

Simultaneous Interpreting into English

Sources of Error
Discussion Questions

1. How is the location of the error impact the message?

- The earlier in the process the error occurs, the more serious the error is and the more likely it is to cause a serious problem in the target language message.

2. How can knowing about types of interpreter errors affect your understanding of the interpretation process?

- Knowing the types and effects of various errors on the interpretation process can help students to become more accountable for their work. Accurate error analysis implies that the interpreter is able to analyze his or her own work. Error analysis helps to focus attention on specific component processes such as comprehension, memory, or production. After a specific component process has been identified then improvement strategies can be applied to that specific area.

3. How does lack of language proficiency affect the interpretation process?

- Lack of language proficiency affects the interpretation process in several important ways. If the weakness is in the source language, it may mean that the interpreter cannot understand the source message fully enough to interpret it. If the weakness is in the target language, the interpreter will have difficulty expressing the message clearly and accurately in the target language.

4. What are the sources of error in interpretation?

- Errors can occur as a result of inadequate language proficiency or processing problems such as difficulty in predicting language patterns, cognitive processing errors, inadequate attention, and interference between languages.

5. What are the main types of errors according to Gonzalez et al?

- The main types of errors are literal translation, grammatical errors such as verb tenses and agreements, negation, and other aspects of grammar, register conservation, distortion, additions, and omissions. Protocol, procedures, and ethics are additional areas where errors can occur.

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Comprehension
Discussion Questions

1. Why is comprehension important to the interpretation process?

- Interpreters must be aware of the possible meanings of an utterance and realize that comprehension of the source message is essential before the interpretation process can begin. The type of listening that the interpreter must do in order to comprehend as fully as possible requires a focused attention on the incoming message and excellent linguistic skills.

2. What is linguistic comprehension based on, according to Gile?

- Gile says that comprehension of linguistic material is based on the knowledge of the words of a language and knowledge of the grammar of the language.

3. What role do paralinguistic features play in comprehension?

- The interpreter must also attend to paralinguistic information such as that conveyed by inflection of the message, whether it is signed or spoken, facial expression of the speaker, the context in which the message is being delivered, and to whom it is being delivered. The interpreter must keep the emotional impact or illocutionary force of the message preserved in order to deliver an accurate message.

4. Why are macro-processing skills important in the interpretation process?

- Creating an accurate summary indicates a grasp of the gist or main idea of the passage. A summary can be a single sentence or a short paragraph. The ability to summarize or find the gist of a passage indicates the presence of macro-processing, which is often considered a predictor for interpretation skills. The presence of this ability shows that the interpreter is able to find the central organizing principle of the talk or text.

5. Why is analysis of the target audience important?

- The information about the target audience, even if it is not complete, must be analyzed in order to formulate an interpretation that is relevant to the recipients. In addition to the actual content and arrangement of the linguistic information, cultural information must be considered. If the interpretation is created without regard to audience needs and cultural context, then the interpretation will not be as accurate or meaningful.

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Transfer Discussion
Questions

1. What is transfer?

- In the context of interpretation, transfer is a way of talking about a part of the interpreting process that is invisible and occurs in the mind of the interpreter. This is the part of the process that allows the interpreter to try out several possible interpretations and select one that is most appropriate, given the context and information available.

2. What is a meaning hypothesis? What is its relevance to the simultaneous interpreting process?

- In the comprehension phase a meaning is temporarily assigned to a part of the text. The temporary meaning is based on what you know about the topic and what you can infer about the topic. In other words, the meaning hypothesis is what you think the passage means. If you discover that the meaning you had in mind is not the correct one, you need to revise your hypothesis and then the interpretation.

3. How do you decide which meaning of a word is meant in a specific text?

- The context provides valuable information that allows you to determine which meaning is most appropriate. If several meanings seem possible or appropriate, you can use hypothesis testing to see which is most feasible.

4. What role does visualization play in transfer?

- Visualization allows you to arrange objects and people in a created mental space. This mental space is like a picture of the situation. Having a mental picture can help create an accurate interpretation. Visualization can be used even when the objects and people being referred to are not present. When they are present the interpretation must reflect the actual relationships between the objects and people.

Why is it important to develop a hypothesis that is non-committal?

