



English Literature and Language Review

ISSN: 2412-1703

Vol. 1, No. 2, pp: 5-16, 2015

URL: <http://arpgweb.com/?ic=journal&journal=9&info=aims>

Pragmatic Functions of Interpreters’ Own Discourse Markers in Simultaneous Interpreting: A Case Study of the 2012 Chinese Spring Festival Gala

Chuanmao Tian

School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, Hubei, 434023 P. R. China ; Intercultural Studies Group, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 43002 Tarragona, Spain.

Abstract: Taking authentic data from the simultaneous interpreting of the Chinese 2012 Spring Festival Gala as the corpus of this study, the present paper summarizes two kinds of pragmatic functions with regard to the discourse markers used in the corpus, namely passive markers and proactive markers. The discourse markers discussed here are used by the interpreters, not those they translated. The paper then discusses their functions with some examples. Finally, the reasons for using discourse markers are investigated. It is hoped that the research findings can shed some light on the success of simultaneous interpreters in use of discourse markers.

Keywords: Chinese-English simultaneous interpreting; Discourse marker; Pragmatic function.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Literature Review	6
3. Research Design	7
3.1. Research Questions.....	7
3.2. Data Collection	8
3.3. Data Analysis	8
4. Discussion and Implications.....	9
4.1. Pragmatic Functions of Cognitive Load Reduction Markers in the C-E Gala SI.....	10
4.1.1. Hesitation Markers.....	10
4.1.2 Repair Markers.....	11
4.1.3. Silence Filler Markers.....	12
4.1.4. Other Cognitive Load Reduction Markers.....	12
4.2. Pragmatic Functions of Communication Enhancement Markers in C-E SI.....	12
4.2.1 Explanatory Markers.....	12
4.2.2. Logical Markers.....	13
4.2.3. Emphasis Markers.....	14
4.2.4. Other Communication Enhancement Markers.....	14
5. Conclusion	14
References.....	15

1. Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) is a highly demanding act involving a complex skill of cognitive and linguistic capabilities (Gile, 1995). Translators of written texts who have plenty of time to do research and ‘polish’ their translation, and consecutive interpreters have some time to rearrange information and organize their output. However, simultaneous interpreters need to perform “online” and “on the spot”. In other words, they need to listen to the source language, understand it and reproduce its meaning in the target language. Moreover, they have to continue to listen to and understand the incoming information. The constant and various constraints lead to simultaneous interpreters’ possible encounter of troubles. As a result, the frequent use of self-modifications, repetitions, explanations and complements during the process of SI requires the interpreters’ strong pragmatic competence. For example, Discourse Markers (DMs), defined by Schiffrin as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of

talk” (Schiffrin, 1987), can facilitate listeners’ comprehension and reduce the interpreters’ cognitive load in the SI process.

Pragmatic analysis of the interpreting process has received considerable attention from some scholars. For example, Pan and Lee (2004) have analyzed the pragmatic function of several DMs in interpreting. Petite (2005), (Setton, 1999) and Van Beisen and Meuleman (2004) have studied the repair mechanisms in SI. Some other scholars pay attention to the relationship between pauses and fluency of SI.

DMs in spoken and written discourses have been extensively explored in the English language (Aijmer, 2002; Blakemore, 2002; Fraser, 1990;1996;1999; Lenk, 1998; Müller, 2005; Norrick, 2001; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1985;1999;2001) and in other languages (Abraham, 1991; Onodera, 2004; Park, 1998).

The rapid proliferation of studies on DMs attempts to identify the pragmatic function of one or several DMs in different contexts, but few have given a comprehensive analysis to all the DMs based on corpus-based study. Still, none of the previous works entails a comprehensive corpus-based study of DMs from interpreters’ output. Therefore, based on the authentic gala SI corpus, this study tries to have a pioneer investigation into the pragmatic functions of DMs used by the interpreters, taking a quantitative approach.

2. Literature Review

In this part, previous standpoints about the definition and categorization of DMs have been summarized. Based on the special features of the gala SI, 7 subdivisions of DMs for this study have been put forward.

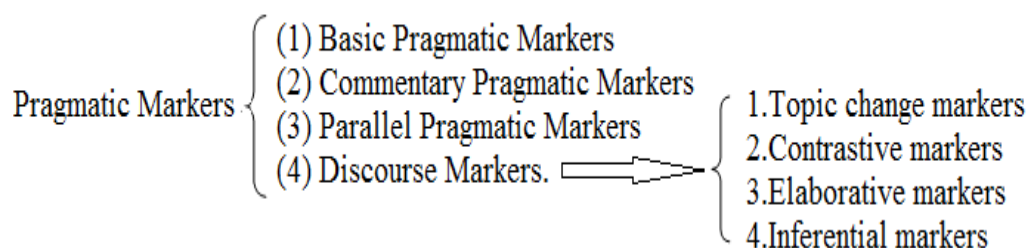
Although DMs are not a newly discovered linguistic entity in the field of pragmatics, systematic studies on them did not start until the 1980s. There is even no universally acknowledged term for them. There are a number of terminologies for DMs, such as “pragmatic expressions” (Erman, 1987), “discourse connectives” (Blakemore, 1987), “pragmatic markers” (Brinton, 1996; Erman, 2001; Norrick, 2001; Redeker, 1990), “pragmatic operators” (Ariel, 1994), and “discourse particles” (Aijmer, 2002; Schourup, 1985). As Jucker and Ziv (1998) put it, “discourse marker” is “a fuzzy concept” because “there is no generally agreed upon definition of the term”. Regardless of the diversified labels attached to this linguistic category, the term “discourse marker” is adopted in the current study.

