

The Methods in Consecutive Interpretation

-- Take “Eating While Multi-tasking” as an Example

Dan Li

School of Foreign Language, Southwest Petroleum University, Sichuan 610000, China

Abstract

The process and methods of consecutive interpretation through one of the courses in Southwest Petroleum University(SWPU) are introduced in this paper. The speech about how to avoid overeating while multi-tasking is adopted to provide some experience for beginners. Some improvement approaches in activities are aslo put forwarded for future learning.

Keywords

Consecutive interpretation; Methods; Improvement approaches.

1. Introduction

With the development of international exchanges, interpretation has become an important means of communication between countries. For MTI majors, a good oral communication ability is much necessary to meet the needs of “global village” and the strategy of spreading Chinese voice. Therefore, MTI students are supposed to master some basic interpretation skills in addition to language acquisitions and translation theories. At present, many universities have offered consecutive interpretation courses in China. It can not only train oral expression, thinking ability and flexible use of language of students, but can also cultivate high-quality talents in this field and enhance the international broadcasting capabilities of the new generation.

2. Consecutive Interpretation

2.1. Definition of Consecutive Interpretation

As a mode of interpretation, consecutive interpretation is the earliest one which has been used in conference interpretation. Nowadays, it stands out in international exchange featuring in small scope, short time and less variety of languages, like business negotiation, diplomatic meeting, judicial process, press conference, on-site training, academic meeting, etc. The consecutive interpreter is required to sit in a separate conference room and take notes while listening to the source language (SL). When the speaker stops speaking, the interpreter shall use the target language (TL) to interpret the content of what the speaker has spoken. Under the influence of the COVID-19, telecommuting has become one of the most common and safest ways of working. In this case, remote video conference is often used in transnational projects to save costs. With the development of technology, it has been gradually recognized and accepted by the public. Human beings draw inferences from one instance, and remote consecutive interpretation has been applied in some online courses and meetings that require interpretation services.

2.2. Consecutive Interpretation Course in SWPU

The consecutive interpretation course is designed for undergraduates with TEM-4 or CET-6 certificates or postgraduates with a good English foundation. Guangdong University of Foreign

Studies has set up a MOOC(Massive Open Online Course) for consecutive interpretation. It is a national high-quality open online course and a first-class course for undergraduates. On Feb 01, 2018, it was first offered in an APP named Chinese University MOOC.

The freshmen of MTI in SWPU could study consecutive interpretation as an optional course in fall of 2021. It ran from 7.00 to 9.25 PM and was composed of 9 units with various topics including basic literacy of interpreters, accent recognition, abbreviations and symbol system, memory practice, social problems, medical treatment, health, education, tourism, public health, environmental protection. The daily practice mainly included finding head words and topic sentences, retelling the SL information, vocabulary preview, long and short interpretation training, analysis of high-quality sentence translation and so on.

Before the beginning of each class, the supervisor would arrange the student who is in charge of the study to call the roll. This was to make sure that all the students are not absent. University classes in China are usually free and open, but sometimes students are tired and resistant to learn, especially for some long and monotonous courses. Good habits make a man half done. Classroom management system is a better way to ensure efficiency and learning effect. Consecutive interpretation requires more efforts with single-hearted devotion, just like small children practicing martial arts. The class usually started with short sentences exercise around a topic. Then, it gradually transferred to paragraphs. After listening to each paragraph, students would exchange their own interpretation with deskmates, check and fill in the gaps through the notes. Interpretation was different because of different knowledge system among the students. This was an important step for learning from each other. After exchanging, the supervisor would randomly call some students to share their interpretation, make comments on their answers, and brainstorm the interpretation of key words and sentences. This period was a golden time for classroom learning and a time when students were highly concentrated and wrote down the key points and techniques. It took a long time, usually accounting for two-thirds of the time of the whole class. There was an analysis of interpretation before finishing the class. The supervisor would show high-quality illustrative sentences to students to analyze the words and idiomatic expressions in English. They were supposed to find some problems in interpretation and make evaluations. It helps them to accumulate more experience by comparing common mistakes with their interpretation habits.

