

## Conversation and Interpreting with Reference to Community, Consecutive, and Simultaneous Interpreting

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### المخلص

يرمي هذا البحث الى توضيح ماهية الترجمة الفورية وعلاقتها بالمحادثة، فهو يسلط الضوء على انواعها الثلاثة وهي ترجمة الجماعة والتعاقبية والترجمة الفورية. كما ويتم اجراء تمييز بين المترجمين لهذه الانواع والخصائص التي يتسم بها، اذ يبين البحث بانه ليس بمقدور كل هؤلاء ان يقوموا بادوار متبادلة نظراً لان لكل مترجم مهمته الموكلة اليه. كما ويتم تناول الكفاءة والممارسة والميزات الاخرى في هذا البحث وان على المترجم ان يسلك خطأ واحدا ما لم يكن على قدر عالٍ من الكفاءة. عموماً يجب على المترجمين ان لا يتوجهوا الى الترجمة الفورية ما لم يكونوا اهلاً لذلك. ويطرح البحث حلاً لبعض المشكلات التي تعترض المترجمين وتبديد المصاعب اثناء قيامهم بالعمل.

### Abstract

The present research aims at explaining what interpreting is and its relation to conversation. It sheds light on the types of interpreting, viz, community, consecutive, and simultaneous. A distinction is drawn among interpreters and the characteristics which each carries. It shows that not all the interpreting in a field entitled to him/ her. Competence, practice and other important merits are also tackled in this research in relation to the interpreter's job. We shall try to show that interspersions have to work on one line unless they are highly competent. Interpreters in general should not embark requires a special type of interpreters. We also try to solve some problems faced by interpreters and to ease the difficulty during the work of any interpreter.

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## **Introduction**

There is a relationship between conversation and interpreting.

Conversation is built on certain rules, namely turn-taking as well as linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Interpreting, on the other hand, takes place in two or more languages, i.e. source language (SL) and target language (TL). Conversation is a face-to-face interaction which is also true of interpreting in certain contexts but with the need of a mediator.

The interpreters are faced by the introduction of new technologies and social systems which create a problem for them lack of equivalent .

Terminology (see Biscaye, 1993, 101). They have to develop so many linguistic and non-linguistic aspects in order to be able to cope with the situation they are working in. this is why different types of interpreters are needed in the different fields of life.

## **Conversation and Turn-taking:**

Conversation is a social phenomenon and a face-to-face interaction. The organization of conversation is based on what is called "turn-taking" (see Coulthard, 1985).

In a two-part conversation one of the speakers talks at a time then the other takes the floor (Schegloff, 1972, 350). This means that there is a sequence of turns regulated in a way similar to any rule of life.

Conversationalist hold that in conversation the first speaker can choose the next one either by naming him/ her or by addressing a certain utterance to him/ her. For example:

Speaker A- Well Ali what about you?

Speaker B- I will go home.

Speaker A- And you old friend what do you suggest?

Speaker C- I suggest that we stay here.

It is obvious then that the participants in an ordinary conversation usually speak one language to achieve communication.

### **Turn-taking Versus Interpretation:**

In the case of a situation when there are participants speaking different languages the need for an interpreter emerges, i.e. the role of the interpreter will be of great importance. An immediate question can be raised: how and when can be interpreter take his/ her turn?

Of course, the interpreter is not going to share his/ her views in the conversation especially if he/ she is not in a sort of relation with the speakers.

However, whenever happens to be a pause the interpreter will immediately interfere as if he/ she were one of the participants:

**Example:**

Speaker A- It is a pleasure to attend the exhibition of fine arts in the city of Mosul.

Interpreter: انه لمن دواعي سروري ان ازور معرض الفنون الجميلة في مدينة الموصل

Again speaker A will go on talking. Thus an interpreter should be a sniper to every pause and exploit lapses. Lapses are "the ensuing spaces of non-talk" (Sacks et.al., 1974, 714).

We think that if the interpreter does not do so, his/ her role as a third party in the conversation would become much more difficult. This is because the first speaker might resume his/ her turn which would become too long for the interpreter to interpret.

Coulthard (1985, 60) states that "if more than or less than one party is talking , it is 'noticeable' and participants set out to 'remedy' the situation and return to a state of one and only one speaker ". this means that some overlapping is not usually intended by the speaker whereas the interpreter might deliberately interrupt.

We can obviously see such a case when the speaker does not give the interpreter enough time to interpreter or when the interpreter has not grape the message properly.

Sometimes the interpreter may depend on a one-direction interpretation when the speaker dominates the floor. This can be manifested when there is a hired coach of a football team who came from another country, it is the interpreter's duty to explain every point in detail to the players.

