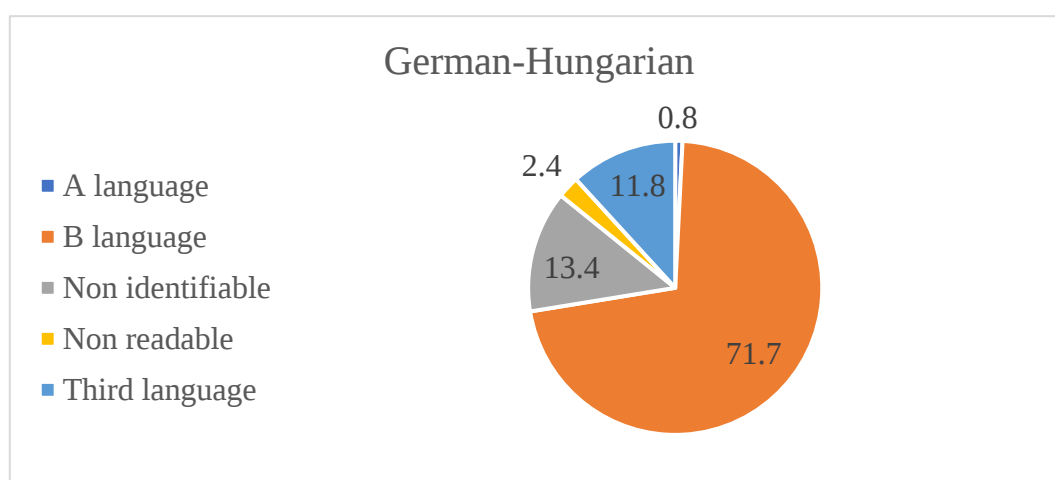
#### 4.1.8 Participant 8

Participant 8 presents an interesting case. She comes from a bilingual family and speaks Hungarian and German at a native level. She grew up and went to school in Vienna but spoke Hungarian at home and studied both languages at the university. As a consequence, even though in her university studies German is her A, and Hungarian is her B language, it would be more accurate to say that she has two A languages.

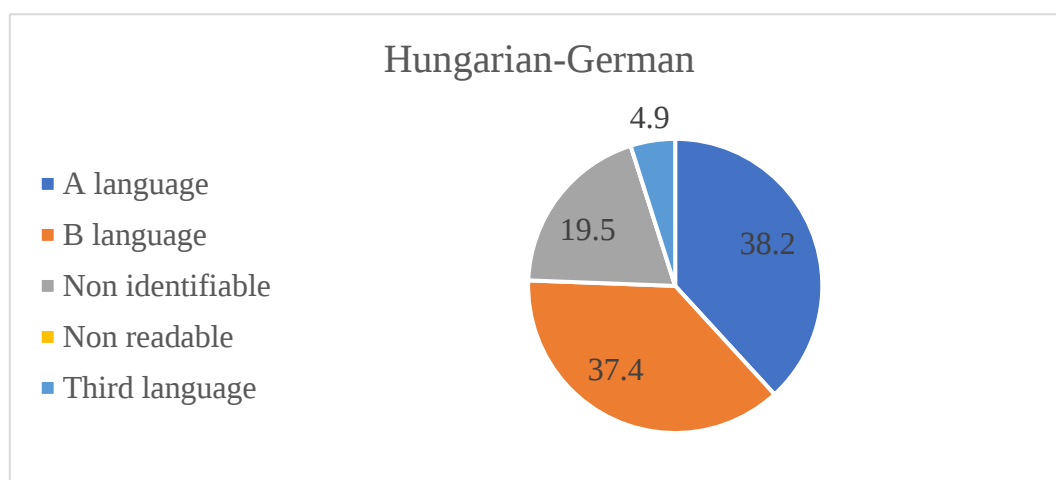
In the first task her notes are similar to those of other participants, in that German dominates her notes. However, in the second task her notes are more balanced in terms of language than any set of notes produced by other participants in any direction. In this task she took nearly the same amount of notes in German and Hungarian. Her bilingual background could be a plausible explanation for this phenomenon, but it will later be argued that this is not the case. In both cases she used other languages in her notes, even though she does not have a C language. Not only did she use several English words, but a Spanish word also appears in her notes. Just like Participant 7, Participant 8 used English not only for short linking words, but for numerous verbs and adjectives.

Participant 8 showed an awareness of her note-taking habits in that she correctly listed all the languages she used in the two tasks. She claimed that generally her primary note-taking language was German, which was confirmed by her notes from the first task but contradicted (even though only slightly) by those in the second task. These results can be seen on Figures 15 and 16. She stated that she took notes in the language in which a word first came to mind; this was the driving factor behind her choice of language for note-taking. Furthermore, she indicated that word length also played a role in her decision.

The language for note-taking was thoroughly discussed in the Note-taking technique class, attended by Participant 8. Students were advised to use either the language in which a word first came to mind or a language in which notes could quickly be written down. They had the opportunity to try out different options and were free to use the one that worked best for them.



**Figure 15: Distribution of notes - Participant 8**



**Figure 16: Distribution of notes - Participant 8**

In this section the notes and questionnaire answers of the participants were analysed individually. Similar note-taking habits could be observed in most participants with regards to the language of the notes. The questionnaires showed that generally the participants were aware of their note-taking habits, and it shed light on the factors that influenced their choice of language for note-taking. The following section presents the overall analysis of the notes, discusses the results in detail and offers some possible explanations for why the data collected is not consistent with either Dam's (2004b, 2021) or Szabó's (2006) findings.

## 4.2 Analysis of notes: A-B language

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the distribution of the notes produced in the two tasks based on the A-B language division. Figures 17 and 18 offer a more visual representation of the results. The numbers in the figures refer to the percentage of the notes in each category. In the figures the categories of non-identifiable language and non-readable language were taken as one.