Of all the earlier scholars, Schourup (1985) was the first to carry out in-depth research on DMs and described them as “particles”. Later, Schiffrin (1987) made a systematic study of them and defined DMs as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of all” that indicate a relation at a local coherence level. On the basis of Schiffrin’s research, (Redeker, 1990) defined DMs as “a general class of discourse operators as linguistic signals of textual coherence links”. Fraser (1999) defines DMs as expressions that signal a relationship between the segment (S2) they introduce and the prior segment (S1). Their specific interpretations are decided by contexts.

Schiffrin maintains that DMs signal to the hearer, independent of content, what is happening, where the speaker is in the discourse, where the speech is heading, whether the finished utterances follow smoothly from where they are previously uttered or whether there is a kind of disjunction occurring. In short, DMs are a finite set of forms that realize a range of interactional functions and contribute to discourse coherence. Through analysis of eleven DMs, she claims that DMs play a coherence function between adjacent units in discourse (Schiffrin, 1987). But it is such a pity that Schiffrin restricts her analysis only to local coherence and does not think about the broader role which DMs play in global coherence of the whole discourse.

While Schiffrin adopts a bottom-up method to analyze some specific DMs, Fraser follows a top-down way to classify the markers first and then illustrates several of them. (Fraser, 1996) suggests that DMs should be viewed as a pragmatic class which demonstrates certain connections between utterances. Fraser’s description of DMs is characterized by his effort to classify various types of pragmatic meaning which DMs contain in discourse. Fraser (1996) employs the term DMs to refer to a group of expressions under the umbrella term “pragmatic markers”, which is made up of all linguistic elements contributing to non-truth-conditional sentence meaning, and they are “linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intentions”. According to Fraser (1990), there are four major categories of pragmatic markers (see Figure 1).

Figure-1.Types of pragmatic markers



Built on the assumption that “sentence meaning is analyzable into two separate types of conventionally encoded information: content meaning and pragmatic meaning” Fraser (1990), Fraser points out that the content meaning is a “more or less explicit representation of some state of the world that the speaker intends to bring to the hearer’s

attention by means of the literal interpretation of the sentence.” For Fraser (1990;1996), DMs are always non-truth conditional and don't contribute to the propositional meaning of an utterance.

Blakemore includes in his list of expressions as pragmatic markers which encode concepts (e.g. “as a result”) and expressions which encode inferential procedures (Blakemore, 2002). Instead of assuming that DMs achieve the function of indicating coherence relations, Blakemore's relevance-based approach regards DMs as devices which can offer instructions for the interpretation of utterances. Based on Sperber and Wilson (1995) Relevance Theory, DMs are regarded as signals guiding the hearer's utterance interpretation, among which the propositional content of a sentence or an utterance potentially gives rise to a number of possible interpretations. Examples of approaches using a relevance-theoretical framework to analyze DMs are Blakemore (1987;1992;2002), Watts (1989), Blass (1990), (Jucker, 1993), Andersen (2001) and so on. Blakemore (2002) Regards DMs as signals of “an interpretation which is mentally represented and derived through cognitive processes”. Therefore, Blakemore's contribution to the study of DMs is his cognitive account of how information is processed in discourse and how DMs work in the processes.

In this study, the classification of markers will be mainly based on Fraser's method. Compared with other scholars' classification method, Fraser concentrates more on typing the markers based on the pragmatic functions of the different DMs. And based on this theory, the corpus and the features of C-E SI, we have categorized the discourse markers into seven kinds: hesitation markers, repair markers, silence filler markers, explanatory markers, logical markers, emphasis markers and other markers.

1) “Hesitation markers”, such as “well”, “oh” and “and”, usually indicate the interpreter's incompleteness of the up-coming sentence translation, help the interpreter gain more time to think about the translation, or keep pace, or divert attention.

2) “Repair markers” refer to those markers used to recover defects of the previous utterance, like “I mean”, “actually”, “basically” and “well”. Sometimes they end an unfinished utterance and lead a repair, or repair a mistake or error. In some situations, they just make the expression more accurate or idiomatic.

3) “Silence filler markers” help interpreters handle the problematic discourse that they cannot interpret. The markers such as “It goes without saying...”, “under that circumstance”, and “I would like to say a few words about...” , will directly fill the gap, or markers like “well”, “eh”, or “such as” will lead to the repetition of the previous interpreted segment or interpreters' assumption of the missing discourse to finish the utterance.

4) “Explanatory markers” explain the cultural distance between the two languages in SI, including the implied meaning in the source language. By using the markers like “such as”, “I mean”, “seems” and “actually”, the interpreter helps the audience understand the target language better, hence higher communicative efficiency.

5) “Logical markers” aim to enhance the cohesion and logic of the utterance. In this study, we conclude the connective markers (“and”, “or”), temporal markers (“then”, “after” and “moreover”), and contrastive markers (“so”, “as a result”, “because”) as logical markers. In SI, the logical markers function to facilitate a better understanding by the audience.

