



***The awe factor explored.
Searching for the conference interpreter advantage
in linguistic processing***

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Professional conference interpreters, who are able to produce target language text while simultaneously listening to the source language text, oftentimes spark awe among their listeners. Due to cross-linguistic multitasking, interpreting may be viewed as an extreme case of language processing. In this talk I will review a series of experiments in which I attempted to examine how interpreting practice might influence linguistic processing. I have compared professional conference interpreters to beginner and advanced interpreting trainees, non-interpreting bilingual controls and translators in basic linguistic tasks (such as word comprehension and production) and more complex ones (such as paraphrasing and respeaking, i.e. producing live subtitles). The results suggest that interpreter training, but not interpreting experience, improves lexical processing and that the interpreting expertise is domain-specific and does not easily translate into other domains even if they are similar. Since conference interpreters are an interesting population to study, I will also identify limitations of behavioural experiments in Interpreting Studies and outline new promising research avenues.