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Conference Interpreting

A Complete Course

Robin Setton
Andrew Dawrant

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Conference Interpreting. A Complete Course
by Robin Setton and Andrew Dawrant

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Robin Setton has worked as a conference interpreter since 1979 (AIIC member since 1983), both freelance and on the staff of an international organization. He has been an interpreter trainer and course leader in both Europe and Asia, and has published articles and books on cognitive, linguistic and cultural aspects of interpreting, including a monograph (*Simultaneous Interpretation: A cognitive-pragmatic analysis*, Benjamins, 1999). He holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics and separate postgraduate degrees in Conference Interpretation, Translation and Chinese Studies, and is currently based in France.

Andrew C. Dawrant 杜蕴德 is a conference interpreter, diplomatic interpreter and consultant. A member of AIIC since 1999, he has interpreted for G20 and bilateral summits. He has fifteen years of experience training professional conference interpreters in China, including eight years as head of programme. He holds an MA in Translation Studies and Prof Dip (Hons) in Conference Interpreting. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and four children.

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Abbreviations

AIIC	Association internationale des interprètes de conférence
AOUSC	Administrative Office of the United States Courts
ASTM	ASTM International (US-based standards organization)
CA	continuous assessment
CC	Complete Course (Vol. 1 of this set)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CITP	conference interpreter training programme
CRT	criterion-referenced testing
ELF	English as *lingua franca*
EMCI	European Masters in Conference Interpreting
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EVS	ear-voice span ('lag' in SI)
FCICE	Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (US)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
ILR	Interagency Language Roundtable
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	international organization
IRR	inter-rater reliability
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITT	Interpretive Theory of Translation (*théorie du sens*)
KSA	knowledge, skills and abilities
L(K)E	Language (and Knowledge) Enhancement
LKSP	Language, Knowledge, Skills, Professionalism
LSP	Language for Special Purposes
LTM	long-term memory
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRT	norm-referenced testing
PECI	Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting
PSI	public service interpreting
RT	Relevance Theory
S1, S2	Semester 1, Semester 2

SCL	student-centred learning
SDI	Speech Difficulty Index
SI	simultaneous interpretation
SI-text	simultaneous interpretation with text
SL	source language
SLE	Second Language Enhancement
SLI	sign-language interpreting
spm	syllables per minute
SRT	standards-referenced testing
ST	sight translation
T & I	translation and interpreting
TA	teaching assistant
TG	Trainer's Guide (Vol. 2 of this set)
TL	target language
UN	United Nations
WM	working memory
wpm	words per minute
Y1,Y2	Year 1, Year 2

General introduction

Interpreting is an attractive profession for people of a curious, independent cast of mind. Bridging cultures and communities, interpreters are rewarded with a rich and varied experience of humanity in its diversity. Unlike the translator of written text, the interpreter's work is fleeting; yet beyond the thrill of mediating live communication, it can also be deeply gratifying when it is done well, leaving a sense of having truly brought people together across cultures. This takes a complex mix of ingredients – language, analysis, empathy, knowledge and technical skills – that for best results should be stirred into expertise by teachers and students working together: interpreters are both born *and* made.

The two volumes in this set are not symmetrical (one for students, one for trainers), nor is the first volume intended for self-study: trying to go through the exercises alone without the guidance of fully-qualified instructors will make no sense and will not take the student anywhere near the level of expertise envisaged for the programme.

Conference interpreting is a social, interactive, contextualized activity performed in very specific conditions and environments. The skillset and judgment required cannot really be mastered alone, nor even by a transfer of wisdom from master to apprentice: it requires a partnership in which instructor and student each have their role. Instructors create realistic and relevant conditions – speeches, exercises, simulated contexts – in which students learn through practice, with detailed feedback and guidance, plus additional support from theory, language and knowledge enhancement, voice training and so on, to be able to meet the needs of real users in real conferences. To make that necessary symbiotic relationship clear, the first volume – the Complete Course (CC) – deliberately intertwines and alternates between the student's and teacher's roles as we move through the stages in learning. The process is centred on the student, who should also benefit from understanding the instructor's role. As for instructors, extensive additional guidance is provided in a separate volume (the Trainer's Guide [TG]), but it will be clear from TG-2[1] that there is a lot more to their role than merely following the exercises or methodological suggestions that any textbook, however detailed, may provide.

1. Chapters and sections in either of the two books are cross-referenced with the prefixes CC- (for the Complete Course) or TG- (for the Trainer's Guide).

The level of detail we offer in our recommendations for exercises, class procedure, feedback, practice or testing may give the impression of an over-'prescriptive' approach to interpreter training. Certainly we have written these books because we believe, on the basis of our experience, research and appreciation of the skills required, and of the reality of the job, that some methods of training are better than others, and that some structure, a reasoned progression and explicit guidance (and some key supporting components, like language and knowledge enhancement) make for better results. At the same time, training must always be student-focused and needs-based; so these recommendations, however strongly argued for, must necessarily remain suggestions that instructors and course designers will adapt to their specific needs, and enrich with their own ideas, practice and methodology.

The focus is on conference interpreting, but the principles and many of the exercises, particularly in the early chapters, are relevant to interpreting in all modes and settings. Today there is a steady demand[2] – and growing, especially in emerging markets – not only for SI but also for reliable consecutive interpreting for the thousands of meetings held every day in locations where no SI equipment is available.

Throughout both books we have sought to support our training proposals with both theory, from cognitive science or expertise research, and constant reference to real-world practice. Trainers and other seasoned professionals will naturally find much that is familiar, or even obvious and elementary, but perhaps also some new ideas. Research and ongoing debate on some key points are flagged and briefly discussed as of the Complete Course, with cross-references to the Trainer's Guide (TG) for more in-depth treatment. Conversely, CC-references in the Trainer's Guide point the reader to the relevant stage or exercise in the Complete Course.

The indexes and tables of contents should also help readers to find specific points of interest, and more systematically, exercises, examples or case studies for each stage in the progression, as well as complete (mini-)syllabi for the various complementary modules: language and knowledge enhancement (CC/TG-7), the use of theory both *for* training (TG-3) and *in* training (TG-12), professionalism (CC/TG-10), an introduction to the organization of the profession (CC-11), lifelong and teacher training (TG-14), plans for postgraduate courses (MA and PhD, TG-12), and last but not least, blueprints for exams (CC-3/TG-4 for admission, TG-3.4 for in-course testing, TG-11 for the final diploma). Course leaders and instructors will find the principles of course design and pedagogy summarized in TG-2 and TG-3, with additional guidance in TG-13 on negotiating the challenges of creating and running a programme in a host institution.

2. As reflected in the number of functioning schools: in 2014, AIIC recognized 84 interpreting schools meeting its basic criteria – i.e. turning out reliable professional conference interpreters – in 44 countries.

In the core teaching chapters (CC-4/TG-5 to CC/TG-10), new techniques and exercises are illustrated with worked examples in various language pairs, with English as a common thread, and with graphic process diagrams, boxes highlighting key techniques or controversial issues, some discussion of the learning and teaching challenges of the new skill, and (especially in TG) a review of relevant literature. Detailed guidelines on how to study and practise independently or in groups outside class – an indispensable part of the training – are provided to students in an Appendix to CC-5.

We hope that researchers, instructors and students will all find these volumes a rich but also an original resource: while the programme we describe builds on the 'standard model' of training that has successfully turned out generations of professionals, we also propose some adaptations and improvements to meet the changing profile of conference interpreting.

Training interpreters: tradition and innovation

In an age where 'evidence-based' is a buzzword, we need to explain the basis for our recommendations. Interpreting is a complex activity, and interpreter training still more so. As is often repeated in the literature, comparative empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of different training methods is complicated by practical difficulties such as tiny samples, high individual variability and the elusive and ephemeral nature of live performance data, not to mention the lack of statistics on student outcomes. We must therefore still rely largely on experience,[3] supplemented with what we know from research on language, cognition, human communication, education or sociology.

Despite the lack of published data, we do know that since the 1950s and 1960s a few well-known ('leading') schools have been largely successful in training operational conference interpreters for work at the highest levels, applying a 'standard' apprenticeship-based training model – also promoted by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC[4]) – of which one version has been

3. In the authors' case, a combined total of nearly sixty years as interpreters and as trainers, administrators and researchers in various programmes in Europe and Asia. Many exercises and teaching methods were developed, piloted or implemented in conference interpreting programmes in Taipei in the 1990s (GITIS, Fujen University), in Beijing in the early 2000s (BFSU), then in Shanghai, as taught from 2003–2011 (SISU-GIIT), as well as Geneva (FTI, formerly ETI) and Paris (ESIT and ISIT).

4. International Association of Conference Interpreters, known by its French acronym 'AIIC'. http://aiic.net. (See CC-2, Appendix).

described in the best-known manual published to date (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989/2002).[5]

Our own scheme is also in line with AIIC recommendations, but aims to 'stand on the shoulders' of past generations of trainers to update and adapt the standard paradigm to the realities of interpreting in the 21st century, including its emerging markets. In most respects we have followed established practice, in some ways even 'more so', but with some adjustments and innovations, notably in the areas of teaching style, assessment and testing, and support with language and knowledge enhancement, in pursuit of fairer yet more efficient and realistic interpreter training.

Progression and incremental realism

One of the cornerstones of the standard training model has been a progressive and constructive curriculum that takes students from exercises in active listening and analysis, then through consecutive interpreting with notes, and some sight translation, before moving on to SI, learning each new skill first into the native (A) language and only then into the second (learned, 'B') language.

We still find this progressive approach, as intuitively followed by early trainers, to be pedagogically highly persuasive. Our readings in cognitive science suggest that it largely reflects the incremental challenges of these tasks – for example, practising interpreting a speech or text in two stages, as in consecutive and sight translation, for at least a while before trying to do everything simultaneously, as in SI – and we have therefore articulated it in still more detail than in past training blueprints, identifying four stages in the mastery of each skill – Initiation (Discovery), Coordination, Experimentation (reflecting individual student variability) and Consolidation – with some limited flexibility allowed for students advancing at different speeds (see TG-3 for discussion and rationale).

Authenticity of tasks and materials is another traditional concern. To reconcile this with progression in difficulty and keep things fun and stimulating, we apply a principle of **incremental realism**: instead of doing artificial drills that are theorized to be cognitive components of the full interpreting task – an idea that some have toyed with in the training debate – we ensure that each exercise from the very start contains something of the communicative goal that is the essence of interpreting, gradually adding new challenges in terms of (i) the communicative characteristics of the input (from natural to formal, recited speech, for example), (ii) the techniques

5. The Ecole supérieure d'interprétation et de traduction (ESIT) in Paris is the home of the 'theory of sense' or 'interpretive theory of translation' (ITT), which we refer to at several points throughout these books.

required to deal with them, and (iii) the expectations for the quality and clarity of the product. Performance objectives are spelled out at each stage. In contrast to language learning, this means that input materials do not necessarily progress linearly in terms of 'linguistic' difficulty or subject matter, but are chosen to encourage and develop a particular type of cognitive processing at each stage. A tentative typology of speech difficulty on four parameters, with indications of appropriate speech and text types for each stage, is provided in an Appendix to TG-2.

We adopt a 'components' approach mainly at a descriptive level, in the postulate that overall interpreting expertise can be seen as a successful integration of four competencies – Language, Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism ('LKSP', CC-2.4). Each is either enhanced (L, K) or acquired through the course (S, P), and thereafter consolidated through life, but these four must be fully integrated to achieve overall, operational interpreting expertise that will continue to mature with practice. Some components – such as language proficiency, specific domain knowledge, or the more mechanical aspects of note-taking – can be focused on separately to some extent, but these are the exceptions to the general rule of incremental realism.

Full realism: going the last mile

Our second extension of the Standard Model involves a commitment to *full* realism, aiming to bring students in contact with all the realities of professional interpreting, including 'last-mile' training to deal with the most challenging conditions that graduates will face on today's market: fast, dense, formal and recited input, foreign accents and presentations that mix speech, text and slides (CC/TG-9).

Unfortunately, due to the pressures of time, money and the need for many speakers to use non-native languages, we don't always have the luxury of interpreting for people expressing themselves transparently and clearly in live, interactive discussion, but are often faced with speech that is rushed, informationally dense (read out from text), or otherwise opaque, stilted or uncommunicative. As interpreters have become increasingly taken for granted and invisible over the years (moving out of the meeting room to the SI booth and now to remote interpreting), it has become virtually impossible to refuse such tasks, even on quality assurance grounds.

While it remains true that coherent and meaningful interpretation is *never* possible without focusing primarily on the sense, conference interpreters must be fully prepared to deal with speeches that are either delivered so fast that the message can only be rendered comprehensibly by (meaning-preserving) compression, and/or are replete with formulas and jargon for which set equivalents are expected, or numbers and names to be accurately reproduced (i.e. a high 'transcoding' factor); or are produced from written text whose linguistic structure requires complete reformulation to be delivered in comfortable, idiomatic form to an audience listening in another language.

To respond to these challenges, interpreters must complement their basic listening, analysing and speaking abilities with a suite of additional competencies: linguistic *readiness*, or the instant availability of ready phrases, both to keep up and because set equivalents are often expected; the ability to stay close to the speaker in SI *temporally,* not to overload short-term memory, but not *linguistically,* to stay idiomatic or even comprehensible, especially from written text – in contrast to the flexible lag and spontaneous formulation that is possible when following a natural, spontaneous exchange; and the ability to compress the text while preserving meaning, often the only way of coping with very fast speeches.

In our pedagogy, two strands correspond to these contrasting techniques as of the first steps in SI training. Alongside spontaneous and natural speeches that allow for a more elastic lag and freedom of style, more or less static or drip-fed text-based exercises are introduced towards the end of the first year (CC-7) alongside freer sight translation, leading into gradually accelerating 'chunking-and-joining' in SI-Initiation (CC/TG-8.2), preparing for the relatively rigid and formal material of institutional discourse and presentations from text (SI-Consolidation and Reality).

Finally, since *all* these techniques are vastly facilitated by familiarity with the subject matter (and sometimes impossible without it), we prescribe intensive study and practice on materials typical of the main target market(s) as soon as basic SI technique is in place (CC/TG-8.5), along with training in document management and conference preparation.

'Bi-active' SI

Another update is the **mainstreaming of 'bi-active' simultaneous interpreting**, i.e. into the B as well as the A language, long since standard in emerging markets, to meet the increasing demand for this capability worldwide (overwhelmingly with English B). SI into a non-native language is obviously more challenging cognitively and linguistically. To preserve the pedagogical progression (B into A before A into B), but still provide sufficient hours of training and practice into B, two adjustments to the standard curriculum are needed: extra class hours for into-B training, and significantly more language enhancement (LE) support than is traditionally provided in leading schools, both in dedicated LE classes and in classroom feedback into B. CC-7 describes exercises and guidelines for Language Enhancement, both within the course and for independent study and practice, and additional knowledge modules required for key domains in conference interpreting (Law, Economics, Parliamentary Procedure etc.) or other specializations.

Teaching professionalism

Another component of training that needs reinforcing is Professionalism, with three interacting facets – craft, ethics and service – that interact to ensure trust and quality in the interpreter-client relationship (CC-10). To take an obvious example, the near-impossible conditions described above are best *mitigated* or pre-empted in advance (as with climate change), to avoid having to *adapt* to them, by communicating better with our clients upstream. With growing pressure on young beginners to accept makeshift or unreasonable terms and conditions, students need a fuller and more detailed introduction to proper working conditions, ethics, role norms and conventions, dealing with (and educating) clients, and the organization of the profession, than has traditionally been provided in schools. This preparation should be consolidated in practice visits to organizations with work in 'dumb booths', and followed up after graduation with support and mentoring.

Under the general heading of professional ethics, norms relating to the *interpreter's role* are known to vary widely in the more diverse and less professionalized settings of community interpreting. However, we have found that such norms vary even among conference interpreters on different markets. The conference interpreting skillset – full consecutive and SI – has long been in demand well beyond the multilateral intergovernmental organizations, notably in settings like bilateral diplomacy and high-stakes business, where the full neutrality of the interpreter (and some more secondary conventions and conditions) is often neither expected nor taken for granted.

In short, while there are no defensible grounds for diluting the oath of *confidentiality*, and no revolutionary leap in human cognition has occurred to change the optimal and minimal *conditions* for quality interpreting, principles like neutrality, loyalty and fidelity are not as clear-cut nor as easy to apply in practice as these iconic words suggest, and need to be better understood in the light of the diversity of practice if we are to preserve their ethical core in the real modern world. After observing some clear differences of perspective between cultures and markets, we have therefore had to settle for presenting both sides of an apparent divergence in the contemporary self-image of the profession – frankly unresolved here – between those who believe that we should always strive towards and never relinquish interpreter neutrality as a goal, and those who hold that (full) neutrality is either not possible or cannot be required of interpreters in some settings and situations (CC/TG-10.3).

In terms of 'business/service' professionalism, practical information that future graduates will need about market organization, getting work and key relationships as they embark on their career (CC-11) is the substance of a final-semester 'Introduction to Professional Practice' module.

Acknowledgements

These books have drawn on a rich trove of work by many authors in the research community, and on the help of numerous colleagues. We have benefited in particular from existing works on training, including Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer's *Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation* (1989/2002), Daniel Gile's *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training* (1995/2009), Roderick Jones' *Conference Interpreting Explained* (1998); Andrew Gillies' *Conference Interpreting: A Student's Practice Book* (2013); Jean-François Rozan's *La prise de notes en interprétation consecutive* (1956), and Laura Myers' (1976) and Andrew Gillies' (2005) introductions to consecutive note-taking; and for court interpreting, González, Vásquez and Mikkelsen's *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation* (1991/2012). For a general overview of the field (including community interpreting), and their work as editors of the journal *Interpreting* and co-authors of *The Interpreting Studies Reader* we are indebted to Franz Pöchhacker (*Introducing Interpreting Studies*, 2004), and – also for her legendary warmth and support – the late Miriam Shlesinger.

Several recent publications on conference interpreting or interpreter training have been referenced only briefly, having emerged too recently to be fully addressed in this book. For additional background and information, including abundant online references and resources, readers are referred to the Further reading sections in each chapter, and to the following excellent general reference works in the field:

Baker, Mona and Gabriela Saldanha (eds.). 1998/2009. *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203359792

Chapelle, Carol (ed.). 2013. *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (10 Vols). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gambier, Yves and van Doorselaer (eds.). 2011-2013. *Benjamins Handbook of Translation Studies* (4 Vols). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/hts.1

Malmkjær, Kirsten and Kevin Windle (eds.). 2011. *Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199239306.001.0001

Millán-Varela, Carmen and Francesca Bartrina (eds.). 2012. *Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.

Mikkelson, Holly and Renée Jourdenais (eds). 2015. *Handbook of Interpreting*. London: Routledge.

Pöchhacker, Franz and Nadja Grbić (eds.). 2015. *Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Complete Course

This book is intended mainly for students of conference interpreting and their instructors, but also for practitioners of interpreting in all its forms, and all those who are in any way interested in this profession.

Chapter 2 ('The interpreter's job') tries to capture the common essence of interpreting by visiting the wide range of modes, settings and situations in which it is practised – from the community and public service through the courts, the media, business, diplomacy and conflict resolution, and the mixes of cognitive, linguistic and social skills that each requires. Interpreting in all these domains has a common purpose: it is a service in which the linguistic operation is only one component, and where, as in all translation, the primary goal is the faithful communication of the speaker's sense.

Beyond this minimal requirement for 'basic' fidelity, different settings pose different kinds of challenges: cognitive juggling for fast or awkward SI; the delicate choice of words and tone, in diplomacy; and in face-to-face exchanges, finding the right balance between 'invisibility' and facilitating or mediating communication. While conference interpreting can be seen in a continuum with other settings and modes of practice, any training programme must target a specific skillset. Conference interpreting in particular requires solid, rich and flexible language proficiency (linguistic quality and precision, registers, style), the ability to rapidly access and use specialized knowledge, and technical skills for capturing and rendering messages, whether in short or full consecutive, simultaneous, or more complex and hybrid ('multimedia') input.

Conference interpreting is itself a varied landscape: some interpreters work from one, two and up to six languages into their mother tongue; others work only back and forth between a pair of languages, or in different directions between two or three (for details about language combinations, see CC-2.6). The focus of training may therefore vary somewhat between schools depending on their target markets – for example, mainly UN-oriented, mainly EU-oriented, or targeting a wide variety of national and international institutions and private-sector recruiters. Our special experience of East-West interpreting, especially Chinese-English, not widely addressed in previous work, may offer some new insights into some of these (partly culturally-determined) differences of perspective.

In CC-3 we set out the prerequisite qualifications for admission to conference interpretation training in terms of language proficiency, knowledge, maturity and other qualities, with a description of a typical entrance exam procedure and advice and exercises to help prepare. A detailed description of the course begins in CC-4, with an Initiation into the ways of enhanced listening, analysing and speaking that are unique and common to all good interpreters and a prerequisite for acquiring technical skills – like a standard method of note-taking to support accurate and complete rendition of a speech of five minutes and more, in Consecutive Interpreting (CC-5). Sight Translation (ST) – making a speech in one language out of a written text in another (CC-6) – is a salutary exercise that helps to navigate the traps of language interference and also prepare for SI, and is therefore strongly recommended at various points throughout the course.

Equipped with these basic skills, and ongoing deepening and broadening of language proficiency and relevant knowledge (CC-7), students are ready to try simultaneous interpreting (CC-8). Once they have acquired the coordination and specific techniques needed for this complex skill and consolidated it on authentic speeches, they can finally be exposed, as in a flight simulator, to the real-life conditions of modern conference interpreting with all its speed, diversity and technicality (CC-9).

The real world of conference interpreting is populated by not only speakers and listeners, but also clients and colleagues, two communities best engaged in a spirit of Professionalism (CC-10). Here we discover the ethics and conventions of the interpreter's role, and learn to weigh prudence against valour ('optimizing' communication) in navigating the narrow straits of Fidelity and Neutrality; but also, how to secure proper working conditions and establish trust and credibility with clients and users of the service. The organization of the profession as it is practised today, with its contracts, options and firm offers, key relationships and 'co-opetition', is described in CC-11. Professional certification is now in sight, after safe passage through a fair but rigorous final exam (see TG-11), for which some useful tips for candidates are offered here in a final appendix.

The second volume in the set, the Trainer's Guide, is aimed at instructors, course leaders and designers (as well as researchers), beginning with introductory chapters on pedagogy, class organization and curriculum design, then mirroring the stages of the Complete Course with specific tips for teaching, choice of materials and feedback, followed by chapters on theory and research, testing and certification, and course administration, and concluding with a speculative look at the future prospects for our profession.

CHAPTER 2

The interpreter's job

2.1 Introduction

Interpreting is an oral form of translation, a service that lets people communicate across language barriers. In today's globalized world, the most striking feature of this activity is no longer its mystery, but its diversity. Interpreting is performed in every possible domain and setting, from hospitals and law courts to television shows and the Oval Office, from university lectures to business negotiations and church services, guided tours of scenic spots, prisoner interrogations, meetings of NGOs, corporate boards and the UN Security Council. This work is done by practitioners with various levels of training and ability, ranging from 'naturals' and unpaid amateurs to highly trained professionals, in different modes (consecutive, simultaneous, etc.), in a myriad different communication situations, formal and informal, for users at every stratum of society, from immigrant factory workers to corporate leaders and heads of state, behind closed doors or for audiences of millions. Interpreters may mediate between groups interacting on an equal footing across primarily linguistic and cultural barriers, as in a meeting between trade union delegates or foreign ministers, or across large power differentials, as for example when an illiterate refugee applies for asylum or welfare benefits from the state. Their tasks range from the trivial to the impossible, for high and low stakes, and with critical or negligible impact on individuals, families, organizations or nations. Their status, and the recognition they receive, vary just as widely, often independently of these factors, from complete indifference to the highest respect.

Interpreting is a stimulating, often rewarding, and – when practised in good conditions – a highly sought-after profession. Assignments are sometimes engrossing, sometimes boring; there are busy and slack seasons, but also opportunities for travel, and for the intellectually curious mind, a front seat on a wide and constantly changing spectrum of human activity.

To observers and users, language conversion is the most visible part of our job, and sometimes the only thing expected. But interpreting, like other forms of translation, involves **language**, **cognition** and **mediation**. Also, as we will see, despite the loose lay use of 'translation' for both the written and live oral[1] activities, translation and interpreting are done under quite different constraints and call upon quite different skillsets.

This chapter offers a general descriptive overview of the interpreter's job, explaining its specificity and the need for targeted training.

2.1.1 Defining the task

Some definitions of interpreting highlight its *immediacy*, hinting at its distinct cognitive processes:

> a form of Translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation in a source language.
> (Pöchhacker 2004: 13)

Others are more prescriptive, but also evoke a mediating function going beyond language:

> the process of understanding and analysing a spoken or signed message and re-expressing that message faithfully, accurately and objectively in another language, *taking the cultural and social context into account*. (ASTM F 2089-01 *Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services* 3.1;[2] emphasis added)

Definitions are always incomplete, and always raise more questions. Here is a simple one that captures three key aspects of an interpreter's job:

Interpreters mediate communication between people speaking different languages.

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1. Throughout this book, terms like 'oral', 'speaker', 'speech', 'listener', 'interpreter', 'language' etc. should be taken to include sign language, signing and signed-language interpreting. Interestingly, in the US at least it seems that the term 'translator' is less often (mis)used in referring to signed- than spoken-language interpreters.

2. The *Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services* (F 2089-01), published in 2001 and reapproved in 2007 by ASTM International, an international standards organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus-based technical standards, offers "an organized collection of information" and is "intended to serve clients and providers of language interpretation services and the institutions providing professional training for interpreters". It does however offer extensive guidance and advice which, though seemingly oriented to the domestic US market, is broadly in line with AIIC recommendations (although without explicit acknowledgement, notably for the A-B-C language classification system).

1. Mediate communication: Interpreters help speakers and listeners *bridge cultural and cognitive gaps* (of which they may not be aware) that would otherwise impede communication. In practice, this mediation may range from cautious language transfer through a range of *optimizing processes*, some automatic, some allowed or constrained, depending on the situation, the setting and the interpreter-user/client relationship.

2. Between people speaking: The interpreter's domain is *real-time oral communication*. Usually both input and output are live speech, and even when the input is partly or wholly written or recorded (as in SI with text or sight translation), the interpreter's product is for *immediate consumption in real time* by real people,[3] with all the constraints (such as imposed pace), conventions and freedoms (pragmatic, prosodic etc.) of oral communication.

3. Different languages: Interpreters are called upon when speaker(s) and listener(s) are *unable* to use a common language (or *prefer* not to – for example, when a participant understands or speaks the other's language imperfectly, or for diplomatic reasons). The mere fact of changing languages already reframes a message culturally and cognitively, since language elements do not match one for one.

To fulfil this combined **linguistic**, **cognitive** and **communicative (mediating)** task, the skillset of any interpreter must therefore bring together four core competencies, the first three being realized and implemented in the fourth:

- **Language proficiency (L)** in both source and target languages, to decode the signs and present the message intelligibly, clearly and idiomatically;
- **Knowledge (K)**, both general (including cultural) and local, to penetrate the cognitive world(s) of speakers and listeners sufficiently to mediate their exchange;
- **Skills (S)**, both general (for communication) and specific to interpreting, to manage the constraints and exploit the opportunities of the medium;
- **Professionalism (P)** to manage conditions, set priorities and take operational and ethical decisions aimed at optimizing the service in real life.

The demands on each of these competencies, separately or in coordination, will vary in different modes, domains, settings and situations, with results depending on the interpreter's ability and on external factors. These four dimensions, developed more fully below in 2.4, will serve throughout this book and its companion volume as a framework for our proposals for developing and integrating

3. Nowadays, anything can be recorded and replayed later – the speaker, the interpreter, or the whole event; but the deferred use of interpretation may create atypical added expectations of the product: see 2.1.2 and note 5 below.

the components of interpreting expertise through training. In our experience, the precise configuration and levels of these competencies that are needed to interpret professionally to a high standard are never all *naturally* present (i.e. without training) even in the most gifted educated bilingual.

In contrast to (deferred, typically written) translation, the key to interpreting is indeed its *immediacy*, which ties performance inseparably to time, place and situation.

2.1.2 Interpreting vs. written translation

In the media the words 'translate' or 'translator' are often loosely used for the oral as well as the written function, but in the world of professional T&I, 'translation' is performed on written texts, while 'interpreting' is used for spoken or signed language.

To the outsider, language transfer is the most obvious common feature, making these activities seem like close siblings. Many leading theorists of interpreting and translation, too, are prepared to view them as branches of a single overarching profession and/or academic discipline, sometimes capitalized as 'Translation (Studies)' (e.g. Pöchhacker 2004; Gile 2009). This may be convenient in a broad taxonomy of academic disciplines, on the grounds that interpreting and translation are two modalities that "can be defined as performing essentially the same function" (Gile 2009: 6). But as cognitive tasks, and therefore for **training**, ('deferred') text translation and (live, immediate) interpreting are different enough in terms of input, conditions of practice, output, reception and use to be treated as distinct activities and skillsets.

The difference between speech and written text has been highlighted only quite recently in the history of language study (e.g. Halliday 1989): writing is generally denser and more intricate in its vocabulary, grammar and use of metaphor, for example, while speech is typically accompanied by meaning-changing prosodic, melodic and kinesic paralinguistic effects. From a cognitive perspective, it is precisely these differences that determine the distinct *processes* of production and understanding in T & I – one is live, aural and ephemeral, the other visual, fixed and consultable: they are products adapted to different media. The difference between interpreting and translation therefore becomes clearer when we replace the formal criterion of 'orality' vs. 'writtenness' with the more essential one of ***immediacy*** of process.[4] Let us take a closer look at the implications.

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4. Or immediacy and proximity: "Interpreting is distinguished by its immediacy, a service performed *here and now* for people who want to communicate across barriers of language and culture" (Pöchhacker 2004: 10; our emphasis). Pöchhacker (ibid.) also draws attention to two more problems with the 'orality' criterion: (a) text is sometimes involved in interpreting; and (b) 'orality' would exclude signed interpreting.

In written translation, the situation is usually as follows: a text which someone has taken some time to write, at a certain place and time and with a certain readership in mind, is given to a translator, in another place and time, to produce a new text, for a new set of readers, who will read it in yet other places and times. Both texts are fixed in a fairly permanent medium – paper or an electronic file – and can be consulted and re-read at the reader's leisure. The original writer and the translator each encode meanings in language chosen to the best of their ability, and each reader decodes the text in the context of his or her own place, time, situation, knowledge and interests. The new text lives on to be re-read, consulted, enjoyed, etc., again and again by the same or different readers at different times and places. The text remains, the context changes.

In pure 'live' oral communication, both speakers and listeners are under different constraints. Speakers can control the pace, density and coherence of their speech, more or less competently but with limited scope for online editing. Listeners have no choice but to decode and interpret the input 'on the fly', forming mental representations of meaning which they may process and retain in different ways (and which may or may not lead to changed perceptions, or to action). The process of understanding a live speaker is immediate and irreversible: the listener captures meaning as it unfolds and processes it in the context of his understanding of the world and the situation and what his memory retains of the speech so far.

In written translation, the translator has time to peruse the original text. Just as a writer *takes* time to weigh words that can be consulted and read repeatedly, the translator *needs* time to consider what the author's intention might have been, how the new readership will receive this or that choice of words, and to choose them carefully, crafting a product which must accordingly stand more scrutiny than the interpreter's. The translator can leave the texts and return to them, to think or consult other sources (dictionaries, reference works, parallel texts, the author, the client), or to research and project past and future contexts of reception.

The interpreter, in contrast, has only fleeting access to the discourse, but a more direct experience of the context of its reception, and usually, a more identifiable audience (however large, e.g. in media interpreting). Clues in the unfolding speech *and* the immediate environment help her appreciate its current relevance. The interpreter must have at least adequate words available immediately; but what she says and how she says it aim, typically, not to support lengthy scrutiny by different people in different places and times, but to give her present listeners access to unfolding meaning in the immediate context of what they know and see, and what is said before and after.

These conditions do vary, of course. In some situations an interpreter may have to rely more on a text, or have fewer clues than a translator can get to the author's intentions, or to the nature of the audience and its reactions (in media interpreting). An interpreter may also be expected to produce a version where every word counts – as in some diplomatic or legal interpreting, or when the interpretation is to be recorded verbatim and later relied upon, without revision, as authoritative[5] (expectations which are unrealistic, even for the very best interpreters: see CC/TG-9).[6]

Typically, though, the translator and interpreter are in two quite different situations, with different resources, using different techniques and skills, and aiming at different products suited to different communication media. The translator needs documentation, dictionaries and other information which she can consult 'off line' to reconstruct intentions and contexts of reception and craft a product which will stand leisurely and repeated consultation, and even critical scrutiny. The interpreter needs to be present and informed about the situation to produce the speech that will be most effective to communicate 'on line', in the changing context of the event: immediacy goes with 'liveness', which usually means physical proximity or co-presence.[7] A translator must be a good reader and writer; an interpreter, a good listener and speaker (and fast reading helps).

In summary, in interpreting and text translation different *opportunities* (live context in one, research, revision and software tools in the other) are exploited to meet different *constraints* (once-only production under pressure in one case, crafting a consultable final product in the other). Though often confused by the public at large, translation and interpreting *are* therefore properly two quite distinct activities,[8] and – though targeted exercise in each skillset can benefit the other (see CC-7.4.2.5) – call for quite distinct overall programmes of training.

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5. This is routine in court interpreting and is now increasingly common in conference and diplomatic interpreting, where the interpreters' output is recorded and/or transcribed in real time and immediately posted to the internet, without revision or editing, for posterity. In the European Parliament, some MEPs like to check the recording and transcript of the English version of their interventions afterwards, and may complain about even minor omissions or perceived distortions or dilutions (Susanne Altenberg, p.c); see footnote 3 above.

6. Drafters of carefully crafted diplomatic, political and legal texts cannot dictate a final product in one pass at 150 wpm, so interpreters can hardly be expected to (unless one believes that interpreting is a trivial act of code-for-code substitution and interpreters are superfast bilingual code-switching computers).

7. See CC-9.4, TG-9.6.2 for discussion of situations where this co-presence is reduced or obstructed.

8. "Although some people do both, interpreting and translation are different professions. Interpreters deal with spoken words, translators with written words. Each task requires a distinct set of skills and aptitudes, and most people are better suited for one or the other". Occupational Outlook Handbook 2014, US Dept of Labour. http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/interpreters-and-translators.htm#tab-1 (Accessed July 29, 2015).

2.1.3 Why is it called 'interpreting'?

Both deferred (written) and live (oral) translation require 'interpretation' in the hermeneutic sense of making inferences about the speaker/author's meaning and intention, and the terms used to describe these two activities have fluctuated through history and in different societies.[9] 'Interpreting' has crystallized as the term for the live, oral activity in some societies, perhaps because speech varies more widely than writing from the linguistic standard, needing more 'interpretation'; or because speech comes with *more immediate evidence* to process to derive meaning – from the speaker's tone, expression and body language through to the whole live, unfolding event environment – but *less certainty* about the words themselves, which vanish as they are spoken – *verba volant, scripta manent.*[10] Or perhaps it is simply because interpreting is a live performance, in which the interpreter is *seen* to 'interpret' a role, often being expected, like an actor, to bring across something of the speaker's personality and style. This norm is preserved in the convention by which professional interpreters speak in the first person,[11] thus appearing to assume the identity of each speaker in turn.

Today interpreting seems to deserve its name in the light of the three meanings listed in one dictionary's *full* definition (see footnote 12) for **interpret** as a transitive verb:

> 1: to explain or tell the meaning of: to present in understandable terms
> 2: to conceive in the light of individual belief, judgment, or circumstance (synonym: construe)
> 3: to represent by means of art: bring to realization by performance or direction; e.g. <interpret a role> (Merriam-Webster online dictionary[12])

Interpreting involves all three of these, and indeed two more dimensions of the job of our 'language interpreters' are missing or understated: overcoming the cultural barrier that comes with the linguistic one, entailing additional knowledge (2.1.6 below); and more controversially, the extent to which interpreters 'mediate' (2.1.7).

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9. For example, German *Dolmetscher* (today: interpreter) used to mean 'translator of commercial texts', while the Latin *interpres* was a broker and explainer as well as an interpreter.

10. "Speech flies away, writing remains" (Latin proverb).

11. With the appropriate markers of the speaker's gender, status, role etc. as required by the output language.

12. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpret (Accessed 23 September 2011 and November 9, 2015). The entry seems to have been updated with a 'simpler' but quite different set of definitions, one of which now emphatically does *not* fit what interpreters do: "to perform (something, such as a song or a role) in a way that shows your own thoughts and feelings about it…"! (see CC/TG-10).

To teach interpreting, it helps to compare and contrast it with ordinary linguistic interaction. We can begin by reviewing recent theory illustrating the cognitive and social dimensions of all verbal communication, then turn to the added complexities of mediated communication with a change of language, and the constraints and possibilities of interpreting.

2.1.4 How verbal communication works

Our understanding of verbal communication has been vastly increased over the last 60-odd years as linguistics has progressed from its traditional role of describing and comparing languages to exploring (with input from the cognitive sciences) how we understand what we mean from the utterances we exchange – a branch of linguistics known as pragmatics. In our view, the best such ('cognitive-pragmatic') account currently available is Relevance Theory (RT) (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Carston 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2012, etc.). Here (or later) readers may wish to turn to TG-12.2.2 for an overview of Relevance Theory, which will underpin much of the theoretical discussion from this point on and throughout the book. We will use 'relevant' and 'relevance' in the technical RT sense more than in their looser everyday meaning – for example, to say that the interpretation is '(highly) relevant' does not imply that the interpreter is filtering out what she feels may be less important or interesting to her listeners.

Linguistic pragmatics and RT in particular have shown that verbal communication is not, as once thought, just a matter of a speaker encoding his thoughts into language which is then decoded by a listener. No language can encode thoughts precisely, unambiguously and completely; to understand each other, communicators must also constantly make inferences from available contexts, i.e. other knowledge, beliefs and perceptions. For all the sophistication of our linguistic tools, even a common language does not guarantee perfect communication between humans (as a glance at the daily news headlines will confirm). Any utterance, written or spoken, can only provide *clues* to a speaker's (or an author's) thoughts and intentions for listeners (or readers) to interpret in a given situation, at the cost of varying degrees of effort to mobilize knowledge, draw inferences and project, on both sides. The same words will not always mean the same thing in different contexts.[13] In short, *all* understanding of utterances involves a significant amount of 'interpretation'. The difference between the everyday interpretation of people's behaviour, including speech and the job of the ('language') interpreter is that "the

13. A classic example is 'Lights, please!' uttered by a speaker before and after his slide presentation.

interpreter's focus is properly not on what the speaker *intends*, but what he *intends to say*" (Seleskovitch 1977: 31; Seleskovitch and Lederer 1995: 227–231).

2.1.5 Mediated communication (with a change of language)

Attempts to define translation have come up against two opposite extremes – converting language forms, or 'being the author/speaker' – neither of which is tenable.

First, communication across a language barrier cannot be achieved just by producing linguistic equivalents, which can neither be exact, since languages embody different cultures and worldviews (Quine 1960; Keenan 1978; Nida 1975; Kramsch 1998), nor fixed, because of changing contexts. Languages do not express the same facets of the universe with equal explicitness, and one-to-one correspondences between words and expressions are the exception rather than the rule (Kade 1968: 79ff; Nida 1975). Even when an illusion of 'literal' or 'verbatim' translation needs to be created (as in some legal settings), what listeners inevitably receive is the expression of a representation formed by the interpreter that is itself a composite of meanings communicated implicitly and explicitly by the speaker. This output will therefore necessarily be *semantically and pragmatically rearranged* as compared to the original utterance, and will inevitably involve some differences (gains and losses) in *encoded* meaning – even when many of the words and expressions in the original and rendition may subsequently be seen to work well as equivalents in the context.

Nor can a translator claim to 'faithfully render the speaker's intentions', which are unknowable. With or without a change of language, to mediate communication between people when one is neither a participant nor an Addressee takes an additional effort of interpretation – a deeper probing of 'belief, judgment and circumstance', in the dictionary's terms (sense 2). The interpreter must *project the cognitive environment(s) of speakers and listeners* to form representations of the meanings that s/he believes the speaker intends to communicate, and choose formulations of them, as far as possible, that s/he believes will make that meaning (optimally) accessible to listeners.

Interpreting therefore inevitably includes the *cognitive mediation* that is entailed in all communication, and thus unless artificially restrained, will necessarily involve some optimization of communication. A speaker may spell things out, simplify or take short cuts depending on what he thinks his listeners will understand more or less quickly or comfortably. But if the interpreter feels that *her* listeners may not be so familiar with a place or a person that is mentioned, she *could* add a brief 'annotation' ('the country's main seaport', 'the outgoing CEO', 'Ogaden *province*', etc.), or (as is normally preferred in court interpreting, for example) just say the name in the other language, and let addressees ask for more information if they want it.

An interesting consequence of this process is that interpreting may also result in *communicative gains*, when the reframing process improves clarity or coherence. If the interpreter understands the speaker at least as well as the source-language audience, but is a better speaker, and/or bridges cultural and cognitive gaps that the speaker is unaware of, her audience may well get more cognitive effects for less effort than the audience listening to the original. At the *linguistic level*, an interpreter can only 'remove the language barrier' *to the extent possible*, '[enabling] participants to communicate in real time' *almost* 'as if there were no language barrier' (ASTM F 2089-01, 6.1, amended)[14] – realistically, *every* culture-laden nuance and stylistic effect on multiple levels can never be transferred – yet the interpreter may help the participants to communicate in real time *at least as well* as if there were no language barrier.[15] Good interpretation can therefore be an improvement on communicating in poor English, for example – at least for some kinds of speech (Reithofer 2013); we return to this in our closing discussion (TG-15).

Translation must therefore always fall short of telepathy, but go beyond language conversion.

All communication crosses cognitive barriers, so when a linguistic barrier is added, cognition and language are intertwined: to communicate on behalf of other people, the interpreter *negotiates a composite barrier that is both cognitive and linguistic*. To close the cognitive-linguistic (e.g. cultural) gaps between speakers and listeners, the interpreter must first know their languages and cultures, then close any residual cognitive gaps between *herself* and the participants by acquiring the necessary general, local and contextual knowledge and using it to infer and re-express their meanings. The route by which the interpreter covers this ground of exploration and inference is necessarily individual, so that (except for short stretches of completely frozen and formulaic language) no two interpreters (or translators) will ever produce identical output.

Thus, insofar as the interpreter *aims* to enable communication, but *must* reframe and reformulate because of language differences, these cognitive and linguistic processes inevitably merge in the interpreter's attempt to make the message transparent to the listener. Paradoxically, it is the asymmetry between languages and cultures that compels the interpreter – insofar as she has a communicative

14. ASTM *Standard Guide* (see footnote 2 above), Summary, 6.1.

15. Though even linguistically, the interpreter's audience may get a clearer and fuller message than other listeners when the speaker has a strong accent, which is 'decoded' by the interpreter.

goal – to 'optimize' the verbal communication globally to some extent, since on the one hand she cannot produce exact *linguistic* equivalents, and on the other she is tuned in to understanding the speaker, and – to a large extent inevitably, insofar as she knows their language and culture – projecting and adjusting to reception by her listeners. To translate literally is to risk miscommunication: an interpreter can have an impact, thus has responsibility and must use judgment like anyone else.

2.1.6 Language: crucial but not sufficient

Seleskovitch is said to have compared an interpreter's languages to the two hands of the concert pianist: knowing two languages is necessary but not sufficient for interpreting. An interpreter needs not just one ability (language) but four – L, K, S, P – integrated through training.

First, we need both general and local knowledge to understand what is meant in context. People who have been working together on a project don't spell out what they all already know,[16] so professional interpreters have to study the background of every meeting – the issues at stake, players, recent decisions taken and in-group terminology – which also requires knowledge about how the world works and the particular domain of the meeting, be it oil prices, fashion or recent developments in hacking. Many people 'know languages' well enough to discuss their *own* business and concerns, but rendering faithfully and precisely what other, unfamiliar people want to say, about what may only concern them, is another matter.

