

[論文]

Achieving Mutual Understanding in Translation-Mediated Interactions : Non-Verbal Facilitation in Task-Oriented Meetings

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ABSTRACT

This study demonstrates that during translation-mediated interactions, primary interlocutors who do not share a common language frequently interact directly with each other by the use of non-verbal back-channels beyond their language barriers and the translating participant, and examine how they do so. The study examines several kinds of non-verbal behaviors conducted by primary interlocutors—such as gaze, nodding, acknowledgement tokens, and partial repetition of words (which is imperfect use of a language)—in the context of particular task-oriented meetings. Significant findings include that primary interlocutors do not only attempt to directly interact with each other beyond language barriers—despite the fact that their utterances are being translated by the translator—but frequently even forestall the translator. That is, by the use of non-verbal back-channels, primary interlocutors of translation-mediated interactions can reach a mutual understanding about particular aspects of the discussion underway, which the translating participant or translation does not provide.

Key Words : translated-mediated interaction, task-oriented meetings, non-verbal behavior, back-channels, gaze, nodding, acknowledgement tokens, joint venture, multi-lingual community

1. Introduction

The present study examines interactions in which interlocutors do not share a common language in the context of a particular community, Shanghai Advertisement.¹ (I will explain about this research site later.) I look at translation-mediated interactions in which primary interlocutors do not share a common language at all, reveal the phenomenon that they nevertheless directly communicate with each other, and then examine how they do so.

In so doing, I argue that translation-mediated interactions are not necessarily controlled by a translating participant, who has exclusive access to the two languages spoken in interactions. In other words, I discuss important contributions that participants other than the translating participant make in successful translation-mediated interactions, and I identify the non-verbal ways in which they do this. I will do so by describing how primary interlocutors, who do not share a common language, directly communicate with each other by the use of back-channels. Through examining the contributions and communication by primary interlocutors, I will shed light on the significance of non-verbal communicative devices, including back-channels, as not only supplements to verbal translation but also as ways of facilitating translation-mediated interactions in the context of Shanghai Advertisement.

It should be stressed that the purpose of the present study is not to evaluate the influence of the linguistic gaps on intercultural interactions. Instead, this study is founded on the concept that interlocutors in intercultural settings can be communicatively competent despite their linguistic incompetence or language barriers, at least within the context of the particular community under study. This concept does not devalue the importance of sharing linguistic resources for intercultural communication; rather, this concept encourages the acknowledgement and examination of individuals' capability and flexibility to overcome the lack of an important communicative resource (i.e., a common language) contingent upon their need to "get things done" in professional and/or task-oriented settings.

The present study is organized as follows. I will first review previous literature on translation, and identify what is lacking in it and what I attempt to offer in this study. I will also review previous literature on back-channels, which typically assumes that interlocutors share a common language, providing theoretical foundations for (re)considering the notion and phenomenon of back-channels used by interlocutors who do not share a common language. Next, I will provide the background of this study, describing the research setting and method, including how I transcribe the data for this study. Then in analytical sections, I will examine several kinds of back-

channels conducted by primary interlocutors—such as gaze, nodding, acknowledgment tokens, and repetition of words—in the context of translation—mediated interactions. Finally, I will conclude the study.

2. Previous Literature related to this study

2.1 Previous Literature on Translation

The tradition of translating is closely related to the proliferation of documents and literacy in its history (Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995). A written language bias in translation studies has been created through such historical facts ; a large part of the literature on translation is text-oriented (Wadensjo, 1998). As well, the written language bias is inseparable from the rise of linguistically-oriented theories of translation generated during the early post-war years and the 1970s (Wadensjo, 1998) —theories which focus on the comparison of the source and target languages' linguistic systems (House & Blum-Kulka, 1986). When text-centered or linguistically-oriented approaches to translation are applied to the translation of spoken language, the source language and target language are regarded as “speakers' productions of different types of text[s],” (Wadensjo, 1998, p.22) and translators tend to be positioned as living “information processing systems” mediating between two different languages as entities (p.30).

However, discourse, sociolinguistic, and interactional approaches to translation, which became a significant part of translation studies during the 1990s, have created a paradigm shift in our views on translation and the role of translators. Viewing language in use as situated in particular interactions and activities, scholars such as Hatim and Mason (1990), Berk-Seligson (1990), Wadensjo (1998), Metzger (1995, 1999), and Roy (2000) argue that translating is a communicative process that occurs in particular social contexts, re-conceptualizing translators as important participants who influence (and even manipulate) such communicative processes. For example, Hatim and Mason examine translation texts by analyzing a translator's decision-making process in negotiating the meaning of text with readers. Berk-Seligson examines the discourse process of courtroom proceedings and

demonstrates that translators become actively involved in courtroom interactions. Her examples show that translators, by urging or promoting a witness to speak or remain silent, control the flow of testimony. Wadensjö's study, grounded in Goffman's (1959, 1961, 1974, 1981) work of frameworks and role-performance and Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) dialogic theory, presents the idea of translators as "moral human beings" rather than "informational processing systems" who actively engage in promoting mutual understanding between primary interlocutors (p.30). She introduces the notion of the interdependent activities of "translation" and "coordination" as creating dual roles for the translator, based on the observation that translators create two kinds of talk in and through their translating. Demitrova (1997) gives special attention to turn-taking by translators and emphasizes the importance of translators mastering and managing appropriate turn-taking for effective translation-mediated interactions. In sum, these scholars have contributed to the promotion of the idea that translators are doing more than just translating message or content; translators are, by involving in on-going interaction through their translation, "negotiating the way messages are understood by others, not just the meaning of words" (Roy, 2000, p.27).

