

CHALLENGES WITH THE TRANSLATION OF PROVERBS IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

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Annotation. *Proverbs are deeply embedded in culture and often carry metaphorical meanings that pose difficulties in direct translation. This study aims to identify the primary challenges in rendering proverbs accurately during simultaneous interpretation and to propose strategies to address these issues. This research reveals that interpreters frequently rely on paraphrasing or omission to preserve message fluency, which can result in loss of cultural nuances. The findings emphasize the need for interpreters to develop cultural awareness and adaptive strategies.*

Keywords: *Simultaneous interpretation, proverb translation, cultural challenges, linguistic adaptation, translation strategies, metaphorical language.*

Simultaneous interpretation is a complex task requiring the interpreter to translate spoken language in real-time, often across cultures. One of the most challenging aspects of this process is the translation of proverbs. Proverbs encapsulate cultural, historical, and linguistic significance, and are often highly metaphorical, making them difficult to translate directly without loss of meaning. However, translating them during simultaneous interpretation, where time constraints demand quick, accurate decisions, presents unique challenges. For instance, the English proverb "A rolling stone gathers no moss" conveys a message about stability and change but lacks a direct equivalent in many languages, complicating its translation in real-time settings. The complexity of proverbs lies in their layered meanings, often encompassing advice, moral lessons, or cultural beliefs. In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter has only seconds to decide how to convey these messages without distorting their meaning or cultural essence. Proverbs are especially challenging due to their use of metaphor and imagery, which may not resonate in the target language. Research on simultaneous interpretation has grown significantly over the past few decades. According to Jones (2002), simultaneous interpretation is a process requiring quick decision-making and an in-depth understanding of both the source and target languages. Scholars such as Baker (2018) and Newmark (1988) emphasize that proverbs embody cultural values, making direct translation nearly impossible without adaptation. This view is echoed by González (2002), who argue that proverbs are laden with cultural nuances, making them one of the hardest elements to translate accurately. According to Baker (2011) and Newmark (1988), idiomatic expressions often lack direct equivalents, demanding creative solutions from translators. Venuti (1995) also highlights the tension between "domestication" and "foreignization," where translators choose between adapting expressions to fit the target culture or preserving their original form, even if meaning is partially lost. These studies highlight the challenge of preserving meaning while adapting to the cultural context of the target audience. Although translation strategies for idiomatic expressions have been widely studied, there is a limited focus on the specific methods interpreters use to manage proverbs during



simultaneous interpretation. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing practical approaches interpreters employ to handle culturally loaded phrases in real-time. The primary goal of this research is to investigate the unique challenges interpreters face with proverbs in simultaneous interpretation and propose adaptive strategies to manage these challenges effectively.

To address the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was employed:

1. Literature Review:

Analysis of previous studies, including Baker (2011), Newmark (1988), and Jakobson (1959), provided foundational insights into translation theory and the handling of idiomatic expressions. The review emphasized the importance of both linguistic and cultural understanding. This foundational research helped outline the challenges that proverbs introduce into the translation process, including cultural specificity and linguistic creativity, which are often hard to replicate in another language.

2. Case Studies:

Real-time interpretations involving proverbs were analyzed to observe interpreters' strategies. For example, phrases like "Break a leg" in English, which is used to wish someone good luck, were examined in multilingual settings to see how interpreters adapted them. Another example analyzed was the Japanese phrase "Even monkeys fall from trees", which means that even skilled people make mistakes. In simultaneous interpretation, translators adapted this phrase to simpler expressions like "Nobody's perfect" to retain the core meaning while bypassing cultural details that might confuse listeners.

3. Interviews with Professional Interpreters:

Semi-structured interviews with experienced interpreters provided insights into their approach to translating proverbs. Many noted that they often choose paraphrasing or context-driven omission to maintain clarity. Interview responses indicated that interpreters prioritize fluency over complete cultural accuracy in cases where proverbs could slow down the interpretation process. This reflects the practical need for interpreters to keep up with the speaker while preserving the core intent of culturally rich expressions.

The study identified several key findings:

1. Cultural Specificity and Lack of Equivalents:

Translators face difficulties when proverbs lack direct equivalents in the target language. For example, the Russian proverb "Семь раз отмерь, один раз отрежь" (Measure seven times, cut once) emphasizes careful preparation but has no direct English equivalent. Interpreters often paraphrase or adapt the proverb to "Look before you leap." The English proverb "The early bird catches the worm" conveys a sense of urgency and reward for early action, but an exact translation might be meaningless in cultures without a similar cultural reference to early rising or worms.

2. Time Constraints:

Simultaneous interpretation requires rapid decision-making, and interpreters often prioritize message flow over precise cultural nuance, opting to simplify or omit complex proverbs. For instance, in cases where time constraints prevent a detailed

translation, interpreters may choose to omit the proverb entirely if it does not add essential meaning to the message.

3. Paraphrasing and Omission as Key Strategies:

Paraphrasing allows interpreters to maintain the message's core meaning while omitting culturally dense aspects that may confuse the audience. However, this can sometimes result in a loss of nuance, affecting the overall interpretation quality.

The findings confirm that interpreters frequently encounter cultural barriers with proverbs, often choosing paraphrasing as the most practical strategy. While this approach maintains the message, it can dilute the proverb's original impact. Venuti (1995) and Jakobson (1959) suggest that preserving cultural authenticity is ideal, but this is not always feasible in simultaneous interpretation.

Given the time constraints inherent in simultaneous interpretation, developing standardized strategies for culturally sensitive expressions could aid interpreters. Future research might explore training methods that enhance interpreters' cultural adaptability and introduce techniques for quick decision-making in complex cultural scenarios.

The translation of proverbs in simultaneous interpretation is complex, as interpreters must balance accuracy with the need for fluency. This study highlights the frequent reliance on paraphrasing and omission, strategies that enable interpreters to manage proverbs efficiently but often at the expense of cultural depth. Further research and targeted interpreter training could improve strategies for handling culturally loaded expressions, enriching the quality of simultaneous interpretation. A deeper understanding of both source and target cultures will benefit interpreters, ultimately enhancing cross-cultural communication.

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