**Table 1:** A-B language distribution of notes: German to Hungarian

|           | <b>Total number of note units</b> | <b>Number of language-based units</b> | <b>Number of A language notes</b> | <b>Number of B language notes</b> | <b>Number of non-identifiable notes</b> | <b>Number of non-readable notes</b> | <b>Number of third language notes</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 153                               | 126                                   | 0                                 | 115                               | 11                                      | 0                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P2</b> | 204                               | 150                                   | 16                                | 117                               | 8                                       | 9                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P3</b> | 128                               | 100                                   | 0                                 | 89                                | 10                                      | 1                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P4</b> | 141                               | 122                                   | 5                                 | 104                               | 12                                      | 1                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P5</b> | 109                               | 76                                    | 58                                | 3                                 | 8                                       | 7                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P6</b> | 187                               | 152                                   | 13                                | 123                               | 13                                      | 3                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P7</b> | 208                               | 162                                   | 25                                | 114                               | 14                                      | 8                                   | 1                                     |
| <b>P8</b> | 168                               | 127                                   | 1                                 | 91                                | 17                                      | 3                                   | 15                                    |

**Table 2:** A-B language distribution of notes: German to Hungarian (in percent)

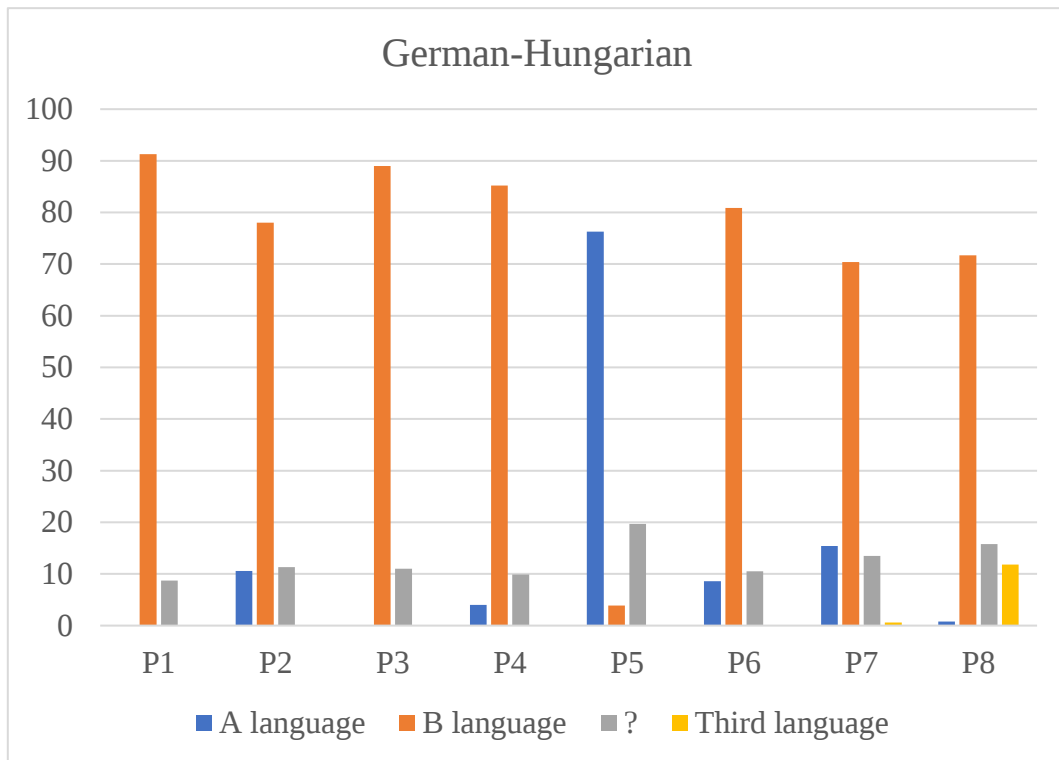
|           | <b>Language-based units</b> | <b>A (HU)</b> | <b>B (DE)</b> | <b>Non-identifiable</b> | <b>Non-readable</b> | <b>Third language</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 82.3                        | 0             | 91.3          | 8.7                     | 0                   | 0                     |
| <b>P2</b> | 73.5                        | 10.6          | 78            | 5.3                     | 6                   | 0                     |
| <b>P3</b> | 78.1                        | 0             | 89            | 10                      | 1                   | 0                     |
| <b>P4</b> | 86.5                        | 4             | 85.2          | 9.8                     | 0.08                | 0                     |
| <b>P5</b> | 69.7                        | 76.3          | 3.9           | 10.5                    | 9.2                 | 0                     |
| <b>P6</b> | 81.3                        | 8.6           | 80.9          | 8.6                     | 1.9                 | 0                     |
| <b>P7</b> | 77.9                        | 15.4          | 70.4          | 8.6                     | 4.9                 | 0.6                   |
| <b>P8</b> | 75.6                        | 0.8           | 71.7          | 13.4                    | 2.4                 | 11.8                  |

