

Consecutive Interpreting Study of Taylor Swift's Speech on the Graduation Ceremony of the New York University

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Abstract: Consecutive interpreting is a common form of translation. In this paper, we will discuss the importance and practical significance of this form of translation, the theoretical basis of consecutive interpreting, and through analyzing the theoretical basis of consecutive interpreting as well as relevant cases, we will explore the skills and strategies of consecutive interpreting, as well as the methods and means of assessing and improving the quality of translation. And then, we will select representative and challenging cases, deeply analyze the process and characteristics of consecutive interpreting, as well as the problems and deficiencies, and put forward targeted improvement suggestions and optimization plans.

Keywords: Consecutive Interpreting, Strategies, Case Studies.

1. Introduction

With the continuous advancement and deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication and cooperation have become more and more frequent, and the problem of language communication has become more and more prominent. As one of the important ways of cross-cultural communication, translation plays an indispensable role. In the field of translation, consecutive interpreting, as a common form of translation, has received increasing attention in terms of its importance and practical significance. Consecutive interpreting is also a form of translation that requires constant practice and progress, and the interpreter will feel regressed if he does not practice for a few days. In practicing, interpreters need to understand the essence of consecutive interpreting, perfect their own note symbols and use them skillfully, enhance the memory of the brain, and absorb the professional knowledge of different fields and so on.

2. Importance and Relevance of Consecutive Interpretation

In the first place, as an important form of translation, consecutive interpretation can eliminate language barriers and enable people from different countries and cultural backgrounds to communicate and exchange effectively. This is of great significance in promoting cross-cultural cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding and facilitating cultural exchange and dissemination. Secondly, in the context of globalization, international exchanges and cooperation have become increasingly frequent. In various fields such as politics, economy, trade, science and technology, accurate and smooth consecutive interpreting is needed to ensure the accurate transmission of information and smooth communication so as to promote international cooperation. Thirdly, consecutive interpreting requires interpreters to complete multiple stages of listening, memorization and expression in a short time, which requires interpreters to have superior interpreting skills and language level. Through the research on the skills and strategies of consecutive interpreting, the quality of interpretation can be continuously

improved and the professional level of interpreters can be enhanced. Fourthly, consecutive interpreting is applicable to various occasions, such as business negotiations, international conferences, academic seminars and so on. On these occasions, consecutive interpreting can meet the practical needs of different fields and industries and provide effective language services for international exchanges of various scales. Fifthly, promoting language learning and cross-language communication: consecutive interpreting not only requires interpreters to master two or more languages, but also needs to have the ability of cross-language communication. In the process of consecutive interpreting, interpreters can come into contact with the expressions and cultural backgrounds of different languages, which helps to promote the development of language learning and cross-lingual communication.

In conclusion, the importance and practical significance of consecutive interpreting lies in the elimination of language barriers, the promotion of cross-cultural communication, the facilitation of international cooperation, the enhancement of the quality of interpreting, the fulfillment of practical needs as well as the promotion of language learning and cross-linguistic communication. Therefore, the research and practice of consecutive interpreting is of great significance and application value.

3. Theoretical Foundations of Consecutive Interpreting

3.1. Definition and Characteristics of Consecutive Interpreting

Consecutive interpreting is the earliest working mode used in conference interpreting, and today it is mainly used for occasions such as meetings and talks, press releases, and other occasions that are small in scope, short in time, and in a small number of languages. The interpreter sits in the conference room, listens to the source language speech on one side, takes notes on the other side, and when the speaker finishes his speech or stops to wait for the interpreter, the interpreter re-expresses the whole content of the source language speech accurately and completely in the clear and natural target

language, just like he is giving a speech. Consecutive interpreting in conference interpreting requires the interpreter to be able to listen to up to five to ten minutes of continuous speech, and to utilize good speaking skills to translate the entire content completely and accurately. Consecutive interpreting is mostly used in occasions that are small in scale and involve only two working languages, such as diplomatic meetings, bilateral negotiations, study tours, small consultations, interviews with journalists, judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings, banquet speeches, press conferences, and small seminars of short duration.