What interpreters actually do is both less magical and more complex than it seems. Computationally, the interpreting process is complex enough[17] that training human interpreters is still much easier than programming a computer to do it as reliably. Computers might store vast amounts of general and specialized knowledge, but the challenges to machine interpreting emerging in the near future are stubborn and familiar to artificial intelligence experts: how to mobilize the *relevant* knowledge to interpret real-time natural speech from the often opaque or confused words of a wide array of different speakers and almost instantly find appropriate formulations in another language, after making the *judgments* needed to mediate across projected cultural and cognitive gaps. We return to the role of technology as a complement or, as some believe, a possible future substitute for human interpreting, in our discussion of prospects for the profession (TG-15).

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16. This is well illustrated by Pinker (1994: 222–3) with a transcript of an Oval Office conversation from the Watergate Tapes.

17. As shown by transcript analysis (Lederer 1981; Setton 1999).

2.1.7 The interpreter as mediator

Interpreters bridge more than linguistic barriers (Jones 1998/2002: 4), and have always been acknowledged as mediators, not just transcoders (Hermann 1956/2002; Pöchhacker 2006b). This role has been strongly re-affirmed in recent literature (Katan 1999; Viaggio 2005/2006; al-Zahran 2007). However, 'mediate' and 'mediation' have a weaker and a stronger meaning (in English, at least):

> 1: *mediate*: to act as intermediary agent in bringing, effecting, or communicating (synonym: convey) or 'to transmit as intermediate mechanism or agency' [Merriam-Webster[18]]; to be a means of conveying' or 'form a link between' [Oxford Concise[19]]
> 2: *mediation*: 'active intercession to bring about reconciliation, agreement, settlement or compromise' [Merriam-Webster]; 'intervention in a dispute in order to resolve it; arbitration' [Oxford Concise]

Dictionary definitions can only capture one or two representative senses on the spectrum of a word's potential meanings: sense (1) does not help us much with practical problems that may arise when interpreting, while sense (2) goes well beyond what most people would see as the interpreter's default role (al-Zahran 2007: 152–3, 256; Pöchhacker 2008).

Translation, as we have seen, unconsciously and inevitably entails some cognitive and cultural mediation. Culture-specific references often surface more or less explicitly in speech, so that interpreters must inevitably make adjustments, often consciously, just to meet the *basic objective of letting each communicator understand what the other means to say*. Even linguistically faithful and accurate translation may leave room for potential misunderstandings (of which speakers and/or listeners may not be aware) that can be avoided by some simple deviation from a literal rendition. These adjustments may include paraphrasing, simplifying, abbreviating, omitting, summarizing, highlighting, explaining or shifting register; but such operations may be variously required, allowed, or encouraged (or proscribed, as in legal interpreting) according to circumstance and setting. The appropriate degree of cognitive and cultural mediation will therefore vary with the participants, topic and type of meeting. In some cases, such as the drafting of a treaty text by international officials, or a technical report among engineers who all read the same journals, the cultural gap to bridge may be minimal; in others, such as an encounter between an illiterate foreign asylum applicant and an educated

18. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mediate?show=0&t=1316755207 (Accessed July 29, 2015).

19. http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mediate?q=mediate (Accessed July 29, 2015).

and rule-bound official from two very different cultures, it may be very wide and require significant cognitive-linguistic bridging bordering on conciliation, i.e. a 'strong' form of mediation in which the interpreter would actively strive to help the parties reach an understanding or agreement.

One way to understand the range of situations that can arise and the options open to the interpreter is in terms of a continuum of optimization along which an interpreter's mediating role can move, as linguistic transfer is increasingly complemented by procedures to bridge cognitive and cultural gaps through adjustments to **form** (e.g. rhetorical improvements) or to **content** (e.g. annotations or explanations) or interventions to improve the **process** of communication, culminating in the more controversial functions of advocacy and arbitration. This scheme is presented in CC-5.8.4 and developed with illustrations in CC-10.4. The ability to judge when such adjustments are appropriate and implement them is a key determinant of professionalism (see below, 2.4), once more basic skills are solidly in place.

Good communication will be a natural by-product of good interpreting by default; but if core skills are missing, attempts to 'optimize' will be disastrously outweighed by message distortions and losses. Interpreters may also take or be given more or less freedom to optimize, from the 'cultural advisor' function expected by a trusting negotiator to the more constrained style of interpreting that is often preferred or indeed imposed by users in adversarial (e.g. judicial, but also some business and diplomatic) settings.

2.1.8 Mediation: neutral vs. affiliated roles

History is sadly replete with examples of interpreters who were mistrusted by their principals, and/or had their own agendas,[20] and with attempts to control or censor them. The emergence of a modern and at least self-regulated profession based in international organizations such as the UN has helped to create the image of a neutral, impartial (international conference) interpreter. However, historically and across different societies, this has not been the only model of the interpreter's role, and even today, many, perhaps the majority of all interpreters currently practising are probably employed by or in some way affiliated to one side in the encounter. The implications for role norms and neutrality are discussed in 10.3.

The interpreter's role and relationship with her users or principals obviously also depend on physical *presence, proximity*, and *interpreting mode*. Simultaneous interpreting lends itself to a more neutral role, consecutive to a more overtly mediating one.

20. see e.g. Kurz (1990a, 1990b).

In the next sections we will see how the different modes and settings of interpreting present different constraints, but also different opportunities for successfully mediating communication; we then go on to set out the core **competencies** interpreters need to fulfil this role.[21]

2.2 Modes of interpreting

Interpreting can be done in a variety of modes, including shorter or longer consecutive, simultaneous (SI) and simultaneous with text (SI-text), sight translation (ST); and whispered interpreting.

2.2.1 Consecutive interpreting

In *short consecutive (or dialogue) interpreting,* the interpreter renders short segments at a time, from a phrase or clause to a few sentences. Short consecutive is used to interpret dialogues, but also monologues, if the speaker is prepared (or prefers) to pause frequently, never going on for more than 2–3 sentences or about 30 seconds. In short consecutive, as the load on memory is light, the interpreter needs to takes only sparse notes, if at all. Short consecutive is probably the most widely used mode of interpreting as it is interactive, relatively natural, and the least technically demanding of the modes, though not necessarily the least tiring. It may be performed by highly skilled professional interpreters to facilitate communication at the highest level, such as between heads of state, where the highest standards of performance are expected and required; it is also used in court for witness testimony, where undetected infelicities could lead to miscarriages of justice.

Full (or long, or 'true') consecutive interpreting is typically done in passages of several minutes, with the help of a *note-taking system* that the interpreter has developed through training and practice. This service, usually expected of professional conference interpreters, allows speakers to develop several steps in a complex argument with illustrations, facts and figures, without being interrupted.

Consecutive is often said to be more accurate than simultaneous, but at least one study suggests that this belief 'deserves to be seriously challenged' (Gile 2001). Consecutive is not suited to discourse that is full of exotic polysyllabic technical terms (e.g. pharmaceuticals: 'Abacavir Sulfate, Lamivudine, phenoxybenzamine

21. Some useful formal definitions of the working modes of interpreting and conditions in which it is (optimally) performed are given, with additional references to relevant domestic codes, in the ASTM *Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services* (see note 2 above).

for pheochromocytoma….') or unfamiliar names, which cannot be abbreviated in notes, in contrast to SI, where such terms can at least be rapidly 'parroted'. On speech of normal density, however, consecutive affords the interpreter more of an opportunity to polish her product and perform 'optimization' as appropriate. It is also much easier in consecutive for the interpreter to consult the speaker when necessary, and for others to correct any errors.

There is no hard-and-fast dividing line between short and long consecutive; the distinction relates mainly to the interpreter's systematic use of notes to support her memory. In reality, the length of passages served up by speakers will tend to vary, so interpreters will frequently end up doing a hybrid of short(er) and long(er) consecutive. But as a trend, the length of passages for interpretation seems to have shortened: anything over 5–7 minutes is already quite rare in the real world, and passages of just 3 minutes' length are in some quarters already considered 'long'.

Consecutive is suited to small meetings in two (at most three) languages; it takes longer than simultaneous, but is easier to monitor and gives participants more time to watch their interlocutors' reaction and prepare their next move (see CC-5.1.2 for a fuller discussion).

In consecutive the interpreter is physically present and visible, thus drawing immediate attention to her status in the meeting, and putting greater pressure on her than in SI to project and establish her role, and to communicate clearly and effectively.

Because of the more spectacular nature of SI to the lay observer, 'simultaneous interpreting' is widely but wrongly used as a synonym of 'conference interpreting' (a term hardly used outside the profession). But to this day and worldwide, meetings of a type and size suited to consecutive, though less visible to statistics, are far more numerous than those where SI is provided, including in high-profile settings, from international diplomacy to private business. Most conference interpreters are now graduates of programmes where they acquire full consecutive skills as part of their training (though they may become rusty in SI-dominant market sectors).

2.2.2 Simultaneous interpreting

In *Simultaneous Interpreting (SI),* interpreters render speeches in real time, with a lag of just a few seconds, from soundproof booths, using microphones, headphones and a multi-channel SI installation. SI is now the dominant mode in mainstream international conference interpreting. Several months of intensive training are usually needed to acquire basic SI skills, even for qualified students who have mastered consecutive. SI is very cognitively demanding and is therefore performed by teams of interpreters, who take turns in 20–30 minute shifts.

SI presents special difficulties when – as is now increasingly common – speeches are read out from text, which may be provided to interpreters in advance, but often is not. Slides, videos or PowerPoint presentations are also much more common adjuncts to speeches than in the past, but may or may not make interpreting easier. In this book, we use the term '**free SI**' to refer to the classic situation where the speech is delivered extemporaneously without text or other supporting (or distracting) channels, and '**SI-text**' when a text is provided to the interpreter in advance. More complex, 'mixed-media' tasks, including SI from text that is read but not provided, are discussed as 'hazards' in CC/TG-9.

Relay SI (CC-9.2.3.3) is used when no interpreter is available to interpret directly between a given pair of languages. For example, in a meeting with SI provided in Korean and several European languages, Korean might be interpreted directly only into English (the 'pivot' language), with the other booths then 'taking relay' from the Korean-English interpreter, into French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, etc. Even double relay is sometimes necessary, notably at the EU with its 24 official languages (at the time of writing) – for example, Finnish to Swedish to English to Slovakian.

2.2.3 Sight translation

During a meeting otherwise interpreted in consecutive, principals may wish to present a written text, such as a letter, preliminary draft of a motion, press release; and in some cases, a speaker may have an entire written speech prepared for oral delivery. Users will appreciate the interpreter's ability to produce a *fluent oral translation* of a text more or less impromptu, after hearing it read first by the speaker, or even after just one quick silent reading or a few moments of preparation. This skill takes practice, and is traditionally taught both as a real-life task and, with variations, as a pedagogically beneficial exercise to combat linguistic interference or to prepare for SI and SI-text (CC-4.3.2; CC-6; CC-8.2.3.1).

2.2.4 Informal and makeshift arrangements

2.2.4.1 *Whispered interpreting ('chuchotage')*

This is a form of improvised SI without equipment, in which the interpreter sits behind or to one side of one (or more) participants and whispers the interpretation. It is less than optimal, for obvious reasons – noise, voice-ear interference, distractions, fatigue, and typically, the lack of a partner to help. Depending on conditions, it may be possible to provide a complete and reliable interpretation for a time, but sometimes only a summary is possible.

However, in real life, whispering is quite common, since it may be the only way of providing a running account of proceedings to a few speakers of a particular language without slowing down the meeting, if attendees are not willing to tolerate the disruption of consecutive, and if simultaneous equipment is not available, or will not fit into the meeting room, or there are not enough booths to cover all the languages needing interpretation.

Save in these exceptional circumstances and for short periods of time, whispered interpretation is discouraged for reasons of quality; and if it is to be performed for more than a half-hour or so, more than one interpreter is required, to take turns (see CC-10.2 for the minimum working conditions needed for satisfactory interpreting).

2.2.4.2 *'Bidule' interpreting*

This is also not a distinct mode, but refers to interpreting with minimal portable equipment consisting of a microphone for the interpreter and headphones for users. The French term *bidule* ('gizmo') reflects its poor reputation among interpreters (see CC-11.2.2.5).

When appropriately used, such equipment – also known as a 'tour guide' system – is suitable for short consecutive in noisy environments, e.g. taking a group through a factory, temple or a shopping mall on a guided tour. The interpreter stays close to the guide or host, doing short consecutive every sentence or two into a microphone for tour group members who hear the interpreter's voice through individual headphones, within a certain range.

However, again, the use of this system is problematic when used to provide ersatz SI without booths (usually to cut costs), for obvious reasons of inadequate sound quality and acoustic isolation – prerequisites for real SI – and consequent impact on quality and interpreter fatigue,[22] not to mention the voice of the interpreter distracting listeners who are not using the interpretation.

2.2.5 Modes: mix and distribution

According to AIIC[23] statistics (Neff 2014), 85.2% of days worked by its members in 2010 were in SI mode (96% for staff interpreters), compared to only 6.9% in short or long consecutive, and 5.6% whispering or ex-booth (*bidule*) SI. (Note that these statistics are valid only for AIIC).

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22. http://aiic.net/glossary/default.cfm?ID=1

23. AIIC: International Association of Conference Interpreters; see CC-2, Appendix A.

In real life there may be mixtures and variants of these forms – half whispering, half noting; sight translation of a written speech with note-taking/consecutive for the speaker's departures; etc. But the formalization of the profession, and the need to define tasks clearly in training programmes, favours crystallization into these separate modes, each defined by specific 'craft' conventions, discouraging makeshift arrangements which make for poor results, such as whispering or *bidule* interpreting when not strictly necessary. The professional who has mastered each of the three basic modes of interpreting – consecutive, simultaneous, and sight translation – in their classic forms should have no problem adapting to each situation.

These skills do not come easily. In full consecutive, the interpreter must be able to capture and render the entirety of a speaker's message over several minutes. In free SI, the interpreter must listen, speak clearly, idiomatically and accurately in another language and monitor her own speech all at the same time; in SI-text, she must be able to use the text for items or passages which are especially difficult to catch if read out fast (as is often the case), while 'checking against delivery' and being alert to additions, omissions and revisions of words, sentences or whole paragraphs and pages, to be sure to render only (and all of) what the speaker actually says. None of this is feasible without wide general knowledge, fluent and flexible language abilities, and progressive training over at least a year (usually two, sometimes three), including hundreds of hours of practice to integrate these skills and be ready to handle a wide range of topics and speaking styles.

2.3 Diversity in interpreting

The diversity of our profession is reflected not only in the subject matter of the exchanges that go through interpreters today, but also in wide variations of setting, quality standards, working conditions and user expectations, as well as in the interpreters' status, remuneration, qualifications and degree of professionalization. This has prompted some to question whether interpreters can all really be considered to share the same occupation, or whether it is necessary to classify interpreting into different branches.

Various nomenclatures have been tried to classify interpreting. Pöchhacker (2004) suggests two major criteria:

i. by social context and institutional setting: '*inter-social*' interpreting is done between societies or nations, as in trade talks (a 'primeval form of business interpreting'), diplomacy or military interpreting; '*intra-social*' interpreting is done within a multilingual society, and would cover most community interpreting as well as SI for a bilingual national parliament.

ii. by situational 'constellations' or 'formats of action', along a continuum between two prototypes: the **multilateral conference** (conference interpreting) and the **face-to-face dialogue** that is more typical of 'community-based' or public service interpreting (PSI), e.g. medical, hospital, legal for hearings and depositions – a sphere that has vastly expanded since the emergence of the welfare state and measures to allow minorities better access to their rights within societies. (Pöchhacker 2004: 13–23)

The second of these distinctions seems more relevant to distinguish settings with markedly different characteristics for training purposes. Besides, as Pöchhacker points out, some important settings fit less neatly into this typology, or are hybrids – such as media interpreting, especially on TV, which may be intra- or inter-social, and either spoken, for foreign talk show guests, or signed, for deaf viewers; or courtroom interpreting, which is done both 'intra-socially' in local or national jurisdictions (usually in short consecutive), and at international tribunals (usually in SI).

Other approaches classify interpreters by the *mode* they offer ('dialogue interpreter', 'consecutive interpreter', 'simultaneous interpreter'); or by their level of competence or status, for example 'paraprofessional interpreter', 'professional interpreter', 'conference interpreter' and 'senior conference interpreter', as in the NAATI accreditation scheme;[24] or by the interpreter's seniority and expertise, as in Japan where interpreters are ranked by agencies as (in ascending order) Level C, B, A, or S, corresponding quite closely to the NAATI scheme and in this case, reflected in the fee scale.

Another common approach explicitly differentiates the practice of interpreting by domain and/or setting.

2.3.1 Domains and settings

The labels commonly used to differentiate interpreting tasks by domain (subject-matter) and/or setting – community, court, conference, etc. – appear superficially to correspond to particular mixes of technical, cognitive, linguistic and interpersonal skills, and to somewhat different interpreter roles or user expectations. We adopt them here for taxonomical convenience, but for training purposes they remain fuzzy-edged, and ultimately, inadequate. Not surprisingly for a social phenomenon, the range of parameters involved would make a detailed classification of interpreter-mediated events extremely complex, as shown by Alexieva (1997: 169) and Mikkelson (2010, q.v. for a fuller discussion).

24. NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) is the Australian national standards and accreditation body for translators and interpreters.

We will argue that all forms and types of interpreting practice depend on some common competencies – language, knowledge, skills and professionalism ('LKSP'), see 2.4 below – but in different configurations or skillsets, justifying largely separate training for sectors such as community, court and conference interpreting. Within each of these sectors, training can cover specializations with targeted LKSP requirements (e.g. healthcare within community interpreting). This book focuses on training in the conference interpreting skillset broadly defined, including for intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations and European Union, but also in high-level business, diplomatic, parliamentary and media settings. We leave it to trainers of interpreters in other settings/domains to judge and adapt our approach as necessary and appropriate.

For more extensive material on interpreting in the other specialized domains and settings, see Further reading at the end of this chapter.

2.3.1.1 *'Natural' and improvised interpreting*

Interpreting has of course always existed, and will continue to exist, in myriad forms and situations with no predetermined 'rules of engagement'. In these situations, when the relative status and relationships of the communicators are uneven or not clearly defined, or when they have little or no experience of language mediation, the interpreter's role may be fluid, and she may be called upon to mediate in various different ways or take initiatives according to circumstances – for example in deciding when to interrupt (turn-taking), or to provide explanation on cultural specificities – in short, to exercise social and human skills in the interests of effective communication and a satisfactory outcome for both parties, in various discretionary ways. Typically users of this service in such situations may have no choice – often for economic reasons – but to use an untrained or 'natural' interpreter (Harris 1992), or may prefer to, for reasons of their own (for example, patients who may prefer the help of a relative – even a child – to the services of the hospital interpreter; see e.g. Edwards et al. 2005). The improvised nature of such encounters means that users often have to take the interpreter's qualifications as they find them (although stricter norms and standards have been introduced in some countries).

In relatively *urgent or improvised* situations, flexibility and discretion may indeed be more important than meeting certain criteria of technical competence expected in a conference – if someone is helping to save a life, no-one cares much about her grammar or accent, and any interruption to clarify a term and communicate vital information between doctor and patient would be not just tolerated, but expected.

'*Liaison*' or '*escort*' *interpreting* are terms sometimes used to describe linguistic support for simple transactions like shopping or making travel arrangements, usually in 'dialogue' (short consecutive) mode. This work may call for a difficult balance of tact and efficiency, but with less expectation of precision or specialized knowledge (except in the case of some tour guides).

For present purposes, the remaining categories imply some form of employment agreement and remuneration, and tasks that require structured training as well as a code of professional ethics and standards. With the exception of conference interpreting, which is the authors' area of expertise and the main focus of this book, the following sketches rely on the literature and in some cases, our specialized informants. For more details, readers are referred to the more authoritative references provided.

2.3.1.2 *Community-based and public service[25] interpreting (PSI)*

These terms broadly refer to interpreting services to facilitate communication between public service personnel (medical and social services, law enforcement, etc.) and members of linguistic minorities in the community. The most common format is short or dialogue consecutive, with some whispering (Corsellis 2008: 4–5). Typical assignments might include mediating between a recent immigrant and a job counsellor, between hospital staff and the family of an uninsured terminal patient, or between the police and a witness, suspect or victim.

These situations typically test the interpreter's understanding of ethics and role (CC-10.3) more severely than an international technical conference, since they often involve at least one party – applicant, patient and family, or victim – whose personal, even critical interests (medical, financial) are at stake, in contrast to the typical conference situation in which participants are acting indirectly, and usually more dispassionately, on behalf of a collective such as a nation, a trade association or a business corporation. Interpreters working in community situations are also likely to meet more cultural diversity than conference interpreters.

In jurisdictions where professionalization of PSI or community interpreting is being sought, authorities are searching for a better definition of the interpreter's role, and in particular to delineate the extent to which they should (be permitted or encouraged to) function as 'strong' mediators and advocates.[26] As Corsellis (2008: 6) explains:

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25. This term is more commonly used in the UK.

26. On optimization and 'stronger' mediation, see CC-5.8.4 and CC-10.4.

> The role of the public service interpreter is still under debate in some countries and contexts. Some say that public service interpreters (PSIs) should restrict their role to transferring the meaning of messages, while others would have them also give advice and opinion and take on additional tasks. Some say that PSIs should remain impartial, while others say that they should be on the side of the other-language speaker and act as advocates of their cause.

Corsellis lists instances "in which public service interpreters, *in contrast to other types of interpreters* [emphasis added], will be required to intervene in order to preserve the integrity of communication: […] to clarify what they have been asked to interpret; or ask for accommodation for the interpreting process; to alert the participants to any perceived non-comprehension by one or more of them, despite accurate interpreting; and to alert the participants to a possible missed cultural inference" (2005: 167). She adds that "the interpreters interpret subsequent explanations or advice but do not give them themselves". This prescription also seems to cover the first three types of optimization in our own continuum (form, content and process – 2.3.3; CC-5.8.4 – but to stop short of the last ('strong' mediation). In other words, *pace* Corsellis, this is not so different from the latitude allowed to (or expected of) the consecutive conference interpreter in small, informal and interactive meetings.

Healthcare or medical interpreting involves some domain-specific ethical principles (such as priority to the patient's interests) that may often require a more proactive interpreter role, including *advocacy* (CC-10.4.2). It also requires specialized knowledge of healthcare and medical terminology. Professionalization of this sector, long overdue, is now underway in some countries, with new codes of practice addressing these issues (Bancroft 2005: 39; see also Further reading).

2.3.1.3 *Business and in-house interpreting*

'Business interpreting' is one of the vaguer genre labels used in classifications of interpreting. The prototype event would be a discussion between potential partners in a business project or parties to a deal – either individuals or small groups – typically representing private-sector entities. 'Business interpreting' may be performed by either in-house or freelance personnel; the former may have more knowledge relevant to their organization, but freelancers may have a higher level of interpreting skills (for example, in full consecutive).

'In-house' interpreters are typically in the full-time employ of an organization, private or public (e.g. a government department), which calls on them to interpret for meetings with outside organizations or individuals, or between speakers of different languages within their own organization (a big multinational, for example). They may also have other job duties and broader responsibilities beyond interpreting. The most common mode in business and in-house interpreting is consecutive (short and long), and subject matter is focused on the affairs of the organizations concerned.

In terms of *role*, as already explained in 2.1.8 above, business interpreters (like diplomatic interpreters, see below), whether freelance or in-house, may be asked to give their employers off-line linguistic or cultural commentary and analysis of parts of the exchange, or the other negotiator's position.

Staff interpreters in intergovernmental organizations, parliaments and international tribunals do not quite fit into this category. They interpret (mostly in SI) at meetings organized or hosted by their employers, are mostly trained conference interpreters (see below), provide no advice, advocacy or strong mediation, and are otherwise assumed to observe norms of complete impartiality and neutrality – which are rarely if ever tested, since the meetings do not usually involve their employer as a party to a dispute.

2.3.1.4 *Judicial, courtroom and legal interpreting*

Legal subject matter increasingly pervades all international discourse, but judicial or legal interpreting spans a range of more or less formal situations in which the interpreter is serving the judicial system, at local, national or international level, from police interviews through witness depositions to court proceedings, criminal or civil. These functions are currently performed by interpreters with varying levels of qualification, from untrained volunteers (in jurisdictions where suspects or defendants' linguistic rights are not guaranteed, or for rare languages) to fully-trained conference interpreters with specialized legal knowledge, in international tribunals and some national and local courts.

In *monolingual courts*, such as in the US, trials are conducted in the national language only. The judge and the lawyers all speak in that language throughout, and the proceedings are documented by a court reporter in that language only. 'Proceedings interpreting' is provided, usually in simultaneous whispering mode, to any party (in particular the accused) who does not understand the language of the court, but it is not checked for accuracy and does not enter the record. In 'witness interpreting', a court interpreter renders questions and answers in consecutive mode (usually short or dialogue) and it is the interpreter's rendition of the witness's testimony – not the original – that is transcribed and enters the official record of the trial.[27]

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27. These different procedures may therefore result in different standards of accuracy in these two kinds of interpreting (Mikkelson 1998, 1999), hence a *de facto* dilution of neutrality. The fact that only the interpretation is transcribed into the trial record also provides a strong argument for the rule that a minimum of two interpreters are needed to provide service, allowing for monitoring and correction, when necessary, of the interpretation in real time.

In *multilingual tribunals*, both criminal (such as Nuremberg, and today the ICTY,[28] ICC[29] or STL,[30] all at the Hague) and civil (European Court of Justice [ECJ]), judge(s) and lawyers may themselves speak several different languages, and interpretation is provided and relied upon throughout all aspects of court procedure, including testimony, legal arguments, and in the ICJ,[31] ICC and ICTY (*inter alia*), also for judges' deliberations. Interpretation is usually done simultaneously in booths by trained conference interpreters. Technology has made its appearance in these courts, with an 'E-court' system flashing a live transcript of proceedings onto computer screens visible to all participants, and (at the ICC and STL) witnesses often examined by videolink, with remote SI (CC-9.4.2 and Further reading).

The adversarial context: impact on norms

The stakes for parties to litigation or criminal proceedings create a particular tension, and the adversarial and formalized judicial context may entail a suspension of the 'Cooperative Principle' (Grice 1975) that otherwise operates by default in human communication. Unlike conference interpreting, where norms of role, neutrality and fidelity have been conventionally shaped both by the profession and by different types of client entities (multilateral or bilateral: see CC-10.3.3), "the role of the court interpreter [in the US and many other countries], has been *defined by the legal profession* in light of important precepts of the adversarial justice system" (Mikkelson 2008, our emphasis; see also Morris 1995, 1999).

One such precept is that the court must be able to observe, experience and evaluate the testimony of the non-English-speaking accused or witness in exactly the same way as one who speaks English.

Certainly research has shown that "pragmatic alterations made by the interpreter" – adjustments of formality, politeness or hedging – can affect listeners' perceptions of a witness' "convincingness, truthfulness, intelligence, and competence" (Berk-Seligson 1990/2002: 196). Court interpreters are thus not only forbidden any attempt at advocacy (that role is already taken) but also any (communicative) 'optimization' (CC-5.8.4; CC-10.4), either by adjustments of content (omissions of

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28. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; proceedings are mostly in English French and variants of BCS (Bosnia/Croatian/Serbian).

29. International Criminal Court: languages may change with each case, sometimes making it difficult to find skilled interpreters, which may slow down the proceedings (Johnson blog (*The Economist*, April 4, 2013). http://www.economist.com/blogs/johnson/2013/04/languages-diplomacy (Accessed December 8, 2015)).

30. Special Tribunal for Lebanon (English, French, Arabic).

31. ICJ: The International Court of Justice at The Hague is the primary judicial branch of the United Nations.

redundancies or repetitions, explanation or clarification of culturally marked expressions, etc.), or even any of the purely formal embellishments that are expected or welcomed in most other settings; and indeed are often instructed by judges to provide a 'verbatim' interpretation (Mikkelson 2008).[32] According to González et al. (1991/2012), court interpreters must conserve in their target language version not only the speaker's message, register and tone, but "every single element of information that was contained in the source language", including, inter alia, all of the speaker's false starts, hesitations, repetitions, mistakes, and fragmentary, vague, incoherent or nonsensical utterances. The interpreter is instructed to "preserve the ambiguities and nuances of the speaker, without any editing" and "never [to] add anything or elaborate […], not even for the sake of clarifying" (ibid.: 475 ff.). Moreover, court interpreters are expected to take note of all non-verbal elements, including "posture, proximity, facial expressions, and gestures" and "to account for each and every one of them in the TL version in order to conserve the meaning of the original and provide a precise legal equivalent" (ibid.).

Practising court interpreters take pride in the pursuit of this meticulous and comprehensive fidelity, but are aware that the requirement for 'verbatim' translation cannot be taken literally, particular when it distorts the meaning of the source language (Hewitt et al. 1995: 200, cited in Mikkelson 2008). Mikkelson recognizes this "dichotomy between the need for interpreter neutrality in an adversarial setting and the limitations this imposes on their ability to convey the full meaning of culture-bound terms" and suggests guidelines "for navigating the treacherous waters between the Scylla of verbatim interpretation and the Charybdis of interpreter advocacy" (2008 ibid.); however,

> Unfortunately, this caveat seems to be lost on a large number of monolingual judges and attorneys who lack sufficient understanding of linguistic theory and interlingual message transfer. They assume that interpreting is a mechanical process requiring automatic responses rather than judgment or discernment, and they compare the interpreter to a phonograph, a transmission belt, and other mechanical devices (Morris 1999). This misconception of interpreting creates a moral dilemma for judiciary interpreters, as they are bound by their code of ethics to be faithful to the intended meaning of the message while at the same time the judge instructs them to "just translate verbatim".
>
> (Morris 1995, cited in Mikkelson 2008: 82)

While courts would ideally prefer to have the monopoly on *inference*, the professional interpreter knows that some interpretation (including inference) is intrinsic to all understanding (see 2.1.4 above), and that the nature of languages makes it impossible *not* to supply missing information at some level in the process of

32. http://www.acebo.com/papers/evolve.htm. (Accessed April 2, 2013).

translation, merely to meet the basic objective of letting each communicator understand what the other means to say (2.1.7). More realistically, then, as suggested by Eric Bishop (p.c.), the court interpreter must be "a gatekeeper of 'first inference' that originates in the domain s/he is responsible for"; but s/he must not supply missing information or even complete a witness's unfinished sentence. However, research suggests significant differences between individual judges, and perhaps jurisdictions, in their preferences and their expectations of interpreters.[33]

The professionalization of court interpreting is a welcome and overdue development that is contributing to realizing the rights – long recognized in principle but neglected in practice – of accused and litigants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and abilities to those of the courts or other judicial authorities. However, before these rights can be guaranteed in practice even in the most enlightened and advanced jurisdictions, an extension of training will be needed both in skills (note-taking and SI) and a wider range of languages, with corresponding certification, in a partnership between the interpreting and legal professions, as well as improved working conditions (notably team strengths, booths and SI equipment).

For more on court and judicial interpreting and on the court interpreter's difficult role, and for guidelines on training, the reader is referred to Further reading at the end of this chapter, notably to the authoritative volumes of González et al. (1991/2012), and Mikkelson's (2008) discussion of evolving standards.

2.3.1.5 *Military and conflict interpreting*

Military interpreting covers perhaps the widest range of situations on the spectrum between routine and crisis, and between the highest and lowest 'profiles': from everyday, formalized talks within multilateral alliances like NATO, through historic crisis aversion or truce negotiations, or arms deals, to the harrowing in-theatre missions or prisoner interrogations that are often handled by ad hoc interpreters – disparagingly known as 'terps' to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent times – who enjoy little or no status or protection. In these situations the interpreter usually has little choice about whether or how to try to mediate, is just as likely to be used in the interests of one side as to be able to contribute to conflict resolution, and cannot always count on the trust of his 'clients'. Interpreters serving in these different settings will also typically have different skillsets – conference

33. A majority of 53 surveyed legal professionals surveyed by Kelly (2000) were against a cultural mediation role for the interpreter; but Kadrić (2001) found that as many as 85% of local court judges in Vienna expected the interpreter to explain cultural references for the court, and were quite accepting of tasks such as simplifying the judge's utterances and explaining legal language. National variations in this respect can also be attributed to different legal cultures.

interpreting for NATO (for example), diplomatic interpreting for formal bilateral military talks, and a very unique form of 'liaison' service, often with minimal training, for personnel with troops on the ground.

Whether employed directly as soldiers with specialized duties (until recently, usually as officers), or hired by private civilian contractors as in recent practice, military interpreters or 'language specialists' are the canonical example of the 'attached' or aligned interpreter, working for one side and typically also performing intelligence and/or propaganda functions. Enlisted personnel receive some training in dedicated and well-funded army programmes,[34] may develop an 'esprit de corps' within the establishment,[35] but will be 'soldiers before translators'.[36] However, most interpretation services in conflict zones are provided by contract interpreters – typically, either recent immigrants to the home country who are native speakers of the target language (Allen 2012), or foreign nationals hired locally – who are generally the most exposed to physical danger, or to retribution from locals who may see them as mercenaries or collaborators.

Conflict situations range from armed combat through peace-making and peacekeeping. 'Humanitarian' field interpreters are among the least recognized of all conflict zone language personnel, and the most isolated, lacking both skills and ethics training, and their job is often severely hampered by the communication problems that plague post-conflict peacemaking and humanitarian aid (ibid.; Moser-Mercer and Bali 2008). As in other areas, courses are being developed, as well as codes of practice – despite the obvious challenges – to guide users and interpreters working in these settings.[37]

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34. See Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) website at http://www.dliflc.edu/ (Accessed December 8, 2015).

35. In France, past and present 'Liaison and Reserve Interpreter Officers' belong to an Association with 300 members covering 30 languages, and some of the few in active service are still said to sport buttons bearing the sphinx symbol originally assigned to their predecessors by Napoleon, who first formalized the function within the Army for his Egyptian campaign. (See https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpr%C3%A8te_militaire_en_France Accessed December 8, 2015.)

36. Recruitment video for US Army '09 Lima' programme.

37. E.g. the 'InZone' programme developed at ETI (Geneva) in partnership with the Red Cross, a mainly online programme adapted for use by interpreters in isolated situations (Moser-Mercer and Bali 2008). http://inzone.unige.ch (Accessed January 16, 2016).

A Field Guide developed by Red T, AIIC and FIT (International Federation of Translators) is available at http://ww1.prweb.com/prfiles/2012/03/16/9292503/T-I_Field_Guide_2012.pdf (Accessed August 6, 2012).

2.3.1.6 *Conference interpreting*

Conference interpreting began in the late 19th century with the first international conferences, and emerged as a distinct and highly organized branch of the profession with the advent of simultaneous interpretation and the rise of the international institutions after the Second World War. This has traditionally been the most formalized and 'high level' branch of interpreting, and the most codified or conventionalized in terms of training, access to the profession, language classification, working conditions and procedures, ethics and professional standards, and the expectations of users. Conference interpreters at first worked mainly in intergovernmental bodies (like the UN and EU) with their own formalized procedures for meeting, voting and so on; then, as demand for the service spread, in a wide range of public or private-sector settings, with procedures often modeled on these international bodies.[38] Over the past sixty years these interpreters have worked largely within a framework negotiated between these organizations and conference interpreters' own professional association, AIIC, which sets standards for the practice of the profession and also publishes research and guidelines on training (see Appendix A).

Conference interpreting uniquely entails mastery of the simultaneous mode (SI), but also traditionally includes 'true' long consecutive, and requires a high level of language proficiency, education and technical skills (and like all interpreting, professionalism). This advanced skillset is now in much wider demand: conference interpreting "has [now] spread far beyond multilateral diplomacy to virtually any field of activity involving communication and exchange across linguistic boundaries" (Pöchhacker 2004: 15). Recent statistics[39] suggest that intergovernmental organizations account for only about half of all AIIC conference interpreters' work in Europe (the heartland of traditional conference interpreting), and just 37% in North America, 30% in Asia-Pacific and 20% in Latin America, with private sector meetings and other kinds of assignments making up the rest.

Given the rapid spread of conference interpreting beyond the realm of intergovernmental conferences, the term has to some extent become a misnomer, with the profession today being distinguished not by the setting in which it is practised,

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38. Interpretation is also routinely provided in parliaments and other government bodies in bilingual or multilingual nations such as Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Cameroon or the new South Africa.

39. Source: AIIC Statistical Report for 2009. The 2012 report (Neff 2014) does not provide the same explicit breakdown, but if anything the private sector share of work seems to be increasing. (Some caution is needed with these categories, however: for example, the World Bank is classified as a private market employer. The private-sector share of the market would probably be larger if non-AIIC interpreters were included).

but rather by two criteria: "its modes ([full] consecutive and simultaneous), and its high performance level" (Gile 2004: 40).

A conference interpreter's range of assignments may be very wide. As we can see from the sample calendar in Appendix B to this chapter, even a staff interpreter in a relatively specialized international organization must deal with a rich variety of subject matter. A freelance conference interpreter's work, however, will also span different settings with somewhat different cultures and conventions. For example, in the space of just one or two months, she might well work in SI mode at a United Nations meeting (traditional 'conference interpreting'), in long consecutive at a technical academic seminar, in short consecutive on a ministerial visit ('diplomatic interpreting'), and then accompany a CEO on a business tour, handling everything from informal dinner conversation ('dialogue interpreting') to contract negotiations ('business interpreting') and a televised press conference ('media interpreting') that starts in simultaneous and then switches to consecutive, in passages of varying lengths, for the Q&A. That same interpreter might then receive an offer to work the next month for an international tribunal ('court interpreting'), in a combination of whispering and consecutive, where a markedly different power balance will prevail at different stages of the proceedings (legal arguments and panel deliberations vs. cross-examination of witnesses). As such, **versatility** is a highly desirable quality in freelance conference interpreters today, especially those who are based far away from the traditional centers of formal multilateral diplomacy and international organizations.

In traditional conference interpreting, there is comparatively little need for negotiation of basic conditions, roles and expectations, and little scope or call for commentary or advocacy on the interpreter's part; but trained conference interpreters will find more variation when they work outside these traditional settings.

The skillset of a conference interpreter is distinguished by a number of features: the time pressures and associated cognitive constraints of its dominant mode, SI; the density and variety of information exchanged at meetings that a practitioner (freelance, especially) will handle in the course of a month or a year; the high formal expectations of users; and a relatively high degree of professional independence, autonomy and internal solidarity.

In the modern world, conference interpreters need an extended skillset to meet the needs of a much wider variety of settings than the traditional international conference, including parliamentary interpreting, media/broadcast interpreting, diplomatic or high-level business interpreting and, particularly in international tribunals, court interpreting. Like court interpreters, they must handle a wide spectrum of discourse, from free and colloquial discussion to the reciting of prepared text in rigid and formal registers, requiring technique ranging from standard interpreting to more rigid 'oral translation' (Shermet 2012; see CC-8.5.4).

This book is specifically about how to train conference interpreters to meet this standard, and is intended to be adaptable, by instructors with the appropriate specializations, to cover all these different applications of conference interpreting in contemporary practice.

2.3.1.7 *Diplomatic interpreting*

> When you travel, you will be crowded by top aides elbowing one another to be allowed into meetings. Ironically, the one person essential to have in the room may not be an official advisor at all but your interpreter. The interpreter plays a pivotal role, because negotiations demand precision in language and often some degree of personal warmth. An interpreter's job, therefore, goes well beyond the literal translation of words; he must convey the negotiator's desired emphasis, nuance, and tone. This is possible only if he has a sophisticated knowledge of the subjects under discussion. …an interpreter who knows not only the language but also the politics, personalities, and culture of a particular situation can be a unique asset.
> (Madeleine Albright, *Memo to the President*, 2008: 71)

Diplomatic interpreters are typically employed by the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent) to interpret for meetings between leaders, officials and diplomats of their own government and their foreign interlocutors. In some countries (e.g. China), diplomatic interpreters are always civil servants, but elsewhere (e.g. Canada, US, France), they may also be accredited freelance conference interpreters.

The classic mode of diplomatic interpreting is full consecutive, which is still employed at many formal bilateral meetings. Indeed, the standard consecutive note-taking technique (CC-5.4) was developed in the first half of the 20th century by interpreters working in diplomatic settings. As the language of diplomacy is 'often formal, well-considered and carefully spoken' (Lei 2006: 157), and the national interest and image is potentially at stake, interpreting in this setting places a premium on 'accurate, complete and high-quality expression' (ibid.).

Diplomatic interpreters (like military interpreters, and 'in-house' business interpreters) are not neutral, impartial third parties, but have a clear affiliation.[40] In formal bilateral meetings, it is conventional protocol for diplomatic interpreters to interpret only the remarks made by 'their' side, into the language of the other side.[41] (This set-up, routinely applied in consecutive, may even carry over into

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40. In the PRC tradition of diplomatic interpreting in particular, much emphasis is laid on political awareness and the need for diplomatic interpreters to be "mindful of the political sensitivities of the Chinese government or leadership" (Guo 2006: 136 and ff.).

41. If one side has failed to bring an interpreter, the other side will provide bidirectional interpreting as a courtesy – but parties will often remain wary of relying on the other side's interpreter, especially at sensitive talks or meetings of high-ranking officials.

simultaneous interpreting when it is used at high-level bilateral meetings.) This means that in non-immigrant countries, most diplomatic interpreting is from the interpreter's A language into her B language (see 2.6.1 below).

In addition to formal consecutive or SI at political talks, negotiations and press conferences, a diplomatic interpreter's assignments will certainly extend into dinners, receptions, ceremonies, tours, and site visits. When on 'escort' duty in particular – shadowing a dignitary or a delegation throughout an incoming or foreign visit – diplomatic interpreters can expect to interpret over the widest imaginable range of topics and settings, making use of informal 'short' consecutive, whispering, as well as other kinds of mediation and diplomatic skills. Such escort work can be 'strenuous but very rewarding' (Obst 2010: 172), with opportunities for extended, in-depth contact with personalities, issues and locations (ibid.: 171–199).

History testifies that "high-level, experienced [diplomatic] interpreters exert a certain power […;] with judicious intervention, they can help clients avoid otherwise costly blunders" (Roland 1999: 4). In some national traditions, high-level diplomatic interpreting may be viewed as a branch of conference interpreting, as its practitioners tend to be graduates of professional conference interpreting schools who work in both full consecutive and simultaneous to a very high performance standard, and for whom interpreting is a lifelong career. But in other traditions, diplomatic interpreting may be an entry-level duty for junior diplomats who are selected for their language skills from among the foreign ministry's new recruits and given several months of in-house training (mostly in consecutive). They will work for a time as interpreters but can expect ultimately to be transferred to other, more 'substantive' duties within the ministry – perhaps one day to become ambassador, or even foreign minister.

High-level business interpreting – for example, for the chairman or CEO of a large multinational corporation on a international visit including high-stakes negotiations, press conferences, etc. – is very similar to diplomatic interpreting, and thus also falls within the modern extended scope of the 'conference interpreting' skillset addressed in this book.

2.3.1.8 *Broadcast and media interpreting*

Broadcast or media interpreting is a highly specialized, high-exposure branch of the profession. In this application, interpreters perform SI live for television or radio. Typically, they are hired by local media outlets and carry out the interpretation in the local studio, far from the actual event and without access to information, speakers or scripts. Here, in stark contrast to legal settings, 'quality' is evaluated mainly in terms of audience impact, as judged by network chiefs with their eye on the ratings. Emphasis is therefore placed on speed and tempo and a lively and engaging voice at the expense of detail, and in some cases, of accuracy (Straniero

Sergio 2003). As an additional constraint, interpreters may have to be gender-matched to speakers, causing an uneven workload. The speed and complexity of the input may be staggering, calling for strategies more geared to sheer survival than are needed in most conference interpreting situations.

Amato and Mack (2011) describe the harrowing experience of interpreting Oscar Night on Italian TV (CC-9.4.1), in which interpreters must keep track of a bewildering array of audio inputs, including official and 'oversound' speakers and other occasional, off-mike comments (with music and sound effects) and various visual inputs including video clips, subtitles and other screen captions, as well as the speakers' body language – not forgetting the last-minute 'script' of the evening, which may or may not be followed.

