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## **Simultaneous Interpretation In Practice**

*The present article is dedicated to some aspects of simultaneous interpretation which is a very difficult, complex mental task. The article covers the critical skills that the interpreter must have and the most common difficulties that may come across during interpretation. Simultaneous interpretation practice is largely based on self-training; therefore, a large portion of the article is dedicated to exercises to build relevant skills. These exercises should be practiced daily as simultaneous interpretation skills must be acquired over time.*

*Key words: simultaneous interpretation, self-training, knowledge of languages, skills.*

Simultaneous interpretation refers to the technique whereby the interpreter speaks at the same time as the source language speaker. Simultaneous interpretation is widely recognized as a very difficult, complex mental task where the simultaneous interpreter transmits the message of the input language in a target language<sup>21</sup>. While translators have time to

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<sup>21</sup> Fundamentals of court interpretation, Theory, Policy and Practice, Second edition, University of Arizona, Agnese Haury Institute for Interpretation Series, Chapter 34, p. 853

consult dictionaries and other relevant sources while performing their task, interpreters do not have this luxury. One of the difficulties of simultaneous interpretation is that the interpreter concentrates on understanding the source language message while conveying the preceding message. And this has to be done in stylistically and grammatically correct order while listening to the next message of the source language.

Simultaneous interpreters must have several critical skills to be able to complete the task. Interpretation must be accurate, impartial and unbiased. No personal emotion or use of information for personal gain is acceptable. Interpreters must be confident and keep confidentiality. Ability to analyse and construe facts, good intuition, speed of reaction and ability to adapt without delay to speakers, situations and subjects are critical for performing good interpretation. Interpreters with high degree of intellectual curiosity, tact and diplomacy who have pleasant voice are able to satisfy both the contractors and the audience.

While the list of critical skills may be further enriched, there are some difficulties that come across during simultaneous interpretation. There are situations where excellent knowledge of languages and experience are impeded by difficult conditions. Heavy local and/or foreign accents may create problems in understanding the speech; thus, if possible, it is always good to have a talk with the speaker before the interpretation starts, which is helpful to get used to the accent. Speed of the speech also creates difficulties. Too slow speed does not allow the interpreter to catch the meaning quickly and makes it uncomfortable to wait until the whole sentence is uttered. Too fast is obviously a concern as lots of the context may be left out.

This often happens when reports are read out quickly with lots of numbers. There are some technical difficulties, such as the volume, clarity, background noise, etc. that can be eliminated by the equipment technician. So, it is always good to have him around and/or have him explain how the equipment works. Booth location is very important as it is always good to see the speaker. When you lose contact with the speaker and the audience it becomes difficult to monitor gestures and moods and you become isolated.

Simultaneous interpreters must always remember that they act as communicators between the speaker and the audience; therefore, it is critical to speak clearly. In fact, it is important for interpreters to make sure they hear both the speaker and themselves clearly. Developing split attention can be very helpful where the interpreter listens to the speaker and critically monitors his/her own translation. This helps to be more accurate without making grammatical mistakes. Using simple sentences, where possible, eases the task.

In practice, there are many cases when interpreters come across unknown words, and it is good to remember that focusing on individual words may be distracting. So, interpreters need maximum concentration. It is helpful to develop glossaries as you come across unknown words; one for general terms and others for specific specialized terms.

It is important to remember that you do not translate words; it is recommended to work with segments of meaning. You need to make sure every single sentence makes sense and is finished. While trying to be as close to the speaker as possible, it is important to finish what has been started. Unfinished sentences are unwanted. Based on knowledge of the subject

matter, common sense and experience, it is possible to develop an ability to predict the outcome of the message.

The quality of simultaneous interpretation is based on excellent knowledge of both source and target languages, lots of practice and self-training. There are many exercises to develop and improve simultaneous interpreting skills. If you have a high sense of self discipline and diligence, exercises presented below will help you to improve your interpreting skills.

The suggested exercises listed here are based on experiences gained in the training of both conference and court interpreters<sup>22</sup>. However, they will contribute to the development of general simultaneous interpreting skills. These are memory-building exercises and are designed specifically to build the skills involved in simultaneous interpretation. They are divided into those that emphasize dual-tasking and those that emphasize input analysis. These exercises should be done in all of the interpreter's working languages, beginning with the native or more dominant language. They should be practiced daily for about a half hour at a time, as simultaneous interpretation skills must be acquired over time to allow for maximum routinization.

