

**THE CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING PROCESS DONE BY  
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
OF IKIP SARASWATI IN CADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018**

*Abstract*

*Translation and Interpretation is one of the subject taught in English Education Department of IKIP Saraswati. Students were taught to be able to do both translating and interpreting. They were practicing them on the sixth semester. Observation was conducted during the practice of consecutive interpreting. It is an activity which involves the interpreter converting the words of the first language into the other, directly after the first language is spoken. This paper discusses the strength and the weaknesses of consecutive interpreting conducted by the students of English Education Department.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In general, language interpreting or interpretation is an intellectual activity during which a mediator, (the interpreter), facilitates the oral communication between two or more partners who don't share the same language. Interpretation implies the actual result of which is the message, tone, feelings and the intentions of the source-speaker are conveyed by the interpreter in the form of a different language.

Interpreting is never verbatim. As it is a real-time activity, unlike in the case of translation, the interpreter does not have the time or the possibility to look up unknown terms (which may occur even in the case of a very experienced expert, especially in case of a very complex topic such as molecular biology or nuclear energy). The interpretation does not mean translating word-for word what the source-speaker says. Many times it wouldn't even make sense, or even worse, it'd even sound ridiculous (just

think of saying, proverbs, or jokes, if you don't find the equivalent –but different - one in the target language but translate them literally it may sound unintelligible or even worse, ridiculous to the audience.

Certain details can be omitted from the original speech. Ideally, the interpretation in the target language contains 80% of the information from the original version. The speakers themselves can help the interpreter by speaking slowly, emphasizing the main points and stopping for a few seconds after each unit of thought.

There are three main modes of interpreting. These are (1) Consecutive Interpreting. It involves the interpreter converting the words of the first language into the other, directly after the first language is spoken. This is the most common mode of interpreting. (2) Simultaneous Interpreting. This mode is considered a harder mode of interpreting and involves the interpreter continuously interpreting from the source language into the target language as the source speaker is speaking. Usually, a Simultaneous Interpreter sits in a soundproof booth and has many years of experience. This mode is commonly used in conferences. (3) Whispered Interpreting, *a rare mode of interpreting*, also known as 'chuchotage' in French, is literally whispered interpreting. This mode is used when the majority of people in a large group share the same language and only one or two people do not; in this case the interpreter whispers the target language in order not to disturb the group.

However, there are some particular problems in the interpreting process: problems in producing more accurate and equivalent target language. In order to interpret a speech the interpreter must be able to

receive and understand the incoming message and then express its meaning in the target language. In order to accomplish this task, the interpreter must go through an overlapping series of cognitive processing activities. These include: attending to the message, concentrating on the task at hand, remembering the message, comprehending the meaning of the message, analyzing the message for meaning, visualizing the message nonverbally, and finally reformulating the message in the target language. Another problem would be the limitations of short-term memory that interpreters are required to drop form and concentrate on meaning. If an interpreter attempts to retain the form of a source utterance their short-term memory will be quickly filled with individual lexical items, which may not even compose a full sentence. Therefore, it will be hard for them to convey the main ideas and messages of the speech.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the errors of Consecutive Interpreting done by students of English Education Department IKIP Saraswati. The students were divided into five groups. This consecutive interpreting was one of their projects in practice of Translation and Interpreting Lecture. It is also aimed to compare between the theory of consecutive interpreting and its application by the students. There was an English native speaker with six students as the interpreters. The topic was social and culture. Some of the interpreters sat on the right side of the native speaker and the others sat on his left side. The interpreting process was carried out by each of the interpreters. The first interpreter translated the native speaker's speech for about ten minutes and then continued by the next interpreter for the same duration. It is hoped

that this interpreting analysis can be beneficial for the study of interpreting in the future.

## **II. CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING**

According to Santiago (2004), in consecutive interpreting, the interpreter starts to interpret after the source-language speaker has finished speaking. It can be divided into two subcategories: short consecutive and long consecutive interpreting (agreed upon with the Client beforehand). In the case of short consecutive interpreting the interpreter has to rely on his / her short term memory. The orator stops after each unit of thought and the interpreter conveys these brief segments in the target language. In long consecutive interpreting (segments of 10-15 minutes are already considered long) the segments are too long to memorize so the interpreter has to take notes. Though it's hard to remember long passages, it is also disadvantageous if the speaker stops after every sentence- it is always best to complete a whole idea before it is interpreted.

### **2.1 The Basic Principles of Consecutive Interpreting**

During consecutive interpreting, when hearing the source-language text, the interpreter has to decode the message of the speech (what is the speaker's intention, point of view, opinion, etc.) then she / he has to analyze the text, select the main points, eliminate the superfluous details (approx. 20%), and in the end, reformulate this message in another language.