3.2. Consecutive Interpreting Process and Techniques

The process of consecutive interpreting can be divided into three main stages: comprehension, expression and language conversion.

Comprehension: The comprehension stage is the first step in the process of consecutive interpretation. At this stage, the interpreter needs to listen with full attention to what is being said in the source language and do his or her best to understand its content. This includes capturing the main ideas, understanding the context, and capturing the tone and emotion of the speaker. For better comprehension, interpreters need to have a solid foundation in the language, rich background knowledge and good listening comprehension skills.

Memorization and note-taking: After comprehending the content of the speech, interpreters need to memorize the information or record it by means of notes so that they can recall it accurately at the expression stage. Memorization techniques include the use of key words, logical relationships and visual associations. In contrast, note-taking techniques include the use of symbols, abbreviations, and layout, but over-reliance on notes should be avoided.

Conversion and expression: The conversion and expression stage is the final step in the consecutive interpreting process. In this stage, the interpreter needs to convert what is spoken in the source language into the target language and express it in a fluent and accurate manner. This requires the interpreter to have good language ability and translation skills, and to be able to deliver the message to the audience in a short time. At the same time, interpreters also need to pay attention to such elements as speed, tone and volume to ensure the accurate delivery of information.

Throughout the process of consecutive interpreting, interpreters also need to have good psychological quality and coping ability to cope with various emergencies and challenges. In addition, interpreters need to keep learning and practicing in order to improve their language proficiency, translation skills and coping ability.

3.3. Factors Affecting the Quality of Consecutive Interpretation

There are many factors affecting the quality of consecutive interpreting, and some of the major ones include:

(1) **Linguistic competence of the interpreter:** The linguistic competence of the interpreter is one of the key factors affecting the quality of consecutive interpreting. Interpreters need to have a solid bilingual foundation and be able to express the content of the source language fluently and accurately. In addition, the interpreter needs to have good listening comprehension ability and be able to understand the meaning of the speaker accurately.

(2) **Specialized knowledge:** For consecutive interpreting tasks in specific fields, specialized knowledge is an important factor affecting the quality of translation. If the interpreter has relevant specialized knowledge, it will be easier for him/her to understand the content of the speech and convert it into the target language accurately.

(3) **Interpreting skills:** Good interpreting skills are the key to improving the quality of consecutive interpreting. This includes skills in memorization, note-taking, speed control, intonation change and so on. Interpreters need to improve their interpreting skills through continuous study and practice.

(4) **Psychological quality:** Consecutive interpreting is a high-intensity work, which requires interpreters to have calm and confident psychological quality. In the face of tension, pressure and other emergencies, interpreters need to remain calm and concentrate their attention to ensure the accuracy and fluency of the translation.

(5) **On-site environment:** The on-site environment of consecutive interpreting will also have an impact on the translation quality. For example, noise, lighting, temperature and other environmental factors may interfere with the interpreter's hearing and attention, thus affecting the translation quality.

(6) **Extra-linguistic knowledge:** In addition to linguistic knowledge and specialized knowledge, interpreters need to have rich cultural background knowledge and contextual comprehension in order to better understand the speaker's intention and convey his/her meaning.

(7) **Training and experience:** Training and experience is another important factor in improving the quality of consecutive interpreting. Through a lot of training and experience accumulation, interpreters can gradually improve their language ability, interpreting skills and coping ability, so as to improve the quality of translation.

In conclusion, the factors affecting the quality of consecutive interpreting are multifaceted, including language ability, professional knowledge, interpreting skills, psychological quality, on-site environment, extra-linguistic knowledge and training experience. In order to improve the quality of consecutive interpreting, interpreters need to keep learning and practicing, improve their language ability and interpreting skills, accumulate professional knowledge and experience, and maintain good psychological quality and coping ability.