During the process of consecutive interpretation class, the students had gotten a deeper understanding of the interpreting forms and methods. However, they had different levels of interpretation proficiency due to individual differences. At the beginning, most students had made some common mistakes as every beginner. With continuous practice, the mistakes were greatly reduced. This is a tremendous legacy for their future study and life-long development. After a semester of high-pressure training, students' interpretation ability has been improved to varying degrees, and some even fell in love with this course. It broadened the way in the area of their expertise, and even changed some students' career planning. There is no shortcut to learn consecutive interpretation well, as an old saying goes: practice makes perfect.

3. Pre-Interpretation

3.1. Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The healthy eating habit is a topic which has been frequently talking about. There is an ancient Chinese remark still going around like this "Food is the paramount necessity of people." With the development of economy and the improvement of people's living standards, more and more people begin to pay attention to healthy diets. A good eating habit has become an index to measure the well-being of people. However, it seems that people cannot chew well at table in a fast-paced life nowadays. Some suggestions are provided in the example audio on how to eat healthier. This topic is chosen as it is a hot topic at home and abroad. It is also widely concerned

by people from all walks of life. Speeches usually take place on formal occasions with different style due to different contents. This speech on a healthy diet is easy to understand with concise language, clear syntactic structures. It is very suitable for beginners to catch up and practice. The teaching of any subject should be done step by step, which is helpful to build students' confidence.

3.2. Basic Preparations

It is particularly important to make some preparations before the official start in consecutive interpretation. This step has been regarded as a prerequisite to ensure a normal work and cannot be overemphasized. Interpreters should make full preparations before each interpreting activity. It includes short-term preparations and long-term preparations.

For a short-term preparation, interpreters shall check working equipments, estimate the on-site situation and adjust their psychological and physical condition. Working equipment is to an interpreter what sword is to a soldier. Some basic tools needed in consecutive interpretation are notebook, pen and recording pen. Besides the tools you carried on, in the working room, you need to check the working conditions of headset and computer which you will use. After everything has been checked, it would be better for you to take a deep breath or chat with the people around you. Of course, you can enjoy the outside scenery or take a few minutes to go to the bathroom. These seemingly useless activities can reduce your tension and keep you in a good spirit before starting. No matter in a training course or in a real interpreting activity, it is not wise to drink too much water.

For a long-term preparation, you are supposed to have solidified linguistic competence, acquire some professional background knowledge of different fields and take part in some professional skill training. An interpreter has to know everything of something and something of everything. There are three points which we should pay attention to as follows:

- a). Solid language skills: An interpreter should firmly master his/her mother tongue and foreign language, and has excellent language skills after years of accumulation.
- b). Broad knowledge system: To become a qualified interpreter, it is much necessary to continuously accumulate and expand your knowledge, improve your business understanding and vocabulary accumulation in one or more fields. Read a lot of books, English, Chinese and parallel texts in various fields.
- c). Excellent practical ability: It needs years of practice to improve your language ability, knowledge, shorthand ability, translation skills, etc. Before delivering the service, study and take notes of the conference materials and vocabulary in relevant fields. During the delivery service, it is necessary to capture the key message, respond quickly, correct errors in time, make a concise processing from redundant information, and ensure a smooth and high-quality delivery service.

It can be said with certainty that vocabulary preview is very significant for beginners in consecutive interpretation. It can be regarded as a fast learning of background knowledge. In this way, interpreters will understand how to interpret some terms and how to make efficient language output with high quality. In the class of SWPU, the supervisor did not give out vocabulary lists in advance for the example audio, because it is short without any terms. Interpreters should make adjustments according to some site conditions and specific requirements, which is also a requirement for professionalism.

4. Case Study

4.1. Information Acceptance

The time duration of consecutive interpretation is usually 2-5 minutes. The SL generally has large capacity of information which requires interpreters have high short-term memory ability.