*The interpreter does not convey words or sentences, but ideas and messages!*

Not even the interpreters are encyclopedic dictionaries, and we must accept that there are times when they do not know a word or an expression. However, they have to do their best to keep their vocabulary up-to-date, to have a deep insight into the given culture and to be generally well informed (this latter is indispensable for an interpreter). They also have to train their short-term memory.

A very important rule: an interpreter cannot add anything (especially his or her personal opinion on the topic) to the speech! The interpreters' task is simply to be the linguistic link between the audience and speaker.

At the same time, consecutive interpreters are also public speakers (usually they stand on the stage next to the speaker) so the same rules apply to them: they have to connect to the audience, create eye contact (and not gazing at their notes), they shouldn't mumble but talk aloud, etc. otherwise the message will not be conveyed properly.

## **2.2 The Interpreting Process**

As a form of translation, interpretation also understands and making understood. The interpreter takes the responsibility of decoding the source language and delivering its meaning in target language. Then, how to do interpreting well and be a qualified interpreter? First, an acquaintance with the process of consecutive interpreting should be known. The interpreting process should produce more accurate and equivalent target texts interpretations. In order to interpret a text the interpreter must be able to receive and understand the incoming message and then express

it's meaning in the target language. In order to accomplish this task, the interpreter must go through an overlapping series of cognitive processing activities. These include: attending to the message, concentrating on the task at hand, remembering the message, comprehending the meaning of the message, analyzing the message for meaning, visualizing the message nonverbally, and finally reformulating the message in the target language.

Seleskovitch in Santiago (2004) compresses these tasks into three steps, noting that the second step includes the, "Immediate and deliberate discarding of the wording and retention of the mental representation of the message", interpreters often refer to this as "dropping form." By discarding the form (words, structure etc.) of the source text the interpreter is free to concentrate on extracting and analyzing the meaning of the text, and conceiving strategies for reformulating the message into the target language.

Seleskovitch, among others, points out that there is another practical reason for the interpreter to discard the form of the source text, there is only so much that a person can hold in their short-term memory. As the interpreter receives the source text the information passes initially through their short-term memory. If the interpreter does not do anything with this information it will soon disappear. Smith in Santiago (2004) notes that, "Short term memory...has a very limited duration. We can remember...six or seven items only as long as we give all of our attention to them". If an interpreter attempts to retain the form of a source utterance their short-term memory will be quickly filled with individual lexical items, which may not even compose a full sentence. If the

interpreter then attempts to find a corresponding lexical item in the target language for each of the source language forms in their short-term memory all of their attention will be wasted on translating these six items rather than attending to the incoming message, as Smith points out, “as long as pay attention to short-term memory we cannot attend to anything else” (Smith in Santiago, 2004). In a consecutively interpreted situation this would result in the interpreter stopping the speaker every six or seven words so that the interpreter could clear their short-term memory and prepare to receive new information. Clearly this is not a preferable manner in which to communicate, and, as Seleskovitch in Santiago (2004) points out, it would require the interpreter to know every existing word in both languages.

It is because of the limitations of short-term memory that interpreters are required to drop form and concentrate on meaning. Both Seleskovitch and Smith propose that meaningful segments of great size can be placed into long-term memory and retrieved later. Of course a chunk of information must be understood in order to be meaningful. To demonstrate this idea Seleskovitch uses the example of a person who has just seen a movie, after viewing the film the person will be able to relate the plot and many of the details of the of the film. If the person continues to discuss the film with others the details will remain fresh in their mind for a longer period of time. In this example the person is able to remember the film because they understood it, and are, “conversant with the various themes found in films...the movie-goer can easily and fully process the ‘information’ conveyed...and for this reason he remembers” (Seleskovitch

in Santiago, 2004). Smith adds, “it takes no longer to put a rich and relevant chunk of meaning into long-term memory than it does a useless letter or word” because of this the moviegoer will probably be able to relate the salient points of the film in a fraction of the time it took them to receive the information. Since the information was understood, its salient points can be reformulated into another mode of communication. For example, when the moviegoer discusses the plot of the film they do not recreate its form, nor do they take two hours to render their “interpretation.

Due to the greater ease of assimilating larger meaningful chunks of information it behooves the interpreter to focus their attention on these larger chunks. A larger chunk of text will usually contain a greater amount of meaning. It is this relationship that aids the interpreter’s understanding of the source text when working consecutively. As shown above, once a chunk of information is understood it can be reformulated into another form. As Seleskovitch points out, “In consecutive interpretation the interpreter has the advantage of knowing line of the argument before he interprets” (Seleskovitch in Santiago, 2004). Interpreters are not charged with merely understanding the message; they must also be able to remember it, in order to deliver their interpretation. Seleskovitch notes that dropping form aids the interpreter’s memory because they are not concentrating on remembering the words, or even the structure of the source text. Instead, the interpreter understands the message, connects it to long-term memory, and is then able to reformulate it in much the same way the moviegoer can relate the points of a film. Of course the interpreter must provide a more equivalent target text than the



moviegoer. To this end interpreter working consecutively will often make notes as they take in the source utterance. These notes help the interpreter retrieve the message from their long-term memory and consist of, “symbols, arrows, and a key word here or there”. These few notes are effective because interpreters do not produce their target texts based on the form used by the speaker but on what they understood of the meaning of the source text. The “key words” may consist of words that will remind the interpreter of the speaker’s point or of specific information “such as proper names, headings and certain numbers” (Seleskovitch in Santiago, 2004).

