

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN MEMORY IN SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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Annotation: The art of interpreting involves facilitating real-time communication from one language into another, presenting unique challenges distinct from written translation. To perform this role effectively, an interpreter must not only be fluent in the foreign language(s) in question but also undergo specialized training. The task demands not only precision but also celerity, requiring quick and accurate delivery of the interpreted message. Interpreters encounter the need to translate swiftly, especially when faced with fast-speaking orator and lengthy sentences without breaks. In simultaneous interpretation, the intricacy is compounded, as the linguist works in an isolated sound-proof booth, speaking into a microphone while the speaker continues without interruption. Simultaneous interpretation can be further categorized into short and long forms, with the former relying on memorization and oral rendering of fragmented segments, while the latter involves note-taking. This article aims to explore memory training techniques, a critical skill for conference interpreters.

Key words: short memory, long memory, listening skill, production effort, mnemonics

Introduction

Without a properly trained memory, language proficiency alone may prove insufficient. Beyond mastering vocabulary and linguistic structures, interpreters should be comfortable with the overall conference context, allowing them to comprehend the information and place it within the appropriate framework. Memory, as a cognitive function, operates in both short and long-term capacities, with short-term memory crucial for immediate retention, while a robust long-term memory facilitates genuine comprehension and accurate message delivery. This rich and nuanced theme offers insights into the cognitive faculties and demands inherent to the indispensable role of interpreters, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of memory training within the field of interpretation.

Methods

Human memory encompasses two primary types: short-term memory (STM) and long-term memory (LTM), both playing distinct yet interconnected roles. Training short-term memory for interpreting involves employing mnemonic techniques and memory enhancement strategies to bolster cognitive function and recall. The use of vivid imagery, association, and linking methods provides interpreters with essential tools to aid in recalling and conveying information quickly and effectively. One valuable tool in memory enhancement is mnemonics, defined as learning techniques that aid memory. Mnemonics involve associating new information with familiar concepts or creating memorable mental images, facilitating retention and recall. This technique

serves as a tool to remember complex information more easily, even within the constraints of short-term memory. Another approach is the link method, which involves connecting unrelated words or ideas through imaginative and vivid mental images. By creating absurd or unconventional mental associations, interpreters can enhance their ability to recall and convey disconnected words or concepts. In conjunction with mental associations, the use of vibrant and positive imagery, incorporation of humor, and the creation of sense-laden, colorful mental images can further aid memory retention and quick recall. These techniques can help interpreters effectively process and convey information, especially when faced with a fast succession of unrelated words or concepts. Memory training, employing mnemonics, imaginative mental images, and the link method, can significantly enhance an interpreter's ability to retain and convey information accurately and efficiently, ultimately contributing to superior interpreting performance.

Results

In line with these cognitive concepts, Gile (1992) proposes Effort Models intended to assist interpreters in optimizing their performance.[1,79] These models center on four key efforts: Listening and Analysis, Memory, Production, and Coordination, each playing a critical part in simultaneous interpretation. The Listening and Analysis Effort involves the comprehensive and subconscious processing of incoming speech, encompassing not only sound recognition but also the extraction of meaningful content from the source language. The Memory Effort serves as a fundamental storage mechanism, temporarily retaining information for subsequent processing. Meanwhile, the Production Effort focuses on rendering the interpreted message in the target language, and the Coordination Effort acts as a vital facilitator, akin to an air traffic controller, enabling interpreters to effectively allocate their focus between listening, analyzing, and self-monitoring during interpretation. This coordination effort harmonizes skill level and task demands, an essential aspect for smooth, successful interpretation. These Effort Models are designed to provide a framework for interpreters, aiding them in overcoming the intricate cognitive and operational demands posed by interpretation. By understanding and leveraging these efforts, interpreters can optimize their performance, ensuring an effective and seamless interpretation process.

Discussion

There is a great overview of Gile's effort model of simultaneous interpretation. This model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the cognitive processes involved in simultaneous interpretation:

Listening and Analysis Effort (L): This refers to the cognitive effort involved in comprehending the incoming speech segments. It includes processes such as auditory processing and understanding the meaning of the spoken words or phrases.

Production Effort (P): This represents the cognitive effort required for producing the interpreted output. It involves quickly formulating the interpreted content while maintaining fluency and coherence.

Memory (M): This aspect highlights the role of short-term memory in simultaneous interpretation. Interpreters need to store and process information quickly to maintain the flow of interpretation.

Coordination (C): The coordination effort involves managing the flow of interpretation, ensuring that the overall interpretation remains coherent and synchronized with the speaker's pace.

The equation $SI = L + P + M + C$ illustrates how simultaneous interpretation is the sum of these efforts, emphasizing the complex nature of this task.

Gile's model acknowledges the dynamic nature of interpretation, recognizing that the processing capacity requirements of each effort can fluctuate rapidly depending on the complexity of the incoming speech segments. This demonstrates the real-time nature of the cognitive demands placed on interpreters.

This model offers valuable insight into the cognitive challenges interpreters face during their work, and it provides a structured framework for analyzing the various components involved in simultaneous interpretation.

Conclusion

Interpreting, whether simultaneous or consecutive, relies significantly on memory. Short-term memory, rooted in immediate sound perception, plays a key role in live interpretation, necessitating careful processing and conveyance of the received message. Conversely, long-term memory, established through neural pathways and synaptic connections, provides interpreters with a deep understanding of the subject matter, enabling precise contextual placement and rendering of the message. Beyond linguistic proficiency and a comprehensive conference background, training memory is vital—across acoustic, visual, and semantic dimensions. By leveraging these memory enhancement techniques, interpreters can further fortify their capacity to effectively interpret and convey information accurately and contextually.

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