6) “Emphasis markers” mostly are used for drawing the listeners' attention. Unlike written language, where the reader can trace back and read the sentence again to check his understanding of the meaning of the text, spoken discourse has only one chance for the speaker to listen to. So the use of markers like “definitely”, “indeed”, “really”, and “especially” will remind the audience that there will be important information in the immediately following discourse.

7) “Other markers” refer to all the other types of markers that are not mentioned in the above categories. There do exist in C-E SI a number of low frequency markers, such as elaborative markers and inferential markers, which are rarely found in utterances and which are classified as “Other markers” in this study.

Based on the different pragmatic functions and purpose of using the markers, all the seven above mentioned markers can be classified into two categories. Hesitation markers, repair markers and silence filler markers can be regarded as cognitive load reduction markers; Interpreters employ these markers to cope with their difficulties and reduce their cognitive load in the SI process: to gain themselves more time to think about the interpretation, fill the unknown gap or repair problems. They are not deliberately adopted by interpreters to foster the communication between the interpreter and the audience. While explanatory markers, logical markers and emphasis markers are used as communication enhancement markers, which help the audience understand the utterance more readily, give guidance to the hearers to recognize the structure of the sentence, or arouse the speaker's intention.

3. Research Design

In this section, the research questions are raised, a survey on DMs in the C-E gala SI is conducted, distribution of different categories of DMs is calculated, and the related statistics is analyzed.

3.1. Research Questions

The current study tries to answer the following two questions:

First, there are several categories of pragmatic markers in SI, and we hypothesize that they appear with different frequencies. But what is the distribution of the 7 types of DMs used in the gala SI? And what cause the different occurrence rate of different types of markers?

Second, definitely DMs play an important role in building coherence and logic. But what are the pragmatic functions of DMs in the gala SI, a task which is so demanding for interpreters and burdens the interpreter with an onerous cognitive load?

3.2. Data Collection

In this study, authentic data from the 2012 Spring Festival Gala was collected. Regarded as the biggest TV event of the year in China, the Spring Festival Gala is always the most important show of the year for CCTV, the largest TV network in the world. In order to establish the credibility of the research, the recording of the simultaneous interpreting was chosen based on two principles:

1) The competence of the interpreters should be satisfactory in terms of professional competence and interpreting experience.

2) The interpreters should tackle the task without the support of the speakers' script or highly-related material. If the interpreter has already got the script of the speech before the interpreting task, the SI task will be turned into reading material or sight interpreting, and the cognitive load and interpreting environment will be completely changed. Considering the fact that this research aims to give reference to those authentic SI interpreting tasks, in all the cases we studied, the interpreters should only know the outline, not the script of the speech before the SI task.

Based on the above two principles, a total of 3.25 hours of recording consisting of seven shows and the links between the shows has been analyzed. The fact that three interpreters had been selected to work on such an important show demonstrates their prestigious reputations. It can be argued that they shared similar training and professional competence to ensure the consistency of their interpreting output. The corpus consists of the material listed in [Table 1](#).

Table-1. Performances and shows in the corpus

	Name	Type of performance	Length of time	Speakers
1	Glee	Cross talk	11' 31	Zhou Wei, Lv Jihong, Tong Tiexin, etc.
2	Justice Has Long Arms	Sketch	15' 12	Cai Ming, Wang Ning, Chang Yuan, etc.
3	The Emperor And the Assassin	Sketch	16' 21	Huang Hong, Shao Feng, Sha Yi, etc.
4	Happiness	Sketch	16' 13	Shen Teng, Huang Yang, Ai Lun.
5	Close-up Magic	Magic	12' 23	Liu Qian, Dong Qin
6	Vehicle of Love	Crosstalk drama	12' 39	Feng Gong, Niu Li, Yan Xuejing
7	Dream of Fame	Crosstalk	12' 08	Cao Yunjin, Liu Yuntian
8	Linking Lines	Linking lines	97' 31	Zhu Jun, Dong Qin, Li Yong, Zhou Tao, Sa Beining, Bi Fujian, Li Sisi
Total			193'58	

3.3. Data Analysis

All the shows were transcribed, with the source language and interpreters' output presented in parallel format. All the script was put into one file to form a corpus in Microsoft Word™ format. First, the total number of words, the total number of sentences, and the total occurrences of certain markers were noted in the corpus. In the crosstalk and sketches, there are some of short and meaningless sentences with no possibility of exploring the DMs, so sentences with three or fewer words are not included in the research, such as "hey, man" or "morning".

Second, using the search function, we have calculated the frequency of each of the DMs. Moreover, considering that in this study we discuss only the DMs that are used by the interpreters but not the DMs that they translated. So, all the DMs that were translated by the interpreters from the source language are excluded from the research results.

The data collected are presented in [Table 2](#), [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 3](#).

Table-2. General information of DMs in 2012 Spring Festival Gala

Performances	Number of words	Number of sentences	DMs
8	13,778	2,108	700 cognitive load reduction markers / 694 sentences 426 communication enhancement markers / 398 sentences

[Table 2](#) is the result of an analysis done by Microsoft Word™'s Word Count and Search Engine. Altogether there are 1,126 DMs in the 8 selected performances and the number of words and sentences are 13,778 and 2,108 respectively. According to the data, the average number of DMs per sentence is 0.53, which means that there is about one DM in almost every two sentences. This clearly indicates that DMs are frequently used in C-E SI.

