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On the Peculiarities of Simultaneous Interpreting

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Abstract:

This article discusses peculiarities of simultaneous interpreting, one of the most complex activities of interpreting. It explains the differences between simultaneous and consequtive interpreting and analyses characteristics of simultaneous interpreting process. It, also states the challenges of simultaneous interpreting and suggests solutions to them.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting, prediction principles in simultaneous interpreting, advantages and drawbacks of simultaneous interpreting, compression.

Introduction

Simultaneous interpretation (SI, simultaneous interpreting) is performed using special and expensive equipment, thanks to which the interpreter translates almost simultaneously with the speaker's speech, and the speaker does not need to pause. The lag of a simultaneous interpreter from a foreign language speaker is several words (or even sentences) and depends on the pair of languages, experience, skills and individual characteristics of the interpreter. At the same time, it should be noted that the psychophysiological data of each person is very individual.

Simultaneous interpreting requires special equipment:

• stationary or collapsible cabin (in professional jargon, it is also called a "booth");

• microphone and two pairs of headphones for translators;

• radio headphones according to the number of people in need of translation.

Main part

Using the SI, events (commission meetings, conferences, seminars, presentations, etc.) are organized with the participation of a significant number of people in large auditoriums (conference halls). There are two (sometimes z) interpreters sitting in the booth, who replace each other every 20-30 minutes (by agreement). At the same time, every hour of each interpreter in the booth is paid. Translation at conferences and other similar events, simultaneous or sequential, is also called conference translation (the terms conference interpreting and conference interpreter are used more often in English).

If the texts of speeches or presentations (slide shows) are provided in advance, the translator can

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preview (or fully translate) the original text of the speech in advance. During the translation, the translator makes the necessary adjustments if the speaker departs from the original text, for example, tells a story about what happened to him yesterday on the way to the conference. This kind of simultaneous translation is called text-based simultaneous translation (English, check against delivery).

During reports, lectures and presentations, the speaker can read the information on the slide or refer to this information: "As you see on the slide ...". Interesting speeches can be found on the portal www.ted.com. In this case, the synchronist essentially does simultaneous translation from the sheet. with the SI based on the text and the SI from the sheet, the perception is first carried out by ear, and then the received information is compared with the perceived visually [Weber 1990]. If the information received by ear differs from the written text, then the translator translates based only on auditory perception. The same thing happens when the speaker speaks too fast, and the translator does not have time to compare the information. If the translator has translated the entire text in advance and the speaker does not make any digressions, the translator reads out the translation he has already made. In this case, his work, in fact, is reduced to reading out a pre-translated text, and the stress during work is not so high. In the modern world, with large flows of information and frequent conferences, synchronists usually look through the texts of speeches or presentation slides, if they are provided in advance, make notes on terminology, but do not translate the entire texts. Synchronists rely on their good speech, reaction, skills, experience and usually do not really like to write, or they simply do not have the time and/or strength to do translations in advance.

Unlike consecutive translation, in simultaneous translation, the perception of speech in English and the generation of speech in English are almost not separated in time, memory is less loaded, and the translator does not enter into active interpersonal relations with conference participants. Usually records in the SI are not kept, but if necessary, a partner can help:

"During simultaneous interpreting, even the most experienced translator will certainly lag behind the speaker. Translating the end of the phrase he has just uttered, he is already listening and memorizing the beginning of the next one. If at the same time a long list of names, titles, numbers is given in the speech, additional difficulties arise.

And here it is <...> my shift mates always came to the rescue. They usually wrote down all the numbers and names on a piece of paper lying in front of the one who was translating, and when he reached the right place, he read these notes without straining his memory unnecessarily.

This not only guaranteed against errors, but also ensured complete coherence of the translation" [Poltorak 1965: 91

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One of the difficulties with simultaneous translation may be the pace of speech. The average rate of speech in the British and American versions of English reaches 120-150 words per minute (English, wpm or words per minute) [Karpf 2007: 42].

The optimal rate of speech for a synchronist in an English-Russian pair is considered to be 100-120 words per minute, and the rate of 150-200 words per minute (as professional English-speaking speakers say) is considered fast, worsens the quality of translation and leads to omissions and errors even when experienced synchronists work [Chernov 2007:17]. The tempo of the prepared speech is faster, so it is easier to perceive and translate [Dejean Le Feal 1982].