Therefore, it is quite vital for interpreters to grasp the key information to ensure the accuracy during the listening. Generally speaking, the key information of the SL consists of three parts: keywords, forgetful information and SL's logical relations. For key words, interpreters need to preview the vocabulary lists what mentioned previously. If it is a real interpretation activity, you can prepare by yourself after knowing the topic. For example, you can try to find some original videos which are related to this theme and study some basic terms and general knowledge of this field. For forgetful information, the indispensable requirement is that the interpreters must promote their short-term memory ability step by step in daily course. The time retention of SL information in short-term memory is generally 5-20 seconds.

The two major factors which affect memory ability in short-term memory are the length and familiarity of information. In terms of these two factors, interpreters shall pay more attention to background knowledge study in long- term preparation as well as vocabulary preview in short- term preparation. As for SL's logical relations, an uncertain factor, it can help you remember the whole structure well if the SL has logical properties. If you encounter the SL with complex structure and poor logic, there is nothing to do but try your best to summarize the main points to help yourself remember well.

4.2. Listening Process

Firstly, we can see that the time of this speech is 2 minutes and 6 seconds in the example audio, and the theme can be clearly figured out through the audio title "Eating while Multi-tasking". As a result, a conclusion can be drawn that this is a simple task with short time and less content. We can make autosuggestion: This topic is close to people's daily life. I believe I can understand it. Such an information analysis will greatly enhance the interpreters' confidence and bring great help to SL information listening. It has to be noticed that interpretation anxiety has a direct impact on the acquisition of SL information. *Students can participate in anxiety intervention training to foster their adaptability to different interpretation anxiety.* [1]

Secondly, what the interpreters need to do is to capture the whole structure and details of the SL after information analysis. This skill has a lot in common with listening course we took when we were undergraduate students. It is a listening comprehension which does not require word for word comparison when interpreting, but the whole meanings and all details must be expressed in your own way. In this part, the preview of vocabulary and the professional background knowledge will be of great use. As long as these two steps finished well, no matter how long the speaker talks, how difficult the topic involved is, it will not be an obstacle for interpreters to successfully get the whole text. During the listening, interpreters should pay more attention to capture the key words and topic sentences at first, some key words and phrases in the example audio are listed as follows:

1. multi-tasking
2. mouthful
3. essential
4. food intake
5. additional signals
6. overeating
7. chew
8. swallow
9. running in your mouth
10. food remaining
11. from your mouth to your throat
12. deep breath

13. exhale

The key words and phrases play important roles in the whole interpretation, and they are the key to ensure the readability of interpretation without translationese. Do not try to use the words which have the same meaning in Chinese as you thought because each industry has its own terminology. Interpretation is not a peripheral discipline, what it involves goes beyond the boundary of any particular branch of learning. Topic sentences are sentences used to summarize the central idea, content core, author's attitude, expressed thoughts and make a conclusion of the SL information.

Thirdly, it is horrible that if interpreters listened the SL mechanically without using brains. It is generally recognized in interpreting industry that predicting what the speaker will say next is much necessary if you catch some appropriate opportunities. It is called information prediction which means interpreters can interpret some words before the speaker spoke them out. Lederer had put forward the cognitive anticipatory activity in word prediction and sense expectation since 1978, after that, many scholars began to study prediction in interpretation from different perspectives. Appropriate information prediction is helpful to remember the SL's logic, and it brings a great chance to capture the next predicted information. As we can see, information prediction is far more important than we think.

Last but not least, recognizing the speaker's pronunciation is a point which cannot be ignored to obtaining accurate SL information. The male speaker in the example audio has a standard pronunciation of English, and his accent is almost the same with native English speakers. If we meet non-native speakers in our interpretation, there is no choice but to learn how to distinguish different accents. British English and American English are very common and widely accepted internationally. There are some other English which have been used in business. For example, Australian English, Japlish and Konglish. Nevertheless, the most difficult to understand are English speakers who come from Southeast Asia and India. If you've never heard a different accent before you listening to the speaker who speaks Indian English, you will become frustrated during your interpretation. It is hardly that interpreters to master all accents, but you can make friends with overseas students in campus or find some original videos on the Internet to learn the accent of the speakers. This is not enough to make it difficult to give up interpreting learning.