Figure-2. Distribution of cognitive load reduction markers in 2012 Spring Festival Gala

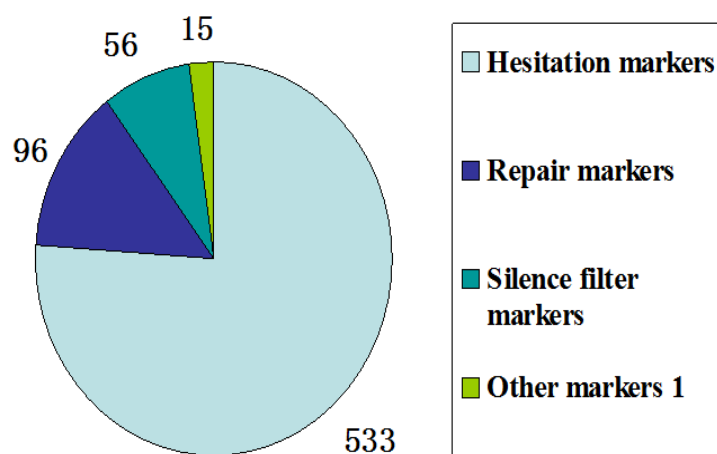
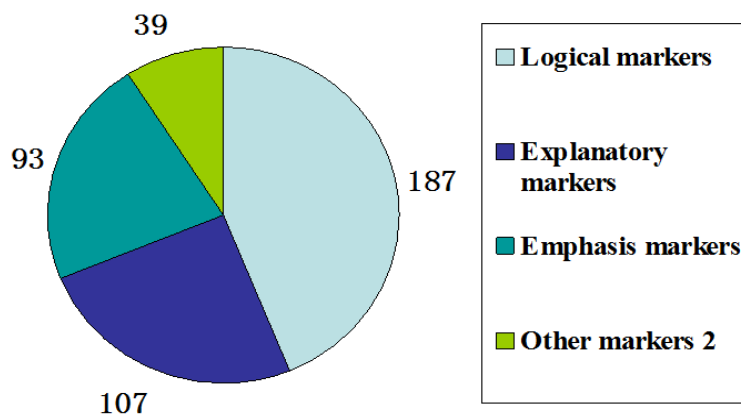


Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of four types of cognitive load reduction markers which are used by the interpreters. Their employment is mainly due to the interpreters' heavy cognitive load. The interpreters may have been forced to use those markers to cope with the difficulties arising from language difficulties in the gala SI. The frequencies of different types of the markers vary from 533 to 15. The greatest proportion of DMs of this type is the hesitation markers, while the “other markers” are of the lowest.

Figure-3. Distribution of communication enhancement markers in 2012 Spring Festival Gala

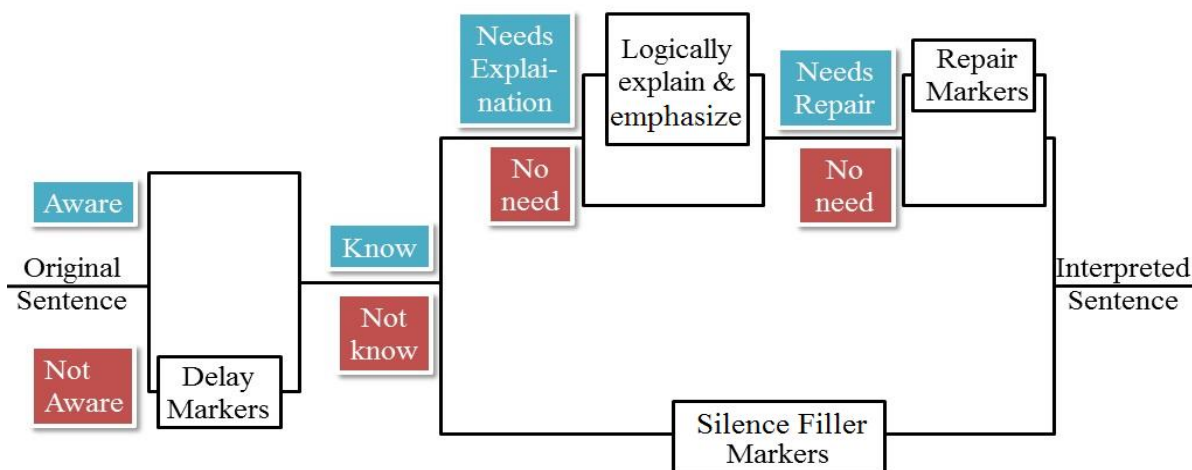


According to Figure 3, more than 400 DMs are deliberately employed by the interpreters to attain different kinds of communicative goals. The bulk of those markers are logical markers and explanatory markers, followed by a considerable number of emphasis markers and a small portion of other markers.

4. Discussion and Implications

The data analysis shows that there are many types of pragmatic functions in the C-E gala SI as well as different procedures of interpreting the sentences. These functions offer the interpreters the coping strategies for processing a sentence. As shown in Figure 4, when an interpreter has already got a solution, he/she will start the interpreting right away.

