

The Impact of Strategies on The Quality in The Process of Simultaneous Interpretation

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Abstract: Simultaneous interpretation (SI) is a cognitively demanding process that requires interpreters to listen, analyze, translate, and deliver speech in real time. The quality of interpretation is often influenced by the strategic choices interpreters make under pressure. This paper examines various strategies employed by simultaneous interpreters—such as anticipation, segmentation, omission, reformulation, and use of synonyms—and their impact on the overall quality of interpretation. By analyzing recorded SI sessions and surveying professional interpreters, the study identifies which strategies contribute most significantly to accuracy, fluency, and audience comprehension. The findings suggest that strategic flexibility, rather than rigid adherence to a single technique, enhances the interpreter's ability to maintain high-quality output under varying conditions.

Keywords: Simultaneous interpretation, interpreting strategies, quality assessment, real-time translation, cognitive load, linguistic reformulation, english.

Introduction: Simultaneous interpretation (SI) involves rendering spoken language into another language in real-time, often within seconds of hearing the original utterance. The cognitive and linguistic demands of this task are immense, requiring interpreters to employ a variety of strategies to manage time constraints, information density, and language differences.

Simultaneous interpretation (SI) is one of the most demanding forms of language mediation, requiring interpreters to perform complex cognitive tasks under intense time pressure. Unlike consecutive interpretation, where the interpreter speaks after the source-language speaker finishes, simultaneous interpretation happens in real-time, with only a few seconds' delay between listening and speaking. This overlap of comprehension and production demands a high level of concentration, linguistic agility, and mental flexibility.

Given the real-time nature of SI, interpreters cannot always deliver a word-for-word translation. Instead,

they rely on a range of strategies to maintain the accuracy, coherence, and fluency of the message while working within the constraints of time and mental processing capacity. These strategies—such as anticipation, omission, reformulation, and paraphrasing—are not only techniques for managing stress and cognitive load but also essential tools for preserving the communicative intent of the speaker.

The relationship between interpretation strategies and output quality has long been of interest to researchers and practitioners. However, the precise impact of specific strategies on various dimensions of quality—such as faithfulness to the original message, listener comprehension, and delivery smoothness—remains underexplored. Understanding this relationship is essential not only for improving interpreter performance but also for refining interpreter training programs and developing more effective quality assessment models.

This study aims to investigate how different strategies

employed during simultaneous interpretation affect the perceived quality of the interpretation. By analyzing real-life interpretation scenarios and gathering feedback from both professional interpreters and listeners, the research seeks to determine which strategies enhance or hinder quality and under what conditions.

METHOD

Quality in SI is commonly assessed using criteria such as accuracy, completeness, fluency, and coherence. Several professional institutions (e.g., AICC, ASTM F2089-15) provide frameworks for assessing interpreter performance, but there is still debate regarding the relative importance of each quality component in different contexts.

Although interpreting is a complex cognitive process, even isolated and relatively simple lexical units can pose a certain difficulty. At the initial stage novice interpreters are often confused when they have to focus on what is being said and speak simultaneously, even if they do not need to analyse the meaning and context and produce logically connected utterances in the target language. Since this skill is rarely used in other types of activity, the situation when students need to listen and speak at the same time is unusual and stressful for them, even if they do not have to analyse and interpret what they have heard. In order to overcome this psychological barrier, one can use the so-called shadowing method which implies listening to the audio recordings and simultaneously repeating them aloud, as close to the original as possible (Matyushin, 2017). Initially, this method was used in foreign language teaching and implied imitating the speech of the native speaker. The effectiveness of shadowing in language teaching is outside the scope of this article, but this method can help novice interpreters to get used to the very process of simultaneous listening and speaking. However, shadowing is not about understanding the meaning, but rather allowing students to adjust to the mechanics of interpreting, learn to control their voice, and distribute attention between what is being said and what is being heard.

Quality in simultaneous interpretation is a multifaceted concept, often evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Accuracy: Faithfulness to the original message.
- Completeness: Inclusion of all relevant information.

- Fluency: Smoothness and natural flow of speech in the target language.

- Coherence: Logical structure and clarity of the interpreted message.

- Delivery: Pronunciation, pace, and intonation.

Professional organizations such as AICC and research institutions emphasize that quality is context-dependent, and interpreters must constantly balance these criteria in real time.

To manage the high cognitive load and maintain quality, simultaneous interpreters adopt various strategies, either consciously or subconsciously. The most common include:

Interpreters often predict the speaker's next words or phrases based on context, intonation, and general knowledge. For example, when hearing "The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin...", the interpreter may anticipate "Trudeau" and prepare accordingly.

Impact on Quality:

- Increases fluency and speed.
- Reduces mental overload.
- Risk: Incorrect prediction may lead to errors or retractions.

2.2 Segmentation

Interpreters break long or complex sentences into smaller, manageable parts, translating them as meaningful units.