All in all, in the listening process, the main four steps are information analysis, capture the key words and topic sentences, information prediction and recognizing the pronunciation.

4.3. Recalling Process

After listening to SL information with a good understanding of the contents, the next point is to retain what you have got in your brain by some auxiliary tools. The short-term memory ability must be mentioned again here for the accuracy and completeness of the interpretation. How can we improve short-term memory ability? There are three methods which have won wide acclaims with unique effectiveness: information visualization, logical analysis of information and meaningful memory. Information visualization refers to transforming SL information into symbols and abbreviations which can be reminders during interpretation. Symbols and abbreviations are convenient to write down and can help interpreters recall related SL information. Taking notes in an orderly manner is a very crucial skill in interpretation. In the example audio, my notes were taken as below:

Good afternoon- GATN

Everyone-EV1

Today-2D

I Would like- I Wd L

Talk about how we eat food-TK abo~ H we e~ f~

If we eat while Multi-tasking- If we e~ Whi Mul-task~

For example, we are working through lunch or watching TV, while as eating dinner- FE, we'r wo~thr~ lun or wa~ TV Whi~ as e~din~

It is just easy to eat more-It's jt easy to e~mo~

on the other hand -OTOH

If we simply eat, then tasting every mouthful makes us aware of how much we are taking in- If we sply~ e~ then tast~eve~ mouf MK us awa~ of HMC w ~tak~ in.

How much we are taking in- HMC we~ TK~ in.

It is Essential-It's ess~

Take a closer look-TK a closer LK

It is not what we eat but how we eat-≠W we eat, =H we eat

Once eating on the way, the brain has a key role to send out a signal when fullness is approaching-1c e~OTW, the bra~ hs a key role 2 SO a sig Whe ful(n) ~appro~.


While our mind is multi-tasking, joining eating, critical signals that limit food intake may not be received by the brain, if the brain does not receive certain messages that occurred joining eating, it may fail to register the event as eating, which can lead to the brain continuing to send out additional signals of hunger and increases the risk of overeating- Whi~ our mind ~ mul-task~,join~ e~, cri~ sigs~ TH limit FI may NT b~recd by the bra, if the bra DSN rec cert~ mess~TH occed join~e~, it may FT regi the eve~ as e~ Whi can LD2 the bra conti~ 2 SO add~ sigs~ of hun~& inc~ the ris~ of OE.

So, we should be mindful when we eating, it is not to say the awareness of what in your plate but the experience of eating- S, we sho be midf~ Whe we e~,≠say the awa(n) of W in Ur pla~ but=the exp~ of e~.

For example, eating an apple, you take one bite of the apple and then close your eyes, don't begin chewing yet, trying not to pay attention to the ideas that are running through in your mind, just focus simply on the apple and notice some anything what are running in your mouth. Then you can begin to chew, chew slowly, just notice what it tastes like-FE, e~an App, U take 1 bite of the App & then cl sur eyes, DNT begin chew~ yet, try~ NT 2 pay att~2 the ids TH r run~thr ur mind, jt focus sply on the App ¬i~ SM anyth~W r run~in ur mou~. Then u can beg 2 chew, ch~ slo~, jt noti~ W it tastes like.

As you prepare to swallow the apple, try to fill the process from your mouth to your throat, and then you will no longer feel any flavor of the food remaining, then finally take a deep breath and exhale. By doing this exercise you may discover something about your own eating habits, this may help set an intension of being mindful through the course of your dinner – As u prep 2 swa the App, try 2 fill the proc fr~ ur mou~ 2 ur thro~, &th u will NLG feel any fla of the fo~ rem~, then fin~TK a deep bre~ &exha. By do~ this exe u may dis~ sth abo~ur own e~habs, this may hp~ set an inte~of be~midf~thr~the cors of ur dinn.

