

Title of Proposed Paper:	Syntactic processing in translation from L1 to L2
Presentation type	Poster
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Abstract for Proposed Paper:

Unlike English, Danish is a verb-second (V2) language: the finite verb is always the second constituent in main clauses, whether the subject is the first constituent (canonical word order) or not (non-canonical word order). In English by contrast, the finite verb precedes the subject. This means that some Danish clauses have the same order of subject and finite verb as their English translation equivalents (S-V clauses), while in other cases, the word order is reversed relative to English (V-S clauses). This reversal mainly occurs when (a) a sentence is introduced by an adverbial or a preposition (b) the subordinate clause precedes the main clause (Hjulmand & Schwarz 2008). The present study investigates whether translation of these particular segments, which prompt reordering of the subject and the finite verb, involve increased cognitive effort.

10 professional native Danish translators took part in a translation experiment in which they had their eye movements tracked during a translation task from Danish into English. The specific focus of the experiment was to assess to which extent professional translators have to invest an increased amount of cognitive effort in the translation task when translating sentences that require reordering of the subject and the finite verb. Another aim was to evaluate to which extent eye-tracking technology is useful for examining micro-behavioural changes in professional translators' gaze patterns. The eye-tracking indicators that we selected as reflective of our subjects' gaze behaviour included total gaze time, i.e. the combined duration of fixations, average fixation duration, and pupil dilation (Rayner 1998, Pavlovic & Jensen 2008).

It is commonly assumed that gaze time, duration of average fixation, and dilation of the pupils reflect the amount of cognitive effort invested in a specific task.

Our data establishes an increased cognitive effort associated with those segments where the order of subject and finite verb in L1 must be changed for the translation into L2, compared to those segments where the word order can be maintained in L2. This implies that translators may be predisposed to apply source language syntax as their primary translation strategy, causing increased processing time as the translators subconsciously adapt the syntax to fit the conventions of the target language. Furthermore the experiment demonstrates that eye-tracking is useful and relevant for assessing micro-behavioural changes in translators' gaze patterns, but the lack of high accuracy of the eye-tracking equipment used in the study places certain constraints on the research design in terms of e.g. large font size, increased line spacing, and limited length of stimulus.