

MEMORY TRAINING TECHNIQUES FOR SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

Sultonova Sevara Bakhtiyor kizi*

*1st Course Master Student,

Faculty Of Translation, Major Of Simultaneous Interpretation,

State World Language University, UZBEKISTAN

Email id: sultonova@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This article conducted with how to improve memory training while being busy with simultaneous interpretation and its developing ways. There is given examples and effective ways of improving short term memory that is essential for translators. Also types of memory is researched in this work including its working process.

KEYWORDS: *Simultaneous Interpreting, Abidule, An Interpreting Booth, Short-Term Memory, Sensory Memory, Segmentation, Interpreting Process*

INTRODUCTION

A translator is someone who can orchestrate an accurate and understandable conversation between people who do not share a common language in a real time situation. In a world that's become a global village, the need for a translator is vital to help bridge the communication gap between individuals who conduct the affairs of governments, corporations, and research, educational and other institutions. In most instances, the translation is needed as quickly as possible during a summit or at a conference as it's happening, and this is accomplished through the use of a highly skilled interpreter by what is known as the method of simultaneous interpretation. This is a very short description of simultaneous interpreting for the non-initiated, and it does not claim to cover everything. There are a large number of books and sources that have been written on the subject, where much more detailed information can be found.

Simultaneous interpreting is a mode of interpreting in which the speaker makes a speech and the interpreter reformulates the speech into a language his audience understands *at the same time (or simultaneously)*. Simultaneous interpreters work in an interpreting booth (though they may also be using a *bidule* (portable interpretation equipment without a booth) or whispering (chuchotage). All of the skills mentioned under consecutive interpreting apply to simultaneous. [2.35-36p]

This is how simultaneous Translation is done. And, although this all may appear to happen "simultaneously", in actuality the translation is performing complex multi-tasking at a lightening pace. It's no wonder, with the intensity of focus and concentration involved that it's been compared to that demanded of air traffic controllers. [5.78-89p]

Here is how the process works:

- Source language listened to

- Comprehended
- Semantic analysis performed
- Inner short term memory operations and transformations performed
- Target language generated
- Self-monitoring and correction applied
- Target language spoken

Or three main actions are done in the process and also essentially the same:

- 1) Listen actively (understand)
- 2) analyse (structure the message)
- 3) Reproduce (communicate)

The difference with consecutive interpreting is that in simultaneous interpreting all the things need to happen *at the same time (or simultaneously)*. This means that besides the skills listed under consecutive interpreting – i.e. a special way of listening, prioritising information and distinguishing between primary and secondary information, activating short-term memory, communicating – a good simultaneous interpreter also has to be able to *anticipate* what the speaker may say (especially when the language spoken by the speaker has a very different syntactical structure to the one it is being interpreted into). The ability to remain calm under pressure, and be resilient to stress is even more necessary in simultaneous as well.[2.67p]

The active language of the interpreter is also under more pressure in simultaneous, as he is speaking at the same time as listening and analysing. So the need for excellent mother-tongue or active language skills is even keener here than in consecutive as well. The possibility of 'interference' from the passive (heard) language to the active (spoken) language is also greater in simultaneous, so interpreters have to pay more attention to their output. This might mean getting away from the original syntax, chopping up long sentences into short ones and avoiding 'false friends'. This explains why trainee interpreters learn consecutive interpreting first, as that is where they learn the key skills necessary for interpreting. Simultaneous interpreting uses the exact same skills but with some added layers of complexity and difficulty.

All of these different skills need to be learnt. You are not an interpreter just because you happen to speak more than one language; it is much more complex than that. There are a large number of universities that offer courses in conference interpreting. For simultaneous interpreting there are a good number of resources listed (non-exhaustive) on this platform as well: Speech Repository (for practice speeches), DG Interpretation training material, ORCIT.[2.web pages]

Simultaneous interpreting is primarily used in formal or large group settings, where one person is speaking in front of an audience, rather than in conversational environments. These events can include: Diplomatic conferences. International conventions. A classic example of simultaneous interpreting is a United Nations conference. At these meetings, it is common to see world leaders wearing headsets. While the main speaker is delivering his/her speech instantaneously, it is being interpreted to the recipient of that target language who is wearing a headset. The translating process related to memory because of it is occurred the same time while we are listening and

than speaking. Ever since the 19th century, memory has been classified as long-term or short-term. This difference was explored in more depth in 1968, by the Atkinson-Shiffrin memory model, that suggests that human memory involves a three phase sequence:[6.98-99p]

1. **SENSORY MEMORY:**the senses have limited ability to store information about the world without processing it for less than a second. For example, vision has iconic memory for visual stimuli like shapes, sizes, colours and location, but does not give these meaning.
2. **SHORT-TERM MEMORY:**our short-term memory is where most information processing takes place. It is where we try to give meaning to what we see and what we hear, converting this information into something significant, filling the blanks with elements from long-term memory. At this stage, information is held for 15 to 30 seconds, more than enough for it to be reused.
3. **LONG-TERM MEMORY:**long-term memory allows for information to be held, not just for seconds, but for a lifetime. This memory seems to have unlimited capacity to store information.

