

**Consecutive Translation: Mixed Challenges .. Mixed Strategies.
An Exploration of the Difficulties of Consecutive Translation with Some
Suggested Solutions with Reference to Gile's Effort Model**

الترجمة التعاقبية : تحديات كثيرة واستراتيجيات متعددة
دراسة في مصاعب وتحديات الترجمة التعاقبية مع بعض الحلول المقترحة بالاشارة الى نموذج الجهد لكيل

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Abstract

The present paper touches upon some linguistic and non-linguistic challenges encountered by consecutive translators. It also suggests some strategies to deal with some difficulties encountered by consecutive translators who sometimes find themselves facing not only difficult but also embarrassing situations since they work under stressful conditions dealing with an oral, not written, texts which are accompanied with various constraints. Consecutive translation involves various elements and challenges which make it a plethora of linguistic, non-linguistic difficulties and obstacles. Accordingly, it requires special skills, capacities, and strategies. In fact, consecutive translators need “extra, i.e. compensatory, strategies” which facilitate their job. The present paper attempts to deal with the phases of consecutive translation process using Gile Model (listening, reformulation phrase and reproduction). The paper also deals with memory, note-taking, strategies employed in consecutive translation and techniques of improving listening, short term memory and note-taking.

Key words: consecutive translation, source language (SL), target language (TL), the efforts model, memory, short-term memory (STM), listening, note-taking, reformulation, reproducing.

ملخص البحث

تتناول هذه الورقة بعض التحديات اللغوية وغير اللغوية التي يواجهها المترجمون في الترجمة التعاقبية. بالإضافة الى ذلك يسعى الباحث الى طرح بعض الاستراتيجيات للتغلب على الصعوبات التي يواجهها المترجمون التعاقبيون الذين يجدون أنفسهم في بعض الأحيان يواجهون تحديات لا تتسم بالصعوبة فحسب وإنما تتصف بالاحراج نتيجة لظروف مرهقة فهم يتعاملون مع نص شفهي وليس نصاً مكتوباً مصحوباً بقيود مختلفة. تتضمن الترجمة التعاقبية عناصر وتحديات مختلفة ومتنوعة تجعل منها سلسلة من الصعوبات والتحديات اللغوية غير اللغوية. وعليه، لابد للمترجم التعاقبي من مهارات وقدرات واستراتيجيات خاصة، بل إن المترجم التعاقبي بحاجة ماسة إلى "استراتيجيات إضافية، أي تعويضية" تيسر له القيام بمهمته على اكمل وجه ممكن.

يسعى الباحث من خلال هذا البحث الى التعامل مع مراحل عملية الترجمة المتتالية باستخدام نموذج كيل (الاستماع، ومن ثم إعادة صياغة العبارة ونتاج النص النهائي في اللغة الهدف). يتناول البحث أيضاً المواضيع ذات العلاقة مثل الذاكرة، وتدوين الملاحظات، والاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في الترجمة التعاقبية وتقنيات تحسين الاستماع، والذاكرة قصيرة المدى، وتدوين الملاحظات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة التعاقبية، اللغة المصدر، اللغة الهدف، نموذج كيل، الذاكرة، ذاكرة المدى القصير، الاستماع، تدوين الملاحظات، إعادة الصياغة، إعادة إنتاج النص في اللغة الهدف.

Introduction

Consecutive translation has always been an important means of communication among different persons and groups speaking different languages. In certain conferences and meetings of any kind: political, industrial or scientific, consecutive translation is indispensable since it is the efficient tool of communication and information delivery. Medical settings, court interpreting, training sessions and on-site facility tours require consecutive translation as there will be many opportunities for natural pauses in the conversation. It will also be suitable for small meetings, such as interviews, human resource meetings, parent-teacher conferences and any types of situations which allow for breaks in speech.

Consecutive translation is a spoken form of translation where real-time verbal translation is performed to enable two or more people to communicate their conversations rendering an oral text from one language (SL) into another (TL) so that both parties understand each other. (The language Factory,2019).

