

The Consecutive Interpreter as a Speaker: Some Circumstantial and Cultural Challenges

المترجم المتتابع كمتحدث: بعض التحديات الظرفية والثقافية



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Abstract

Consecutive interpreting is a demanding task where the consecutive interpreter is believed to perform in an optimal manner that need the interpreter to work extremely hard to cater for these standards. In this paper, the researcher sheds the light on the behavioral, communicative and linguistic competences a consecutive interpreter should enjoy as the interpreter is a speaker in the first place. Moreover, the researcher also points at some cultural and circumstantial challenges that occasionally face the interpreter. The results show that the consecutive interpreter needs to work excessively to obtain the aforementioned competences and avoid the awkward situations by being regularly exposed to the linguistic and cultural patterns of the target language.

Key words: Consecutive Interpreting , competence , cultural challenges ,circumstances

المستخلص

تعد الترجمة التعااقبية مهمة شاقة حيث يعتقد أن المترجم التعااقبي يجب أن يؤدي عمله بطريقة اقرب ما تكون إلى المثالية ولذلك يحتاج المترجم التعااقبي للعمل بجد لتلبية المتطلبات اللازمة لذلك. يسلط الباحث الضوء في هذه الورقة البحثية على الكفاءات السلوكية والتواصلية واللغوية والتي يجب أن يتمتع بها المترجم التعااقبي كون المترجم متحدثا في الأساس. علاوة على ذلك يشير الباحث أيضا إلى بعض التحديات الثقافية وبعض الظروف التي تواجه المترجم أحيانا والتي من شأنها أن تعرقل عمله. أظهرت النتائج أن المترجم التعااقبي يحتاج إلى العمل بجد لتطوير الكفاءات المذكورة أعلاه وتفادي المواقف المحرجة التي من الممكن أن يتعرض لها المترجم من خلال التعرض بانتظام للأنماط اللغوية والثقافية للغة الهدف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة التعااقبية، الكفاءة، التحديات الثقافية، الظروف.

Introduction

Consecutive interpreting is one of the other modes of interpreting where the interpreter should listen to a speaker for a short period of time and write down notes about what the speaker said then start immediately interpreting the moment the speaker stops. It is a demanding job that requires the interpreter to enjoy several skills in order to be a competent interpreter. The interpreter is a speaker in the first place who needs to work hard on his/her speaking skills and the behavioral and linguistic competences in order to fit this position. In this paper, the importance of the interpreter performance as well as the linguistic skills are presented in a brief manner. The interpreter is also prone to face some cultural and circumstantial challenges such as idioms, jokes, fast delivery and stress which constitute a considerable obstacle that the interpreter should be well-trained to overcome.

Interpreting and Interpreting Modes

Interpreting is the process of verbally translating a text or speech from one language to another. Interpreting is an extremely challenging task due to the fact that it requires the performer to execute a succession of difficult perceptual and motor tasks in front of a group of people, even if that group is a public or confidential one. These tasks include listening to the speaker, processing his/her speech and producing the interpretation within seconds or less than that. The act of providing appropriate information verbally and then transferring that knowledge into some other language, that has its own distinct cultural and linguistic patterns, is referred to as consecutive interpreting according to Hu (2006, p. 3). Interpreting consists of several modes , such as simultaneous interpreting, which is distinguished by its dependence on high-tech booth tools, and remote interpreting, which is distinguished by its complete dependence on the availability of excellent internet access , consecutive interpreting is the type that is used the most regularly because it is the least expensive and has only reasonable requirements on tech assistance. It is used in interpreter-on-site trade negotiations, press conferences, confidential state meetings, interviews, and personal consultation, among other settings.

The Consecutive Interpreter

A consecutive interpreter observes attentively all of a speaker's



remarks or at least a large portion of them, and then reassembles what the speaker said with the assistance of notes that were made while the interpreter was listening. Therefore, the interpreter is working successively with the first speaker.