An interesting and, as it seems, promising is the transitional version of the SI, which has become known as simultaneous sequential interpretation (English, simultaneous sequential interpreting or SimConsec). In 1999 , the EU translator M.Ferrari, during consecutive translation, while making translation recordings, simultaneously recorded a segment of speech on a digital medium. Then, in a pause, he quickly put on headphones and translated, listening to the segment of speech for the second time and relying on his notes as well. The experiments of such simultaneous-sequential translation [Ferrari 2001, 2002], [Hamidi, Pochhacker 2007] show that double listening increases the accuracy (adequacy) of translation.

Is simultaneous translation really "synchronous"? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider at least three components of the SI.

1. For a long time, psychologists believed that the same mechanisms operate in the perception and production of speech. Therefore, a person (including a translator) still cannot listen and speak at the same time: the translator is silent when he listens, and does not listen when he speaks. However, in the SI, the translator has a mechanism of split attention (A.F. Shiryaeva - "synchronization mechanism", English, the mechanism of shared attention). An inexperienced translator alternately switches to the speaker's speech, then to finding a solution and delivering a speech in the target language. The synchronization mechanism functions successfully only if the translator has speech skills that operate without the active participation of consciousness. "We can talk about the telegraphic style of perception" [Shiryaev 1979: yu8], the perception of a word is reduced to the awareness of only some syllables representing its general sound contour. It is important to achieve such a "split" attention by training, trying to listen and speak almost simultaneously. At the same time, apparently, different parts of the brain are involved.

* 2. Simultaneous interpreters acquire the skill of simultaneous listening and speaking when, as a result of practice, they, according to the observations of A. Welford, learn to ignore the sound of their own voice [Welford 1968]. G.V. Chernov conducted an experiment together with I.A. Zimnaya, a

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well-known domestic psychologist, and found out that a significant part of the original speech is perceived by the translator against the background of their own speaking (60-70%) [Zimnaya, Chernov 1973].

* 3. According to different researchers and depending on the pair of languages, the shift in simultaneous translation (English, time lag, or phase shift, or ear-voice span, EVS) is 0.5-11 seconds, but on average 2-4 seconds or 4-5 words at the average pace of the speaker's speech [Pochhacker 2004:117]. An experienced synchronist tries to keep a pace that is convenient for him, regardless of what pace the speaker chooses [Shiryaev 1979: 79]. Along the way, we note that consecutive translators, according to M. Lederer's experiment, also tend to maintain their own pace of speech [Lederer 1981]. According to the calculations of K.Dejean Le Feal, the synchronist's speech rate in comparison with the speaker's speech rate ranges from 71% (high speaker's speech rate) to 87% (average speaker's speech rate) [Chernov, Setton, Hild 2004:17-18].

Thus, research and experimental data show that translation is indeed synchronous in many ways.

Another important component of simultaneous translation is probabilistic forecasting (English, anticipation in interpreting). Probabilistic forecasting is the use of accumulated experience in the past, which helps to assess the probability of future events. Probabilistic forecasting is helped by the redundancy of the language, which is 70-85% [Piotrovsky 1968: 58]. Probabilistic forecasting is present in speech [Frumkina 1971] and is probably inherent in all types of speech activity.

Not all translation theorists and practitioners agree that probabilistic forecasting exists: "a translator is unable to predict an unknown thought of a specialist from a foreign industry"; "translation ethics forbids expressing an idea before it is uttered by a speaker" [Steyer 1975: 101-102]. However, we are not talking about predicting someone else's thoughts, and even from a field of knowledge unknown to the translator, but about the ability to predict the further content of the message due to the redundancy of speech, and the redundancy of speech increases due to intonation. In Russian translation studies, the idea that "probabilistic forecasting is the basic mechanism of simultaneous translation" has firmly strengthened [Komissarov 2002-a: 143].

"Forecast" needs to be constantly checked and clarified. An inexperienced translator can sometimes simply not perceive what does not correspond to his forecast. For an experienced synchronist, such dissonance is only a signal of the need to activate attention.

G.V. Chernov conducted an experiment: synchronists were offered a text that included separate sentences devoid of meaning, such as "Sour sweetness screamed to the ground from obesity" [Chernov 2007: 72]. There were omissions, pauses, or translations indicating that the translator ascribes meaning predicted by the previous text to a meaningless sentence. Let us formulate G.V.