Nida (1964: 161 – 164) defines translation as a process which “consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”. However, this definition can be applied to written translation more than it is to consecutive translation. Translators in dealing with written texts have, relatively speaking, enough time to, understand and examine texts consulting dictionaries and other sources of information whereas consecutive translators are deprived of all these facilities which makes consecutive translation a real challenge.

It is preferable to use consecutive translation in small events, meetings and closed-room dialogues and discussions. However, in live TV broadcasts, large conferences or conventions simultaneous translation is the best means of communication (Day Translations Team,2018).

1. Challenges of Consecutive Translation.

1.1 Consecutive Translation: Definition.

Consecutive translation indicates the process in which a speaker makes a number of sentences (the source language) to be reproduced by the consecutive translator in the target language. Usually, consecutive translators keep very close to speakers using pads and pens to take notes. They also use microphones to make themselves well heard. It is supposed that speakers deliver their ideas or speeches in a reasonable pace so that translators can cope with them giving faithful translation. Note-taking is the pillar on which consecutive translation is based (Movahedi,2016). Listening carefully and actively is indispensable for consecutive translators. Besides, the analysis of what is said by the speaker will help in making useful notes which will refresh memory and the consecutive translator will be able to interpret or translate the speech (European Commission, 2020).

1.2. Consecutive Translation Difficulties and Challenges.

Difficulties and challenges in consecutive translation can be classified into three types: linguistic, cultural and paralinguistic.

1.2.1 Linguistic Challenges.

Linguistic difficulties include syntactic, semantic, phonological and prosodic difficulties and challenges.

1.2.1.1 Syntactic Differences.

Languages differ in their syntactic rules and formulations. In the case of Arabic – English (and English – Arabic) translation we may explain these differences by the different word order of English and Arabic sentences. As- Safi (2013:51) gives the following example to clarify this types of difficulty reflected by different word order of Arabic and English sentences:

زار جلالة الملك عبد الله الثاني وجلالة الملكة رانيا وولي العهد سمو الامير الحسين دارا للايتام.

Their majesties King Abdullah II, Queen Rania and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al-Hussein visited an orphanage.

The Arabic sentence here starts with the verb (زار), then, the subject (جلالة الملك عبد الله الثاني وجلالة الملكة رانيا وولي العهد سمو الامير الحسين) and finally the complement (object) (دارا للايتام). The English sentence starts with the subject, then the verb and complement. The syntactic difference between Arabic and English sentences composition represents a real challenge for consecutive translators who have to keep the main verb in their memories waiting for the subject before they start translating.

1.2.1.2 Semantic Challenges.

This type of challenge is related to lexical incompatibility which includes jargon words [the terminology or phraseology used by a particular class, trade, or profession; as legal *jargon*. (Webster, 1977:516), neologisms (a new word or phrase); the new usage or meaning of old words (Ibid:638) and blend words. Consecutive translators should be aware of the topic, register and vocabulary related to the speech rendered (Jackendoff, 1972).

1.2.1.3 Phonological and Prosodic Challenges.

Phonological and prosodic challenges are always faced by consecutive translators especially, for example, when an Arab translator translates from English into Arabic because speakers who speaks English are not always English native speakers. The researcher, who is consecutive translator, has encountered a lot of difficult and embarrassing situations due to this type of challenge which refers to phonemes (like vowels, consonants, consonant clusters, and diphthongs), suprasegmentals and prosodic features (like stress, intonation, pitch, rhythm, and tempo). Consecutive translators have to listen carefully trying to figure out the way speakers pronounce sounds and words especially when they are non-native speakers (As-Safi, 2013: 51).

1.2.1.4 Cultural Differences.

Translation (written, consecutive or simultaneous) is an intercultural activity where different cultures interconnect. Cultural differences are related to various aspects of human life: religious, social, political, historical, environmental ...etc. Translators, in general, should be well aware of cultural differences between the source language and target language. However, consecutive

translators are supposed to have an idea about speeches or the event they participate in. They also can ask the speaker if s/he uses a cultural expression which is not familiar to them.

