



ULTIVATING STUDENT'S INTERPRETING SKILLS

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Abstract. This article explores effective techniques that should be designed to cultivate students' interpreting skills; split-attention/dual-task exercises can be helpful to develop concentration and a powerful memory, as the interpreter/translator must have a powerful memory; he/she should train it consistently through and in practice. The author discusses all the skills and techniques required for a good interpreter, particularly memory, which is the first one that should be introduced to trainee interpreters.

Key words: interpreting skills, simultaneous interpreting, shadowing, public speaking, paraphrasing, expanding, role play

Аннотация. В этой статье рассматриваются эффективные методы, которые следует разрабатывать для развития навыков устного перевода у студентов; упражнения на разделение внимания/двойную задачу могут быть полезны для развития концентрации и мощной памяти, поскольку у переводчика должна быть мощная память; он/она должен тренировать ее последовательно и на практике. Автор обсуждает все навыки и методы, необходимые для хорошего переводчика, в частности память, которая является первым, с чем следует знакомить будущих переводчиков.

Ключевые слова: навыки устного перевода, синхронный перевод, сопровождение, публичные выступления, перефразирование, расширение, ролевая игра

In simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter sits in an interpreting booth, listening to the speaker through a headset and interprets into a microphone while listening. Delegates in the conference room listen to the target-language version through a headset. This is a very difficult task and to fulfill it the following skills are required: a) Complete command of working languages at all levels of usage; b) Good public speaking: voice projection, clear enunciation, and good posture and smooth pacing; c) Mental agility and flexibility to work on two channels at once (simultaneously processing the source language while speaking in the target language). The above-mentioned skills are cultivated with the help of effective innovative methods and techniques of teaching translation. The interpreter must have a powerful memory; he/she should train it consistently in the rough and in practice. Daniel Gile [1]. proposes his Effort Models for interpreting designed to help them [interpreters] understand the difficulties [of interpreting] and select appropriate strategies and tactics, the Listening and Analysis Effort, the Memory Effort, the Production Effort, plus the Coordination one. In his models, Gile emphasizes the significance of short-term Memory. [2]. It is one of the specific skills which should be imparted to trainees in the first stage of training. Among all the skills and techniques required for a good interpreter, memory is the first one that should be introduced to trainee interpreters. Powerful memory could be acquired by effectively designed exercises. For memory training the following methods and techniques can be recommended:

Retelling in the SL: The instructor either reads or plays a recording of a text of about 200 words for the trainees to retell in the same language. The trainees should not be allowed to take any notes. In the first instance, trainees should be encouraged to retell the text in the same words as the original to the largest possible extent.

Shadowing exercise can also help students to improve their memory, (a paced, auditory tracking task which

involves the immediate vocalization of auditory presented stimuli, i.e., word-for-word repetition in the same language, parrot-style, of a message presented through a headphone.

One of the effective tools in memory training is **Mnemonic Memory**. Mnemonic is a device, such as a formula or rhyme, used as an aid in remembering. Recording speeches with specially 'inserted' noises as a background is a recommended classroom practice since this is a very effective method to enable students to concentrate and thus strengthen their STM duration.

The following **split-attention/dual-task** exercises can be helpful to develop concentration and a powerful memory:

1. Students are given sheets with 3-4 sentences, they should chunk them, then close the sheets down, while the teacher reads the given sentences aloud they should chunk them orally (visualizing them), and then one of the students repeats the sentences by heart.
2. Students listen to the speech in L1 and think about how to interpret it while listening they should manage to translate a passage in L2.
3. Students should count to 10-100 in a loud voice while reading a passage; they should practice until they manage two tasks up to 80%.
4. Listen to a sentence, stop the tape, think about how to interpret it, speak the interpretation while listening to the next sentence, stop the tape, think about how to interpret it etc.
5. Change same speech to very "anti" and then "for" (or similarly to very serious then very ironic etc.).
6. Practice changing the order of the clauses in a sentence without changing its meaning.

Public Speaking Students are asked to practice speaking before a group of people at every opportunity. People they know will constitute a less threatening audience and will allow them to ease their way into public speaking and build their confidence.

Paraphrasing is a helpful exercise that develops the mental agility you need for interpreting. It forces you to read ahead and solve problems quickly; it also helps you focus on meaning rather than words, thus avoiding stilted, literal translations. Paraphrasing is a good vocabulary building exercise that trainees should continue to do periodically even after they feel they are adept at interpreting.

Prediction Interpreters should be able to predict the outcome of an incomplete message and be versed in the various writing styles – legal documents, personal and business correspondence, technical reports so they can be alert to common constructions that may pose translation problems.

Analyzing: Analyze the content of each text and practice picking out the subject and verb to determine the core meaning.