Figure-4. Employment of DMs in the whole process of SI



When he/she meets some problems or puzzles, the interpreter will use delay markers to gain for himself/herself some time to think about the translation, and if he/she still fails to offer the interpreting due to the lack of competence or to the effect of the extreme working environment, he/she will adopt the silence filler marker to fill in the gap. During the process of interpreting, if the interpreter finds something that needs explanation, emphasis, or cohesion to enhance the logic of the output, he/she will choose the relevant markers to achieve a certain goal. At the end of a sentence, if he/she finds any unsatisfactory part of the sentence that needs repairing, he/she will utilize repair markers to correct the previous errors or unidiomatic expressions.

4.1. Pragmatic Functions of Cognitive Load Reduction Markers in the C-E Gala SI

According to Table 2, the DMs in the Gala SI are predominantly made up of cognitive load reduction markers, including delay markers, silence filler markers and repair markers. The reasons for this phenomenon are varied, but the production of most of these markers might result from the interpreters' huge effort and cognitive load during the SI process. In order to cope with the problems, they are obliged to employ some of the DMs. In this part, delay markers, silence filler markers and repair markers will be analyzed mainly from the interpreters' perspective.

4.1.1. Hesitation Markers

According to Gile (1997) and Seeber (2011), the interpreter is required to cope with different kinds of tasks in a very short period of time, or almost simultaneously, including understanding the source language, memorizing information, translating the source language into the target language, and delivery of the target language. Such a huge cognitive burden of simultaneous interpreters leads to the possible occurrence of trouble. Meanwhile, some other factors can add to the load of interpreters, such as poor interpreting conditions -- noise, strong accent, syntactic complexity or high speed of delivery, and even terminology. Such difficulties sometimes will make the interpreters ignorant of the source language or incapable of translating the source language. To cope with this, hesitation markers or delay markers are a necessity for the SI interpreters to imply the incompleteness of the upcoming sentence translation. Please look at following example:

Example 1:

周炜：你姓冯，这加上龙，“龙”逢盛世啊！

朱军：你们俩都有“龙”了，也把我加上呢！

周炜：你姓朱啊，来来来，往中间站，你看，往我们俩中间一站这也有“龙” -- 二“龙”戏“珠”。

Chinese pinyin version:

Zhou Wei: Ni xing feng, zhe jiashang long, “long” feng shengshi a.

Zhu Jun: Nimen liang douyou “long” le, ye bawo jiashang ne!

Zhou Wei: Ni xing zhu a, lailailai, wang zhongjian zhan, ni kan, wang women liang zhongjian yizhan zhe yeyou “long”, er “long” xi “zhu”.

English interpreting:

Zhou Wei: You've *got the... oh* idiom of dragons, my name, my... the connection between my name and the dragon. That means two dragons play with the ball.

Figure-5. Picture of Feng Shaolong and Zhu Jun and Zhou Wei



In the source text, one of the speakers intends to tell the audience a joke by using a homophonic pun. “珠 (*zhu*, pearl)” is pronounced the same as one speaker’s family name “朱 (*zhu*, *Zhu*)”, so the idiom “二龙戏珠” (*er long xi zhu*, two dragons play with a pearl or ball, see Figure 5) here means the other two speakers are playing a joke with the speaker Zhu Jun. The translation of a pun, or even the translatability of a pun is always a problem without a ready solution. So when the interpreter hears the word “双龙” (*shuang long*, two dragons), he/she successfully anticipates the following sentence. But to find an English equivalent for the idiom is difficult, so the interpreter uses redundant words and silence to delay the discourse. But due to the time limit, the interpreter fails to find a suitable expression to deliver the source language message. In the end he/she literally conveys the meaning of the idiom, ignoring its immediate contextual implication. From this example, we can see that delay markers not only can help the interpreter delay the conversation, but also help them distract their mind, and divert some of their attention to handle other burdens, such as listening to the source text, memorizing, translation or anticipation.

To sum up, the above example illustrates that in different situations of SI, especially in difficult situations, hesitation or delay markers perform a variety of functions, helping the interpreters keep pace, divert attraction, or delay the discourse for more time.

4.1.2 Repair Markers

Levelt’s (1983;1989) study of speech errors and repairs in spontaneous speech offers a clear classification of errors in utterance and its repair mechanism. On the other hand, Gile (1995) emphasizes the difficulties and efforts involved in the SI task and the strategies needed to overcome them. Due to the overload resulting from the high capacity-consuming features of SI, or phonological and psycholinguistic reasons during the production of an utterance, errors in the delivery of the SI can easily be found. To correct those errors, a possible result of monitoring function is the repair. At the third stage of repair, Postma and Kolk (1993) divide repair in utterance into three sub-stages, namely error detection, interruption or/and the correction itself. The SI interpreters will employ the repair markers as the signal of repairing actions. For example,

Example 2:

黄宏：你这不是皇上不急太监急吗？

Chinese pinyin version:

Huang Hong: Ni zhe bushi huangshang bu ji taijian ji me?

English interpreting:

Huang Hong: Well, it’s the eunuch’s. *Basically*, it’s not the eunuch’s business.

In the source text, “皇上不急太监急” is an idiom which means “The emperor is rested at ease while the eunuch is excessively concerned”, and implies that “The person involved is calm and collected, but observers are very worried.” Considering the limitation of time for translation and delivery, the interpreter started with “it’s the eunuch’s”, and as soon as he/she realized his/her error, he/she stopped in the mid-flow of delivery, and repaired it as “it’s not the eunuch’s business”. The final version may not be that satisfactory compared with the suggested version, and the interpreter has noticed this fact, but for the repair itself has taxed the interpreter’s processing capacities, it is already the best version he/she can produce. In this example, the marker “basically” not only stops unfinished utterance, negates the former segment, but also indicates that the interpreter only expresses the gist of the idiom.

