



## STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LISTENING SKILLS IN INTERPRETERS

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**Annotation:** *The acquired ability to receive, interpret, remember, assess, and answer both spoken and unspoken messages is known as listening. Long before we communicate verbally and nonverbally, we start to use the listening process. We don't start actively practicing our own kinds of expression until we have been listening for months as babies. This article offers tips and examples on how interpreters might enhance their listening abilities.*

**Keywords:** *Listening skills, Shadowing Technique, Dual-Task Exercises, Segmented Listening and Summarization, Accent and Speed Exposure, Selective Listening and Filtering Non-Essentials, Mindfulness and Focus Techniques*

### INTRODUCTION

Listening is a vital component of the interpretation process, and developing strong listening skills is critical for interpreters to succeed in high-pressure, multilingual environments. Enhancing listening skills involves not only language comprehension but also advanced cognitive processing, cultural awareness, and emotional regulation. Below are several strategies to improve listening abilities, each grounded in academic research and supported by practical examples from the field [1].

1. *Shadowing Technique:* The shadowing technique involves listening to spoken language and repeating it verbatim, either in the same language or in the target language. This exercise improves interpreters' ability to process language in real-time while speaking simultaneously, making it a powerful tool for enhancing listening skills.

Example 1: An interpreter listens to a live speech in French and repeats it simultaneously in French. This practice helps develop a faster ear-voice span (the gap between hearing the word and speaking it), which is essential in simultaneous interpretation (SI). The challenge here lies in maintaining both fluency and coherence while keeping up with the speaker's pace, which strengthens the interpreter's ability to listen actively under time constraints.

Example 2: A more advanced version of shadowing involves listening to a speech in Spanish and immediately interpreting it into English. By training the brain to listen, process, and translate at the same time, interpreters can hone their capacity for multitasking and active listening. This exercise pushes interpreters to think rapidly, identify key information, and stay focused, all while delivering an accurate interpretation.



2. *Dual-Task Exercises*: Dual-task exercises involve performing two tasks simultaneously, such as listening to a speech while completing a physical task like typing or note-taking. These exercises train interpreters to manage divided attention effectively, an essential skill for real-time interpretation.

Example 1: An interpreter listens to a news broadcast while simultaneously typing a summary. The goal is to capture the key points of the broadcast while managing the cognitive load of typing. This exercise develops the interpreter's ability to filter out non-essential information and focus on the critical elements, which improves their selective listening.

Barbara Moser-Mercer (2008) highlights the importance of dual-task training in improving interpreters' capacity to cope with cognitive load and distractions. By regularly practicing these exercises, interpreters improve their resilience in high-pressure situations, where they must manage multiple streams of information without losing focus [2].

3. *Segmented Listening and Summarization*: Segmented listening involves breaking down a longer speech or conversation into smaller chunks, allowing interpreters to focus on comprehending and retaining one segment at a time. After each segment, the interpreter summarizes the content in their own words. This strategy helps interpreters improve their listening comprehension and retention.

Example: An interpreter listens to a 5-minute speech divided into one-minute segments. After each minute, they pause and summarize the key points. By focusing on small sections at a time, the interpreter can better grasp the meaning and structure of the speech, improving their ability to process complex information in real-time [3].

4. *Accent and Speed Exposure*: Interpreters must often work with speakers who have unfamiliar accents or speak at a rapid pace. Listening exercises that expose interpreters to a variety of accents and speech speeds can help them adapt more quickly in live interpreting situations.

Example: An interpreter listens to recordings of English speakers from different regions, such as British, Australian, and Indian English accents. By practicing with diverse accents, the interpreter becomes more adept at picking up nuances in pronunciation, which is crucial for understanding speakers from various linguistic backgrounds.

5. *Selective Listening and Filtering Non-Essentials*: Selective listening is a skill that allows interpreters to filter out unnecessary information and focus on the key points of a message. This skill is particularly important in long speeches or complex discussions, where not all details are equally important [4].

Example: An interpreter listens to a scientific presentation with a lot of technical jargon. Instead of focusing on every term, the interpreter selectively listens for the speaker's main arguments and conclusions. This helps the interpreter focus on the essence of the message, even in dense, information-heavy contexts [5].

6. *Mindfulness and Focus Techniques*: Interpreters often work in stressful environments, which can affect their ability to listen attentively. Mindfulness techniques, such as focused breathing or brief mental pauses, can help interpreters maintain their concentration during high-pressure moments.

Example: Before starting an interpreting session, an interpreter spends five minutes practicing mindful breathing exercises. This allows the interpreter to center themselves, calm their mind, and prepare to focus fully on the speaker. Regular mindfulness practice can improve the interpreter's ability to stay calm and attentive during difficult or stressful assignments [6].

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, enhancing listening skills in interpreters requires a multi-faceted approach that combines cognitive training, practical exercises, and emotional regulation. Techniques such as shadowing, dual-task exercises, segmented listening, and exposure to diverse accents all play a critical role in developing an interpreter's ability to listen actively and attentively. These strategies, supported by research from scholars like Gile, Setton, and Moser-Mercer, offer practical tools that interpreters can use to improve their performance in real-time interpretation. By incorporating these exercises into regular practice, interpreters can enhance their ability to process information quickly, manage cognitive load, and maintain focus under pressure.

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