As reviewed, the communicative aspects of translating and the interactive role of translators have been increasingly explored in the last decade, reframing the notion of translation as situated sense-making within particular social activities and contexts rather than as text-(re)production between different linguistic systems (i.e., source language and target language). However, there are still few studies that focus on the interactivity of primary speakers as opposed to the activity of translators. Wadensjö (1998) examines back-channeling by primary interlocutors but does not consider it as a useful interactive resource for translation-mediated interactions. She maintains that primary interlocutors use less back-channeling with each other when engaging in translation-mediated interactions. She further states that the less understanding interlocutors have about each other's talk, the more they become dependent on translators, leading to less use of back-channeling to each other. Thus, her discussion treats the interactivity of primary interlocutors in terms

of their relationship with the translator rather than with each other. Discourse/interactional approaches to translation most frequently depict translators as holding unique and exclusive access to “everything” because of their access to the two languages involved in translation, depicting (the interactivity of) primary interlocutors as “handicapped” because of their relative linguistic inability. Metzger (1995) states that professional translators must and tend to “generate” utterances to achieve their goal of translating the meaning and/or promoting understanding of the parties. Such “extra” work by translators seems to be widely understood based on the notion of imbalanced resourcefulness between translators and primary interlocutors. However, communicative resources that primary interlocutors may have despite their linguistic inability have not been fully examined. Additionally, previous research has limited the range of communicative resources available to translators as interactants to their linguistic knowledge.

An emphasis on translators as those with exclusive access to communicative resources, however, sometimes restricts the understanding of what else is going on during translation-mediated interactions. Such an emphasis perpetuates the idea that successful translation is an almost independent production of a skillful translator, however one might define “skill,” rather than a collaborative production that results from the interaction of all interlocutors. Therefore, while I identify my approach as affiliated with the interactional trend of translation studies that these scholars have created, one purpose of the present section is to correct such a bias by focusing on two aspects of translation-mediated interactions: the role of non-linguistic resources and the contributions that interlocutors other than the translator make by the use of such resources.

2.2. Previous literature on back-channels

Before analyzing examples in which primary interlocutors who do not share a common language use back-channels to communicate with each other during translation-mediated interactions, it seems necessary to review and understand what researchers have found out about the use of back-channels in the contexts in which

the premise is that interlocutors *do* share a common language used in interactions.

Yngve (1970), who first introduced the term, defines “back-channels” as short messages like “yes” or “uh-huh” which speakers receive from their listeners without giving up the floor. Duncan and Fiske (1977) expanded the notion of back-channels and included more expressions as back-channels (e.g., m-hums). They are also responsible for having broadened the notions of back-channels beyond vocal behaviors to include non-vocal behaviors, such as head nods, as back-channeling behaviors. Maynard (1987) basically agrees with the definitions presented by these scholars ; however, she adds that longer messages can function as back-channels and supports her argument with examples in the Japanese language.

Many researchers (e.g., Kawai, 1975; Mizutani, 1983; Maynard, 1986,1987; White,1989) have conducted cross-cultural research on the English and Japanese back-channels. Whereas their findings show common functions of back-channels between the two languages, they also indicate significant differences between the two languages, such as the frequency or placement of back-channels. These researchers seem to agree that Japanese speakers use back-channels, or *aizuchi* as it is called in Japanese, more frequently than English speakers. It is also agreed that Japanese speakers often use back-channels in the midst of the sentence or turn, whereas English speakers tend to use back-channels toward the end of a turn. However, with particular respect to gaze, Japanese speakers use gaze less than English speakers. The reason for this can be said that direct gaze is considered to be impolite in the Japanese society.

As to the use of back-channels in languages other than English and Japanese, Liu (1987) and Mizuno (1988) study how Chinese speakers use back-channels and compare this usage with that of Japanese speakers. They state that Japanese speakers use back-channels much more often than Chinese speakers. Further, Mizuno shows that there are more varieties among Chinese speakers than among Japanese speakers regarding the frequency of the use of back-channels; to understand why this is so, Mizuno suggests considering factors such as situations of conversation or content of talk, in addition to the possibility of different attributions among the speakers

(native language², up-bringing). The study by Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki, and Tao (1995) confirms the finding by Liu and Mizuno; they claim Chinese speakers use back-channels less often than Japanese speakers and English speakers.

Kubota (1994) points out that while short acknowledgement tokens (e.g., *ee*, *un*) and partial repetition of speakers' utterances are among the popular topics in research on Japanese back-channels (Matsuda, 1988; Sugito, 1989), nods and gazes (in addition to short vocal messages) are popular topics in research on English back-channels (Kendon, 1967; Duncan & Fiske, 1977). Such differences themselves are interesting because they seem to show what kind of back-channels is more acknowledged as significant in each society, and/or interactional strategies used in each society. Similarly, according to Mizuno (1988) and Clancy, et al., there is little systematic research on Chinese back-channels. Such paucity of work, they propose, indicates that back-channels is not regarded as a major feature of the Chinese language use.

A number of extensive as well as detailed research has been done about "back-channels," although its focuses vary. As a result, it is now generally understood that one important function of back-channels is to demonstrate that the listener (the one who offers back-channels) is listening to, is following, and/or has understood the current speaker (Fries, 1952; Kendon, 1967; Horiguchi, 1991; Drummon & Hopper, 1993). It is important that back-channels do not express the utterers' judgments but simply signals "I am listening."

With this, I now address the question: How would such knowledge be applied to our attempt to understand intercultural communicative practice in which not all interlocutors share a common language?

3. Research Setting and Method

This study is based on detailed discourse analysis of videotaped data of naturally occurring interactions, collected during the two months of fieldwork I conducted in a merger advertising firm comprised of a state-managed Chinese firm and a private-sector Japanese firm in Shanghai, China—Shanghai Advertisement. This merger

provides for a naturally multilingual environment, in which translation between Japanese and Mandarin is an important routine. However, since Shanghai Advertisement does not have a professional translator, one of the bilingual employees usually plays the role of the translator. Thus, how participants manage translation is closely related to how they themselves can achieve their tasks in the intercultural environment.