4.1.3. Silence Filler Markers

Some researchers may consider “silence filler markers” and “delay markers” are of the same kind, but here, they will be discussed as two different markers due to the unique specification of SI. Unlike daily discourse with 0.5 to 2 seconds long pauses that need delay markers to delay the discourse which provides speakers the chance to form utterance, in SI, the overload such as densely informative strings, pre-composed written texts which are read out, unusual or ungrammatical linguistic structures will directly lead to the misunderstanding of the source text. But in this scenario, over 2 seconds of the long pauses will cause anxiety of the listeners, so employment of the silence filler markers, or delay marker plus harmless repetition of the previous interpretation will diminish the awkward silence in SI. For example,

Example 3:

董卿：中华民族五千年的传统文化是我们的共同财富。

Chinese pinyin version:

Dong Qin: Zhonghuaminzu wuqian nian de chuantong wenhua shi women de gongtong de caifu.

English interpreting:

Dong Qin: *It goes without saying* that the Chinese traditional culture is our common wealth.

According to Jean Herbert (1952), when interpreters meet with difficulties, besides stopping the service and admitting the incapability of interpreting, they will employ segments such as “it goes without saying...” (see example 3), “under that circumstances”, and “I would like to say a few words about...” to fill in the gap. Those markers frequently appear in daily conversations and can be used without pondering. After saying these “meaningless” but harmless silence filler markers, the interpreter can manage their time effectively to organize their language and to relax. Silence fillers can also help interpreters control the rhythm, and hence a possible language jam can be avoided.

4.1.4. Other Cognitive Load Reduction Markers

In this paper, “other markers” refer to all the other types of cognitive load reduction markers that are not mentioned in the above categories. These markers belong to different categories of markers and are rarely used in SI due to their distinctive features. For example:

Example 4:

李咏：就在过年前，突然来了一只怪兽，叫除夕。

Chinese pinyin version:

Li Yong: Jiu zai guonian qian, turan laile yizhi guaishou, jiao Chuxi.

English interpreting:

Li Yong: However, on one New Years' eve, *a kind of* monster came to the village, named Chuxi.

The dialogue was between Li Yong and a group of children. So in order to help the audiences understand what Chuxi is, the interpreter used the downtoner “kind of” to make the interpreting easier for the foreign audiences to better understand the utterance. Regardless of their rare appearance in SI, this group of cognitive load reduction markers still plays the role of solving problems for interpreters: helping them explain the abstract and culturally-loaded words, or implying their uncertainty of the translation. All of them help the interpreters reduce the cognitive load and enhance communication efficiency.

4.2. Pragmatic Functions of Communication Enhancement Markers in C-E SI

Despite interpreters will encounter numerous difficulties and challenges during SI process, in some circumstances, devices like explanatory markers, logical markers and emphasis markers will be deliberately adopted to reduce the listeners' processing effort, facilitate their understanding of the utterance and achieve the speakers' communicative goals.

4.2.1 Explanatory Markers

One of the most important tasks for interpreters is not to translate the literal meaning of the source text, but to interpret its actual meaning. This is especially important when the interpreter meets with two languages in which one language is of high-context while the other of low-context (Edward, 1976). Unlike English which usually delivers the meaning in a straight-forward way, in Chinese, one has to infer the implied meaning of the sentence sometimes. So when interpreters translate from Chinese to English, they have to avoid the obscurity of the source text, and give an ingenious explanation of it in the target language. Since the interpreters' translation is not a literal translation of the high context utterance in the source language, adopting an explanatory marker to indicate the explanation becomes a necessity. For example,

Example 5:

李咏：朱军，你觉得你好看吗？

朱军：不是，这个问题，它得分跟谁站在一块……不，李咏，你别误会。我是说你这个人他比较耐。

Chinese pinyin version:

Li Yong: Zhu Jun, ni jue de ni haokan ma?

Zhu Jun : Bu shi, zhege wenti, ta de fen genshei zhanzai yikuai... bu, Li Yong, ni bie wuhui. Wo shi shuo ni zhegeren ta bijiao naikan.

English interpreting:

Li Yong: Zhu Jun, do you think you are the smart one?

Zhu Jun: No, what I am saying is, oh, well. *It means* you have to be patient to take a very good look at my appearance.

Figure-6. Picture of Li Yong and Zhu Jun



This is a joke between the two hosts of the Gala (see Figure 6). When Li asked Zhu about Zhu’s self-evaluation of his appearance, Zhu answered that it depends on the face with which his face is compared. This indicates that he is comparatively more handsome than Li. When he detected the unhappiness on Li’s face, Zhu soon changed his answer to “耐看” (*nai kan*). This gives a special burden to the interpreter: “耐看” means not that stunning at first glance, but you will find its attractiveness after long-time observation, and it is sort of mission impossible for the interpreter to find a short but precise English equivalence in the SI process, so the interpreter started with the explanatory marker to demonstrate to the audiences that the posterior information is the explanation of the word “耐看”, which will save the receivers’ processing time.