Seleskovitch also points to the time afforded an interpreter working in the consecutive mode as an asset in reformulating the message in the target language. Because the interpreter does not need to split their attention between receiving the message, and monitoring their output, as is required in simultaneous, they can devote more of their processing to analysis and reformulation of the text thereby producing a more accurate and equivalent interpretation.

### **III. THE CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING PROCESS DONE BY STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF IKIP SARASWATI**

The topic of interpreting used by the students was social and culture. In general the students had done their interpreting successfully. In this consecutive interpreting, they had questions and answering interpreting and there were also interpreting long speech by the native speaker. Besides these good points, there were also some points that should be revised.

The first thing that can be seen from the process of interpreting is the lack of knowledge and information owned by the interpreters. They were often not familiar with a code of ethics (e.g. confidentiality and impartiality; they might feel allegiance to the native speaker). They did not know how to interact appropriately. They were also not sufficiently familiar with his culture. They were not sufficiently aware of intercultural communication issues.

Based on The basic principles of consecutive interpreting by Santiago (2004), when the source-language text was heard, the interpreter should decode the idea or message of the native's speaker speech (what is his intention, point of view, opinion, etc.) then the interpreter has to analyze the text, select the main points, eliminate the superfluous details (approx. 20%), and in the end, reformulate this message in another language. It can be said that the interpreter does not convey words or sentences, but ideas and messages. But the application was different. All of

the interpreters interpreted the words or the sentences spoken by the native speaker instead of interpreting the main idea or the messages. They brought some piece of paper which contained all of the native speaker's speech. It was just like on-sight translation. In this translation the interpreter reads a document written in one language while translating it orally into target language. Therefore, while interpreting the source language they were just looking at the script or the paper without having any eye contact with the hearer of the target language. They did not use or train their short memory. Moreover, they did not pay attention to the body language. This made the interpreting process was uncommunicative.

In consecutive interpreting, it is really hard to catch the main idea spoken by the native speaker. Based on the theory of consecutive interpreting, the interpreters should note what the speaker said. But, by using the script this group did not make any note.

While the interpreting process should produce more accurate and equivalent target texts interpretations, the interpreter must be able to receive and understand the incoming message and then express its meaning in the target language. Due to their first time in interpreting, they seemed unconfident in interpreting the source language. The unconfident feeling made them hard to receive and understand the incoming message. They need more experiences in interpreting.

## CONCLUSION

Like comprehension, this process requires the linguistic knowledge, non-linguistic knowledge and analyzing ability too. To sum up, a successful interpreter needs to be qualified in so many aspects. After comprehension, memorizing and note-taking period, what interpreter should do is to transfer the information. The interpreter should learn to follow the speaker's thought, and memorize the meaning through the way of categorizing, generalizing, comparison, or note-taking, understanding of that, we could draw a conclusion of the skills which should be gained by a successful interpreter. To meet the requirement, the interpreter should be bilingual and master large vocabularies, which are linguistic knowledge. Facial expression and ways of standing or sitting are supposed to be natural and unrestrained. The most influential approach is note-taking. It refers to the comprehension of both linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge. Besides that, a couple of other skills should be taken into our deep consideration. The aim is to enhance the short memory of the interpreter. Second, he or she should pay attention to the body language. Reformulation means to deliver the original meaning swiftly, accurately and fluently in target language. When the interpreter comes across some problem, he or she should ask in time or skip some unimportant information so as to grasp the main idea.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, Samuelsson. 2004. *A Practical Guide for Translators*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Catford, J. C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Debora, Nellissa Samasstasa. 2010. "A Comparative Analysis on Translation Techniques Used by the Original Translator of Stephenie Meyer's *The Host* and by Daerah Sumber Translator". Universitas Sumatra Utara. Available from: <http://repository.usu.ac.id/handle/123456789/20992?mode=full>
- Hornby, A. S. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, Mary Snell. 1988. *Translation Studies an Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Schäffner, Christina. 2004. *Translation Research and Interpreting Research Traditions, Gaps and Synergies*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Thomson, Sandra Burns. 2001. *A Newcomer's Guide to Translation and Interpretation*. American Translators Association. USA: Reinekers Lane