Discourse data for this study have been transcribed with reference to transcript notation developed by Gail Jefferson. (The notation will be explained at the end.)³ For the present study, I will use the simplified/modified version of the notation. Because two languages, Mandarin and Japanese, are used in the transcripts, Mandarin utterances will be shadowed.⁴ *Ping-ying* will be used for writing down Mandarin utterances and *roma-ji* will be used for Japanese utterances; both *ping-ying* and *roma-ji* are systematic usage of English letters that describe phonemes in the respective languages. Both Mandarin and Japanese utterances will be accompanied by two kinds of English translation: word-by-word translation and semantic translation. Particles themselves used in Mandarin and Japanese utterances often do not have particular meaning and cannot be exactly translated in a word-by-word manner. However, sentence final particles often characterize a subtle meaning or nuance of sentences in both Chinese and Japanese. For them, I will add English translations, which seem to deliver the denotation attached to the original utterances with referring to the context of talk. About other types of particles, I will indicate with an abbreviation, “PA,” for the word-by-word translation, while I will include such a subtle meaning or nuance in semantic translation.

For the description of non-verbal phenomena, especially for participants' gaze/nods, I use a way that differs from conventional methods. The main reason for this is that conventional methods are not designed for and are not capable of sufficiently describing all participants' gazes and nods, factors which are important for my analysis. In examples for this study, Examples 1 and 2, every line of utterance is accompanied by the gaze-line of every participant; the gaze-lines are dashed lines below each utterance, representing the gaze of each participant. The

letters in parentheses on the gaze-line indicate the direction or the object of the gaze. The letter appearing to the right of the gaze holder's identification does not necessarily indicate gaze-shift ; it simply indicates the direction or object of the speakers when the utterance begins. I use capitalized initials if the object of gaze is an individual and non-capitalized “m” when participants are looking down at materials on the desk or gazing down. Nods are also indicated on the gaze line. For describing distinctive gestures which overlap with utterances, I mark the overlapping parts with the symbol “~~” and explain the gesture within double parentheses below the symbol. For the reader's benefit, I explain more with reference to the case below.

2. Z : miao limian (.) ni meibanfa

seconds inside you no way

Z: (m)----- (o)----- (m)-----

O: (m)-----nod-----

S: (m)-----

In the above excerpt, the first gaze-line shows Z's (Zhou's) gaze and nods. While Z himself is speaking, he is first gazing down; he then looks up at O (Okano) when he utters “*limian*,” or “inside.” Then when he utters “*meibanfa*,” or “no way,” he gazes down. The second gaze-line is O's. He keeps his gaze down during Z's utterance, and he nods when Z pauses. The third line is S's (Suzuki's), which shows that S keeps his gaze down during the entire period of Z's utterance. All non-capitalized m-s right after the gaze-holders' identities do not indicate that they shift their gaze to materials on the desk, or gaze down; they simply indicate the direction of their gaze at that point. (So, if the last gaze-line indicates different gaze-object than the first letter, it means the gaze-holder shifts his gaze at this point.)

4. Data analysis

4.1. Gaze and head nods

In this portion of my discussion, I analyze the head nods and gaze used by primary interlocutors (i.e., non-translating participants) as ways of directly communicating with each other. This example below (Example 1) is an excerpt from the videotaped corpus I collected during my fieldwork for the current study. It is from the meeting for the production of a television commercial. The products to be advertised are a series of three bathroom products: bathtub, tile, and bathtub stopper. This is a part of the discussion on whether they should make one long (thirty-second) commercial and advertise the three products together or whether they should divide it into three short (fifteen-second) commercials advertising each product separately.

The participants are : Zhou (Shanghainese television commercial planner ; speaks Shanghainese and Mandarin), Okano (Japanese account executive ; speaks Japanese and Mandarin), and Suzuki (Japanese director of the sales promotion department; speaks Japanese). They are sitting at three sides of a rectangular table; Zhou and Suzuki are facing each other and Okano is in the center. As the only bilingual among the participants, Okano is playing the role of translator. The transcript begins with Zhou's comment in Mandarin, followed by Okano's translation into Japanese, then by Suzuki's response. As readers will see in the data below, Zhou thinks it is better to make three separate commercials rather than one long commercial.

Example 1

Participants (languages they speak and professional affiliations)

Z (Zhou): Shanghainese (L1)⁵, Mandarin (L1), television commercial planner

O(Okano): Japanese (L1), Mandarin (L2), account executive

S (Suzuki): Japanese (L1), director of the sales promotion department

1.Z: wo zai xiang, inwei ni zai zhezhong sanshi san(---)ge shengme sanshis

I am thinking because you in this kind of thirty three s what thirty

Z: (m)---(O)-----(m)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

2. miao limian (.) ni meibanfa

seconds inside you no way

Z: (m)---(o)------(m)-----

O: (m)----- nod -----

S: (m)-----

I am thinking that, because in this kind of thirty, within thirty seconds, you have no way

3.O: eh, [eh

Uh-huh, uh-huh

Z: (m)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

Uh-huh, uh-huh

4.Z: [hen mingjue de fenkai shi shegme yang sheng [me yang de

very clearly PA divide is what like what like PA

Z: (m)---(O)------(m)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

to clearly divide things like this or like that.