1.2.1.5 Paralinguistic and Psychological Challenges.

Paralinguistic and psychological challenges and constraints are numerous and they represent difficult barriers for consecutive translators. Some of the paralinguistic challenges are gestures speaker's tone, tempo and loudness of voice. Psychological constraints include: fatigue, timidity and fear. These constraints may result in omissions, hesitations and time lag. To overcome these barriers and constraints a consecutive translator must have self-confidence and full concentration. S/he must listen carefully paying attention to the context of the speech. S/he should be familiar with the topic and various ways of pronunciation. However, there some other constraints and difficulties which consecutive translators may point out asking moderators, or those who are in charge, to handle; like:

1. fast speaking and the difficulty of interrupting speakers.
2. speakers forget that there is a translator and they do not pause in their speech.
3. too early or too frequent pauses made by speakers may confuse consecutive translators because it will be difficult to understand the full ideas speakers want to express.
4. Chatting among participants in events or meetings make it difficult for interpreters to focus on what speakers say.
5. speakers deliver speeches again while the interpreter is trying to take notes or interpret what is delivered.
6. interrupting and correcting consecutive translators by the speakers who know the target language. (Ibid: 52)

2.Strategies of Consecutive Translation

2.1 Consecutive Translation Process.

Specialists argue that the process of consecutive translation is composed of three stages: active listening, analysis of what is said and the reproduction of the speech (the SL message) in the target language (European Commission,2020). The three main actions in this process are:

2.1.1 Listening. Active and good listening is the key to understand the message delivered in the SL; listening and understanding go hand in hand. Actually, there is no chance to listen again to what is said or to understand ambiguous and doubtful parts. Listening, in consecutive translation is performed in a very special way; the purpose of listening is not to express reaction or participation in conversation but to keep the speech in memory to be reproduced accurately and faithfully in the TL (European Commission,2020). Full focus and vigilance, good listening, and a very good short-term memory are the indispensable tools for consecutive translators (Movahedi,2016).

2.1.2 Analysis. Consecutive translators must handle information they receive according to its priority; i.e., they should be able to underline primary and secondary information. They are, also, required to note down who has said what and so on (European Commission,2020).

2.1.3 Reproduction. It is the last stage where the consecutive translator reproduces the SL oral message in the TL depending on her/his memory, skills and short notes (Ibid).

2.2 Gile Effort Models.

"The Effort Models" are proposed by Daniel Gile (1992,1995) to help consecutive translators in fulfilling a better performance in translation. It is a strategy which enables consecutive translators to overcome many challenges (Zhong, 2003). The three stages afore mentioned are reduced to two: the first one is encoding and storing information; the second one is retrieving information and reproducing it in the target language. The first phase includes listening, note-taking and short-term memory; the second one is reproducing the SL message as honestly as possible in the TL reproduction. The two phases are modeled as follows:

Phase 1= listening and analysis of SL speech + short term memory + note- taking.

Phase 2= retrieving messages from short-term memory+ reproducing the TL message (reading the notes then reconstructing the message).

Reproducing SL speech involves recalling segments, from memory, (good notes written in a clear and logic way will be a very helpful tool), which are incorporated in the notes written down by the translator who is supposed to reconstruct and reproduce the SL speech once the speaker stops speaking (Meifang,2012), (Zhong,2003), (Vanhoat,2006).