4. Selection and Analysis of Consecutive Interpreting Cases

4.1. Overview of Cases

This consecutive interpreting case study is an excerpt from the famous American singer Taylor Swift's speech for the graduates at the graduation of New York University, in which she shares her own experiences and lessons learned with the graduates. Her pronunciation is very clear and authentic American, and she speaks a little fast.

4.2. Contextual and Situational Description of Specific Cases

This graduation speech was given at the offline NYU graduation ceremony that was forced to be canceled twice because of the epidemic. The graduating seniors were full of anticipation for the day. And Taylor Swift's appearance was a great way to bring the atmosphere right up to speed. She used her own personal experience to tell us that life is a mixture of

flavors, no one will always be smooth sailing, and all we can do is to face it, overcome it, and live with it. There are a lot of things that we can only realize after experiencing them that it may not be a bad thing. All in all, it was a philosophical speech.

4.3. Detailed Translation Process and Skill Analysis of Cases

4.3.1. Translation Process

Consecutive interpreting is a type of interpreting in which the interpreter translates the spoken words of the speaker into another language on the spot after the speaker has finished speaking. A complete consecutive interpreting process usually includes the following steps: The first step is to make good preparation before translation. Before consecutive interpreting, the interpreter needs to make full preparation for the content to be interpreted, including understanding the subject matter, background knowledge of vocabulary and common expressions. At the same time, they also need to familiarize themselves with the flow of the meeting and the identity information of the participants. The next step is to listen to and understand the original text. The interpreter needs to listen carefully to the speaker's content and understand its meaning. In this process, the interpreter needs to pay attention to catching the key words and sentences for better understanding and memorization. There is also the need for the interpreter to take notes to assist him/herself. The translator needs to take notes quickly to help memorize and translate. Notes should be concise and to the point, and shorthand, abbreviation, symbols and other techniques can be used to improve the speed and accuracy of notes. The next step is to express the meaning contained in the original text as well as possible. The interpreter needs to re-process and re-organize what he or she has heard and then translate it in another language in a suitable form. In the process of expression, the interpreter needs to pay attention to the accuracy, fluency and consistency of the language, and at the same time pay attention to controlling the speed and tone of voice so that the audience can understand and comprehend. Finally, it is necessary to check and correct one's own notes and translation. At the end of consecutive interpreting, the interpreter needs to check and correct his/her translation to ensure its accuracy and completeness. If necessary, they can communicate and confirm with the speaker.

Therefore, the first time I listened to it, I took notes while memorizing with my brain, but given that this speech excerpt is biased towards the philosophy of life, there are quite a number of places in terms of note-taking symbols that I don't remember accurately enough, so most of the short-term memory for the brain can't handle it, and after the first time I listened to it there are some places where I don't remember with my brain enough to make it clear enough, so I started to put it on for the second time, and in this time when I listened to this speech I focused on supplementing the content that I hadn't heard the first time. Next, I threw out my previous notes and re-listened to it again, realizing that there were some things I hadn't caught several times and marking them to find solutions.

4.3.2. Skill Analysis

a) Basic skill

In the process of translation, I find that in many places there is a phenomenon of manifestation, that is, the meaning of the original text is made clearer in the translation. The

phenomenon of visualization in the process of interpreting is regarded as a coping strategy to overcome linguistic and socio-cultural differences. Generally speaking, visualization is the addition of words to the translated text, and appropriate visualization can promote mutual understanding between the two sides, but adding words to the translated text in an unintended manner is likely to be cumbersome and burdensome to understand. Spoken language and written language are different in nature, the former is relatively cumbersome and the latter is relatively concise, and the audience can understand the speaker with the help of the cumbersome part of the spoken language. Therefore, the quality of interpretation cannot be measured solely on the basis of translation standards. Although redundancy is unavoidable in spoken language and serves a practical purpose, there is an interplay between the various quality assessment criteria used by interpreter listeners, i.e., if an interpreter perceives one of them to be substandard, the overall impression will be significantly reduced. Whether over-explicit and verbose interpretation affects the audience's overall assessment of interpretation quality is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worthwhile to analyze it through empirical research.