5.O: [Ma, sanjuu byou wo

Well thirty seconds PA

Z: (m)---(S)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

6. ne (.) hitotus tuskuru: (.) tukutte (0.5)

you know one make make and

Z: (m)-nod-nod----- (m)---

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----nod- (m)-

7. ironna shouhin o dasu yori wa, yappari juugo byou de

various products PA show than PA after all fifteen seconds in

Z: (S)-----nod-nod-----

O: (S)-----

S: (O)-----

8. tsuk [utte kichitto wakechatta [hou ga] wakari yasui deshou neto.

make and distinctively divide way PA understand easy will I guess

Z: (S)-----NOD-nod-nod-----

O: (S)----- (m)-----

S: (O)-----nod---- (Z)-NOD-----

~~~~~

pointing gesture on the material

*Well, rather than making one thirty-second (TV commercial) and advertising many products (in it), (it's) better [to advertise each product] separately in (several types of) fifteen-second (TV commercials), it's easier to understand, I think.*

9.S: [(sore wa sou desu ne) (---) [hou ga]

it PA so is right way PA

*That's right. (---) [It's] better,*

10. Sore de ato, naga

it then also fl-

Z: (S)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (O)-----

*And also, fl-*

11.O: Ah, ah, eh,

Huh, huh, huh

Z: (S)-----

O: (m)---(S)-nod-(m)

S: (m)-----

*Huh, huh, huh,*

12.S: moshi ne mittsu ni wakerun dattara nanda sono eh:::(.) (---)nagashi

if you know three into divide then what it uh put on the air

Z: (S)------(m)------(S)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)------(O)-----

13. kata? (1.5) Nagashi kata o, tatoeba, ichi ni san,

way put on the air way PA for example one two three

Z:(S)-----

O:(m)----nod-----

S:(O)------(m)-----

*If [we are going to][make] three, what, well, (---) the way to put [the advertisements] on the air? [About] the way to put [them], for example, one, two, three,*

In line 5, Okano starts translating what Zhou has just said into Japanese from line 1 through line 4. Except for a momentary deviation, Zhou keeps his gaze on Suzuki during Okano's translation from line 5 through line 8. On the other hand, neither Okano nor Suzuki gazes at Zhou until toward the end of Okano's translation. Instead, after Okano's pause and accompanying Suzuki's nod at the end of line 6, Okano and Suzuki are gazing at each other in line 7 and in most of line 8. The translation from line 5 through line 8 is being offered by Okano for Suzuki, and it seems reasonable that the two Japanese participants are engaging with each other by gaze during the translation but not with Zhou, the original speaker of Okano's translation. That is, during most of Okano's translation from line 5 through line 8, Suzuki behaves as Okano's listener, as shown in his engagement with Okano by nod

and gaze (see Illustration 1).



Illustration 1: Suzuki behaves as Okano's listener, as shown in his engagement with Okano by nod and gaze

However, this relationship between Okano and Suzuki as speaker and listener terminates with Suzuki's move. Review line 8 of Example 1 below.

8 tsuk [utte kichitto wakechatta [hou ga] wakari yasui deshou ne to.

Make and distinctively divide way PA understand easy will I guess

Z: (S)-----NOD-nod-nod-----

O: (S)----- (m)-----

S: (O)-----nod----(Z)NOD-----

~~~~~

pointing gesture on the material

When Okano's translating nears the end (in line 8), Suzuki utters the same words Okano is uttering, "*houga*," overlapping with Okano. At the same time, Suzuki points at the document on the table. It is not clear whether these series of actions are done to encourage termination of Okano's current utterance; yet, it does seem clear that Suzuki gives a kind of punctuation to Okano's translating by these series of acts. In support of this, after the simultaneous acts of overlapping, nodding, and pointing, Suzuki turns his head from Okano toward Zhou and noticeably nods once with his gaze on Zhou (see Illustration 2a and 2b).

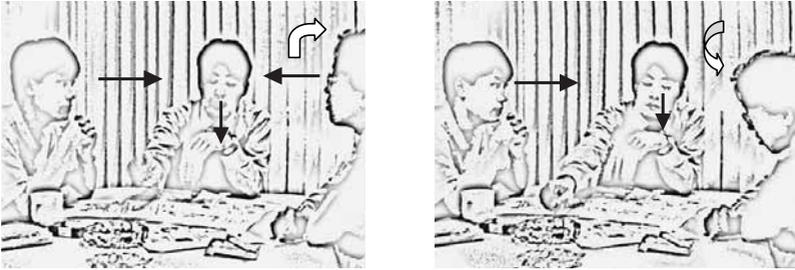


Illustration 2a & Illustration 2b : Suzuki noticeably nods and Zhou nods almost simultaneously with Suzuki, while Okano gazes down.

It is important to realize at this point that having kept his gaze on Suzuki, Zhou could notice this punctuation that Suzuki has produced. That is, although Zhou does not understand what is being said (or translated) at which point, Zhou is capable of knowing, by looking at Suzuki, that an interactional punctuation occurs between Suzuki and Okano. Almost simultaneously with Suzuki, Zhou also markedly nods, followed by two lighter nods. In chorus, Okano gazes down and disengages from Suzuki (see Illustration 2a and 2b again). Thus, toward the very end of Okano's translation of Zhou's comment, the interactional framework, which has been centering primarily on Suzuki and Okano, now shifts to Suzuki and Zhou. And in this new interactional framework, Suzuki and Zhou noticeably exchange nods and gaze way, suggesting they are demonstrating 'something' to each other.

As reviewed earlier, back-channels are usually defined as behaviors that a listening participant offers in response to a speaking participant. In this regard, Suzuki's and Zhou's synchronized acts may not be regarded as back-channels; right before the synchronization, Suzuki and Zhou were not in the speaker-listener framework, as they will never be in this example—that is, they cannot directly speak with and listen to each other because they do not share a common language. However, we should remember that it is given to all participants in the example that Okano is translating Zhou's Chinese comment into Japanese for Suzuki. Therefore, it is possible to consider that Suzuki's nodding toward Zhou somehow indicates his

response to Zhou's idea, which is transmitted to Suzuki through Okano's translation and Zhou's nodding. Along this line, it is also possible to say that Suzuki is demonstrating his understanding about Zhou's idea directly to Zhou himself by offering back-channels, without counting on Okano's translation. That is, although Suzuki and Zhou cannot directly talk about Zhou's idea for the commercial because of the language barrier, they can still directly communicate about Suzuki's understanding of that beyond the language barrier. In sum, despite the facts that they do not share a common language and that their utterances are being translated by a bilingual participant, Suzuki and Zhou are capable of communicating directly with each other.

