

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OF CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION

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Nowadays with the deepening of globalization, consecutive interpretation has become a quite common activity, which plays a vital role in cross culture communication. It is mostly used in formal conference, diplomatic occasions, conference interpretation, business negotiation, press conference, speeches, etc. As to consecutive interpretation, it poses high demands to interpreters, who need to listen to the speakers while taking notes at the same time. As long as the speaker pauses after one paragraph or so, the interpreter has to interpret it into accurate, fluent and understandable target language immediately. Consecutive interpretation requires the interpreters to have solid bilingual languages at least, as well as a great sense of culture. The quality of interpretation could have a direct effect on cross culture activities. Accurate and appropriate expression could have a positive effect on cross culture communication, while some improper and neglect of culture might catch misunderstanding or even conflicts. Therefore, it is of great importance to lay emphasis on the quality of consecutive interpretation. However, there are several factors need to be considered to ensure the quality of interpretation, including external and internal factors.

It is acknowledged that Consecutive Interpretation plays significantly important role in cross culture communication, not only in diplomatic affairs but also in the daily business exchanges. However, on one hand, there is no universal criteria to define the quality of consecutive interpreting. Moser-Mercer (1996) defined "optimum quality" as "complete and accurate rendition of the original and tries to capture any and all extralinguistic information" (P. 44). On the other hand, it's hard to control the quality of consecutive interpreting, since it has strict requirement for the interpreters. Someone who has a good command of professional knowledge might not be familiar with interpreting, while the person who majors in English is not skilled in professional operation principles or technical terms. It is hard to decide which one would be more appropriate for the interpreting. The best way to find a balance between the two conflicts is to practice more and keep learning.

The majority of previous research mainly explored the quality of interpretation. Moser-Mercer (1996:43-55) mainly discussed the assessment of quality in interpreting from different perspectives: including user's perspective, employer's perspective, laboratory experiments, and teacher's assessment of students. Generally, interpretation includes consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation, the quality and norms may vary from each other. Moreover, as to consecutive interpretation, it could also be divided into formal conference and informal meeting. Therefore, it seems necessary to take this factor into consideration when exploring the quality of interpretation, for one must conforms to the style of the source text. Moreover, to explore the factors influencing the quality of consecutive interpretation, the role of the interpreter could not be neglected. In response to these

matters, this study attempts to: 1) explore the factors that influence the quality of consecutive interpretation, 2) to investigate effective ways on the study of interpretation, and 3) to seek efficient ways on combining translation theory and practice. In this way, the present study pursues to contribute to the gap of knowledge in this particular issue.

Nadja Grbić (2008) described quality as a social construct in three social systems like teaching, research and practice. This study discussed some examples from different dimensions to reveal the complex quality discourse. The findings of the study suggest that there is no exact definition of quality since it is dynamic and relative. Based on the previous research, it is a significant work to explore the perception of “the quality of interpretation” from the perspective of interpreters, which could be more practical and convincing.

This study explores the factors influencing the quality of consecutive interpretation from the perspective of an interpreter base on practices of interpretation, hoping to offer some implications for further understanding of consecutive interpretation.

The Quality of CI

To explore factors influencing the quality of consecutive interpretation (CI), we must be clear about the definition of “the quality of CI”. Different scholars held different opinions regarding this matter. Andrew Gillies (2019) concluded that quality in consecutive interpreting as “say what the speaker says and make sense” (p.12) in the book *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*.

A good consecutive interpretation could convey the speaker’s information accurately in limited time. There are several elements playing a decisive role in consecutive interpretation, which could be concluded as “good listening skills”, “enough preparation of the content”, “grasping key information instead of word-for-word translation”, as well as “a strong sense of culture”. To ensure the speaker’s information could be accurately conveyed, all of these elements should be taken into consideration. A lot of factors might influence the quality of consecutive interpretation. Different scholars have studied the factors from different perspectives. The paper would analyze the data offered by the interpreter from the following aspects, hoping to shed some light on the further research.

Practice and Non-stop Learning. Practice is a term mentioned fifteen times in this interview. In the following conversation, “practice” and its other forms appeared six times. Actually, practice really matters a lot for the success of the interpretation. The researcher noticed the interpreter never stops learning during the casual dialogue and her daily focus.

Practice makes perfect. Without practicing, all the skills or techniques don’t matter much. Only through practicing can you have a better understanding of interpretation. Experience is the best teacher. Learning from practice and experience is the best way to become a skilled interpreter. Secondly, it is also very important to know something about everything, because there can be topics of any area during interpretation. The topics might cover any aspects. If you know nothing about something, then it would be very difficult for you to convey the speaker’s meaning accurately. For example, if you know nothing about the rules for certain sports, it would be hard for you to convey the meaning of the speaker accurately, even if using your mother tongue. And it is one of the most common topics of the speakers, you

know. So constant learning is very important, especially not just focus on one area. A learning heart for everything is quite important for an interpreter. Because we don't know when it will be used even for casual talks.

Thirdly, one should follow up the news around the world every day. If possible, listening to the news broadcast on BBC or other major media. People always like to talk about what's new, and it will be very helpful for the interpreters if knowing about the latest trends. Therefore, it's quite necessary to keep up with the latest news. Otherwise, the interpreter might be nervous when hearing unfamiliar things.

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