On TV and radio, professional broadcasters are trained to simulate spontaneous speech, but the material is often scripted. News reports in particular are far too fast and dense for unprepared simultaneous interpretation, but acceptable quality may be achieved with a system of short alternating turns in which interpreters preview the next segment (as in Japan).

Writing on the AIIC website, Tsuruta and Buck (2012) confirm that the skillset needed for modern TV interpreting includes many elements from other professions, notably journalism (preparation, including sometimes writing one's own script as part of a team), acting (voice quality), 'localization' (cultural and cognitive adaptation to the audience), media marketing ('selling the story', ibid.) and even some 'techie' skills (audio engineering, computing for voice-over work), as well as extra agility needed for close synchronization with the speaker (ideally, even finishing first…). Buck considers his job 'more like that of a journalist with an eye and ear for language and cultural differences.'

Media interpreting is a speciality that may therefore not be for everyone. Whether it heralds a general trend to increased multiskilling or multitasking for *all* interpreters in a multimedia future world (ibid.) is a matter for debate (see Donovan 2009, and discussion in our concluding chapter, TG-15).

2.3.1.9 *Tele- or remote interpreting*

In 'tele-interpreting', interpreter do not share the same location as some or all of the participants to the exchange (speakers and/or audience), and must work with audio and/or video feed. These conditions are considered sub-optimal, especially by interpreters, who have traditionally resisted such set-ups, more or less resolutely depending on the quality of the sound and picture, the degree to which 'co-presence' in the live context of the meeting can be reconstructed (for example, by using multiple or divided screens showing the speaker, the audience, the slides, etc.), and the justification for the remote set-up – for example, interpreters may be required to work elsewhere from screens simply because the meeting room has been badly designed, with no room for booths or no direct view, or simply to hide them from the delegates. But different forms of tele-interpreting are widely used for reasons of expediency, or convenience, or to save time and money (on travel, especially); and with improved technology (and carbon footprint accounting), video-mediated conference interpreting is increasingly commonplace and even routine. Sixty years after interpreters were moved out of the conference room into booths to do SI, technology and expediency is removing us still further from the meeting.

Telephone interpreting is an example of expediency typically trumping concerns about quality and comfort, sometimes justifiably. A standard telephone line does not offer adequate sound quality for reliable simultaneous interpreting, providing a frequency range of just 300 Hz–3.4 kHz, in contrast to the 125 Hz–12500 Hz required for SI (ISO 2603, para 7.2). By the same token, a VoIP or 'wideband' connection with frequency reproduction of up to 7000 Hz is unacceptable for SI, as it will still cut off the upper 5,500 Hz, resulting in reduced speech intelligibility.[42] But over-the-telephone consecutive interpreting has been used in high-level diplomacy for over a century; and the Emergency Telephone Interpreting Service run by Australia's Department of Immigration the 1980s saved lives in remote communities (see Garrett 2009). More prosaically, telephone interpreting services are now often provided to help foreign visitors communicate with taxi drivers at major events, for example at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

Consecutive interpreting with inferior sound quality and no picture will thus continue to be used in sectors like diplomatic or community interpreting under urgent pressure of time, cost, reasons of state, or medical emergency, with conscientious interpreters seeking proper briefing to compensate for poor technical conditions, though these are likely to improve.

Conditions may be much worse in other sectors, however. Today, notably in the US, 'videorelay services' (VRS)[43] – a service that allows deaf and hearing people to communicate over video telephone – operate with scant regard for adequate working conditions, and are already a multi-million dollar service industry. One reluctant practitioner (Petersen 2011) reports dehumanized, even Orwellian working conditions, with the 'interpreters' ordered to translate verbatim, denied access to context or background information – no doubt inspired, as Petersen points out, by a 2003 FTC description of interpreters as the 'functional equivalent of a dial tone' (ibid.: 206).

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42. See Flerov (2015). VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol.

43. According to Wikipedia, "a Video Relay Service (VRS), also sometimes known as a Video Interpreting Service, is a video-telecommunication service that allows deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired (D-HOH-SI) individuals to communicate over video telephones and similar technologies with hearing people in real-time, via a sign language interpreter". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_relay_service (Accessed December 8, 2015).

In conference and court interpreting, for remote interpreting, a video link and high-quality sound feed (125 Hz–12.5 kHz) are minimum requirements.[44] With recent rapid advances in sound and picture quality, and despite continued resistance to the loss of 'co-presence' of the interpreters and their principals (reducing the range of inputs: see CC/TG-9.1.3; CC-9.4.2; TG-9.6.2.7), **video-mediated interpreting** in various forms is becoming commonplace in conference interpreting (but faces more resistance in court interpreting, with serious reservations expressed by the legal profession about defendants' rights[45]).

Two situations are commonly distinguished in terms of 'co-presence':

- in *videoconference interpreting (VCI),* "the proceedings take place at two video-linked locations […] with the interpreter being situated at either end of the link" (Braun and Taylor 2012: 28); typically, the interpreter(s) are physically present at the event with most of the participants, and interpret distant speakers who appear over a live video link.
- in *remote interpreting (RI),* "the proceedings take place at a single location […] with the interpreter working via video link from a remote location" (ibid.), which may be an adjacent room.

There are also mixtures and variations, for example when only some booths have a view of the room, or there are interpreters at both ends of the link, or only one or two speakers are participating remotely, etc. Broadcast interpreting (above) is a special case of complex, multi-location remote interpreting with a widely dispersed audience.

Research is inconclusive as to the 'objective' effect of remote interpreting on output quality (Roziner and Shlesinger 2010); but it seems clear that, even with the best technology, adapting to these conditions and to the loss of co-presence with meeting participants costs interpreters significant additional effort and stress (Moser-Mercer 2003; Braun & Taylor 2012: 34; Mouzourakis 2003, 2006). Trainees should therefore be prepared for these conditions, but with a best-practice set-up that meets all relevant technical standards, including ISO 2603/4043, as discussed in CC-9.4.

At the time of writing, remote SI set-ups based on VoIP, Skype and similar web platforms are being promoted by various commercial entities and agencies as a 'disruptive' technology that will allow simultaneous interpreters to work from

44. Due to market pressures, however, even AIIC interpreters will sometimes be prepared to interpret contributions to the meeting via a simple telephone link, for short durations and provided the sound signal is routed through their headphones.

45. Declaration published by the Law Societies Joint Brussels Office, June 2009, cited by Braun and Taylor (2012: 33–4). However, videomediated interpreting is currently practised in courtrooms in the UK.

home. However, this technology does not yet meet professional standards (notably the requirement for sound reproduction from 125 Hz–12.5 kHz, but also for reliability of connection, visual co-presence, etc.) and cannot be recommended for professional use.

2.3.2 Sign(ed) language interpreting (SLI)

Signed language interpreters facilitate communication between deaf and hearing people across spoken and signed languages. SLI is thus not just interpreting in a particular language combination, setting or mode, but a unique configuration of all three. However, **cross-modality** – from sign to voice and voice to sign – is its defining feature, shaping its preferred mode (simultaneous) and core settings, and justifying the use of the term '**bimodal**' interpreters (though spoken-language interpreters also do text-to-voice in sight translation). The SLI interpreter's language combination thus includes at least one spoken and one signed language, and is typically bi-active (B > A, A > B). Many SLI interpreters are children of deaf parents ('CODAs'), but more and hearing people are now learning a signed language in adulthood, and Deaf[46] interpreters also play a key role.

In multilingual, multicultural assignments, SLI may be done between different (national) signed languages, often in relay by teams of Deaf and hearing interpreters (Grbić 2013); or through International Sign, "a more or less improvised, restricted, and nonstandardized contact language used at international events for Deaf people lacking interpreters into their own signed language" (Leeson and Vermeerbergen 2010: 325).

Signed languages, of which there are many throughout the world, are of course fully-fledged languages, each having its own distinct, complex grammar and lexicon, shaped in part by the visual modality itself: signers use head, face, torso, arms and hands to encode information in 3D space, either directly (about shape and movement, for example) or symbolically – thus posing the challenge inherent in all translation, to interpret and reformulate meaning between two languages and cultures. In this case the cross-modal factor may make the job particularly challenging in legal contexts, due to the higher demand for accuracy of information relating to location, interaction and manner of interaction (Brennan and Brown 1997, cited in Leeson and Vermeerbergen 2010: 326).

46. "A capital 'D' is used to refer to the Deaf community as a collective who identify themselves as having a cultural and linguistic identity which is expressed by the use of a natural signed language. However, a lower-case "d" is used to refer generally to deaf persons as potential consumers of interpreting services, since not all of these individuals identify as culturally "Deaf," even if they use a signed language in some form." (Napier and Goswell 2013).

Variations on SLI work include interpreting for deaf or hard-of-hearing persons who rely on lip or speech-reading, with or without sign language support, or who do not have a full competency in either a spoken or a signed language; and interpreting for the Deaf-blind, through either tactile signing or tactile fingerspelling. Deaf interpreters may be more qualified than 'hearing' SLI interpreters when a deaf client uses idiosyncratic signs or gestures unique to a family or region, or is deaf-blind, or for interpreting between two different signed languages (ibid.) SLI interpreters may also be required to do *transcoding* or *transliteration*, a variety of signing where a spoken language is literally encoded and transmitted on the hands (Leeson & Vermeerberghen 2010: 324), often accompanied by speech or lip movements, for partly-hearing people or those who have lost their hearing after acquiring a spoken language.

2.3.2.1 *Modality, mode, settings and role*

The visual modality makes simultaneous the most convenient mode for SLI, since there is no acoustic overlap (Grbić 2013), but also because the need to visually follow signing makes note-taking more difficult (Napier et al. 2006: 26–8, cited in Grbić ibid.). A fairly recent phenomenon is 'Signed-Language Translation' (SLT) from text to sign (Grbić 2013) – for example from a teleprompter or subtitles into a sign language.

The traditional domain of SLI was inter-community interpreting, historically performed by both deaf and hearing interpreters, often members of the family or same ethnic group[47] as volunteers in a 'helper' role. With the gradual social and legal recognition of the access rights of the Deaf community in some countries, the domain of SLI has spread to all levels of education, social services, government agencies, private businesses, religious and performance interpreting settings, as well as judicial and conference settings, and most recently and visibly, television.

The impartiality, neutrality and especially, the 'invisibility' that is advocated for interpreters in some settings (particularly in legal and court interpreting) has been even more strongly challenged in SLI than in other community settings, reflecting an especially close relationship between interpreters and their clients in this specialization, and the much closer involvement of clients in shaping the profession (Metzger 1999; Napier & Goswell 2013; Nicodemus, Swabey, & Witter-Merithew 2011).

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47. "Hearing children who have deaf parents (often referred to as CODAs, "children of deaf adults") often undertake informal interpreting for their parents or other deaf family members […]. Therefore, many people who became the first generation of signed language interpreters grew up bilingually, using the local signed language at home with deaf family members, and the majority spoken/written language in all other communication outside the home […and thus] either consciously or accidentally became interpreters." (Napier and Goswell 2013).

> [C]ompared with other users, deaf consumers seem to have a strong vested interest in the workings of their allied SLI profession; perhaps because deaf people's usage of interpreters is more frequent, across more domains, and lasts for a lifetime. In countries where deaf people are professionally qualified and rely on interpreters in their workplace, their influence is critical – they are very clear about how they want to work with interpreters, what they need, and what they expect.
> (Hauser & Hauser 2008, cited in Napier et al. 2013)

Current role norms in SLI, drawing notably on Cokely (2000), thus see the interpreter as responsible for making linguistic and cultural decisions and adjustments where appropriate, at least as much as in other areas of community interpreting (cf. Wadensjö 1998; Angelelli 2004a; Metzger 1999).

Remote communications technology (2.3.1.9 above) is also impacting SLI, bringing undoubted benefits but also disrupting the shared presence and intimacy which was felt by many to be a key cultural feature of this visual form of interpreting (Petersen 2011). Three common configurations that physically separate the communicators are (i) telephone interpreting, where the interpreter makes the call on behalf of a Deaf person who is there with her; (ii) video remote interpreting (VRI), in which the (hearing and Deaf) principals are in one place (such as a doctor's office) and the interpreter is elsewhere, on a videolink; and (iii) 'video relay service' (VRS) where an interpreter working in a relay centre facilitates communication between deaf and hard of hearing individuals over the telephone using a webcam or video phone (RID; Grbić 2013).

2.3.2.2 *Professionalization and training*

Professionalization, training and certification of SLI are at widely different stages internationally. As of 2013, professional associations had been founded both at international level[48] and in at least 10 countries (Napier et al., ibid.). The United States has been at the forefront, with the establishment of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in 1964 to create standards of practice, guidelines for the provision of interpreters, and regulation of interpreting quality and behaviour via a code of ethics.

With the extension of its domain, SLI is becoming more challenging. SLI interpreters have more access to training than community interpreters, but less than conference interpreters. Training is still ad hoc in most countries or limited to intensive short courses, but demand for professional SLI is increasing, and training "must work hard to keep pace" (Napier & Goswell 2013). However, more people from outside the Deaf community are now learning signed languages, and more

48. The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI), in 1993, and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) in 2003.

SLI interpreters are receiving formal SLI training, sometimes alongside translators and interpreters of spoken languages (e.g. in Geneva, Paris and Graz).

In most countries, SLI credentialling is regulated by a national signed language-specific body, and in the US (RID) and Australia (NAATI) requires a university degree in addition to a certification test. In some countries there is now also special certification for SLI interpreters working in judicial settings.

2.3.3 Mediation in different modes and settings

In practice, the degree to which interpreters are required, encouraged or allowed to mediate more actively varies according to setting and mode, from 'close to nil' in conference SI (Viaggio 2005/2006: 113) through gradual increases in potential involvement with proximity and informality, from 'conference' consecutive and business interpreting to community and dialogue settings, where interpreters are more likely to go beyond basic adjustments (form, content or process optimization: CC-5.8.4) and engage in stronger mediation, spontaneously or on request, from explaining and summarizing to actively regulating the exchange. Intercultural mediation is usually unnecessary in technical meetings, where culture-specific concepts rarely surface, and in some legal settings may even be forbidden.

In community and public service interpreting, a wealth of case studies show that even in routine events – police interviews, asylum applications – and much more so in crises such as medical emergencies and conflict situations – the interpreter may appear to one or both sides as the only person able to resolve a dispute, or bring about justice (see e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Angelelli 2004a, 2004b).

In conference interpreting, the relatively high demands on cognitive management and linguistic readiness (especially in its dominant modes, SI and SI-txt) do not preclude the need for tact and diplomacy. High-stakes business meetings are not always models of decorum;[49] and emotional involvement may be tested even in a formal, intergovernmental conference setting: international tribunals and conferences hear horrific accounts of torture and genocide.[50] More generally, conference interpreters (whether freelance or in-house) also perform intercultural

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49. Recent hostile takeover negotiations between a multinational company and their joint-venture partner in an emerging economy featured the local partner, a self-made multimillionaire, frequently yelling, cursing and storming about the room, relying on professional conference interpreters to ensure that his colourful invective hit home.

50. For example, child soldiers from Africa told a UN Foreign Ministers' Meeting how they were conscripted from their villages, handed rifles, and forced to execute enemy prisoners to prove their loyalty.

as well as linguistic mediation, according to both survey and performance data (Altman 1989a; al-Zahran 2007).

More active mediation (but still stopping short of arbitration) is commoner in consecutive than SI, perhaps due to physical proximity, but is at the discretion and judgment of the interpreter, (al-Zahran 2005: 225–226). The extent of the mediating role that may be allowed, encouraged or expected of the interpreter will also depend on how far the sponsors or organizers of the exchange are *aware* of cultural or social gaps to be bridged to achieve either basic communication or the successful resolution of the issues. As Seleskovitch puts it, "because the interpreter's role is to achieve understanding and communication, the degree of his/her intervention is relative, depending on the knowledge that interlocutors have of one another and, more importantly, on how different and remote their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are perceived to be" (1968/1978: 114 ff.). As we shall see, setting-specific norms may often be a third factor.

In more institutionalized settings, mediation in the limited 'linguistic-cultural' sense will generally be entrusted to the interpreter, while stronger mediating functions, from regulating the flow of talk to encouraging compromise and facilitating a settlement, are entrusted to other specialists, such as the Chair, designated negotiators or legally appointed arbitrators, who may also use the services of translators and interpreters (CC-5.8.4.2).

2.3.4 Diversity in interpreting: summary

Across the diverse landscape of interpreting, variations in proximity, involvement and the relationship between communicators create situations where more or less advocacy and initiative are tolerated or expected, where the norms and priorities regarding different aspects of the quality of the service may vary significantly with the needs/expectations of users or clients, and realistically, where interpreters are more or less equipped, informed or in control of their working conditions.

This diversity of domains, environments and the interpreter's role should not be confused with levels of required *competencies*. The core skills and abilities needed for interpreting remain the same across the profession, and may be mastered to a greater or lesser degree, whatever the context of practice. The more fully an interpreter masters the key skills and abilities, the better she can adapt to the variations of real life, be it in terms of role and degree of mediation, or of emphasis on different quality aspects of performance, or indeed, in some cases to unavoidably sub-optimal conditions. These universal common components of interpreting expertise are the subject of the next section.

2.4 Common competencies: 'LKSP'

The common framework that we have adopted to guide us in training professional interpreters conceives of all-round interpreting expertise as the integration of four competencies: **Language, Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism, or 'LKSP'.**

These four dimensions, which must already be either present to different degrees, or potentially present as aptitudes, in any candidate for training (CC-3.1.1) can be spelled out as follows (with references to parallels in the US-based ASTM *Standard Guide*[51]):

L: Language proficiency in source and target languages [cf. ASTM 8.2]: interpreters must have a solid and thorough *understanding* of all their working languages, and excellent *active command* of their target languages (for details see CC-3.2.1).

K: Knowledge: to interpret effectively, confidently and relevantly, an interpreter must have:

i. general ('encyclopaedic') knowledge of the world above the average educated world citizen, in international affairs, political geography, economics, politics and business;
ii. *above-average knowledge in domains common in interpreting*, such as business and management issues (including budgets and auditing) and for work in international institutions, conference procedure;
iii. socio-cultural knowledge of the communities that use her working languages;
iv. domain-specific knowledge of the topics under discussion and the relevant terminology;
v. context-specific knowledge of the encounter: who the parties are, why they are meeting, the history and background of the discussion and relevant issues or controversies.

To have the right knowledge available when needed, this competency also entails the ability (skill (v) below) to acquire, prepare and manage information and terminology (CC-9.2.5.1; ASTM 8.3.1.6 and 8.4).

S: Skills indispensable (and in this configuration, probably specific) to interpreting, acquired progressively and cumulatively through training:

i. *Analytical listening skills ('active listening')* which are the basis of all good interpreting: see CC-4.2 [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.1, 8.3.1.2].
ii. *Speaking skills*: an interpreter must at the very least be audible, clear and coherent; and at best, articulate, confident and convincing (all modes) [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.7].

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51. See note 2.

iii. *General language transfer skills*: interpreters must be able to convey the same meaning in different languages, choosing expressions that are equivalent and appropriate either contextually (dynamically, in context) or conventionally (for fixed or technical terms, names), while resisting formal interference between their languages [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.4] (CC-4.8.3).

iv. *Mode-specific* technical skills required to capture and render meaning under very tight conditions of time, which are thus somewhat different for consecutive [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.5], simultaneous, or sight translation (see CC-9.2.3.2, Table 9-1). These presuppose attention, memory and analytic skills [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.1–3] as prerequisites for training.

v. *Cognitive and information management skills*: the ability to acquire and mobilize relevant knowledge and language so that they are accessible when needed – involving basic research skills such as the ability to use resources (print, online, human) to gain knowledge of specialized domains and master their *terminology*, and an understanding of the background and context of meeting assignments (parties, goals, controversies, etc.).

vi. *Intercultural communication and mediation skills*: awareness of the different cultural perspectives among participants to an encounter, alertness to misunderstandings that may result, and the ability to avoid or discreetly resolve instances of miscommunication.

P: Professionalism

This component rounds off the skills, norms, behaviours and knowledge that are desirable to fulfil the task optimally in real life, and can itself be seen as a composite of:

i. *Craft professionalism*: understanding the tools of the trade – our minds, skills, equipment, and working environment – and their potential and limitations; factors in feasibility and quality and their interdependence with working conditions; resourcefulness: problem solving and crisis handling abilities, unflappability, ability to cope with stress [cf. ASTM 8.3.1.8–8.3.1.11]; (CC-10.1.2.1).

ii. *Ethical professionalism*: ethical standards and practices [AIIC Codes, cf. ASTM Section 13], setting-specific role norms and conventions, behaviour and demeanour [ASTM 8.3.1.8]; gauging where (and how much) optimization and mediation are appropriate, judging risks and benefits (2.1.7 above, CC-5.8, CC-10.4).

iii. *Practical professionalism*: teamwork, organization and management, dealing with offers and contracts, relationships with colleagues and clients, etc., appropriate to each setting and branch of interpreting [cf. ASTM Sections 9–12]; ongoing personal skills development, career management, lifelong learning (CC-11).

These three interacting dimensions of Professionalism are discussed at greater length in CC-10 and CC-11.

Language, Knowledge (and therefore culture) must be at a minimum level for admission, but coalesce as they mature through training into a composite resource that each interpreter refines and develops throughout her career. Interpreting-specific Skills are practice-intensive and are best learned in 'guided apprenticeship' mode. These skills, and ultimately their professional application in real situations, involving judgments about optimization and mediation (below), are the main focus of training.

If interpreting were not primarily a social activity subject to the infinite variety of human interactions, and could be captured in a chemical or mathematical formula, we might state it as follows: L+K+S+P = E (Expertise). But these plus signs do not adequately express the integration, then the implementation of the whole through practice, that must be achieved through training and experience. A better formulation might thus be to say that Expertise *integrates* the four competencies: **E = ∫ (L+K+S+P)**!

2.5 Skillsets and settings

As we have seen, all interpreting tasks share common features – elements of translation, of mediation and time constraints – but different settings make somewhat different demands on the LKSP components and configuration of the skillset. Some classifications that associate skillsets with settings (such as the NAATI[52] accreditation scheme, see below) suggest a hierarchy of qualifications that to some extent reflects de facto gradations of pay and status in the real world. Market forces will no doubt always prevail, but our aim must be normative, seeking to train excellent interpreters for all applications and settings while efforts continue to improve recognition, pay and conditions for all. Task analysis by setting will yield target skillsets, with varying emphasis on the basic ingredients of expertise (LKSP), to guide the design of programmes with some shared and some specialized modules.

52. http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Misc/Outliness%20of%20NAATI%20Credentials.pdf (Accessed January 16, 2016).

2.5.1 Common skills and specialization

As a first approximation, Table 2.1 outlines skillsets for four 'macrosettings' – conference, legal, community/PSI and (in-house) business interpreting, indicating common shared components and special competencies which could be covered by complementary domain- and setting-specific modules offered as additional options, according to the market targeting chosen by each course (see TG-3.3.1, TG-7.4.3).

Table 2.1 Macrosettings and skillsets

	Language	Knowledge	Skills	Professionalism	*Training*
SHARED:	**Wide range, flexibility**	**More or less varied, specialized**	**Listening, transfer, speaking (CC-4)**	**General craft, moral and service (see CC-10, 11)**	
Conference	Extra speed, flexibility coordination for SI, mixed media	Wide range, preparation skills for specialized content	Short and full Consecutive, SI, SI-text	Specific working conditions	Two-year postgraduate, internships where possible
Court/Legal	Some wider competence in dialect, register (slang/profanity, legalese)	General plus legal knowledge	Consecutive, ST (maybe SI), specific fidelity norms	Legal procedure, conventions, specific impartiality norms	Two-year postgraduate with internship
Community and PSI	Competence in dialect, register switching	General, social, and domain-specific (e.g. health)	Dialogue/short consecutive, perhaps some whispering	Face-to-face, Role-managing, Variations on mediation, cultural sensitivity	One year with multiple internships, on-site training
In-house (business, government)	Generally formal, mid-register	General + in-house-specific	Consecutive	'Affiliated' role (see CC-10), other duties	Undergraduate or postgraduate

Conference interpreters must be skilled in SI and SI-text as well as full (with notes) and short consecutive; wide knowledge must be complemented with preparation skills, enabling them to work across a wide range of subject areas, in terms of both content and language, although they will have subject affinities, and may develop particular expertise over time in a few subjects that are in demand. In terms of professionalism, they must be versed in the norms and standards of this professional community and its working conditions. Sub-specialization modules complementing basic training in this skillset might include interpreting for international organizations (e.g. United Nations/EU), parliamentary interpreting, media interpreting, or interpreting for bilateral diplomacy or high-level business settings.

Court or legal interpreting increasingly requires the same range of technical skills as conference interpreting (i.e. including SI), but in terms of the three other components (L,K,P) is also highly domain- and norm-specific, requiring a thorough knowledge of court procedures and legal terminology, and in linguistic terms, a greater familiarity with both ends of the register spectrum – highly formalized legalese at one end, dialect, slang and obscenity at the other – than is generally required in conference interpreting.

Community and public service interpreting (PSI) shares the same key LKSP requirements as these specializations, but with the focus on consecutive and dialogue formats, and the same familiarity with a wider range of speech (dialect, register) as for court interpreting. The relative fluidity of norms of practice in a potentially wide range of different micro-settings (police station, hospital, welfare office, refugee camp…), and face-to-face contact with communicators in sensitive or conflictual exchanges engaging the vital interests of individuals (similarly for conflict interpreters), justify a large component of special training in role management and different degrees of mediation through role-playing and simulation and on-site internships.

2.5.2 Hierarchical classifications

In Australia's National Authorisation and Accreditation System for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), interpreters can apply for accreditation in a particular language pair and direction at any of four different levels of competence: Paraprofessional Interpreter, Professional Interpreter, Conference Interpreter and Senior Conference Interpreter (Table 2.2).

The designers of the NAATI accreditation scheme sought to grant professional status to all interpreters, and to avoid "an exclusive demarcation line between the previously established profession of conference interpreters and technical translators for international needs, on the one hand, and the newer emerging groups of interpreters and translators for local needs on the other; rather, they saw all these practitioners as essentially one profession with differences of specialities and levels as in other professions" (Ozolins 2000). The scheme also recognizes the need for postgraduate-level training for court as well as conference interpreting.

Table 2.2 NAATI Accreditation Levels for Interpreting[53]

Conference Interpreter (Senior) (formerly Level 5): "The highest level of NAATI interpreting accreditation, [reflecting] a level of excellence in conference interpreting, recognized through demonstrated extensive experience and international leadership […]; encompasses accreditation at *Conference Interpreter* level".
Conference Interpreter (formerly Level 4): The "level of competence required to handle complex, technical and sophisticated interpreting, in both consecutive and simultaneous modes, in line with recognized international practice. Conference Interpreters operate in diverse situations, including at conferences, high-level negotiations, and court proceedings and may choose to specialize in a particular area(s)".
Professional Interpreter (formerly Level 3): represents the minimum level of competence for professional interpreting and is the minimum level recommended by NAATI for work in most settings, including banking, law, health, and social and community services. Professional Interpreters "are capable of interpreting across a wide range of semi-specialized situations and are capable of using the consecutive mode to interpret speeches or presentations".
Paraprofessional Interpreter (formerly Level 2): Competence in interpreting general conversations [and] non-specialist dialogues. Practitioners at this level are encouraged to seek Professional-level accreditation.

However, the scheme is clearly based on a hierarchy of levels of competence, and while each level is described in terms of specific skills, it also makes some reference to the settings and social sectors in which the profile is appropriate.

Japan offers an example of a formalized hierarchy of fees and status *within* conference interpreting, by experience and specialization;[54] but this seems to be an exception worldwide, at least on the freelance market. International organizations such as the EU and UN apply two pay grades for freelance conference interpreters according to experience.

2.5.3 Skillsets, settings and specialization – some caveats

Our descriptions of the three 'macro' skillsets in Table 2.1 are inevitably only an idealized approximation and require some caveats. For example, 'court interpreting' in international tribunals will require a combined court and conference interpreter skillset.

53. http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Misc/Outliness%20of%20NAATI%20Credentials.pdf (Accessed January 16, 2016).

54. https://www.simul.co.jp/en/interpreter/fee.html
https://www.simul.co.jp/en/interpreter/faq.html#q6 (Both accessed January 16, 2016.)

Also, adaptability to setting should not be underestimated: setting- and domain-specific modules, and gradual induction and exposure post-graduation, will always be needed. It should be clear from the table that training that is narrowly focused on any one of these skillsets will be insufficient in itself to prepare for the others.

2.5.4 Professionalism, personality and adaptability

Some of the aptitudes that may serve an interpreter in different situations are less easily teachable – such as the presence and voice qualities prized in broadcast interpreting, or certain cultural sensitivities and interpersonal skills that may be severely tested in community interpreting. Ultimately an interpreter training course can neither offer psychotherapy, nor be a finishing school for diplomats, debutantes, entertainers or social workers. A course of limited duration, based primarily in the classroom, in which very challenging cognitive skills must be acquired and practised, will never be able to prepare graduates for all markets, and some further local adaptation will always be needed, be it for the UN or the TV network.

The focus of this book is on Conference Interpreter training, for all the domains and settings where this level of competence is required[55] – including more or less 'specialized' micro-setting knowledge that might vary within that profile depending on the school's market connections, e.g. special familiarity with EU or UN terminology, procedure and speaking styles, or modules in such sub-specializations as medical conference interpreting.

2.5.5 Modularity and skillset-specific training

This common-and-differentiated approach to training interpreters allows institutions with different market requirements either to focus on training in one skillset (e.g. conference interpreting only), or to cater for multiple skillsets in a modular approach (facilitating streaming, switching, reskilling etc.; see TG-13.3.5.3). Some parts of the Initiation module in this book – the do's and don'ts of interpreting, and learning 'rotating side-taking' (CC-10.3.3.1) – constitute common basic training for all interpreters, to be complemented by subsequent phases and special modules differentiated by skillset and setting – for court interpreting, for

55. To the extent that court interpreting requires the interpreter to work to a high professional standard in both consecutive and simultaneous, we would specifically include court interpreting within our non-domain-specific label 'Conference Interpreting' and recommend two years of full-time postgraduate training.

example, including the core parts of CC Chapters 5 to 8, but focusing on court-relevant input materials, plus setting-specific Professionalism and Language and Knowledge Enhancement (LKE) modules.

2.6 The interpreter's language combination

Each of the ingredients of an interpreter's skillset is specific to this profession – not just the techniques of consecutive or SI, but also what knowledge we need and how we manage and use it and the particular bounds on 'mediation' of the interpreter's role. Language is no exception: the *relative* status and potential of each language offered by the individual interpreter, native, active or passive, will remain more or less stable from admission into professional life, and is therefore conventionally classified in the same way for all interpreters, from novices to experts.

2.6.1 Language classification and combinations

The conference interpreter must obviously have exceptional linguistic proficiency, adequate for instant understanding of virtually anything in her realm of experience, and production of fluent, formal and technically accurate speech with no opportunity to interrupt, consult and clarify. But the pressure and demands on language in interpreting are such that expected proficiency must be specified differently for each of an interpreter's working languages.

There are many ways of describing an individual's language proficiencies. Some are informal, like the loosely used term 'bilingual' (as in an ad for a 'bilingual secretary', for example), or when we say that someone 'knows' a foreign language. Some definitions are more specialized, like the terms L1, L2, L3 used in the psycholinguistic and SLA (Second Language Acquisition) literature, where learned language proficiency is traditionally described in terms of four competencies: listening, speaking, reading, writing (although 'translation/interpreting' has been added as a fifth in some countries).

The classification used in conference interpreting is tailored to its practical needs rather than precise scientific definitions (which still elude linguistics and psychologists). Interpreters are not polyglots *per se*: the depth of understanding and readiness of expression we need can only realistically be maintained in a few languages, and depends on whether we are offering each particular language 'passively' (only for understanding and interpretation *into* another language) or 'actively' (for interpreting both *from and into* that language). The classification of interpreters' working languages on this basis has been one of the cornerstones in the professionalization of conference interpreting.

As will become clear, the key requirements in linguistic proficiency for an interpreter may be both ‘more’ and ‘less’ than for other purposes. For example, for an interpreter, but not for a novelist or text translator, understanding speech in different accents is obviously much more important than correct spelling and an elegant writing style.

The working languages of a conference interpreter are defined as follows by AIIC (the International Association of Conference Interpreters)[56] and ASTM[57] respectively:

The conference interpreter’s working languages (AIIC and ASTM Definitions)

Active languages:

A: [AIIC] the interpreter’s native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language), into which the interpreter works from all her or his other languages in both modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive. All members must have at least one ‘A’ language but may have more than one.

A: [ASTM] a language in which the speaker has educated native proficiency in speaking and listening.

B: [AIIC] a language other than the interpreter’s native language, of which she or he has a perfect command and into which she or he works from one or more of her or his other languages. Some interpreters work into a ‘B’ language in only one of the two modes of interpretation.

B: [ASTM]: a language in which the interpreter has full functional proficiency in speaking and listening.

Passive languages:

C: [AIIC] Languages of which the interpreter has a complete understanding and from which she or he works.

C: [ASTM]: a language in which the interpreter has full functional listening proficiency.

The AIIC definitions are somewhat idealized (e.g. ‘perfect command’), and vague as regards the B language. ASTM seems more practically-oriented, and provides more detailed descriptions of ‘full functional’ proficiency in listening and in speaking in five-level rubrics that resemble the ILR[58] scales. But neither framework is

56. AIIC Regulation Governing Admissions and Language Classification, Art. 7. http://aiic.net/page/6726 (Accessed January 16, 2016).

57. ASTM *Standard Guide to Language Interpretation Services*. http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2089.htm (Accessed December 8, 2015).

58. Readers will find URLs for the L2 language proficiency level descriptors cited in this book (ILR, CEFR and IELTS) in Further reading at the end of this chapter.

quite clear on *acceptable directions of work*, except for the purely passive nature of C languages.

Language proficiency levels must be specified more closely for testing purposes, especially for admission where language is still evaluated more or less separately from other aspects of performance. More detailed descriptions of proficiency in A, B and C are given in CC-3.2.1.

In theory, the *minimum* viable combination an interpreter must offer would be from one language (C) into another (A), in one direction only; but this would not be marketable, except perhaps very occasionally, when working in a team, if the C is a rare language. All or nearly all professional interpreters therefore offer a service in **at least two directions or language pairs**, either between an A and B language in both directions (B into A and A into B[59]), or from two or more C languages into A. Table 2.3 lists some typical language combinations offered by professional interpreters:

Table 2.3 Some possible language combinations for conference interpreters

Interpreter	A	B (or 'Bsim')	C	Number of directions offered
1	Chinese	English		2 (B>A, A>B)
2	German	Arabic		2 (B>A, A>B)
3	English	ASL[59]		2 (B>A, A>B)
4	Korean	French	English	3 (B>A, A>B, C>A)
5	Italian		English, French, German, Greek	4 (C>A, C>A, C>A, C>A, C>A)
6	Russian	English, French	Spanish	5 (B>A, B>A, A>B, A>B, C>A)

Note that in the current AIIC classification system, 'B' indicates a language which is active (qualified for output) either in consecutive, or simultaneous, or both (the interpreter must be consulted), but some interpreters and training schools distinguish these capabilities with the labels '**Bsim**' (active in both SI and consecutive) and '**Bcons**' (active for consecutive only). Also, interpreters may sometimes work from C into B, and/or more rarely, from B into B. However, assuming for simplicity's sake that the B languages shown in Table 2.3 are all active for simultaneous, but only from A (A into B), the six interpreters shown would be offering different numbers of language directions, as shown in the last column.

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59. Or between two A languages, in the rare cases where these are recognized.

60. ASL: American Sign Language.

Most of the world's conference interpreters have one of two types of combination: 'bilingual/**bi-active**', working between an A and a B, as in examples 1 to 3 above; or '**multilingual**' (as in examples 4, 5 and 6), often (and typically in the EU institutions) with one A and several Cs. (Some interpreters have two Bs, and a very few are recognized by their peers as having two true 'A's, both indistinguishable from native languages.)

Multilingual interpreters are found mostly in organizations like the European Union. Bi-active interpreters mostly work on the national and private markets where the bulk of demand is for a bilingual service between the local language and English; these are the vast majority in countries like China, Japan or Brazil, where international organizations have not (yet) established their headquarters. Bi-active and multilingual interpreting exist side-by-side in the busiest freelance markets, and the less widely-known languages are interpreted bi-actively in both the EU (for the recent accession countries) and the UN.

For example, in the United Nations, where there are six official languages each with its own booth, both types of combinations are used. The English, French, Spanish and Russian booths are unidirectional booths, i.e. they produce output in one language only, and are therefore staffed by 'multilingual' interpreters who can work *from* at least two other UN languages (their C or B languages) *into* their own A language (the output language of their booth). These interpreters are not required to have a B language (if they do have one, it will be used as a passive language only in this set-up). In contrast, the Chinese and Arabic booths are bidirectional booths, staffed by interpreters with an AB combination (though an extra C language is highly appreciated) who must interpret both *into* and *from* Chinese/Arabic respectively. Their other active language is either English or French,[61] which are the most suitable for relay as they are the most widely understood by the other booths (though no longer in equal measure…), both in the UN system and the EU.

2.6.2 Getting there: from novice to journeyman

We believe that all interpreters can benefit from formal training and professionalization, but the training effort needed to produce qualified practitioners at each level will depend on the pool of available candidates, and on their starting point in terms of language proficiency and general knowledge, as well as relevant personal qualities and aptitudes.

61. English is rapidly taking over from French as the dominant 'retour' language (with some pressure from users).

Typically, developing the skillset needed for a market-ready Conference Interpreter – a fresh graduate, equivalent to what is sometimes called 'journeyman' level in the expertise literature – takes two years[62] of methodical, progressive full-time training at postgraduate level, for which language proficiency, general knowledge and other aptitudes are merely prerequisites. To define a reasonable admission standard – one that is realistic both in terms of the available pool of talent and the demands of the market (assuming competent trainers, curriculum design, etc.), course designers must **work backwards** from the target skillset, allowing for the progress we can expect to achieve within a two-year full-time course, to define the minimum initial language proficiency, knowledge, and intellectual potential that candidates must possess at admission to have a realistic chance of successfully completing the programme. The next chapter describes these prerequisite abilities and aptitudes, and typical procedures for testing candidates for admission.

2.7 Summary

Interpreting is an ancient activity that is widely performed today as a paid professional service, in a range of domains and settings that reflect the diversity of the modern globalized world. Interpreting competence for any setting can be defined as an integrated composite of Language, Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism.

Despite the appearance of simple linguistic conversion, to enable communication interpreters must also inevitably bridge cognitive and cultural gaps between speakers and listeners, since different languages embody different cultures, and similar utterances convey different senses in different contexts. This 'gap-filling' to optimize communication can justifiably be considered a form of mediation, a dimension of the interpreter's role which may be either consciously developed, or in some cases restrained, depending on the norms or requirements of different settings and the expectations of users.

Interpreters must also mobilize general and event-specific knowledge, in addition to the technical skills needed to capture and render messages fully and accurately under the constraints of different modes, such as consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. These technical skills are largely specific to this form of translation, which is distinguished from written forms by its immediacy, external pacing, and the sharing of a live unfolding context with the principals.

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62. One year may suffice for simple language combinations, and/or subject to trainees' starting profile in terms of mature language proficiency and knowledge, especially for more narrowly specified domains and markets (TG-14).

While the skillset of any interpreter must combine language proficiency, knowledge, skills and professional judgment, in practice the diversity of assignments and the priorities given interpreting by users create needs for practitioners qualified in different skillsets, working to specific professional conventions and with different domain-specific knowledge profiles, in different segments of the profession. This book mainly describes training in the conference interpreting skillset, but whatever the focus of an interpreter training course, its objectives, target skillset and market should be stated clearly, in the interests of transparency and efficiency for trainees, instructors and future employers alike.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

History of interpreting
Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2014, 2004b, 2015 (20th century history of conference interpreting)
Gaiba 1998: The Origins of Simultaneous Interpretation: The Nuremberg Trial
Hermann 1956/2002: Dolmetschen im Altertum/Interpreting in Antiquity
Obst 2010: White House Interpreter
Roland 1999: Interpreters as Diplomats
Torikai 2009: Diplomatic Interpreters in Post-World War II Japan

Interpreting and written translation
Riccardi 2002: Translation and interpretation

Community interpreting, PSI
Critical Link series of conferences: see e.g. http://www.criticallink.org/cli-5/ and https://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/btl.87/main (Both accessed March 5, 2016)
Guidelines for community interpreting: https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:13611:ed-1:v1:en (Accessed February 15, 2016)
Hale 2007: Community Interpreting
Roberts 2002: Community interpreting in search of its identity
For training guides and textbooks, see TG-14

Liaison interpreting
Gentile et al. 1996: Liaison Interpreting – A Handbook

Healthcare and medical interpreting
Angelelli 2003, 2004: (the interpreter's role)
Brisset et al. 2013: Working with interpreters in health care
Pöchhacker 2006a: Research and methodology in healthcare interpreting
Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2007: Healthcare interpreting
Swabey & Malcolm 2012: Educating Healthcare Interpreters

Court and legal (judicial) interpreting
Driesen 1990: Initiation à l'interprétation juridique
González et al. 1991/2012: Fundamentals of Court Interpretation

Hale 2004: The Discourse of Court Interpreting
Kadrić 2001, 2009: Dolmetschen bei Gericht
Mikkelson 2000, 2008: Introduction to court interpreting / the court interpreter's role
Morris 2000/2012: Bibliography of court and legal interpreting: http://aiic.net/page/235/a-bibliography-on-court-legal-interpreting/lang/1 (Accessed July 26, 2015)

Media interpreting
The Interpreters' Newsletter 16. 2011: Special Issue on Television Interpreting

Telephone interpreting (for remote interpreting, see CC-9)
Kelly 2008: Telephone Interpreting: A Comprehensive Guide

Military and conflict zone interpreting
http://najit.org/blog/?p=229 (Accessed December 8, 2015)
http://virtualinstitute.eti.unige.ch/virtualinstitute/index.php?name=Sections&req=viewarticle&artid=43&page=1 (Accessed December 8, 2015)
Kahane 2007: Interpreters in conflict zones: The limits of neutrality
Moser-Mercer & Bali 2008/2012: Interpreting in zones of crisis and war

Sign language interpreting
Grbić 2012: Signed language interpreting
Napier et al. 2010: Sign language interpreting in Australia and New Zealand
Shaw et al. 2004: Student perspectives from signed and spoken language programs

Interpreter competence levels or skillsets, expertise
Hoffman 1997; Moser-Mercer et al. 2000; Tiselius 2013
ILR Skill Level Descriptions For Interpretation Performance: http://www.govtilr.org/skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm (Accessed December 8, 2015)
NAATI accreditation by Testing: Information Booklet: http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Booklets/Accreditation_by_Testing_booklet.pdf (Accessed December 8, 2015)
NAATI accreditation by Overseas Qualification, Professional Association Membership or Advanced Standing: Information Booklet
http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Booklets/Accreditation_by_Assessment_OSQualifcation_ProfessionalAssociationMembership_AdvancedStanding_booklet.pdf (Accessed December 8, 2015)
Outlines of NAATI credentials (version 1.0, October 2010): http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Misc/Outliness%20of%20NAATI%20Credentials.pdf (Accessed December 8, 2015)

Interpreter and/or Translator Training Institutions (see also TG-13)
AIIC Interpreting Schools & Programmes Directory: http://aiic.net/directories/schools/lang/1 (Accessed December 8, 2015)
Caminade and Pym 1998: Translator-training institutions
Harris 1997: Translation and Interpreting Schools (Directory)

Appendix A

International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)

AIIC[60]
International Association of Conference Interpreters
Association internationale des interprètes de conférence

AIIC is the global association of professional conference interpreters, both staff and freelance.

Established in 1953 and headquartered in Geneva, the association

- admits practicing conference interpreters as members through a peer review process;
- sets ethical, professional and technical standards for the profession;
- promotes high standards of quality in interpreting;
- promotes the working conditions required for high-quality interpreting;
- promotes high standards for conference interpreter training;
- is recognized by the United Nations, European Union and major international organizations that rely on simultaneous interpretation;
- represents the interests of all conference interpreters (members and non-members) in collective negotiations with these employers;
- works to advance the interests of conference interpreters and the interpreting profession.