An even more important phenomenon related to their synchronization is, however, that after this synchronization as well as after Okano's translation, Suzuki takes the floor in line 10, making Okano his listener-as shown in Okano's acknowledgment tokens in line 11. Review the parts below.

8 tsuk [utte kichitto wakechatta [hou ga] wakari yasui deshou ne to.

make and distinctively divide way PA understand easy will I guess

Z: (S)-----NOD-nod-nod-----

O: (S)----- (m)-----

S: (O)-----nod-----(Z)-NOD-----

~~~~~

pointing gesture on the material

*Well, rather than making one thirty-second (TV commercial) and advertising many products (in it), (it's) better [to advertise each product] separately in (several types of) fifteen-second (TV commercials), it's easier to understand, I guess.*

9. S: [(sore wa sou desu ne) (---) [hou ga]

it PA so is right way PA

*That's right. (---) [It's] better,*

10. S: Sore de ato, naga

it then also flo-

Z: (S)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (O)-----

*And also, flo-*

11. O: Ah, ah, eh,

Huh, huh, huh

Z: (S)-----

O: (m)---(S)-nod-(m)

S: (m)-----

*Huh, huh, huh,*



Illustration 3 : Suzuki turns his head toward Okano as well as returning his gaze to Okano, with taking the floor.

This also means that the interactional framework between Zhou and Suzuki, which was effective in the later part of line 8, is now deactivated, as Suzuki turns his head toward Okano as well as returning his gaze to Okano in line 10<sup>6</sup> (see Illustration 3). Although Suzuki's overlapping (in line 9) with Okano's words (in line 8) signals that Suzuki may be taking the floor from Okano<sup>7</sup>, it is interesting that

Suzuki makes an interactional engagement with Zhou right after his overlapping and right before his taking the floor. In other words, although speaker-listener alternation itself concerns (only) the interactional framework between Okano and Suzuki, a different interactional framework between Suzuki and Zhou gets inserted in the middle of the process of floor alternation.<sup>8</sup> (See Figure 1 below.)

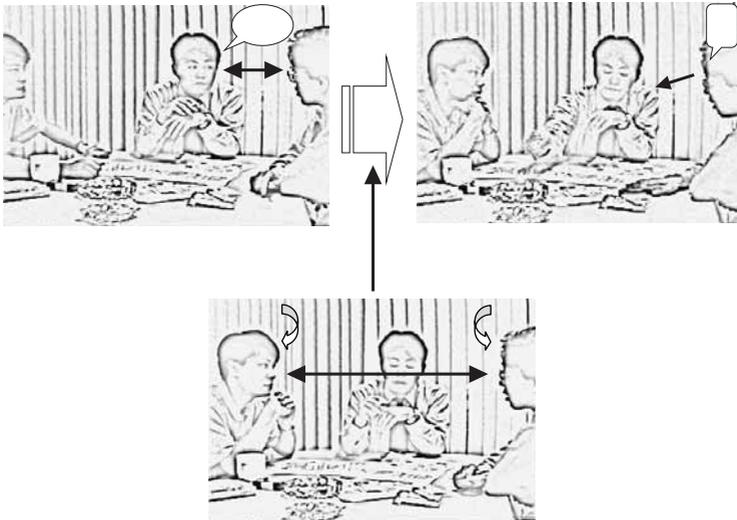


Figure 1 : Another interactional framework between Zhou-Suzuki (primary interlocutors gets inserted in the process of floor alternation between Okano and Suzuki (Japanese speakers/listeners)).

In an attempt to address the significance of this phenomenon, it seems important to consider the nature of the two interactional frameworks. The two different frameworks present in Example 1 concern the two relationships involved in translation-mediated interactions: the relationship between the translating interlocutor and the primary interlocutors, and the relationship between the primary interlocutors. Needless to say, the former is based on a common language whereas the latter is not.

Before the translation occurs, or upon and after the original comment by either original interlocutor is made (upon and after line 4, in Example 1), interaction

seems to center on the relationship between the original interlocutor and the translating participant (Zhou and Okano, in Example 1), because the understanding of the comment is shared only between the two. At this point, the other original interlocutor (Suzuki, in Example 1), who has not shared the understanding yet due to his linguistic inability (of Mandarin, in the case of Example 1), can be excluded from whatever interactional conducts the other two manage based on their sharing and/or shared understanding of the comment. However, upon and after the translation occurs, the primary interlocutors, theoretically, come to share the understanding of the comment; they have now shared a common ground on which they may manage interaction. Now all the participants can be involved in interactional management based on the understanding of the original comment—Zhou's statement from line 1 through 2 in Example 1.

The phenomenon of the inserted framework in the process of floor alternation between Okano and Suzuki discussed above therefore seems to show that interactive management (e.g., alternation of speakership and listenership) between the interlocutors who share a common language (i.e., Okano and Suzuki as the translating participant and one of the primary interlocutors), especially after the occurrence of the translation, is related to how primary interlocutors (i.e., Okano and Zhou) who do not share the language interact at that time. Or, it may even be facilitated by the non-verbal way(s) in which primary interlocutors directly communicate with each other. This seems to explain why Okano averts his gaze, demonstrating his interactive disengagement from Suzuki, simultaneously with Zhou's and Suzuki's nodding synchronization.

Okano's utterance is supposed to be a rephrasing of Zhou's utterance in this context of translation-mediated interactions; therefore, although verbal communication is occurring only between Okano and Suzuki (i.e., the translating participant and one of the primary interlocutors who share the target language of the translation) during Okano's translating, Okano is actually speaking *for* Zhou. That is, as far as the relationship between Zhou and Suzuki as the primary interlocutors is concerned, it is still considered to be *Zhou's* turn. Therefore, upon and after

sharing Zhou's idea through translation, it seems reasonable that Suzuki and Zhou demonstrate mutual understanding to each other about the idea before Suzuki takes his turn, because Suzuki is not only taking the floor from Okano as the delegated speaker but also from Zhou as one of the primary speakers.

#### 4.2. Acknowledgement tokens

The next example is from the same meeting as Example 1. This segment occurs a while after Example 1 and also shows that Zhou and Suzuki, the primary interlocutors, are directly communicating each other in a non-verbal way. Unlike Example 1, however, their direct communication occurs during Zhou's speaking Mandarin utterances, not during Okano's Japanese utterances (i.e., not during Okano's translation of Zhou's Mandarin comment into Japanese sentences for Suzuki). In this example, Suzuki utters Japanese acknowledgement tokens during Zhou's speaking, and his acknowledgement tokens seem to function as back-channels, despite the fact, again, that Suzuki and Zhou do not share a common language and thus that Suzuki does not understand what Zhou is saying. See below.

#### Example 2

1.Z: Zhe zhong paishe de fanfa, camera,

this kind shooting 's way camera

Z: (m)-----

