

## UTILIZING GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

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### Abstract:

This article presents a hypothesis about the impact of field dependency upon the quality of translation and interpretation processes and language learning. The claim being made in this paper is that general psychological knowledge of field dependency can be applied to this specific area and contribute to the more effective development of the professional skills of translators and interpreters well as language skills of any language learners. Field dependency as an inner predisposition determines how we perceive and process information, and how we approach problem-solving tasks. As a cognitive feature with affective and social dimensions, field dependency manifests itself as the ability to separate parts from the whole in perceptual, abstract, and social fields. In this paper it is suggested that these subconscious mental mechanisms are present also in translation and interpretation processes, in which they may considerably determine the quality of outcomes. Different aspects of field dependency and field independency are influential in different types of translated discourse, interpretation situations and language learning tasks. The theoretical analysis of various aspects of this cognitive style is followed by their application to foreign language learning, translation and interpretation processes and illustrated by some examples of defective practices. The discussion could be of direct use to translators and interpreters by helping them become aware of their own subconscious preferences and mental mechanisms, and purposefully work with them in order to improve the quality of their work. Furthermore, it could help educators to develop language skills and the required professional skills of their trainees.

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**Key Words:** Psychological aspects, field dependency / field independency, quality of translation and interpretation, professional skills

In the field of translation/ interpretation most researches and professional discussions are traditionally focussed on the materials in question, i.e. text, discourse, literature etc., and on various linguistic aspects of translation / interpretation processes (semantic, pragmatic, grammar, interlanguage and intercultural interference etc.). However, as the processes are by human beings, it is obvious that the quality of final outcomes must be considerably determined by their inner predispositions, personalities and mental processes, both cognitive and affective; let alone the social and environmental factors. The fact is that little research has been done in this field and the number of relevant professional articles has been very limited so far. I am convinced that more research findings could “open eyes” to understanding many practical problems of translators / interpreters that have not yet been studied from this perspective. My intention is to present my opinions and hypothesis based on theoretical analysis of relevant psychological knowledge and, more importantly, to stimulate research in the field. My belief is that there is a huge potential for improving the development of professional skills, particularly in translator /interpreter training and education. Drawing on state-of-art psychological knowledge, the training of good professionals should focus not only on the development of their linguistic competence with its numerous sub competences necessary for a good translator /interpreter, but also on the development of skills and personal characteristics that can make them better professionals. In addition, their metacognitive awareness should be developed so that they could consciously utilize the strong points of their inner endowment and systematically work on weak ones.

Undoubtedly, there are many relevant fields, particularly in cognitive psychology, which could be focussed on and applied to this specific field of expertise. One of them seems to be the field of cognitive styles that are nowadays being studied and researched intensely, not only by cognitive

psychologists but also by experts in other fields, education in particular. Researchers seek to explain how people cognitively process stimuli from the environment, i.e. how they perceive input, process and store information, and how they subsequently respond to the stimuli. Due to the currently dominant focus on individuality, they study not only what people have in common but also how they individually differ in various characteristics. Each person has his/her specific features related to cognitive processes, due to which everybody constructs his/her subjective picture of the objective reality, processes information, solves problems, encodes (and decodes) thoughts into words in his /her own unique way. This leads to a wide variety in behaviours, approaches to tasks, responses to problems in various spheres and levels of mental functioning. Understandably, each translator / interpreter also perceives and processes a given text / utterance in their own way, uses different linguistic devices to express the same extralingual entity and behaves in their unique way.

Little research on cognitive styles has been conducted to date in the field of foreign language learning and usage (see in: Ellis 1994, Griffiths 1992, Reid 1995, 1998, Ehrman 1996, 2003, Riding 2001). Therefore we have to draw on the knowledge of experimental psychology and apply it to the specific conditions of translation / interpretation processes. Even if in experimental psychology there are plenty of research findings available, some experts doubt their validity due to numerous uncontrolled variables that might distort research results or allow different interpretations (see in: Witkin 1962, Mareš 1998, Skehan 1998). Inevitably, also in theory there appear various controversial claims and hypotheses leading to a plurality of opinions, and classifications. Therefore it is obvious that more research on psychological aspects of translation / interpretation would undoubtedly shed more light on relevant inner processes and help to improve the professional skills of translators and interpreters.