2.3 Memory, Note Taking and Background Information.

2.3.1 Memory (Long Term and Short Term- LTM & STM).

An excellent memory (aside from being fluent in the SL and TL) is the capacity consecutive translators need; it is indispensable for them (Day Translation Team, 2018). Consecutive translators can not work without excellent long-term memory (LTM) to keep in mind whole chunks of speech which on the average take about 3-8 minutes; in addition, they need short-term memory STM (Święcicka,2020). Short - term memory, which is also called "primary" or "active" memory, can store a limited amount of information for a limited period of time, roughly 15-30 seconds. The capacity of STM is limited and small. Atkinson and Schifrin propose that it is seven items of information. Miller, also, says it is seven "chunks" (Zhong, 2003; Vanhoat, 2006). If consecutive translators, for example, attempt to reproduce the form of an SL speech, their STM will be filled with lexical items, which may not even make a full sentence. On the other hand, if they try to give corresponding lexical items in the TL interpretation for the SL items relying on their STM, they may focus their attention on translating these items rather than listening carefully to incoming messages. Accordingly, it is necessary to stop speakers every six or seven words so that consecutive translators can clear their STM and prepare to receive new information (Ibid). According to Gile's *Effort Model*, short-term memory is indispensable for interpreting. Besides; a long-term memory is very important for putting "the information into context" (Zhong, 2003). Memory is defined by psychology as the retention of, or the ability of recalling information, experiences skills and habits...etc. It is divided into three parts: "sensory storage, short-term memory and long-term memory. Sensory storage is the shortest one of the three"; it can hold

information for only seconds. Short-term memory can go for more than seconds. Long-term memory is very large. The process of consecutive translation bears on the three types of memory where short-term memory acts as a bridge between sensory stores and long-term memory (Meifang, 2012).

2.3.2 Note-taking.

Consecutive translators, mostly, cannot perform their task without taking notes. they are used at once and for one-time (Ibid). When a speaker talks for, relatively, a long period the consecutive translator should take notes in order to be able to remember the message and deliver it accurately. Note-taking skills, with "a special note system" which includes symbols and abbreviations to represent words, are indispensable in consecutive translation (Day Translation Team, 2018).

The SL ideas, and their order, need a quick and consistent way of noting in consecutive translation. Notes are considered "a visual representation" of the analysis of the SL speech. Notes must be clear otherwise the analysis is wasted and usually the notes will be clearer in structure than the original speech, so that the interpreter can easily transmit the same message to the audience (Gillies,2017). However, if a consecutive translator is thinking too much about how to note something, s/he will listen less well. The most difficult challenge for consecutive translators is the difficulty of listening and taking notes at the same time.

Some specialists believe that note-taking cannot be taught and that everyone must come up with one's own system. That's mean any consecutive translator can introduce a number of his own techniques which means no two translators will ever produce an identical set of notes (Ibid).

2.3.2.1 Note-Taking: Content, Phases and Procedure.

Useful notes promote effective listening and concentration. They should include basic information and ideas of the SL speech content like key words, technical terms, figures and proper nouns (Meifang, 2012; UNSW, 2019).

A consecutive translator has to follow certain procedures so that s/he will be able to achieve a high performance. Arriving on time and sitting near the front in order to take good notes is the first thing to do; consecutive translators need to hear and see clearly(Ibid). Notebooks/ documents should be set up for note-taking (Ibid). There should be always a note-pad and a couple of pens (Gillies,2017). Notes may be written down in the SL, TL or in a combination dividing a speech up into its component parts and summarizing the main message of each section of a speech. It is recommended that a single page is used to note an entire speech (Ibid). Symbols and abbreviations have to be used and everything should be consistent and clear. One glance is enough for qualified consecutive translators to read notes by several lines; time, on the other hand, is saved for the following memory retrieval and delivery (Meifang,2012). Finally, consecutive translators must not forget leaving margins in note-taking. A margin may indicate a different type or mode of content. Besides; it, gives the translator a room to fill in the information stored in memory (Gillies, 2017).

2.3.2.2 Note-taking According to Gile's Effort Model

Gile believes that note-taking is not only assists in storing information in the STM, but also helps in stimulating and supporting the whole process of memorizing and encoding (Meifang,2012). Consecutive translators usually write down the main topics, ideas of speeches using some marks which may represent the logic relations between ideas. Consecutive translators may use established well known marks or "fabricate" their "own" marks; for example **&** means 'and'; **::** may mean 'because, since; as for'; happiness, gladness, pleasure...etc. may be represented by a smiling face. Besides, speakers' emotions can be symbolized in notes using the mark '!' to show the speaker's emphasis on some ideas, suggestions or information (Meifang, 2012). Finally, good notes saves time, energy and help consecutive translators to retrieve core information, ideas and key words. They help consecutive translators in making focus on main issues and ideas (Ibid).