**Table 3:** A-B language distribution of notes: Hungarian to German

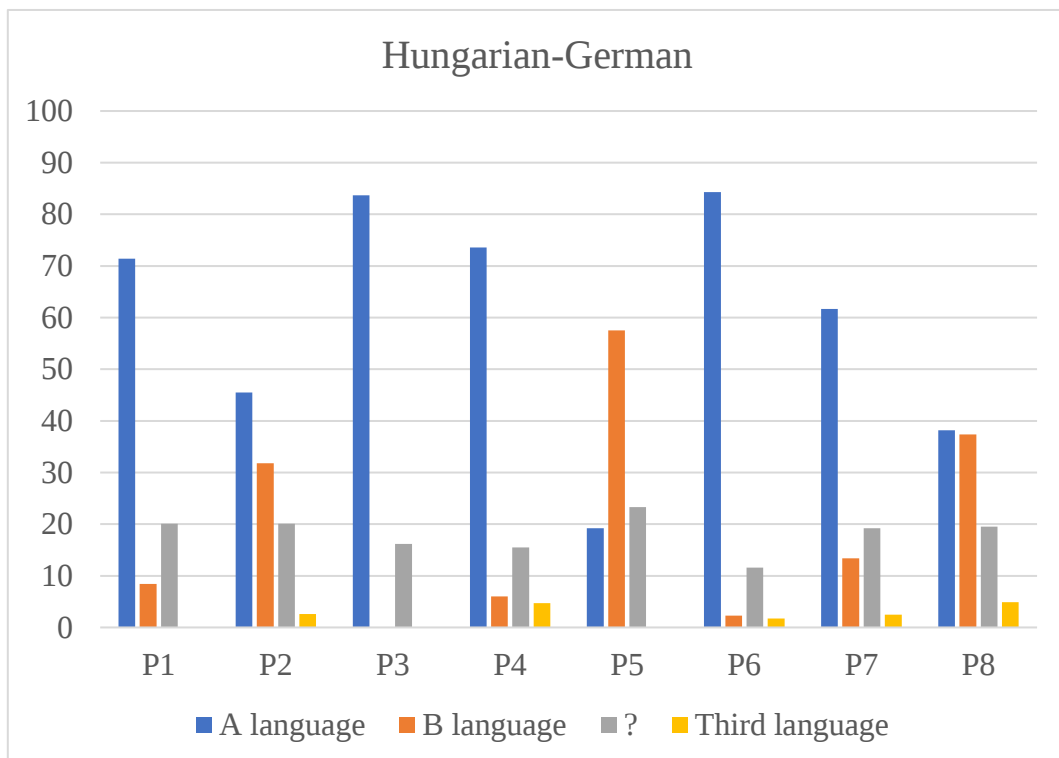
|           | <b>Total number of note units</b> | <b>Number of language-based units</b> | <b>Number of A language notes</b> | <b>Number of B language notes</b> | <b>Number of non-identifiable notes</b> | <b>Number of non-readable notes</b> | <b>Number of third language notes</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 158                               | 119                                   | 85                                | 10                                | 24                                      | 0                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P2</b> | 193                               | 154                                   | 70                                | 49                                | 19                                      | 12                                  | 4                                     |
| <b>P3</b> | 163                               | 129                                   | 108                               | 0                                 | 18                                      | 3                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P4</b> | 169                               | 148                                   | 109                               | 9                                 | 20                                      | 3                                   | 7                                     |
| <b>P5</b> | 165                               | 120                                   | 23                                | 69                                | 21                                      | 7                                   | 0                                     |
| <b>P6</b> | 214                               | 172                                   | 145                               | 4                                 | 20                                      | 0                                   | 3                                     |
| <b>P7</b> | 202                               | 162                                   | 100                               | 27                                | 22                                      | 9                                   | 4                                     |
| <b>P8</b> | 159                               | 123                                   | 47                                | 46                                | 24                                      | 0                                   | 6                                     |

**Table 4:** A-B language distribution of notes: Hungarian to German (in percent)

|           | <b>Language-based units</b> | <b>A (HU)</b> | <b>B (DE)</b> | <b>Non-identifiable</b> | <b>Non-readable</b> | <b>Third language</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 75.3                        | 71.4          | 8.4           | 20.1                    | 0                   | 0                     |
| <b>P2</b> | 79.7                        | 45.5          | 31.8          | 12.3                    | 7.8                 | 2.6                   |
| <b>P3</b> | 79.1                        | 83.7          | 0             | 13.9                    | 2.3                 | 0                     |
| <b>P4</b> | 87.6                        | 73.6          | 6             | 13.5                    | 2                   | 4.7                   |
| <b>P5</b> | 75.8                        | 19.2          | 57.5          | 17.5                    | 5.8                 | 0                     |
| <b>P6</b> | 80.4                        | 84.3          | 2.3           | 11.6                    | 0                   | 1.7                   |
| <b>P7</b> | 80.2                        | 61.7          | 13,4          | 13.6                    | 5.6                 | 2.5                   |
| <b>P8</b> | 77.4                        | 38.2          | 37.4          | 19.5                    | 0                   | 4.9                   |



**Figure 17: A- B language distribution of notes: German to Hungarian**



**Figure 18: A- B language distribution of notes: Hungarian to German**

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 and Figures 17 and 18 show that in seven out of eight cases the B language dominated the notes in the first task, whereas a strong preference for the A language could be observed in the second task. The only exception is Participant 5, who took the majority of her notes in her A language in the first task, and most of them in her B language in the second. The other student who somewhat differs from the other participants is Participant 8, as she took nearly the same amount of notes in her A and B language in the second task. However, Participant 2 displayed a similar note-taking habit.

The questionnaire answers also do not indicate that the A-B language parameter would play the main role in the participants' choice of language for note-taking. Only one participant referred to this parameter, while the other students focused on the source-target language variable, despite the questionnaire explicitly asking if the A-B language parameter was important to them. The behavioural data and the participants' self-reports all point to the A-B language division not playing as important of a role in the choice of language for note-taking in consecutive interpreting as it was expected based on previous studies.

This data to some extent confirms Dam's (2004b) proposal about the A-B language dichotomy playing a role in the choice of language for note-taking. However, the results of the first task fail to confirm the dominance of the A language, whereas those of the second task fall short of reinforcing the dominance of the B language. Therefore, organising the current data based on the A-B language parameter as the main factor for the choice of language for note-taking fails to confirm either Dam's (2004b, 2021) or Szabó's (2006) findings. Nevertheless, if one looks at the data from a different angle, a different and clearer picture emerges.