Membership of AIIC, although not required to work as a conference interpreter in any market, is an internationally recognized badge of quality and professionalism. Admission to the association is through a peer review process based on sponsorship. Applicants for membership are vetted by qualified senior members for their

- mastery of working languages;
- technical competence in conference interpreting;
- track record of quality, ethics and professionalism.

Upon joining the association, members commit to be bound by the AIIC Code of Ethics and the AIIC Professional Standards, which include complete professional secrecy. Their names, language combinations, city of domicile and contact details are published in the AIIC Directory, online and in print, which is widely consulted by international organizations and other recruiters.

As of 2014, AIIC had over 3,000 members in 100 different countries, covering 52 languages, and since 2012 recognizes both spoken and signed languages in members' language combinations.

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63. Based on text from the AIIC website at http://aiic.net/node/about (Accessed December 8, 2015).

Appendix B

A staff interpreter's calendar

Date	Meeting and topic	Languages
April		**English and French**, plus
1–2	International Road Transport Institute	German, Russian
3	Illegal and unregulated fisheries	
4	Annual Jobs Report: press launch	
8–9	Food crisis prevention in Sahel region	
10	Budget Committee (internal)	
12	Address by visiting Prime Minister with Q & A (a.m)	Bahasa
15	Computer privacy and security	
16	Science & technology in higher education (statistics)	
18–19	Small enterprises: Innovation, public-private partnerships	Spanish, Italian
22	Energy: oil and gas markets, renewables, fracking	German
23	Energy: futures, new technology, clean coal etc.	
24–25	Integrity in business: public forum	Russian
26	Staff Association: Health and Safety	
29	Macro-economic trends (videoconference link with IMF and People's Bank of China)	Chinese
30	Financial Markets (private equity, derivatives)	
May		
2–3	Conflict Minerals, supply chains, and corporate responsibility	Portuguese
7–8	Education and Employment (Trade Union Forum)	German
9	Nuclear waste disposal (mission with site visit)	
14	Regional Economic Review: North Africa and Middle East	Arabic
15	Visiting national delegation (small group, consecutive + dinner)	local, bring own interpreters
17	Audit Committee (internal: buildings and maintenance)	
20	Staff Association Seminar on Gender	
21–22	Tax Policy and Environment	Chinese
23	Nanotechnology and Biotechnology	
28–30	Annual Public Forum (moderated panels, webstreamed): Exiting the Crisis; Investing in Africa; Global Value Chains	Italian, Japanese, Korean Spanish, Russian,Turkish

Date	Meeting and topic	Languages
June		
3–4	Insurance: Private pensions	German
5	Livestock hygiene and food chain	
7	Fruit and vegetables classification scheme	
10–11	Communication Infrastructures and Services	
12	Information Economy	Chinese
17–18	Childcare and pre-school education	
20–21	Trade and Development	
24	Investment: Trade Union meeting	German, Japanese
25–26	Investment (Govts and NGOs): Responsible Business Conduct; Transparency in Public Procurement	Russian, Spanish
27	Council (internal discussion)	

CHAPTER 3

Prerequisites and admission

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Who can be a conference interpreter?

As a candidate for training to be a conference interpreter, you will obviously not be expected to show sophisticated interpreting skills for admission – but you must already be able to understand, analyse and re-express naturally-paced speech in different languages on a variety of non-trivial topics in world affairs for an educated audience. A university degree is therefore considered the minimum educational level *necessary* to apply, but this is not *sufficient*: you will need to have raised your practical language abilities and general knowledge well above undergraduate level, through some combination of personal training, family upbringing, sustained exposure to the culture and society of your non-native language(s), and, ideally, overseas study or work experience. Your examiners will expect you to be an articulate, intelligent communicator, and to show intellectual honesty, curiosity, a quick and lively analytical mind, good humour, empathy, and of course, a readiness to learn. These personality traits and aptitudes will be needed to accept the mental reconfiguration that training as an interpreter entails, to acquire technical skills and eventually, to work in a team as a professional.

These prerequisites, on which there seems to be general consensus in the conference interpreter training community, are examined in more detail below with some guidelines on how best to prepare for admission. In the Trainer's Guide (TG-4.3) we describe a three-stage suite of admission procedures and tests (on dossier, written and oral) designed on this basis with reference to the literature on aptitude testing, current best practices in leading schools and the authors' own experience, and a brief review of the debate on selection criteria and admissions testing practices.

3.1.2 The course: what to expect

Conference interpreter training courses are organized along similar lines in the world's leading schools. The course may last between 1 and 2 years (two to four semesters), and typically follows a progression, starting with activities to develop basic abilities like listening and speaking (Initiation, CC-4), then consecutive (CC-5) and simultaneous interpreting (SI, CC-8), with complementary practice in sight translation (CC-7). These skills are typically learned in small classes, usually devoted to a single language pair (for example English into French), in which students practise and receive individual attention and feedback from an instructor who is a practising professional in that language combination. Alongside these core skills classes in all of your language pairs, you should get help with language and knowledge enhancement (CC-6), including lectures in key domains for conference interpreting like law or economics, some theory (TG-12), and an introduction to the conventions and ethics of professional interpreting (CC-10 and CC-11). You will be encouraged to work hard on your own to improve your language proficiency and knowledge, and to meet with classmates in frequent and intensive practice sessions to practise your skills in small autonomous groups. You will be continuously assessed, and may be required to take an exam at midpoint in the course to qualify for access to training in SI. Class and practice materials will become increasingly challenging and realistic, eventually simulating real-life conditions with invited speakers, mock conferences, immersion in the language of organizations like the EU or the UN, and training in topic and terminology preparation, relay interpreting, and coping with fast, technical or complex presentations with slides or read out from a prepared script (CC-9). As you approach graduation, you should get a chance to visit an international organization and practise SI in a real meeting from a dummy booth (off-microphone). Finally, to graduate from the course you will have to take a comprehensive final exam, interpreting in all modes for a jury of external examiners. On successful completion of this exam and any other required credits, you will be awarded a conference interpreter's diploma that will be recognized in the profession as a certificate of professional competence (TG-11).

3.2 Selection criteria

The *abilities* and *aptitudes* that conference interpreter training programmes look for in applicants for admission are precursors to the fully developed components of Language, Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism described in the last chapter (2.4), that will eventually be integrated in interpreting Expertise:

- ***Language proficiency*** should develop from the base described here (3.2.1);
- ***Verbal (communicative) skills*** (3.2.2 below) are a prerequisite for acquiring technical interpreting Skills;

- ***General Knowledge*** (3.2.3) and a solid university education are needed to understand and analyse sophisticated speeches on real-world issues, and for specialized topic preparation and knowledge management;
- ***Personal Qualities*** (3.2.4) can be seen as precursors for Professionalism (CC-10).

3.2.1 Language proficiency

When applying for the course you must declare an intended **language combination** (CC-2.6.1), though this may be altered – by the school, in light of your performance, or by agreement at your own request – at the entrance examination, a Midpoint Exam, in continuous assessment, or even for the final Professional Diploma: for example, a declared B language may be downgraded to C, or a C language dropped from your combination.

This is an important point: the status of your prospective A, B, and C languages cannot be truly determined in language proficiency tests, interviews, or even in early interpreting exercises, since the A, B, C classification scheme applies to languages as they are *actually deployed* in mature consecutive and simultaneous interpreting on authentic speeches. After graduation, if you apply to join AIIC, your language combination will again be checked and certified by qualified peers and published in a directory as a guide to users and recruiters forming teams (though your B and C languages may still change in the course of your career).

Let us begin with a closer look at the A language requirement for admission, before turning to B and C languages.

3.2.1.1 *The A language(s)*

Performance in the native (A) language is a key indicator in assessing a candidate for training. Some interpreters will only ever work into their A language, and interpretation into A will always be preferred on the market for the most stylistically challenging, rhetorical speeches. Above all else, schools look for candidates who are articulate and intelligent communicators, with a full and sophisticated (native) command of their A language over a wide stylistic range.

Candidates must speak a standard, educated form of their A language. Some world languages, like Spanish or English, accept several standard (educated native-speaker) forms – British, American, or Australian English, for example. Within each such standard, some limited variation of accent and melody is accepted – for example, a slight Southern accent is usually acceptable in Chinese, French or German (and may even be popular with some delegates) – but much less than we find on national radio and television.

The quality of your A language will be assessed in the entrance interview by professional interpreters with that same A. The A language is usually the mother tongue or native language, and/or the main language of education, in which the candidate:

- is most at ease, expressing him/herself naturally, clearly and well without undue effort and in a standard accent;
- has a convincing educated command at university honours level, both written and oral;
- can read complex texts aloud fluently, confidently and intelligently;
- can use the language correctly in a range of registers (formal, colloquial, humorous, ironic, etc.);
- has a large vocabulary and good command of idiom, usage, colloquialisms and cultural references;
- exhibits high verbal fluency and flexibility, and can easily generate synonyms, paraphrase, and express things in different ways for impact, or for different settings and audiences;
- can expand or compress expression;
- can 'read between the lines', and anticipate how sentences are going to end and where the argument is going;
- is familiar with discourse and style conventions in different genres.

And, since *comprehension* of A cannot be taken for granted:

- "[is] able to understand fully all forms and styles of speech intelligible to the well-educated native listener, including a number of regional and illiterate dialects, highly colloquial speech and conversations and discourse distorted by marked interference from other noise […]" (ILR scale of listening proficiency, 'Listening 5');
- is sensitive to nuances, tone and fine shades of meaning;
- can understand literary language, allusions and even somewhat archaic language.

Some candidates from mixed backgrounds may feel that they are fully fluent in more than one language and are not sure which is really their 'A'. If this is your case, you should check the above descriptions carefully to help you decide. In a few rare cases, students may be accepted with a 'double A'; but any language recognized as an A for interpreting purposes must be much richer and more robust than what many people may accept as 'native' proficiency in everyday use.

3.2.1.2 *Comprehension of B and C languages*

Active mastery of one or more languages is obviously only part of the minimum requirement to become an interpreter: you must also understand one or more other languages (B/C >A). Patchy or weak comprehension of an acquired language (especially C) is probably the main source of errors in interpreting generally.

The requirement for an interpreter's C language is somewhat artificial in everyday terms: you may or may not be able to speak it fluently with friends, but the only relevant criterion for professional use is your ability to *understand* any speaker in a conference without too much effort. This would seem to correspond approximately to level 4 or 4+ on the ILR listening proficiency scale (or in English, a IELTS listening score of 8–9). But a professional interpreter must understand speech in a wide range of speaking styles, registers and topics – including accented, deviant or incoherent language – with some *attention left over* for the other mental operations of the interpreting process. This is because we have no choice about what speakers say or how they speak (except indirectly, by refusing assignments), and audiences are not concerned about whether we are working from an A, B or C language.

Are interpreters expected to understand *everything* in all their languages? Professionals must indeed do everything to maximize their readiness, expanding the range of accents and regional variants (as well as technolects and jargons, and cultural and literary references) that they can follow. For admission, your examiners will set realistic limits on the range of understanding that they test (which may also depend on how much language enhancement can be expected in-course).

In terms of **accent** and **dialect**, you must be comfortable understanding the main standard variants of your languages. As a professional, you will have to handle a wider range (many users rely on interpretation only from speakers they do not understand!), but colourful samples of linguistic variety will not be tested at admission. The requisite range and depth of comprehension will be built up over the course, alongside skills training proper, through practice on varied samples and using international audiovisual sources. But to stand a reasonable chance of achieving it by graduation, entrants must already show **rapid, solid and comfortable comprehension of naturally-paced standard speech**, at a level not usually achieved merely by completing an undergraduate course, across a wide range of subjects and registers – hence the strong recommendation (or requirement) for a significant time to have been spent in the countries concerned.

3.2.1.3 *Active B language: 'Bcons' and 'Bsim'*

Outside a few international organizations, most interpreters have two active languages. In CC-2 we adopted the terms 'Bcons' and 'Bsim' for these two levels of B-language use and proficiency. Interpreters who are fully **bi-active** in consec and SI have an 'ABsim' (rarely, A-A) combination.

As a conference interpreter working into your B language, even if only in consecutive, you will need to be able to speak convincingly and effectively in public on behalf of your speakers, giving sophisticated speeches and presentations and taking part in demanding interviews, negotiations and debates with native speakers of the language. You will need to marshal devices of argument, rhetoric, persuasion, hedging, be able to project empathy and humour, and be sensitive to cross-cultural dynamics. Only so much language enhancement will be possible in-course, so for bi-active combinations (Bsim), your examiners will choose only those students with the *strongest possible baseline of active production in B*. Good accent, pronunciation and intonation are also important, and you may be required to submit a recording or take a voice test.

Finally, be aware that active English (usually B) has now become virtually indispensable in an interpreter's language offering everywhere but in Europe, and even there is highly sought-after. Some students may feel able to offer two 'Bcons' languages (or even a Bcons and a Bsim) – but must then maintain them at the requisite level, or accept downgrading.

Language proficiency tests as a guide

As a rough guide, using three well-known scales that measure language proficiency for learned languages, the recommended level for a B language at admission would be ILR-4, or, ideally, 4+ ('advanced professional proficiency [plus]'), roughly equivalent to CEFR C2 and (for English only) IELTS 8–9. Examiners might possibly accept a strong student with a B language at the next level down, conditional on significant enhancement during the course, i.e. at ILR-3+ ('general professional proficiency, plus'), equivalent to CEFR C1 but near the borderline with CEFR C2, or IELTS 7–8.

Listening comprehension of B and C languages should also be equivalent to ILR-4(+) or CEFR C2. Again, a candidate with less comfortable comprehension (ILR-3+, CEFR C1), if accepted, will need intensive in-course enhancement.

3.2.2 Verbal intelligence and communicative skills

Language proficiency is useless in an interpreter without communication skills and what has been called 'verbal intelligence' (Gardner 1983, 1993). Examiners will look for candidates who have the following abilities and traits (cf. AIIC 2014; see also TG-4.2 and 4.3):

✓ can **listen attentively** and effectively to speeches, presentations and discussions;[1]

1. Adapted from AIIC (2014), Advice to students wishing to become conference interpreters.

- ✓ can **analyse** arguments logically and clearly summarize conclusions and positions;
- ✓ have a good **working memory** for detail as well as the logical thread of a speech;
- ✓ have communicative **speaking competence** (in active languages): can explain things clearly and precisely, can engage listeners, and be articulate and convincing; can rapidly generate synonyms or antonyms and produce effective paraphrases;
- ✓ have fast, intuitive **comprehension** (in all working languages): can rapidly grasp a speaker's meaning and even anticipate how sentences will end;
- ✓ are alert to shifts in tone, inflexions, pauses, silence, etc.;
- ✓ can detect and correct miscommunication;
- ✓ can tell stories coherently and engagingly (with a tendency to use humour);
- ✓ enjoy using language and be visibly comfortable with live, communicative discourse, in both passive and active roles.

In addition to proficiency in each of your languages, you will be expected show some **language transfer skills**, including an awareness of the traps of linguistic interference (CC-4.8.3), and the ability to identify good vs. less-good vs. poor equivalents in context, to explain culturally different concepts clearly to speakers of the other language, and to keep your languages separate, speaking in one language at a time without code-mixing.

3.2.3 General knowledge

Comprehension and confident expression are not just about language, but also depend crucially on knowledge. You will need to have at least the level of general knowledge that comes with a university education, as exercises in class will be based from the very start on press reports or televised debates about topical world issues (political, economic, social, scientific…), and you will not be able to focus on technique if you stumble too much on unfamiliar names, events or concepts. As you start the course you must already be comfortable reading and discussing the science, technology, business, culture *and* political sections of the newspaper in all your working languages, and know something of national and regional history, organizations, territorial disputes and current political and economic developments. Beyond this, in you future career you will be called on to interpret in an almost infinite range of possible fields, so you must also have the curiosity to learn more, about virtually anything. Any semi-specialized knowledge you may already have that is relevant to certain sub-segments of the market – legal, budgeting, medical etc. – will always be welcome at admission, but most of this will typically be acquired later, during and after the course.

To sum up the knowledge requirements, you will be expected:

a. to have a good **undergraduate degree**, proving your ability to study and acquire knowledge;
b. to follow the news and be **able to discuss intelligently** (i.e. at the level of a well-educated, non-specialist layperson) a variety of contemporary political, social, economic, cultural and scientific (but not obscure) issues outside your own area of study;
c. to possess **cultural knowledge of all the countries of your working languages** – including their salient history, geography, traditions and their contemporary politics, economics and society;
d. to be **curious**, **open-minded** and **willing to learn** about the things the people in suits talk about on TV – or at minimum, to have no mental block or resistance to politics, economics, finance, etc.

3.2.4 Personal qualities

Other traits and qualities sought after in aspiring interpreters, based on the experience of leading training programmes, are summarized below. The ideal candidate

✓ is intellectually honest:
  - can faithfully represent another's point of view despite personal beliefs
  - knows what s/he doesn't know, and is not afraid to admit ignorance
  - has personal integrity and is willing to abide by professional ethics and standards,

✓ has calm nerves, composure and the ability to perform under pressure,
✓ is highly motivated:
  - sincerely wants to help people from different cultures communicate
  - is ready to accept instruction and advice ('coachability')
  - is willing to devote long hours outside class to group and individual practice as well as to language and knowledge enhancement,

✓ enjoys public speaking and has a pleasant voice, appropriate demeanour and some stage presence,
✓ has a sense of humour and can work well as part of a team,
✓ shows maturity and developed social skills ('EQ'),
✓ is capable of empathy.

3.2.5 Additional pluses

- ✓ First degree in a non-language subject such as law, economics, journalism, political science, business, or even science or engineering (or better still, a postgraduate degree);
- ✓ Significant overseas experience;
- ✓ Working experience, especially in a job that requires good verbal skills and/or deals with relevant subject matter (e.g. journalist, lecturer, consultant, lawyer, diplomat, or experience in business).

In some schools, a **non-language-department background** has been seen as a plus, provided that language skills are on a par. Recent graduates from local university departments are not the only candidates for interpreter training; the profession welcomes **mature students** who may have acquired the necessary knowledge and language abilities through work, life and/or travel experience. However, the best age for this kind of training seems to be between the ages of about 22 to 32, so older applicants are usually checked more carefully for flexibility and coachability.

3.3 The admission test

Aptitude tests for admission will vary somewhat even among leading schools with very similar training programmes. Here we have tried to describe a typical procedure and set of exercises. (Our own detailed recommendations to schools for admission testing, including criteria for evaluating candidates' performance, are set out in TG-4.)

In principle, the school should publish full details of the candidate profile sought, selection procedures and admission standards in its prospectus (nowadays, online), along with other information about the programme, instructors, curriculum, employment opportunities and actual graduate outcomes. There should also be detailed information and advice on the website for candidates on how to prepare optimally for the test. Some schools will also offer public information sessions and have a dedicated email address to answer candidates' questions.

A typical selection procedure will include the following steps:

1. Applicants submit a package with their completed application form, copies of degree(s) and transcripts, CV, letter of intent (or a video résumé), letters of recommendation and any required language proficiency test certificates, for pre-screening.

2. Qualified applicants take a written examination, and possibly also a voice test in the B language.
3. Candidates shortlisted on the basis of the written exam then take a live aptitude test before a panel of examiners.

The written exam generally consists of tests of language proficiency (reading and/or listening comprehension, active and passive vocabulary), cultural literacy, general knowledge and knowledge of current affairs, and some performance tasks to help assess verbal skills, such as paraphrasing, cloze (inserting appropriate words into blank spaces in a text), prose composition, written translation, or reading aloud expressively.

The oral aptitude test is taken before a panel of examiners, most or all of whom should be professional interpreters, including the successful candidate's future instructors. The test will typically last around 40–60 minutes[2] for each candidate, and will consist of a brief exchange about the candidate's interests, background and motivation for wishing to train as an interpreter, followed by a series of *retelling exercises* which form the core of the test and the main basis for the panel's decision. Typically, retelling is done first from B into A, then A into B, then C into A where appropriate.

For each retelling exercise, a prepared, structured but oralised speech, lasting up to 2–3 minutes, will be presented (either live or on video) on a topic of current or general interest. This speech will be a complete communication with an introduction, body, and conclusion, delivered at normal speaking speed, as if to an audience of native speakers. It will be designed to contain one or two key arguments with original features (not to make it too predictable or cliché), as well as some supporting examples, facts and figures and/or anecdotes, but without overloading memory.

After listening to the speech attentively but without taking notes, you will be asked to retell the content in your other active language as well as you can from memory, and as clearly, communicatively, fully and convincingly as possible. The panel may then ask you questions to clarify certain points, or prompt you to help recall of an overlooked point or link. This may be followed by a short back-and-forth dialogue or Q&A on the same topic, between two examiners each speaking a different language with you as interpreter.

Afterwards, panel members may also ask you for one or two different paraphrases for various expressions in the speech, or various different ways of completing a sentence. Occasionally, if time allows, you may be asked to give a short

2. This is a conservative estimate for a candidate offering an AB or ACC combination; for ABC or ACCC it may take longer, but possibly broken up into two or more sessions.

impromptu speech presenting your own opinion on the topic at hand, or arguing the opposite view, or even improvising on an unrelated topic chosen from a short list, after a few minutes of preparation.

Perfection is not expected in retelling – and speeches may contain one or two 'untranslatable' expressions, or a joke, or an unknown or difficult name, or a figure too difficult to remember exactly without notes. What is expected of you is to get the macrostructure of the speech across clearly and correctly, with as much detail as possible. The retelling task is therefore also a test of your unflappability – a key quality for a future interpreter – and of resourcefulness (including your ability to prioritize and convey the idea when the exact details could not be remembered), as well as of personal qualities such as intellectual honesty (and from the instructors' point of view, coachability).

This procedure for aptitude tests is widely followed, with variations, in leading interpreting schools around the world.

3.4 How to prepare

3.4.1 Realistic self-assessment: is this for me?

Many young people will be attracted to a profession that seems to offer good pay,[3] variety and a window into current affairs, plus some free time and opportunities to travel and discover the world. When asked in the interview why he or she wants to be an interpreter, many candidates talk about the 'personal challenge' or their lifelong love of English, as if they see interpreting as the acme of linguistic attainment – which, is not really the essence of interpreting, as we saw in CC-2.

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3. Good pay is, of course, relative. Taking the EU as an example, at the time of writing the EU's net daily rate for *freelancers* is around 310 Euros for beginners and 400 Euros for experienced interpreters. Additionally, the EU will pay a contribution into the interpreter's private pension insurance for each day worked, in the amount of 100 Euros for beginners and 130 Euros for experienced interpreters. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/become-an-interpreter/faqs/index_en.htm (Accessed on July 26, 2015).

EU *staff interpreters* are 'officials' hired at grades AD 5/7 with a starting monthly salary of around 4,500–6,000 Euros at the time of writing, with salary increases based on seniority. They also receive an extra 16% expatriation allowance on top of this base salary if they have left their home country to serve in their job role, plus a variety of family-related allowances including a household allowance, a dependant child allowance, an educational allowance and a pre-school allowance. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/job/official/index_en.htm#4 (Accessed on July 26, 2015).

Before deciding whether to invest considerable time and money preparing and training to be an interpreter, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I good at things that require strong verbal skills, like analysing arguments, debating ideas, making persuasive speeches, explaining and summarizing complex material?
- Am I a good listener?
- Are my proposed working languages strong enough? Can I comfortably follow news, lectures, debates and dialogues on a wide variety of topics in each of them? In my non-native active (B) language, can I make convincing presentations and engage native speakers effectively in sustained discussions and debates?
- Am I interested in current affairs, economics, business, and generally in how the world works and how people, institutions and organizations think and operate?
- Am I comfortable performing live in a high-stress, high-exposure environment – like an actor improvising on stage, or on television?
- Am I prepared to accept *representing and speaking for other people* as my primary professional goal? Can I fill this role without feeling I am sacrificing my own identity, creativity, agency – or more attractive career choices?
- Am I contemplating doing this course of training as a launching pad to a career in investment banking, or as an executive assistant to a CEO? (If so, you should do an MBA instead, don't waste our time AND yours!)
- Am I aware that, in schools with high standards, on average fewer than 60% of admitted students successfully complete training and graduate as conference interpreters?
- Am I aware of the level of income earned by conference interpreters in my target market (and that, with some regional exceptions, the freelance profession offers little or no promotion in terms of pay or status)? Am I aware of the ease or difficulty of finding employment/freelance work with my prospective language combination?
- (optionally) Have I seen real interpreters working, and spoken with them about their job?

3.4.2 General advice and information to applicants

You can improve your chances by preparing well in advance. Given widespread misconceptions about interpreting, the school's published recommendations for preparation should stress that

- The admission test is an aptitude test. It is not a test of developed interpreting skills in consecutive with notes, or simultaneous. Professional interpreting competence is not expected, as successful candidates will receive full and systematic training in conference interpreting.

- It is not necessary to attend any special preparatory classes.[4]
- Practising the retelling task (without notes) for the aptitude test is recommended, but otherwise undirected interpreting practice, especially in SI, is not only useless but may even be harmful.

The website should also provide information about what language combinations are most useful or expected to be in demand in coming years. If you can get this information long enough in advance, you can plan either to work up an already solid C language (one learned in adolescence but later neglected, for example) to active B proficiency, or choose to focus provisionally on just one out of two or three potential C languages.

3.4.3 How to prepare

The following activities and exercises are recommended over a period of months (or even longer) before the entrance exam (unless otherwise specified, in all working languages, but especially, and 'actively', in B (see also CC-7.4.2).

1. *Extensive reading in non-fiction genres like current events, international affairs, history, economics, biography, management and popular science.*

Prospective interpreters should read most of a high-quality daily two or three times a week (NYT, FT, WSJ) and most of a high-quality current affairs journal (*The Economist*, *Time*) weekly in each of their languages. The main focus should be on analysis, background and op-eds on international issues, but another valuable traditional tip is to begin with the article that seems least interesting, to expand your horizons and add that topic to your range of understanding of the world. In addition to newspapers, reading widely and eclectically in non-fiction genres, sometimes in more than one language in parallel (and making topical glossaries), will help build up both knowledge and language skills.

4. A customized preparatory course (undergraduate or private) may be approved by professional trainers (and even taught by them, as in Geneva); but experience of the impact of such preparatory training is still too limited to draw conclusions about its benefits. Some trainers have expressed concern that preparatory courses may skew the results of entrance exams and lead to worse, not better, candidates being admitted: less talented candidates may get a temporary boost from the prep course and from intensive practice in retelling tasks, leading to their admission, but these candidates may already have reached their maximum potential and fail to make significant progress once admitted to the course; other candidates who haven't had this test-specific training may actually be much better candidates, but fail to be admitted due to their inferior (untrained) performance on the retelling tasks.

2. *Practising listening skills*

Listen every day to high-quality programmes and recordings in your B and C languages in the following genres: interviews, lectures, speeches, news analysis, seminars and classes, talk and debate shows and news bulletins (see CC-7.3.3, Listening Level 1). To test and sharpen your aural comprehension, record the programme and **listen again until you understand everything**, getting help from a native speaker with things you don't understand. Try to get some exposure to differently accented varieties of the languages (e.g.in English, Indian talk shows).

Reading and listening for language and knowledge enhancement deserve at least a couple of hours every day. Both intensive and extensive practice are needed: over time, reading and listening widely, even if you don't necessarily understand every word at the micro-level, may help more than the intensive exercises in which you go out of your way to look up, understand and master every word (Lewis 1997: 47). Also, watch a variety of shows in your non-native language(s) – documentaries, soaps, comedy, entertainment, sports – again, where possible, with someone to help you understand.

3. *Active practice in the B language: mimicking quality speech*

Using a recording of a speech or debate (good native speakers) that you now understand fully (see above), play it back again through earphones, pausing every sentence or two to repeat back what your heard *in the same language*, trying to imitate as closely as possible the speaker's natural, fluent pronunciation and intonation. Also memorize good patterns and formulas and recycle them, to make them your own when you are speaking.

4. *Analysis and retelling exercise*

The main component of an aptitude test is a retelling task in which you are asked to listen to a short speech (up to 2–3 minutes), without taking notes, and re-present its content in another language. You can practise for this as follows:

- ► After reading or listening to a passage, retell the main points clearly and coherently in your own words based on what you have understood and remembered; afterward, check what you missed (if possible, do this with a partner).
- ► When reading more complex, informationally dense material, practise making an outline of the main points and logical structure.

Additional exercises to enhance your performance and linguistic flexibility for the exam include

- ► Practise paraphrasing: take sentences and try rapidly generating different versions using other words, expressions and sentence structures to convey the same meaning.
- ► Practise using simple words and sentences to explain complex content and ideas.
- ► Expansion exercise (converse of gisting): take a dense text in B, and expand and unpack the messages into a less dense, oralised version.

5. *Strengthening the knowledge base*

- Follow the news and systematically look up everything you don't know enough about. Fill in gaps in your encyclopedic knowledge.
- Build up your knowledge of international politics and world affairs in particular; read up on the relevant background, issues and players.
- Make a systematic study of basic macroeconomics; if you have not previously done so, take an introductory economics course.

6. *Speechmaking*

- Take a class and get coaching in public speaking.
- Practise making speeches to an audience from outline notes. Get feedback.
- Practise reading aloud and record yourself, doing your best to speak clearly and sonorously, in a pleasant voice with correct pronunciation and natural intonation.

7. *Do not* try to teach yourself or practise doing simultaneous interpretation (SI). You will not be able to judge the quality of your own performance, and worse, are likely to pick up bad habits and technique which will interfere with and slow down your acquisition of the skill later.

3.4.4 Personal study: some recommendations

3.4.4.1 *Understanding factors in comprehension difficulty*

For students who have learned a foreign language mostly outside its social and cultural context, the goal of 'full comprehension' may seem daunting when faced with the wide variations in real-life usage, especially for a language spoken in such a variety of forms as contemporary English. It helps to understand the enormous difference that factors like context, situation and medium make to understanding real-life speech.

Comprehension depends on both linguistic and background knowledge. The deeper our familiarity with the language, and the deeper our familiarity with the subject and the situation of communication, the better our comprehension. The two cannot be neatly separated. Realizing that some comprehension tasks are much harder than others, and being aware of what you are attempting, helps to avoid getting demoralised – as may well happen when go to see a movie in your B or C language in the hope of combining study with pleasure.

Here are the main factors affecting comprehension:

- *sound quality and environment*: noise and other distractions obviously make understanding harder;
- *direct visual contact*: people are easier to understand face-to-face than through a video or audio medium, like radio, television or the telephone;
- *familiarity with the speaker*: it helps when you know his opinions, speaking style, body language;

- *familiarity with the topic*: the more you know, the better you understand;
- *the 'preparedness' of the speech*: the speaker may be improvising, speaking from notes, or – hardest of all – reading out a prepared text;
- *focussed or divided attention*: understanding running speech may be harder when your attention is distracted by pictures (e.g. news footage), unless they are well coordinated with the speech (as may or may not be the case when slides accompany a lecture);
- *language variety (dialect):* speakers with non-standard accents, grammar and usage may be harder to understand;
- *the speaker's communicative skills*: monotonous, mumbled or badly organized speech is harder to follow;
- *high speed or rate of delivery* usually makes comprehension harder;
- *density of information*, which usually varies in any speech, is a key factor.

Different combinations of these factors may make a particular listening experience easier or harder. But clearly, chatting with a friend, watching the news for the first or the third time that day, and following a movie, are very different tasks. A movie is one of the hardest inputs to understand: your attention is distracted by the action; and the dialogue is written to be original, surprising and cool even for native speakers, is often full of strange accents, irony, sarcasm, puns, etc., and may be deliberately and artificially mysterious, for suspense. At the other extreme, when chatting with a sympathetic friend on a topic of your choice, you may feel you can understand the language perfectly and have nothing more to learn. This is, as you can imagine, an illusion.

Your goal must lie somewhere between these extremes. As an interpreter, you won't ever have to simultaneously interpret movies (at least not without the script or some rehearsal), and you can expect to see the speakers you are interpreting, usually live. However, the subject matter won't concern you personally, and won't always be familiar; speech will be fast, and will often involve current affairs and concepts in economics and law; many speakers will have non-standard accents; and some will read prepared scripts.

At the preparatory stage, focus on understanding mainstream speech directed at the widest possible sample of the community of speakers of that language, and therefore mostly free of very difficult combinations of accent, technical content and other complicating factors. National and international media are a reasonable yardstick to gauge comprehension, since they are aimed roughly at the educated native-speaking population. Recording and playing back selected programmes until fully understood, as described in exercise (2) above, and checking your comprehension by doing exercise (4), is probably the shortest way to improving relevant comprehension skills.

If you can't spend time in the country of your B language, make sure at the very least that you are fully equipped to record international media (audio and video), and if possible, find one or more study partners who are native speakers of your B language. But neither going to a B-language country nor working with a partner will *automatically* improve your language proficiency. Here are some tips for making the best use of these opportunities.

3.4.4.2 *Working with a partner*

One of the best things you can do is find a serious and rigorous language exchange partner who really understands and accepts your requirements. Be systematic, planning sessions to focus separately on different needs, such as:

- Monitoring you in structured retelling exercises as described above: listen and then re-tell in your own words (consecutive without notes) short passages (of around one minute at first, and later up to 2–3 minutes) into the same language. Have your partner listen and check your rendition. S/he should be very demanding, but should understand that your objective is to relate the overall message and logic of the original, taking into account the hierarchy of main and subsidiary points vs. details.
- Coaching you in paraphrase, sentence completion, gisting, or other supplementary exercises.
- Correcting your grammar and usage – also based on listening to your retelling or speech-making recordings – and helping you improve your expressive ability and quality.
- Explaining passages that you had difficulty understanding during your listening practice, and illustrating word usage where the dictionary fails (try to put it into a sentence).

3.5 Studying in the B-language country

Traditionally, new entrants to an interpreter training programme have been expected to have spent at least a year in a B-language country (e.g. for English B, usually the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand).

If you have never lived or studied in a country where your B language is spoken, an extended stay is strongly recommended, either before or during the course (for example, taking a gap year between the first and second years). One popular option is to do a one-year MA degree in a relevant subject, such as International Relations or Economics.

However, although being surrounded by native speakers and media should improve your feeling for the language, this rubbing-off effect is not enough to get you to the competence you will need. Here are some tips to help you get maximum benefit out of the experience:

- DO completely immerse yourself in the B-language environment (as a student plus in your social life, as a volunteer, in any part-time work, entertainment…). Do everything possible to achieve maximal exposure in all settings and go out of your way to listen to and use your B language all the time.
- DO make friends with native speakers. DON'T spend your time with people from your own culture! Gillies (2013) recommends sharing accommodation with speakers of the language you're learning, and watching TV with a local who can explain cultural references, jokes and idioms that you haven't understood.
- DO join student clubs of interest to you, and be an active participant.
- DO attend public talks on a range of different subjects.
- DO get out and attend cultural activities, visit museums, galleries and science centres (get an audio guide, and read everything, even if you know it in your A language; there are probably gaps in your B).
- DO try to find one or more committed language exchange partners (see 3.4.4.2 and CC-7).
- DO carry a notebook at all times, to jot down expressions to look up or ask your study partner about later. And if permitted, record classes and lectures for re-listening.
- DO sign up for activities where you have to perform verbally challenging tasks together with native speakers – e.g. debate club, public speaking classes, mock trials. Record your performance and get feedback.

As a bonus, see if you can observe some formal meetings and proceedings, such as:

- administrative or management meetings, if you are working in a company, for example;
- meetings open to the public at city hall and parliament;
- meetings of a student body or association (ideally, one that follows *Robert's Rules of Order*);
- legal proceedings (public law courts) and public hearings.

Record these events if allowed, so that you can re-listen and review later.

3.6 Summary

Interpreters are neither born nor made, rather a bit of both. Training is most effective in students who have not just innate talent but also the right dispositions, such as a lively and curious mind, in addition to a first university-level degree and, of course, superior language proficiency. Full formal training is the fastest way to becoming an excellent professional – and the safest, both for you, to avoid starting with a handicap and a poor reputation, and for users of your service! – and will open doors to the professional world.

If successful, you should use the valuable time between the admission tests and the start of your training to work on your language proficiency and general knowledge, based on (if you have chosen your school well) the structured individual feedback that you should receive after the aptitude test, with recommendations on how to improve (see also CC-7).

Training to be an interpreter will be different from school and undergraduate learning in several ways, with the focus in language on exploring flexibilities and expressive potential, rather than accumulating words; in knowledge, on learning about domains like government, business and science rather than mathematics or literature; and in skills, on developing techniques and abilities that cannot be acquired through books or manuals, but only through individualized coaching and repeated practice. The emphasis will be on learning *how* more than learning *what*. Students who take this on board will already have made a good start.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

General advice to students

AIIC Advice to Students (AIIC 2014): http://aiic.net/page/56 (Accessed December 8, 2015)

European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI): FAQ on training to be an interpreter: http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/10 (Accessed December 8, 2015)

EU Commission (DG-Interpretation): http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/become-an-interpreter/want-to-become-interpreter/index_en.htm (Accessed December 8, 2015)

L2 language proficiency level descriptors: ILR, CEFR and IELTS[5]

The ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable) has detailed scales for each of the following sub-skills:

5. See http://www.ielts.org/researchers/common_european_framework.aspx (Accessed July 26, 2015) for a rough mapping of IELTS and CEFR.

Listening: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale3.htm
Speaking: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale2.htm
Reading: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale4.htm
Writing: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale5.htm
Translation: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/AdoptedILRTranslationGuidelines.htm
Interpretation: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm
Intercultural communication:http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm
Audio translation performance: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Audio_trans.htm

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
The top two CEFR Proficiency levels, C1 and C2 (the highest) can be found at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf
C2 may be considered roughly equivalent to ILR-4 and above, C1 roughly to ILR-3/3+
CEFR self-evaluation grid: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/assessement_grid/assessment_grid_english.pdf (Accessed February 16, 2016)

IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
IELTS descriptors for overall band scores can be found at http://ielts.calculator.free.fr/band-score-interpretation.htm
(All accessed December 2015.)

CHAPTER 4

Initiation to interpreting

4.1 Introduction

A general initiation to interpreting consists mainly of learning to do some everyday tasks – listening, understanding, speaking – in new ways that are specific to (or at least required for) interpreting:

- sharpening memory, attention and analysis for **listening** and **understanding**;
- learning to **speak** to an audience confidently and articulately;
- discovering and avoiding the pitfalls of **language transfer**;
- learning the conventions of the **interpreter's role** as a mediator; and last but not least,
- forming habits of **self-directed learning**.

In this process, students are weaned from any rigid or prescriptive attitudes to language and meaning that persist in some educational systems (with a bias toward the written word) towards a more flexible, realistic feel for language in oral communication. The emphasis of Initiation is on mental techniques and verbal practice, the discovery of a new environment, the interpreter's role in it, and the new cognitive and communicative habits it entails.

These 'pre-skills' are developed in specific exercises (in bold below), helped with small doses of theory (with a first basic model of the interpreting process: 4.8.2 below), and teacher demonstrations where appropriate.

Initiation has five main components:

1. **Active Listening and Discourse Analysis** (Semester 1, first 4–5 weeks)

Interpreting requires making adjustments to the 'default' ways we communicate verbally in everyday life, including a new and different way of listening and analysing – for meaning and logic, not words – and a different use of memory. These new habits cannot simply be explained, but must be instilled early through demonstration and practice. Students practise listening without taking notes to speeches and presentations in passages of about a minute, building up to 2–3 minutes, and retelling them in outline then in increasingly complete form. Discourse Analysis helps to understand how speech achieves its effects through its structure, texture and other communicative devices, and which aspects need special attention to retain not only the content of the speech but its message or 'point', and the devices used to convey it.

The first module, **Active Listening** (4.2.1) develops three ways of intensifying understanding through

- *attention*: additional and targeted concentration;
- *association*: tying content to what you already know or can imagine and learning new tricks to improve medium-term memory ('rich encoding');
- *analysis:* recognizing discourse structure, logic and the speaker's intentions.

Basic techniques to support and structure this enhanced ability to capture meaning are drilled in **Discourse Outlining** (4.2.3) with further practice in **Short Consecutive without Notes** (4.4).

2. **Introduction to Public Speaking** and delivery skills (throughout Semester 1)

Here students practise preparing and delivering short presentations, which should also qualify them to give each other good enough speeches to practise effectively together out of class by the end of the Initiation stage (4.7.1.2 and CC-5, Appendix C).

3. **Language and sense**: how to think outside linguistic form

While working on both sides of verbal communication – in Active Listening and Public Speaking – we must also address what *lies between them* specifically in Translation: the 'language barrier', and how to negotiate it without getting snagged on words, moving as cleanly as possible from (expressed) sense to (expressed) sense. For this we have a principle – or rather a *habit* of text processing known as 'deverbalization' (4.3), which is trained in two powerful exercises: **Idiomatic Gist** (4.2.2.1) and **Sight Translation** (4.3.2). Students discover that to facilitate idiomatic, natural production of a target-language version, one must first apprehend the source text in conceptual, visual and other ways detached from its linguistic structure. This ability is especially challenged and developed in Sight Translation ('ST': see CC-6 for variations on this task through the course).

4. **Mediation**: basic principles (and do's and don'ts) of interpreting (early Semester 1)

This is an introduction to the essential aspects of the interpreter's ethos and role: elementary do's and don'ts, speaking in the first person, and appreciating the basic issues that may arise in linguistic and cultural mediation.

After learning how to carry meaning intact across the language barrier, we look at the 'role (or identity) barrier' and the *role shifts* that mediation implies. In mental association, analysis, and reformulation, we are using our resources of knowledge, language, experience and imagination as a kind of 'vaulting horse' to jump between identities without getting snagged on our own personal beliefs and biases. The interpreter's condition is not a loss of identity, but the application of personality to the performance of the service, without expressing it in the product.

A lively and comfortable way to start practising interpreting proper, in line with incremental realism (General Introduction and TG-3.2.3.5), is **Short Consecutive without notes**, including some lively dialogue interpreting. In 'broken-up monologue' format, the instructor or an invited speaker makes easy speeches, pausing every 2–3 sentences for interpretation, for about 5–10 minutes, followed by Q & A. For variety, this format can be supplemented with dialogue, consisting of easy, engaging short segments of chat and conversation, and frequent and rapid role changes – the archetype of verbal exchange between two people with a motive to communicate. Recordings or transcripts of dialogues and interviews can also be used.

These formats are generic to all branches and settings of interpreting, and can thus provide a valuable (simulated) Initiation to the interpreter's role, and the basic dos and don'ts of interpreting. They also prepare for full consecutive, SI and the rest of the specifically conference-interpreting skillset, where content will increasingly be biased towards current affairs, economics and business, and the style and type of presentations towards more formal and mixed formats, through to the full-blown reality of modern international conference communication, which will be gradually fleshed out as the course progresses.

Other activities in this thread can include

i. a brief *theoretical introduction* to mediated communication;
ii. *watching and discussing videos* of consecutive interpreting performances (perhaps even on-site observation at a real meeting);
iii. *role-playing* in various interpreter-mediated situations, where students take turns acting as primary communicators and interpreters – ideally, between students who don't understand each other's native languages;
iv. once or twice, for fun and variety, a round of 'Chinese Whispers',[1] to show what care is needed in passing along a message….

5. **Forming habits for self-directed learning** (from mid-Semester 1)

In addition to these basic new ways of approaching speech and discourse for interpreting, students are initiated into active and selective reading and topic preparation, targeted language enhancement, and listening practice. Together, these

1. 'Chinese Whispers': a traditional children's game in some Western countries in which (usually) a sentence is whispered from one person to the next. The last person to receive it repeats out loud what they have heard (or understood), then the originator of the message speaks or reads out the original message, revealing the extent to which it has been distorted. For an initiation to interpreting, a slightly longer message could be used, which in a typical class might be relayed 6–8 times.

exercises and activities should develop the basic skills of listening and analysing, help you get to know your own memory, and gradually make it clear what (good) interpreting is and how it works.

When taught well, this eye-opening process can be a lot of fun, as students begin to learn how to listen with 'interpreter's ears', and how to communicate another's ideas clearly and effectively. Initiation is thus a crucial stage, laying the conceptual and practical foundations on which to build solid technique in the more complex skills, and forming students' attitudes toward the course and their own learning process as they start to develop practice and study habits, and a classroom dynamic begins to take shape.