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Chernov's observations in [Chernov 1987] and in his 1978 book, which is more available in the reprint [Chernov 2007]:

* - probabilistic forecasting is carried out at the linguistic, speech and situational levels;

• - forecasting is more confident in the perception of speech in the native language, even with highly qualified translators;

* - there is a cumulative accumulation of elements of the meaning of ST, creating the possibility of probabilistic prediction of subsequent semantic components;

* - redundancy of the message can be objective and subjective;

• - the higher the redundancy of the message, the higher the probability of correct prediction. The opposite is also true: the higher the density of information in a message, the lower the probability of correctly predicting its development. Simultaneous translation of a poetic work, even at the level of presentation of meaning, is impossible due to the fact that the level of redundancy in a poetic work is the lower, the greater the originality and originality of its author;

• - the basis of the construction of any utterance is the internal program of a person (idea), which is then developed into a speech work. The translator [as the creator of the secondary text] has such a program built and adjusted in accordance with the extracted meaning of the original message.

After analyzing G.V. Chernov's observations, we conclude that the main components of the training of simultaneous interpreters should be thorough language, speech and thematic training in two/all working languages[1]. It is important to be able/learn to translate speakers who speak different versions of the language (American, British, Australian) and dialects (Manchester, Scottish), as well as speakers speaking a non-native language whose pronunciation is marked by interference of their native language. Such speech samples can be found on the website www.ted.com .

Literature review

Probabilistic forecasting is possible because the translator, like any other listener, perceives information in "clusters", i.e. certain segments containing a certain meaning. A.F. Shiryaev introduces the concept of "unit of orientation" in the SI, which means a segment of ST, (semantic) perception of which allows the translator to start searching or choosing the next translation solution. Such units can be different in composition and size [Shiryaev 1979]. There is a certain segmentation of the text, as R.K. Minyar-Beloruchev wrote about in his works. "Unit of orientation" A.F. Shiryaeva differs from the "translation unit" (translemes[2]), which means a unit of speech that requires an independent decision for translation: situational cliches, terms, stable phrases, phraseological units, etc. A.F. Shiryaev notes that simultaneous translation combines two opposite features: continuity and discreteness. On the one hand, the SI is characterized by continuity, unity and integrity. On the other

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hand, in all three phases/processes - the phase of perception and probabilistic forecasting, the phase of generating a piece of text on the page and the control phase - regular discreteness is clearly traced. The translation is issued in consecutive portions, quanta. In time, these processes constitute a single translation action - one step of the translation process. At a slow pace of the speaker's speech, the steps follow one after another in a simple sequence. With the rapid pace of the speaker's speech, the translator's steps are superimposed on one another [Shiryaev 1979:102 et seq.].

Of course, probabilistic forecasting should be applied carefully and selectively - the speaker's speech may suddenly take an unexpected, and even paradoxical, turn.

To understand how the mechanism of probabilistic forecasting works, let's turn to the translation from German.

Stress in Germanic languages helped to distinguish part of speech. In nouns and adjectives with a prefix, the stress fell on the prefix, and in prefixed verbs - on the root [3]. In English, we still observe pairs of the type 'import - to im'port, 'export - to ex'port, 'sSIect - to su'spect, 'envelope - to en'velop. In the pre-stressed syllable, the reduction is the strongest. Over time, the prefix separated from the root, and in modern German it is placed at the end of the sentence, as is the negative particle. It turns out something like *She came to me yesterday with a friend at or * He did not come to me yesterday for. In the case of using modal verbs, the second verb also goes to the end of the sentence. Thus, the synchronist is faced with the task of translating, wasting for a verb or prefix that can change the meaning, and guessing a possible negation at the end. Such a somewhat exaggerated picture gives an understanding of the difficulties that the synchronist faces. At the Nuremberg trials, translators developed a tactic that is still used today: to start with some general words (vague and general phrases) and, having heard the verb, go to the point [Gaiba 1998: 104]. Experienced synchronists try to guess the verb based on the situation of translation and pre-text, but "this task, although feasible, requires knowledge of a foreign language as a native"[4]. In a trial, "guessing" a verb can be risky and even irresponsible [Rainier 2007: 12]. And yet the mechanism of probabilistic forecasting often comes to the translator's aid.

An example from practice. Says the German synchronist and bilingual from birth B. Steyer, "Psychologically, I feel my role and my actions so that I do not translate, but speak the language, and the information about what I want to say gets into my brain from somewhere outside. After work, I don't remember the turns of the speaker's speech, I don't even remember who said what. I remember only my own formulations <...> When you lose the rhythm, stop gesticulating (you can also gesticulate with your fingers), you freeze for a second, lean back and begin, looking at the ceiling, to summarize in an uncertain quiet voice what the speaker wanted to say. It sounds like this: "So... he

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says[5]... that it's a question of correlation... this... Having understood the structure of the next phrase, you cut off in mid-sentence, lean forward and switch to the saving synchron.