### 4.3 Analysis of notes: Source-target language

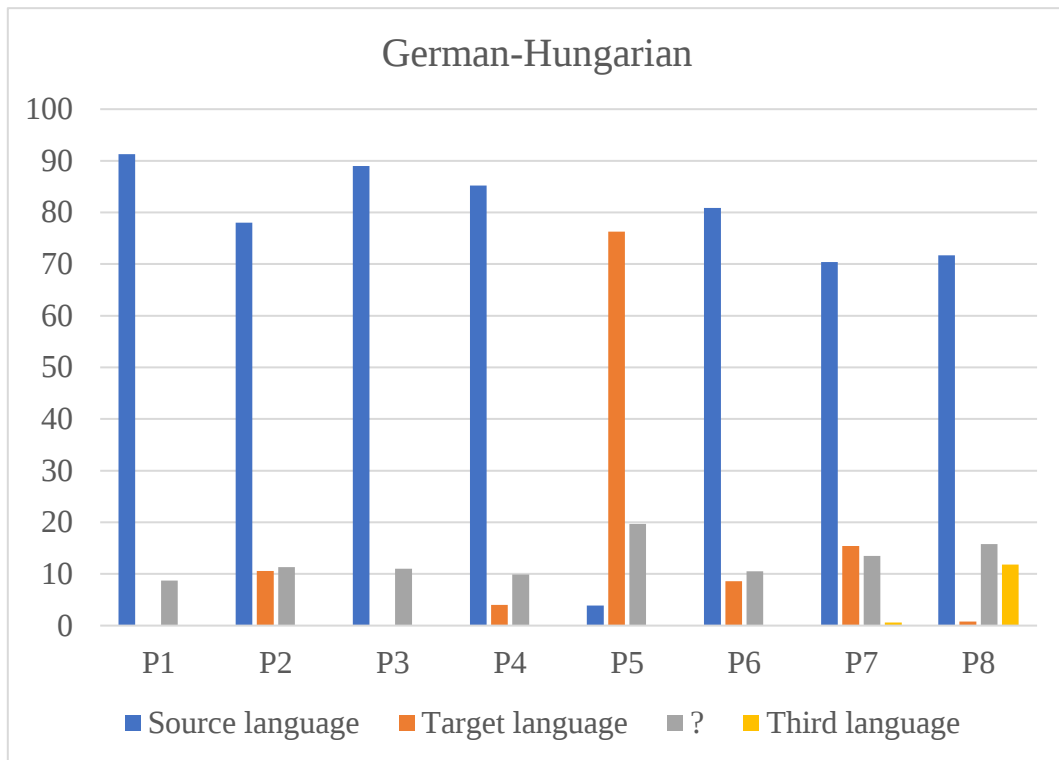
Tables 5 and 6 show the distribution of the notes produced in the two tasks based on the source-target language division. Figures 19 and 20 offer a more visual representation of the results. The numbers in the figures refer to the percentage of the notes in each category. The percentages were calculated based on the number of note units in Table 1 and 3. In the figures the categories of non-identifiable language and non-readable language were taken as one.

**Table 5:** Source-target language distribution of notes: German to Hungarian (in percent)

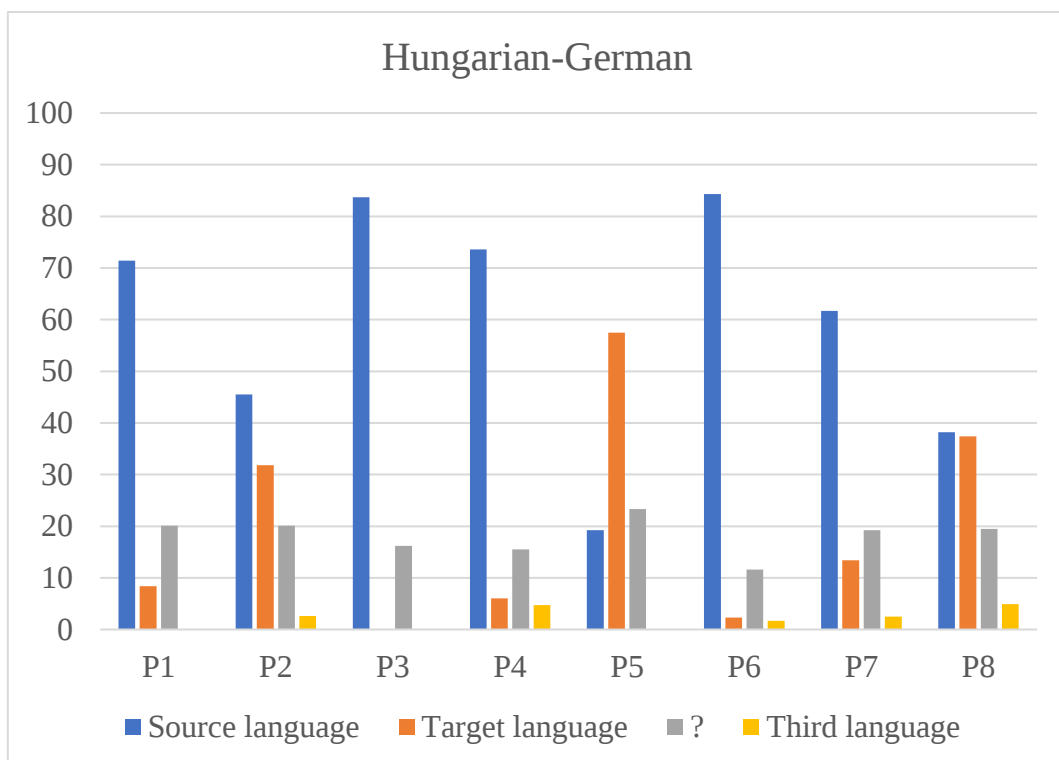
|           | Language-based units | Source language (DE) | Target language (HU) | Non-identifiable | Non-readable | Third language |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 82.3                 | 91.3                 | 0                    | 8.7              | 0            | 0              |
| <b>P2</b> | 73.5                 | 78                   | 10.6                 | 5.3              | 6            | 0              |
| <b>P3</b> | 78.1                 | 89                   | 0                    | 10               | 1            | 0              |
| <b>P4</b> | 86.5                 | 85.2                 | 4                    | 9.8              | 0.08         | 0              |
| <b>P5</b> | 69.7                 | 3.9                  | 76.3                 | 10.5             | 9.2          | 0              |
| <b>P6</b> | 81.3                 | 80.9                 | 8.6                  | 8.6              | 1.9          | 0              |
| <b>P7</b> | 77.9                 | 70.4                 | 15.4                 | 8.6              | 4.9          | 0.6            |
| <b>P8</b> | 75.6                 | 71.7                 | 0.8                  | 13.4             | 2.4          | 11.8           |