The range of exercises and activities presented in this chapter is designed to make this critical Initiation phase as stimulating and effective as possible. (The theoretical rationale is spelled out in more detail in TG-5.10 and motivated with an overview of some relevant research on memory, knowledge and discourse.)

4.2 From Active Listening to Discourse Modelling[2]

This section explains why we need special initial training in active listening and discourse memory for interpreters, and introduces key exercises to develop these skills.

4.2.1 Active Listening

4.2.1.1 *Ways of listening*

Learning to interpret begins with learning how to listen effectively. Listening is fundamental to good interpreting: you cannot convey precisely and clearly ideas that you have yourself grasped only vaguely and approximately. But this involves more than just hearing, understanding and registering the speaker's words. Even students who did well at the entrance test may sometimes find that they cannot retell a passage well because although they understood all the *words*, they didn't get the speaker's *point*.

This may come as a bit of a shock, since we tend to take for granted our ability to listen and understand, especially in our own language. Certainly, complete retelling shows up comprehension gaps that would otherwise have gone wholly unnoticed. But the ways we listen in everyday life are very different from the way we need to learn to listen as interpreters, and will not be able to support complete

2. 'Discourse modelling' will be used here as a general term for the process of forming a mental model of the discourse, and 'discourse outlining' for the act of writing out a representation of this in point form.

retelling even if our comprehension is 'complete'. Three everyday approaches to listening are *passive*, *superficial*, or *selective;*[3] interpreters must master a new and demanding listening skill that we call **Active Listening**. Let's look at each of these in turn, and explore the differences.

1. *Passive listening:* imagine you are listening to the radio, and a traffic report comes on, with detailed information on which roads are congested and which are moving well. If at this moment you are just relaxing with a cup of coffee and no plans to go anywhere, you will likely be listening *passively*. You will hear and understand the words and register that this was a traffic report, but it is unlikely that you would be able to retell much of the content afterwards. In fact, research has shown that people who listened passively to the same information (a BBC radio announcement of an upcoming frequency change) more than a *thousand* times still hardly recalled more than could have been achieved by mere guessing (Baddeley 2004: 76).
2. *Superficial listening*: Suppose now that you are listening to the same traffic report as a way to improve your English. Unlike passive listening, this involves consciously paying attention to what is said, and perhaps noting down words and phrases like 'underpass', or that traffic is 'backed up' at a certain intersection. But it is still *superficial*, in that attention is focused on surface features of the discourse; afterwards, you might be able to tell someone a number of nice new phrases you picked up, but not much about traffic conditions.
3. *Selective listening*: In some situations we may focus our listening attention on particular aspects of the content. If you hear the opening jingle of the traffic report while in your car getting ready to take someone to the station, and running a bit late, you will listen closely for any relevant information that can help you avoid getting stuck in traffic, and when it comes, mentally process it, conjuring up a mental map and planning your best route to be on time. In this case, you have listened *selectively*.

This third kind of listening takes more attention than passive listening, and more mental processing than superficial listening. Having attended to and actively processed the information that seems directly relevant and important to you, you could probably retell the key points from the relevant part of that traffic report later that evening, or even a few days later. But the rest of the report would leave a much fainter trace in your memory.

Selective listening is typically how students follow lectures – especially when they hear the instructor say, "this will be on the test"; how conference delegates

3. Bowen and Bowen (1984: 5–7) proposed a similar classification, distinguishing 'protective' (non-listening), passive, selective and concentrated (i.e. what we call active) listening.

follow most speeches and presentations; and more generally, how some people hear only things the speaker says that support or agree with their own position or worldview, or are easy for them to understand or accept. The more intensive level of selective listening, when relevant or important information is detected, begins to approach the way the interpreters must listen, actively and deeply processing speech for meaning. But unlike autonomous listeners, interpreters can never be sure enough of what is relevant or interesting *for their audience,*[4] so they need to maintain a high level of concentration and depth of processing over the *entirety* of the discourse. This is an unnatural and cognitively demanding task that calls for special **Active Listening** skills.

Now, imagine that, for some reason, you had to listen to and then *retell* the entire content of the traffic report, accurately and completely, so that someone else could plan their route based on what you have relayed to them. What would your best listening strategy be? Clearly, you would need to maintain *maximum concentration*. You would listen not for surface features, like the words and phrases used, the speaker's accent, voice quality, grammar mistakes etc., but to *extract meaning*. To do this, you would need to *mobilize background knowledge* – if you knew the city, visualizing a city map – to make sense of the information and better *chunk and organize* it into meaningful blocks to serve your goal, by visualizing individual streets as they are mentioned, with identifying landmarks and familiar buildings. This would result in a *structured, coherent mental model* of the traffic report in your mind, with *rich encoding of the details*.

'Rich encoding' for memory

In his book *Your Memory: A User's Guide* (2004), Alan Baddeley, a leading researcher in human memory, confirms the importance of 'rich encoding' for recall, achieved by a combination of analytic effort and imagination (or diversity of representation). In general, he points out, "information that is encoded in terms of a rich and detailed representation of the world is likely to be more accessible than material that is processed in terms of simpler or more impoverished scheme" and "enriching and elaborating the encoding process tends to make material more memorable […]". "Generally," he says, "putting a lot of effort into encoding leads to better recall: you are more likely to remember later the solving of a difficult problem than an easy one" (2004: 158–161). Research suggests that recall is improved when the information is multiply encoded – through vision, verbal labelling and action. Multiple encoding is thus a strategy for making the material available to recall as richly and in as many modalities as possible. This is a relatively recent discovery (ibid: 240) with important applications in listening for consecutive interpreting (see next text Box).

4. Though in real-life they may be forced to produce information selectively under impossible conditions of input speed and density (CC-9.4/TG-9.6), professionals will have long since learned to hear the entire message.

Active listening is a more intensive, concentrated process than any of the ways we normally listen in everyday life. This is to be expected of a natural process that is honed and adapted for a specific professional purpose: interpreters listen differently, just as artists see differently, film critics watch movies differently, and sculptors feel differently.

Active listening underpins good interpreting, and can be learned and honed through deliberate practice (Ericsson 2007; see TG-2.6.2). But our ability to process discourse deeply depends heavily on our **background knowledge**, as well as on **empathy** and **imagination**.

4.2.1.2 *Mobilizing relevant knowledge*

Conjuring up a mental map of the city and visualizing individual street scenes would be quite easy in your home city, more difficult in a city you have recently moved to, and next to impossible in a strange city you know absolutely nothing about. To make sense of what we hear, we need sufficient knowledge not only of the language spoken but also of the topic and its background.

Clearly, in many cases the interpreter will know much less about the specific subject matter under discussion than the meeting participants. What's more, the speaker will be addressing them, not you, the interpreter. In other words, the speaker will speak in a way that is intended to be relevant and clear to their addressees, taking for granted a certain amount of shared knowledge and background, which you as the interpreter may or may not share. What the addressees may understand easily without any special processing effort may take significant extra analysis on your part. Active listening therefore requires making a special effort to activate and mobilize background knowledge. As we will see, usually this will mean preparation: anticipating what knowledge you will need and acquiring it in advance – and against that more comfortable cognitive background, analysing the logic and content of the speaker's message.

4.2.1.3 *Empathy and the speaker's communicative intent*

Our traffic report example highlights intensity of concentration and accurate recall of content, but this is still only a one-dimensional approximation to how we must listen for interpreting.

First, building on that example, if we knew exactly what use our listener wanted to make of the information, we could omit information irrelevant to that goal (about traffic far away on the city's ring road, for example, that would have no impact on our planned route), in full confidence that we were fulfilling our mission as 'interpreter'. In a real interpreting situation, with multiple unfamiliar speakers and listeners whose goals we cannot fully know, we could not choose to omit content: those relying on our interpretation expect to receive a complete version of what was said, for them to evaluate and decide for themselves what is relevant.

Second, in this example all that we needed to convey was *information*, packaged and delivered as clearly as possible. We didn't need to listen for the traffic newsreader's choice of words, or capture and reflect his mood, style or rhetorical effects. But in real meetings as interpreters, we would need to register and reproduce other dimensions of the presentation than mere factual content, and that reflect the persuasive, interpersonal and social functions that make a speech a speech (TG-5.10.3).

The interpreter therefore needs to be sensitive to the speaker's *communicative intent*. This means registering and internalizing – again, often involving conscious reasoning and analysis – not only what the speaker means, but why the speaker is saying this, and why the speaker has chosen to say it in this particular way.

In the same way that extracting sense from the words requires knowledge of the subject matter, grasping intentionality requires an appreciation of the communication situation: who is speaking to whom, in what setting, for what purpose? A speech is a social act, and most human communication involves much more than simply presenting information. Implicitly and sometimes explicitly, every speech is made with intentions that are not strictly speaking *informative* – such as making others feel welcome and included, giving reassurance, showing compassion, making an impression, selling ideas, enhancing prestige, complaining or thanking, warning or encouraging, criticizing or praising, persuading or dissuading, apologizing sincerely or insincerely, ridiculing overtly or covertly, showing off or being humble, flattering someone or putting them in their place, trying to put a smile on someone's face or even make them laugh out loud, perhaps in order to soften a tricky request. Sometimes the goal might even be the precise *opposite* of providing information: intentional obfuscation!

As observed in CC-2.1.4, we can never *know* a speaker's communicative intent – even the speaker might not be able to fully articulate it – but can only infer it from external clues and other knowledge. When the speakers and their business are unfamiliar to us (the interpreter usually starts out as an outsider) this takes an **extra effort** of clue-gathering, seeking, absorbing, processing and inferring. This **deep processing** is an application or extension of the natural curiosity that your examiners looked for at the admission interview, and must now be cultivated further in class, not by mere theoretical explanation, but by probing questioning from the instructor ("Why do you think he used this word/intonation? Does it imply that he likes or dislikes the proposal?"), and by demonstration.

Appreciating the speaker's **intended effect** is necessary to realizing it in the target language. If the intended effect is reserved praise, this is what the interpreter must attempt to convey; a gushing interpretation would be inappropriate.

If the intended effect is harsh criticism with a measure of rudeness, a softened, self-conscious hint of displeasure would be unfaithful. And if the intended effect is establishing rapport, a cold, mechanical rendering, no matter how 'accurate', clearly would not serve the speaker's purpose. A good interpreter will therefore listen (and watch) carefully, with empathy, for the intended communicative effect, and then find appropriate ways to bring it across.

4.2.1.4 *Imagination*

By imagination, we mean not only mental visualization but any means of mentally relating external input to personal experience, and thus imprinting it more firmly in memory. If children learn faster and more deeply than adults, it is because everything is fresh and new. As adults, we can partly simulate or induce the natural microtraumas of our childhood – humour, shock, surprise and zany or surrealistic associations – to help imprint things in memory. The box below gives some examples:

Active listening: aids to memory

- Maximize concentration.
- Mobilize knowledge of subject matter and communication situation.
- Squeeze as much meaning as possible from the input: analyse what the speaker means and how it fits into the speech.
- Mentally process the information using different modes of experience, for rich encoding.
  - ✓ **visual**: visualizing a mental scene of what the speaker is describing, using spatial representation where possible and appropriate;
  - ✓ **verbal**: tagging each point (idea sequence, 'paragraph') with a short label, word or phrase – a precursor to note-taking. This can be powerfully combined with spatializing, by assigning each tag to one finger, or to a location in a mind-map of the speech (cf. Yates 1966; Spence 1984);
  - ✓ **predictive**: trying to anticipate where the speaker is going and what s/he will say next;
  - ✓ **cognitive**: linking what the speaker is saying to your own knowledge;
  - ✓ **perceptual and emotional**: trying to experience what the speaker is saying through different senses ('smelling' a croissant baking; or when hearing "feminization of poverty", picturing and empathizing with women left behind in rural villages);
  - ✓ **critical**: registering your own reaction to what the speaker is saying (agree? disagree? is it logical?);
  - ✓ **projective**: imagining how the audience will react.
- Chunk/segment the speech passage into blocks, or points, and note connections and links.
- Create a mental map/outline of the speech.

The result should be a structured, coherent *mental model*, with rich encoding of speaker meaning, details and desired communicative effects.

Different people may use one, several or all of these rich encoding routes or modes at different times, depending on input, resources and personal inclination. Students should be made aware of all of them, experiment, and find out what works best. In class, instructors can drill and develop these memory support techniques by going through the passage point-by-point and asking "How would you imprint this in your memory? What keyword would you assign to 'tag' the speaker's first point? What mental image could you conjure up to go along with that verbal tag? Which finger will you assign that point to?" etc. In Consecutive, note-taking also serves to fix and support memory, but as a supplement to these basic techniques, not to replace them.

In summary, **Active Listening**, the first base of interpreting, relies on an interplay between linguistic familiarity, supporting knowledge and empathy. Listening must be comprehensive because we need *all* the information – we don't know what is relevant to our audience, at least at first – plus local clues to intentionality, without losing touch with the overall message or point. Knowledge and familiarity with the communication situation are needed to approximate to the level of understanding of the participants: Active Listening is the necessary complement to raise it above a threshold where the interpreter can do useful work (subject to her powers of expression).

Naturally, the ability to extract clues to meaning from speech also depends on the interpreter's familiarity with the source language and culture. Capturing communicative intent and rhetorical effects in a speech in your A language is more instinctive and automatic, but may take more conscious analysis when listening in an acquired (B or C) language, especially in the early stages of training. An important goal of language enhancement is to sharpen this sense and gradually make it more automatic (see CC-7).

Effort spent on Active Listening is amply rewarded, since listening effectively is the greater part of success. In consecutive, the closer you listen and mark the ideas, structure and desired communicative effects, the easier delivery will be. In fact, it is not unusual for a good consecutive interpreter to deliver a better version of the speech than the speaker did; but no amount of eloquence can make up for faulty listening in the first instance.

With this conceptual background in place, here are the main exercises that we have found useful to develop these skills of Active Listening in the Initiation stage of training. These are designed to be additive and complementary, laying the groundwork for consecutive interpreting.

4.2.2 Exercises for Active Listening

4.2.2.1 *Idiomatic Gist (B/C-into-A)*

The first main exercise we recommend for working on Active Listening skills in Initiation is **Idiomatic Gist**. This classic exercise aims at easing students into the habit of listening for sense, not words, and then re-expressing that sense clearly and naturally. Initially developed by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer (1989: 2–7), it is presented here with some refinements that we have found to help maximize its effectiveness.

Materials: Written texts that are linguistically striking, stylistically sophisticated[5] and on the surface difficult to translate, but that present clear ideas on subjects of general interest or current affairs that pose no difficulties in terms of background knowledge requirements. (For a more detailed Speech Difficulty Index for this exercise, see TG-2 Appendix.)

Idiomatic Gist: procedure

1. The instructor introduces the topic and facilitates a brief brainstorming session, to activate relevant background knowledge.
2. A short passage is read out verbatim to the class (from 30 to 45s at first, to keep the focus more on analysis than memory, later in the range of 1–2m).
3. A student who has the language of the passage as a B or C is asked to retell the main ideas in her own A language, expressing them clearly and idiomatically.
4. This oral précis is critiqued for *reliability* – has it accurately captured the main points and logic of the passage? – and for *naturalness* – is the expression normal-sounding for an articulate native speaker and easy to understand?
5. The passage is read out verbatim again, to let the class verify the main ideas and logic, and reflect on the relationship between the words and the meaning.
6. *Optional*: Another student is then asked to give a fuller version, which again is checked for naturalness and reliability.
7. Continue with the next passage.

On this kind of text, listening *superficially* will get you bogged down in surface distractions, whereas if you listen *actively for sense* you will be able to confidently grasp the essential ideas, relate them to your own experience and world knowledge, and be prepared to retell them clearly and in simple, natural language. Here is a sample passage from an appropriate text (further developed for another classroom exercise in 4.2.3 below):

5. However, texts in a very formal, written or literary register should be avoided, especially from B into A.

> It is hard to exaggerate the danger in North Korea's finger-on-trigger taunts to America and the world that it already has a few nuclear bombs, is busily producing the stuff to build more, and will make use of them in whatever ways it chooses. Such nuclear swagger from one of the world's reckless squad jeopardises peace on the Korean peninsula….

The topic should be one that has been in the headlines, the content easy to follow for anyone who doesn't live in a cave. The language, however, is creative and striking: 'finger-on-trigger taunts', 'nuclear swagger' and 'the world's reckless squad', for example, will prove elusive targets for those who would translate them directly. But these expressions do not require any specialized conceptual or terminological knowledge to understand, and can be re-expressed in clear, straightforward language by separating the message from its linguistic package.

The **Idiomatic Gist** exercise has two other important features.

First, your task is to re-capture the main ideas, not give a detailed rendition. This should encourage you to listen for meaning at the 'macro' level, focusing on the message and logic of the passage and sorting out what is essential from what is secondary. A metaphor may help to understand how focusing on the main thread will help build a coherent mental model that makes it easier to recall the supporting arguments and details.

Replanting the Tree

Natural, deliberate and supported memory

A speech to be remembered for interpreting can be likened to a tree that you must transplant and revive with new leaves. Of the original tree, only the outer leaves, producing the aesthetic effect, are visible; but the effect depends on the internal structure as well as the visible leaves, and can't be reproduced without understanding the tree's anatomy. The trunk is the main thrust – the speaker's intention, the point he wants to get across, branching at the nodes (links and topic shifts) into the main arguments or assertions, to which are appended examples, facts and figures, or anecdotes, and finally, smaller twigs for minor asides and digressions – all of this dressed in the SL foliage that gives the tree its appearance and impact – vigorous, appealing, bare, sombre, threatening, etc.

When transplanted, the tree must be re-clothed in new, TL leaves that produce the same effect (which with optimization may also mean changing or adding some twigs – see CC-5.8.4).

Listeners may not see the tree's internal anatomy – and the speaker may not necessarily want them to – but the interpreter must, both to support her own memory and to recreate it. Without losing sight of the trunk, Active Listening and Discourse Modelling can imprint enough of the branching structure in our minds to trigger surprisingly rich recall – at first with a brief prompt from the instructor, or later, a note or mark on the page – of whole local arrangements of smaller branches. Many smaller branches and twigs, however, are easily missed or forgotten – hidden by those pretty leaves, or too precise and unique in shape – and so must be both reliably heard and exactly noted, but without ever losing sight of the trunk and branches.

Second, you must listen in a way that prepares you to render the ideas idiomatically and naturally in a different language. If you focus too much on the words and phrases of the original passage structure, you may fall into the trap of linguistic interference, and perhaps even fail to identify the key ideas and how they are organized. Your instructor may use an amusing test to alert you when (even though you may have fully understood) you say something that is unnatural or incomprehensible:

The Grandmother Test[6]

This is a fun but effective classroom discipline for ensuring that everything a student interpreter says makes sense. Whether summarizing, paraphrasing, or interpreting, you must speak in a way that will make the meaning perfectly clear to your grandma (who is presumed to be a sharp monolingual speaker of your A language, with a straight-talking, no-nonsense attitude to life – if not, any equivalent member of the family circle can be substituted). Use simple, natural language, and avoid any unusual phrases or expressions that would befuddle poor granny, making her scratch her head and go 'huh?'

This works well because imagining speaking to a grandmother helps students relax and use familiar, natural language. The challenge is simple and motivating: make things clear for somebody you are close to, and who you know is relying completely on you to explain something she doesn't understand (unlike your classmates). And with Grandma in mind, it is easier to see how awkward, stilted expression might confuse your 'client', or make her tune out.

From time to time, different students can be assigned the task of serving as 'grandmother': during the delivery, it is her job to monitor for interference (4.3), and to put her hand to her ear and say 'HUH?' out loud whenever the interpreter says anything that fails the grandmother test, i.e. anything that could not conceivably emerge from the mouth of a native speaker talking naturally in his or her own language. Examples:

Original: Yes, country X's economy is in rough shape for the time being, but the government's fiscal stimulus package is clearly starting to make a difference.
Student A: X国经济目前确实有困难，但政府的财政刺激方案显然已经开始做出不同。
Student B (puzzled): Huh? 做出不同？(Huh? *'Produce a difference' [ungrammatical in Chinese]?)
Student A (self-corrects): 财政刺激方案已经初见成效了('the fiscal package is starting to have an effect.')

Original: Le gouvernement doit accompagner la transition au fioul plus cher pour les familles les plus touchées…
Student A: The government must accompany the transition to more expensive fuel…
Student B: Eh? 'Accompany the transition?'

6. Graduates of the ESIT in Paris remember D. Seleskovitch urging students to speak "as if explaining it to your grandmother".

Student A (self-corrects): The government must help poorer families cope as fuel oil gets more expensive.

In classes where all students understand both the SL and the TL, it can be difficult for the listener to pretend s/he did not understand the original and to maintain a high degree of sensitivity to interference and awkward expression. A good workaround is for the designated grandmother to leave the room during the SL delivery, and then return to listen only to the interpretation. This guarantees that 'Grandma' will listen with fresh ears.

Language issues: In these classes you may be tempted to ask for either (i) an explanation of a phrase you're not familiar with, or (ii) a target-language equivalent that you can use to translate a tricky word or expression in the future.

Don't be surprised if your instructor responds somewhat indirectly, with a synonym or a paraphrase. As far as filling gaps in your SL knowledge is concerned, class time is precious, so you will have to check some words in your own time. But as explained in CC-7, an interpreter's attitude to learning words is rather specific: on the one hand, we certainly do need to look up and learn the meaning of all unfamiliar words and expressions we encounter (even in our own A language), to be sure we will understand them when interpreting; but in our B language, we must focus on mastering for our own active use a more restricted (but adequate) subset of words and expressions and be sure we know exactly how to use them, not just grammatically and semantically, but in full awareness of all their connotations and overtones. When we encounter new words and expressions we must always add them to our *passive vocabulary*, but not necessarily to our *active vocabulary* (CC-7.5).

As far as *equivalents* are concerned, while handy and more or less all-purpose equivalents can and should be learned for *some* expressions (jargon and clichés, for example), the best equivalents in context are often *not* the ones found in the dictionary – so a more productive and fundamental strategy is learning to be flexible and be able to express the same thing in different ways.

To illustrate these points, **Idiomatic Gist** can be complemented with the following supplementary exercise, **Listening Cloze**. This is an awareness-building drill that can be used a few times during the Initiation phase of training, but does not need to be a regular part of classroom activities.

4.2.2.2 *Listening Cloze*

This demonstration aims to show how we can understand a passage correctly even when it is presented with gaps. It helps students learn not to focus on individual phrases, but to listen holistically for larger patterns of meaning and to have confidence in their ability to follow (and even predict) the speaker's points and logic. Listening Cloze is a 'smart' (and real-time) adaptation of the cloze tests used in different forms in language testing and interpreter training (e.g. Kalina 2000: 180). In its present form it is designed to raise awareness of redundancy in text and how we don't need to know (or hear) every word to be able to understand a passage.

Materials: A written text in the students' B/C language, from which a number of words and phrases have been strategically removed in advance by the instructor, in such a way that an intelligent listener can fill in the gaps. As this is a confidence-building exercise, it is important to make sure that the intended meaning can be inferred (or approximated) on the basis of sufficient clues in the speech, coupled with available background knowledge.

Listening Cloze: procedure

1. After telling the class who the speaker is and the topic and context of the communication, the instructor reads the SL text aloud to the class in passages of around one minute's length, indicating where there are gaps, for example by pronouncing filled pauses ('mmmmmmmm').
2. The instructor then reads the same passage again from the beginning, but now breaking the flow of speech at each gap for students to fill in with high-probability SL words before continuing.
3. Next, a student is asked to retell the passage in her A language, as a complete and fluent TL communication with all the missing pieces filled in.
4. Afterwards, other students evaluate the performance, and suggest better alternatives for the missing items, in SL and TL. Students will have a better grasp of collocation (word affinities) in their own A language, and ability to fill in the blanks idiomatically.
5. The instructor can pick examples of blanks that were readily filled in and others that proved more difficult, to explain and demonstrate how they could be reconstructed successfully by looking to relevant context, including clues in the text, the speaker's tone (including facial expression and body language, which the instructor can make strategic use of when delivering the speech), as well as background knowledge that students can be expected to have about the topic at hand.

For a harder variant on this exercise, the instructor can stop after each sentence at the *first reading* of the text and ask students to fill in the gap(s) in that sentence before continuing. Depending on the words removed, this may be feasible only on certain highly predictable or formulaic texts – with which students must be familiar – and is therefore better kept for a later stage in training.

Here is an example[7] (with several possible fillers given in brackets for each gap):

7. This short passage is given for indicative purposes only; normally a whole speech should be used.

Speech to the World Health Assembly by the Director-General Elect

This is a moment of great _______ for me [*honour, pride, happiness*], but also one of _______ [*gravity, solemn reflection, humility]*. I do not take this _______ lightly [*appointment, mandate, task, mission*]. I have always been proud to work in health, and especially proud to work for WHO.

Now I will _______ a position of leadership [*be given, be put in, be assuming, be taking up*] that has _____ the health of humanity [*a direct impact on, responsibility for overseeing*]. That is the power of this Organization, its true greatness. The work we do together saves lives and relieves ________ [*suffering*]. I will work with you tirelessly to_________ this world ________ [*rid.….of disease; make….a better place*].

4.2.3 Discourse modelling and outlining

A 'discourse model' is a complex mental representation that we construct while reading or listening to a text or speech that we intend to recall later (see Box and Further reading). Mental *discourse modelling* is thus simply a natural phenomenon that needs to be further developed in interpreters, since the process and the structured memory that it generates provide critical support for both input (comprehension, memory) and output (delivery). During the listening phase, recognizing and grasping macrostructure – the main ideas and how they are organized, 'the point(s)' – is crucial both for understanding and for recall, especially as passages become longer (Kintsch 1998: 167–214). During the delivery phase, the interpreter can then rely on her grasp of this macrostructure to navigate through the speech, and, very importantly, to make her target language speech more coherent for her audience by explicitly *signaling* its macrostructure through the use of various cues, both verbal and non-verbal (4.5.1.2).

What is a discourse model?

According to experts in discourse comprehension, when we read text or listen to a speech, we form a mental model of the discourse that helps us process, consult and recall the information. The richer the model, the more deeply the listener understands and retains the text. 'Richness' refers not only to completeness of content – all concepts and entities are represented or made accessible to the listener – but also to the web of connections between them, which are a measure of the model's coherence – and more, since whatever is read or heard inevitably evokes (by 'spreading activation') memories and knowledge about things not explicitly referred to in the speech, but without which we would not understand verbal messages at all. These extra-textual connections and link-ups with the local and universal background also contribute to the richness of the model and thus the depth of our understanding.

The discourse model is built up from different inputs. Knowledge about the source (speaker or writer), place and occasion of the communication, and the listener's expectations supply an initial frame of reference. Then, the reader/listener decodes the incoming words and structures for linguistic meaning, according to the rules of the language, and derives an interpretation of the utterances against the initial context and whatever needs to be evoked further to make sense of them (TG-12.2.2).

Our understanding of the thrust and content of a verbal message is built up incrementally from any and all clues – linguistic meanings, expectations, perceptions and other knowledge – available at every moment, creating a network of connected representations in short and medium-term memory (4.2.1.4). This network, a 'model' of the speech content and message, serves as the basis for recall, or production in another language. As the speech unfolds, and perhaps even after it is finished, the interpretations reached are revised or adjusted as more signals come in. In particular, some will certainly be deleted, fused or compressed to accommodate the listener's memory, especially if s/he must meet the constraints of a specific task, like having to recall and summarize the material later.

Discourse outlining

The easiest way to introduce students to analysing the structure and workings of discourse is to invoke the idea of an outline.

Almost all students will have had the experience of preparing an outline as a basis for composing an essay or delivering an oral presentation, typically on three levels: (1) main points, or key statements of essential information or arguments; (2) secondary points, supporting, qualifying or elaborating on the main points and fleshing out the discourse; and (3) tertiary points, details and examples. This may be appropriate for planning (or even analysing) whole discourses, but interpreters must usually work with shorter passages, and also need a more fine-grained analysis, showing how segments fit together into an argument structure, clearly specifying *links* – elusive, since memory in the classic learning environment is biased toward semantic content – and also tagging elements like mood.

The **Discourse Outlining** exercise involves listening (actively) to passages of structured discourse, and then creating a point-form outline that reflects their organization and argument structure.

Materials: 'Semi-prepared' speeches delivered by the instructor, from an outline/notes in passages of around 1–2 minutes (and occasionally up to 3–4 minutes, to challenge memory). These speeches should be on a topic of general interest and *highly structured*, i.e. with an introduction, body and conclusion, the body divided into clear sections, with a few main points connected by clear links and transitions. Each main point in turn should include a few clearly articulated sub-points, e.g. elaborations, supporting arguments, examples, caveats, qualifications, again bracketed by appropriate markers.

Discourse outlining: procedure

1. The instructor introduces the speaker, setting, and topic and facilitates a brief *brainstorming* session, to anticipate likely content and activate background knowledge.
2. The instructor delivers a passage to the class (language: students will first do A into A, then B or C into A). Each passage should contain two to three main points, each supported by a few secondary points (in an authentic text there will inevitably also be a few more minor points or digressions) and ideally connected by a variety of different logical links.
3. The class *listens actively*, without taking notes.
4. *Interpretation*: a student is selected to interpret the passage into her A language, focusing on communicating clearly all the main and secondary points, with links and transitions, and what additional detail she can recall. If at any point she gets stuck, the instructor can help by asking a leading question or offering a single keyword as a prompt.

   After the interpretation, feedback should be brief and limited to macro-structure – the main ideas, logic and thread. Only later in Initiation will these retellings be evaluated in more detail, as interpretations per se (4.4). For now, the focus of the exercise is on the next step: working up a written outline reflecting thorough analysis of the discourse structure.
5. *Making a discourse outline:* through group discussion led by the instructor, an outline of the passage is worked out and written up on the whiteboard, in the form of keywords and links. These are laid out using indentation to illustrate visually the hierarchy and organization of the ideas in the speech (see example below). The instructor prompts students to complete the analysis and ensure that the outline is coherent and operational, spelling out all main messages and all coherence relations (both explicit and implicit).
6. *Optional:* listen to the speech again, compare to outline on the whiteboard, and add details.
7. *Improved interpretation:* Another student is selected to interpret the passage again, also into her A language. This interpretation should be more fluent, structured and complete, as it follows a thorough analysis of what the speaker said and how it was organized. This student should be encouraged to deliver the interpretation without looking at the discourse map on the whiteboard, except for occasional glances to prompt recall.

Example:

To practice extracting discourse outlines, we can use the same complex texts as for Active Listening, but for this exercise, oralising them somewhat (see 4.7.1.1). Here is a longer extract from the North Korea article (from *The Economist*, May 1, 2003) cited earlier, that might take around 2.5–3 minutes to present orally in class:

IT IS hard to exaggerate the danger in North Korea's finger-on-trigger taunts to America and the world that it already has a few nuclear bombs, is busily producing the stuff to build more, and will make use of them in whatever ways it chooses. Such nuclear swagger from one of the world's reckless squad jeopardises peace on the Korean peninsula. It also endangers stability in East Asia, where threats hurled at the neighbours risk setting off an arms race and a chain reaction that could tempt several of them, including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, to turn nuclear at speed. And it aims another damaging strike (after Iraq's teasing of weapons inspectors and recent revelations about Iran's uranium enrichment) at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), whose members opened a treaty review this week in an anxious huddle.

Yet it is no big surprise that North Korea should have in effect declared itself the world's ninth nuclear power. America's CIA has long guessed that before an earlier crisis-defusing deal back in 1994, under which the regime agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle plutonium production in return for generous energy assistance, North Korea had probably already got its hands on enough material for perhaps one or two bombs. That crisis had its spine-prickling moments, but this one could be far more dangerous. For, if Kim Jong Il's nuclear claims are true, he may soon have five or six more, with options on others. And more weapons mean enough spares to be able, say, to test one to intimidate the neighbours; or to auction one off to the highest bidder (an Iran, a Libya, or perhaps even an Osama bin Laden). How this crisis unfolds therefore depends on what Mr Kim really does intend to do with his bomb.

Below is an example of the kind of discourse map that can be drawn up on the whiteboard through the analytical procedure described above (this example is presented all in English just for convenience):

Point 1:
(Topic): **There is a danger**: North Korea says/threatens:
it has a few nuclear bombs,
is building more,
and will use them anyway it likes.
(Comment): **Danger is great**
BECAUSE
it could: lead to war on the Korean peninsula
trigger a nuclear arms race in East Asia
seriously undermine the NPT
BUT
it is not surprising
BECAUSE
the CIA suspected that North Korea had the materials, from before 1994.
Point 2: This time the **danger is even greater** than in 1994
BECAUSE
IF their claims are true
THEN they could soon have 5–6 more bombs
SO

they might: set one off to test and intimidate
sell one to terrorists

Point 3:
(Rhetorical question): What will happen?
(Answer): All depends on just what they want to do with the bombs.

By creating an outline of the speech in real time, with main points and links, we give ourselves an overall roadmap to follow. When the time comes to render the speech, begin at the starting point in the map, bearing in mind the topic, context and communicative intent of the speaker, and proceed along the *thread* of the discourse through each component and link through to the conclusion.

The exercise of writing up the discourse outline on the whiteboard is not an end in itself, but rather a process to help ensure that you are correctly identifying the ideas, *chunking* and *linking* them, and creating your own mental map, or discourse model. It will, however, lead rather nicely into note-taking later on (CC-5).

A good outline for speaking (and for interpreting) will set out the **links** that connect the ideas together and make a stretch of discourse into a story, an argument or a speech rather than just a sequence of statements. Whether such **coherence relations** are made explicit with **connectives** or are left implicit, some linguists have suggested that they fall into just a dozen or so categories (Kehler 2002; Pinker 2014: 160–169):

- similarity: *and, similarly, likewise*
- contrast: *but, nevertheless, on the other hand, alternatively*; *although, still*
- elaboration: *that is to say, in other words, also, notice that, in addition*
- exemplification: *for example, such as, including, in particular*
- generalization or specification: *but more generally*, *in particular*
- exception (generalization first): *however, on the other hand, then there is*
- exception (exception first): *nonetheless, nevertheless, still*
- sequence: before-and-after (*and, before, then*) or after-and-before (*after, while, when*)
- result (cause-effect): *and, as a result, therefore, so*
- explanation (effect-cause): *because, since, owing to*
- violated expectation (preventer-effect): *but, while, however, nonetheless, yet*
- failed prevention (effect-preventer): *despite, even though*

… and the simplest of all relations, which for that very reason must often be noted (mentally or graphically): simple coordination (and – and –) between items in a sequence or list.

Note, however, that in discourse there will not necessarily be a one-to-one correspondence between the relationship and the actual connective used. For instance, 'in particular', and especially 'and' can mark various kinds of semantic relationship – not to mention the pragmatic meanings of words like 'well', 'anyway' or 'after all…' (see TG-12.2.2). We can never manage without analysis!

The key thing to remember is that such links *may not always appear as explicit words* (and not surprisingly, often do not translate one-to-one across languages) but are nevertheless *always* present, explicitly or implicitly, between the ideas in any coherent speech; and that *making them explicit mentally*, through active, analytic listening (and later as notes) is vital to getting 'ownership' of the speech for subsequent recall and convincing rendition.

Discourse Outlining builds organically out of the first main exercise, **Idiomatic Gist**. Again, and as always, students must continue to listen actively for the speaker's sense. What is new is that passages gradually become longer: starting from 30–60 seconds, they can progressively expand to two and then three minutes, and occasionally up to four minutes. On these longer (but always structured) passages, special emphasis is now placed on analysing the speech's organization and logic, and the links between ideas. Students now need to grasp not only the sense of each point the speaker makes ('*segment*'), but also its relative weight in the overall argument (its '*contribution*'); how these segments relate to each other ('*coherence relations*') and form cohesive chains of speech ('*sequences*'), joined by links and bracketed by boundaries and transitions ('*discourse markers*' and implicit shifts); and how these sequences are patterned into a coherent, structured speech ('*discourse plan*'). To this end, students learn to take a mental 'X-ray' of the speech.

4.2.4 Concision, compression, summary and gisting

Exercises from memory that involve some reformulation, like retelling and paraphrase, may sometimes raise the question of what is a 'complete' rendition, and the difference between 'concision' (usually good) and for example, summarizing (not usually expected from an interpreter). Instructor and students should have the same understanding of such terms to avoid misunderstanding.

It is important not to confuse *concision* or *compression* – which the instructor may call for when students get too wordy and long-winded – with *summarizing* (précis), or *abstracting* (gisting). Some agreement should be reached on terminology at this point.

Many terms have been used to describe various degrees of 'streamlining' of the interpretation (Jones 1998/2002, for example, talks about 'efficiency'), which is usually welcome up to a point in conference interpreting (but not in judicial and other adversarial or formal settings).

We use *concision* to describe the ability to convey the *same full message, explicit and implicit, without loss*, but more succinctly, i.e. by (a) using fewer, and therefore apter, well-chosen words (and shorter, where possible), and (b) eliminating some blatant redundancy, helped by any other linguistic devices available, such as structuring, intonation and clear links. Concision may shrink the linguistic package by 10 to 25%, perhaps more if the speech is quite redundant; but it stops short of 'omission' since there is no loss of information.

For clarity, we shall use *compression* ('syllable-shrinking', Viaggio 1991) to describe a more vigorous streamlining that includes both maximal concision of expression and fuller elimination of redundancy, plus the actual reduction or omission of minor or irrelevant details and even some 'subjective redundancy' (Chernov 2004 and *passim*) – i.e. information that is not the focus of the speaker's communication but is in the background, and is familiar and apparent in context to the audience, if their cognitive environment is clear to the interpreter (as it should increasingly be as a meeting proceeds). Compression may be welcomed, especially in consecutive (along with brisk delivery), as a time-saver; and in very fast SI, it might indeed be necessary, to keep up (CC-9.2.4). Skilled compression can often reduce the volume in words to around 60% of the original.

Summary (précis) goes even further, with the judicious *omission* of information (or effects) deemed secondary, not essential, such as the details of supporting arguments, examples, qualifications, as well as accompanying description, elaboration, parentheticals, etc. As explained in CC-2.1.7, summary is therefore not part of the 'default' mission of the interpreter and is justified in only three cases:

a. when explicitly requested by a client;
b. when judged appropriate in certain conditions to optimize the service, usually based on a highly informed understanding of the client's wishes and intentions (CC-5.8.4, TG-10.4);
c. as a coping tactic to preserve the essence of the message under extreme conditions of fast and dense input; or during *whispered interpreting*, when the interpreter cannot hear the speaker clearly (CC-2.2.4.1).

Summary may go as far as reducing the message to its macrostructure, i.e. just the headlines (main points), main arguments, and conclusions, and typically shrinks the word or syllable count to just 20–30% of the original.

Abstracting describes the most radical chopping of content, which would only be done in interpreting on explicit request, or under extreme duress (impossibly fast and dense input in SI, and/or extremely difficult accent, that simply doesn't allow the interpreter to capture and convey more than the bare essential message). Abstracting will aim to preserve the main headlines or conclusions, as bullet points or 'stepping stones', possibly reducing length to just 5–15% of the original (CC-9.2.4).

All these procedures result in savings in terms of time and words (syllables) uttered with respect to the original. But while *concision* as we have defined it is part of default conference interpreting (TG-12.2.2.5), *compression* is often but not always welcome; it may, however, sometimes be the only way of keeping up and communicating the speaker's message. Summarizing and abstracting, however, are only acceptable in the situations described. Finally, in some specific settings (judicial, adversarial), 'constrained' interpreting norms (CC-5.8.4) may apply that forbid *any* streamlining, including even attempts at concision.

4.2.4.1 *Compression exercise*

Compression can be drilled as a text-based exercise, where students first highlight keywords in text with a marker, and then use them to produce the tersest possible spoken version. This exercise drills the core pre-skills of analysis and expression that are a main focus of the Initiation stage, and is a useful precursor to the cue-word selection exercise for initiation to consecutive note-taking (CC-5.3). It can also be effectively combined with an introduction to Sight Translation (4.3.2) by performing the two exercises on the same text.

Procedure: For this exercise, the instructor hands out copies of a written text, and students highlight essential keywords with a marker, then try to orally deliver the meaning back uttering just those keywords plus the absolute minimum necessary connecting words to make simple, complete sentences.

Here is an example (English-to-English) showing the possible result of successful compression. The source text (i) appears in regular typeface. The compressed version (ii) consists of selected words kept from the original (bold face) plus phrases abstracted to convey the general meaning (bold caps).

i. Original text as distributed to the class:

> Whereas the financial crisis undoubtedly curbed demand for some goods and services, demand for broadband services has continued to grow. The 2011 Report documents the continuing strength of the sector, highlighting growth in the take-up of high-speed fixed and wireless broadband communications. While some governments injected money into the construction of networks as one of the special measures to stimulate their economies, in most cases this was directed towards greater geographic and social availability and wider social and economic inclusion in the use of services, rather than as a measure to compensate for any reduction in demand for broadband. (99 words)

Students will then highlight some words – shown in bold lower case in (ii) below – but will also need to add words (in bold caps) to produce a terse version (iii) that is not only faithful to the message, but is complete in the sense that it does not deprive the (deemed savvy) audience of any information they would not automatically infer.

ii. Text selectively highlighted for compression (in bold) and reflowed (words added in bold caps):

> Whereas **the** financial **crisis** undoubtedly curbed demand for some goods and services **HAS NOT CUT demand for broadband** services has continued to grow. The 2011 Report documents the continuing strength of the sector **WHICH IS STILL STRONG**, highlighting with **growth in** the take-up of high-speed **fixed and wireless broadband** communications. While **some governments** injected money into the construction of **HAVE BUILT networks as** one of the special **a** stimulus measure to stimulate their economies, **BUT in most cases** this was directed towards **TO EXPAND geographic and social** availability and wider social and economic inclusion in the use of services **COVERAGE**, rather than as a measure, **NOT to compensate for any reduction in demand** for broadband.

iii. Final compressed version:

> **the crisis HAS NOT CUT demand for broadband, WHICH IS STILL STRONG, WITH growth in [both] fixed and wireless. Some governments HAVE BUILT networks as a STIMULUS MEASURE, BUT mostly TO EXPAND (geographic and social) coverage, NOT to make up for any drop in demand** (45 words)

4.2.4.2 *(Optional) resequencing exercise*

An excellent exercise following Discourse Outlining is to ask students – with the help of their Discourse Outline – to render the information elements in a passage in a different or even reverse order. This requires adjusting all the links. It is not too difficult to find speech passages with a structured logical argument that lend themselves to this exercise, provided the message has been thoroughly assimilated. A typical and realistic example might be provided by a Chinese speaker's answer to a yes/no question, which might begin with the words "因为… (Yinwei… [Because…])" and be followed by perhaps a full minute's setting out of context and explanation, perhaps still leaving the *reasons* for his answer only implicit, before concluding with an actual yes or a no. A resequenced consecutive into English could begin with the yes or the no, and then carry on with the 'becauses', teasing apart and tagging each of the reasons embedded in the original explanation while still conveying the content. This is a classic example of reorganizing information to adjust for a cultural difference in discourse patterns; but the exercise is possible with well-chosen texts in any language, and has often been used in interpreter training (though not widely documented).

This is an excellent test of the solidity of the student's discourse model and the depth of understanding of the speaker's message. The ability tested and developed in this exercise will pay off later, either to overcome cultural differences in logic and the order of presentation of arguments and information (Setton 1993a: 252; 1994) or indeed to improve incoherent presentations. These are obviously possibilities that are offered by consecutive, but hardly SI.

4.3 'Deverbalization' and interference-busting

Along with an introduction to how to listen and speak for professional purposes, budding interpreters must be initiated into the mysteries and pitfalls of **language transfer** – crossing the language barrier – beyond and sometimes against what they might previously have learned.