4.2.2. Logical Markers

“Cohesion” means a close relationship, based on grammar or meaning, between two parts of a sentence or a larger piece of writing and it also refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that defines it as a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). There are four kinds of conjunctive relations, including additive, adversative, causal and temporal relations.

In interpreting, the source language and target language of interpretation are, though not in written form, also discourses and thus cohesion is essential to the quality of interpreting. Especially when it comes to interpreting from Chinese to English, the translation from a paratactic language to a hypotactic language (Wang, 1947), the interpreter is supposed to pay special attention to the cohesion of the delivery. Sometimes, in order to make the interpreting more accessible to the audience, some logical markers will be added to the target text to achieve this communicative goal. In this paper, all the markers that enhance the logic or the cohesion of the discourse are considered as logical markers, such as connective markers, temporal markers, alternative markers and contrastive markers. For example,

Example 6:

撒贝宁：谢谢孟昆玉，今天其实来到现场一家人一块儿过年还不仅仅是孟昆玉一家，我们来看这一桌。这红红火火的一大家子。

Chinese pinyin version:

Sa Beining: Xiexie Meng Kunyu, jintian qishi laidao xianchang yijiaren yikuaier guonian hai bujinjin shi Meng Kunyu yijia, women lai kan zhe yizhuo. Zhe honghonghuohuo de yi da jiazi.

English interpreting:

Sa Beining: Thank you, *but* there are more than one family tonight, this is a big family, all dressed in red.

In the source text, there is no word which is an equivalent to “but” in the target text. However, it conveys the contrastive meaning in the sentence, so a logical marker here is needed to give a signal to the listeners to indicate that the coming discourse will be contrasted with the former discourse. In the source text, the first sentence is about a whole family who came to the Spring Festival Gala to be in the audiences, which gives the audiences the impression that it is the only family achieving the family reunion on this special occasion -- the Spring Festival Gala. Later on, the logical marker “but” helps the audiences know the real situation: there is more than one family tonight in the Gala. So this marker helps the interpreter draw the audiences’ attention, numerous overseas friends will marvel at the warm atmosphere of the Gala, which will eventually make it a great success.

The example above indicates that in the SI process, logical markers function to illustrate the contrastive connection between different segments of the utterance, offer cohesion to the target text, or indicate the cause-and-effect relationship between different parts of the sentence. To sum up, regardless of different types of function in the discourse, all the logical markers are added by the interpreter in order to ease the audience’s interpretation and smooth the communication, and finally achieve the communicative aim.

4.2.3. Emphasis Markers

In discourse, or spoken language, the audiences only have one chance to hear the utterance and there is no possibility of replaying. Since sometimes the audiences will easily be distracted, it’s the speakers’ responsibility to use the emphasis markers to draw the hearers’ attention and achieve the goal of communication. For example,

Example 7:

周炜：《咱老百姓》和《祝酒歌》是两把事。

Chinese pinyin version:

Zhou Wei: Zanlaobaixing he Zhujiuge shi liang ba shi.

English interpreting:

Zhou Wei: You can’t *really* put the two different songs together.

The speaker gave the interpreter another puzzle here: “咱老百姓” (*zan lao bai xing*, we the ordinary people) and “祝酒歌” (*zhu jiu ge*, song for drinking) are two popular songs in China, but unfamiliar to foreign English speakers. It will bring confusion and misunderstanding if the interpreter just gives the literal translation to the audience. In the source text, the speaker intended to express the fact that those two household songs are different on a lot of levels. So instead of bringing confusion to the audiences by giving a literal translation, the interpreter used the emphasis marker *really* to illustrate the essence of the source text, to help the audiences better understand the utterance.

4.2.4. Other Communication Enhancement Markers

Besides the three types of markers mentioned in the above discussion, we can still see some other types of communication enhancement markers in C-E SI, such as elaborative markers and deference markers. These markers have their unique functions. For example,

Example 8:

刘谦：首先我先把它放进去，换成红色拿出来。

Chinese pinyin version:

Liu Qian: Shouxian wo xianba ta fang jinqu, huancheng hongse na chulai.

English interpreting:

Liu Qian: Firstly, I put the cookie inside the mirror, and secondly retrieve a red one from the mirror.

In this example, the magician named Liu Qian is explaining the whole process of the magic. The interpreter interpreted “首先” (*shou xian*) as “firstly”, and when the speaker forgot to add “secondly” in the introduction, the interpreter still employed “secondly” in his/her interpreting to show that the following discourse is something that will happen right after the previous procedure, thus reducing the burden of the hearers.

Despite the very low frequency of this category of markers in SI, they are still available to the interpreters’ linguistic choices. The functions of these markers are varied: illustrating more than one point of view in the statement to minimize the audience’s processing effort, showing respect for the audience and facilitating the communication.

5. Conclusion

The present study presents the statistics of DMs in a special C-E SI event, namely the 2012 Chinese Spring Festival Gala, focusing on the pragmatic functions and features of cognitive load reduction markers and communication enhancement markers employed by the interpreters. Through corpus-based research, the different categories and frequencies of occurrence of DMs are obtained; features and pragmatic functions of the DMs in the Gala SI process are analyzed. The research findings show that DMs are frequently used by simultaneous interpreters, with more than one marker in every two sentences with regard to the Gala SI.