**Table 6:** Source-target language distribution of notes: Hungarian to German (in percent)

|           | Language-based units | Source language (HU) | Target language (DE) | Non-identifiable | Non-readable | Third language |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>P1</b> | 75.3                 | 71.4                 | 8.4                  | 20.1             | 0            | 0              |
| <b>P2</b> | 79.7                 | 45.5                 | 31.8                 | 12.3             | 7.8          | 2.6            |
| <b>P3</b> | 79.1                 | 83.7                 | 0                    | 13.9             | 2.3          | 0              |
| <b>P4</b> | 87.6                 | 73.6                 | 6                    | 13.5             | 2            | 4.7            |
| <b>P5</b> | 75.8                 | 19.2                 | 57.5                 | 17.5             | 5.8          | 0              |
| <b>P6</b> | 80.4                 | 84.3                 | 2.3                  | 11.6             | 0            | 1.7            |
| <b>P7</b> | 80.2                 | 61.7                 | 13.4                 | 13.6             | 5.6          | 2.5            |
| <b>P8</b> | 77.4                 | 38.2                 | 37.4                 | 19.5             | 0            | 4.9            |



**Figure 19: Source-target language distribution of notes: German to Hungarian**



**Figure 20: Source-target language distribution of notes: Hungarian to German**

Tables 5 and 6 and Figures 19 and 20 show that the main factor behind the participants' choice of language for note-taking in this experiment was the language's status in the interpreting task. With the exception of Participant 5, all other students used the source language for note-taking regardless of the direction of the task.

When interpreting from German to Hungarian, the source language's dominance is more visible than in the other direction: here seven out of the eight participants took more than 70% of their notes in the source language, whereas in the other direction only four of them did. Therefore, when comparing the target language notes in the two tasks one can see that four out of the eight participants took more notes in German when the target language was German than in Hungarian when the target language was Hungarian. Two participants took no notes in Hungarian when it was the target language, whereas when German was the target language only one participant did not take notes in that language.

The importance of the source-target language parameter is shown in the participants' questionnaire answers as well. Five of them stated that they usually took notes in the source language and the main reason for this was that writing down the words that they hear was easier than immediately translating them into the target or into a third language. As many of them wrote, the only exception was when a word or expression instantly came to mind in another language.

## **5. Discussion and conclusions**

Based on the behavioural data and the participant's self-reports, the main factor for the choice of language for note-taking in this experiment was the source-target language parameter. Even though the findings contradict Dam's (2004b, 2021) and Szabó's (2006) results, they are not surprising. Both of these previous studies showed that the source-target language parameter did play a role in the choice of note-taking language, and as described in Chapter 1, several interpreting scholars support the use of the source language for note-taking because it requires less processing capacity. This chapter will discuss the two most significant deviations from the trend in this experiment: Participant 4 because of her preference for target language note taking, and Participant 8 because of her bilingual background. In the end some conclusions will be drawn.

### **5.1 Preference for the target language for note-taking**

The notes of Participant 4 show an interesting deviation from the trend displayed by other students. Participant 4 demonstrated a clear preference for using the target language for note-taking in both directions. The reason behind this is revealed by her questionnaire answers. She stated that she preferred to write down the key words of the source text in the target language because in so doing she already started to translate the text in the comprehension phase. This way she was able to reproduce the text in the target language much faster in the speech production phase. This is in line with Willett's (1974) argument for target language note-taking: by having the key pieces of information in front of them in the language they are interpreting to, interpreters are likely to feel more comfortable when they deliver the interpretation.

Despite the source-target language parameter being the primary driving factor behind the choice of language for note-taking of Participant 5, the importance of the A-B language division can also be seen in her case. She took more notes in the target language than in the source language when the target language was her A language (76.3%) as opposed to when the target language was her B language (57.5%). To a large extent Participant 4 seems to be aware of her note-taking habits, as in the questionnaire she claimed that in most cases she used the

target language for note-taking. She wrote that in this experiment she had solely used Hungarian for note-taking when interpreting from German into Hungarian, and German to a lesser extent when interpreting in the other direction. However, her awareness is not perfect because the data showed that in the first task she took notes in German as well. She acknowledged that the A-B language parameter played a role in her choice of language for note-taking, as she had a tendency to use her A language more, especially when she was tired. Moreover, she claims that when the speech is delivered fast or contains a lot of important information she prefers to use her A language or the source language, when the two do not coincide, in order to ensure that the interpretation will be complete and correct. This remark supports Gile's (2009) suggestion to use the source language when the source text becomes too difficult or informationally dense in order to avoid becoming mentally overwhelmed.