The main purpose of symbols and abbreviations are used to help interpreters recall the SL information, and it is not necessary to follow a strict standard. Some other symbols and abbreviations about eating are summarized as below:

- A. The “balance of yin and yang” (In Chinese food culture) -balance of 
- B. Good eating habits and health complement could be mutually “complementary”- “< >”
- C. High-quality protein is the “core” in the diet pyramid- “Δ”
- D. Vitamin C- VC
- E. Carbohydrate-Carboh

There are many symbols and abbreviations which enjoy a high popularity in interpretation as mentioned above. We can make a symbol system according to our study and work, it can not

only improve working efficiency, but also help us develop a good working habit. As for notetaking, the notebook often used in interpretation is loose-leaf book with a lot of advantages, like paper space utilization, multiple turnover and flexible disassembly.

After taking notes, interpreters need to quickly make an organization of interpretation. The second point mentioned above is to make a logical analysis of SL information. Listening to the SL information and writing down are not enough for us to work with high efficiency. Sometimes, interpreters shall recall the information through the whole context. For example, it has been mentioned in the example audio that it is easy to lead to overeating when people do other things while eating. Therefore, it can be inferred that if we eat without any other things to do or just focus on eating while multi-tasking, it will reduce the probability of overeating. On the other hand, if you care more about other things in your mind, you won't notice how much you have eaten. In this way, it is easy for interpreters to follow the speaker's language logic and obtain the true and useful information.

Compared with mechanical memory, meaningful memory refers to the use of relevant knowledge, experience and the internal relationship of things on the basis of SL understanding. The speaker in the example audio cited an instance of eating an apple. We should eat every mouthful with great enjoyment, you will be enchanted by the flavor like you have never eaten an apple previously. Do not think about anything else except what remained in mouth. What does the speaker want to tell us? Almost everyone knows that when you eat carefully and slowly, the brain will feel the signal of "fullness" slowly and you will not get overeating in this way. You can guess the speaker's conclusion without even listening.

In a conclusion, there are four main steps need to do in recalling process, these are listening comprehension, short-term memory, note-taking and coordination.

4.4. Information Output

Information reception and information output are inseparable with each other. There will be invalid output if you didn't do well in the first part. The only thing to do in the second part is to coordinate your notes and memory, then the good interpretation will come naturally. The major steps in output are recalling, note-taking and production.

What's more, interpreters have a lot to do for information output in the long run. For example, we have to study the characteristics and styles of different SL information. Speeches, interviews and reports, the author's speaking style and attitude are worthy to digging out. We can make a comprehensive understanding from the aspects of vocabulary, tone and context to show the opinions and attitudes that the speaker wants to express during interpretation. In the example audio, the speaker talked in a suggested way to tell people how to avoid overeating while multi-tasking. When we interpret, we'd better use the free language style to maintain the feature of the SL information. In daily training, we can read each sentence and each paragraph after it been translated to find the language sense. *It is much necessary for interpreters or translators to adjust the word order, to do conversion of word-class and deletion or supplement, because English and Chinese have great difference in syntax and expressions.* [2]

What calls for special attention is the ideology in interpretation. Translation is not only a linguistic transformation, but also has a strong social function. It has always been influenced by politics. Interpreters should have a serious and explicit political attitude in any interpreting activity. For example, how to interpret “台湾问题” from Chinese to English? The key word “问题” should be interpreted into “issue” or “problem”? *“Issue” is an important topic that people are discussing or arguing about*, this is an English explanation from Oxford Dictionary. Of course, it is much better to use “problem” instead of “issue” here, because Taiwan is a territory of China which beyond controversy. Indeed, an interpreter has to be “a Jack of all trades”.

