



Interaction Cost Management
using
First Contact[®] – *On the Phone*

First Contact's core technologies integrate Internet application delivery with telephony and scripting in such a way as to make these disparate components act in unison to deliver practical and usable tools for multi-lingual scenarios.

Understanding the cost-reduction potential of using *First Contact*[®] – *On the Phone* is fundamental to any planned deployment - this document outlines that potential.

Overview

Contact Centres are expected to handle many different types of telephone calls covering a wide range of customer contact scenarios. Such scenarios can be ‘wide’ or ‘narrow’ in nature and the breadth of scenario range can determine how effectively customer contacts can be addressed.

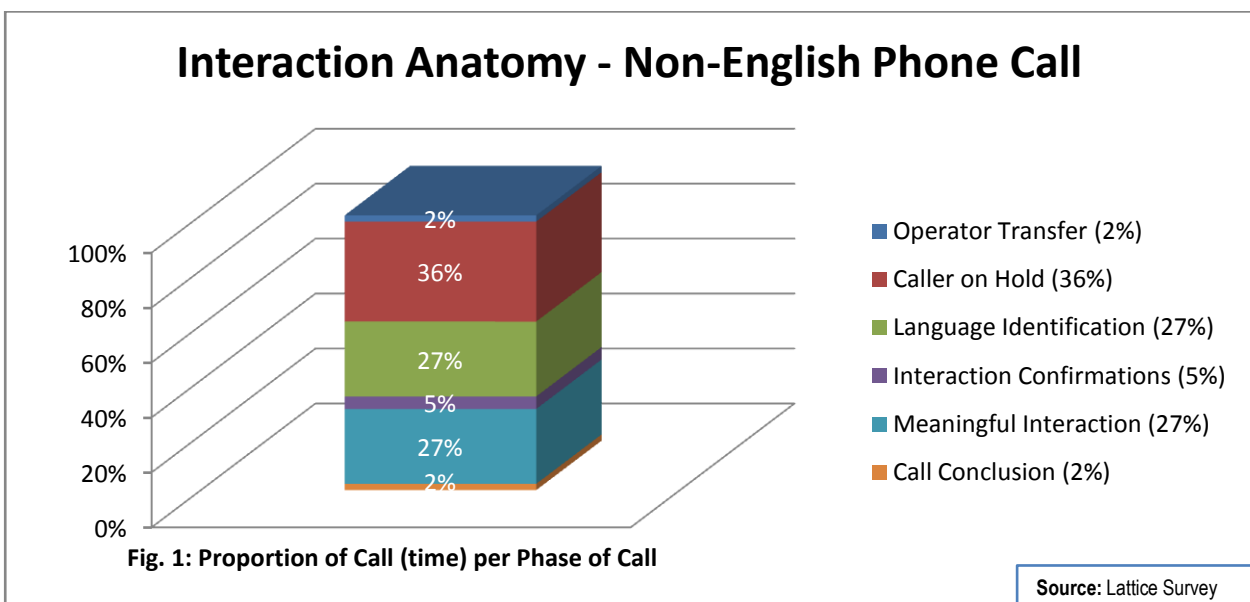
‘Narrow’ scenario ranges can be observed in contact centres – and in automated contact solutions – used by banks, utilities, and local authorities, for example, where the contact centre will handle a narrow, specific set of call scenarios. A bank, for instance, may handle “balance enquiries”, “funds transfer” and “lost or stolen items” as the ‘top three’ contact scenarios, and can prepare systems and personnel in line with these scenarios in advance.

Conversely, a police 999 contact centre, whilst it will also have ‘top three’ and ‘top ten’ scenarios, must handle contact scenarios with a wide and indeterminate range – handling anything that a member of the public chooses to contact the police for. First Contact – On the Phone can handle either of these situations.

However, underneath this level of scenario complexity, all interactions have a similar structure – the ‘anatomy’ of an individual interaction, whether this is a phone call or a face-to-face conversation. Understanding the anatomy of interactions is key to identifying where call durations can be reduced, particularly with interactions that are not carried out in English and which may currently involve an interpreter.

Interaction Anatomy

All interactions using a particular channel (e.g. a phone call) have a similar anatomy. Figure 1 below shows, as an example, the common anatomy of a phone interaction for a police 999 contact centre, using interpreters:



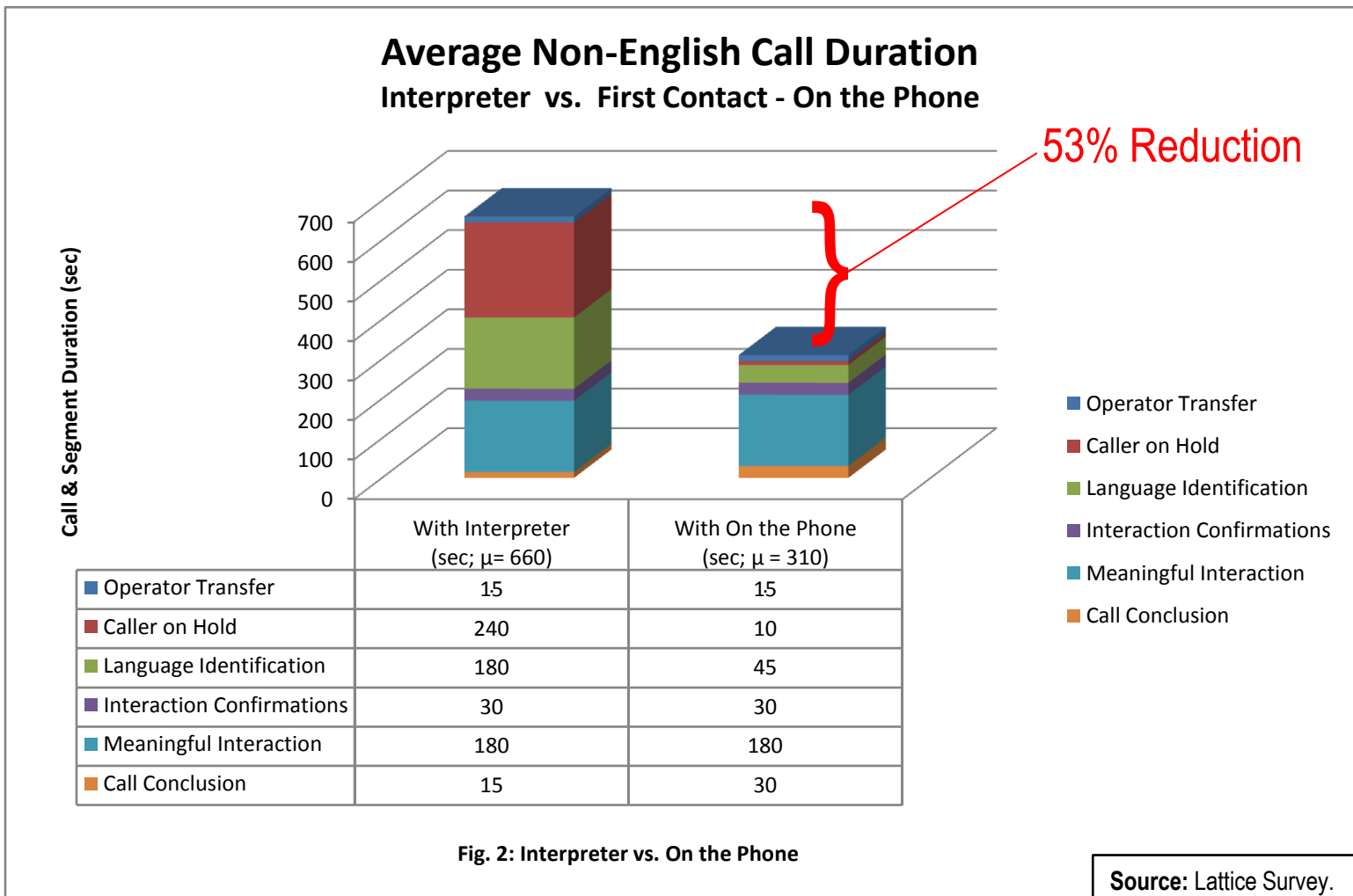
As can be seen from the above graph, only 27% of the overall call duration (“Meaningful Interaction”) relates directly to the *caller’s reason for calling* – the remaining 73% of the call relates to

‘housekeeping’ issues – transferring the call from a network operator; the caller being kept on hold whilst an interpreter is engaged; language identification; confirming the caller’s intention to call the police; and concluding the call appropriately.

First Contact – On the Phone can have a significant impact on this call anatomy, both by reducing the time expended on ‘housekeeping’ issues and by improving the meaningful interaction of a call – both quantitative and qualitative improvements.

The Impact of using First Contact – On the Phone

Figure 2 below shows the potential impact of using *First Contact – On the Phone* to handle non-English calls in the first instance:



As can be seen, all of the ‘housekeeping’ activities can be almost entirely eliminated in terms of their contribution to the duration of calls, representing a 53% reduction in overall call duration and associated interpreter cost. Considering each element of a call individually:

- **Operator Transfer** cannot be reduced
- **Caller on Hold** can be reduced by 95% to an average duration of 10 seconds (previously 4 minutes)
- **Language Identification** can be reduced by 75% to an average of 45 seconds (previously 3 minutes)
- **Interaction Confirmations** cannot be reduced
- **Meaningful Interactions** can not be reduced in terms of time, but may deliver more functionality
- **Call Conclusion** may increase by ~ 50%

This rolls-up to an overall reduction of 53% on average call durations.

In addition to the time reductions shown above, a further benefit of using *First Contact – On the Phone* is that the need – and hence cost of – interpreters is entirely eliminated from the *Language Identification*, *Interaction Confirmations*, *Meaningful Interaction* and *Call Conclusion* phases of non-English calls (in the majority of calls). As interpreters are not required for the remaining call phases (*Operator Transfer* and *Police Hold*) the need for interpreters can be entirely eliminated from the majority of calls.

Can The Need For Interpreters Really Be Entirely Eliminated?

For the majority of calls, the answer is yes. Some calls will still require an interpreter, but this will be a much smaller proportion than previously, where *all* non-English calls would require a interpreter. The above figures show *First Contact – On the Phone*'s ability to more than halve the duration and cost of *average* and *typical* calls. Not all calls will be *average* or *typical*. Because of the more complex nature of some atypical calls these calls may still require the involvement of an interpreter.

Other Factors that Influence Call Cost

There are other factors that influence the cost of call-handling, such as call-volumes. *First Contact – On the Phone* scales seamlessly as call volumes increase or decrease, which means that whatever the call volume, *First Contact – On the Phone* will deliver ~ 53% overall call-duration and call-cost benefits irrespective of call volumes and, for a majority of calls, can remove the need for interpreters entirely.

Summary

- By deploying *First Contact – On the Phone* the duration and cost of *all* non-English calls can be reduced by ~ 53%
- For the majority of calls, the use of (and cost of) interpreters can be eliminated
- Some calls may still require interpreters
- *The First-Contact – On the Phone* solution scales seamlessly, always delivering full benefits irrespective of call volumes, interpreter costs and other cost factors