Similarly to Dam's (2021) study, there was only one participant in this experiment who preferred the target language as the language of the notes. This reinforces the idea of scholars such as Ilg (1988) and Gile (1995) that, when it comes to deciding between the source and the target language, the source language offers an option in which less processing capacity is required. All in all, it can be concluded that regardless of whether the main factor behind the language for note-taking is the source-target or the A-B language parameter, the target language is a less widely used option.

## **5.2 The impact of two A languages on the choice of language for note-taking**

The notes of Participant 8 present another interesting case. Even though German is her official A and Hungarian her B language, Participant 8 speaks both languages with a proficiency similar to that of native speakers. Despite being different from other participants in this aspect, in the first task her notes show a similarity to those of the others. In this direction she took most of her notes (71.7%) in the source language and only very few of them (0.8%) in the target language, which is similar to other participants' behaviour. It was when interpreting from Hungarian into German that her notes showed a significant deviation from the notes of the other students. She took nearly the same amount of notes in the source and in the target language, 38.2% and 37.4% respectively. No other participant displayed a similar ratio.

According to Dam (2004b), interpreters are more likely to take notes in their A language, which would mean that German is the dominant language of Participant 8. However, the notes of other participants contradict Dam's findings. This is the reason why Participant 8's notes

were taken into consideration in this research despite her not fulfilling the Hungarian-as-A-language criteria. Participant 1 is similar to Participant 8 in that she too went to high school and university and worked for many years in Austria, yet her notes show no resemblance to Participant 8's notes. In the case of Participant 1, the source language dominates. Interestingly, she did take some notes (8.4%) in her B language when interpreting from Hungarian to German, whereas she did not take any notes in the target language when interpreting from German to Hungarian. However, a similar trend can be observed in the case of other participants as well, who only attended university, but not high school in Austria and have not worked in this country. Therefore, the claim that Participant 8 took nearly half of her notes in German and half in Hungarian because of her bilingual background is questionable. It would be interesting to repeat the same experiment with interpreters with two A languages. Such an experiment could contradict or confirm this assumption.

The questionnaire answers of Participant 8 also speak against her bilingualism having an effect on her notes. This research, as well as Szabó's (2006) study, has shown that self-reports need to be analysed with caution, as the participants are not always conscious of their note-taking habits. Nevertheless, questionnaires can still provide a useful insight into the participants' motivation behind their choice of language for note-taking. To the third question enquiring about the factors that influence the participants' decision when it comes to the note-taking language, Participant 8 answered that she used the language in which the word first came to mind or the language in which the word was shorter and could be written down faster. She did not indicate that her bilingualism would have an impact on her note-taking language, or at least she was not aware of it. Moreover, she could not give a clear answer to the second question asking which language she usually used for note-taking. Here she replied that she mainly used German, but also Hungarian, English and Spanish. She stated that she used these languages in these specific tasks as well, which was confirmed by the analysis of her notes. This shows her awareness of her note-taking habits, which suggests that if her bilingualism played a role in her choice of language for note-taking, she would have at least some awareness of it.

So far the results of the experiment were discussed based on the A-B and source-target language parameter. It was argued that, in contrast to previous studies, here the most significant factor in the choice of language for note-taking was the language's position in the interpreting task and not its position in the interpreter's language combination. The two cases that can be considered special and that showed a deviation from the general trend were discussed in detail.

This section focused mainly on the quantitative analysis of the notes, whereas the next part of the thesis will concentrate on the questionnaire answers of the participants.

### **5.3 Questionnaire answers**

After the interpreting task the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire that consisted of three main questions:

1. Which language did you use for note-taking in these specific tasks?
2. Which language do you normally use for note-taking? (source language, target language, A/B language or another language)
3. Why do you use that language for note-taking? What motivates your decision for using that language? Which factors influence your decision?

The first question aimed to find out to what extent participants were aware of their note-taking habits. Overall, the participants showed a great awareness of their preferred language for note-taking. They listed all the languages they used and correctly stated which language was more dominant in their notes. Apart from listing the languages, four participants stated that they preferred to take notes in the source language. Participant 6 even wrote that when interpreting from Hungarian into German she took approximately 60% of her notes in German and 40% in Hungarian. This is close to the real result: she took 57.5% of her notes in German and 19.2% in Hungarian. The gap between her estimation regarding Hungarian and the actual result is most likely due to the fact that she did not take into consideration that a considerable percentage of her abbreviations (17.5%) did not clearly belong to either of these languages. It is possible that for her these notes were in Hungarian, but for an outsider they cannot clearly be assigned to one of the two languages.

As the self-reports of the participants about their note-taking habits in this experiment are in line with the results of the quantitative analysis of their notes, it can be supposed that their answers to the second question give an accurate picture of their note-taking habits in general. Two participants stated that they exclusively used the source language, one participant claimed that she mainly used the source language, one participant wrote that she tried to use the target language whenever possible, and the rest of the participants answered that they used a mixed system, consisting of notes taken both in the source and the target language. Half of the participants stated that sometimes they used a third language and they all named English as their preferred third language option. With the exception of one participant all the other students

concentrated on the source-target language parameter. The A-B language parameter was mentioned only by one person. This is surprising, especially since the question drew the participants' attention to the A-B language parameter; however, in their answers they ignored this aspect. This suggests that the source-target language parameter was more important to them, and this is the factor that mainly drives their choice of language for note-taking.

In their answers to this question two participants referred to the importance of word length. They claimed that they used a third language when a word was shorter in that language. The answer of one of the subjects included another interesting factor, namely the mental state of the interpreter. She claimed that tiredness had an effect on the language of her notes, and that she was more likely to use her A language when she was tired. Studying how the physical and mental state of the interpreter influence their choice of language for note-taking could be an interesting area for future research.