~~~~~

((circling with finger on the material))

O: m)-----

S: (m)-----

This kind of way of shooting, camera,

2.S: N n n n

M m m m

Z: (m)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

3.Z : Zhezhong (.) do:ri⁹

this kind of shooting

Z: (m)----- (S) - (m) -

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

This kind of shooting

4.S: Dori,

Shooting

Z: (m)----

O: (m)----

S: (m)----

Shooting,

5.Z: Eh,

Huh

Z: (S) -nod-

O: (m) --

S: (Z) ---

Uh-huh?

6.S: N [n n n

Mm mm mm mm

Z: (m)-----

O: (M)-----

S: (Z) ---nod- (m) -

Mm, mm, mm, mm,

7.Z: [Zhezhong paishe de fanfa, he women shangci konakkusu you shuo

this kind of shooting 's way with us the last time KONAX have say

Z: (m)----- (O)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

8. bu ding de.

not definitely PA

Z: (O)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

KONAX wasn't clear with us [about] the way of shooting.

9.O: nn, nn

Z: (m)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-nod--

10.Z: Zheyang ba,

like this isn't it

Z: (O)-----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

Like this, isn't it

11.O: n, n

Mm mm

Z: (m)----

O: (m)---

S: (m)----

Mm, mm,

12.Z: ta, ta xuyao jue due shi, zheng, jiushi, zheng ge zheng ge de yugang,

it it need absolutely is whole I mean whole while bathtub

Z: (m)-----



((touch the ashtray))

O: (m)-----look toward the ashtray-----

S: (m)-----look toward the ashtray-----

13. yige, yigede yigede biao(xian)

one one one expression

Z: (m)-looking toward ashtray-----

O: (m)-looking toward ashtray-----

S: (m)-looking toward ashtray-----

It, it needs to be absolutely a whole, I mean, a whole, a whole bathtub, [as] a way of, a way of expression,

14.S: nn

Mm

Z: (m)-ashtray-

O: (m)-ashtray-

S: (M)-ashtray-

Mm.

15.Z: Cong zheyang satt (.) satt

from this way ((Onomatopoeia))

Z: (m)-ashtray-----

~~~~~

((hand gesture: swimming mermaid around the ashtray))

O: (m)-ashtray-----

S: (m)-ashtray-----

*By way of ((onomatopoeia)).*

## 16.O:N,

mm

Z: (m)-ashtray

~

O: (m)-ashtray

S: (m)-ashtra

*Mm,*

17.Z:satt,

((Onomatopoeia))

Z:(m)-astray-

~~~~~

((hand gesture:mermaid))

O:(m)-ashtray-

S:(m)-ashtray-

18.O: Dakara, kore de ittara maa, kono ofuro wo ne zenbu zenbu miserutte

because this by go well this bathtub PA well whole whole show

Z:(O)------(m)------(S)-nod----

O:(m)-----

S:(m)-----nod-----

19. iuyou na

like

Z:(m)-----

O:(m)-----

S:(m)-----

So, in this way, well, like showing this bathtub entirely,

20.S: Sou desu ne. (.) (Mukoude ne.)

it is yeah over there yeah

Z:(S)-----nod-----nod-----

O:(m)-----

S:(m)-----

That's right.

As shown above, from line 1 through line 17, Zhou keeps the floor. Since the participants gaze down at the materials on the desk most of the time in this example, we cannot detect from their gaze the response of the other two to Zhou's comments. However, they constantly utter acknowledgement tokens during the excerpt (described in line 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, and 16). All the acknowledgement tokens in these

lines are “nasal-tokens” and indicate that the utterers are demonstrating their “passive listenership” (Handy Bosma & Funayama, 1999).^{10 11}

It is noteworthy that it is not only Okano who offers acknowledgment tokens uttered in these lines; Suzuki also offers acknowledgement tokens as often as Okano does, in line 2, 6, and 14, while Okano does so in line 9, 10, 16. Considering the fact that Suzuki cannot understand Zhou’s Chinese utterances, it seems self-evident that Suzuki is *not* demonstrating his understanding or following what Zhou is stating. In this regard, Suzuki’s acknowledgment tokens may not be regarded as “back-channels.” However, Zhou’s circling gesture with a finger on the material in line 1 can be visibly shared by Suzuki; in this regard, it is possible that Suzuki understands that Zhou is saying ‘something’ about the part he is circling and demonstrating such. Further, when we look at this phenomenon from the speaker’s (Zhou’s) perspective rather than the listener’s (Suzuki’s) or the token-utterer, we still may say that Zhou “is receiving back-channels.” The reason is that Zhou is thereby continuing his talk after each occurrence of Suzuki’s acknowledgment token.¹² Tsukahara and Word (1997) state *behaviors* of back-channels (e.g., acknowledgement tokens) do not necessarily indicate the utterers’ understanding of the content of talk. Accordingly, it seems that in offering back-channels and thereby encouraging the continuation of talk, Suzuki plays the role of listener without understanding the speaker’s language.