Interpretation occasions, contexts and service objects are varied, so the interpreter must adapt to the situation and adopt appropriate translation methods, so the depth of the degree of "manifestation", the number of times, the difference between the types can not be set in stone, so the conclusions of this paper are purely for a single case, and can not be generalized. In this paper, we have summarized three relatively obvious phenomena of manifestation in our analysis. The indispensable manifestation is the part added to conform to the grammar of the translated text, if it is lacking, the grammar is not clear and the meaning is not known. Context-added manifestation adds information that is familiar to the speaker but may be unfamiliar to the listener; if it is lacking, the listener may not know what it refers to; if it is dispensable, it is an addition; if it is lacking, it neither constitutes a grammatical error nor hinders the listener's understanding.

b) Interpreter's note symbols

The biggest difference between interpretation and translation is that. The source language information can only be heard once, and it passes by instantly. In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter must listen to the source message while logically analyzing, storing and writing notes on the message; and continue to listen to the source message that follows. Within a few seconds after the speaker finishes speaking, the interpreter has to translate the source message into the target language according to the memory in his/her mind combined with his/her notes. Undoubtedly, this kind of high-density and high-intensity work puts high demands on the interpreter's memory. However, human short-term memory capacity is limited after all, so notes, as a tool to help translators memorize, play a very important role. The study of notes and the exploration of the interaction between notes and memory have also become a focus of interpreting research". The notes of professional interpreters are usually small and precise, sometimes even only some symbols, letters, lines and so on. Why do such professional notes have such a magic power to help interpreters instantly recall the huge amount of information minutes ago.

For the interpreter, first of all, when he takes notes during the process of listening to the source language information, his sensory memory is not only auditory memory, but also

produces visual memory of the note symbols, thus increasing the memory channels for the interpreter. Secondly, the combination of notes and logical analysis produces synergy. Logical analysis itself already belongs to the deep processing and fine recapitulation of the source language information, deepening the interpreter's memory traces of the source language information, while the notes reproducing the important vicarious relations and information points of such logical analysis are the fine recapitulation of the fine recapitulation, deepening the memory traces further, forming the information blocks with larger unit capacity, and expanding the interpreter's short-term memory of each slot. It further deepens the traces of memory, forms information blocks with larger unit capacity, expands the capacity of each slot in the short-term memory of the interpreter, and helps part of the memory to enter the long-term memory. Thirdly, notes not only deepen the traces of the translator's memorization of the main points of information and its logical structure, but also reduce the translator's memory load of certain contents. No matter how good the interpreter's analysis of the source language is and how well he or she organizes the main points of the source language in a way that is suitable for jogging the memory, there are simply too many elements that the interpreter is required to write down for a longer period of time, especially when the source language involves a lot of numbers, names, and enumerations, which often cannot be recalled by analysis and logic alone. And notes that jot down these elements ease the translator's burden of memorization in this regard. Fourth, notes can help activate memory. The translator's logical analysis of the source language information is reflected in the notes on the one hand, and continues to exist in the translator's mind on the other. According to the theory of cognitive psychology, sometimes the information in short-term memory is not forgotten, but just hard to be extracted. When the interpreter reads the notes and reorganizes the expression, the notes can play the role of signpost, quickly find the corresponding memory and activate it in the self-addressing process in the interpreter's mind, thus greatly improving the efficiency of the interpreter in reorganizing the expression. This is just like when an elementary school student forgets the words in a book, the teacher prompts a few words, and the student may activate the memory in his mind to recall the following. The logical relationship of the information contained in the symbols of the notes and the information points play the role similar to that of the teacher's "mentioning words", only that the interpreter recalls the information, not the original text of the information that he or she has memorized. Fifthly, since practiced tasks require less attention, the ability to write and recognize notes quickly, which is achieved after a lot of practice, enables the interpreter to pay less attention to note-taking and note-recognition and allocate more attention to listening to and recognizing the source language information and logical analysis, thus contributing to the smooth progress of consecutive interpreting.

c) Analysis of cases

Example1:

ST: Someone read stories to you and taught you to dream and offered up some moral code of right and wrong for you to try and live by, especially if you try to carry it at once.