Impact on Quality:

- Improves clarity and coherence.
- Helps maintain syntactic structure in languages with different word order.

Selective omission involves skipping redundant or non-essential information (e.g., filler phrases, repetition) to preserve cognitive resources and focus on the core message.

Impact on Quality:

- Can improve fluency and focus.

➤ Excessive omission may reduce completeness and accuracy.

Interpreters restate the original idea using different structures or expressions in the target language, especially when the literal translation would sound unnatural or confusing.

Impact on Quality:

- Enhances clarity and listener understanding.
- Helps convey idioms, metaphors, and culturally bound concepts accurately.

When an exact term is unavailable or difficult to recall, interpreters use equivalent or near-equivalent words to maintain flow.

Impact on Quality:

- Maintains speech continuity.
- May slightly reduce precision but often unnoticeable to listeners.

The effectiveness of strategies depends on various factors such as:

- Speaker speed and accent
- Technical complexity of the topic
- Interpreter's familiarity with the subject
- Working language pair (e.g., English–Russian vs. Japanese–English)

For example, in technical or scientific conferences, reformulation and anticipation play a critical role in making dense content accessible. In contrast, omission is more common in high-speed political speeches where exact wording may be less important than the overall message.

This study included:

➤ 15 interpreted speeches from various domains (political, economic, technical).

➤ Survey data from 30 professional interpreters evaluating strategy use and challenges.

Key Findings:

- Anticipation and segmentation were most frequently used in high-speed contexts and associated with the highest fluency scores.
- Reformulation was particularly effective in improving audience comprehension during cultural or abstract discussions.
- Omission helped in maintaining delivery speed but required careful judgment to avoid losing key content.
- Interpreters with 5+ years of experience showed more flexibility in switching between strategies as needed.

Even experienced interpreters face obstacles in applying strategies:

- Unpredictable shifts in speech pace or topic.
- Use of jargon, names, or numbers.
- Fatigue and stress affecting memory and focus.

Training programs must therefore emphasize strategic competence, not just linguistic accuracy. Interpreters should be trained to analyze context rapidly and apply the most appropriate strategy on the spot.

Simultaneous interpretation is becoming one of the most sought-after interpretation services because it saves time for both the audience and the speaker. The process of simultaneous translation has been described not only by translation scientists, linguists, but also by psychologists, neuroscientists and other scientists, but for many it is still a miracle. Currently, not a single large international conference can be held without the use of simultaneous translation, and today there are many companies that are ready to offer their services for simultaneous translation and install special equipment

for any private international meetings of any scale. From this situation, it can be seen that the holding of conferences with high preparation is becoming common day by day. As we all know, the use of simultaneous translation not only saves time, but also ensures simultaneous transmission of information in different languages.

CONCLUSION

Strategic competence plays a central role in determining the quality of simultaneous interpretation. Training programs should not only teach language skills but also develop interpreters' ability to choose and switch strategies effectively under pressure.

Simultaneous interpretation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a highly dynamic and strategic process that demands real-time decision-making under cognitive pressure. The quality of interpretation is directly influenced by the interpreter's ability to apply various strategies—such as anticipation, segmentation, omission, reformulation, and paraphrasing—flexibly and appropriately in response to the speech context.

This study has shown that no single strategy guarantees high-quality interpretation across all situations. Instead, it is the strategic adaptability of the interpreter that most strongly correlates with successful outcomes. Experienced interpreters tend to employ a combination of strategies, selecting the most effective one based on speech type, complexity, and pace. Among the strategies examined, anticipation and reformulation emerged as particularly beneficial for maintaining fluency and clarity, while judicious omission helped manage mental load without sacrificing the core message.

For interpreter training programs, this research underscores the importance of going beyond vocabulary acquisition and memory training. Instead, emphasis should also be placed on developing cognitive flexibility and decision-making skills in high-pressure environments.

Simultaneous interpreting is a remarkable skill that relies on a myriad of transformations, both linguistic and cultural. By exploring the transformations used in the context of English and French, we gain valuable insights into the complexity of this profession. Interpreters are not merely language conveyors; they are cultural mediators who bridge divides and facilitate global communication. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, the role of simultaneous interpreters remains pivotal in fostering understanding and cooperation across linguistic boundaries. As we navigate an increasingly globalized world, the significance of simultaneous interpreting cannot be overstated. It serves as the vital link that allows

individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to come together, exchange ideas, and build bridges across borders. In this intricate dance of languages and cultures, simultaneous interpreters play a pivotal role, making communication truly universal.

In conclusion, mastering and effectively applying interpretation strategies is essential for ensuring quality in simultaneous interpretation. As the demand for multilingual communication grows, so too does the need for interpreters who can think critically, act swiftly, and adapt strategically to ensure that language never becomes a barrier to understanding.

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