The interpreter plays a significant and indispensable role in the process of interpretation since he/she is not only transferring information from one language to another, but also represents a bridge on which two nations or more speaking different languages can communicate and agree upon several issues that may change the political, economic and cultural future of both nations. Due to the multiple tasks an interpreter is to accomplish, a consecutive interpreter needs to have specific competences and develop certain skills in order to master this mode of interpreting.

Speaking skills are one of the critical traits to have in order to effectively communicate the meaning of what is being interpreted throughout the execution of interpreting. When executing their duties, interpreters are communicating more efficiently since they have excellent speaking abilities. Furthermore, efficient speaking skills lead to successes not just in particular work tasks but also in progress at some other personal and professional objectives. This accomplishment is due to the fact that effective speaking skills generate more persuasive communication. Novice interpreters need to be instructed on linguistic aspects so that they can build their speaking abilities. According to Saunders and O'Brien (2006, p.14-40), one of the essential components is for interpreters to perfect their articulation of the target language.

The correct pronunciation plays a significant part in the understandability of the interpreter because incorrect pronunciation can sometimes result in miscommunication. This is particularly true when it comes to the incorrect distribution of stress and intonation patterns, both of which can result in varying possible interpretations.

Thus, the interpreter is burdened with enormous responsibilities which should be taken into account whenever interpreting realizing the interpreter's role as a speaker who speaks on behalf of the institution, nation or individual who hired him/her. Speaking is one of the several, yet most.



prominent and direct way of communication. It involves two parties or may be more engaging in discussing a common topic of which the two parties should share a common language. Interpreters are there to facilitate the process of communication when the two parties do not share a common language. Thus, interpreters function as the glow by which the communication process is put together and to function properly, an interpreter should have the following competences:

The Communicative Competence

Communication is not a product but rather a procedure which facilitates and gives notice for doing things. Both the sender and the receiver are involved in this procedure. The sender's duty is to encode the intended meaning, and the recipient's is to decode it. In accordance with the surrounding norms governing the communication and the syntactic rules appropriate to the language that is used, encoding is a cognitive process where both verbal and non-verbal actions are chosen to generate a message. When one decodes a message, he/she attaches meaning to the user's actions based on our understanding of how they reflect the user's cognition according to Samovar and Porter (1997, pp.10-11).

Haymes (1972, p.269), an anthropological linguist, was one of the first linguists to emphasize the importance of the communicative competence in terms of interpreting. The term was described by him as the aggregate of many other abilities, including semiotic, socio-pragmatic, discursive- textual, and referential ones. Ethno-sociocultural competence constitutes the fifth ability as Boyer states (1991, pp.41-44). Semiotic competence points to the interpreter's familiarity with both the verbal (phonology, phonetics, syntax, semantics, and lexemes) and para-verbal (i.e., in oral language, this involves mimics and gestures, and in written language, this involves graphics) aspects of communicating in a given language. Conversational fluency, or socio-pragmatic competence, refers to the interpreter's familiarity with the social norms and practices surrounding certain types of speech actions.

Discursive-textual proficiency refers to the ability to use language for purposes beyond the sentence level (discourse, textual cohesiveness and coherence, etc.). A person with referential competence is well-versed in the linguistically-grounded social, anthropological,



demographic, geographical, innovative, intellectual, and technical realities. Lastly, the ability to demonstrate ethno-sociocultural awareness depends on the interpreter's familiarity with a group's mythologies, symbols, rituals, subliminal codes, and norms .

Over the last several decades, the communicative competence has emerged as the pinnacle of second and foreign language education. It is discussed to prove the multifaceted nature of communication and the many factors upon which the communicative competence relays while seeking for the right meaning. The capacity to decode and encode verbal cues in their contextual medium is a crucial part of interpreting. Although considered straightforward, communication between two different languages, i.e., two different cultures is a complicated task that may initiate misunderstanding issues unless the interpreter is well-trained to handle this task.

The Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence encompasses proficiency in both languages and beyond. The syntactic rules which a speaker acquires unconsciously in order to utilize and comprehend a language. The grammatical competence, which is another name for this concept, contrasts with linguistic performance.

Nordquist (2020, para.1-2) argues that the expression "linguistic competence," as employed by many linguists such as Noam Chomsky, is not meant to be a judgmental one. Rather, it is considered a reference to a person's natural linguistic understanding, which is what enables him/her to associate words with certain sounds. In terms of the Theory of Syntax (1965), Chomsky said, human beings therefore propose a basic difference between competence (the speaker-listener's understanding of his/her language) and performance (the practical usage of language in particular circumstances). If one believes this argument, then even the most fluent native speaker is still susceptible to making or failing to recognize syntactic faults when memory, attention, emotions, and other such elements are removed from the equation. It is related to the theory of generative grammar, which states that all fluent speakers of a language have an innate, subconscious knowledge of the linguistic patterns regulating their language. Interpreters having excellent linguistic.



command on both languages are supposed to perform fluently due to their sensitive occupation, otherwise interpreters should be trained to master this competence to prevent awkward and urgent situations. However, native speakers are prone to committing spelling, pronunciation and grammatical mistakes not because they are not linguistically competent, but it might be due to fatigue, distraction or mental distress.

The Behavioral Competence

Besides being an expert communicator, an interpreter is also considered a public speaker. His/her job entails repeating what other people say in a language which their listeners do not comprehend, or may only partially comprehend. This implies that speaking is an essential pillar in the interpreter's job as an interpreter spends most of the time rendering what his/her client says orally. Because of this, his/her way of talking is an integral part of their job as interpreters and communicators across different cultures.

Researching and describing speech and speaking may seem to be straightforward and easy tasks given that the majority of individuals utilize these elements in their professional and personal interactions on a daily basis. Speaking accounts for the great portions of our interactions with others as a matter of fact. Every human being, assuming there is not any underlying pathology, eventually figures out how to communicate verbally. When individuals have reached the point when they have perfected the ability of speaking, it will become as naturally and effortless task to others as breathing will.

Hughes (2002, p.7) disjoins studying speaking and speech into three separate domains: the global or discourse level, the structural level, and the level of speech production. Hughes makes the point that speaking intersects with other fields and activities. The creation of human beings voices with the assistance of their chest, throat, and brain; the sounds traveling through the air in the form of vibrations; and the receipt of the sounds by the audience's ears are the three primary activities that occur when one talks. Roach (2001, p.4) infers that both brains of the speaker and the listener are engaged in the process of directing the creation of speech; however, it is the task of the recipient's brain to analyze the voices which were heard and turn them into purposeful content. In



addition to that the brain sends out the orders required for making speech, it is also continually receives feedback in the shape of a speech tone that is being generated; if individuals were not able to monitor their speaking in this manner, they would find it exceedingly challenging to speak at all.

speakers with a normal speech pace generate over 150 words each minute. The typical speech rate for a human being is between 60 and 120 words per minute. When there is a pressing need to make time, the rate may be quickly increased to 300 words each minute.

According to Levelt (1989, p.199) a typical, well-educated speaker will have a working vocabulary that is somewhere around 30,000 words. In speech, a speaker fluently makes the appropriate selection from within these 30,000 words or more which can be used as substitutes not just once but continually two to five times per second - a level which may be retained without any obvious timing limit. There is possibly not another cognitive process that is universal among healthy individuals and that has such a significantly higher rate of decision making. However, the rate of errors is low. Alan Garnham in his book Psycholinguistics argues that there could be a slip of tongue every time an individual utters 1000 words. Whenever the different components (sounds, phonemes, words, and sentences) are built into understandable utterances, a complicated process called articulation is required. This process takes meticulous preparation.