5. Improvement Approaches

Interpreters shall do a lot of interpretation training after class and make themselves in good condition every day. The consecutive interpretation course in SWPU has achieved good teaching results. It convinced students of the need for wider reading and listening. All the subjects are designed for practice and work. There are improvement approaches we can make in terms of interpretation activities.

According to the characteristics of the work, consecutive interpretation can be divided into two categories. One is interpretation for provincial and municipal leaders when they meet foreign guests, and the other is the interpretation in large-scale foreign affairs, such as investment activities and professional forums. Interpretation is at the forefront of foreign affairs. It is not only related to the effectiveness of foreign affairs for a province or a city, but also related to the implementation of the foreign policy of the Party and the country. The requirements of the translation office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country's top foreign affairs translation team, for interpretation work can be summarized in ten words: "basically complete, basically accurate, and sonorous voice". "Basically complete" is to ensure the complete transmission of information between the host and the guest. This mainly depends on notes and brain notes. The notes should have a set of suitable methods. Brain notes should seek the logical relationship in the speech and string scattered words and sentences together. Making conscious practice is very important for brain notes. "Basic accuracy" mainly refers to accurate use of words, including professional words, collocations and new words and so on. Voice is a sign of confidence in your interpretation. You must cultivate the habit of sonorous voice. If the interpreter's voice becomes lower and lower because of lack of confidence, it will lead to the leader doubt that his original intention has not been well transmitted to the other party. Even both sides will question the effect of the whole interpretation.

So how to prepare for interpretation? Here we use some cases in foreign interpretation as an example. "Know yourself and know the opposite party, you will be successful" in *Sun Tzu's Art of War* is a strategy for interpretation.

"Know yourself" seems a simple job that is often despised. Who doesn't know himself? However, the fact tells us that sometimes the problem is that we don't fully grasp the situation of ourselves. In interpretation for foreign affairs, "Know yourself" means to fully grasp the basic situation and characteristics of a province or city. Interpreters know the basic information of each task clearly in mind, including the following five items:

- a). The main data of economic and social development of the province or the city, including GDP, GDP per capita, total import and export value, the actual use of foreign capital under the agreement, the number of major scientific research institutions, the number of college students, and update these data in time.
- b). Economic characteristics of the province or the city. For example, Chengdu is characterized the tertiary industry. The industries where talents and enterprises concentrated are research and development, exhibition, cultural innovation.
- c). Pay attention to the interpretation of specific phrases with local characteristics. For example, Divided hotpots(鸳鸯锅); Healthy QR Code(健康码); Teahouse culture(茶馆文化).
- d). Concern about current politics, keep abreast of international developments and read more international news.
- e). Understand the characteristics of different leaders' speeches as much as possible. For example, some leaders speak fast and have a large amount of information. Others like to use a series of numbers to explain a question. Some leaders have outstanding eloquence by using four-character idioms. If these characteristics can be mastered in advance, they will also be of great benefit to the on-site interpretation.

f). Master the overall arrangement of leaders' meeting activities. For example, if gifts are prepared in advance, you can learn more about the purpose and meaning. It will give the feeling of being welcomed at home.

Compared with "know yourself", "know the opposite party" is a difficult task because of the asymmetry of information. Therefore, we must grasp the situation of the other party to the greatest extent through various ways, and, mainly do the five preparations as follows:

- a). The main purpose of the trip and background of the foreign guests.
- b). Master the resumes of foreign guests, including their educational, professional and religious backgrounds and photos.
- c). Brief introduction about foreign visitors' organization or institutions.
- d). The overall itinerary of the foreign delegation.
- e). If possible, understand the guests' accent, speech characteristics and personality in advance.

6. Conclusion

I will conclude by saying that consecutive interpretation is a position that requires high comprehensive quality. Interpreters are supposed to have basic language skills, linguistic acquisition, cross-cultural knowledge, good psychological quality, adaptability and work ethics. *These factors can be called in a joint name -Interpreter Quotient.* Although it is difficult, if we devote ourselves to it and keep practicing every day, we have the reason to believe that we will become proficient sooner or later.

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