Chunking: Choose a text /sentence and mark off the small meaningful units in it.

Oral Chunking Find a short and simple text on an everyday topic and make a copy for each student. Read the text to students while they follow along and mark chunks of information with a double slash (//) sign.

Expanding: Read a text aloud and expand it (i.e., say the same thing in more words) as you are going along, again taking care not to change the meaning.

Condensing: Read a text aloud and condense it (i.e., say the same thing in fewer words) as you go aloud, retaining the same meaning.

Next, have them turn their papers over and read the same text to them again as they try to chunk it 'orally'. To do this they may choose to count chunks of meaning on their fingers and/or try to visualize each 'chunk' separately. Then ask students to repeat the sentences as accurately as they can (either in front of the group or to a partner).

Role Play Develop a role-play that can be used for interpreting practice. Identify the setting (e.g. social services, health care, education) and the people involved. List to ten questions that could be asked in this setting; Students will be working in groups of three. One person will read your questions to you and you will be responding. The other person will be acting as an interpreter. Then you will use another classmate's role-play and switch roles.

Below are the exercises that improve student's interpreting skills: Delivery

The delivery skills required in simultaneous interpreting and the exercises that might usefully be undertaken

to improve them are in large measure the same as for consecutive interpreting.

“Cheating” – Repeatedly interpret the same speech until you arrive at a satisfactory version.

Shadow a speech, which has a large number of delivery problems (ie. frequent restarts, umming and erring, self-correction etc.). Eliminate the same shortcomings in the target text. As a next phase, the same can be done when interpreting a similarly flawed source text from another language.

Split attention skills: Speaking and listening at the same time is not natural and can detract from other cognitive activities, it is therefore worthy of practice.

Listen to a sentence, stop the tape, and think about how to interpret it, speak the interpretation. Repeat

Listen to a sentence, stop the tape, think about how to interpret it, speak the interpretation while listening to the next sentence, stop the tape, think about how to interpret it etc.

At a very early stage, this may be a good introduction to the art of listening and talking at the same time.

Improvisation exercise. While in the booth, improvise a speech of 2 minutes on a subject volunteered by a colleague. Other students listen and comment on the coherence of speech, delivery etc.

This exercise trains the split attention of the interpreter since as you improvise you should be thinking ahead to your next sentence/paragraph. It also trains delivery technique.

In addition to training split attention this activity accurately mirrors the lack of control we have on content when in the booth, and trains you to think on your feet.

Interpret a speech silently in your head. Then interpret the same speech aloud. Speaking and listening at the same time is not easy. This exercise is an interim stage in the process.

Shadow a speech while at the same time writing something completely unrelated on a piece of paper. Ie. Numbers from 1-100 in reverse order.

Practice changing the order of elements in the clause i.e. practice holding individual words or ideas of the clause/sentence and working them back in much later (i.e. a date can very easily be switched from first to last in a sentence).

Practice changing the order of the clauses in a sentence without changing its meaning.

Rework the grammatical structure of sentences without changing their meaning i.e. change all passive verbs to indicative, remove subordinate clauses etc. (also Weber and Heine).

Interpret the same speech in extremes of register, i.e. “phat” street slang then an OTT “smashing” aristocratic drawl. You can also use different regional accents.

Change the same speech to very “anti” and then “for” (or similarly to very serious then very ironic etc.).

Practice shadowing speeches which have been deliberately sprinkled with constructions taken from the language later to be interpreted from but which are inappropriate in the language you are using. Correct the structural and syntactic errors while shadowing.

This is an excellent way of tackling the reformulation challenges that all languages offer without the added difficulty of the comprehension task. Later when faced with L2 you will already be familiar with the techniques and strategies that will allow a sound rendering in L1 [3].

Miscellaneous:

Interpret for friends and colleagues who don’t have your language(s). This is real communication, with a real audience who can check if you’re making sense.

Listening to stock market reports in your B/C languages try to note down all the numbers.

Numbers tend to cause problems and panic in student (and many working) interpreters. Practice can help overcome this.

The above-mentioned exercises aim to enable students to produce correct, coherent and fluent interpreting. However, all those exercises are in-class activities. Real-life conditions will be different and sometimes more difficult.

Therefore, students should be prepared to solve various problems before they work in real-world conditions. Though text types and topics may vary according to market demand, interpreting course syllabus design should include the following text types: commercial and economic texts, e.g. real-world texts on current world economic and financial issues, international trade and business, scientific and technical texts, e.g. medicine, environment, computer science, journal articles, manuals, and patents, political and legal texts [4]. In conclusion, it should be noted that training time is the time to introduce students to the real-life process of interpretation. They should be made aware of the fact that there are many factors, which may act as

constraints on the process. Their role is to make certain decisions to manoeuvre among those factors.

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