

# THE METHOD OF LISTENING AND SHORT-TERM MEMORY IN INTERPRETING AND SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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## Abstract

It goes without saying that good knowledge of both source and target is one of the most crucial elements in interpreting. However, the aforesaid is not sufficient and other elements are involved in the process of interpreting, which include strong short-term memory and powerful listening. Some approaches required for this purpose are explained. As Selesovich (1978) reiterated, factors such as memory and listening play a major role in interpreting, since for a spoken message to be favorably translated into words of another language, it should initially be understood and remembered. In interpreting, the source language form is less significant and meaning is of greater importance.

## Keywords:

Interpreting, listening, short-term memory, inter lingual, inter cultural, oral translation, note taking, consecutive translation

Interpreting has been defined in different ways by various scholars. The term is usually called "interpreting" rather than "interpretation" and the discipline is named "Interpreting Studies". Although most theoreticians believe that interpreting is rendering spoken words from one language to another, some aspects of these definitions appear to be different. The definition provided for interpreting in the Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (2001) is the oral translation of oral material in comparison with sight translation which is oral translation of written texts. However, Phelan (2001) classifies sight translation, translation of a written text into spoken words, as a type of interpreting. Hence, in order for the definition to include sight translation, we could define interpreting as "rendering information from one language into speech in another language". Nevertheless, if we consider Gile's definition (2004) of "pure translation" and "pure interpreting", we can classify sight translation as a form of "intermediate" type.

Due to the major modes of interpreting are consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting. In consecutive interpreting, the speaker delivers an idea in segments, which are rather large, and thereafter the interpreter orally translates that which heard. Note-taking is very important in consecutive interpreting. In simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter orally translates while the speaker is speaking. In other words, during most of the simultaneity period the interpreter is listening and speaking at the same time. Some conference interpreters believe their task, i.e. conference interpreting should be considered as a separate mode as conference interpreters, unlike those interpreting consecutively, do not wait for a complete idea to be delivered by the speaker and usually translate after each sentence is finished. Some argue that the term "simultaneous" is not used appropriately for this form of interpreting as the interpreting by the interpreter and the speaker do not occur concurrently and may happen with a time difference of less than a second and furthermore, the interpreter's task is contingent upon the delivery of the speech by the speaker.

Different types of interpreting based on social situation and special kinds of interpreting include liaison interpreting, whispered interpreting (chuchotage), telephone interpreting, sign language interpreting, television Interpreting, radio, theatre, and film interpreting, summary interpreting, and sight translation (Phelan, 2001). Factors involved in rendering interpreting; different factors are involved in the success of an interpreter which include good knowledge of the , subject familiarity, good listening and understanding, high level of concentration, powerful memory (Mahmoodzadeh, 1992), self-confidence, neutrality, and ability

to perform under stressful conditions. Short-term memory (STM) plays a major role in interpreting. The message is encoded either in the form of acoustic, visual, or semantic data and thereafter moves to our STM where it remains for less than thirty seconds. Some scholars believe that in interpreting this figure is less than ten seconds (Smith, 1985). After this stage, the message may move to our long term memory (LTM) where it will remain forever. This will depend upon whether or not the message is coded, retrieved, or rehearsed. If not, the message will be forgotten. Data in interpreters' LTM will help them to put the information they hear into context, but STM is of immediate assistance without which they will not be able to function properly. Some techniques for enhancing the quality of memory are retelling in source language, shadowing, mnemonic techniques, short-term memory exercises with inference, newspaper/news translation, and speech translation.

Another major element in the oral translation process is listening. The first step in the quality of interpreting relates to listening and analyzing the source language speech, so that one can transfer the message as accurately as possible. Having a high level of focus, listening skill, and powerful short-term memory are the main factors to conduct interpreting perfectly. Different factors involved in rendering a favorable interpreting are pointed out. Two of the mentioned factors, i.e. listening and STM are explained. The differences between STM and LTM are reiterated. Another skill with a critical role in interpreting, i.e. listening is explained. Thereafter, techniques for enhancement of STM and listening are described.

To conclude, good knowledge of SL and TL is a necessary but not sufficient requirement in interpreting. Among other factors, interpreters have to pay special attention to improving listening and short-term memory. It is necessary for the interpreter to concentrate on the message, instead of words, details, or form of the SL. In this study, we have outlined different modes and types of interpreting. Some techniques for enhancement of the aforesaid were summarized.

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