The aim of the third question was to find out why the participants use the language or languages indicated in response to the second question and what factors have an impact on their decision. Two participants stated that there was no conscious decision behind their choice of language. Most of the subjects agreed in that they used the language they heard, unless the word or expression immediately came to mind in the target language or in another language. Only one participant answered that she preferred to take notes in the target language because this way she could deliver the interpretation more fluently. Two participants highlighted that for them the economy of writing played an important role. They answered that they consciously used the language in which a certain word was shorter and thus easier and faster to write down. This finding supports the importance of word length in note-taking. Two participants answered that they used the source language because writing down the words in the language they heard it is much easier and that they do not have the capacity to immediately translate the words to the target language. Rather, they focus on writing down all the important information, and having their notes in the source language helps them to remember the text.

The answer of one of the participants raises an interesting question. She stated that there was no conscious decision about how she took her notes and if she was asked to consecutively interpret the same text on another day her notes would most likely look completely different. Furthermore, she would probably use a different language for the same words. The question that arises is whether the choice of language for note-taking really is just a random decision or

if the notes would show similarities in terms of language if interpreters were asked to interpret the same text again after a certain period of time.

This section has discussed the questionnaire answers of the participants. It can be concluded that overall the subjects showed a good awareness of their note-taking habits. As driving factors for their choice of language for note-taking they listed most of the advantages of source, target and A language that have been discussed by members of the interpreting research community. Szabó's (2006) study showed that the economy of writing played a significant role in the choice of note-taking language, and this was highlighted by the participants in this research as well. The next section will focus on this aspect of note-taking.

## **5.4 Economy of writing**

From the questionnaire answers in Szabó's (2006) study it emerged that one of the reasons for the dominance of the B language in the participants' notes was the language's economy of writing. Both Szabó and her participants state that English words are generally shorter than Hungarian words and are therefore easier and faster to write down. By being able to take notes more quickly, the participants have more mental capacity for the other efforts of the interpreting task and can avoid becoming mentally overwhelmed. Szabó's other possible explanation for relying on English for note-taking was the language's prevalence in the international context and its status as a lingua franca. One of the aims of the present study was to find out whether the English language's key role in international communication and its economy of writing was significant enough to make it present in the participants' notes, despite it not being part of the interpreting task.

The results of the present study confirm Szabó's findings. In the second task, when interpreting from Hungarian to German, five out of the eight participants took some of their notes in English; however, the ratio of these notes is small, and in neither participant's case is it more than 5%. The most popular English abbreviation that is present in all five of these subjects' notes is "HU", the internationally used short form for Hungary. Interestingly, the Participants also abbreviated the word China; however, all of them used the short form "Ch", instead of the official abbreviation "CN". Because of this, this abbreviation was assigned to the B language category when grouping the data, as it most likely stands for the German word "China" and not for the Hungarian word "Kína".

Other English words that appear in the notes include “event”, “for”, “but”, and “so”. Two participants used the word “event” in their notes, which can be explained by the fact that this word has been incorporated into German, and to some extent into Hungarian as well. Szabó (2006) found that interpreters tended to note down linking words in English because in this language most of them are very short. This tendency can be observed in the present research, as one of the participants repeatedly took notes of linking words in English. Interestingly, the shortness of these words does not explain their use in every case. For instance, the Hungarian word “de” is shorter than its English equivalent “but”.

Participant 8 took notes of numerous words in English. She used words from different word classes (substantives, verbs, conjunctions) and her English notes included words such as “happy”, “health”, “develop”, and “etc”. Table 7 presents some of the English notes taken by Participant 8 and their equivalents in Hungarian and German.

**Table 7:** Comparison of word length in Participant 8’s notes

| English | Hungarian     | German     |
|---------|---------------|------------|
| happy   | boldog        | glücklich  |
| why     | miért         | warum      |
| hope    | remélni       | hoffen     |
| speak   | beszélni      | sprechen   |
| etc.    | stb.          | usw.       |
| like    | tetszik       | gefallen   |
| hands   | kezek         | Hände      |
| health  | egészség      | Gesundheit |
| if      | ha            | wenn       |
| develop | kifejleszteni | entwickeln |

Table 7 shows that in some cases the English words are shorter than their Hungarian and German equivalents, or at least they have roughly the same length. Therefore, it is possible that in some cases it was the English language’s concise nature that contributed to Participant 8’s tendency to incorporate English words into her notes. Interestingly, Participant 8 was the only one who used a fourth language in her notes. She wrote down the Spanish word “hoy” (today). The reason for this is hard to explain. On the one hand, the Hungarian word “ma” is

shorter, and on the other hand it is the native language of the student. Therefore, it is not clear why she opted for the Spanish word.

In conclusion, the number of English language notes made by the Participants is small compared to the total number of their notes. In comparison to the five participants who took notes in English in the second task, only two of them did so in the first one. Therefore, it seems that despite its economy of writing English is less widely used for note-taking when it is not part of the interpreting task.

The aim of the present thesis was to study which language student interpreters use for note-taking in consecutive interpreting between Hungarian and German. The thesis firstly discussed the theoretical background of this topic with special attention to Daniel Gile's (1995) Effort Model and the interpreting research community's debate about the most suitable language for note-taking. Source, target, and A language note-taking all have their advantages, and previous empirical studies reached different results on which language interpreters prefer to use. In order to confirm or contradict these findings, an experiment was conducted with the participation of student interpreters with the language combination Hungarian-German. The experiment was based on Szabó's (2006) methodology. The findings showed a strong preference for the use of the source language, and the results indicate that the driving factor behind the choice of language for note-taking in this experiment was the language's status in the interpreting task. This contradicts Dam's (2004b, 2021), Szabó's (2006) and Chen's (2017, 2020) results, who all found that the language's status in the interpreter's language combination played the main role.