For example:

The situation	The interpreter's behavior
In a conference in the UN where the Iraqi former president Noori Al-Malki was delivering a speech.	The consecutive interpreter stood right next to Al-Malki. The interpreter hastened the speech and kept interrupting the speaker in a way that shows her as the dominant of the situation.
In a press conference held by Jeanine Plasschaert, the UN	The interpreter stood near the speaker and waited for the speaker to finish her intended lines while



representative in Iraq in Sep 13th 2020	writing down notes the started to deliver smoothly while the speaker kept dominating the speech.
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The Consecutive Interpreter's role in a Communication

The duty of an interpreter is to facilitate communication among people who do not share the same linguistic or cultural backgrounds. In an interpreting communication setting, the interpreters act as mediators. This implies that interpreters are not the creators of the content of the speech; but they work to transfer that content from the sender to the receiver. According to this scenario, the interpreters' personalities are to be present in the situation. They have an unusual position in the communication process.

Interpreters, as mediators, do not take a leading role in a communicative scenario. This is also true for dyadic and group communication. They are not the leading figures, even if the communicating parties ask their interpreters for their thoughts on a particular topic which has arisen through a debate or convention. In certain cases, interpreters may respond to these requests, but it should be noted that interpreters are not involved in making the decisions related to the essence of the topic since they lack the necessary competence.

Interpreters are not meant to involve in the subject matter of the occasion, on the contrary, interpreters are meant to transfer the meaning of the content of that occasion .

It may not appear clear some times since interpreters frequently predominate the interaction scenario in order to save time to hear and render the rest of the speech while maintaining the time limit.

Furthermore, interpreters receive a lot, if not the majority, of the focus throughout meetings. This is especially true for face-to-face interpreted events, since they frequently sit or stand next to the speaker(s). However, they must constantly remember that their job is to convey the meaning as simply as possible, i.e. without substantial changing, consequently easing the discussion, and that they do not hold authority in such instances.

The function of an interpretation is similar to that of a lawyer or a doctor as they are employed to assist the clients in an extremely



significant or fundamental issue that is a communication difficulty. The connection between interpreters and their customers is also built on mutual trust and respect. It is a partnership marked by prudence, secrecy, and steadiness, in which the interpreter is cautious and provides clients with a sense of safety and guidance.

The visibility or invisibility of the interpreter is another aspect of their job that has to be addressed in relation to the function which the interpreter plays. In the realm of community interpreting, there have been multiple instances in which the objectivity constitutes a challenging task for many interpreters. Angelelli (2003, p.15-25) suggests in her approach that interpreters should be made visible along with all of the socio-cultural variables that make it possible for them to co-found a definition of reality with the other individuals who are participating in the conversation.

This indicates that the interpreters are present with all of their strongly integrated views on power, social standing, unity, gender, age, race, ethnic origin, nationality, as well as the cultural values and plans of the social factors which are employed by him or her to construct and interpret reality.

Circumstantial Challenges

Fast delivery

It is a common belief that interpreters faces a difficulty when interpreting for people who speak quickly. The amount of terms that can be said in one minute is used to evaluate the pace and manner of the speaker. Numerous geographical, cultural, linguistic, interpersonal, and psychological incentives, amongst others, have a role in determining this pace. The quantity of words or expressions that a person says in one minute is subject to change depending on the elements that were discussed before. According to Roach (1998, p.58-100), one may estimate the pace of delivery of a speech by just listening to it; nevertheless, it is impossible to determine the grounds on why that evaluation is formed. Some of the speakers appear to speak quite quickly.

Some people speak quickly, while others appear to have a normal speaking tempo. It is possible to assess the pace of speech using one of two distinct methods: the first method takes into account both pause



and hesitation, while the second method does not. According to Li (2010, p.19), it is common knowledge that the ideal pace for English speakers is somewhere between

100 and 120 words per minute; however, the exact number could vary depending on the sort of speech being delivered. Furthermore, Li also infers that the greatest challenge for the consecutive interpreter is dealing with quick speech. If the interpreter is properly prepared, he/she will be able to compensate for any gaps in his/her knowledge and vocabulary, which will make the interpretation of rapid speech considerably simpler. Nevertheless, regardless of how well an interpreter understands a topic, their performance may degrade if the speech rate surpasses a particular ideal limit.