TT: 有的人给你读童话, 教你如何树立理想, 并告诉你善恶的道德准则, 让你依据这些去生活, 当你鱼与熊掌都想要是尤其是如此。

Analysis: As far as listening is concerned, the sentence is

not very difficult and lacks substance when taking notes. So this sentence is better memorized in my opinion using my brain than taking notes. However, there are a lot of small words and details that need to be emphasized. First of all, there is the word "dream", which is abbreviated as "dr" in my notes, but it is very strange to translate it as dream alone. So the translator added the Chinese verb "树立" here, which goes with "理想" and expresses the meaning of the original more clearly. Next is the translation of "right and wrong". If translated as "对与错", the translation would be mechanical and lifeless, while the translation of "善恶" reads better. The translation of "善恶" is more catchy and more in line with Chinese morality. If we look at the last clause on its own, it's not difficult to understand that it means "especially if you need to catch it right away". But we have to take the context into account to express the true meaning of the original. The phrase "鱼与熊掌" is the most familiar expression to us Chinese, so we can know the meaning of this phrase immediately, and it also sounds more beautiful.

Example2:

ST: Part of growing up and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch and release

TT: 成长并进入人生新篇章的一部分, 是关于抓住和放手。

Analysis: First of all, in the symbols of my notes, the first letter that appears is the letter "P", that is, the initial letter of "part", and then the content that follows is put in brackets. And when translating, I start from the content in brackets. Then there is the translation of "catch and release", and there is no doubt that these two parallel words have to correspond to each other. "抓住和放手" is a good choice.

Example3:

ST: Decide what is yours to hold and let the rest go.

TT: 想好什么事情是决不能放手的, 剩下的就顺其自然吧。

Analysis: Actually, this sentence doesn't seem to be difficult, and it doesn't sound like there are any out-of-the-way words, but the translation is always a bit strange. I only wrote "决" and "go" in the note symbols, so if I want to translate it on the basis of these two note symbols, I have to use my brain to memorize it, as well as my ability to express myself in Chinese.

Example4:

ST: One toxic relationship can outweigh so many wonderful simple joys.

TT: 而一段糟糕的关系会挤走很多美妙而简单的快乐。

Analysis: In a sentence, "toxic" is replaced with a fork in my notes to indicate something bad, something negative, rather than toxic. So when I translate it, I don't translate it as "toxic", but find a negative word to go with "relationships".

Problems and challenges in cases

In fact, in my consecutive interpreting, this video is no less difficult than regular political and economic material. Obviously, there is no jargon in the original text, but there are quite a few "empty" expressions, whereas in my daily practice, I practiced more political economy material, and formed my own unique notes on the relevant terms. However, there are some expressions in this passage that I don't know how to take notes on, so most of them are memorized in my head, especially some details.

Secondly, this case is quite logic-oriented, which means that one has to consciously add certain logical connectives in

the spoken translation to make the words more smoothly connected and easier to understand.

5. Conclusion

To summarize, I found that the improvement of consecutive interpreting ability requires day-to-day practice and review. One needs to continuously improve one's language ability, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. You can improve your language ability through reading, listening training, speaking practice and so on. Also continue to master the skill of practicing notes. Because note-taking is a very important part in consecutive interpreting, you need to master some note-taking skills, such as shorthand, abbreviation, symbols and so on. You can improve your note-taking speed and accuracy by practicing note-taking skills. Another thing is to keep expanding your knowledge. That is to say, consecutive interpreting requires knowledge of various fields, so you need to constantly expand your knowledge. You can improve your knowledge by reading books, articles, news, etc. in various fields. Make steady progress in your practice.

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