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The Concept of Interpretation and Common Mistakes in Consecutive Interpretation

Karimova Dilyora

Master's degree student of Namangan state university

Abstract:

This article is aimed to analyze the concept of interpretation as well as its types. It is also crucial to be accurate in interpreting process and therefore, this paper also shows some common errors in consecutive interpretation, and identified typical mistakes, which can help the interpreter prevent future difficulties and choose the right translation strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Interpretation is a significant feature of using verbal form of a language and interpretation in English is one of the most widespread usage among all skills as well as among languages since English language is considered predominant language all over the world. Hence, it is obvious that English language is the language of science, diplomacy, business, mass media and world information sources. Various fields of life require verbal conversation and if two different language users have to communicate, the process of interpretation arises. That, in turn, requires both sides to be accurate and precise in this process so as not to misunderstand and to achieve their goals.

METHOD

Interpreting frequently falls under the more well-known umbrella term translation. Focus typically falls on the spoken aspects of interpreting when defining the concept, and so it is often described as oral translation. The difference in the medium of transfer is undoubtedly the most characteristic feature of interpreting. Nevertheless, it does not encompass all of its nuances.

Apart from the communication media, translation and interpreting paths also diverge when it comes to language skills, personality traits, and work tools. Interpreting, understood as the oral reproduction of spoken language, requires the mastery of specific skills that are not emphasized in standard translation practice such as language skills that's to say excellent pronunciation and articulation, perfect command of the spoken language, personality traits, such as multitasking, great receptive skills, mental toughness, well-developed soft skills.

Interpreting skills also vary depending on the interpreting mode. Two main types of interpreting exist, namely simultaneous and consecutive.

When asked about interpreting, people rarely have the same image in mind. Some imagine interpreters in a booth at a conference, while others see a person who alternates with the speaker in a political debate. At this surface level, most people recognize these two primary interpreting modes, and they might find it challenging to indicate any differences between them. Here are some key distinctions:

Simultaneous interpreting usually requires special interpreting equipment. The interpreter must have excellent short-term memory, receptive and productive skills, and specialist knowledge of the given work tools.

Consecutive interpreting is an interpreting mode in which the interpreter and speaker(s) take turns. This often requires interpreting notes and segmenting the input – getting across the crucial parts while leaving behind the unnecessary.

This short summary provides a rough idea of what interpreting is, but if you are interested in more, we have provided a more detailed explanation of both modes in one of our previous articles.

Moreover, these interpreting modes can be further divided into subcategories. For example, conference interpreting (booth interpreting) is notably different from chuchotage (whispered interpreting), even though both fall into the same category – simultaneous interpreting.

Consecutive interpreting also includes two other subcategories; 'high consecutive' and 'low consecutive'. High consecutive involves interpreting longer time intervals. On the other side of the spectrum, low consecutive deals with shorter time intervals, for example, interpreting after only a couple of words or sentences. However, other types of interpreting exist that don't quite fit the previous definitions. That is because we divide interpreting types depending on our focal point – time, setting, equipment, and thus interpreting services are created.

RESULT

Interpreting takes place when one person translates orally what he or she hears from the speaker into another language. Furthermore, in this globalization era, everyone is required to interact and communicate each other despite the distance of geographic, language, and culture, the interpreting is needed to solve the distance.

Rendering a spoken or signed message into another spoken or signed language, preserving the register and meaning of the source language content. The process of first fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language.

Interpreting takes place in many settings and for many reasons, yet at heart the purpose of interpreting is *to facilitate communication between parties who do not share a common language*. Trained, qualified interpreters faithfully interpret for all parties without adding, omitting or changing the

message. And yet, their professionalism not only enables direct communication, it also supports communicative autonomy.

Interpreting in a police interview is a complex task that involves a number of risks of miscommunicating or mistranslating some information. The inaccuracies that can be found in interpreters' speech can be due to typological contrasts between the pair of languages involved or to some of the characteristics of the interpreting task itself, such as simplification and a tendency to focus on the content of the message rather than on its form.

These inaccuracies are not easy to avoid. When faced with a typological contrast, the interpreter needs to choose between a more natural and a more literal translation. In both cases, the outcomes involve potential changes to the original text, such as the addition or omission of information in the first case, or the addition of connotations in the latter.

Minding such important constraints in interpreting activity – one-time presentation and tough time restrictions, the interpreter needs to resolve the situation on the spot and quickly, using short-term translation strategies over the long-term strategies.

Errors in the final translation text, which has already been given to the client, can lead to negative consequences: from a fine to a loss of trust and termination of cooperation. But in addition to this important role, mistakes and their consideration in professional activities are also a great tool to improve and find the proper translation strategy. The problem of errors typology in professional interpreting is not new, but today it is considered debatable.

Modern classifications of translation errors are based on the principle of equivalence and adequacy, where the error is considered the discrepancy between the original and the translation. Moreover, errors are related to the distortion of the content or violation of the rules and usage of the language of translation. Based on the analysis of approaches and classifications of translation errors, we distinguish the following ones in professional interpreting: errors of perception, understanding, expression and behavior.

Perception errors can be the result of information saturation of the source text (numbers, dates, names, proper names, etc.), unusual speaker's accent, fast speech, insufficient extralinguistic and background knowledge, incorrect distribution of resources of attention and concentration.

Misunderstandings of the original text can be caused by incorrect semantics, memory problems, analysis of the original message, misunderstanding of grammatical or lexical phenomena, inaccurate understanding of the meanings of some words in the original or ignorance of the subject of the message, inefficient or insufficient preparation for translation. The current situation requires the interpreter to understand not only the superficial level of expression, but also to recognize the deep intentions of the participants in communication, to determine the general context that describes the circumstances, time, objects, and so on.

DISCUSSION

Expression errors can be the result of insufficient knowledge of the target language, violation of the rules of the target language, incorrect distribution of attention in the process of decoding the translation records. Such errors can result in the loss of a number of message elements in the target language as well.

Behavioral errors can be caused by anxiety, excessive anxiety, inability to overcome stress and focus on the translation process, lack of experience in public speaking.

Evidently, interpreting process is based on mental processes by which information is moved from one memory type to another. As in consecutive interpreting STM is as much important as LTM, therefore usual information processes, which encompass attention, rehearsal, encoding, and retrieval proposed by Hermann, Gutman can also be applied for the information processing in the interpreting process.

LTM occurs when you have created neural pathways for storing ideas and information which can then be recalled weeks, months, or even years later” (Zhong, 2003:3). Therefore, LTM can be defined as a learning process. It is essentially an important part of the interpreter’s acquisition of knowledge, because as it was mentioned above, information stored in LTM may last from minutes to weeks, months or even an entire life. While the duration of STM is very short, particularly, it is up to 30 seconds.

In attempting to reveal the challenge facing an interpreter during the process of performance, which is similar in many ways to the challenge facing a foreign language speaker during a difficult conversation task, as Weller (1990) states: “one (an interpreter) never knows what is waiting around the bend when one accepts a commitment to interpret. It is precisely this professional challenge, a type of linguistic and emotional roller coaster that keeps the interpreter on his toes.

Discourse competence is the ability to combine ideas to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought, above the level of the single sentence. Strategic competence is the ability to use strategies like gestures or talking around an unknown word in order to overcome limitations in language knowledge” (Oxford, 1990:7)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, interpretation is necessary and common in life and this process plays a significant role in numerous fields of life ranging from business to political affairs and diplomacy. Obviously, an interpreter is accountable for the precision and accuracy of the content of the speech one is translating. Taking this into account, there are a number of possible common errors that should be avoided.

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