After the experiment the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire about their preferences with regards to the choice of language for note-taking. All the participants showed a great awareness of their note-taking habits. From the answers it emerged that the students opted for the use of the source language because this required the least processing capacity. This finding is in line with Gile's (1995) Effort Model. There was only one participant who took most of her notes in the target language. As she was an exception, her notes and questionnaire answers were discussed in depth. The other special case was a participant with two A languages. Special attention was given to her notes too, but her habits did not differ from those of other participants when it came to the choice of language for note-taking.

Szabó and Chen found that when English was part of the interpreting task participants preferred to take notes in this language, even if it was their B language. They explained this by

the English language's brief and concise nature, its wide use in international communication, and their participants' proficiency in this language. Another aim of the present thesis was to examine whether the students will take notes in English. English notes appeared in the participants' notes, even though this language was not part of the interpreting task. In their questionnaire answers several of the participants stated that they found English a suitable language for note-taking because of the shortness of English words, which made them easy and fast to write down. Therefore, it was confirmed that word length plays an important role in the choice of language for note-taking and that English is a preferred option.

The choice of language for note-taking is an interesting and varied topic. This thesis aimed to deepen our understanding of the factors that influence this choice with a language combination that has not previously been studied. However, the present thesis raised new questions, and more research is needed to account for these. For instance, a future study could investigate how having two A languages influences the choice of language for note-taking. Replicating the current experiment with other language combinations could also expand our knowledge of this topic. Therefore, the choice of language for note-taking offers promising avenues for future research.

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## **Abstract**

English

This master's thesis aims to investigate the choice of language for note-taking with the languages Hungarian and German. The first part of this thesis focuses on the theoretical aspects of the choice of language for note-taking in consecutive interpreting. This serves as the basis of the second, empirical part. The first chapter discusses the features of consecutive interpreting that distinguish it from other forms of interpreting, and its historical development. Then Daniel Gile's (1995) Effort Model for consecutive interpreting is described. Chapter 1 also presents different note-taking techniques. Special attention is given to those of Seleskovitch (1975) and Matyssek (1989). This chapter also discusses the interpreting research community's debate about the advantages and disadvantages of note-taking in the source, target, A and B languages. In Chapter 2 five previous empirical studies on the choice of language for note-taking are selected and discussed. These are the studies by Dam (2004b, 2021), Szabó (2006), and Chen (2017, 2020).

The second part of this thesis is an experiment based on Szabó's methodology. Eight student interpreters from the Centre of Translation Studies of the University of Vienna participated in the experiment. They consecutively interpreted a German source text into Hungarian, and a Hungarian source text into German. Then they were asked to fill out a questionnaire about their choice of language for note-taking. The main assumption was that students would use their A language, Hungarian, for note-taking. It was also assumed that they would take notes in a third language, most likely in English. The results suggest that the driving factor behind the participants' choice of language for note-taking was the language's status in the interpreting task, and not its status in the interpreter's language combination. The assumption about the English language appearing in the participants' notes was confirmed. The findings confirm that the source-target language parameter plays an important role in the choice of language for note-taking, and that English is a suitable language for note-taking.

## **Abstract**

Deutsch

Die vorliegende Arbeit setzt sich das Ziel, die Wahl der Notationssprache beim Konsekutivdolmetschen zwischen den Sprachen Ungarisch und Deutsch zu untersuchen. Der erste Teil der Arbeit befasst sich mit dem theoretischen Hintergrund der Wahl der Notationssprache. Dies dient als Grundlage für den zweiten, empirischen Teil. Im ersten Kapitel werden die Eigenschaften des Konsekutivdolmetschens, die es von anderen Formen des Dolmetschens unterscheiden, und seine historische Entwicklung erörtert. Anschließend wird das Effort Model von Daniel Gile (1995) für Konsekutivdolmetschen beschrieben. Im Kapitel 1 werden auch verschiedene Notizentechniken vorgestellt. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird dabei den Methoden von Seleskovitch (1975) und Matyssek (1989) gewidmet. In diesem Kapitel wird auch die Debatte in der Dolmetschforschung über die Vor- und Nachteile des Notierens in der Ausgangs-, Ziel- und A-Sprache beschrieben. Im Kapitel 2 wurden fünf empirische Studien über die Wahl der Notationssprache ausgewählt und behandelt. Dies sind die Studien von Dam (2004b, 2021), Szabó (2006) und Chen (2017, 2020).

Der zweite Teil dieser Arbeit besteht aus einem Experiment, das auf der Methodik von Szabó (2006) basiert. Acht Studierende des Zentrums für Translationswissenschaft der Universität Wien nahmen an dem Experiment teil. Sie dolmetschten konsekutiv einen deutschen Ausgangstext ins Ungarische und einen ungarischen Ausgangstext ins Deutsche. Anschließend wurden sie gebeten, einen Fragebogen über ihre Wahl der Notationssprache auszufüllen. Die Hauptannahme war, dass die meisten ihrer Notizen in ihrer Muttersprache, Ungarisch, gemacht würden. Außerdem wurde angenommen, dass sie auch in einer dritten Sprache, höchstwahrscheinlich in Englisch, notieren würden. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass der entscheidende Faktor für die Wahl der Notationssprache der Status der Sprache in der Dolmetschaufgabe war und nicht ihr Status in der Sprachkombination der DolmetscherInnen. Die Annahme, dass die englische Sprache in den Notizen der TeilnehmerInnen vorkommt, wurde bestätigt. Die Ergebnisse bestätigen, dass der Status der Sprache in der

Dolmetschaufgabe eine wichtige Rolle bei der Wahl der Notationssprache spielt und dass Englisch eine geeignete Sprache für das Notieren ist.