This is the case even if the limits are reasonable. The explanation for this is because while all interpreters have a certain amount of cognitive abilities, consecutive interpreting according to Gile (1995, p. 161) requires them to deeply consider a number of different aspects, such as: the four skills of listening, producing, remembering, and coordinating. When a speaker has a rapid speech rate, the interpreter must spend the majority of their time just listening to and processing the information in the source language. This leaves the interpreter with little time to reproduce the information in the target language.

Different Dialects/Accents

Accent is understood as the method in which a word is pronounced which takes place between individuals in a specific nation or territory, and dialect is defined as a manner of a language spoken in a particular area and that uses some of its own words, grammar, and pronunciation patterns. Both of these definitions can be found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Both speaking with an accent and switching to a dialect when one is in the middle of speaking provide significant challenges for interpreters. The English language is currently the most often used language for international conferences and the lingua franca of the globe. The most common language used is English.

It is common for people whose native language is not English to speak the English language with a strong accent in a number of nations throughout the globe and at professional meetings. Additionally, even within nations where English is the primary language spoken, there is a



wide variety of accents and dialects. The interpreters have difficult situations understanding what is being said at times since the speakers have accents that are not familiar to them. The ability to comprehend spoken language is an extremely intricate process.

The interpreters needs to devote the time to attentively listen to the speaker so that they would comprehend and identify the terms that are being stated; as a result, productivity decreases since the interpreters are unable to keep up with the speaker. The value of the interpreter's performance is negatively impacted as a result of this process. Their attention to Detail and analyzing ability also decline as a result of the individuals' attempts to cope with the heavily accented pronunciation. When the interpreter is acquainted with the speaker's accent, it can often assist them better understand what is being said. Nevertheless, highly accented English is one of the most significant problems that the interpreters must face, and it has the potential to impact their entire performance. An engaging exercise that, when presented by a speaker, ultimately results in the listener's comprehension of the source text There are a lot of things that might help or negatively effect an interpreter's listening comprehension, such as the pace at which the information is delivered, the vocabulary used, and the articulation that is generally recognized. Accent is a variation from the general norm of pronunciation in a language which is suggestive of another language, in this case the speaker's mother tongue. It is defined as a divergence from the general norm of pronunciation.

Stress

The experience of a perceived danger or threat, in addition to the anxiety which derives the interpreter to feel that he/she is unable, for whatever reason, to manage an issue which is believed to be harmful, is what causes stress. Because the interpreter works in the field of languages mediation as a profession, it follows that he/she made a conscious decision to work in this field. The interpreters have made the decision to remain in a line of work that is widely acknowledged to be extremely demanding, not just psychologically but also physically. Stress is something that follows a person during his/her career; it is not just something that is characteristic of a novice interpreter because even a veteran interpreter finds this job demanding. Although this is true, it



may be the case as professional interpreters report that the amount of stress they face over their careers seems to lessen as they get more expertise in the field.

The relationship between stress and how an interpreter performs can be modified by a number of factors, including excellence and motivation. Interpreters who are highly experienced and compelled are more probably to deliver a great level of performance even though they are stressed. Successful interpreters tend to continuously monitor their progress and work to eliminate their weak points.

Horváth (2012, p.149) asserts that the connection between playing sports and interpreting may, at first glance, appear implausible or, at least, strange. However, these two activities have a strong connection in terms of stress and the ability to control stress. Due to the reason that stress appears as one of the primary psychological aspects affecting an interpreter's professionalism, working out has proved psychologically to contribute to the field of interpretation as well as the development of the interpreter. A scenario in which athletes compete against one another is analogous to that of an interpreter being tasked with a job as both are characterized by the achieving incentives of the performers, in this case the athlete or the interpreter, to reach their goals. They are unable to evade the circumstances, and it is imperative for them to carry out the commitments they have made. Their achievement each day is dependent on both internal and external elements, which both the athlete and the interpreter need to be able to regulate well.

