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SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION: FEATURES, ADVANTAGES AND DIFFICULTIES

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются особенности синхронного перевода как одного из наиболее сложных видов устного перевода. Анализируются его основные характеристики, преимущества и трудности, связанные с высокой когнитивной нагрузкой и ограниченностью времени. Особое внимание уделяется специфике синхронного перевода как процесса одновременного восприятия и порождения речи.
Ключевые слова: синхронный перевод, особенности перевода, преимущества перевода, трудности перевода, когнитивная нагрузка, временные ограничения.
Abstract. The article examines the features of simultaneous interpreting as one of the most complex types of interpreting. It analyzes its main characteristics, advantages, and difficulties associated with a high cognitive load and time constraints. Special attention is given to the specific nature of simultaneous interpreting as a process of simultaneous perception and production of speech.
Key words: simultaneous interpreting, interpreting difficulties, interpreting features, interpreting advantages, cognitive load, time constraints

In the context of globalization and the development of international contacts, simultaneous interpretation is a key means of overcoming language barriers. Simultaneous interpretation is an oral translation performed by ear, which the translator performs in parallel with the speech message in the source language[1]. The translator starts playing the text in the target language with a short time delay, usually of a few seconds.

Despite the external simultaneity of the process, the perception of the original speech, its semantic and linguistic processing and the generation of utterance in the target language represent a complex set of cognitive operations. During the work, the translator simultaneously perceives the spoken speech, analyzes its content and formulates an equivalent statement, practically avoiding pauses between listening and speaking.

This type of translation is carried out without relying on recordings and largely depends on the short-term memory of the translator. At the same time, the specialist performs a dual function, acting simultaneously as a recipient and producer of speech.

In simultaneous translation, there is a brief time delay, usually 2-5 seconds, between the perception of the speaker's speech and the beginning of its reproduction in the target language. In most cases, translators tend to keep it within 2-4 seconds, since a longer interval can make it difficult to perceive information[2]. On average, the delay rarely exceeds 7-8 seconds, as a larger gap disrupts the continuity of communication. At the same time, simultaneous translation does not imply complete simultaneity of speech, since the translator needs a minimum amount of semantic information to form an utterance. This delay allows for the primary processing and understanding of incoming speech. However, the translator often begins to speak without waiting for the semantic fragment to be fully completed, relying on forecasting and linguistic guesswork.

Simultaneous interpretation gained real fame precisely because of the Nuremberg trials. On November 20, 1945, the attention of the whole world was focused on the crowded courtroom in Nuremberg, where for the first time in history, war criminals were brought before an international military tribunal. One of the features that made this process even more unusual was something almost never seen before: simultaneous translation. The main Nuremberg Trial (1945-1946) became a court with translation, the first major international event to use simultaneous interpretation. The world admired the novelty of the system, which allowed the accused, defenders, prosecutors and judges to communicate with each other, speaking in different languages[3]. Prior to this, sequential translation prevailed at international conferences, negotiations, and meetings: the speaker spoke, followed by a translation into another language, which significantly lengthened the discussion. They were usually limited to English and French as the main working languages. The Nuremberg trials were attended by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France and the USSR, as well as German defendants. Applying sequential translation would make the process excessive. That is why the organizers chose simultaneous translation, which allowed speech transmission in almost real time. For the first time, special booths and equipment appeared in the courtroom, as well as two main synchronized swim teams: Soviet and American. These groups coped brilliantly with the task, ensuring the accurate and prompt transmission of all testimony, questions and speeches. The Nuremberg Tribunal has clearly demonstrated the key advantages of simultaneous interpretation: it saves time, maintains a natural rhythm of discussion and makes it possible to communicate fully in a multilingual environment without delay. This experience marked a turning point in the history of interpretation and laid the foundation for its widespread use in international forums in the following decades.

A key feature of simultaneous interpretation is the simultaneous perception of the speaker's speech and the generation of an utterance in the target language. This feature determines other characteristics of this type of translation, first of all, strict time constraints: the translator has only the time interval during which the original speech sounds. At the same time, the amount of time available to a simultaneous interpreter is significantly less compared to sequential and especially written translation. In addition, the pace of translation is determined by the speed of the speaker's speech, which eliminates the possibility of arbitrary regulation of the translation process. An important feature is also the segmental nature of the work: translation is carried out as individual fragments of an utterance arrive, unlike sequential and written translation, where the translator has the ability to perceive the entire text[4].

These features significantly complicate the process of simultaneous translation and place increased demands on the professional training of an interpreter. Practice shows that even a high level of proficiency in a foreign language by itself does not guarantee successful mastery of simultaneous translation skills, since this type of activity requires the development of specific cognitive and speech skills.

Advantages of simultaneous translation:

1. Simultaneous translation provides the ability to translate into several languages at the same time, which is especially important for a multilingual audience.

2. Due to the absence of pauses, the audience perceives speech almost simultaneously with the speaker, which eliminates the language barrier and allows the speaker to hold the listeners' attention, observe their reactions and emotional state.

3. The duration of events using simultaneous interpretation is reduced by about two times compared to sequential translation, which makes it highly effective at large conferences and official meetings.

Disadvantages of simultaneous translation:

1. High workload for a specialist. Constant concentration and intense mental activity lead to rapid fatigue. Research shows that the ability to listen and speak at the same time is relatively rare.

2. The need to work in a translation team. One specialist, as a rule, cannot work for more than 30 minutes without a break, so a group of 3-4 translators is required. All team members should be free to navigate the topic of the presentation.

3. High requirements for the translator's qualifications. In addition to an impeccable command of languages, a specialist must have psychological stability and stress tolerance.

4. The risk of information loss. The use of compression and speech prediction can reduce the completeness of information transmission[5].

In conclusion, it should be noted that simultaneous interpretation is one of the most difficult types of interpretation, requiring high concentration of attention from the translator, developed working memory and a quick speech-thinking reaction. Its specificity lies in the simultaneous perception of the source speech and the formulation of the utterance in the target language, which causes a significant cognitive load. Historical experience, in particular the Nuremberg trials, has confirmed the high efficiency of simultaneous interpretation in the context of multilingual international communication and contributed to its widespread dissemination. Among the main advantages of this type of translation are efficiency, reduction of event time and ensuring continuity of communication. At the same time, simultaneous interpretation is accompanied by a number of difficulties related to time constraints, the high speed of the speaker's speech and the psychological stress of the interpreter. In addition, the risk of partial loss of information and the need to work under stress require special professional training from a specialist. Thus, simultaneous interpretation occupies an important place in modern translation practice and is a necessary tool for effective interlanguage interaction.

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