### **Community, Consecutive, and Simultaneous Interpreting:**

Community interpreting can be defined in different ways "ranging from the kind of interpreting that takes place informally in neighborhoods and community agencies, and is performed by a matures or ad hoe interpreters to a more formal occupation involving practitioners with some training in medical, legal or social service interpreting". (Gonzale et. al., 1991, 29 cited in Mikkelson, Ht. P. 1(internet)).

Unlike other types of interpreting it provides services to the residents of the community in which the interpreting takes place, not to the conference delegates, diplomats , or professionals traveling abroad to conduct business (ibid).

(Roberts,1994, 127-138) distinguishes community interpreting from conference interpreting in the following:

- 1- Community interpreters primarily serve to ensure access to public services, and are therefore likely to work in institutional setting.
- 2- They are more apt to be interpreting dialogue-like interactions than speeches.
- 3- They routinely interpret into and out of both or all of their working languages.
- 4- The presence of the community interpreter is much more noticeable in the communication process than is that of the conference interpreter.
- 5- Many languages are minority languages that are not the language of the government in any country, are interpreted at the community level.

Concerning consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, the first is considered the most popular among the types of interpreting. It has a great relationship with turn-taking as the interpreter listens before he talks, "one person speaks and then pauses; one or many people listen whilst the consecutive interpreter repeats what has been said in the target language" (Internet I, P. 1). Consecutive interpreting is cheaper than simultaneous interpreting and it does not happen in real time. The interpreter may interpret for the whole or, as is becoming increasingly common, sit next to individual and whisper what has just been said (ibid).

In a simultaneous interpreting situation "the interpreter does not have the luxury of time in which to research and consult with others in arriving at an equivalent term. This adds additional pressure, especially in situations which may have direct implications on the public. In this case, an interpreter uses the English term, and tries to define it to the best of his or her ability and understanding" (Biscay, 1993, 102).

#### The Role of the Interpreter in Relation to Conversation:

As mentioned earlier, the interpreter waits for the end of the turn or sniping pauses. (Sa'eed, 1998, 3) states that "in calm discussion, participants regard the end of a syntactically and semantically complete sequence with a terminal pitch movement as a turn boundary. While in heated discussions, participants orient to the pragmatic meaning of the utterance as a turn boundary indicator, i.e.

when the pragmatic meaning of the utterance is complete then others can take the next turn even if the syntactic structure, the propositional content or intonation contour associated with the utterance is incomplete". We believe, however, that an interpreter is not obliged to follow this especially when he turn is so long. The responsibility of the interpreter is much more difficult than the next speaker for he has to grasp what has been said and then interpret fully as much as possible the turn. After all it depends on the interpreter's competence. Community interpreters, we believe, are not always qualified to work as conference interpreters because the conference interpreter should be very qualified and competent. Community interpreters may have more freedom in the situation in which they interpret. For example, the relation between the community interpreter and the participants sometimes tends to be less formal than the consecutive or simultaneous ones in formal meetings.

Besides the community interpreter may utilize signs and body parts to enable him/ her to communicate properly whereas the simultaneous interpreter cannot use them especially if he/ she is sitting in an isolated place from the delegates.

One might think that living abroad for some years is enough to create an interpreter. To a certain, the case might be true with community interpreters in the market place or in some social situations. Conference interpreter, on the other hand, requires a long-term training and an experienced interpreter. This is why some graduates of the department of translation can be good interpreters if

they are well prepared since they study the written as well as the oral languages. An interpreter, therefore, should have a good working knowledge in both the written and the oral languages. Accuracy should not be neglected on the part of consecutive and simultaneous interpreter because a little mistake sometimes costs a lot.

(For Mercer, 2001, 1) an expert "is generally considered to be someone who has attained a high level of performance in a given domain as a result of years of experience".

The following quotation might assert that consecutive and simultaneous interpreters should be undergone certain tests before embarking on their job: "I believe that the assumption an individual in my position must make and accept is that not all students in translation and/ or interpretation schools will become consecutive interpreters" (Capaldo, 1980, 244).

Conference interpreting does not mean parroting the words of the SL into the TL for the success of the communication rests highly on the interpreter (see Bühler, 1985, 49).

Taking notes is another important thing. A consecutive interpreter often needs to take notes of important numbers, figures, etc more than a community interpreter due to the difficulty and sensitivity of the situation. It is difficult and embarrassing to ask an official to reappear what has said repeatedly. A competent consecutive interpreter resorts to the notes he has taken and the fresh memory he has. The problem might be overcome in community interpreting because the situation could be less formal than the previous case. The community interpreter then can ask to repeat what has been



said. We believe, however, that a good way is to use a declarative question i.e. repeating what the speaker has said in order to make sure of it. (Quirk et al, 1973, 195) explain a type of a declarative sentences that indicates a question.