In addition, this research indicates that in C-E SI, different categories of DMs have different frequencies. Among them, delay markers have the highest frequency, followed by logical markers, explanatory markers, repair markers, emphasis markers, silence filler markers, and other markers. In terms of the proportion between cognitive load reduction and communication enhancement markers, the bulk of the markers used by the interpreters are cognitive load reduction markers. The reason for this is mainly determined by the unique feature of SI. The interpreters often face a large number of difficulties when having an extremely high level of cognitive load, so they have to employ pragmatic tools like discourse markers to help them solve the problems and reduce the cognitive load. Some other types of markers like elaborative markers, deference markers, or assessment markers are found to have the lowest frequency due to the special feature of SI output and unique language characteristic of crosstalk and sketches in the Gala.

This study attempts to offer simultaneous interpreters a whole package of coping strategies of processing a sentence with the help of DMs. In different procedures of interpreting sentences, different types of DMs will play perform various functions to facilitate the listener's understanding of the utterance and reduce the cognitive load of the interpreter.

This study has just explored the frequencies and pragmatic functions of DMs in the Gala SI from Chinese to English. The findings need to be further verified by more case studies of other C-E SI activities in order to prove their universality. Moreover, future research in this respect can examine whether the findings in this study hold true in SI from English to Chinese, and in SI between other language pairs.

References

- Abraham, W. (1991). *Discourse particles*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Aijmer, K. (2002). *English discourse particles: Evidence from a corpus*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Andersen, G. (2001). *Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic variation: A relevance-theoretic approach to the language of adolescents*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Ariel, M. (1994). *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Pergamon Press: Oxford.
- Blakemore, D. (1987). *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Blakemore, D. (1992). *Understanding utterances*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Blakemore, D. (2002). *Relevance and linguistic meaning: The semantics and pragmatics of discourse markers*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Blass, R. (1990). *Relevance relations in discourse: A study with special reference to sissala*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Brinton, L., J. (1996). *Pragmatic markers in english: Grammaticalization and discourse functions*. Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin.
- Edward, T. H. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books: New York.
- Erman, B. (1987). *Pragmatic expressions in english: A study of "You know", "You see" and "I mean" in face-to-face conversation*. Minab/Gotab: Stockholm.
- Erman, B. (2001). Pragmatic markers revisited with a focus on you know in adult and adolescent talk. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(9): 1337-59.
- Fraser, B. (1990). An approach to discourse markers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14: 383-95.
- Fraser, B. (1996). Pragmatic markers. *Pragmatics*, 6(2): 167-90.
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31(7): 931-52.
- Gile, D. (1995). *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Gile, D. (1997). *Conference interpreting as a cognitive management problem*. In: Danks et al. (Eds.), *Cognitive Processes in Translation and Interpreting*. Thousand Oaks.: Sage Publications: London and New Delhi.
- Halliday, M., A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in english*. Longman: London.
- Jean Herbert (1952). *The Interpreter's Handbook*. Librairie de L' Université: Geneva.
- Jucker, A., H. (1993). The discourse marker well: A relevance-theoretical account. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 19: 435-52.
- Jucker, A., H. and Ziv, Y. (1998). *Discourse markers. Descriptions and theory*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Lenk, U. (1998). Discourse markers and global coherence in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30(2): 245-57.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1983). Monitoring and self-repair in speech. *Cognition*, 14(1): 41-104.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. MIT: Cambridge, MA.
- Müller, S. (2005). *Discourse markers in native and non-native english discourse*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Norricks, N., R. (2001). Discourse markers in oral narrative. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(6): 849-78.
- Onodera, N. (2004). *Japanese discourse markers: Synchronic and diachronic discourse analysis*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Pan, H. and Lee, P. I. P. (2004). The role of pragmatics in interpreting the Chinese perfective markers -guo and -le. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36(3): 441-66.
- Park, Y. Y. (1998). *A discourse analysis of contrastive connectives in English, Korean, and Japanese conversation: with Special reference to the context of dispreferred responses*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Petite, C. (2005). Evidence of repair mechanisms in simultaneous interpreting. *Interpreting*, 7(1): 17-29.
- Postma, A. and Kolk, H. (1993). The covert repair hypothesis: Prearticulatory repair processes in normal and stuttered disfluencies. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, 36(3): 472-87.

- Redeker, G. (1990). Ideational and pragmatic markers of discourse structure. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(3): 367-81.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Schourup, L. (1985). *Common discourse particles in english conversation: like, well, y'know*. Garland, New York.
- Schourup, L. (1999). Discourse markers. *Lingua* 107: 227-65.
- Schourup, L. (2001). Rethinking well. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(7): 1025-60.
- Seeber, K., G. (2011). Cognitive load in simultaneous interpreting: Existing theories – new models. *Interpreting*, 13(2): 176-204.
- Setton, R. (1999). *Simultaneous interpretation: A cognitive-Pragmatic analysis*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
- Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication cognition*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Van Beisen, F. and Meuleman, C. (2004). Dealing with speakers' errors and speakers' repairs in simultaneous interpretation. *The Translator*, 10(1): 59-81.
- Wang, L. (1947). *Chinese grammatical theory*. The commercial Press: Beijing.
- Watts, R., J. (1989). Taking the pitcher to the "well": Native speakers' perception of their use of discourse markers in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 13: 203-37.