
EFFORT MODEL OF CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING AND NOTE-TAKING

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Abstract.

Consecutive interpreting requires a lot of parallel cognitive and affective processes, which are challenging for the interpreter who has to deal with them currently. This study focuses on the problems trainee interpreters encountered in their CI sessions. An analysis of the strategies they used to weigh whether they have been successful in completing their task is also given. Translation is an interdisciplinary field of study; it is associated with all fields of knowledge. Due to globalization, there is an urgent need for oral interpretation all over the world. Therefore, the interpreters should have certain skills that enable them to perform their task professionally. Training interpreters is necessary to provide them with 'tactics and strategies' that will help future qualified interpreters to solve the problems they encounter.

Key Words.

note-taking; consecutive interpreting; principles; effort model; listening.

Introduction

The quality of interpreting relies on certain skills and strategies that should be adopted by practice training." Consecutive interpreting entails a large number of almost concurrent cognitive, psychomotor and affective processes, all of which pose major challenges for the interpreter who has to deal with them simultaneously". That is, consecutive interpreters encounter problems such as mental processing related to short-term memory, self-confidence problems as well as linguistic problems. Formal training for translators and interpreters is very essential because it develops "their performance to the full realization of their potential" and helps them develop their translation skills more rapidly than through field experience and self-instruction, which may involve much groping in the dark and learning by trial-and-error". Formal training should be organized, directed and systemized to prepare qualified interpreters. Furthermore, formal training raises the professional standards of translators and interpreters in the

marketplace; it lifts their social status, and it introduces them to the prospected organizations and clients, and provides them with self-confidence²⁴⁴. Russell defines CI "as the process of interpreting after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas in the source language and pauses while the interpreter transmits that information"²⁴⁵.

Setton, R and Dawrant, A indicate that researchers drew on sociology, cognitive psychology and linguistics as models of interpreting; however, these models are still intuitive because of the complexity of the data. "Cognitive process models focus on the interpreter's mental operations, and typically draw on cognitive psychology to model such component processes as speech comprehension and production, memory, attention/resource allocation and coordination." This model can be effective when focusing on developing the interpreter's self-confidence, training his/her short-term memory as the man's memory is a muscle that needs certain exercises to enhance or activate its capacity. The second model is that "social or relational models focus more on the shifting dynamics of the communicative relationship between participants in the mediated event, including the interpreter. "It takes into consideration the relationship, distance and formality between the interpreters and the speakers." Again, these two models can be applied individually; they should be applied with other models to have a comprehensive model. Therefore, the present study relies on Gile's Effort Model of Consecutive Interpreting in analyzing the data.

According to Gilies, "notes taken in consecutive interpreting are a representation of the skeleton structure of the speech." „The aim of note-taking has often been described as the process of capturing some abstract, global-level conceptual sense on the notepad." Taylor- Bouladon agrees: „the aim is to take notes which represent ideas, so that they may serve as memory-joggers"²⁴⁶.

The Effort Models were created by Daniel Gile with the aim of elucidating commonly encountered challenges in the field of interpretation, as well as providing guidance to students on how to surmount them. The model posits the existence of two distinct phases in consecutive interpreting. The initial stage involves the process of comprehension, which includes attentive listening and note-taking. The subsequent stage pertains to the production of speech, also known as reformulation.

²⁴⁴ Gile, D. Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training. Amsterdam, 2009. Volume 35, Issue 2– P. 14-17

²⁴⁵ Russell, Debra. Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting. In Janzen, Terry (Ed.), 2005. Volume 18, Issue 4 – P.135-164.

²⁴⁶ Taylor-Bouladon, V. Conference interpreting: principles and practice. third edition. 2011. – P. 68

The text elucidates that in Gile, during the first phase, the interpreter attentively listens to the speech, conducts an analysis, and records notes. Four distinct efforts can be identified: The four cognitive processes that are commonly associated with effective learning are Listening and Analysis (L), Note-taking (N), Short-term Memory operations (M), and Coordination (C).

The concept of Memory Effort pertains to the duration that elapses from the point of auditory reception to the point of transcription. During the initial phase of consecutive interpreting, a Production Effort is undertaken, which is specifically focused on generating notes²⁴⁷. The act of taking notes can become a hindrance to effective listening as the interpreter may become preoccupied with the mechanics of note-taking, thereby impeding their ability to listen attentively. Frequently, individuals experience instances where auditory information is not perceived. During the second phase, three distinct efforts can be identified: The three main cognitive processes involved in learning are Remembrance, Note-reading, and Production. The act of note-taking during phase one is a crucial component in the subsequent phase of interpretation, as it can potentially mitigate the reduction of cognitive processing capacity during the phase of working memory retention, provided that the quality of the notes is satisfactory.„ When notes are taken according to a few simple layout rules, the layout itself can be hypothesized to act as a visual stimulator of memory regarding the logical structure of the speech”²⁴⁸. The author Gillies draws a comparison between clear notes and stage directions, as both serve to guide the interpreter in determining appropriate moments for pauses, emphasis, and restraint. As per the aforementioned model, the seamless execution of consecutive interpretation is contingent upon the availability of a total capacity that surpasses the aggregate processing demands. According to Gile, it is advisable to introduce the Efforts Model and the concept of processing capacity to students at the outset. This approach appears to be effective in facilitating their comprehension of various challenges they encounter, as well as in interpreting the techniques and methods recommended by instructors, such as conference preparation, consecutive note-taking, and language skills improvement. The individual recommends engaging in speech repetition exercises in the same language, without initial interpretation. Additionally, they suggest conducting a brief experiment to promote awareness. It is recommended that students be segregated into two distinct groups. It is recommended that the initial cohort engage in the practise of