A more critical situation faced by a conference interpreter is that when he is mediating a meeting between the delegates of two disputed countries. Heated debates may arise causing an overlap, i.e. the two parties speak at the same time. The interpreter in such cases would not be able to interpret both to the audience and he/ she certainly misses many words and phrases. A problem like this needs a sharp-minded interpreter for he/ she can give a concise and precise ideas to the audience about what is going on, i.e. he resorts to explaining rather than to interpreting. Otherwise he/ she is in a difficult situation.

We are not, however, neglecting the difficulty faced by the community interpreter for he/ she may face the problem of different ages of the speakers. He/ she has to expect the speakers to be adults, teenagers, children, or old men and women since the interpreter is dealing with the society directly. This could explain why sociological aspects are considered a prerequisite for the community interpreter. Of course consecutive and conference interpreter are mostly working with adult people like officials, ministers, etc.. even the age of the community interpreter him/ herself might serve in making the interpreting process more helpful and smooth. Let's imagine a situation in which there is a young mosuli interpreter who interprets some old mosuli proverbs and idioms, names said old-

aged people in the market place to a delegate wandering there. Unless he/ she is familiarizes him/ herself with them he/ she might stand helpless in interpreting such things. This means that not only consecutive and conference interpreting needs experience but also community interpreting. This explains why many non-specialist interpreters pitfall in their interpreting.

Making tests is a good step to choose trainee interpreters. However (Niska, 1997, 1) says "I don't think any test can be a substitute for proper training, nor is testing parse a remedy for a lack of interpreters. Tests don't produce interpreters; proper education does". He further states that the training and testing should be in harmony with the need in a certain situation (ibid).

Community interpreters also face the problem of dialect variation more than conference interpreters who often deal with the formal language. For example, when interpreters to a group of British people the word "fall" is different from translating it into a group of American people (see Palmer, 1981, 81).

In general, any interpreter has to take into account certain linguistic points. Foe example, he/ she cares for intonation which is if neglected, the SL message would not be transferred properly into the TL. If the interpreter feels that the turn of the speaker has become so long, he/ she can interrupt the speaker in positions called by conversationalists "utterance in completer" like but, however, etc.. In doing so, the interpreter avoid being troubled by interpreting a long turn.

Interpreters can benefit from non-verbal signals and visual information about the speaker as they help to understand his/ her words (see Bühler, 1985, 51).

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

The research has come up with the following conclusion that conversation and interpreting are similar in taking turns, however, each is restricted by certain rules and conditions. In the first the next speaker takes the floor by naming or addressing the next speaker or by other ways whereas in interpreting it is a matter of sniping pauses.

Overlapping is not usually intended in conversation in contrast to the interpreter who does so deliberately in order to catch up with the said utterances and to avoid missing important words and phrases.

Regarding the types of interpreters, it is not successful changing the roles of interpreters, i.e. community interpreters are not always qualified to work instead of consecutive or simultaneous interpreters. The last type requires very qualified and competent interpreters. The last type requires very qualified and competent interpreters. This, however, does not mean that community interpreters are not always good. It is the situation which imposes a certain type.

Community interpreters tends to be more flexible as the relation with the speakers can be less formal than interpreting in a conference. Signs, body parts, and non-verbal signals can be used much more than in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

mastering both the role and the written language of both SL and TL is very necessary. An important thing is that living abroad does not create a consecutive or simultaneous interpreter unless he/ she has done this. In such types the interpreters need to master the written and the oral language as well and to have undergone a long-term training in this field.

Note-taking is a corner stone in consecutive interpreting without which consecutive interpreting sometimes can hardly be achieved in a pin-point precision. Simultaneous interpreters often do not have the time to take notes especially in a quick one-direction interpreting.

Community interpreters, on the other hand, should pay more attention to the sociological aspects because they are mainly dealing with issues within the society. They are dealing with different ages and different mentalities.

We suppose that a good interpreter should be a good speaker but not necessarily vise versa.

In brief, creating competent interpreter means establishing specialized training centers especially for B. A. holders of translation. Certain intensified courses might be given to each graduate who is going to be a community, a consecutive, or a simultaneous interpreter. It might also be suggested that a special class be open in the department of translation for students who have the desire for such a faculty. To study the different types of translation in a short time is not suffice to graduate specialized translators and interpreters.

Although the theoretical aspect it, no doubt, essential, the practical side might be given much more care.

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