### **Field dependency/ field independency**

Field dependency seems to be the most frequently researched cognitive (or learning) style<sup>546</sup> in second language acquisition and usage. It was introduced, defined and extensively researched in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by gestaltpsychology, and in particular by Herman Witkin (see in Witkin 1962, Witkin and Goodenough 1981). Field dependency as an internal psychological characteristic is considered to be a very complex phenomenon consisting not only of cognitive but also of affective and social aspects (Chapelle and Green 1992, Skehan 1998, Lojová 2011). It determines how learners perceive input, process and organize information; how they approach various tasks, solve problems and how they behave in social interactions. Concretely, it determines to what extent people perceive individual elements as components that create the whole (field) or as parts separated from their environment (field). The whole may be either perceptual, abstract, or social fields. Generally speaking, the ability to discriminate perceptually as well as in abstract fields, in social situations and in language usage is considered to be a universal predisposition, in which people differ individually. This is also the case with the ability to perceive items in a given context and to see relationships between them. Field dependency as a personal feature is considered to be a continuum with two extreme poles. Each individual is characterized by his/her position on the continuum, which may change to some limited extent within his/her individual zone of flexibility. The scope of the zone is determined by numerous intrapersonal or environmental conditions and may vary in different contexts. Obviously, the extreme types (poles) are rather rare in real life. In spite of that, it seems to be more effective to study, research, and identify explicit differences between the two poles. In so doing, judgemental statements appear quite frequently, particularly when applying the theoretical knowledge to real life situations or characterizing people. However, it is important to emphasize that each pole has its positive and negative aspects. Therefore it is more useful to describe them objectively, analyze and explain their typical consequences and impact, which may be positive or negative depending on the different tasks and situations where a target language is used. Some examples are provided later in the article.

As has been mentioned, field dependency is predominantly characterized as a *perceptual feature* determining how people perceive perceptual stimuli (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, etc.). Field independent people can easily separate parts from the whole, quickly and easily perceive details,

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<sup>546</sup> Various experts use the terminology differently. Detailed discussion see in Mares 1998, Dörnyei 2005, Lojova 2011)

remember them and process them independently. However, extreme field independency, also called “tunnel vision”, can be too restricting, as people tend to focus on details, whether important or unimportant, too much, which hinders their ability to see the whole picture.

On the other hand, field dependent people perceive a perceptual field as a non-analyzed whole and cannot see (or hear etc.) the parts that the whole is composed of. Extremely field dependent people are not able to perceive the details that may convey the important information or even change the meaning of the whole, whether slightly or fundamentally.

Some experts believe that field dependency can also influence attention, namely the ability to concentrate on a mental activity in an environment rich in stimuli, whether visual or auditory. Field independent people can concentrate better as they are not easily disturbed by surrounding stimuli (e.g. noise, music, television, people talking or moving around). In contrast, field dependent people are not able to concentrate when their attention is distracted by surrounding stimuli, which they are not able to block off.

Field dependency also manifests itself in abstract fields, which may be comprised of *abstract sets of ideas, thoughts or emotions*. As a result, it determines how people process, categorize and organize information and how they approach problem-solving tasks. When solving problems, field independent people tend to focus on separate ideas and details that have caught their attention, whether they are important or not. They are able to elaborate on them thoroughly, however, independently of the whole context. It may lead to a digression from the main problem, to an incorrect comprehension of the whole, or of the relations within the whole field. On the other hand, field dependent people approach problems holistically, consider the context, create a bird’s-eye view and easily grasp complex relations within the whole. Naturally, they are not able to focus on parts so tend to overlook or ignore them even if the parts may change the comprehension of the whole situation or may be crucial for solving the problem. In spite of this general predisposition, the field dependent may focus on details and analyze and process them thoroughly, but it is always from the perspective of the whole (e.g. how the change of a particular detail may influence the meaning of the whole, which is an inevitable way of thinking when translating literature).

Field dependency also determines our social interactions as it has a considerable impact upon the *perception of the social environment* we live in. In this perspective, it crucially determines our self-perception, i.e. perception of self in a social environment (field), as well as of other related affective characteristics such as self-esteem, self-image, relations to our social environment and our behaviour. It is suggested that a fundamental feature is a general orientation either towards internal or external frames of reference (Brown and Gonzo 1995, Chapelle and Green 1992). Internally oriented people (field independent) tend to perceive themselves as a separate identity, not as part of the society they live in. They think and behave independently of their environment, of other people. They draw conclusions according to their own interpretations; their self-image is a result of their own self-esteem and self-evaluation. Therefore they tend to be more self-confident and stable in their opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

On the other hand, externally oriented people (field dependent) tend to adapt their interpretations, conclusions, and behaviour to the expectations of their social environment. Their self-esteem depends much more on other people’s evaluation, which may cause various inner confusions and conflicts resulting in lower self-confidence and instability in opinions and attitudes. In problem solving and decision making they are also significantly influenced by the context and other people’s opinions. Understandably, their behaviour may also be modified much more by the current situation, atmosphere or social expectations.