4.3.1 Deverbalization and the *Théorie du sens*[8]

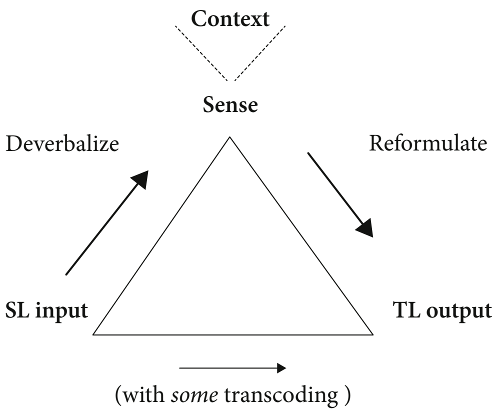
The first conference interpreter trainers soon noticed that even students who understood an SL speech and its message perfectly seemed to have trouble in rendering it naturally and idiomatically, and sometimes in making sense, even in their mother tongue. All the signs pointed to linguistic 'interference': a failure to detach oneself fully from the forms and words used to express the ideas in the source language, and instead express them naturally yet accurately in the target idiom – or as we put it earlier, not getting snagged on the language barrier. The *Théorie du sens* or 'Interpretive Theory of Translation' (ITT), developed by Seleskovitch and Lederer in Paris, saw this problem as symptomatic of a false view of translation as pure linguistic transfer, insisting instead that good Translation[9] could only come from *interpreting* the sense of the speaker's words in context, rather than merely converting them. They thus placed the mental act of 'deverbalization' – discarding or forgetting the words of the original, as it were – at the heart of the process (Seleskovitch 1975; Seleskovitch and Lederer 1986).

The Theory of Sense holds that to produce a translation that is faithful, naturally expressed and makes sense, the translator's (or interpreter's) fundamental focus must be on understanding the speaker's meaning in the context, and reformulating it naturally in the target language, rather than stringing together linguistic equivalents for the words and phrases he uses. This can be illustrated in a diagram, the now famous 'Paris triangle' (adapted from Laplace 1994):

8. 'Theory of Sense'.

9. We follow a recent convention in using the term Translation with an initial capital to refer to all forms of translation and interpreting in any mode.

The 'Paris triangle'



Thus in the diagram, the *primary* route for 'interpreting proper' is 'up' the pyramid via sense and context, then 'down' from there to expression.

This is said to be complemented by a secondary process, *transcoding* (shown along the base of the pyramid, directly from SL to TL equivalents), to a greater or lesser degree depending on the material, the conditions and the context (and 'look-ahead') available. Seleskovitch and Lederer observed that some items in discourse – like names, numbers or technical terms – are often 'transcodable', i.e. can be reliably translated with a standard, context-independent, equivalent term in the target language. In their words, "[t]he linguistic meaning of a statement is one thing, but the sense that the statement takes on in a given context for a given individual is something entirely different; there are nevertheless certain words that need to be taken at face value" (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 8, our translation). Numbers are the best example of transcodables: they have fixed translations, and are quickly forgotten unless noted down (or converted quickly, in SI). In a famous analogy, Seleskovitch compared the process of translation to the baking of a currant bun (*brioche aux raisins*) in which these items are still physically recognizable in the finished bun, surrounded by the dough that has gone through the more complete, 'chemical' transformation of deverbalization and reformulation.

Deverbalization, or conceptual rather than linguistic representation, helps the interpreter to reformulate idiomatically and escape linguistic interference. Although a few items are always transposed from language to language automatically, the basic idea is to cut through the surface forms and structure, work with contextual meaning, and formulate freely and flexibly in appropriate TL. Deverbalization, most emphatically, does *not* mean giving a rough or approximate rendering that sacrifices accuracy – on the contrary, it is all about ensuring that the speaker's meaning is accurately conveyed in clear and effective target language.

At Initiation, the classic ‘interference-busting’ exercise is Sight Translation, which we introduce below. To close this chapter we will look more closely at the phenomenon of linguistic interference (4.8.3), and ask how much of interpreting consists of (partly automatable) ‘transcoding’ (4.8.4).

4.3.2 Introduction to Sight Translation

Perhaps the best exercise to raise awareness of the (sometimes subtle) effects of linguistic interference and cultivate deverbalization is Sight Translation (ST), which – despite its name – is a form of interpretation, not text translation (see CC-6 for an overview). ST is a particularly powerful training tool since it calls for the oral reformulation of written text, which remains visually present and therefore poses a greater risk of interference.[10] Variations on ST will be used more intensively later in the course, mainly as preparation for SI.

These easy, introductory sight translation exercises are done in three steps: reading aloud in SL, followed by *same-language paraphrase* by students who are native speakers of the SL (A to A), and only finally by the generation of TL versions by students whose A language is the target language (B/C to A).

The text used should initially be something easy in a didactic style (e.g. airport non-fiction, or a business ‘how to’ book). The procedure is similar to the compression exercise described above, but this time with the focus on paraphrase:

i. The text is distributed to all students.
ii. One student reads a paragraph aloud as naturally and ‘didactically’ as possible while the others listen – reading without seeming to read is an art that needs to be practised.
iii. The class then studies the paragraph for about 30 seconds, circling or underlining the transcodables (see Deverbalization, 4.3.1), i.e. words that will be left unchanged in the paraphrase, such as proper names and important technical terms.
iv. A-to-A paraphrase: one student (a native speaker of the SL) is then called on to paraphrase the passage in the same language, changing everything except the transcodables. (This is similar to the Oralisation skill which students will need for their own practice, described in this chapter in 4.7.1.1.)
v. The class discusses the paraphrase, suggesting alternative versions; the instructor can identify some patterns, and suggest tips or heuristics to help make paraphrase easier or faster.

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10. This text-to-speech reformulation across languages addresses the key dimensions of *lexical* and *syntactic* interference (a third type, phonological interference under aural exposure to the other language, must be combatted during SI training).

vi. B/C into A retelling: After same-language paraphrase of three or four paragraphs, a student (a native speaker of the TL) is chosen to retell the meaning of all those paragraphs fluently, in idiomatic, natural-sounding TL – with or without looking at the SL text. (Discuss the difference in naturalness; some students should listen without following the text and play the role of grandmother, as described in 4.2.2.1.)
vii. Optionally, discussion can include critical analysis of the text: who is addressing whom, for what purpose, with what assumptions/prejudices, in what style/register, with what nuances and sensitivities, and leaving what unspoken? And how might this understanding affect paraphrasing/interpreting choices?

Here is an example of a beginner-level extract for sight translation, in which transcodables – terms with invariant meanings and equivalents – are underlined and can stay unchanged (in this example text, these include numbers, precise terms like 'average', and words that are there for their form alone, like 'eated'):

> A human baby produces its first real <u>words</u> at about eighteen months of age. By the age of <u>two</u>, it has become quite vocal and has a vocabulary of some fifty <u>words</u>. Over the next year it learns new words daily, and by the age of <u>three</u> it can use about <u>1000 words</u>. It is now stringing words together in short <u>sentences</u> of two or three words, calling your attention to objects, requesting this and that. Its command of <u>grammar</u> is already nearly as competent as an adult's, though it will make amusing yet plainly logical mistakes, saying <u>'eated' instead of 'ate', 'mouses' instead of 'mice'</u>, and so on. Then the floodgates open. By the age of <u>six</u>, the <u>average</u> child has learned to use and understand around 13,000 words; by <u>eighteen</u>, it will have a working vocabulary of around <u>60,000 words</u>. […]
>
> This is an extraordinary achievement. It is no wonder that the machinery which makes this possible is so expensive to maintain. Although your brain accounts for no more than 2 per cent of your body weight, it consumes 20% of all the energy you eat. …
>
> (From Dunbar, Robin (1996/2004), *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*, p. 3)

Here is a possible A-to-A paraphrase (leaving the transcodables unchanged):

> An infant will start to speak actual words at the age of around one and a half. At two, babies are already pretty talkative, and may know a few dozen words. In the next twelve months the child will widen its vocabulary steadily until at three years old, it knows around a thousand words, and can make simple 2–3 word sentences to name things, or ask for something. At this age, children can already use grammar almost as well as grown-ups. They still make errors that are funny, but are based on rules, like 'eated' instead of 'ate', or 'mouses' instead of 'mice'. But then their learning suddenly speeds up. On average, a six-year old has a vocabulary of over 12,000 words, and nearly five times that when they are eighteen.

This is very, very impressive. So it's not surprising that the brain needs such a lot of energy – in fact a fifth of all the calories you eat! (or, on a pound-by-pound basis, ten times as much as the rest of your body!)

The exercise may sometimes seem silly or contrived ('infant' for 'baby', 'around' instead of 'about', for example) but the idea is to cultivate the paraphrasing reflex that is key to interpreting. Texts chosen for sight translation should contain structures that, though routine in the source language texts, are mildly, then (later in the semester) more seriously challenging into the target language(s) of the class. There will almost always be some transcodables, but after a while, as students grasp the balance between linguistic flexibility and fidelity, these should no longer need to be flagged by the instructor.

It will also be useful to discuss what is and what is not a transcodable. Students may not realize just how much can be successfully paraphrased, and thus 'translated' more flexibly into TL. Later, the paraphrasing stage can be skipped, jumping straight into the sight translation (see CC-6.2.2). But at the first sign of literalness and awkward TL, this step should be reinstated: at this stage, paraphrase first, then translate.

4.4 Short Consecutive without notes

After some initial training in delivery skills (below), students can now combine their active listening, deverbalizing and idiomatic retelling skills in some easy interpreting in short consecutive mode, rendering speech in segments from as short as 10 seconds (as in dialogues) to longer ones of 30–45 seconds.

4.4.1 Materials and classroom procedure

Initially, speeches should still be given by the instructor or a trained native speechmaker (a teaching assistant or second-year student on the programme, for example) so as to ensure that they are clear, well-organized and suitable for this stage in the training. This first taste of real interpreting in easy formats will get students used to 'being' the speaker. They should be challenged to interpret points of view or testimonies that are completely out of character – for example, with male students interpreting speeches about what it felt like to be pregnant and to breastfeed.

Procedure: At each pause or turn, the designated interpreter must immediately render the speech segment just concluded into clear and fluent TL. This is fast-paced, live interpreting, in which each student performs as the interpreter for several minutes at a time, alternating with the speaker without any break and without any prompting or help. All feedback is noted down to be given after the end of a student's turn as interpreter. The aim should be to combine accuracy with natural (idiomatic, fluent) expression, but also flexibility – the ability to spontaneously rephrase or explain, instead of stopping in your tracks to worry over the right equivalent – and fidelity to the speaker's tone and point of view (4.4.3 below).

In this exercise, students should get both positive and critical feedback after each turn. The instructor will commend fluency and confidence, picking up only on major meaning errors and distortions.

4.4.2 Dos and don'ts: ground rules of interpreting

These first realistic exercises will afford an opportunity to get across some very basic **dos and don'ts of interpreting** for beginners:

1. DO NOT react overtly when listening to the speaker. Don't nod enthusiastically (at most an initial neutral nod of acknowledgment is acceptable[11]). Don't mumble 'uh-huh' in agreement, shake your head, frown in amazement or disagreement, or laugh out loud at the speaker's jokes.
2. DO speak in the first person, as if you were the speaker.
3. DO project the speaker's tone and energy, but at an appropriate level of intensity; DO NOT 'ham it up', or mimic, upstage or outshine the speaker.
4. Do not embellish or over-interpret; if uncertain, be cautious and wait for more context (or ask the speaker to clarify).
5. DO state ideas clearly for your audience – 'make sense'; DO NOT blindly 'translate' what you have not understood.
6. DO finish your sentences, and avoid backtracking.
7. DO follow the basic rules of good delivery: project your voice, make eye contact, eliminate fillers.

Finally, the following guidelines can be given to students at this stage for when they are really stuck on a term or a passage:

- If you have understood but have trouble finding an *equivalent term or expression* immediately,
  - paraphrase, or (if there is time) explain; or,
  - use a more general or superordinate term, staying alert for clues downstream so that you can specify or clarify if the occasion arises, and/or get it right next time.
- If the problem is one of *understanding* (but to be used sparingly):
  - get help if possible (later, in SI, from your boothmate); or,
  - call attention to your difficulty, and/or ask the speaker to repeat or explain.

11. For example with a new speaker, a shy speaker or one clearly unused to interpretation.

In consecutive, the interpreter can quickly check a fact or figure with the speaker before rendering the passage. If you do need to ask a question, be sure to phrase it crisply and precisely, in a way that makes clear exactly what information or clarification you are seeking, and that invites the shortest possible answer from the speaker.

- Do not ask a big, open-ended question that may prompt the speaker to elaborate at length;
- Never ask a question that could embarrass the speaker, for example, by asking him or her to clarify deliberately vague language.[12]

4.4.3 Role and mediation issues (impartiality and fidelity)

The focus of this first dynamic, no-notes experience of realistic interpreting is on putting together and rehearsing what students have learned so far about attentive listening, analysis and effective speaking, before moving to note-taking. But naturalistic, simulated real dialogues will also test how well they cross the 'role barrier' (4.8), identifying with and faithfully representing the position of each speaker, sometimes with rapid switches.

The justifications, risks and benefits of 'optimizing' the interpretation will not be addressed until later (CC-5.8.4 and 10.4), but these first realistic exchanges will inevitably throw up examples of more complex issues like 'untranslatability', unjustified editing, censoring, or embellishing, over- or under-translation, and how to prioritize to ensure fidelity to all speakers in difficult conditions. Students will gradually discover these more complex dimensions of fidelity as the course progresses, both in theoretical and practical terms (and not least, how it is judged in the testing and certification of interpreters).

4.4.3.1 *Over-translation and under-translation*

As students first come into contact with actual interpreting, the main problems to be overcome will be with comprehension, memory and analysis, and deverbalization. At this stage, *translation* issues per se should be relatively infrequent, by design: input speeches are general and accessible, free of culturally loaded terms, extremely nuanced expression or subtle metalinguistic effects, and are always preceded by briefing and brainstorming to activate relevant TL phrasing. However, one type of error in particular, and its opposite, may crop up from the start:

> **Over-translation**: the TL rendition inappropriately goes beyond what the speaker actually said, or intended to convey.
>
> **Under-translation**: the TL rendition only partially or unsuccessfully conveys relevant meaning that is important to the speaker's message.

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12. See e.g. discussion of 'non-denial denials' in 4.4.3.1 below, and TG-10.4.5.1.

We use these terms here to refer not to distortions or losses of meaning that are due to sloppiness, inattention, poor memory, or flawed technique, but to actual translation choices that go either too far, or not far enough. For example, *under-translation* may come from a well-meaning desire to simplify and speak plainly, but that in fact results in a loss of impact, tone, or even of important semantic or pragmatic meaning. In the novice, this may just reflect inadequate expressive ability, especially when speakers use colourful, idiomatic, or emphatic phrasing. *Over-translation* is often a symptom of the interpreter's 'overenthusiasm', a desire to explicate fully the speaker's meaning even when he was (perhaps intentionally) understating, indistinct, incomplete, unclear, or vague.

For example, if a journalist questions the CEO of a research institute about accepting funding from certain sources, and he protests that 'we are not for sale', to render this as 'we are neutral' would be under-translation; to say 'we are not prostitutes' would be the opposite.

Either error can result from good intentions – trying to be more communicative – or an over-hasty use of otherwise valid processing tactics: as explained in the box in 4.2.1.1, memory can often be boosted (and effort saved) by recognizing a familiar schema, but with the risk that the remembered schema overrides the speaker's actual – and perhaps more original – intended message. Both under- and over-translation can result from taking this cognitive shortcut without proper care.

One example of a trap of this kind is the 'non-denial denial', defined as "a statement that seems direct, clear-cut and unambiguous at first hearing, but when carefully parsed is revealed not to be a denial at all, and is thus not untruthful".[13] This is a device that politicians or business leaders may use to give the impression of denying a rumour or allegation without actually doing so. A recent example was the White House spokesman's statement (in autumn 2013) that the United States "is not monitoring and will not monitor the communications" of German Chancellor Angela Merkel[14] – which sounded like a denial, but in fact, by only referring to the present and the future, did not deny that it had done so in the past. It is all too easy for the less vigilant interpreter, influenced by the grave tone and demeanour of the speaker, to 'recognize' this as a blanket denial and inadvertently and enthusiastically add 'and never has', or make that implication in their TL formulation. Other common examples include statements by politicians when asked

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13. This definition is from Wikipedia. *The Sunday Times* has defined it as "an on-the-record statement, usually made by a politician, repudiating a journalist's story, but in such a way as to leave open the possibility that it is actually true."

14. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/10400865/White-House-US-is-not-listening-to-Angela-Merkels-phone-calls.html (Accessed January 17, 2016).

https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/10/23/readout-president-s-phone-call-chancellor-merkel-germany (Accessed December 3, 2015).

by the press if they are planning to run for office, or to resign (see TG-10.4.5.1 for an example – 'it must be August' – with commentary on translation strategy), and executives asked about takeover plans.

When expertly deployed, the 'non-denial denial' does not call attention to itself, but leaves the door open to different, conflicting interpretations. The challenge for the interpreter here, and with other kinds of deliberately vague language, is to construct a target language discourse with the same characteristics, and the trap to be avoided is over-explaining, disambiguating, or otherwise producing a TL version that precludes an interpretation which the original plausibly supported. (Note that it would be completely inappropriate, and a disservice to the speaker, for the interpreter prior to rendering to ask the speaker for clarification! See 4.4.2 above on ground rules.)

Students must become attuned to these dangers and risks of distortion. The solution lies first and foremost in active and *vigilant* listening and analysis. Only then, if a real translation challenge remains, find a safe equivalent for the nuance (or hedge, or fudge, or ambiguity), or failing that, restore the effect in the TL discourse in another way – which may even be simply by intonation.

4.4.3.2 *The interpreter's role: basics*

This will also be a good time to reinforce the most basic rule regarding the *professional* interpreter's **impartial role**: suppress your own views, sympathies or preferences when interpreting; do not let them colour your interpretation. Unlike a media commentator who is merely doubling or 'acting as' interpreter (perhaps alternating commentary and interpreting), on no account make comments on or censor speakers in pursuit of some other goal than interpreting.

More complex role and mediation issues will be discussed later in the course (10.4), with examples and case studies provided by the instructor (TG-10). At this stage, we can take note of the essentials: convey each speaker's opinions, position and tone as faithfully as possible, make no substantive additions or omissions on your own initiative, nor add any personal commentary, however interesting or helpful (Jones 1998: 18–21); betray no personal views or sympathies; briefly explain any 'untranslatable' concepts; avoid over- and under-translation.

4.5 Public Speaking and delivery skills

A message fully understood and captured (through Active Listening and later, notes) is still only a virtual plan for communication that must then be realized through effective delivery. While eloquence without fidelity is disastrous in an interpreter (hence the priority given here to Listening), a speech that is mumbled or rendered haltingly or without conviction, however accurate and complete, is largely wasted if the audience 'switches off'. On the principle (derived from Relevance Theory, TG-12.2.2) that the quality of a communication is a trade-off between the effects a listener can derive from a speech and the effort required to get them, delivery is not an added luxury: it has a direct impact on how the message is received, and is thus a *fundamental component of interpretation quality.*

In consecutive, interpreters often have to work in large rooms with poor amplification, and they will be resented for taking up valuable time unless they can be efficient *and* engaging. In SI, the user gets only a voice: the missing dimensions of gesture and facial expression must be replaced by more expressive use of prosody and vocal range. High-exposure events like televised addresses by political leaders demand polished public speaking not only in the speaker but also in the interpreter. Rhetorical skills have therefore always been a must for interpreters: "A good interpreter must be a trained public speaker" (Herbert 1952: 59).

How a speech is **prepared** and **delivered** makes a big difference to how well it gets across to the audience, and also to how comfortable it is to interpret, so it is important for trainees to understand the mechanisms of delivery from both a **speaker's** and a **receiver's** perspective.

Here is a simple typology, drawing on our own experience and the work of authors who have recognized and tried to quantify this parameter (Lucas 2004; Pöchhacker 2004):

Speech delivery – a typology

1. <u>Unprepared</u> or <u>impromptu</u> ('off-the-cuff') speech: "A speech delivered with little or no immediate preparation" (Lucas 2007).
2. <u>Semi-prepared</u>[15] speech: the speaker has thought in advance about the structure and content of his presentation, and typically has prepared an outline and/or point-form notes, but is to a significant extent verbalizing this content spontaneously. This is the optimal kind of speech for interpreting, and will be the standard type of input used for training until the later stages, when more awkward material is introduced – formal and scripted, but also very loose and incoherent (CC-8.5, CC-9).
3. <u>Scripted</u> presentations
   a. *Pseudo-oral speech*: this refers typically to speech delivered verbatim from a text that has been designed and crafted for this purpose (as in the case of most formal or ceremonial speeches), and read with pseudo-oral features by a trained speaker. The same relatively 'dense' effect, due to low redundancy, deliberate choice of words, structure, rhythm and various rhetorical tropes may also be produced by a speech learned by heart.

15. Lucas (2004) calls this 'extemporaneous', but we prefer to avoid this term since it (or 'extempore') is sometimes used interchangeably with 'impromptu' i.e. unprepared speech.

b. *Recited text*: in contrast, this refers to text that has *not* been drafted with a view to oral delivery that is read aloud verbatim (or pseudo-oral text that is read poorly, or too quickly, losing its oral quality).

The lines between these types may be blurred. Speakers may read whole sentences and paragraphs verbatim from their 'notes'; or, if the speaker has made an identical presentation many times, and/or knows the material inside out, a type (2) speech based on outline notes and memory may be as fast and dense as type 3(b), although the language will still be more congenial to interpreting. News broadcasts are scripted and professionally presented pseudo-orally; however, they are not speeches but almost pure vehicles of information, and are thus usually much too fast and dense for interpretation.

4.5.1 Components of Public Speaking

Effective speaking is a core skill in interpreting, but as with other communication skills, some aspects of it are amplified, while others are less relevant but nevertheless useful pedagogically. Although interpreters don't have to prepare their own presentations, learning to do so is very instructive, as well as being a necessary tool for learning skills and practising in groups in and out of class. Preparing a presentation for our purposes involves:

1. choosing a topic, as well as a plausible audience, occasion and purpose for the communication;
2. researching the subject matter and its real-world background;
3. planning the points to be made, taking into account the purpose of the speech, audience, etc.;
4. outlining a structure and flow, from introduction through body to conclusion, to make these points most effectively;
5. inserting some telling phrases, rhetorical effects, self-deprecating humour, quips, quotations, statistics, etc.;
6. practising making the speech;
7. presenting live to the audience, referring to your point-form outline but speaking freely and communicatively.

Points to remember for each stage:

1. *From the planning stage*: **know your audience** ('audience design') – who they are, how much they know, what they think they know, their biases, motivation for listening to your talk – and of course (this seems obvious but is often forgotten when simulating), **know the purpose of your talk**.

   Every speech in the interpreter training classroom should have a clearly defined target audience and purpose, and this information should be made explicit to students, as it will guide their strategies, both as presenters and as interpreters.

2. *In the planning and outlining stage:* Have a clear and logical structure. Pitch your speech at the right level for your target audience. Make your meaning clear by introducing and defining any special terms, explaining unfamiliar concepts, using examples or metaphors to illustrate them, and avoiding unnecessary jargon. Put things in context for your listeners, and restate important ideas in different words. Anticipate likely objections and points of resistance, and proactively defuse them.[16]
3. When speaking in a B language, be aware of cultural conventions. For example, British or Scandinavian speakers might apologize for their lack of preparation, knowledge or speaking skills, but not North Americans, who will also be less likely to use proverbs or quote poetry or the classics.
4. *In the practising stage*: record yourself and listen critically to your own delivery. Time yourself, and work on your pacing.

Public Speaking is an ancient art that has probably changed little over the centuries (see Further reading). As far as the Western rhetorical tradition is concerned, at least – there are others, of course, but less widely represented in modern international discourse – we can still relate its components to Aristotle's classic three 'appeals' or modes of persuasion: 'ethos', 'logos' and 'pathos', adapted here for interpreter training. The first two, especially, highlight two important dimensions of oratory for interpreters – delivery and organization – and can serve as the main foci of this Initiation to Public Speaking. We have adapted the third – 'pathos' – more loosely, assimilating it to 'style' (and related optimization choices), which will not become a focus in interpretation exercises per se until later, after basic interpreting skills have been mastered.

4.5.1.1 *Delivery ('ethos')*

First and foremost, future interpreters must grasp the basics of *good delivery* in both its nonverbal and verbal dimensions.

'Delivery' for our purposes here includes voice projection, eye contact, posture, vocal control, and other dimensions of 'paralanguage', as listed below – but not choices of words or expressions. Delivery is at least as important for interpreting as it is for speaking on one's own behalf, whether impromptu or from notes, or reading aloud from text. It is the one aspect of public speaking over which interpreters have the most control, and most directly bears on their credibility as professional communicators.

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16. Students will find useful tips in up-to-date handbooks on public speaking like J. Donovan's *How to give a TED talk*, in Dale Carnegie and Toastmasters guides, or even in classical rhetoric. See Further reading.

On the non-verbal side, the most important requirements are:

a. Establish **eye contact** with the audience (hold eye contact with one person for a few seconds, then switch, covering all parts of the room – including the camera) and visually monitor the audience's understanding, reactions and other non-verbal feedback.
b. Adopt an appropriate **posture** and **demeanor**: stand or sit up straight (but not ramrod) and use confident, open body language. Don't slouch, fidget, spin a pen around or fiddle with an object, touch your hair, put your hands in your pockets, lean to one side, constantly shift weight from one foot to the other, roll your eyes or grimace…
c. Match **gesture, movement** and **facial expression** to content – for example expressing condolences, vs. energizing salespeople at a sales rally, vs. taking the audience into your confidence when sharing a 'secret'. This can be demonstrated by the instructor, and by watching videos of good speakers, with and without the sound. In general, convey a friendly and sincere attitude.

On the *verbal* side:

d. **Project your voice**, be clearly audible to all (even the bored and hard-of-hearing). Diaphragm breathing exercises help learn to project without shouting.
e. **Eliminate <u>all</u> fillers** (um, er, ah; euh, bon; ese-e…, ano-o-o…, 这个，那) – pause instead, if necessary.

> **Voice training** by an orthophonist should be made available to all students at least as an option, to place the voice and enhance vocal quality and resonance; improve projection, diction and breathing (also for stress control); and eliminate verbal tics.

f. **Control your speed**. Don't rush ahead breathlessly (this is common, due to nerves); but equally, don't bore your audience to tears by speaking unnaturally slowly (less common, but no less annoying). Vary your rhythm to hold the audience's attention, but in tune with the message – for example, pausing deliberately (but not histrionically) after rhetorical questions, before important points, after recapping a key idea and before switching to a new topic.
g. **Vary your pitch**. Don't speak in a monotone; use your intonation to accentuate key words, nuance the message, and help the audience tune in to your meaning. (Prosodic patterns appropriate to each language can be studied and best of all, practised by shadowing recorded speeches by excellent professional speakers – see CC-7.4.2.)
h. **Enunciate clearly**. Don't mumble or slur your words. Pronounce names, titles, unusual terms and numbers especially clearly (e.g. 17 vs. 70, million vs. billion).

i. **Stress the right words** in each sentence as required by the message *and* the conventions of the language. For example, contrastive stress and intonation are an intrinsic and key feature of spoken English that is often neglected in undergraduate-level language teaching. This can be practised by reading aloud after first underlining the contrasted words to be stressed – if possible, have a native speaker check and go over your recordings with you. (This ability will eventually be critical for communicative 'bullet-point' summarizing under extreme speed conditions in SI – see CC/TG-9.)
j. **Avoid backtracking** – finish each sentence the way you start into it – and speak in complete sentences. (Later, in SI, this will need especially strict supervision, by both instructors and the student herself through self-monitoring)
k. In general, be (or at least act) **confident, sincere and natural**. Confidence is the key to credibility.

The initial priority in Public Speaking (first 2–3 weeks) is to identify and target any serious deficiencies in each student's delivery (first in presentations they give in their own A language; later, in their retellings). Students tend to come in with one or more bad habits, such as too many fillers, too much backtracking, a flat monotonous voice, failure to project. Targeting and fixing the most visible and audible problems is half the battle.

Practice delivering short (semi-prepared) speeches, anecdotes or statements (short stories with a moral, indignant complaints, etc.) will suffice. These should be immediately played back on video and critiqued, followed by the instructor's demonstration of better technique on selected excerpts. The student can mimic this improved delivery, re-presenting the material one or more times until satisfactory. Coaching can follow 'deliberate practice' principles (TG-2.6.2): a focus for each session, working on one thing at a time; instant feedback (with interruptions if necessary); and frequent repeat performances.

After fixing any glaring issues, the next priority is to improve and optimize delivery in all the verbal and non-verbal dimensions listed above. This will take time and practice, and will benefit from detailed feedback and repeated performances. A semester of regular practice with a demanding instructor and peer feedback will often be needed (perhaps more in the face of strongly ingrained social or cultural conditioning[17]) to reach an acceptable professional level, and these skills should be monitored and continue to improve throughout the entire course.

17. In some cultures, for example, young women are traditionally taught always to speak in a small, shy voice.

After a few weeks of emphasizing basic delivery skills ('ethos'), Public Speaking instruction can progress to the next phase, 'logos'. The focus here is on structure, flow and organization, which must be practised and tested in longer and more structured speeches (at least 4–5 minutes, and potentially up to 10 or more minutes depending on available class time) – while still continuing to monitor and work on the 'ethos' (delivery) skills already covered.

4.5.1.2 *Structure and signposting ('logos')*

The second instrument of conviction in Public Speaking is 'logos', or the sequence, organization and structuring of the material presented. In interpreting, we have already seen how the process of capturing speech structure enhances memory, analysis and appropriation of the speech. In the presentation phase, clear structure adds to credibility. Typically, a good speech has an opening, a body, and a conclusion:

1. *Opening ('incipit')*: The opening words of a speech should grab attention, establish the credibility of the speaker, build a rapport with the audience and confirm that it is worth their while to invest this (ever more) precious resource – attention – in listening to this speaker on this topic. Successful speakers often open with an arresting or shocking statement, quotation or statistic, a rhetorical question, or an engaging or humorous anecdote (cf. TED Talks, *Vital Speeches*, C-SPAN – see Further reading).

2. *Body of the speech*: this should be well-organized with explicit structure: a clear succession of points and arguments, in a 'cognitively friendly' order (chronological, spatial, causal, problem-solution, etc.). A model speech for training purposes might make three or four main points. The importance of 'signposting' in the form of signaled links, transitions and topic shifts cannot be overemphasized for conference interpreting. These verbal and vocal markers help the audience maintain attention and follow the argument with minimum effort.

A 'preview – view – review' structure' is also known to facilitate communication and audience message retention ("tell 'em what you're going to tell them, then tell 'em, then tell 'em what you've told 'em"). Such 'previews' and 'reviews' – including occasional partial recaps on the way if the material is complex and involved – are much more necessary in speech than in writing, since the audience can't go back and re-read the text.

Speakers (and interpreters) should have a rich repertoire of such verbal signposts, allowing shades of meaning beyond the simplistic 'right, next I'd like to talk about…'. Expressions can be collected over time from good speakers (CC-7.3.3).

Sequencing ideas

Here is a brief guide to basic 'logical' or comfortable ways of sequencing ideas (adapted from Trzeciak and Mackay 1994):

- Most important to least important
- Past to present
- Steps or stages in a process or event
- Well-known to lesser-known facts or ideas
- Simple to complex
- General to specific
- Global to local, macro to micro, or vice-versa
- From problem to solution
- From causes to results

These can all be seen as classic but more typically Western-culture schemes. At a more sophisticated level, some cultures favour (and appreciate) symmetrical or cyclical argument structures, such as the Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis pattern, or more generally, argument – counterargument – conclusion, prized in some European intellectual and rhetorical traditions, or the spiral, converging patterns said to prevail in some African discourse.

3. *Conclusion*: this should be signaled in advance, for example by recapping the main arguments, before leaving the audience with something to ponder or 'take away', or making a call for action. As the last thing the audience will hear, a conclusion should be memorable: students can experiment with a quotation, an appeal, a challenge, a succinct moral lesson, or even an unexpected change of direction. One especially effective technique (but not to be abused) is to come full circle by returning to the beginning of the speech and closing a loop left open or a question left unanswered from the introduction.

It is well worth spending class time looking at typical speech organization patterns, as well as rhetorical techniques, including the more advanced patterns of argument and counterargument often found in political discourse; and time out of class reading and studying successful and famous speeches (see Further reading). This will also raise students' sensitivity to speech texture and structure on the 'passive' side, in the input to interpreting, increasing familiarity and facilitating anticipation.

4. *Time allocation* – apportioning time between introduction, body (and each point and sub-point) and conclusion – also takes practice. Here again, previewing the main points helps to avoid common pitfalls, such as running out of time halfway through, or getting caught up in details and failing to convey the big picture.

Once the basics of organization and patterning are in place, students will also benefit from spending some time studying another aspect of 'logos': the workings of argument and persuasion – as well as fallacies of reasoning and common problems in argumentative discourse (e.g. confusing correlation with causation, slippery terms, faulty analogies, circular reasoning: see Weston 2000).

4.5.1.3 *Language, expression, rhetoric ('pathos')*

In Aristotle's three modes of persuasion, 'pathos' is the appeal to the audience's emotions. We appropriate this term for our purposes to refer to the interpreter's skillful use of language and rhetoric – essentially, style – to bring the speaker's personality and effects to life in the target language speech, reflecting his tone, choices of colourful or original language (including culture-specific 'local flavour', where appropriate and feasible), rhetorical devices, humour, nuance and irony, preserving the exact level of hedging, imprecision and indirectness adopted by the speaker, and giving listeners access to some extent to what is unspoken or 'between the lines'. This third dimension can be considered the highest level of what the interpreter tries to convey, and is what ultimately makes a speech a speech, not just the reporting of whatever information it contains.

In Initiation, as the reader will have guessed, we are still a long way from this performance goal, which will only come into view after 'ethos' and 'logos' have been mastered in speechmaking, then in retelling, consecutive capture-and-rendering technique has been consolidated, and the spectrum of the interpreter's optimization choices has come into focus in classroom feedback (CC-5.8.4). It will then increasingly be foregrounded in the 'polishing' phase.

However, this dimension leaps out of any authentic speech, and students will become more sensitive to it through analysis of real input speeches in class, and when discussing interpretations and re-doing them. This awareness can be developed by giving students an introduction to contemporary rhetoric and verbal tools of persuasion in their different working languages; and in interpreting classes, by constantly and relentlessly guiding students to identify clues to the speaker's intent and to rhetorical devices and their effects, including 'special' effects sought by the use of colourful (or loaded), vague, culture-bound or body language.

In the context of Public Speaking training, students can begin developing this sensibility in planning and delivering their own sovereign presentations geared toward a particular audience and purpose, aiming to convey emotional impact and carry an audience. The following checklist may be useful:

- Use *register* appropriate to the audience and occasion.
- Use language with *precision* and *flair*: especially in your A language, challenge yourself to use colourful, impactful expressions – 'le mot juste'. Leave no ambiguity as to your meaning (unless you mean to be ambiguous).[18]
- Pay attention to *nuance* (especially in political speech, where nuance often ***is*** the message).
- Shun verbiage; but do use repetition purposefully (for recapping, or emphasizing).
- Study political speechwriting, read and analyse successful speeches from different countries, on different issues and across the political spectrum.
- Use rhetorical devices effectively – parallelism, alliteration, allusion, metaphor, intertextuality – if fully mastered (especially in a B language).

Audience awareness (or 'audience design', see also CC-9.2.2; TG-10.5.3) can also be tested by asking students to present the same content (arguments) to different imaginary audiences: receptive or sympathetic vs. sceptical or hostile; knowledgeable, expert vs. lay or uninformed; junior high school students, ESL listeners, etc.

Finally, rendering emotive speech and high oratory is also made more challenging by the risks that must be taken in aiming for the same impact in TL. Mastery of this genre will therefore also need a good understanding of the optimization continuum (CC-5.8.4) to help the interpreter judge 'how far they should go' in different cases and settings, weighing the benefits of optimization against the risks of over- or under-translation.

Some useful references on speech making are listed in Further reading at the end of this chapter.

4.5.2 Public Speaking: summary

Public Speaking training should focus on the most representative speech form for conference interpreting: semi-prepared presentations (delivered from an outline or notes), in which content and organization are prepared, but verbalization is mostly fresh.

Public Speaking should initially be trained in the A language, until skills are solidly grasped, but practice and feedback on presentation and delivery will definitely be needed in all active languages – and increasingly through the course, more attention will need to focus on sounding convincing also in the B language. Expectations will obviously differ between A and B production in terms of expression, style and rhetorical flourish ('pathos'), but should be comparable on the basics

18. When a speaker is deliberately vague, ambiguous or unclear, the interpreter must recognize this and recreate the desired effect in the target language (CC-5.8.4).

of delivery ('ethos') and coherence ('logos'), though more work may be needed in B on cohesive links.

Early basic training in good speaking, a core skill of interpreting, should yield multiple dividends. First, in learning early to face an audience, students are confronted with their own paralinguistic abilities – voice, posture, projection, timing, stamina. Second, preparing presentations is an excellent way to expand world knowledge,one topic at a time. And third, analysis of successful speeches can help to understand the structural features and devices that make a speech effective. This initiation into the speaker side of communication will pay off at different points in the course.

4.6 Putting it all together: listening, capturing and speaking

After some initial training in active listening and analysis, professional public speaking and the basics of the interpreter's role, students should now be able to give a creditable consecutive interpretation without notes (retelling) – faithful, conveying everything important, and sounding like a real speech.

4.6.1 Consecutive without notes: materials, procedure and feedback

Materials: At this point, speeches should still be semi-prepared, oralised and well-structured, containing a clear argument with some examples and secondary ideas (but no difficult names or numbers), on a topic currently in the news or of general interest. The speaker pauses for interpretation every minute or so for denser passages, up to around two minutes for easier ones.

Procedure: All of the ground rules of public speaking in professional interpreting now apply. After topic activation and brainstorming, the speech is delivered in segments for interpretation. At each pause, one student goes to the podium and interprets. The audience must listen respectfully and refrain from speaking – or helping – during the delivery.

If the student gets really and truly stuck, the instructor may initially help with a quick prompt or cue-word, but will increasingly stay as hands-off as possible until the student has finished. Students must learn to rely on their mental map, to follow the thread through from beginning to end without being prompted.

Feedback: At this stage of training, major problems that need to be addressed and corrected fall into five categories:

- major meaning errors
- glaring omissions of important information

- serious logical inconsistency or incoherence
- awkward expression in TL due to transcoding where deverbalizing was needed
- significant over-translation or under-translation, bias, and other departures from the interpreter's role

Any error in one of these categories should be self-corrected by the student interpreter, aided by probing questions from the instructor. After each self-correction, the instructor should explore the underlying reason for the problem.

The interpreter can now also be given feedback on public speaking skills, including posture, body language, voice projection and control of fillers, as well as links and communicative packaging.

This basic task – retelling an oral passage without notes – looks the same as for the admission test. But after six weeks or so of intensive practice in Initiation, the different gaps and weaknesses tolerated in each individual student for admission should have been eliminated. Improvement over the level at admission should be noticeable in the following:

i. *Completeness*: all main and secondary points should now come through, as well as important details.
ii. *Cohesion and communicativity*: the rendition should now sound like a speech.
iii. *Reliability over a wider range of* topics and speech types.
iv. *Awarenes*s of the choices that have to be made in interpreting and the reasons for them (for example, dealing intelligently with any names and figures, substituting 'my colleague, 'the previous speaker' for a missed name, or an order of magnitude for a missed figure).

When students can confidently apply the techniques of active listening and discourse mapping to process structured oral speech passages and deliver back faithful, fluent versions in the other language covering all the main points and links, speaking communicatively and clearly, then they are ready to proceed to learning note-taking.

4.6.2 Initiation: objectives

In addition to the improvement in listening, analysis, and presentation skills, students will have been initiated into the basic conventions of interpreting, adopting the *interpreter's ethos*. They should now have assimilated, if still largely in theory, the essential spirit of the profession as expressed in this extract from the AIIC (2004/2012) Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters[19]:

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19. http://aiic.net/page/628/practical-guide-for-professional-conference-interpreters/lang/1#33 (Accessed January 18, 2016).

> As conference interpreting is a **professional communication service**, quality in interpreting is a function of communication. It is your job to communicate the speaker's intended messages as **accurately, faithfully, and completely** as possible. At the same time, make it your own speech, and **be clear and lively in your delivery**. A conference interpreter is a communication professional who needs to be a good public speaker, so make your interpretation fluent, expressive, and communicative.
>
> In a number of respects, good interpreting is like acting. As the speaker's alter ego, you must strive to convey both the substance and the emphasis, tone, and nuance of what is said, so as to allow your delegates to comprehend the speaker's messages just as clearly and effectively as those who are listening to the original. Watch the delegates listening to you for their reactions and hold their attention by being **not only accurate but convincing**. Make them forget they are hearing the speaker through an interpreter.

In the real world, we can't always hope for clearly structured, well-organized speeches. This is why the interpreter must always analyse more deeply and searchingly than an ordinary listener, and impose or create structure, to help understanding – but also to be able to fall back, when words and symbols temporarily fail her, on the *memory* of understanding that has been enriched by deep processing. It is on these occasions that the element of 'interpretation' in its original sense is maximized.

4.7 Self-directed learning: first steps

4.7.1 Independent study and practice

To get the most benefit from the course and maximize their own study and practice time, students should learn as soon as possible how to work effectively on their own. It is imperative that instructors provide orientation and clear instructions[20]: without guidance, students' practice may be misdirected, useless or even counterproductive. Here are some habits and routines students need to get into right away as of Initiation, and maintain throughout the course:

- *Active reading and listening*: sum up content to yourself after every one or two paragraphs, or every 30–60 seconds or so of speech, and occasionally paraphrase, re-tell in another language, or sight-translate.
- *Speech making*: use readings and audiovisual recordings as source material to prepare an outline or succinct notes, and deliver live.

20. One useful function of the first few sessions of the Theory class (TG-12.3) will be to establish a common, clear 'metalanguage' of terms for teachers and students to use in discussing interpreting methods, objectives, etc.

- *Oralising*: learn to oralise from written text after reading through it once (see 4.7.1.1 below).
- *Language and knowledge enhancement*: work regularly, and *methodically*, on language proficiency and general knowledge, distinguishing intended passive and active vocabulary (see CC-7 for guidelines, priorities and exercises).
- *World affairs:* follow current events, by reading and listening to the news, but more especially to high-quality opinion, analysis and commentary. Do this in all working languages in parallel, and make glossaries of key terms related to big stories in the news, focusing on the most relevant countries and regions for your language combination.
- *Topical deep-dives*: read or listen to contemporary non-fiction in all your languages on such topics as an introduction to financial markets, global and regional megatrends, the impacts of globalization, how to end poverty, how the UN works, fundamentals of negotiation, etc. Your domain emphasis will vary somewhat with a view towards your future target market (e.g. mainly SI for international organizations vs. private market assignments in a financial hub).

The basic **checklist of knowledge domains** for the first year of training includes world political geography, culture and history and intellectual traditions; the basics of macro-economics, trade, financial markets; the structure and workings of government and corporations; democracy and other political structures; and business administration and management. A taught introduction to economics, with text analysis and terminology, is usually appreciated if it can bring this arid subject to life. In the second year, you will learn the language of scientific reports and presentations, budgetary terminology, conference procedure and the life and jargon of international organizations.

4.7.1.1 *The art of oralising*

The ability to present the content of a written text in oral form is extremely valuable, not only as an exercise in same-language Sight Translation but also for practice out of class when no fresh recordings or prepared speeches are available.

Oralising means "paraphrasing while reading, changing both vocabulary and syntactic structures, thus introducing the required features of impromptu speeches into the text" (Gile 2005: 136). Spontaneous oralising is indeed difficult for beginners, but in the (superior) interest of producing clear, coherent input for fellow students to practise on, a few minutes can be taken to read the text through first, rehearsing *sotto voce;* or if there is more time available, "taking [consecutive-like] notes on the text, then making a speech from the notes, [with the added advantage that] the end-product is truly the result of online formulation" (ibid.). See point 3(a) of the Guidelines for Group Practice (CC-5, Appendix C).