²⁴⁷ Gile, D. Basic Concepts and Model for Interpreter and Translator Training. Amsterdam. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009. Volume 46, Issue 6 – P. 7

²⁴⁸ GILE, D. Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training. Amsterdam, 1995. – P.114

note-taking, while the subsequent cohort is advised to limit their note-taking to numerical data, proper nouns, and specialised vocabulary, if deemed essential. Subsequently, the pupils are obligated to construe a concise demonstration encompassing several appellations, and upon encountering a name, the scholars are expected to confirm its accurate reception. Upon analysing the proportions of correctly perceived names between the two groups, it was observed that the cohort of students who refrained from taking notes exhibited superior performance in recognising the names as compared to the group of students who did take notes. As per Gile's assertion, the presentation of Effort Models is effectively introduced. As previously stated, these materials are didactic in nature and have been designed with the objective of facilitating comprehension for students.

Daniel Gile proposed his Effort Models to help interpreters understand the “difficulties [of interpreting] and select appropriate strategies and tactics” The underlying basic ideas are mainly two:

“interpretation requires some sort of mental ‘energy’ that is only available in limited supply”,

interpretation “takes up almost all of this mental energy, and sometimes requires more than is available, at which times performance deteriorates”.

The Effort Models are based on the fundamental principles of Processing Capacity and the recognition that certain cognitive processes involved in interpretation require a significant amount of it. The interpreter must attain a state of balance in the distribution of energy across the various phases of interpretation, as each phase demands a specific level of effort. Gile (D) delineates four principal obstacles that interpreters confront during their professional practise:

Listening and Analysis Effort: this pertains to all operations that are oriented towards comprehension, ranging from the analysis of sound waves that convey the speech in the source language and are received by the interpreter's ears, to the identification of words, and ultimately to the determination of the significance of the utterance. These endeavours pertain to comprehension: the mere auditory perception of linguistic utterances holds no significance unless the interpreter's cognitive faculties process them into a coherent and significant communication.

Memory Effort: seen “more as a storage mechanism where information is temporarily kept before further processing takes place” ;

Production Effort: consecutive interpreting is a process that involves two distinct production phases. The first phase requires the interpreter to attentively

listen to the source language (SL) speech and take notes. The second phase involves the delivery of the target language (TL) speech.

Coordination Effort: in comparison to the role of an air-traffic controller, the interpreter is responsible for managing their focus of attention between the tasks of listening and analysis, as well as ongoing self-monitoring during performance. Upon reaching this point of coordination, interpreters are capable of executing their interpreting duties under the most favourable circumstances, as their abilities are harmonised with the specific task at hand. The Coordination Effort is essential as it facilitates the seamless interpretation process, which is reliant on effective coordination. Coordination is essential in achieving a balance between various factors, even if there may be instances where these efforts overlap²⁴⁹.

Consequently, an interpretation (I) can be summarised with the following equation:

$I = L + M + P + C$ where L stands for the listening and analysis effort, M for memory, P for production and C for coordination.

The total requirements (TR) for the interpretation will be the following:

$$TR = LR + MR + PR + CR$$

As a result, in order for the interpreter to carry out the interpretation smoothly, the following conditions need to be satisfied:

$$TA > TR$$

where TA is the total available capacity.

Consequently,

$$TA > LR + MR + PR + CR$$

where the R stands for requirements.

Should conditions (2) and (3) not be fulfilled, the interpreter would experience **mental saturation** with an obvious **negative effect on the interpreting performance**. Here is exactly where the Coordination Effort comes into play, managing the interpreter's resources and allowing him/her to "survive", like Monacelli suggests in her book *Self-preservation in Simultaneous Interpreting*.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research is to illuminate the authentic challenges pertaining to perception and reproduction that novice interpreters face when consecutively interpreting from English to Arabic. The text centres on the utilisation of Gile's Effort Model of Consecutive Interpreting to address and shed light on the aforementioned challenges. The data was gathered, transcribed, and

²⁴⁹ Kriston, A. "The Importance of Memory Training in Interpretation." Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012. – P. 79-86.

examined to identify errors made by novice interpreters. The errors were classified as linguistic issues, encompassing deficiencies in language proficiency, difficulties in listening, note-taking and note-reading, memory lapses (resulting in loss of focus), and challenges in reproducing the intended text. The data was subjected to analysis in order to identify the issues experienced by the trainee interpreters. The aforementioned issues were categorised as follows: difficulties related to perception, including but not limited to listening, comprehension, focus, retention, and technical challenges; and challenges related to reproduction, encompassing semantic difficulties, lexical equivalence, and numerical obstacles. The theoretical framework utilised in this study was Gile's Effort Model of consecutive interpreting.

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