#### Dual-Tasking Exercises

1. Have someone record passages from magazines or newspapers on tape, or record radio or television talk shows or interview programs (news broadcasts are not suitable for these exercises because the pace is too fast and the content is too dense). The subject matter of these passages is irrelevant, but it should not be too technical or contain too many statistics and proper names. As you play back the tape, "shadow" the speaker: repeat

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/improvesimulskills.pdf>

everything the speaker says verbatim. Try to stay further and further behind the speaker, until you are lagging at least one unit of meaning behind.

2. Once you feel comfortable talking and listening at the same time and are not leaving out too much, begin performing other tasks while shadowing. First, write the numerals 1 to 100 on a piece of paper as you repeat what the speaker says (make sure you are writing and speaking at the same time, not just writing during pauses). When you are able to do that, write the numerals in reverse order, from 100 to 1. Then write them counting by 5s, by 3s, and so on. Note what happens whenever numbers are mentioned in the text you are shadowing.

3. When you are able to do exercise #2 with minimal errors, begin writing out words while shadowing. Begin with your name and address, written repeatedly. Then move on to a favorite poem or a passage. When writing this text, you should copy from a piece of paper placed in front of you.

4. While shadowing the tape as in the previous exercises, write down all the numbers and proper names you hear. Then play the tape back and check to see if you wrote them correctly. The purpose of the above exercises is to accustom your mind to working on two "channels" at once, and to force you to lag behind the speaker. These exercises should be repeated as many times as necessary over a long period of time.

#### Analysis Exercises

1. Using the same tapes you prepared for the above exercises (or new ones, if you have grown tired of those); rephrase what the speaker says rather than simply repeating it. Stating a message in different words forces you to lag behind the speaker, waiting

until he or she has said something meaningful for you to work with.

2. To develop your ability to predict the outcome of a message, do the following exercises with written passages from a magazine or newspaper: a. Cover up the latter half of a sentence and try to predict what it says. b. Read the title of an entire article or essay and try to predict the content. c. Read the article, paragraph by paragraph, predicting what will come next. d. Repeat exercises (a) and (b) with oral input, having someone read the passages to you. e. As you increase your awareness of key words, learn to look for pitfalls that can lead you astray, such as embedded clauses and dangling participles. Develop your ability to skip over those distractions and get to the heart of a sentence or passage.

3. Using all the techniques you have developed in the preceding exercises, begin interpreting from the source language to the target language. At first, use the tapes you have already recorded and worked on in the other exercises, then make new tapes specifically for interpreting practice.

Much practice and disciplined self-training play a great role in developing interpreting skills. Be patient and remember that nothing is impossible.

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## Հեղինե Սևոյան

### Համաժամանակյա թարգմանությունը գործնականում

Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է համաժամանակյա թարգմանության որոշ բնագավառներին: Վերջինս շատ դժվարին և բարդ մտավոր առաջադրանք է: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում են թարգմանչին անհրաժեշտ կարևորագույն ունակությունները և այն հիմնական դժվարությունները, որոնց հանդիպում են թարգմանության ժամանակ: Համաժամանակյա թարգմանության փորձի ձեռքբերումը առավելապես հիմնված է ինքնուսուցման վրա, այդ իսկ պատճառով հոդվածի մի մեծ հատված նվիրված է համապատասխան վարժություններին: Վարժությունները պետք է կատարվեն ամեն օր, քանի որ համաժամանակյա թարգմանության հմտությունը ձեռք է բերվում ժամանակի ընթացքում:

Հիմնական բառեր - Համաժամանակյա թարգմանություն, ինքնուսուցում, լեզուների իմացություն, ունակություններ

Эгине Севоян

### Синхронный перевод на практике

Данная статья посвящена некоторым аспектам синхронного перевода. Синхронный перевод очень тяжелый умственный труд. В статье представлены самые важные умения и навыки, которые нужны для перевода и основные сложности, которые встречаются в процессе работы. Приобретение опыта синхронного перевода в большей степени основан на самообразовании, поэтому большая

*часть статьи посвящена соответствующим упражнениям. Упражнения должны выполняться каждый день, поскольку навыки синхронного перевода преобращаются со временем.*

*Ключевые слова - синхронный перевод, самообучение, знание языков, навыки*