2.3.3 Background Information.

Good background information of an event is necessary for consecutive translators; good background helps to make accurate interpretation. Consecutive translators have to ask clients to provide them with briefings and basic information regarding events topics, themes and speakers. It is important for consecutive translators to have, as much as possible, "drafts of speeches, special vocabulary, terminologies and other vital information the client or the speaker requires" (Day Translation Team, 2018).

3. Improving Consecutive Translators' Performance

3.1 Techniques and Solutions

Comprehension, memory and note-taking are the components which cooperate with each other to enable consecutive translator to perform their job. Gile's effort model suggests an order of attention distribution where listening and analysis comes first, memory is second and note-taking is third. In real performance, these three components happen and interact simultaneously (Meifang,2012).

3.1.1 Improving Listening.

In the following are some techniques which can help to improve listening:

1. Ear adaptation. Consecutive translators should train themselves on intensive listening in various assumed situations and comprehensive listening. (Golmohammadi,2020).
2. Simultaneous activities. Translators have to do certain activities simultaneously; they have to listen and understand at the same time because they cannot have another chance to listen again. On the other hand; there is always a possibility to encounter ambiguous and vague words or expressions. Hence, they have to practice and train themselves to acquire and improve the skill of listening and understanding at the same stage.
3. Numbers, figures and proper nouns skill. A consecutive translator needs a special skill for dealing with numbers, figures and proper nouns. S\he has to practice on daily basis on

listening and memorizing numbers and proper nouns taking rapid note-taking. Names of countries, towns and major geographical features must be memorized (Ibid).

4. Eye contact. A consecutive translator should maintain an eye contact with speakers; s/he should be attentive, but relaxed, trying to feel what the speaker is feeling.
5. Asking questions. Consecutive translators must not interrupt speakers; they should wait for a pause to ask clarifying questions; asking questions here is only to ensure understanding (NSW,2019).

3.1.2 Techniques for Improvement of STM.

Short-term memory training is an important exercise which consecutive translators have to do on daily or weekly basis. It is the first skill which is required by consecutive translation (Vanhoat,2006). The purpose of memory (STM) training in consecutive translation is to achieve a better understanding of the source language, which will lead to adequate translation (Zhong, 2003). There are some recommended techniques should be followed by consecutive translators:

1. Consecutive translators have to try to Memorize some phone numbers, poems, literary pieces, simple scientific formulas, etc. Memorizing the pieces of the above mentioned information is a good technique for keeping new information in mind.
2. Retelling in the SL. Retelling in the SL is a very important and useful tool for improving STM. This activity involves an instructor, who either reads or plays a recording of a text of about 200 words, and a consecutive translator who is supposed to retell in the same language (and in the same words, as much as possible) without taking any notes.
3. Generalization. A consecutive translator should be able to make general conclusions from the examples or messages provided by the SL text.
4. Comparison. A consecutive translator should have the ability to spot differences and similarities between different things, facts and events.
5. Reconstructing segments. It is a common suffering in consecutive translation to misunderstand (or not having a proper hearing) technical terms, names, numbers...etc. Consecutive translators, in this case, have to reconstruct the message using their knowledge of the language, the subject, and the situation (Vanhoat,2006).
6. 'Inserted Noise'. This is a tactic usually followed to develop the ability to focus, concentrate and enhance STM duration. It involves recording speeches with specially 'inserted' noises as a background (Zhong,2003).