EXERCISES FOR IMPROVING SHORT-TERM MEMORY

As mentioned, for short-term memory to work properly, an effective processing of sounds into known words and, afterwards, into portions of information, the effective storage of these portions and the retrieval, at the right time, of this information is required. The ideal would be to work on each of these aspects separately, but unfortunately this is not possible. So, the exercises we suggest here involve all of these aspects. Memory exercises should simulate the interpretation as best as possible, since the intention of these exercises are to improve memory for interpreting purposes. However, this kind of exercises should not involve bilingual activities, since these lead to different problems that the mind tends to focus on. It is highly recommended that the exercises be done alternately in both of the interpreter's languages. For the enhance of short-term memory, it is necessary to use short texts, where individual words may be analysed in context and retained as portions of information, instead of being retained simply as acoustic units. The exercises we suggest here may be used by an interpreter, a group of interpreters that work together or by a trainer that is leading a course in interpreting.

Activity 1 *shadowing*. *Shadowing* involves repeating what the speaker says, word for word, in the same language. Normally, the interpreter will be a word or two behind the speaker as one repeats what has been said. This delay may be increased as the interpreter becomes more comfortable. This exercise is often used in preparation for simultaneous interpreting, since it teaches the interpreter to listen and talk at the same time. It is also very good for memory development, since it forces the interpreter to store and recall small groups of sounds, words and chunks of information in a relatively short period of time. However, it is complicated by the fact that the speaker continues to speak while the interpreter is recalling a previous segment, forcing the interpreter to listen and speak at the same time. For this exercise, the texts used should be relatively small, but may increase gradually in size. If you work alone, record a text or use a speech from the television or radio. If you work in a group, one may read the text while the other repeats it.

Activity 2 is *attentive listening for key elements*

Careful listening is an important element for memory recall. If have not listened to something carefully, it will be impossible to remember later. First, attentive listening requires identifying a speech's key points. For example, you should be capable of listening to a short narrative or a descriptive text and answer the key questions "Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?" While it might not always be possible to answer these questions in every case, the ability to answer most of them proves that you listened carefully to the key points. In this exercise, any descriptive or narrative texts may be used and you may record the text, if you're practising alone, or you may ask a colleague to read it, if working in a group.

Activity 3 is Visualization.

In any case, there are speeches that invoke visualisation naturally and the interpreter should be able to identify them and use visualisation to retain and recall. For example, court interpreters often have to interpret descriptions that were described by a witness (a place, a suspect, etc.). These descriptions are ideal for the use of visualisation to improve memory. Images should be visualised step by step and in sequential order, helping the interpreter recreate a whole scene. Visualisation exercises may be completed with oral recall or, in some cases, by drawing the images involved. In other words, recalling memories does not always have to be done through words. In this exercise, any descriptive or narrative texts may be used and you may record the text, if you're practising alone, or you may ask a colleague to read it, if working in a group.

Activity 4 is segmentation

This exercise is based on the concept that it is easier to retain a number of limited chunks with information than just one or two larger dense chunks. Segmentation involves breaking a larger chunk of information into two or more smaller ones.

This exercise can be performed used both oral and written texts and the segmentation can also be both oral and written. You should be able to read the sentence only once and, then, segment it. The texts should contain long sentences and dense information.

Exercise 8: recognizing incoherent or ambiguous messages

In general, incoherent and ambiguous speeches are hard to remember. This exercise aims to help you recognize incoherence or ambiguity in a speech, which is, in itself, also a way to recall the speech. After hearing a relatively incoherent and ambiguous text, you should be able to identify what aspect is incoherent or ambiguous and explain what makes it so. For example, in the sentence "João asked Miguel to sit still. Then, he got angry," we don't know if "he" refers to João or Miguel. Once the incoherence or ambiguity has been identified, it may be recalled and dealt with at the production stage of interpreting.[14.122p]

Exercise 9: remembering messages you disagree with or find offensive. Confirmation bias describes the tendency to favour information that confirms one's personal belief or hypothesis. People display this bias when they collect or recall information selectively or when they interpret information in a biased way. Even if someone tries to interpret evidence in a neutral manner, he or she may recall that information selectively. This effect is called "selective recall", "confirmatory memory" or "access-biased memory". In short, it is harder to remember information that goes against what we believe in.

One way to deal with such information is to put yourself in the speaker's place. In other words, take yourself out of the picture and identify with the speaker because, in doing so, you'll be temporarily bypassing your personal beliefs and prejudices, and assuming those of the speaker. To practise this exercise, start by summarising a controversial text and, then, move on to the freer shadowing with a twist.

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