- It is important to develop a non-committal hypothesis when you do not have enough information to be certain of the meaning or relationships included in the message. Sometimes, as the message unfolds, more information is revealed and the interpreter can commit to a more specific interpretation.

Simultaneous Interpreting into English Unit

Reformulation



1. What is reformulation? What is the difference between analysis and reformulation?

- During analysis you determine the meaning of the source text.
- Reformulation is the visible result of the analysis and transfer stages of interpreting. Reformulation is the stage in which you render the interpretation.

3. What is the goal in reformulation?

- The goal is to render a grammatically appropriate interpretation that does not violate the syntax rules of the target language and that includes the impact of the source message.

4. How does visualization help you in reformulating the message?

- If you can visualize where actors and objects may be in relation to each other, you can render a logical interpretation even when the specific locations of actors and objects is not explicitly stated in the source text.
- Once you have established their locations, you must be consistent in referring to them, especially in signed languages.

Simultaneous Interpreting into English Unit

Self-Monitoring and
Correction



1. Why is memory important in the interpretation process?

- The interpreter cannot interpret what s/he cannot remember,
- Thus the interpreter cannot correct what s/he cannot remember.
- Accurate memory skills will reduce the effort needed for the process and will reduce the errors in the product.

1. Why is memory important in the interpretation process?

- People often do not really attend to what they are hearing and as a result do not remember accurately. However, people tend to think they have heard and remembered correctly.
- The kind of attention and memory skills used in everyday conversations are not as intense as the effort that must be used in the interpretation process.
- Memory allows the interpreter to continuously compare source and target messages for accuracy.

2. What factors affect memory?

- If you want to remember something you are more likely to remember it.
- If the new fact is similar in some way to something you already know, you are more likely to remember it.
- If you use the information in some way you are more likely to remember it.

2. What factors affect memory?

- You are more likely to remember the items at the beginning and end of a list or a text than the information in the middle of a text (Baddeley, 1976)
- Too much stress can reduce your ability to remember (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908).
- Moderate levels of stress can improve memory (Loftus, 1980, in Gonzalez et al, 1991).
- Irrelevant stimuli can distract you and interfere with storage and recall of information.

3. What aspects of the interpretation should be monitored?

- **Self-correction:** the message must be monitored for accuracy continually
- **Intelligibility:** focuses on clear diction and pronunciation of words or clarity of signs and phrases in the target language. Phrases must be delivered in syntax that is appropriate to the target language.
- **Volume:** the interpretation must be loud enough for the intended audience to hear if you are working into a spoken language. If you are working into a signed language, your signs must be large enough to be easily discernable by the audience watching your interpretation.

3. What aspects of the interpretation should be monitored?

- **Message accuracy:** the message conveyed in the target language must match the source language message in meaning, content, and intent. Cultural adjustments may be necessary to convey ideas appropriately in the target language.
- **Illocutionary force:** the effect or impact of the message should be the same on the target audience as it was on the source language audience.

3. What aspects of the interpretation should be monitored?

- **Fillers and repetition:** Fillers are additions to the message and skew the message somewhat. Adding fillers like “um” and “ahh” show uncertainty. When the interpreter repeats the message the target audience is likely to think that the speaker is repeating the message, when the speaker may have delivered the message only once.
- **Comments on your own interpretation:** are really another form of addition. These comments add something to the message that was not delivered by the speaker.

4. Why is it unlikely that interpreters can accurately remember everything they interpret ?

- Interpreters generally are using short-term memory at its fullest capacity while they are interpreting.
- The interpreter does not rehearse the incoming information and so its not likely that the message will be stored in long-term memory. If the interpreter has prior knowledge of the subject, s/he may be able to remember some of the message.

5. Why does simultaneous interpreting place such heavy demands on memory?

- Simultaneous interpreters must process incoming information while rendering the interpretation and thus never process the information in silence.
- Silence allows the interpreter a bit more time to actually rehearse and store the information and so the consecutive interpreter is likely to recall more information than the simultaneous interpreter.

6. Why would we study self-monitoring and correction after learning the simultaneous interpreting process?

- The interpreter must be able to produce a product first of all, and then later after some experience is developed, learn how to make corrections in the interpretation while the source is ongoing.