3.1.3 Techniques for Effective Note-taking.

One of the difficulties encountered by consecutive translators is relatively long speeches which contains names, addresses or figures. Writing down every details or information may take time and make translators lose other items or information. Short memory, here, has a significant role to play (Vanhoat,2006). Consecutive translators need to abide by the following techniques to develop short memory:

1. **Concentration:** concentration is what consecutive translators rely on in their job; they cannot work without full concentration. There are some tools which help consecutive translators to develop their abilities to focus and understand what they hear. Active listening, critical thinking and analyzing information are what consecutive translators need to do in order to develop their abilities to focus and understand what they hear (UNSW, 2019).
2. Trying to write down everything said is not helpful; consecutive translators should select essential and basic information. Note-taking should be involved with key topics and relative information (Ibid).
3. Coding notes – coding notes is often an indispensable technique for consecutive translators. Consecutive translators are supposed to use certain colors and symbols to mark emphasis, indicate and classify major sections, main points or diagrams (Ibid).
4. Transcribing key concepts in the translator's own words (Ibid).
5. **Overlooking redundant information:** consecutive translators cannot handle the full information at any time. They may not reproduce in the TL some repeated speech's content or some information provided that enough information has been reproduced. (Vanhoat,2006)
6. **Note-taking:** consecutive translators should not try to write word for word; they have to rely on well organized, labeled and reduced notes in complete thoughts.
7. Consecutive translators have to make their notes easy to read.
8. **Consecutive translators should be aggressive note takers:** the first thing consecutive translators should do is to find a place where they can hear and see speakers as clearly as possible. They have to be always alert and ready to take notes as soon as speakers start talking.
9. **Developing special and private set of symbols:** a consecutive translator should have her\his special and private symbols (circles, lines, underlines...etc.) to be able to handle the various items, ideas, notes and information (Instructional Center,2020).

3.2 Strategies Followed in Consecutive Translation.

There are some strategies followed by consecutive translators. These strategies are the outcome of real and on ground experiences in consecutive translation. Consecutive translators are recommended to follow these strategies; they may follow some other new strategies imposed by the situation, process and conditions of the event (in which the consecutive translator is performing translation).

1. **Prediction and anticipation:** a consecutive translator should be able to predict and anticipate the incoming information, ideas or items. Anticipating incoming items helps in saving time and efforts which lessens pressure on consecutive translators.
2. **First come, first proceed:** a consecutive translator should break long and complex sentences and speeches into meaningful segments starting translation following the principle of "first come, first processed."
3. **Elaboration:** consecutive translator may add missing information in the source text, so that the target text sounds more logical and coherent for the audience.

4. Approximation and paraphrasing. It is not always possible for consecutive translators to reproduce the exact or the ideal equivalents for SL words or expressions; hence, he should use approximate equivalents or give an explanation of the original concepts and items.
5. Restructuring order. To produce a good TL text may sometimes require reformulating source speeches; literal reproduction of SL items is not always a first priority in consecutive translation once the SL message is faithfully reproduced in the TL text.
6. Visualization. Strengthening understanding and memory of the original message can be promoted by forming a mental picture of the SL speech content especially when dealing with a descriptive message.
7. Errors Correction. Consecutive translators should not try to correct trivial errors if they find that corrections cause more harm than help.
8. Reproduction. Sometimes, original speeches contain an unknown term (or terms and expressions) for consecutive translators; it is recommended to leave it in the target reproduction as it appears in the original.
9. Adaptation. Sometimes, consecutive translators should adapt the source message to fit the TL conventions or culture.
10. Intonation. Rising or falling of intonation is necessary in consecutive translation to achieve speech to make listeners understand, in a better way, the intended meaning of the utterance. (Li, 2015).

Conclusion

Consecutive translation is a difficult process that needs concentration, accuracy and good experiences in translation. It is a challenging activity which requires various abilities and skills. Good knowledge of Source language (SL) and target language (TL) is a prerequisite; in addition, related knowledge and general information are very necessary for consecutive translators.

It is necessary for consecutive translators to concentrate on the message that convey by the speaker, instead of words, details. Note-taking is a good and necessary aid; it is useful for consecutive translators to use note taking and record ideas such as main ideas of the topic, terms, numbers, questions, etc... logically and chronologically to enable them in reading the information when they reproduce the target language speech.

Using some symbols and abbreviations is very necessary to speed up in consecutive translation. However, consecutive translators have to pay special attention to improving listening and short-term memory (STM); they must have intensified trainings and exercises using so many strategies and techniques in order to increase their ability in listening process, saving more information in STM, speed up taking notes in note-taking process.

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