### **The impact of field dependency upon translation and interpretation processes**

From the discussion above, it seems obvious that field dependency is a multi-componential individual characteristic that must have an impact upon numerous spheres of human activity. Research findings suggest that it also significantly determines the processes of second language acquisition and learning (Reid 1995, 1998, Ehrman 1996, 2003, Riding 2001, Skehan 1998). Therefore we could hypothesize that it will also determine the usage of a target language in real life. This suggestion is based on the hypothesis that specific cognitive skills enabling people to analyse perceptual and abstract fields are the same as the skills enabling us to analyse linguistic fields. Even if field

dependency research in the area of translation and interpretation is rather limited, the claim being made in this paper is that general psychological knowledge on field dependency can be applied to this specific field and contribute to the more effective development of professional skills of translators and interpreters.

It may be supposed that field dependent / independent interpreters and translators enjoy varying degrees of success when interpreting in various situations, contexts and conditions, or when translating different types of texts. Generally speaking, differences in field dependency lead to the different perception and processing of language input (both mother tongue and second or foreign language); different decoding and comprehension; different encoding into a target language, as well as different responses to the environment. When perceiving language stimuli, it is necessary on the one hand to classify language units independently of the context, so that they can be understood paradigmatically and used appropriately in different contexts and varied situations. On the other hand, they must be properly comprehended in a given context, which determines their current meaning. Accordingly we must perceive and comprehend a stream of sounds, words, phrases, clauses and sentences, both independently as separate units and holistically in any given discourse, i.e. in the field it is a part of. These processes are even more difficult and demanding when using a second or foreign language, as claimed by cognitive psychology. It is obvious that when translating or interpreting, both the processes are important. However, in different contexts and discourses they may have different roles, different importance, advantages and disadvantages. The typical characteristics of the two poles, i.e. field independent / field dependent, applied to translation and interpretation processes are described below:

*Field independency* as our predisposition manifests itself by the ability to analyze and cognitively reconstruct the linguistic material we are exposed to, identify its components, explore the relationship between them, and separate the essential from the inessential (Skehan 1998). However, too much focus on details and their manipulation independently of other elements may block the ability to see relations among them, contextual relations, and thus hinder the comprehension of the meaning of the whole text or utterance. Field independent translators / interpreters tend to stick inadequately to an original text and the lexical meaning of language units or structures used. An unknown word, phrase, or structure brings them to a standstill; they find it difficult to cope with phenomena such as different semantic fields, homonymy and polysemy, ambiguous meaning of linguistic structures or lexical units where a current meaning must be derived from the context or current situation. In the case of lack of linguistic knowledge, the field independent are not able to guess the meaning from the context. The same applies when they are not “experts” in a given subject matter. Due to these characteristics their target language text or utterance may become difficult to comprehend, illogical, redundant, meaningless, confusing or even nonsensical, which they do not realize. (e.g.: On TV news the sentence “*In Iraq members of the American intelligence were imprisoned.*” was translated as “*...intelligent people...*”; In a film the sentence “*.....he was getting blue...*” was translated as *blue colour* ;there is also a quite frequent misuse of deontic / epistemic meanings of modal auxiliary verbs or ambiguous meaning of their negative forms etc.).

Furthermore, highly field independent translators and interpreters lack the skills of generalizing, summarizing, condensing, reviewing, paraphrasing, “reading between lines”, or noticing situational relations. In addition, they may not be able to implement cultural differences into their outcomes adequately, even if they may know about them theoretically. Due to these predispositions the field independent tend to translate literally, word-by-word, not respecting situational aspects, cultural differences or social conventions (e.g.: inadequate translation of phrases in American movies such as: “*I love you.*” in languages or cultures where it is not so common to use this phrase or to express one’s feelings so openly and frequently; or: “*Hello!*” literally translated also to a language in which it is more common to use in various social situations other, usually more formal, greetings such as “*Good morning, Good evening!*” etc.). As a result, translated /interpreted texts and dialogues do not sound natural; they may even change illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, they may contain mistakes such as the inappropriate use of pronouns, modal verbs, relative clauses, etc., or may even change the message encoded in the original text.