4.3. Imperfect use of language

Especially from line 1 through line 8 in Example 2, it is only Suzuki who offers back-channels; that is, despite their language barrier and despite the fact that Okano is the only one who can understand Zhou’s comment, the interaction is centering on the relationship between Suzuki and Zhou during this particular period. During this particular period, while they do not share a common language, however, Zhou’s utterance of a Japanese word accentuates their interactional engagement with each other. Review below an excerpt from Example 2.

From Example 2

3. Z: Zhezhong (.) do:ri¹³

this kind of shooting

Z: (m)----- (S) - (m) ----

O: (m)-----

S: (m)-----

This kind of shooting

4. S: Dori,

Shooting

Z: (m) ----

O: (m) ----

S: (m) ----

Shooting,

5. Z: Eh,

you know

Z: (S) -nod-

O: (m) --

S: (Z) ---

Uh-huh?

6. S: N [n n n

Mm mm mm mm

Z: (m)-----

O: (M)-----

S: (Z) ---nod- (m) -

“Dori” in line 3 is, as repeatedly noted in the footnotes, a Japanese word meaning “shooting.” However, readers should know that native Japanese speakers do not usually use this word alone. They, particularly those in the advertising industry, use this word as part of a hybrid word, like “*comaasharu-dori*,” or “shooting of

commercials”; the word placed before “*dori*” indicates the object of shooting. I have observed that some Chinese members of Shanghai Advertisement, including Zhou, have picked up and use at times certain Japanese words, such as greetings and industry-specific words, likely through interacting and socializing with Japanese members of Shanghai Advertisement for an extended period of time.¹⁴ The use of such words is often somewhat awkward, as in the case above, and does not add significant content to their talk-as easily speculated, because they do not know the language itself after all. Nevertheless, it seems to make an impact in terms of how interactions proceed, and actually, in my observation, such imperfect use of language is one of the characteristics of the communicative practices at Shanghai-BDK.

In Example 2, Zhou’s imperfect use of the Japanese word seems to facilitate Zhou’s and Suzuki’s interaction. First, it becomes a resource for Suzuki’s particular behavior of an offering back-channel to Zhou in line 4. In line 4, Suzuki repeats a part of Zhou’s preceding sentence, i.e., the particular Japanese word—“*dori*”—used in Zhou’s utterance in line 3; as previously stated, partial repetition of the speaker’s words is a way of offering back-channels. However, it should be noted that unless Zhou inserts the Japanese word into his Mandarin sentence, Suzuki can not offer this particular kind of back-channels; Suzuki would not be able to repeat, or reproduce, any Mandarin word, at least not as a meaningful unit.

After Suzuki’s repetition, in line 5, Zhou and Suzuki look up and their gazes meet (see Illustration 4), then right after that, Zhou nods to Suzuki, uttering “*eh*.” The closest literary translation of this “*eh*” may be “uh-huh?”, as the transcript shows, yet the connotation delivered to Chinese speakers seem closer to “you know?” or “right?” That is, he is confirming something, most likely Suzuki’s understanding about “*dori*,”¹⁵ given that Suzuki repeats “*dori*.” Then in the next line, line 6, Suzuki utters nasal acknowledgement tokens along with a nod (see Illustration 5). It seems clear that at this point they are demonstrating somewhat shared understanding about ‘something’ between themselves and are communicating as such—directly with each other, beyond the language barrier.



Illustration 4 (left): Zhou and Suzuki look up and their gazes meet.

Illustration 5 (right): Suzuki utters acknowledgement tokens along with a nod.

My speculation is that they have at least shared up to this point an understanding that Zhou is saying ‘something’ about the part he is circling and that Zhou is saying ‘something’ about “*dori*,” or ‘shooting’ related to the part he is circling. That is, they probably have not shared a significant understanding as far as the content of (Zhou’s) talk or discussion is concerned, and actually, nothing substantial about “*dori*” or “shooting” has really been said by Zhou at this point. Nevertheless, and more importantly, the degree of sharedness is sufficient to be ‘a common ground’ between them; they can then interactionally confirm this common ground, and thus directly communicate as such beyond language barriers. Additionally, the Japanese word “*dori*,” along with Zhou’s circling gesture, plays an important role in the creation of such common ground, enabling mutual understanding (to a sufficient degree) to occur.

5. Concluding Remarks

Wadensjo (1998) shows her concern that translators, because of their exclusive access to two languages involved in translating, run the risk of depriving the primary interlocutors of their power and responsibility in communication. However, my analysis has demonstrated that in translation-mediated interactions of business or creative meetings at Shnanghai-BDK, interlocutors other than the translating participant can actively engage in the communicative process of translation-mediated interactions, influencing the intercultural communication underway.

In this study, I have identified important contributions that the original speaker and the receiver of translation make in translation-mediated interactions. One significant finding is that the original speaker and the receiver of translation frequently attempt to directly interact with each other beyond language barriers, despite the fact that their utterances are being translated. I have shown that during translation-mediated interactions, primary interlocutors who do not share a common language frequently interact directly with each other by the use of back-channels beyond their language barriers and the translating participant, and I have examined how they do so. By the use of back-channels such as gaze, nods, as well as repetition of the current speaker's words, primary interlocutors of translation-mediated interactions can reach a mutual understanding about particular aspects of the discussion underway, which the translating participant or translation does not provide—for example, understanding of the translated content and/or materials under discussion, or confirmation of such understanding, or when and how one can take the turn from the other.