If you have understood the essence of what has been stated, then you broadcast in a confident voice, beating time to yourself with your head or pencil, as if confirming the correctness of your own wording (or maybe not to succumb to the rhythm of the speaker, from whom you have lagged behind?).

If the speaker sets an unthinkable pace (it's not the tongue twister that's scary, but the absence of pauses between sentences) <...> you strain all over, you press the headphones, you add volume, you stick to the viewing window and you start shooting like a machine gun. You can say anything: the audience is no longer listening, but watching our fight with awakened interest. But you can't say anything at this speed - there is no time to formulate something that has not been solved.

The situation is worse when he presents himself with an important air. He speaks with emphasis, in detail, looking at me arrogantly and endlessly increasing the chain of subordinate constructions. They did something to something. I can't understand what they did: finished, prepared, rejected or revised. I'm trying hard to imagine what he wants to say, and I hopelessly forget everything he said. It makes no sense to remember — he has already got into the next subordinate turn. Shut up. The speaker slows down and looks at me. I'm silent. I could say that they carried out, executed or implemented, and then make an intricate combat turn and attach a specification - completion, preparation, rejection or revision. I do not want. I'm silent. He looks expressive. I get impudent and inform you that I need a verb. This is already a meanness on my part. He can't figure out what a verb is and what it has to do with ST. Then he realizes that I am not only repeating his words, but even analyzing them. We don't like to be analyzed, so the aplomb instantly flies off, and he starts over in confusion. I translate meaninglessly verbatim. The audience smiles maliciously.

This is what probabilistic semantic forecasting looks like in practice.

Advantages of simultaneous translation:

* * unlike sequential translation, the speaker's speech sounds without pauses. This makes communication more dynamic. Today, proficiency in a foreign language is not uncommon, and many participants prefer to listen to reports in a foreign language in the original. Such people, as a rule, are annoyed when, during consecutive translation, the speaker stops and everyone listens to the translation;

• * compared to the use of sequential translation, the time of the event is reduced by about two times;

* * translation can be carried out simultaneously into several languages (for example, in EU

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organizations).

Disadvantages of simultaneous translation

• * * for the organizers, simultaneous translation is much more expensive than consecutive translation: the fees of simultaneous interpreters are high, plus payment for the rental of special equipment;

* * the need to involve at least two synchronists who know the topic of the event;

* * the loss of information is greater than with sequential translation, and the accuracy (adequacy) of the translation is lower;

* * higher stress when translating due to the need to adapt to different speech styles, tempo and accents.

Requirements for a simultaneous interpreter:

* * rich vocabulary in both working languages;

* * competent speech in both working languages;

* * solid stock of stable constructions, cliches and phraseological units in both working languages;

* * automation of language and speech means of expression (ability to quickly find equivalents);

* * good listening skills (perception in cajoc);

• * breadth of outlook, encyclopedic knowledge;

* * phonetically well-articulated speech, correct intonation, phonogenicity (pleasant timbre);

* * fast speech;

* * good RAM;

* * quick reaction, ability to get out of difficult situations;

* * the ability to distribute attention ("splitting attention");

• * the ability to concentrate, the ability to "disconnect" from external interference;

* * mental and physical endurance, stress tolerance.

Conclusion.

As we have seen above,there are different types of simultaneous interpreting and

several varieties of simultaneous translation are sometimes called "semi-synchronous". In the case of whispering translation, the translator uses a small portable transmSTter with a microphone. The recipient of the transfer uses a portable receiver with headphones. Such devices are sometimes used by (Japanese) guides and groups of tourists. In order not to disturb others, the tour guide speaks softly into his microphone. Tourists who are a lSTtle behind the group to take pictures of the sights, hear everything the guide says, and he does not strain his voice and does not interfere with others.

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So the interpreter can be next to the speaker or sit apart from the participants of the conference, seminar, presentation and quietly translate

("whisper") into the microphone. Such a device for interpretation is called a whisperer, and the translator is sometimes also a whisperer (by metonymy), or a whisperer, or simply a synchronist, translator. The cost of such a service is estimated, as a rule, at the rates of consecutive translation, despite the fact that it is not easy to interpret in this way - the interpteter is not isolated from noise, walking around the hall distracts, etc.

The interpteter can also translate in a low voice to his client, sitting or standing behind his shoulder, in a situation of psychotraining, equipment adjustment, excursions, etc. Such situations are similar in specifics to the translation with a whisper.

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