

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION AND ITS HISTORY

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Annotation: Simultaneous translation and its history.

INTRODUCTION

In simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter sits in an interpreting booth, listening to the speaker through a headset and interprets into a microphone while listening. Delegates in the conference room listen to the target-language version through a headset.

Simultaneous interpreting is also done by signed language interpreters (or interpreters for the deaf) from a spoken into a signed language and vice versa. Signed language interpreters do not sit in the booth; they stand in the conference room where they can see the speaker and be seen by other participants. Whispered interpreting is a form of simultaneous interpreting in which the interpreter does not sit in a booth in the conference room, but next to the delegate who needs the interpreting, and whispers the target-language version of the speech in the delegate's ears.

The first experiment in simultaneous conference interpreting dates back to 1928, the VIth Comintern Congress. There were no telephone. The speaker's message reached the interpreters' ears directly. The first booth and headphones appeared in 1933 at the XIIIth Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive A group of Russian simultaneous interpreters from Moscow formed part of the conference interpreter's team servicing the Nuremberg Trials and another one participated in the Tokyo Trials of the Japanese war criminals.

The interpreters who worked at those first conferences came out of the Nuremberg Trial Interpretation Service where they had made their debute as simultaneous interpreters. They had been young graduates of the Military Institute of Foreign Languages (established in 1942 on the basis of the Military Department of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages), where they were trained as military translators-interpreters (Mishkurov 1997), Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, Moscow University, and the Institute of Philosophy and Literature (IFLI), as well as several staff members of the Foreign Ministry and the Society for Cultural Exchanges with Foreign Countries took a part in training interpreters (Gofman 1963:20). Some of the most capable among them formed the first post-war group of free-lance conference interpreters in Russia.

An International Economic Conference serviced with simultaneous interpreting was conducted in 1952 in Moscow, employing over fifty simultaneous interpreters with six conference languages: Russian, English, French, German, Spanish and Chinese. The lead language-changing mode is a purely national system based on one native tongue common to all members of the team of simultaneous interpreters, which in fact serves as a "lead language" Since 1962 the United Nations Language Training Course in Moscow, at the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages, set itself as a school where 5 to 7 simultaneous conference interpreters are trained annually for the Russian Booth of the UN Secretariat in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

A decade later, in 1971, a postgraduate Advanced Translating and Interpreting Schools at the same college introduced a two-year course of simultaneous conference interpretation in A to B and B to A language combination, if so desired by the student. Simultaneous translation studies began after the invention of the multichannel tape recorder and were done at roughly the same time by several researchers at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies (Henri C.Barik in the United States and Canada 1971; D.Gerver in the United Kingdom 1974; I. A. Zimnyaya in Russia and others.

Shiryayev writes that simultaneous interpretation as a specialized activity consists of Steps or Actions, each of which has several stages. The most important stages are: stage of orientation, stage of the search for, the translation decision and execution stage. When the speaking rate in the source language is slow, enough, stage one of step two follows stage three of step one there is no simultaneity of listening and speaking, in fact.

The simultaneous interpretation is a complex type. It is bilingual, sense- oriented.

Historically, research in conference interpreting can be broken down into four periods; early writings, the experimental period, the practitioner's period and the renewal period (Gile 1994)

The early writings period covers the 1950s and early 1960s. During this period, some interpreters and interpreting teachers in Geneva (Herbert 1952, Rozan 1965 Ilg 1959) and Brussels (van Hoof 1962) started thinking and writing about their profession. These were intuitive and personal publications with practical didactic and professional aims, but they did identify most of the fundamental issues that are still debated today.

The experimental period includes the 1960 and early 1970s. A few psychologists and psycholinguists such as Treisman, Oleron and Nanpon, Goldman-Eisler, Gerver, and Barik became interested in interpreting. They undertook a number of experimental studies on specific psychological and psycholinguistic aspects of simultaneous interpreting and studied the effect on performance of variability such as source language, speed of delivery, ear-voice span (i.e. the interval between the moment a piece of information is perceived and the moment it is reformulated in the target

language), noise, pauses in speech delivery, etc. During the practitioner's period, which started in late 1960s and continued into the 1970s and early 1980s, interpreters, and especially interpreters teachers, began to develop an interesting theory. There was much activity in Paris, West Germany, East Germany, Switzerland and other European countries, as well as in Russia, Czechoslovakia and Japan. Most of the research was speculative or theoretical rather than empirical, and most Western authors, except a group at ESIT (Ecole Superieure d'Interpretes et de Traducters) in Paris, worked in relative isolation.

CONCLUSION

From a cognitive psychological point of view, simultaneous interpretation is a complex human information processing activity composed of a series of independent skills. The interpreter receives a meaning unit. He begins translating and conveying meaning unit 1. At the same time, meaning unit 2 arrives while the interpreter is still involved with the vocalization of meaning unit 1. Thus the interpreter must be able to hold unit 2 in some type of echoic memory or short term memory before interpretation. (Gerver 1971), Furthermore, while conveying unit 1, the interpreter is also verifying and monitoring the correct delivery of that meaning unit. The interpreter has to learn to monitor, store, retrieve, and translate source language input while simultaneously transforming a message into target language output at the same time. There are, in fact, so many activities involved during simultaneous interpretation. Pedagogical approach should tease these activities apart, differentiate the component skills, and where possible, provide training experiences in each one.

References:

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/about-ambassadors/>