Cultural Challenges

Idioms

If the speakers are accustomed to using idiomatic statements, particularly ones that are culture-related or based on realia (i.e. lexical items identifying aspects that are peculiar to a certain culture), the interpreters will have a difficult time understanding what they are trying to convey. Idioms belong to a category of expressions in a specific language which have developed over a period of time and are intimately connected to a particular location, group of individuals, religious tradition, or cultural tradition. Idioms are an important component of every language, and they can reveal aspects of the historical or cultural backgrounds that are local to the area in which



they are practiced. According to Larson(1984, p. 20), an idiom is a phrase that consists of a series of words that together communicate a meaning that is distinct from the meanings of the words taken individually.

As a result, it is abundantly evident that interpreters are unable to provide a word-for-word translation of the meaning of an idiom, and to make matters even more complicated, an idiom could be unique to a specific region from where a speaker comes. This creates an obvious difficulty for the interpreters, which is only going to be worsened by the disparities between the SL and TL. Idioms, as Baker (1992, p.63) proposes, are fixed patterns in a certain linguistic system that permit minor or no modification in form and frequently hold meanings which cannot be derived from the meanings of their constituent components.

Because of the cultural connotations associated with idioms, interpreters have to have a comprehensive understanding of both the source language and the target language in order to provide an approximation of the meaning of an idiom that has been used by a speaker. Therefore, in order to be an effective translator, one has to have an understanding of other cultures as well as adequate grasp to select the appropriate idiom from the TL when it is accessible. Arabic and English languages differ culturally to a great extent and interpreters when facing such structures, if interpreting from Arabic to English or vice versa, should either look for an equivalent in the target language or interpret what they understood literally in order to deliver the idea behind these structures. Given that consecutive interpreters have no time to look for an equivalent, they would probably resort to explaining the literal meaning in some words so that the general meaning is covered.

For example:

English idioms	Arabic equivalent	Literal English
Add insult to injury	يزيد الطين بلة	To worsen an already bad situation
Break a leg	أتمنى لك _ حظاً سعيداً والسداد التوفيق والسداد	To wish someone good luck.



Jokes & Humour

A lot of the speakers are humorous. They frequently make use of humor as a method for catching the eyes of the audience to listen attentively to them. It's possible for a joke to include a sort of cultural reference, and if it does not, the listener might not be able to get the jokes or enjoy it as much. The interpreters are sometimes pushed to their limits when they are asked to express the meaning of humour in addition to the cultural context of the joke in its totality. This is done to ensure that the listeners are able to comprehend, find delight in, and value the joke. It is rarely straightforward to copy a joke from the source language into a matching version in the target language. This is because something that is considered amusing inside one culture could not be considered so or could even be disrespectful in another.

It does not matter the age, gender, or religious system of the people who are speaking humorously because humor is intrinsic to all societies. Occasionally humor gets rid of a severe issue, and it may diffuse stress at a meeting by convincing others to consider some matters in a more sensible and hilarious sense. Humor can also be used to lessen the sharpness of a serious situation when it is stated in a funny manner. It is the responsibility of the interpreters to show the audience the essence of the joke by using terms and metaphors that are suitable for the situation. In order to do this, the interpreters will endeavor to comprehend the mindset of the speaker and investigate the specifics of the messages the speakers plan to convey. It is possible that the interpreters may be required to remove any information which might look inappropriate in the target language culture despite the fact that occasionally the speakers are not trying to be disrespectful or inappropriate. The interpreters face a particularly difficult obstacle when it comes to jokes; yet, when they succeed in making the audience laugh at the joke, they will prove themselves and be much more appreciated.

Hoffman (2012, p.31) asserts that making a joke is an artistic ability that a few speakers have and if an interpreter faces such situations, it is better to look for a cultural equivalent that bear similar effect or let it without being interpreted because a joke will lose its funny sense if explained literally and that would save the interpreter some time as he/she has to catch up the rest of the speech.



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