INVESTIGATING INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES:
A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

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Aim: to identify strategies used by interpreters and translators when processing verbal nouns (VNs) and deverbal nouns (DVNs) in the course of the English-Russian simultaneous interpreting and translation.

Why VNs and DVNs?

The Russian language has a strong trend to substantivation, i.e. transition of the words from different parts of speech to nouns. It is most noticeable in the domain of political speeches delivered in Russian. That is why we wanted to investigate if the same phenomenon occurs in the course of simultaneous interpreting from English into Russian.

Building a corpus: to assist the study, it was necessary to compile a corpus covering source speeches, their interpretations and translations in the English-Russian language pair.

Original speeches (EN)

- Transcripts and video available at the [United Nations web television portal](#) and official websites [whitehouse.gov](#), [gadebate.un.org](#)

Translations (RU)

- Translations available at the media outlets and official websites e.g. [INOSMI.RU](#), [Voltairenet.org](#), [gov.uk](#)

Interpretations (RU)

- Manual transcription of interpreters' speeches at [United Nations web television portal](#)

To transcribe the interpretations we used **YouTube automatic captioning** and **iOS** speech recognition tool.

The corpus currently consists of approximately **32,000 words** (**3 hours 36 min**).

Interpreters transcripts include non-verbalised noises (for instance, **[laughter]**) and pauses **[…]**.

The punctuation marks are used occasionally where possible.

Numerals are spelt as figures.

Text annotation was done via TreeTagger.

POS-tagging and lemmatisation are fully automated with minor manual intervention and check of VNs and DVNs.

Investigating strategies

Strategies used in interpreting and translation usually fall into many different classifications and sometimes are referred to as 'transformations'.

The analysis shows that in order to successfully manage VNs and DVNs both interpreters (73%) and translators (63%) mostly employ **lexicosemantic transformations**.

However, if we look at the more granular classification, it becomes clear that interpreters mostly rely on compression strategies and omissions (53%):

Source Text (ST): *I also want to thank the many member states who helped us reach this moment — a moment that is actually far greater than people would understand; far greater — but for also their support and the critical support that we will all need going forward.*

Simultaneous Interpreting (SI): *я бы хотел поблагодарить те страны которые помогли нам в этих устремлениях и помогли нам добиться того чего мы добились*

[I would like to thank those countries that have helped us in these aspirations and helped us achieve what we have achieved]

Translators mostly use decompressing techniques (35%):

ST: *They took to the streets because their leadership was for sale and they had no recourse.*

Translation (T): *Он вышел на улицы, потому что его руководство было продажным, и ему не к кому было обратиться за помощью.*

[It took to the streets because their leadership was corrupt, and they had no one to turn to for help.]

The second most frequent group of transformations is the group of **syntactic transformations** (19% and 27% for interpretations and translations respectively):

ST: *We have secured record funding for our military — $700 billion this year, and $716 billion next year. Our military will soon be more powerful than it has ever been before.*

SI: *инвестировали в наших военных около 700 миллиардов долларов в этом году к ним добавится еще 700 миллиардов в следующем наша армия как никогда сильна**

[have invested about 700 billion dollars in our military this year, to which will be added another 700 billion next year our army is stronger than ever]*

*the figures were transcribed the way they were pronounced

ST: *We will continue to be a steadfast, permanent member of the Security Council, meeting our NATO commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence and making a leading contribution to UN peacekeeping efforts, where we have doubled our commitment, including new deployments to Somalia and South Sudan.*

T: *Мы останемся непоколебимым постоянным членом Совета Безопасности, будем выполнять обязательства, данные организации НАТО, по выделению 2% от ВВП на оборону. Кроме того, мы внесем существенный вклад в миротворческие усилия ООН: мы уже вдвое расширили свои обязательства, в том числе, осуществив размещение сил в Сомали и Южном Судане.*

[We will remain a steadfast permanent member of the Security Council, and we will honor NATO commitment to allocating 2% of GDP on defense. We will also make a significant contribution to UN peacekeeping efforts: we have already doubled our commitment, including by deploying forces in Somalia and South Sudan]

Lexicosyntactic transformations constitute the least popular group (3% and 5% for interpretations and translations respectively):

ST: *But I believe this thinking is wrong.*

SI: *обратный подход неверен*
[the reverse approach is wrong]

ST: *We cannot escape the prospect of nuclear war unless we all commit to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursuing a world without them.*

T: *Мы не сможем избежать угрозы ядерной войны, если все вместе не станем бороться за нераспространение ядерного оружия и за создание мира без него.*

 [We will not be able to avoid the threat of nuclear war if we all do not fight together for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for creation of a world without it.]
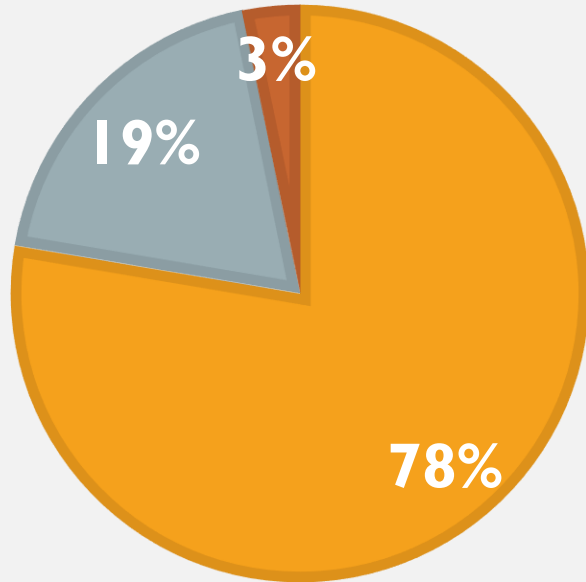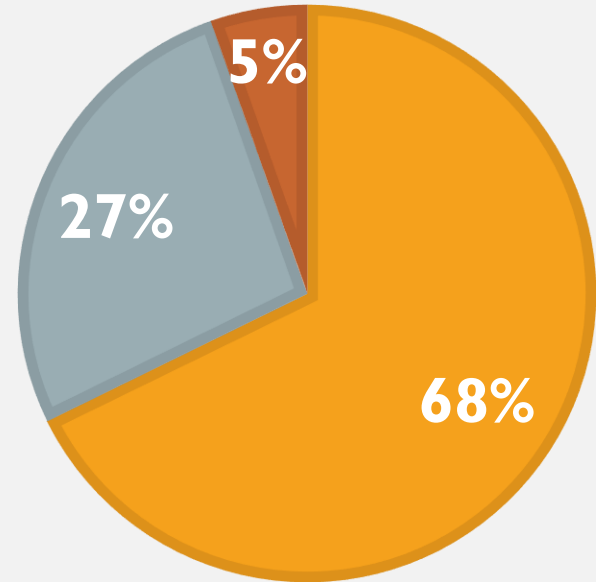
THANK YOU!

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