In the auditory perception of language input, typical field independent interpreters are able to selectively focus their attention on stimuli essential for the comprehension of the conveyed meaning,

as well as on the crucial linguistic aspects. On the other hand, they also tend to focus on unimportant details, which may easily divert their attention away from the main idea. They may also get lost in numerous details, losing the thread and mutual relations. As a consequence, the interpreted utterance may become difficult to comprehend. When interpreting, they also tend to pay attention to random unimportant notes or phrases that native speakers may spontaneously insert into their utterances, often subconsciously. They mistakenly believe that the more literally they interpret, the better job they do. On the other hand, they do not take into consideration the meaning expressed by spontaneous non-verbal means of communication, which may considerably help convey the meaning.

Similarly, in the visual perception of linguistic material, i.e. in reading and translating, the highly field independent tend to translate each word, “play” with individual words and details, either linguistic or content, usually to the detriment of cohesion and coherence. Their ability to respect and implement interlingual differences, syntactic in particular, may be limited, even if their level of proficiency in a target language is sufficient (e.g. the usage of nominal constructions, passive and active voice, non-finite constructions, verb phrases, complex sentences etc.). Furthermore, they are not able to implement intercultural differences and differences in extra lingual reality adequately so as to preserve the illocutionary intentions of the original text.

Considering all these characteristics, we can hypothesize that people who are highly field independent are better or more successful when translating and interpreting various professional materials rich in technical descriptions with explicitly stated facts, exact and clear instructions, economic or legal documents etc., which require linguistic analysis, accuracy, precision, exactness and literal translation. As their internal frame of reference is dominant, they rely on themselves and prefer individual work. When interpreting, the field independent often require to be given the text in advance, so that they can study it, analyze and prepare thoroughly. Logically, they expect the speaker to follow (even better to read) a prepared speech so that they can interpret precisely as they have prepared. It is more difficult for them to respond flexibly to a changed situation or to feedback from the audience; indeed they may hardly perceive the audience.

From the perspective of developing their professional skills, field independent translators and interpreters should focus consciously more on functional characteristics of linguistic phenomena as well as on their pragmatic aspects. It seems obvious that their declarative knowledge dominates their procedural knowledge, and their linguistic competence is usually greater than pragmatic and strategic competences. Therefore they should consciously and purposefully develop skills such as generalizing, summing up, condensing, guessing the meaning from the context, paraphrasing, grasping contextual relations, and perceiving nonverbal means of communication. There are numerous foreign language teaching materials available that offer relevant techniques and activities for classroom settings as well as for self study.

As general psychological characteristics suggest, highly *field dependent* translators / interpreters, on the contrary, perceive and process language stimuli holistically, parts are merged with their environment, and with the whole text or discourse (field). It is difficult for them to separate some elements from the context, to notice details, whether essential or inessential. Consequently, fragmental input, incomplete information (linguistic or content) or partial problems do not prevent them from getting the whole picture. When perceiving foreign language texts or utterances, they get the main idea or the gist of a problem. They also understand an overall situation and atmosphere with ease, even if there are some unknown lexical units or structures. When learning a foreign language, as a consequence of underdeveloped analytical skills they are not able to effectively process linguistic information and gradually create the systematic body of declarative knowledge of the language. They also tend to underestimate linguistic rules, correctness and accuracy in their utterances. When the field dependent work as translators or interpreters these characteristics may result in more or less serious mistakes, which they do not consider important. Usually fluent and communicative, field dependent people focus more on functional characteristics of linguistic phenomena. However, their level of linguistic competence is usually inferior, which they do not mind. When translating / interpreting, they can easily create the general view; they are skilled in paraphrasing, guessing the meaning and relations from the context, and “reading between the lines”. However, they may also tend to be superficial, imprecise and inaccurate, as they miss details that may be important or may significantly determine the meaning of the whole. As field dependent translators / interpreters rely on an external frame of

reference, they are easily influenced by the environment, situation, atmosphere, and context. They are also able to respond flexibly to changing conditions as well as to feedback from the audience, which may result in their own clarification of the content or discussion with the audience. Due to their strong interpersonal orientation they enjoy cooperation and need to belong to a team. When interpreting, they can also be easily influenced by a speaker, whom they approach as a partner, or by the emotional atmosphere, i.e. they succumb to possible tension or stress. Due to their social dependence they may also suffer from inner inhibitions, which may create barriers and hinder their language performance, particularly in a foreign language.