Linguistic competence has been frequently regarded as one of the most important elements of intercultural communication competence. However, my analyses, based on detailed analysis of actual interactions, have shown that interlocutors in intercultural settings within the context of Shanghai Advertisement can be communicatively competent despite their linguistic incompetence or language barriers; linguistic inability, or a lack of cultural knowledge, does not necessarily indicate communicative incompetence. In conclusion, when we study intercultural communication by examining actual details of particular interactions occurring at Shanghai Advertisement, we realize that what constructs communicative competence in the context of Shanghai Advertisement does not necessarily stem from an individual's stock knowledge but lies in the dynamics of ongoing interaction.

One defining characteristic of the present study, as compared to existing literature on translation or translation-mediated interactions, is that this study examines the interactions in which no one is a professional translator. This further differentiates

my discussion from the previous literature in two ways: the translating interlocutor has more linguistic difficulties when engaging in translating, and the translating interlocutor is just one of those involved in the task underway, sharing co-membership with other interlocutors in various ways. These points set up a certain limit for comparing my argument and most previous studies on translation or translation-mediated interactions and thus may need to be considered for further research. My findings as well as my argument may be only applicable for the cases in which the translator is not a professional translator. On the other hand, it seems even more common in the contemporary world that the translating interlocutor is not necessarily a professional translator in a given intercultural setting. The settings like those discussed in this article, in which interlocutors play the role of translator in more improvised ways and in varying situated tasks, deserve more investigation in the future.

Notes 1

Transcript notation

- : A colon indicates an extension of the sound or syllable.
- :: More colons prolong the stretch.
- (2.0) When intervals in the stream of talk occur, they are timed in tenths of a second and inserted within parentheses, either within an utterance or between utterances.
- (.) When pauses in the stream of talk occur, they are indicated with a dot within parentheses.
- (---) Broken lines within parentheses indicate unintelligible utterances.
- [] Brackets indicate utterances (and/or gestures) within brackets are overlapping.

Notes 2

¹All names appeared in this paper are pseudonymous

²As I explained earlier in this study, there are five major languages used in the mainland China, all of which can be called “Chinese,” and Mandarin is one of the five languages used in Beijing and Shanghai, as well as the official language of the People's Republic of China. Therefore, unless one is from the area(s), most people in China speak their local/native language in addition to Mandarin. (And if one is not very educated, his/her proficiency/sophistication of Mandarin can be lower.) In this section in particular, I am using the term “Chinese” following the researchers’ ways, but I speculate in most cases, the language they have studied is actually “Mandarin.”

³For detailed explanation of the transcript notation developed by Gail Jefferson, see J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage, ed., *Structures of Social Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) ix-xvi.

⁴Most Chinese members of Shanghai Advertisement are from Shanghai and natively speak the local language, Shanghainese, in addition to the official language of China, Mandarin. Mandarin is one of the five major languages (dialects) spoken in mainland China, and it is the official language of the People's Republic of China. All Chinese employees in Shanghai Advertisement natively speak both Mandarin and Shanghainese with each other, and they speak Mandarin with Japanese members and frequently among themselves in task-oriented situations. While both Mandarin and Japanese are used for communication in Shanghai Advertisement, which language is used is contingent upon the particulars of any situation (e.g., participants and occasion.) Sometimes participants use one or the other language exclusively, and at other times both languages are used with code-switching.

⁵L1 refers to the first/native language of the participant. L2 refers to the second language of the participant.

⁶Zhou cannot be Suzuki's listener because Suzuki speaks (only) Japanese and Zhou cannot understand Japanese, although Zhou still keeps his gaze on Suzuki.

⁷This can be also speculated from the fact that Okano is already done with translating Zhou's comment for Suzuki at the middle point of line 7, therefore, Suzuki is now expected to offer his response to Okano, and/or Zhou through Okano's translation.

⁸Yet, if looking at only from the perspective of Zhou and/or his gaze-engagement, the interactional framework between Zhou and Suzuki has been present.

⁹“*Dori*” is a Japanese word meaning “shooting.” Although Zhou does not speak Japanese, he has picked up several Japanese words used in advertising and sometimes inserts them in his Mandarin sentences.

¹⁰The work by Handy Bosma and Funayama is about Japanese acknowledgment tokens, and may not be exactly applicable for understanding Mandarin conversations. However, since the example also includes Japanese utterances and both of the acknowledgment token-utterers under discussion are Japanese native speakers, one of which does not speak Mandarin at all, their findings still seem to be useful for understanding these acknowledgement tokens.

¹¹It is understood that among acknowledgment tokens and/or back-channel, some signal speakership incipency. See, Handy Bosma, & Funayama, 1999; Sztatowski, 2000; and Tsukahara & Word 1997.

¹²As to whether we should study back-channel from the speaker's or listener's perspective and the importance of collaboration between the speaker and the listener as related to back-channel, see, Mizutani, 1988.

¹³“*Dori*” is a Japanese word meaning “shooting.” Although Zhou does not speak Japanese, he has

picked up several Japanese words used in advertising and sometimes insert them in his Mandarin sentences.

¹⁴I am talking about Chinese members who do *not* speak Japanese.

¹⁵It should be noted that it is not exactly clear, which aspect of Suzuki's understanding Zhou is trying to confirm. However, my point is that Zhou and Suzuki are engaging in a type of confirming interaction, beyond their language barriers, as well as despite the fact, they have not really shared a significant understanding about the content of talk by this time.

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