4.7.1.2 *Group practice*

Once students have acquired adequate public speaking skills – say from around the fourth or fifth week – and right up to the end of the course, they should meet in small groups (say, of 3–4) to practise at least 3 times a week, following exactly the same procedures used in class. However, to ensure that these sessions are really effective, **clear and strict guidelines** must be followed (CC-5, Appendix C).

4.8 Bridging gaps: some theory for students

4.8.1 The triple focus of Initiation: Understanding, Mediating, Delivering

Our first general model of interpreting (Figure 4.1) shows the three basic steps in interpreting that are explored for the first time in Initiation:

1. **Understanding** speaker meaning, using the twin sources of language and context and – for interpreting – *extra* attention, association and analysis to represent what was understood (both intent and content) as a rich **discourse model** to cover points of potential relevance to all listeners.
2. **Mediating** the message for presentation to an audience, for which the interpreter must bridge three barriers:
   i. a **language barrier**, by re-expressing the message in a code that listeners can process, deverbalizing for more natural formulation to minimize their effort.
   ii. a **cognitive barrier**, by pragmatically optimizing to help listeners with different cultural or knowledge backgrounds to relate to what is being talked about, maximising its Relevance (TG-12.2.2) for them. (This 'barrier' is not specific to interpreting but common to all communication.)
   iii. a **role barrier**, by assuming in turn each speaker's communicative intent, relying on the convention (preferably accepted by all participants) that s/he is communicating in the first person on the speaker's behalf.
3. **Delivery** or public speaking skills: presentation and formulation, again leveraging language and context to give listeners access to the speaker's meaning at minimum effort for maximum effect.

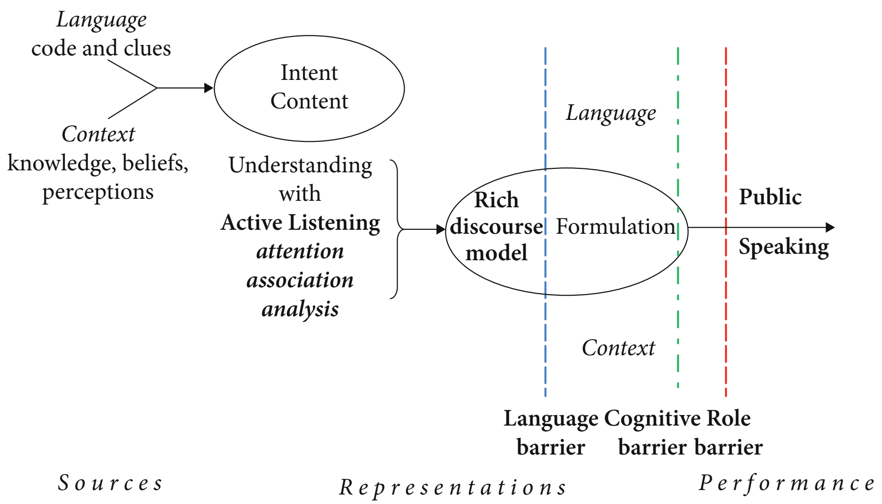

Figure 4.1 A first model of interpreting

4.8.2 Interpreting as 'communication-plus': a model

These barriers all represent obstacles that interpreters must negotiate as interlingual and intercultural mediators. Crossing the **language barrier** without getting snagged means not just rendering a message in another language, but doing so idiomatically, avoiding linguistic interference (4.8.3 below). Crossing the **role barrier** means being able to set aside one's own interests, loyalties, preferences, hang-ups and opinions and become the speaker.

Overcoming **cognitive barriers** is a challenge for all communicators, and in interpreting, given the change of language and cultural gaps, means judging the appropriate nature and degree of optimization of the translation process, as explained in CC-5.8 and CC/TG-10.4.[21]

4.8.3 Linguistic interference

The languages we know contain words, phrases and even sentence constructions that look or sound as if they should mean the same thing but don't, so we have to make an effort to avoid these traps, especially when we're hearing or reading one language and speaking another.

21. All translation for a communicative purpose entails some minimal 'optimization' merely by virtue of the choice of words and use of TL – specific pragmatic devices needed to restore the speaker's 'ostension' in the target language (CC-2.1.5; TG-12.2.2; Setton 1998: 188).

In terms of the ‘Paris Triangle’ we described earlier (the Interpretive Theory of Translation, ITT), we would say that instead of deverbalizing (forgetting the SL words) and expressing the sense naturally in TL as if it sprang from our own thoughts, we lazily and *wrongly* transcode from SL to TL, (wrong) word for word and (wrong) structure for structure. The interpretive (thinking, sense-grasping) process that would have produced a more accurate, idiomatic translation has been hijacked by a (lazy, mechanical) transcoding process that is awkward, hard to understand, or just plain wrong in the target language. How do we prevent this?

In the language of neuroscience, we might say that we have to find a way to activate some neural pathways (the ones that understand meaning) and deactivate others (the ones that connect directly to similar sounds and forms). This takes some effort, because (as another branch of cognitive science – pragmatics – has shown: see TG-12.2), to grasp what the speaker means in *this* utterance and in *this* situation, we have to activate a whole other array of neural pathways to bring in information from other parts of our brain – what we know, what we see – instead of just taking the short route from a sound to another sound. (It’s also obviously more intellectually rewarding to be experiencing meaning than stringing together learned equivalents for pat phrases – luckily, interpreting is a mixture of the two.)

According to authors who try to understand human cognition in evolutionary terms, any spoken or written utterance automatically activates two mental resources that can be seen as specializations of universal abilities:

i. the ability to interpret intended meaning from ostensive signals in context (TG-12.2.2), – used for the dominant *interpretive* process in Translation; and
ii. linguistic knowledge (the interconnected grammars and lexica of two languages).

But for *Translation,* we need to control the relationship between them, keeping interpretation uppermost, with transcoding to complement it where appropriate.

Speech probably triggers the *general* interpretive (‘mind-reading’) activity more strongly than written text, since in speech the language signal comes with an array of other sources, from the human voice and its expressive range to visual cues in the speaker’s posture and body language, while text presents a more overwhelmingly and tyrannically linguistic source; but the text translator can tear himself away, look up, take a moment to think,[22] project and (meta)represent, then return to the text and think again, now along linguistic lines, for precise equivalents where necessary; and so on (see CC-9.2.3.2, Figure 9.1).

22. Sigmund Freud is said to have translated by reading a paragraph, turning the book over, writing out a version, then reading the next paragraph; presumably this was followed by final polishing with both texts open in front of him.

Accordingly, the danger of linguistic interference is greatest when the interpreter must work from text (sight translation or SI-text) without the leisure to look away, and perhaps less in consecutive, provided she uses the first pass to restore a more favourable balance between the conceptual and linguistic sources in the new composite source she prepares for herself (her notes and memory: see next chapter). In most speeches, however, the linguistic signal is still the most dominant and demanding, so that even in 'free' SI, resisting linguistic interference takes significant effort at first; in fact, Seleskovitch, contra Gile (1997, 2009), saw it as the main or only 'effort' specific to SI.

Keeping language codes apart takes an effort because (not surprisingly) linguistic resources are not naturally organized in our brains for interpreting. (For a digest of the literature on the organization of language in the multilingual brain, see TG-7.5.4.)

4.8.4 Interpreting and transcoding: are 'ready equivalents' useful?

For interpreting to be both fast and accurate, we need both 'concept mediation' and 'word association' – words *and* sense (Setton 2003b). Even professional interpreters who use deverbalization as a default strategy prepare glossaries and activate the right neural paths for an assignment by reading and preparation. Many specific terms are soon forgotten, but a core of useful, more-or-less-safe, tried-and tested words and phrases remains, amounting to a '**bilingual phrasebook**' (or '**thesaurus**') which, with vigilance, serves to save effort on not only the routine and technical parts of discourse, as suggested in the original concept of 'transcodables', but also collocations, formulas, sentence openings and framing devices (especially useful for work into B). The interpreter's mental phrasebook thus contains not only one-to-one correspondences but also one-to-several, with only a last-minute choice from among a few handy TL equivalents to be made in each context. In some predictable speeches and settings, especially, this might very much reduce the effort of interpreting without any real decline in quality, provided that monitoring (vigilance) for appropriateness in context is not completely switched off – a kind of parallel 'currant chute' in the currant bun factory.[23]

In summary, to tie these theoretical premises about the constraints and possibilities of our brains to training and practice, we need to develop realistic and effective strategies to:

23. In the schematic process model given in Figure 8.1, TG-8 Appendix B, this is shown as a horizontal 'short-cut' between the lexica of the two languages.

i. *have words, phrases and collocations available and activated*, to use, cautiously, for those parts of discourse that can be handled in this way, making room and regaining control needed to;
ii. be attuned to *information flow*: focus on analysing, processing and reformulating the *'newer', more salient,* unfamiliar or original parts of the message;
iii. *monitor ourselves* to check that the product is not tainted by interference (lexical, structural or rhythmic/prosodic) and is comprehensible, accurate and comfortable for the listener.

This composite task can be seen in terms of balancing efforts online (cf. Gile's Effort Models – see Gile 2009: 157 ff.). But it rests on particular strategies in training and preparation, notably, a realistic and conscientious approach to ensuring 'linguistic readiness' in the B language (CC-7).

4.8.5 Knowledge: how much do we need to interpret?

It is now widely accepted that understanding speech or text is only possible with the help of other knowledge than what is encoded in the words we hear and read, though the process is too fast for us always to be aware of it. Language is a sophisticated system for encoding meaning, but a speech utterance will always leave some imprecision and ambiguity that can only be resolved and made to make relevant sense with the help of other information: from our memory and what we see and know of the situation. Newspaper headlines provide some examples ('*Mugabe in Rome for beatification*'), but these are somewhat artificial, since editors may deliberately make headlines vague to arouse curiosity and sell papers. There are plenty of genuine examples where local context or wider general knowledge are needed to disambiguate utterances – such as whether the French phrase '*la Commission*' refers to a committee or to the European Commission.

If context is necessary for comprehension, it is even more crucial for interpreters, because ambiguities need to be resolved more quickly, and because we are essentially outsiders. Participants in meetings often speak elliptically, taking each other's inside knowledge for granted. Background and 'local' knowledge about the topic, the issues at stake and participants' roles help to deepen and flesh out understanding (enrich our discourse and situation model, or our representations of meaning) and fill in connections left implicit, increasing our translation options and giving us more time to paraphrase and choose the words with the most impact.

Interpreting is impossible without recourse to paraphrase, synonym and generalization, all of which depend on complementary knowledge. When an Australian delegate cites the fate of the Northern hairy-nosed wombat as an example of a local not a global challenge,[24] it helps to be able to say 'an endangered local species' or 'our indigenous marsupials' instead of stammering and breaking down. So if 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing' is a salutary warning for those who would act on partial information and unsafe assumptions, for an interpreter a little knowledge is considerably better than none, if it helps in disambiguation, or to produce the next best thing: knowing the category an item belongs to, or the order of magnitude when an exact number has escaped us, lets us paraphrase or use a generic term sufficient for the purpose.

It is certainly *sometimes* possible to translate at the linguistic level, without really understanding, when both syntactic and lexical encoding are fully explicit and all terms have known standard equivalents across that particular language pair, unaffected by the context. But if we look closely, that is only ever partially true, if we want reliable, idiomatic interpreting. Lin (2008: 63) gives this example of a passage that could bear literal rendering:

> …The key information aspect there is signalling systems. Under this question, test methods are to be developed for different traffic model networks; and also, a test specification is to be created both inside the domain, and end-to-end when using intra-domain communications.

But several phrases even in this text are not that clear on closer inspection ('Under this question'? 'Creating a test specification end-to-end'?), and in some languages, to boot, could not just be transposed 'literally' as an uncomprehending bluff passed off as translation. Just learning pairs of equivalents of terms, phrases and structures in the two languages is clearly not a safe general strategy, to say the least.

The key is to *know how much or how little one knows*, in order (a) to produce a safe generic or approximation, and hedge if necessary; or (b) to judge whether an item looks sufficiently 'coded' and context-proof to translate literally but uncomprehendingly with its dictionary equivalent without risk; or (c) if impossible, ask, or admit ignorance, for the sake of professional transparency (4.4.2 above and CC-9.3.2).

Specialized and technical knowledge and interpreting

Experts in various disciplines sometimes express doubts about the ability of an interpreter – a layperson and outsider – to understand enough about their field or their business to interpret usefully. To provide quality (or at the very least, acceptable) service, a professional interpreter, especially a freelance, must have the five categories of knowledge listed under 'K' competence in the last chapter (CC-2.4) – about the world in general, about international organizations and the corporate

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24. An authentic example, from a recent meeting on macro-economic policy.

world, about the countries and communities that use her working languages, and about both the topic and the background of the assignment at hand.

Even with all these precautions, of course, her understanding of the proceedings will rarely be as complete as that of most of the participants. And yet, trained and prepared interpreters can and routinely do provide a service which satisfies and sometimes even surprises 'insiders'.

Clearly, interpreters will not necessarily understand all the implications of what is being said. But (in addition to knowing how to translate the technical terms) the interpreter's level of understanding of the sentences to be interpreted must at least be reliable at the level of *syntax*, plus enough understanding about the basic nature of the entities referred to therein, to avoid producing nonsense and reproduce the relationships between them in a sense-preserving paraphrase. Emphasis, too, can be mimicked when comprehension of the input language is instinctive or sound enough to recognize logical contrasts and similar mood-conveying voice effects and constructions.

As we will see in CC-9, in extreme cases, when the subject matter is extremely abstruse, these competencies plus a conscientious study of the equivalent terms (neither is enough alone) – helped, with luck, by the speaker's slides and diagrams – may be enough to provide a usable version that experts in the audience can flesh out by inference to follow the meaning.

4.9 Summary

An interpreter must excel in the basic cognitive and communicative abilities needed for each stage of the interpreting process – active, analytic listening; a rich and robust working memory for discourse; and fluent, convincing public speaking. But to bridge the communication gap between speakers using different languages – and with different backgrounds and viewpoints – we must become the masters of three barriers (or bridges): linguistic, cognitive and 'role'.[25] In Initiation, through practical and enjoyable exercises and some simple theory, you should have learned how to listen like an interpreter, retaining meaning and structure; how to express yourself clearly and convincingly, evading the traps of language transfer; and last but not least, how to mediate from an impartial position, temporarily adopting and representing the roles and positions of different speakers. These are the indispensable 'pre-skills' needed to approach the techniques of consecutive interpretation.

25. i.e., what may separate people due to differences of language, of knowledge or beliefs, and of interest and viewpoint (and purpose, but this is the domain of the professional mediator or negotiator).

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Public Speaking

1. *Classical sources:*

Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*: see Kennedy 1991 (for references in other languages, see also http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/

Cicero: *De Oratore* or *Selected Works*

Quintilian (Quintilianus): see e.g. Murphy 1987

2. *History of rhetoric*

Fontanier 1830/1977: Les figures du discours

Enos 1996: Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition

Fumaroli 1999: Histoire de la rhétorique dans l'Europe moderne

Corbett & Connors 1999: Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student

3. *Contemporary public speaking and oratory*

Vital Speeches of the Day: http://www.vsotd.com

Lucas 2004: The Art of Public Speaking

Carnegie 2005: Public Speaking for Success

Donovan 2014: How to deliver a TED Talk

Gallo 2010: The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs

Harvard Business Review 2011 on communicating effectively

Discourse structure, style, coherence

Pinker 2014: The Sense of Style

Trzeciak & Mackay 1994: Study Skills for Academic Writing

Weston 2000: A Rulebook for Arguments

All URLs accessed February 16, 2016

For more in-depth reading on discourse comprehension, mental modelling, knowledge schemas, memory and multilingualism, see Further reading in TG-5

CHAPTER 5

Consecutive interpreting

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 History and specificity

Consecutive interpreting has been practised since ancient times with varying degrees of formality. Modern 'full' or formal consecutive relies on a note-taking technique that allows for interpretation of continuous passages of five and even ten minutes or more, even when the speech is quite dense. The origins of this technique can probably be traced to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and the period between the two World Wars, where it was deployed at the League of Nations – the UN's predecessor – by a handful of French-English interpreters[1] who were widely admired for their rhetorical skills and impressive memories, sometimes interpreting whole speeches of 30 minutes or more with minimal notes (for an account of this 'heroic age', see Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2014, and Further reading at the end of CC-2).

Consecutive at the UN was soon superseded in most meetings (but not without a fight: Baigorri-Jalón 2004a: 139 ff.) by SI, which has since largely taken over as the default mode at all large international gatherings. However, consecutive remains widely used in smaller events, is considered a necessary skill for a fully-qualified interpreter, and is still recognized by many as the true 'noble art' of interpreting. Speech styles have changed since the heroic age, in terms of length but also content and density, perhaps now requiring more complete and systematic note-taking for many types of speech. Consecutive in its full professional form is still certainly no less challenging to master than SI.

Today, consecutive interpreting tends to be used in short, intimate, or impromptu meetings; for ceremonies and site visits; and (for reasons of accuracy and monitorability – see below) for testimony in legal settings, for bilateral diplomacy and negotiations and for press conferences. But it is generally practical only when interpreting is required between just two languages. Examples of events that will often (but not always) require long consecutive include

1. Paul Mantoux, Jean Herbert, the Kaminker brothers, Antoine Velleman and Georges Mathieu, among others (Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2014).

- bilateral meetings between diplomats, officials or leaders, in or out of the public eye;
- business discussions and negotiations of all kinds;
- private talks between principals, in the boardroom, over dinner, in the car/airplane or even via videoconference;
- speeches at formal occasions such as receptions, functions, investitures, inaugurations, ribbon-cuttings, etc.;
- academic and technical seminars with presentations and discussions;
- lectures and training sessions;
- press interviews, media scrums or roundtables;
- TV or radio interviews and talk shows (though now also often done in simultaneous voice-over).

Shorter consecutive or dialogue interpreting are more typical in PSI and liaison interpreting settings such as guided tours, site visits (industry, mine, museum, cathedral, shopping expedition), judicial and police proceedings (depositions, questioning of witnesses or suspects), welfare and public service interviews (between officials and applicants for welfare services, asylum, etc., for example), medical interviews and consultations, or telephone interpreting.

As these lists show, alongside the modern and more spectacular SI, long or short consecutive is still the most widespread mode of interpreting in terms of the range of settings where it is used, from formal to informal and in all walks of life, and will probably remain so, for several reasons:

- ► *Cost*: consecutive can be done by a single interpreter, and involves no equipment rental charges.
- ► *Mobility and convenience*: consecutive is portable, and can be done anywhere and anytime – down a coalmine, in a moving limo, on an aircraft, etc.
- ► *Privacy or intimacy*: consecutive provides person-to-person(-to person) communication without the intervention of machines and with fewer people involved. The exchange can be limited to just two principals and interpreter(s), – as in fireside diplomacy, or Reagan and Gorbachev's famous walk in the woods. Consecutive is potentially more confidential and secure than SI, notably from electronic eavesdropping.
- ► *Accuracy and/or monitorability*: consecutive is believed by many to be more accurate than SI. This is not clear-cut, but certainly accuracy is much easier to *check* in consecutive than SI, either by principals with knowledge of both languages or by their assistants. This argument was prominent in initial resistance to SI and accounts for the use of consecutive in high-sensitivity bilateral meetings today.

- *Slowness*: paradoxically, consecutive may be preferred in negotiation or diplomacy for its temporizing potential, giving principals extra time to think; on occasion it has even been used as a pure formality, or deliberately to waste time.

Consecutive also survives in conference interpreter training and testing as strongly as in real life, if not more so:

- *In professional recruitment exams*: although consecutive is rarely used in international organizations, the EU (the world's largest employer of conference interpreters) tests full consecutive as an eliminatory exercise.[2] This alone guarantees that conference interpreting students in Europe will need to devote considerable time to mastering the technique, regardless of how frequently it will be used in their future careers.
- *As preparation for training in SI*: learning consecutive provides an excellent foundation (with sight translation) for training in simultaneous (TG-3.3.5.1).

5.1.2 Long vs. short consecutive

In practice, consecutive interpreting is done in segments of all lengths, from utterances of a few seconds to extended passages of up to half an hour, subject to different constraints and conventions – and with different advantages and drawbacks:

Very short consecutive of, say, 5–10s fragments (sentence by sentence or even clause by clause) may be enough for snappy dialogues, and may also be imposed or chosen either when the interpreter is not qualified in note-taking, or users are unaware of or impatient with it. Paradoxically, however, it can be performed optimally by a professional conference interpreter with SI training.

Short consecutive: a few sentences at a time, conveying a more complete thought, up to but not exceeding around 30–40s per passage for interpretation. This is common in business interpreting, and is probably the dominant form in most informal, community and court interpreting, and is tested for certification in these specializations (NAATI, FCICE, LTTC[3]). This segment length does not generally tax memory or require a developed note-taking technique, yet normally provides enough context for effective comprehension and delivery of the message. However, some speakers may find it disruptive to have to pause systematically every half a minute to accommodate the interpreter, breaking their momentum and interrupting their train of thought.

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2. But not the UN.

3. Language Training and Testing Centre, Taiwan.

Medium-length consecutive (45s–90s) will need more developed note-taking technique, especially for information-rich, complex or unfamiliar material, but will be appreciated by users who can speak and interact more naturally, speaking in passages that are shorter or longer as they prefer without having to worry about overloading the interpreter. This is where 'true' consecutive interpreting begins.

Long or full consecutive (over 2 minutes) with notes offers a quality advantage for monologues, or exchanges with longer turns, where speakers may wish to develop a thought more fully without interruption, possibly thinking of additional examples, statistics, etc. on the fly; and other participants may appreciate having extra time to think and plan their next move while noting audience reactions during each successive segment.

Full consecutive allows a more cohesive, packaged product than short bursts (or SI) since the interpreter has more look-ahead, and thus more speech context to work with.

While consecutive interpretation obviously takes longer than simultaneous, it does not have to double the length of the meeting, as is often assumed. A skilled interpreter can speak faster and more succinctly than speakers, eliminating hesitations, false starts, redundancy and repetition – increasingly as the meeting progresses and its relevance pattern becomes familiar – and can even summarise if asked. Speakers in good faith never object to improved coherence and fluency, if there is no loss or dilution of tone, content or communicative impact (unless unevenly bestowed by the interpreter, or forbidden, as in some controlled or adversarial settings such as court proceedings).

'*Very long*' consecutive (over 5 minutes) is becoming less common, however, as it is likely to try the patience of many participants, especially those who understand both languages (increasingly numerous, for English).

In the field, shorter turns in consecutive may be preferred for various reasons: obviously, in dialogues, interviews or any exchange with frequent turn-taking or that needs frequent interruptions for clarification or consultation (on the user's or the interpreter's initiative) – but also in high-exposure settings, such as televised press conferences or diplomatic summits, to keep politicians or celebrities in the limelight. Even in private meetings, people may get restive if the speaker goes on for too long without pausing for interpretation, or – since many now understand both languages – jump in with a comment, causing confusion that the interpreter then has to manage. In certain adversarial or high-stakes situations (legal, diplomatic), users may want to monitor the accuracy of the interpretation closely, which is easier to do when segments are shorter.

Today, therefore, chunks of 1–2 minutes are probably becoming the norm even in traditional 'full' consecutive settings; but professional conference interpreters must still be ready to deal with varying passages, from very short to very long. For training purposes, 5–7 minutes is a good test of competence in the skills of full consecutive.

Another feature of consecutive interpreting as distinct from SI is its exposure. Proximity to participants, varying formats and dynamics of turn-taking that are not always constrained by the disciplines of microphone use and procedure (and in some settings – health, law, welfare, migration – the more immediate individual life outcomes that are at stake) may test the interpreter's flexibility and responsiveness, and require more sensitivity and role and situation management skills, than when the interpreter is ensconced in an SI booth in more formal and codified institutional environments.

Although some conference interpreters end up doing little or no consecutive in their later careers (in some international organizations, for example), training in consecutive with notes is good preparation for SI (for a fuller discussion see TG-3.3.5.1).

5.1.3 How does full consecutive (with notes) work?

Full consecutive relies on memory supported by notes. The note-taking technique used by most professionally-trained interpreters today can be traced back to the pioneers of the early 20th century, and was described in several publications by practitioners in the 1950s and 1960s (Herbert 1952; Rozan 1956 and van Hoof 1962), of which Rozan's is the fullest and best known.[4] More recently, Matyssek (1989) has proposed a system that is taught in some schools and is based on largely the same principles (Ahrens 2005), but is much more elaborate and codified in terms of symbols and combinations of signs. The professional consensus seems to be that the Rozan method provides just enough basis to allow for adaptation to individual preference and convenience and to the natural variation in speech texture and genres, so this can legitimately be called the 'Standard Method' of note-taking for consecutive.

Although the method is always customized by each individual, most professionals use elements of these basic guidelines for layout, internal structure, abbreviation and symbolization, and even many of the same symbols and abbreviations. The pioneers of the system all emphasized that optimal note-taking for consecutive

- is not a verbatim record, but a supplement to memory while the speech is still fresh in the interpreter's mind;
- is not shorthand (which won't work, since it can't be corrected, scanned or read back rapidly enough, not to mention postponing the translation component of the task);

4. Later presented, commented and updated with examples by Myers (1976), Liu (1993/2008) and Gillies (2005).

- is a personal system developed on the basis of general guidelines;
- relies crucially on analysis of the incoming message;
- records ideas and discourse structure rather than words;
- must record links between ideas at least as faithfully as the content of the ideas themselves;
- must be recognizable at a glance, to cue fluent delivery.

Rozan observes that notes serve a purpose in each phase of consecutive: to help crystallize and imprint in memory a thought or an image, then at delivery, as reminder to support (not obstruct) a fluent rendition. The golden rule is that in-depth analysis must be finished by the time the interpreter returns to the beginning of the noted passage to begin delivery. Analysis of what is heard, and the clarity and precision of the note taken, contribute in equal measure to successful performance. Rozan's (1956) system with its 'seven principles and twenty symbols' is summarized in Appendix A.

By way of illustration, here are some of his sample notes based on these principles:

Some principles and sample notes from Rozan (1956)

Group elements vertically	
'the report on/concerning Western Europe is interesting'	Rpt int^{g} W Eur
Avoid repetition and save time by indenting and carefully aligning elements on different lines *Notes are placed on a lower line as if leaving room for an element of an upper line that is still valid, as if it had been repeated – e.g. (for the sake of clarity, the example is only partially abbreviated)*	
'during 1954, prices rose less rapidly than wages, resulting in a net increase in households' revenue'	54, px ↗ but ______ no = income so ______ pop^{n} ↗
Use brackets for subsidiary items	
'this has led to fresh investments, particularly in the area of transportation…'	→ + inv^{ts} (esp Tport)
Use marks and abbreviations for emphasis, negation, prefixes, suffixes; etc.	
'examine very closely'	exam
'I want to state/assert quite categorically/ emphatically that…'	I say
'(this study is) extremely interesting':	int^{g}

The method consists primarily of structure, layout, and design principles, plus **suggestions** for economical capture of information content. Used precisely, but also creatively and flexibly (as Rozan suggests), it enables a skilled interpreter to take notes that:

- clearly reflect the structure and logic of the original as analysed by the interpreter;
- can be condensed enough for the interpreter to keep up, even on fairly content-rich material at 130–150 wpm;
- can prompt recall of all relevant information, nuances and details on most speeches;
- can be recognized at a glance and read back fluently in the target language while the original is still fresh to memory.

Individual interpreters are expected and encouraged to develop and customize the technique, working out their own specific conventions, symbols and abbreviations within this framework. Accordingly, all note-taking examples given in this book are merely indicative, as they may be presented by a particular instructor in the classroom.

The 'standard method' basically consists of two complementary features:

1. ***Layout***: how to structure your notes on the page effectively, by means of **verticalization**, **indentation**, **stacking** and **boxing –** the 'syntax' of the system, so to speak;
2. ***Information capture***: how to capture content economically yet reliably, through intelligent cue-word selection and the recording devices of **simplification**, **abbreviation** and **symbols –** the system's 'lexicon'.

These twin features complement one another: layout (the 'syntax' of the method) makes the structure and logic of the message clear at a glance, while abbreviation and symbolization (the 'lexicon') enable the recording of efficient cues for all the speaker's ideas, plus supporting detail, nuance and tone – all instantly recognizable while the speech is still fresh in memory.

Good consecutive notes are neither a word-for-word record of what the speaker said, nor an outline of just the main points, nor even just the hard-to-remember items. Instead, consecutive notes are a set of structured and condensed idea-by-idea recall cues for the meaning. They reflect the interpreter's analysis of the speech, and support – but do not replace – the interpreter's memory (the 'mental discourse model' described in the last chapter): they can be read back fluently immediately after the speaker pauses for interpretation, but might not be all that meaningful to the same interpreter even a few weeks later. The level of compression from original to notes is not fixed, but varies somewhat depending on the subjective redundancy of the input to the interpreter. In the default pattern of a set of consecutive notes, there will usually be a cue (word, symbol, abbreviation) for each of the items, or minimal meaning units, that combine to represent a complete ('sentence'-length) idea unit – although we will see later that sometimes just one simple cue may be enough to trigger a whole idea, while at other times, it may be necessary to write down something for each phrase, and even capture strings of input words in their original form.

Research shows (see TG-6.8.1) that professional consecutive notes usually consist of abbreviated words and symbols, structuring signs like arrows, brackets, circles, horizontal or vertical lines, prompts for changes of topic or logical links, and marks of mood or emphasis. Seleskovitch (1975) found that some 'hard' items, like names, numbers or lists, are more fully noted than verbal 'padding', and links and structure are often made more explicit, but often a sketch or a single word are enough to cue recall of a whole anecdote or illustration. The quantity of notes is not proportional to the words spoken, but varies according to the amount of support the memory needs; so notes will often get sparser as a meeting progresses and the interpreter grows more familiar with the topic and situation, and better attuned to the peaks of relevance in the discourse. Albl-Mikasa (2008) shows how the original discourse is 'shrunk' in the notes, which can be seen as an elliptical and fragmentary intermediate text that the interpreter then fleshes out again for delivery with the help of her memory of the speech.

Most importantly for training, while common principles underlie effective note-taking, and some basic symbols and abbreviations are widely used, each individual interpreter must consolidate his or her own system and technique through intensive practice after an initial period of instruction and guidance.

Consecutive interpreting: a simple model

Notes are the most visible tool used by the interpreter in full consecutive, but they are only one ingredient in the process. The diagram below shows how a speech (or self-contained segment) is captured, processed and retold in effective consecutive interpreting. Input and processing are concurrent in the Capture phase, followed by output in the Delivery phase.

On the left, the **Input** is of course speech, but more realistically and precisely, it is the *interpreter's experience of understanding and analysing* that speech. The product of a thorough understanding (as described under Active Listening in CC-4.2.1) is shown as a structured package of content (square), carried by a perceived intention (oval) derived from various verbal and non-verbal clues that – to simplify – we have called 'style'.

In the centre, **Processing** shows how the interpreter stores this complex (arrows) as a memory of the experience of understanding (oval), supported and fleshed out both mentally, through the memory-enhancing habits of active listening, and by a set of notes (square) that record and/or cue the structured information content, often with a few added pointers to local expressions of mood and intention (e.g. ☺ or !!, see 5.4.4 below), and the odd important word or expression.

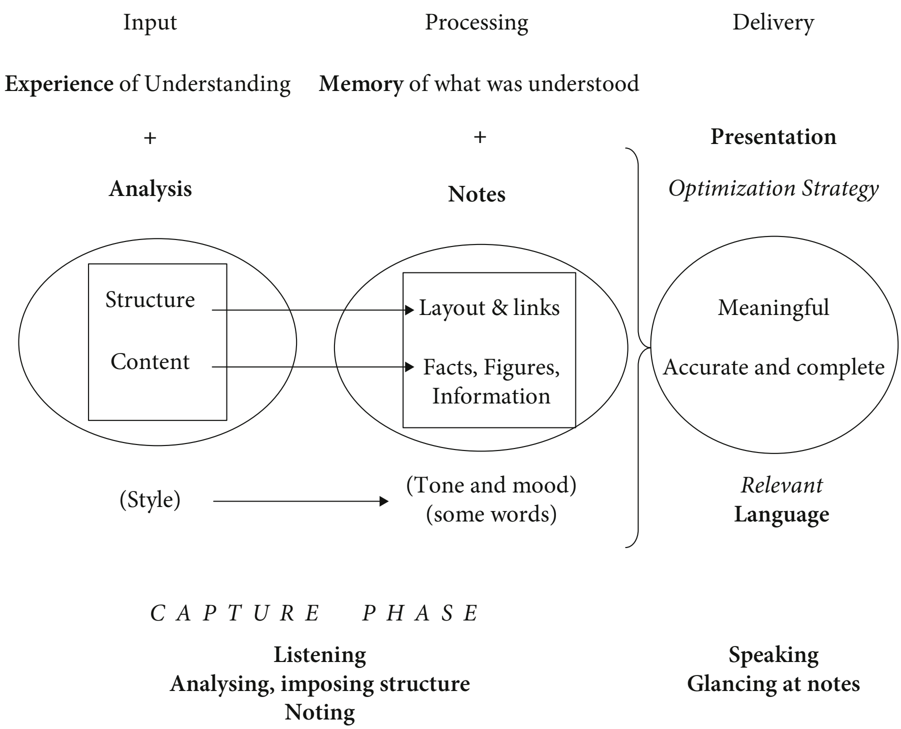

Figure 5.1 Consecutive interpreting

In the **Delivery** phase, as the interpreter presents her version based on this complex of memory plus notes, her impression of the speaker's intention, mood and style are still fresh enough in recent episodic memory to be naturally communicated, while the notes supply the structure, information and local effects or devices that ensure maximum fidelity to both the content and intended impact of the message, including facts or connections whose relevance to listeners she may not be aware of.

The interpreter's output becomes the input to her listeners' understanding of the communication, and should therefore aim to be maximally *relevant* in the sense of Relevance Theory (TG-12.2.2), i.e. to give access to maximum cognitive effects (i.e. roughly, to 'meaning' or message) for minimum effort. In other words, all other aspects of fidelity being equal, production should be expressive, coherent and as comfortable as possible for the listener to assimilate, both linguistically and presentationally.

This simple diagram cannot show some additional important dimensions of consecutive interpreting. First, the *interpreter's degree of involvement* is both more and less than an ordinary participant's: she must put *all* of her understanding and communicating skills into listening and speaking, but reflect *none* of her own beliefs or prejudices in the product – a stance developed during Initiation in listening, mediating and speaking exercises and the basic dos and don'ts of interpreting (CC-4.4.2). Consecutive develops the technical requirements to fulfil this paradoxical role.

While ordinary listeners – a motivated audience – might retain the general impact, mood and overall message, certain images and words, or a striking example, statistic or anecdote, an interpreter must also register (note or remember) both what was said and how it was said: the *structure* of the speech, and the *devices* by which it achieves its impact, its tone, flavour and mood., Natural memory for speech must now be supplemented with the trained memory of active listening, and with judicious notes, to capture not only the aspects of the speech whose relevance the interpreter fully understands, but also what is needed for listeners to derive meanings that may be relevant to them in ways of which the interpreter may not be fully aware.

Secondly, the diagram shows what is a **two-stage event** in real time. The **capture** phase (left and centre) is considered more demanding for the interpreter, who must coordinate listening, analysing, recognizing/imposing structure and noting; **delivery** combines speaking with referring to notes, and a variable amount of additional effort for 'translation' or formulation, depending on how much forward thinking has been done in the capture phase. It is this cognitive management aspect of interpreting that Gile (2009: 175–179) has foregrounded in his Effort Models (TG-6.8.3.1).

A third dynamic aspect not visible in the process diagram is the interdependence between memory and note-taking, and the dependence of product on process. Noting serves not just to record what was said, but also to fix the thrust, content and structure of the speech in memory (see box below). A number of critical points can be identified in the process:

✓ linguistic comprehension
✓ analysis
✓ choice of note (cueing power/completeness – depends on memory, analysis)
✓ quality of notes (layout, legibility)
✓ linguistic readiness (can be helped by notes, degree of forward planning)
✓ presentational skills (eye contact, tone, rhythm, speed).

These will (cumulatively) determine the quality of the final product, and must therefore be targeted in training. Once these basics have been consolidated, quality is further polished with increased command of nuance, style, rhetoric and 'optimization' (5.8.4).

Why learn note-taking? The triple function of notes

The invariable tendency of students to rely too much on notes and forget to listen, and the apparent decline in their other natural mental faculties during the Coordination phase, has led some teachers to be wary of teaching any kind of note-taking system.

However, when judiciously used, note-taking has three valuable functions: as an **activity** that enhances analysis and therefore, memory; to provide a **record** of items (or cues to them) that may escape our short or medium-term memory, ensuring completeness; and as a **speaking plan** of what we are going to say and how, perhaps including some target-language elements, to make our rendition more coherent and communicative.

1. As a memory-enhancing ***activity***: the very act of analysis, and the choice of a representative mark for an element of meaning and its position in the overall discourse structure, help to assimilate and remember what has been understood. Thinking or translating must not prevent hearing, but **analysis** is the key to everything else, since without analysis of what is heard, no meaningful memory will be there for the note to trigger later. The act of analysis, of processing, structuring and making sense of what is heard against one's own pre-existing schemas of knowledge, itself consolidates memory and in turn reduces the need for notes.

2. In terms of their **recording** function, notes **fill in the gaps** of ordinary short-term memory. In recalling a simple speech, we typically miss many of the informational nuggets – the 'currants' in Seleskovitch's currant-bun analogy (CC-4.3.1), such as names, numbers, technical terms and lists – but we may also distort the sequence and structure of arguments, and lose some substantive conceptual content (Taylor 1989[5]).

3. These findings help to understand why **structuring** the notes into a **speaking plan** for the delivery phase is at least as important as recording elusive details. For this reason, structure can even be added and made more explicit in the notes, to help memory, even if the scaffolding of the final product is eventually clothed in the appropriate stylistic effects, generated from natural 'mood' memory, becoming no more visible to the listener than it was in the original.

To the extent that there is a 'competing efforts' challenge in consecutive interpreting, it is in making sure that three operations – experiencing the whole message, hearing the details and making a note – don't interfere with each other. That is the juggling trick that students must develop over a period of a few months.

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5. Taylor (1989), teaching in Trieste, reviewed research on how people recall discourse without the benefit of notes (e.g. van Dijk and Kintsch 1983, and Taylor's own experiments) and found that the elements most often lost or missed were indeed Seleskovitch's 'raisins'; and on conference-like speeches – i.e. discursive argument, not narratives of events in chronological order – there were also distortions of argument structure, and loss of content, especially when speakers digressed or deviated (as they often do) from a conventional order of presentation (such as problem – cause – effect – remedy). These findings help to understand why structuring the notes is at least as important as recording elusive details.

5.1.4 Overview: consecutive expertise in five stages

A good consecutive is very satisfying, but requires several months of training to reach basic competence, a year or two to attain a solid professional level (even for the best students), and, like anything that is variable and complex, years to master. Like any new skill, it is acquired in stages, first focusing on and developing prerequisite component abilities, like listening, speaking, or abbreviating, then coordinating and progressively integrating them into a fluid task in increasingly realistic conditions, but without losing touch at any point (except for some mechanical practice in the details of noting, like abbreviation) with the lifeblood of interpreting – the requirement to communicate.

Our Initiation to Interpreting (CC-4) has already developed skills in the basic operations listed along the top and bottom of the diagram: listening, analysis, memory and communicative speaking. The techniques of full Consecutive can now be acquired in five stages.

I. Introduction to Note-Taking

This first stage is fairly mechanical: students acquire the elements of the note-taking method (see below) under frozen or slow-motion conditions. The basic principles and components are best first introduced by a single instructor, in one or two sessions in the same week, after which (but not before) all classes begin to teach the method, covering the three sub-modules (Note-Taking I, II, III) fairly quickly, within a few weeks (say, weeks 5–9 of the first semester).

Note-Taking I instils awareness of possible conflicts between noting and attending, and starts off with an embryonic note-taking technique that focuses on cue-words and links. **Note-Taking II** introduces the two basic and complementary features of the Standard Method: structured layout and economical information capture. With these devices in place, notes can become more detailed and complete, where necessary capturing each element of information at the level of the proposition.[6] Finally, in **Note-Taking III** the toolkit is completed with devices to improve cohesion, efficiency, nuance and precision, and to express mood and emphasis, and students can continue to customize the method for their personal use.

II. Coordination

This concentrated three-part introduction to the components of the note-taking method and its tools should be followed by an extended period of supervised classroom practice to learn how to use the method in real time, at first on normal-speed but deliberately super-coherent ('trainer') speeches. The key objectives of this stage are as follows:

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6. i.e. a semantic unit (of meaning), which may not always coincide with a grammatical unit like a clause or a sentence. See Albl-Mikasa 2008.

- Learn to **think and analyse before noting** ('note the ideas not the words'). This is fundamental. Throughout all stages, students should understand that the content and details can only be noted *intelligently* against the constantly present background of the overall thrust of the speech as experienced – its tone, mood, style, intent – in other words, the ***ovals*** in our diagram must always be there as background for the ***squares.***
- Stabilize **techniques and devices for clear and succinct noting**, in stages over a few weeks.
- Learn **how to note *judiciously***. This is more complex, since what is more or less easy for you to remember, and what extra cues you will need to recall things reliably, will depend on your individual mental schemas and general knowledge, your familiarity with the subject matter, and your sense of what is most new or significant in the discourse. This is where the gap between instructor and student is greatest: the instructor's choice of note cannot be transferred to students, who will not necessarily understand how it can cue that information.

The instructor's role is twofold: to present, demonstrate and elicit the techniques, while constantly checking that students remain coordinated, alert to the unfolding message and ready to analyse more deeply for understanding where needed.

As with all exercises, Consecutive proper (with notes) is first practised into A (from B or C). Some practice from **A into B** can begin, using straightforward trainer passages and exercises, after students have learned the basic methodology and practised it for several weeks into A – i.e. typically, in the second half of the first semester (see course timeline in TG-3.3.5, Table 3.1).[7]

III. Experimentation

After achieving basic Coordination between listening and note-taking in real time, you will need several months of practice on authentic and varied speeches, experimenting, customizing and gradually stabilizing your personal use of the technique and the devices you are most comfortable with, through intensive work both in class and independent group sessions, following strict guidelines for preparation, simulation, checking and feedback (see Appendix C).

Once you have mastered the balance between attention, analysis and noting, the amount of notes you take will be more a function of speech familiarity and density. Instructors should now need to intervene only when the message has been incompletely or superficially understood, to draw attention to significant errors and omissions, or when production is too wordy, rambling or confused. Serious practice can then also begin **into B** in the 2nd semester, and even more time should then be devoted to it from mid-2nd semester (Consolidation phase) onwards.

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7. Estimated durations correspond to the 'Option A' two-year course timeline given in TG-3.3.5. This period may be somewhat accelerated in a one-year course.

IV. Consolidation

Experimentation leads into **Consolidation**. Note-taking technique should now be mastered and internalised sufficiently to free up capacity for attention to presenting a fluent, accurate and communicative product on standard authentic material into both A and B (though with still moderate demands on eloquence). This level of expertise typically takes hundreds of hours of deliberate and focused practice to achieve (see TG-2.6.2), working in groups or in pairs outside class on increasingly challenging authentic material, all of which should continue regularly throughout the rest of the course, even when SI has become the main focus of classwork.

V. Polishing and advanced consecutive

In the final semester, the focus of feedback will be squarely on the finished product, including its linguistic and rhetorical quality, on standard authentic speeches[8]. In addition, more complex real-life tasks will be introduced, such as consecutive mixed with sight translation or from a slide presentation, or standing up (CC-9). Finally, since consecutive involves close proximity to participants in an exchange, situations will be simulated that require role management, judgment, resourcefulness and diplomacy, and weighing the risks and benefits of different ways to optimize communication (CC-5.8 and 10.4).

5.2 Introduction to Note-Taking (S1 weeks 5/6–9)

Consecutive notes are a fascinating artefact that seems to hold the promise of being a magic system that will record everything the speaker says and solve all translation problems to boot. This is an illusion, of course, so we mustn't rush into using the method too fast. Rather, the two fundamental skills that make good interpreting possible in any mode are careful listening for meaning and communicative intent, and close analysis of the discourse for logic and structure. Note-taking is a supplement, a natural extension of active listening and mental structuring (especially, as we will see, sorting, chunking and linking); yet a reliable note-taking method, including abbreviation and symbols, is necessary for capturing complex, unfamiliar and informationally dense material.