All these characteristics suggest that the highly field dependent tend to prefer successive interpretation in less formal or familiar social or professional environments that allow them to move self-confidently within familiar linguistic and thematic environments, to interpret freely, to paraphrase and respond directly to feedback. They are successful in interpreting utterances that require condensing, generalization, and providing concise summaries of utterances that are weak in ideas or facts (e.g. formal welcome speech). In so doing, however, they may miss some important pieces of information (e.g. *when and where the meeting is.*), which they do not mind. They prefer interpreting in natural social situations where flexibility and situational alertness are required.

Similarly, field dependent translators are better at free translation of materials rich in implicit messages, hidden ideas, figurative language, various contextual and cultural connotations, and those with metaphorical and emotional elements carrying rich illocutionary intentions or aimed at strong perlocutionary acts (e.g. poetry).

The characteristics described above can be exemplified by differences in the quality of interpreting some types of utterance or translating some types of text such as:

*1. Interpreting a professional lecture rich in facts and concrete information:*

A typical highly field independent person interprets precisely each item of information and all facts as required. The audience can easily follow the facts and knowledge presented as well as logical sequencing and relations. However, should he /she focus too much on separate details, he /she may miss a possible complex relationship between the pieces of information. It may result in a lack of cohesion or coherence, which is obvious in the speaker's utterance. Running into an unknown expression causes a serious problem, particularly if the interpreter's expertise in the content field is not sufficient. Due to a strong focus on interpreted speech a highly field independent interpreter may have a limited potential to perceive the audience and to respond to the feedback from the speaker or the audience.

On the other hand a typical field dependent person interprets freely, expresses main ideas and paraphrases, which may result in omitting some details that may be essential for comprehension or may significantly determine the meaning. Such interpretation is not accurate or complete and indeed may be incomprehensible. Responding to the feedback he /she fills in missing information giving his /her own explanation, which he /she does not find inappropriate. In so doing he /she tends to communicate with both the speaker and the audience, which he / she usually enjoys.

*2. Interpreting welcome / farewell speech usually emotional but not rich in ideas, facts, or concrete information:*

Highly field independent people interpret literally word by word, which may be perceived as boring and monotonous or even inappropriate (e.g. various formal phrases that are culturally /language specific). They also interpret vague and redundant utterances or formal phrases due to their limited ability to select, condense and concisely paraphrase them or replace them with equivalent phrases in a target language. When expected to concisely summarize a longer stream of speech, they find it difficult to get the gist and to briefly express the main ideas.

On the contrary, a field dependent interpreter immediately grasps the purpose and atmosphere, interprets the main ideas freely, summarizes, paraphrases and uses equivalent phrases in a target language to transmit the message. He / she adapts the interpretation to the audience and situation respecting cultural and interlingual differences so that the overall "atmosphere of the speech" is preserved.

3. *Translating literature, i.e. texts full of figurative language, metaphors, ambiguity, contextual connotations, emotions, atmosphere etc.*

A highly field independent translator would precisely translate facts, main plots, logical relations etc. However, due to the characteristics described above and a lack of ability to “read between the lines”, to grasp the atmosphere and emotions expressed by varied linguistic devices he / she is likely to miss the atmosphere, some essential ideas and finally also the author’s main message.

Nevertheless field dependant translators are able to find appropriate target language means to convey the author’s message even if linguistically the means may considerably differ from the language means used in the original text. In so doing they often have to analyze also some important details thoroughly, although, it is always from the perspective of the whole text or situational context (e.g. how a different target language equivalent to the original word would influence or change the overall meaning).

Generally speaking, it is obvious that the overall quality of translation and interpretation processes does not depend either on field dependency or field independency. In different contexts, tasks and types of utterance different approaches are required. Theoretically speaking, it would be optimal for an interpreter or translator to be flexible so as to be able to activate the most suitable characteristics of field dependency in any situation. Even if this is not fully possible, each translator and interpreter should know his / her position on the field dependent /independent continuum and be aware of related strong and weak points. One may undoubtedly strive to consciously utilize one’s strengths and purposefully work on weaknesses so as to become more flexible. The aim is to move on the field dependency continuum within a wider individual zone of flexibility instead of subconsciously strengthening a relatively fixed way of functioning.

