

AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
International Relations Department
Chair of Diplomatic Translation
Translation business in the field of international and legal relations
Practice of Simultaneous Interpretation
2021-2022 academic year spring semester

Lecture

Module 1: General Principles in Training Translators and Interpreters

Lecture 1: Translation vs Interpretation

Plan of the lecture

1. Introduction
2. Different aspects of training translators and interpreters
3. Conclusion
4. References

Aspects of the lecture

1. Explaining differences between translation and interpretation
2. Main aspects of consecutive interpretation
3. Main aspects of simultaneous interpretation
4. History of interpretation
5. Services of conference interpretation in Kazakhstan

Goals of the lecture

1. Introduce main tenets of oral interpretation
2. Explain peculiarities of oral interpretation
3. Familiarize with sight translation
4. Highlight dynamics of development of interpretation/translation services in Kazakhstan

Basic concepts

ST - source text, TT – target text, SL – source language, TL – target language, CI - consecutive interpretation, SI - simultaneous interpretation, sight translation, conference interpretation, notetaking techniques, sentence-by-sentence interpreting and etc.

Interpreting and translation are practiced under a wide variety of conditions. Many interpreters and translators work full-time. Others such as housewives, students, medical practitioners, engineers and journalists work part-time for supplementary income. Interpreting and translation work can

also be assigned occasionally or regularly to employees whose official duties bear no relationship to such tasks but who happen to speak one or more foreign languages.

Some important differences are found at more practical levels:

a. Translators generally (but not always) have hours, days, or even weeks to complete the operations. Admittedly, they cannot afford to spend hours on each Translation Unit before moving on to the next, but progress at a speed of a few pages per day (generally from 6 to 15 pages or so, that is, about 2000 to 5000 words) in routine work is fairly common; they can therefore take at least some time to consult with experts, call colleagues and/or look for information documents, databases and dictionaries to solve individual problems. Interpreters work at speech delivery speed, that is, 100 to 200 words per minute on average. In 10 minutes to an hour or so they interpret a mass of words similar to that which is translated in writing in a whole day of work. In consecutive, they only have a few minutes to complete the processing of successive Translation Units as they are delivered by the speaker, and in simultaneous, they have a few seconds at most. An interpreter can consult a colleague sitting alongside in the booth or try to find the information in a document or glossary that is at hand (at a certain cost in terms of processing capacity and at a risk of 'losing' the next Translation Units – see Chapter 8) but cannot stop interpreting and leave the booth in order to find a solution to a problem.

It follows that in interpreting, a large part of the knowledge acquisition process must be completed before interpreting begins, while in translation it can take place online.

This is not a minor difference, as knowledge requirements in interpreting are often unpredictable, with Bible quotations coming up at a data processing conference, mathematics being used at a medical conference and references to world politics being made at a conference on agriculture. Interpreters must therefore not only have a wider 'general culture' than translators, but also be able to take decisions more rapidly and be willing to take more risks (this concept of risk-taking is stressed by Claude Namy, of the University of Geneva – see Namy 1979: 53, 1988: 45).

Finally, another significant difference between interpreting and translation in the context of the Model presented here is that when testing the acceptability of aggregates of Translation Units (in the bottom part of Figure 5.1), interpreters can only do so on a very small number of units because of time and memory constraints (see Chapter 7). In simultaneous, they can operate on one, two, or possibly three Translation Units, but if they test the acceptability of more than one sentence before uttering it, they may not be able to keep in short-term memory the whole sentence

plus the incoming source-language content. Moreover, the time lag associated with testing mentally more than one Translation Unit before rewording it in the target language may cause further problems. In consecutive, they have more time and could theoretically test many Translation Units for acceptability before actually uttering the relevant target-speech segments, but again, short-term memory limitations and speed and fluency requirements reduce the scope to a very small number of units tested in each aggregate of Translation Units, so that time and memory constraints turn out to be almost as severe as in simultaneous interpreting.

Follow-up questions

1. What is translation? What do we mean when we say 'translation'?
2. The difference between translation and interpreting
3. Describe dynamics of development of translation/interpretation services in Kazakhstan
4. Describe main requirements for interpreters
5. Describe main features and problems of SI

References

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