COMPLEX TYPES OF TRANSFORMATION IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

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Abstract: *This article explores various types of transformations that interpreters employ during simultaneous interpretation to accurately convey messages across different languages. It discusses syntactic transformations, which involve changing sentence structures; semantic transformations, focused on preserving meaning; and pragmatic adjustments to match cultural and social contexts. The article also covers techniques such as condensation, expansion, transposition, modulation, and adaptation, which help interpreters overcome the challenges of real-time translation. These transformations are essential for maintaining clarity, accuracy, and the original intent of the message in the target language.*

Key words. *Simultaneous interpretation, syntactic transformation, semantic transformation, pragmatic transformation, transposition, modulation, adaptation, translation techniques, interpretation challenges.*

Simultaneous interpretation (SI) is a dynamic and complex process where interpreters translate spoken language in real-time. Unlike consecutive interpretation, where the speaker pauses for translation, simultaneous interpretation requires interpreters to process, analyze, and convey the message almost instantly. Given the time constraints and the nuanced nature of languages, interpreters often rely on various types of transformations to ensure accurate and effective communication. These transformations help them bridge linguistic gaps, cultural differences, and structural variations between the source and target languages. This article explores the complex types of transformations that interpreters employ during simultaneous interpretation. [2, 35]

1. Syntactic transformations. One of the most fundamental challenges in simultaneous interpretation is the structural differences between languages. Each language has its own syntax or sentence structure, which may not directly align with another. Syntactic transformations involve reordering the structure of sentences to match the grammar and syntax of the target language. This process requires interpreters to mentally restructure sentences while maintaining the original meaning.

For example, in English, sentences often follow a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, while in Japanese, sentences may follow a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) pattern. An interpreter translating from English to Japanese may need to restructure a sentence entirely to preserve the message's clarity. [4, 75]

2. Semantic transformations. Semantic transformations focus on preserving the meaning rather than the direct words or phrases used in the source language. This type of transformation is crucial when there are no exact equivalents between languages for certain terms or when cultural context plays a significant role in understanding.

For instance, idiomatic expressions or cultural references that are clear in the source language might be unknown in the target language. Interpreters must find ways to convey the underlying meaning or choose phrases that are functionally equivalent. For example, an English expression like "break the ice" might be replaced with a phrase that signifies "creating a relaxed atmosphere" in a language where the literal translation does not exist. [1, 26]

3. Pragmatic transformations. Pragmatic transformations relate to the way language is used in different social and cultural contexts. Interpreters must adjust their interpretations to suit the formality, tone, and cultural expectations of the audience. This might involve changes in politeness, adapting humor, or emphasizing certain aspects of a speech to make it resonate better with the target audience.

For example, a speaker may use a formal tone in a business meeting, but the equivalent terms or expressions in the target language might sound too rigid or even offensive if translated directly. An interpreter would need to adjust the tone accordingly to ensure that the message is appropriately received.

4. Condensation and expansion. In simultaneous interpretation, interpreters often face a time-lag between the speaker's words and their translation. This delay can sometimes overwhelm the interpreter with information, leading to what is known as a cognitive overload. To manage this, interpreters might use condensation, where they simplify or shorten the message without losing essential meaning. This helps them keep pace with the speaker while still delivering an accurate interpretation.

Conversely, expansion may be necessary when the target language requires additional words or phrases to convey the same idea. This can occur when the source language uses concise expressions that do not directly translate into the target language without additional explanation.

5. Transposition. Transposition involves changing the grammatical category of words during interpretation. For instance, a noun in the source language might be translated into a verb in the target language. This process is essential when a direct translation would result in awkward or incorrect usage in the target language.

An example of this is translating "He has courage" (where "courage" is a noun) into a language where a more natural phrasing would be "He is brave" (where the concept is expressed as an adjective). The interpreter ensures that the translated sentence retains the same message while adapting to the grammatical norms of the target language. [3, 108]

6. Modulation. Modulation involves changing the point of view or perspective when translating from one language to another. This is necessary when a direct translation would not convey the intended meaning correctly or naturally. Modulation can help in aligning the interpretation with the target audience's cultural and linguistic sensibilities.

For instance, in English, one might say, "It's not impossible" to emphasize the possibility of an event. However, in another language, a more direct and natural way to express the same idea could be "It's possible." Modulation allows interpreters to reframe statements to maintain their intended emphasis and meaning. [5, 25-54]

7. Adaptation. Adaptation is a transformation that interpreters use when cultural references or concepts in the source language do not exist in the target language. This process involves replacing these references with equivalent concepts or phrases that the target audience can understand. Adaptation is particularly useful in interpreting cultural events, legal systems, or colloquial expressions.

For example, if a speaker makes a reference to a traditional Western festival like Halloween in a context where the audience may not be familiar with it, the interpreter may need to find a culturally analogous festival or concept that conveys the same spirit or significance.

Conclusion

Simultaneous interpretation is more than just a direct translation of words; it is a complex process that requires interpreters to navigate linguistic, cultural, and contextual challenges. By employing various types of transformations—syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and others—interpreters ensure that the essence of a message is accurately and effectively communicated. These transformations are essential for maintaining the integrity of the message while adapting it to the structure, tone, and cultural nuances of the target language. Understanding these complex transformations is crucial for appreciating the skill and expertise involved in simultaneous interpretation.

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