In addition, there are some research findings as well as empirical evidence suggesting that field dependency is not as fixed a feature as it was originally considered to be and that it may be determined by various factors such as age, type of task, social, cultural and natural environments etc. (see in: Cook 2001, Johnson 2000). This is particularly important information from a pedagogical perspective as it suggests that it is possible to develop the required professional skills of translators and interpreters. The above-mentioned knowledge may serve as basic guidance for such development.

In addition to the issues discussed above, it may be also useful to briefly describe the impact of field dependency upon language learning processes. According to P. Skehan (1998), field independent learners have better skills to analyze and cognitively reconstruct their structure of knowledge. Therefore they can effectively create their own interlanguage, linguistic competence and better resist fossilization. However, they are less successful in the practical application of the learnt knowledge. These characteristics imply that field independent learners are more successful in instructed classroom language learning focussed on explicit rules, analysis, and accuracy than in acquiring a language in natural settings, a point which has been supported in some research findings (Ehrman 1996, Naiman et al. 1996). They prefer strictly organized lessons dealing with each linguistic phenomenon separately and emphasizing structural features; they like learning linguistic rules and manipulating them; they can easily memorize a list of vocabulary, separate phrases, create mnemonics. Therefore they learn effectively through various controlled and focussed activities, drills, manipulation of structures etc. They usually stick to the textbook as too much authentic foreign language material might overload and frustrate them. In written tasks they tend to have more stylistic errors than spelling, lexical or grammatical ones. In listening and reading activities, they capture various details but may miss the gist, overall perspective or the main problem. Field independent learners usually prefer individual to group work and communicative activities. In so doing they usually don’t practice learnt knowledge sufficiently, lack fluency and promptness in verbal utterances. On the other hand, they do not suffer from inhibitions, social barriers and hindrances. As for assessment, they are more successful in tests and tasks focused on products (not processes) and declarative knowledge, such as multiple choice tasks, gap filling, transformation exercises, dictations etc. In oral exams they tend to reproduce memorized knowledge instead of focusing on understanding the overall meaning or explaining relations in the learnt material.

On the contrary, highly field dependent learners process foreign language stimuli holistically. As a consequence of underdeveloped analytical skills, they are not able to effectively process linguistic information and gradually create systematic knowledge of the language; therefore their

achievements may be limited. When perceiving foreign language texts or utterances (reading and listening comprehension activities), they get the main idea, overall atmosphere with ease, even if there are some unknown words or structures. They are skilled in guessing the meaning and relations from the context, in paraphrasing, expressing meaning in varied ways. However, they can be superficial, imprecise and inaccurate, as they miss details. They tend to underestimate linguistic rules, correctness and accuracy in their utterances, which may result in more or less serious mistakes. Field dependent learners focus more on functional characteristics of linguistic phenomena; tend to overestimate fluency and the ability to “just express yourself”. Usually they are fluent and communicative; however, their level of linguistic competence is often inferior, which they do not mind. Field dependent language learners learn more effectively in natural settings or simulated communicative activities in a classroom, which enable them to create their own complex associations. They enjoy using learnt knowledge in various classroom activities and in real-life communication. Their learning can be enhanced by varied classroom interactions and authentic materials. Their written tasks or dictations are full of spelling, grammar and lexical mistakes; however, they are cohesive and coherent. When assessed, they perform better in communicative tasks, tasks focussed on overall comprehension, contextual and situational relations rather than on grammar structures or the correct application of linguistic rules. In oral exams they recall more general information and, due to their higher communicativeness, their evaluation and marks may often be better than their real achievements. Field dependent learners enjoy cooperation and need to belong to a team, prefer group and whole class work, and tasks with social context. However, they tend to suffer more from social barriers and inhibitions that might hinder their speech production. Despite their lack of ability to create a complex system of the target language, field dependent learners are believed to achieve a higher level of overall communicative competence, which has been confirmed by some research findings (Johnson et al. 2000). It is supposed to be due to the higher interpersonal orientation, focus on social contexts, and the ability to grasp social relations.

### **Resume**

*This paper presents the hypothesis about the impact of field dependency / independency upon the quality of translation and interpretation processes. This cognitive style determines how people perceive and process information, how they respond to and solve problems. As a cognitive feature with affective and social dimensions it is characterized by the ability to separate parts from the whole in perceptual, abstract, and social fields. These processes are inseparable components of translation and interpretation activities, and may considerably determine the quality of outcomes. Different aspects of field dependency are influential in different types of discourses and situations. The discussion could help translators and interpreters as well as language learners to enhance their skills as well as educators to develop the required language and professional skills of trainees.*

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