But note-taking is also *distracting*: when you start taking notes, your performance may well take a nosedive at first, at least until you learn to coordinate your attention between listening and note-taking, and automatize some of the more routine operations with practice. It is therefore best to ease into note-taking gradually, alternating at first between exercises with and without notes, and occasionally also practising 'Slow Notes' off-line to stabilize key parts of your system.

8. See Speech Difficulty Index in TG-2 Appendix for a guide to parameters of speech difficulty.

Equipment and facilities

Training in consecutive note-taking will require the following facilities and equipment:

- a quiet classroom;
- a large boardroom table around which the entire class can sit (or failing that, school desks and chairs arranged in a square or a circle);
- a whiteboard and coloured markers;
- a digital recording device and loudspeakers to record and play back speeches and interpretations;
- a lectern;
- a stopwatch;
- if possible, a projector that can be used to project notes from paper onto a screen for group discussion and analysis; later, when students have graduated from trainer speeches to authentic recordings, it can also be used to play videos of speeches to be interpreted;
- a spiral reporter's notebook for each student to take consecutive notes in (aka a 'steno pad', generally 6″ × 9″, coil bound across the top, not down the side; ideally, unlined[9]), several pencils or ballpoint pens of different colours, and one or more *separate* notebooks (lined, for other notes, on points of language and technique);
- ideally, a video camera to record speeches and, later, student interpretations for analysis of presentation skills in the Polishing phase.

5.3 Note-Taking I: Cue-words and links

- ***Objectives (process):***
  - *Note cue-words, links and structure economically to support memory in capturing main points and links (one or two words for each);*
  - *Learn to share attention between active listening & analysis and taking notes.*
- ***Objective (product):***
  - *A coherent and reasonably complete version of a short structured passage in the discursive genre (presenting an argument) but containing some supporting factual detail.*

In this first exercise, students take only very simple, outline notes – just jotting down one or two well-chosen cue-words for each main point or idea in the speech, while also paying special attention to noting down all the links (e.g. *however,*

9. Regrettably, these are getting harder to find. To avoid being constrained into a linear, linguistic style of note taking and keep your artistic and pictorial freedom, look for the faintest lines possible.

therefore, consequently, also, on the other hand, for example, that is to say, more generally…) – and then interpret, either with or without looking at the notepad.

In other words, all you are doing for the moment is writing down a *bare-bones discourse outline*, similar to but even simpler than the outlines practised in Initiation (CC-4.2.3), but now in real time, using economical, sparse representation.

5.3.1 Materials and classroom procedure

Speeches at this stage should be self-contained, on a topic of general interest, clear and well-structured, not too dense, consisting of a few main points connected by explicit logical links, each point elaborated with some verbal padding and redundancy to keep the density of new information fairly low. These controlled 'trainer' speeches (see TG-2, Appendix) should be delivered by the instructor, or a trained SL native speaker (for example, a teaching assistant, or a 2nd year or PhD student volunteer). Here is an example passage for this exercise, which would be oralised somewhat on delivery:

> *Ladies and Gentlemen,*
>
> *The last two years have seen a worldwide increase in the price of food that has now reached crisis proportions, causing unacceptable levels of extreme poverty and hunger.*
>
> *The situation is expected to deteriorate further in 2011, with estimates putting the total number of malnourished people at around 15% of the world population by the end of this year.*
>
> *The food security crisis of 2007–2008 and its return last year have brought to the fore the importance of agriculture not just as a producer of food, fuel and fibre but also, as a sector that can generate income for the poorest segments of the population, 75% of whom live in rural areas.*
>
> *The recent focus on agriculture has concentrated mainly on short-term programmes and policies to alleviate the immediate consequences of high food prices, such as food aid or subsidies for inputs such as seeds, fertiliser, or irrigation to boost immediate agricultural production. However, this risks obscuring the long-term challenge of how to ensure food security for 9 billion people in 2050. Agriculture's challenge will not only be to provide adequate food, fuel and fibre for increasing populations but to meet those demands in the face of a limited resource base and changing climatic conditions.*

Typical notes at 'cuewords and links' stage:

> last 2 years
> food prices up
> crisis: extreme poverty hunger
>
> will worse 2011
> guess 15% underfed by end

2007–8 crisis + now 2010
show agr important:
produce fuel, food, fibre
BUT also
income for poorest, 75% rural

Recent focus
short-term help:
food aid,
subsidies for seeds, fertiliser, irrigation
Aim = boost production

BUT
miss long-term
how feed 9B in 2050?

Ag must
provide FFF for more people
+ with limited resource, changing climate

Procedure

1. *Preparation*: As always, a few minutes are devoted to topic activation and brainstorming (TG-2.5.6), at this stage to eliminate as far as possible any obstacles due to language or knowledge and make sure the exercise is focused on the skills of consecutive per se.
2. *Speech delivery:* The speaker should begin naturally, introducing himself and the topic and moving gradually into the subject matter. Segments of about 1 to 1.5 minutes are ideal at this stage, stopping and starting at clear logical breaks, such as a major shift in the topic or argument. Each point should be presented with some verbal padding and redundancy: 'spinning wheels' occasionally in this way will make it easier to boil down the idea to a few simple cue-words.
3. *Note-taking:* Students take sparse notes, writing down only cue-words (one or two for each point in the speech) as well as all logical links, and trying to use the target language where possible. To encourage parsimony and instil the habit of clear layout (*verticalization*) from this early stage, students can initially take notes either on narrow strips of paper, going downwards, or only in one column in the notepad (half the width of the 15 × 22 cm (6″ × 9″) page) (Myers 1976: 103–5).
4. *Interpretation*: A student is picked to interpret the passage, the instructor deciding whether and how much to let her look at her notes.
5. *Discussion:*
   a. Prompting and self-correction: the instructor asks leading questions, in the usual way, to help the student self-correct any major problems.

b. Examination of notes: some students' notes are transferred to the white-board, or projected onto the screen, and looked at to check:
   i. if they satisfy the requirements of the exercise (key points and links only, noting just one or two words for each; clear, legible writing, laid out vertically down the page; and using TL where possible);
   ii. if cue-word and link selection is correct and/or effective.
c. Optional: guided group discussion to elaborate a simple discourse outline (key points and links) on the whiteboard.

5.3.2 How to note links

During the cue-words and links module, you should start developing some fixed conventions for noting links with short, simple words. For example:

as, coz, ∵	= since, because, given that, considering that, due to…
thus, ∴	= therefore, hence, consequently, as a result, for this reason
tho	= although, despite, notwithstanding, etc. (general function: opposition or concession)
but	= however, on the other hand, nonetheless, nevertheless… (general restriction)
if	= assuming that, suppose that, let's say that, were it the case that
then…	= consequence (what comes after IF clause)
so	= in conclusion, as a result, from the above it can be seen that (general conclusion)
to	= in order to, with a view to, with the intention/aim of
wrt, re:	= with respect to, as regards, as far as…is concerned, on the subject of…
e.g.	= for example, for instance, take…X…, say, as a case in point
i.e.	= that is to say, in other words
+,	= additionally, moreover, a further/additional point, another thing, I should add…

In general while reading, listening or practising, keep a lookout for various kinds of linking words in your different languages, and collect and categorize them accordingly (see CC-4.2.3 on connectives and coherence relations).

However, sometimes **logical links are only implicit** in the speaker's verbalization. For the purposes of this exercise, students are to analyse and note down **all the links, both implicit and explicit** (but see 5.7.2 on the use of notes for delivery).

- Notes must be BIG, CLEAR and LEGIBLE.
- Notes should flow VERTICALLY down the page and be sufficiently spaced out. You can now start using the whole page (but if you must divide the page, make a narrower margin on the left for link words).

In which language should I take notes?

Whether to use words from the *source or target language* in consecutive notes is a much-debated question.

Taking down whole ‘unprocessed’ SL words and phrases from the original speech is ill-advised, since the job of translating or reformulating is merely put off until delivery. Worse, too many original words on the page may make it harder to shake off linguistic interference; and worst of all, faced with a page of poorly-chosen SL words, you may not be able to recall the actual *idea*.

If words, symbols or abbreviations written down are understood just as *symbolic cues* for ideas that have *already been understood*, the language they are drawn from is irrelevant. Your ability to listen actively and effectively and choose cue-words intelligently to maximize the value of the notes as recall cues for meaning is therefore more important than SL vs. TL.

On the one hand, using mainly TL especially for any words you have to write down (and making some use of symbols) helps you get away from unthinking transcription of the SL forms, and helps you think in the TL, offering a more comfortable script for delivery. Willett (1974) recommends noting not what you have understood, but what you are going to say. Getting some of the translation or reformulation part of the job done in the capture phase by already thinking and noting in TL frees up effort in the delivery phase. If nothing else, then, TL should be used for noting any *good TL expressions* that come to mind for when you deliver, and might otherwise forget.

On the other hand, listening and noting is more effort-intensive than delivery, and, unlike the delivery phase, is paced by the speaker. When necessary, then, sticking to SL notes can help save valuable processing capacity for listening. Once you have started doing SI you will get into the habit of thinking in TL immediately, so noting in TL will come more easily, but for now don’t force yourself if it takes too much concentration away from listening and understanding – *provided* that you process ideas and note intelligently.

When working into B, there may be a bias towards noting in the A language (Dam 2004), but this risks adding an interference ‘drag’ when it comes to formulating. This justifies making an extra effort to think and note in B. (However, for some students with particular language combinations *availability* and *legibility* may be overriding considerations. For example, Western students who have learned Chinese may speak it well enough to train with it as a B language for consecutive, but may not have mastered the writing system to the point of sufficient automaticity to be able to take full notes, fast, in legible Chinese characters. Forcing them to take notes in Chinese will clearly be counterproductive.)

On balance, we would still recommend “TL where possible, SL where necessary” (AIIC 1994: 21, cited in Dam 2004) – and using symbols where effective – but without imposing this choice, since there seems to be wide variety in practice among professionals. Ultimately, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: over time, individual interpreters will find what works best for them. Some interpreters may learn to resist interference despite mostly using their A language as a basis for notes; others may end up mixing SL and TL freely, and may even draw on other languages they know (for example, using some *hanzi/kanji* when taking notes to interpret between English and French), and/or use more symbols; yet others may choose to work with TL most of the time. Finally, the type of speech is always a factor. You should therefore experiment, to learn the consequences for delivery of noting more or fewer words, in which language, and whether as mere cues or as actual output solutions. (For references to discussions on this question in the training literature, see TG-6.8 and TG-6 Further reading.)

5.3.3 Choosing the right cue-word: exercise

During this module, a complementary offline cue-word selection exercise may help to reinforce the same skills, following the same procedure as in **Idiomatic Gist** (CC-4.2.2.1): the instructor reads out passages from stylistically involved texts,[10] and the class discusses what cues should be written down, and **how** to capture them economically. Importantly, the words written down do not have to be actual words that were part of the source language utterance. For example, "Attendance is mandatory and is not subject to personal preference" could be recorded simply as '*must go*'. This exercise not only reinforces intelligent cue-word selection, but also shows that you don't actually have to use the words you wrote down when making your own TL speech. The interpreter could read back 'must go', for example, in a similarly stuffy register as "Being there is not optional, so kindly ensure that you present yourself at the designated place and time."

Table 5.1 Note-Taking I: the essentials

1. *Listen actively*: Words ≠ Message. Actively 'squeeze out' the sense from the words.
2. *Deverbalize*: Make notes that capture the ideas clearly and simply, using smart cue-words, or, if they are quicker or easier to write, clear abbreviations, symbols, arrows, etc.
3. *Analyse* the structure and logic of each passage, and how it fits into the speech overall. Deeper processing = better grasp of the thread and better interpretation. Pay particular attention to links and transitions: note all links, explicit or implicit.
4. *Note economically*: Try recording each idea in the speech with just one or two cue-words or signs. Your notes are simply cues to trigger recall from your memory, not a record of everything the speaker said. If you are not understanding, stop taking notes, look at the speaker, and *listen*.

Once everyone is comfortable with the cue-words-and-links approach – but not before – speeches can gradually become more detailed and less redundant, and you will gradually be allowed to note down more – provided that this does not interfere with active listening and analysis.

As more details are introduced into the speeches, you will find that in addition to cue-words and links, it is helpful to capture 'transcodable' elements (CC-4.3.1) in the notes – nuggets of data that don't necessarily fit into the idea being developed, making them harder to remember.[11] The most obvious ones are:

10. As in Initiation (CC-4.2.2.1, note 5), formal, written or literary texts should be avoided, especially when working from B or C into A. Stylistic and linguistic sophistication should be more syntactic and pragmatic than lexical, to avoid adding this factor of difficulty from a B or C language.

11. But a concentration of some items in these categories – e.g. long, unfamiliar (or very 'foreign') proper names; institutions; titles, polysyllabic chemical compounds, pharmaceuticals, species in zoology, botany etc. – can make consecutive (but not SI) impossible.

- numbers
- names
- technical terms
- lists (sometimes but not always composed of the above)
- motivated expressions – particular word choices that the speaker has made for a reason, and that must therefore be respected and given special treatment in the translation, whereas unnuanced paraphrase would water down the speaker's intended effect.

This first module should ease you comfortably into the right habits for note-taking in consecutive, keeping notes simple and economical, focusing on the *imperative* need never to lose touch with the speaker, resisting blind unprocessed dictation, and instead, analysing and understanding before choosing a note. However, as the rest of the note-taking tool-kit is incrementally acquired, the next phase will be somewhat more bumpy, with uneven performances when thinking about your notes diverts your attention from listening or formulation.

Students who are having difficulty with legibility at this stage should retrain their handwriting habits before proceeding to the Standard Method. Detailed guidance on everything from penhold and paper placement to letterforms and maintaining control at speed is available in Sassoon and Briem (2014).

5.4 Note-Taking II: the standard method

5.4.1 Origins and key features

Once students are comfortable applying the cue-words and links approach on two-minute passages of trainer speeches, initiation into the full 'Standard Method' of note-taking (Rozan 1956, Appendix A)[12] can begin, starting from the principles of **layout** before moving on to techniques for capturing the **content** of a speech, then finally, its style, **mood and tone**.

5.4.2 Layout

How to structure your notes on the page effectively, by means of ***verticalization, indentation, stacking****, and* ***boxing****.*

In Cue-words and Links, students were encouraged to 'verticalize', noting *down* the page, taking minimal notes. Additional structuring techniques can now be introduced: *indenting* to the right[13], *stacking* lists or other items at the same hierarchical

12. But see discussion of variations on note-taking method in TG-6.8.

13. Or possibly to the left, from the right-hand side of the page, for those most accustomed to languages that are written from right to left (although whole phrases are rarely noted…).

level, and *segmenting* the discourse into boxes separated by horizontal lines, each introduced by the appropriate logical *link.* At the same time, more details can be captured in the notes where necessary.

Layout: main principles

1. *Boxes*: Note vertically down the page. Draw a single horizontal line after each complete idea, chunking the speech into 'bite-sized' idea units roughly corresponding to 'complete sentences'. At 'paragraph' or topic-shift breaks, draw a double line.
2. *Links*: Note down links (THO, BUT, COZ, SO, IF, TO, +, e.g., RE:) in the top left corner of each box.
3. *Indentation*: As you move down within each box, indent progressively to the right in order to separate out the elements that make up that idea unit, each on a separate line. Typical patterns include:

Topic
Comment
____

Subject
Verb
Object *(or:)*
Verb
Object 1
Object 2…
____

Link/connector
Agent – Action
(qualification: though…, which…)

4. *Stacking*: Elements at the same hierarchical level – lists or short examples – should be stacked vertically without indenting.
5. *Clarity*: The structure of the page should be clearly visible at a glance from several feet away.

Indentation signals relations of subordination or dependency between parts of an extended idea within each chunk or box. More frequent and even systematic indenting – noting each 'phrase' progressively to the right as you go down the page – can also help as a visual aid, to see each item more clearly. This is so even if the 'subordination' is trivial, as long as it does not lead to delay, confusion or spurious subordination on delivery. Ultimately, some students will indent more than others; but significant indenting is necessary, indeed mandatory, because of its contribution to clarity and spacing on the page: cramped notes are one of the most common obstacles to performance, especially in the early stages.

Correctly applied, **layout principles will yield a body of notes that *chunk the speech* into a series of idea units ('sentences' and 'paragraphs'), *linked* explicitly as appropriate, and with the constituent parts of each idea unit clearly *sorted* and separated out on the page for immediate visual recognition**.

For example:

Just a few years ago, people in the United States wouldn't have believed you if you'd told them there was a middle class in China. Today, though, the Chinese middle class is already larger than the entire population of the United States. And in fifteen years, the Chinese middle class is expected to reach 800 million. For companies that want to sell to China, now the timing is right and momentum is strong. In China, Western companies have advantages in big-ticket items such as automobiles, luxury goods and technology products because of their quality and reputation. However, they will face more competition from Chinese domestic firms in consumer goods sectors such as food and beverages, household appliances and personal care products.[14]

Few years ago
    US people ~~believe~~
        'middle class' in China

But
    now
        >
        whole US pop !

    in 15 years
        will reach
                800m

For companies
    /sell to China
        time right
        momentum strong

Western advantage:
        'big ticket'
            e.g. cars
                luxury
                tech
    coz
        quality
        reputation

---

14. Text adapted from "Times Have Changed: No More 'China Produces and America Consumes'" by Helen Wang, published January 2011 on Forbes.com:
http://www.forbes.com/sites/helenwang/2011/01/27/times-have-changed-no-more-china-produces-and-america-consumes/

```
------------------------------------
But
    more competition/Chinese firms
        in consumer goods
            e.g. food & bev
                white goods
                personal care
------------------------------------
```

We have written up this example mostly in whole words and entirely in the source language to illustrate the *layout* of consecutive note-taking without complicating the picture with abbreviations, symbols, or target language items – and this is what you should do at this stage. One or two devices for clarifying structure with 'relational' syntax can now be introduced:

1. *Cross-referencing and repetition of items*: The 'agreement line' (van Hoof 1962), also called '*reference' or 'recall' line* (Gillies 2005), is a line without arrowhead, of indefinite length and shape, that can be used to refer back to things or 'drag' things around in your notes, so you don't have to write them down twice (Myers 1976: 108–111). In this example we use it to repeat a reference ('the middle class in China') in the second box ('…is bigger than…')
2. *Backslash*: The diagonal line or slash / *('relation' slash)* can be used to show subordination or to connect elements that belong together, e.g. NP/relative clause ('that', 'which') or NP/prepositional phrase ('by', 'for', 'of', 'per'…). In this example it represents 'which', and later, 'from' ('which' sell to China; 'from' Chinese companies).

It is important not to retain only one principle of layout – say, indenting – and neglect the rest. You may, for example, be intimidated at first by long or complex sentences (Liu 1993: 108), and believe that just continuing to indent mechanically will somehow defuse the problem – but then wonder what happens when you run out of space at the edge of the page!

To show that complex structure need not be an obstacle, the instructor will sometimes give speeches with longer sentences, and demonstrate how to use *all* the principles of layout to capture and note the *semantic* relations between sub-units, both smaller, like Agent – Action – Object – Manner; or larger, like subordination, exemplification, condition, concession, etc. For example,

- placing an operator or qualifier (verb or adjective) *alongside* a stacked list of the items that it commands or qualifies;
- using a slash *within* a line of notes for local subordination (e.g. for 'by…' or 'which');

- separating coordinated clauses on different lines by a big 'and' or 'but' (and not necessarily indenting the second one, since they may be of equal importance: indeed a BUT clause that follows an initial statement may often be the real point, coming as the punchline of the 'long sentence').

Most importantly, these semantic and logical relations (and later, marks of relative emphasis) must be *clearly visible* on the page (see e.g. Gillies 2005). Simple, economic representation also helps (see next section). While grammar will change across the language barrier, logical relations in this sense usually do not.

Here are some examples of how information arriving in various shorter and longer sentences might be laid out (assuming also that students may already spontaneously use some of their own abbreviations):

The secretariat will revise the report, but we must have your comments by December 15th.

Sec to revise Rt
but
must get comments by Dec 15

Although companies are investing more, unemployment is still high.

Tho firms invest +,
    Jobless still high

The ministry says that fishing could resume in some areas if radiation falls to safe levels, but we cannot expect exports to recover for several years.

Min: OK fish again some areas
            IF rads ↓
                    safe

BUT no hope exports up b4 <u>years</u>

Unfortunately, despite all our predictions, and with no prospect of a reversal of their decision, Burnham Limited have decided to sign the deal without us.

☹	vs all predic^{ns} & as no hope chge mind	Burnham will sign w/o us

Students can now do a simple and straightforward Slow Notes exercise, but concentrating for now on layout only: the instructor reads a text, sentence by sentence, and students can write whole words in SL, focusing purely on deciding *which* meaningful items to write down, and getting the *layout* of these clear and correct.

Layout is more crucial to good note-taking than abbreviations or symbols, so learning to apply its principles should on no account be rushed.

Exercise: 'Slow notes'

Materials: The trainer speech[15] used should be on a familiar topic, very coherent, and – for this module – fairly rich in information content, consisting of clear, well-formed sentences (ideally, a mixture of short and long ones) each contributing essential, non-redundant meaning that must be reproduced in the interpretation. Obscure, technical or literary subject-matter should be avoided, as well as anything that is not perfectly clear and will give rise to quibbles over meaning.

The speech is delivered slowly, in short passages of several sentences or around 30–45 seconds at a time. All notes are reviewed carefully to ensure that the relevant techniques are being applied effectively.

Procedure: Students are given time to work out how best to note each short passage, and then take turns looking at and discussing each other's solutions. These can be put up on the whiteboard, or projected on the screen, for the class to look at together, with a focus on the technique of the day. We recommend using this exercise to work on layout first, and then later on information capture (abbreviations, symbols, etc.).

Say the class is currently working on abbreviation. Each student's notes should be checked for (a) any long words or phrases that should have been abbreviated but were not, and (b) any abbreviations that could be problematic or ambiguous. Different students' solutions can be compared and discussed. As long as the basic principles are respected and the notes are economical, legible and immediately clear in meaning, the range of different solutions observed will all be acceptable. But some solutions will be more elegant than others, and sharing them can help catalyse creativity and thinking outside the box.

Pedagogical focus: From the first 'cue-words and links' exercise until several weeks after the first introduction to note-taking, you will be experimenting with and personalizing the technique, working on good layout, while trying out and adopting your own symbols and abbreviations. During this period you will naturally be somewhat preoccupied with your notes, and it will be unreasonable to ask too much in terms of eye contact, audience engagement or eloquent delivery.

5.4.3 Information capture

How to capture information content economically yet reliably: making smart choices and using the devices of ***simplification, abbreviation*** *and* ***symbols****.*

Once you are comfortable with the above layout techniques – the 'syntax' of note-taking – you can begin to work on integrating the other key design feature of the Standard Method: its 'lexicon' for information capture. A basic requirement of a note system is to be able to capture each element of meaning that you choose to record *fast and reliably* in a way that allows for *unmistakable recognition* and fluent read-back. Legibility is paramount – there is no point taking down notes that you can't decipher or are meaningless to you afterwards!

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15. See SDI in TG-2, Appendix.

Speech varies in the speed and density of information to be captured, and a solid note-taking system must be able to handle fast-ish input (say, 130–150 wpm) packed with facts and figures – as in economics reports, for example – as well as discursive, conceptual, and conventional and oratorical speeches. Interpreters note the 'ideas' (captured through *analysis* of the speech) rather than the words themselves; but in some speeches, even analysis still leaves a lot of uncompressible words and items to be noted. Few people can write more than 30–40 words a minute legibly,[16] so the interpreter must make up the difference in two ways:

i. Smart choices in terms of *what items* to write down
ii. Conventions for *how to record* these items in condensed, abbreviated form.

What to write down: Cue-words and links was an exercise in minimal or 'skeleton' note-taking. We now have to learn how to take full and detailed notes (roughly one notation for every 2–4 SL words, as in Rozan's examples) when this is occasionally necessary. To equip your note-taking system to handle this more mechanical, compression aspect of note taking, you will need to learn and stabilize a set of conventions that will allow you to write down something clear and unambiguous for **each meaning-contributing and non-redundant** element.

How to condense and abbreviate: As seen in the instructor's demonstration of consecutive note-taking, we can freely mix and match TL and SL words and abbreviations as well as non-verbal symbols to represent the speaker's ideas economically in our notes. Information can be compressed in notes in various ways:

a. *simplification*, requiring prior analysis of the meaning of the phrase to be simplified
b. *abbreviation* of the words we choose to note, by some purely mechanical convention
c. *symbols*

Classes in this next stage of learning note-taking can start focusing on each of these devices in turn.

5.4.3.1 *Simplification*

Simplification – summarizing a string of words in a simple but adequate cue – is at the heart of consecutive note-taking technique. Examples:

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16. An average professional typist types at speeds of 50 to 80 wpm: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Words_per_minute#Handwriting

'Varsity debaters talk at 350 to 400 words a minute – about the speed of a fast auctioneer': http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/19/magazine/319debate.html?pagewanted=all

acceptable	OK
amazing, impressive	wow
evidence	proof
commencement	start
replicate	copy
terminate	end
protracted, extended	long
aspiration	hope, wish
at the present time	now
achieve visibility with respect to	show, see
have the ability to	can
render assistance to	help
cause injury to	hurt
there is a possibility that	might
in terms of the underlying reason	coz
with the objective of being able to	to
despite the foregoing, there are nonetheless	but
with regard to the idea that	re:
let me give a couple of illustrations	e.g.

Languages may vary in this regard, but English at least is helpfully endowed with a large stock of short, single-syllable words (especially verbs) of Anglo-Saxon origin. A well-chosen single Chinese/Japanese character (*hanzi*/*kanji*) can play the same role, provided that it is easy to write and non-ambiguous. Examples of how to use short synonyms to substitute for longer words and phrases can be found in various 'plain language' style guides; journalistic headline writing as well as telegraphese can also be rich sources of inspiration (see also Ilg and Lambert 1996).

SL and TL can be freely mixed as desired, so long as there is no ambiguity. Thus, short English synonyms can be used for longer French (or Chinese, or Russian…) phrases, and vice versa.

Simple practice in short synonym substitution can be done as a standalone exercise. The instructor reads out a prepared list of long words and phrases like the above, asking you to write down or speak out a short SL or TL word to capture the same meaning. A few sessions will suffice, as the goal here is merely to 'potentiate' the technique, which must be practised and mastered on speeches, not on out-of-context snippets. But it will be even more productive to practise accurate simplification on texts in a convoluted style, boiling down the original. After any consecutive exercise, the instructor may review the students' notes for missed opportunities to replace words and phrases that were too long or complicated with shorter synonyms (in any language). For example:

"To what do you attribute this change?"
→ why (Liu 1994: 108)

"The most elegant strategy for terminating the present contract would be to propose a more productive arrangement to replace it"
→ best way kill deal = swap better one
"Admittedly, the purpose of the exercise was defeated to some extent by the fact that…"
→ sure, plan spoiled by…

It is important to understand that simplification is not a linguistic exercise, and is *easier* in a way than finding a short 'exact synonym', since all you need is a short word (or abbreviation or symbol) that *cues* the original meaning *in the context*. When the time comes to deliver, the interpreter will *not actually speak* any of these simplified expressions; rather, she will refer to them for memory support only, and choose an appropriate TL rendition in the correct register.

5.4.3.2 *Abbreviation*

Unlike simplification, which needs semantic analysis, abbreviation is mechanical (fixed, stable abbreviations) or at least automatable (applying standard procedures, like superscripts). It includes devices for abbreviating words, phrases, numbers, dates, and regular grammatical features like prefixes and suffixes, plus functions like negation, tense, modality, intensification and degree. Many of these devices are not specific to consecutive note-taking; you may well already have used some of them for taking notes at lectures. Each type of device can be introduced and tried out over a few class sessions.

Abbreviating words and phrases

Words and phrases can be abbreviated using existing standard forms in current use, or ad hoc by applying certain principles. Sources of fixed or standard abbreviations include

i. *Standard acronyms and initialisms*: e.g. UN, IMF, USA, PRC, BBC, CIA, VIP, CEO, ATM, BRIC, GDP; P5 for the five permanent members of the Security Council, Q4 for the fourth quarter, B2B for business-to-business, etc.
ii. *Standard abbreviations*, e.g. from Latin: cf., i.e, e.g., NB, QED, etc., et al., stat; or from chemistry: e.g. Fe, Au…; units (cm, kg, kWh); countries/cities (car number plates or, possibly, airport codes).
iii. *Informal abbreviations used in email, text-messaging, etc*: asap (as soon as possible), btw (by the way), ok (= agreement, success), ko (knock-out = failure), FYI (for your information), FYR (for your review), IMHO (in my humble opinion)…or even WTF to express indignant surprise!
iv. *Semi-standard and fixed personal abbreviations* – gov (government), dept (department), nec (necessary), mfg (manufacturing), bkg (banking), mkt (market)…w/ for with, w/o for without, etc. Personal abbreviations developed during undergraduate studies can be kept, as long as they are non-ambiguous (see below).

Abbreviations, like symbols, can obviously be drawn from any system or language regardless of the SL or TL of the interpretation. Handy examples include Spanish *hay* ('there is'), Q for 'source' (from German *Quelle*), or bs (French *bien sûr* = of course) – always provided, as illustrated in this last example, that the abbreviation is 100% stabilized and unambiguous with this meaning in the interpreter's repertoire!

Students of consecutive should look out for these in their daily lives and try them out in their notes. Some further examples of symbols and abbreviations from the literature (Ilg and Lambert 1996) can be found in Appendix B.

Ad hoc abbreviation: principles and caveats

The vast majority of long words have no standard or conventional short form, but some regularities of word morphology make it possible to abbreviate following certain rules and principles. The Standard Method suggests two approaches to abbreviating long words (>4–5 letters):

a. *Delete vowels*: → dlt vwls; report → rprt; toujours → tjrs ; perfect → prfct
b. *Word stem + superscript*: For longer words, **note down the word stem and then tag on the word ending in superscript** (see also Matyssek 1989). This helps to avoid ambiguity, and captures many long words clearly in only 4–6 letters. For example:

production:	prod^{n}	government	gov^{t}
producer:	prod^{er}	governor	gov^{r}
product:	prod^{ct}	governance	gov^{ce}
productivity:	prod^{ty}	governing	gov^{g}

Common *prefixes*, on the other hand – like 'pre', 'post', or 'trans' – are best spelt out.

Code-mixing for abbreviation

SL and TL elements and symbols can be freely combined in creating abbreviations, thus making them potentially both shorter in form and clearer in meaning. For students with Chinese or Japanese,[17] here are some examples using a character for the semantic component:

economist	ec$^{\text{人}}$	capitalism	cap$^{\text{义}}$
economics	ec$^{\text{学}}$	populism	pop$^{\text{义}}$
academic	ac$^{\text{人}}$	most dangerous	危^{est}
businessman	bus$^{\text{人}}$	more drawn-out	长^{er}
employer	emp$^{\text{主}}$	urbanization	urb$^{\text{化}}$ or 市$^{\text{化}}$
employee	emp$^{\text{员}}$	globalization	⊖$^{\text{化}}$
rural residents	rur$^{\text{人}}$		

17. and perhaps Korean.

And the same technique can of course be employed within the same writing system:

Member of the Communist Party 共人

However, abbreviation 'on-the-fly' carries risks, some worse than others.

i. A major risk is *non-recognition* – when you can't remember what the abbreviation was supposed to stand for – or (potentially worse still) *false recognition*. For example, you have written down 'Fed' in relation to the Federal Reserve setting interest rates, but you read it back as 'the federal government' setting interest rates – negating at a stroke the autonomy of US monetary policy!
ii. Less dramatically, any *effort* or delay needed to remember what abbreviations were supposed to stand for will slow down delivery, a serious drawback for consecutive interpreting.

For on-the-fly abbreviation to work, you must be absolutely sure that the abbreviation is clear and unambiguous. Writing down the first part of a word is the method that tends to come most readily: for example, noting 'especially' as 'esp'. You can adopt fixed personal abbreviations in this format, as long as one form corresponds uniquely to one *meaning* (not necessarily one *word* – a form can point to a 'family' of related words, e.g. 'nec' for 'necessary, necessitate, necessity, necessarily'…). This works if the form-meaning pair is completely stable in the repertoire; otherwise, when employed on the fly, this approach can easily lead to bad abbreviations and false recognition, or slow down output as you struggle to remember. Common traps include

cons – consumer, consumption; (*opposite!*) conserve, conservation; consider; pros & cons; consolidation; construct(ion) constitution(al)…

cont – containing/contents; continue/continued/continuing; contribute/contribution; [continent/-al]…

exp – expert, expertise, experience, export, expect, expel…

stat – statistics, statute (-ory), state, status, statement, station, immediately (medicine)…

eco – ecology vs. economy.

Obviously, the context would rule out many of the 'theoretical' possibilities. But even in context, it is still quite possible for ambiguity to arise, and it most assuredly will (per Murphy's law) often at the worst possible time. For example, noting (energy) consumption as 'cons' could be very dangerous in a speech that also talks about energy 'conservation' – and what speech on energy does not touch on conservation? Similarly, confusing 'ecological' with 'economic' concerns could result in a serious misunderstanding. This kind of problem is very common in beginners' note-taking.

Abbreviation of grammatical features

Some grammatical features – in particular, the *tense* and *modality* of actions described in a speech: will, did, would, could, may, might, should, must, etc. – are not always obvious from context or spontaneously remembered. We therefore strongly recommend marking these explicitly, especially for longer passages. In our experience, failure to render tense and especially modality correctly and precisely is a common problem even among advanced students of consecutive, in particular when working with languages that express these differently. Systematic marking instilled with repeated targeted practice should help.

Three sets of devices that can be used to mark present, future, past, continuous, completed and/or hypothetical or conditional action are:

i. *Diacritic marks* from many languages: for example, the acute, grave or circumflex accents used in several European languages can be used alone or in combination to show future, past and conditional/possible action respectively, and doubled for completed actions; continuation can be shown by a horizontal line above the whole of the relevant word(s) or symbols (with an optional arrowhead to emphasize duration):

sée: (acute accent) 'will see'	sèe: (grave accent) saw;	sêe: (circumflex) would see
s$\overline{\text{ee}}$: 'is seeing'	sèè: 'has seen'	sèê: would have seen

ii. *Word stem + superscripts* modelled on tense endings in certain languages, e.g. English past suffix -d, or French future -ra: swap^{d} (= exchanged, swapped), swap^{ra} (will exchange), etc.; Go^{ing} or go^{g} (continuous, 'going'); Go^{ll} (future action, 'will go');

iii. A *fixed abbreviation, symbol, letter or character*, e.g:

should:	d (Latin languages), soll, 应
must:	<u>d</u> (underlined), m (Germanic), 必
can:	can, k (Germanic), p (Latin), 可
future:	will
past:	已

You can choose from the above, or create your own fixed conventions. Some more examples (here 'impl' is short for 'implemented'):

The project is being carried out.	Proj $\overline{\text{impl}}$
The project will be carried out.	Proj ímpl
The project was carried out.	Proj ìmpl
The project will be completed by August.	Proj fíni ⊣ Aug
The project should be completed by August.	Proj d fíni ⊣ Aug
The project must be completed by August.	Proj m fini ⊣ Aug
The project should have been/was expected to be completed by August (but wasn't).	Proj d̏ fini ⊣ Aug

The project can be completed by August.	Proj k fíni ⊣ Aug
The project could have been completed by August (but wasn't).	Proj k̂ fíni ⊣ Aug (but not)

Symbols can express duration or the relative position of actions or events:

before/in the past:	.|; *now*: ┼;
after/later:	|. [a point placed before, on or after a vertical line]
until/up to:	--|
since/as of/starting from:	|--
Since 1982:	1982→
Until 2017:	→2017

Abbreviation of functions: intensification, degree, negation

Intensification and degree *(most / extremely / very / more / somewhat / less, not, or vocal or implicit intensification)* can be shown by $\underline{\text{single}}$ or $\underline{\underline{\text{double underlining}}}$ to intensify, $\underset{\cdots\cdots}{\text{dotted underlining}}$ to moderate or weaken, and crossing out (~~strike-through~~) for negation.

regrettable

somewhat regrettable	$\underset{\cdots}{\text{pity}}$
very regrettable	$\underline{\text{pity}}$
extremely regrettable	$\underline{\underline{\text{pity}}}$
not regrettable	~~pity~~
more regrettable	pity$^{+,}$ pity$^{>}$
less regrettable	pity^{-}, pity$^{<}$
most regrettable	pity$^{!}$, pity^{est}
Not bad	~~bad~~
Not the worst	~~bad~~$^{\cancel{!}}$

Abbreviation of numbers

Research has shown numbers to be a focus of errors in interpreting (e.g. Pellatt 2005). They should be noted immediately, while still fresh in echoic memory, and carefully. Various abbreviations are possible for series of zeros; or letters like k, m and b can be used for thousand, million, billion.

three hundred and seventy five thousand: 375k
two hundred and forty million: 240m
three point seven billion: 3.7b
nine and a half trillion: 9.5tr

Regular and intensive number conversion drills, though tedious, make a significant difference to students' performance both in consecutive and especially, as we will see later, in SI. Such drills are *indispensable* for trainees working in 'Asian-Western' combinations (see box).

Numbers in Asian-Western interpreting

Languages like Chinese, Japanese and Korean (among others, especially in Asia) divide up large numbers differently from the Western and Middle Eastern systems. In these East Asian languages, numbers are expressed as multiples of ten, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand (万 / 萬 *wan, man, man*) and a hundred million (亿/億 *yi/oku/eog*) – but not millions, billions or trillions, which must be expressed as multiples of 万(10^4) or 亿(10^8) (India has yet another pattern). Thus, the figure 'two hundred and thirty eight million' would be rendered in Chinese as 'two 亿(10^8), three thousand eight hundred 万(10^4)'.

Hours of practice are therefore necessary for students in these combinations, where they listen to lists of big numbers and instantly orally convert them to the other language, without taking notes, until the conversion process is fast, reliable and as automatic as possible – an absolute pre-requisite for becoming an interpreter in these languages.

In these combinations any number-related hazard will be significantly amplified – such as when speakers leave out 'million' and just say the number preceding it, or when they combine fractions and large number units (e.g. 'two-thirds of a million'; 'three-quarters of a trillion').

In consecutive, these conversions can be done either when noting, or at delivery (see Box above on SL vs. TL noting) – but either way, you must be clear about the format: for example, 'seventeen point three million' should be noted EITHER as 17.3m (to be converted during delivery) OR 1730 万 (conversion completed during note-taking). DO NOT get confused and write down the first half in 'English' and the second half in 'Chinese', or vice versa, getting the units all mixed up.

The difficulty is further compounded in the field of electrical power, usually measured in China only in multiples of a kilowatt (although new, borrowed words have appeared recently for *mega*, *giga* and *tera*, sometimes creating confusion). A typical example:

> 据介绍，大唐集团在坚持发展的同时，不断提高发展质量，电源结构、机组结构进一步优化。截至目前，水电装机容量从组建时的２７１·２０万千瓦增加到１３８８·７４万千瓦，增长了４·１２倍以上，位列同行业发电集团之首；风电装机容量达到２３５·１２５万千瓦；核电、生物质能和太阳能均实现了"零"的突破。清洁能源和可再生能源所占比重达到１８·０３%，比组建时提高了６·６６个百分点。[18]

Here, for example, the interpreter would first need to convert 1388.74 万千瓦 (i.e. 1,388.74 × 10^4 kW) into 13.9 million kilowatts; and then, in a second conversion, could report it as 13.9 gigawatts.[19]

Similarly, the interpreter may need to convert various measures for her target audience, such as *mu* (亩), equivalent to 0.0067 hectares, or *crore/lakh* for large sums in rupees.

18. Source: "中国大唐集团成为亚洲最大发电企业", article from 中华工商时报, July 2, 2009. http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2009-06/29/content_11621365.htm (Accessed February 16, 2016).

19. Note also in passing the different conventions regarding (ostensible) statistical precision: in Western presentations, figures are usually rounded off to the last relevant decimal point.

World knowledge, context and local analysis will obviously help you to do a much better job with numbers, at least in terms of providing plausible approximation in the right order of magnitude, which will be acceptable in some situations. However, there is also a purely mechanical, transcoding aspect that can be drilled, out of context, by simply practising fast noting and transposing of large and complex numbers – an exception to the 'incremental realism' approach, but necessary especially between languages with conflicting systems.

Abbreviation of dates

It is important to note that formats vary between countries (Europe, North America and China use three different orders of days, months and years), so consistency with one particular system throughout is critical when reducing dates to numbers (e.g. you must know if 6/8 is June 8, or August 6).

Noting down names

Names of people, places, countries or organizations from all the world's cultures are scattered throughout international discourse, can hardly ever be abbreviated, and, especially when unfamiliar, are probably the most difficult thing to note down reliably. (This is one important reason among others why we need documentation – including a list of participants – to provide adequate service.)

At this stage, instructors should keep names to a minimum, and where unavoidable, supply them in writing or spell them out carefully (and pronounce them if possible) during the pre-exercise briefing, to be noted by students on a separate 'crib' sheet. More practice will be needed later (5.7.3).

5.4.3.3 *Symbols, sketches and combinations*

Alongside abbreviation, symbols are the other major device for rapid information capture. Symbols are immensely valuable in that they are fast to write and are non-verbal signifiers of meaning, thus by definition 'deverbalized'. They are perhaps also the most idiosyncratic kind of note, and have been a contentious aspect of note-taking instruction, with some instructors being reluctant to teach any symbols at all, in the belief that symbols must come from and make sense to each individual student, while others seem quite happy to offload dozens on their students.

In our experience, what works best is for the class to begin by reviewing different sets of more-or-less familiar symbols from various domains (e.g. mathematics, punctuation, music, road signs, emoticons). The advantage of these sets of symbols is that they will already known to most students and can therefore be taken on board more easily. For example,

↑	increase, growth, upward trend
↓	decrease, decline, drop off
>	greater than, more
<	less than, less
=	equals
~	approximately
?	question
$	dollars OR money (decide!)
✓	approval, agreement
∢	parse, examine, look at
!	important
Δ	change, uncertainty [math] *or* 'danger/beware'
∞	infinite, unending, boundless
©	copyright
☺	happy, pleased
Rx	doctor's prescription (hence, 'solution', 'response' [to a problem])
→	resulting in, causing, leading to

Over time, you should develop your own small personal stock of useful signs and symbols. These are highly individual, and must make sense to you; in fact, the most meaningful and easiest to remember are often those you used at school or as an undergraduate. You can 'borrow' some nice symbols from colleagues[20] but do *not* try to memorize reams of idiosyncratic ciphers developed by somebody else unless they make perfect intuitive sense to you. Some amusing examples include an upward or downward cupped hand for 'supply' and 'demand', a tipping scale for 'balance' (of payments, trade, etc.), a wavy line for change, a flash of lightning (as in the Tower Arcanum in The Tarot) for war or disaster, etc. Students who happen to be familiar with any ancient or exotic pictographic script, from runes to hieroglyphics to Dongba, will have an additional private source of their own.

Repertoire-building: Analyse your notes regularly for recurring concepts that could benefit from having a fixed abbreviation or symbol, then make or find one to meet that specific need. Ready-made symbols can be found in various domains and incorporated into your personal note-taking system with stable meanings for useful, common concepts.

Ideas for intuitively appealing symbols can be discussed over a number of class sessions, and students can decide which they want to adopt. Some students will gradually discover a liking for symbols and may, over time, develop a large

20. See also Ilg and Lambert (1996) for more sources of symbols and abbreviations, such as telegraphic newspaper headline jargon (ban, bar, nix…), number plates, keyboards, mobile phones, etc.

stock of them. Others will use only a select few, preferring (short) words and abbreviations. This is a matter of individual style and should not be of concern provided that the resulting notes are clear and effective and can support good interpretation.

One informal poll of a number of professional 'consecutivists' revealed that the number of stable fixed symbols in their personal note-taking systems ranged "from 50 to 300, with master-level interpreters usually having a smaller number than colleagues at somewhat lower skill levels" (Obst 2010: 52). Rozan himself recommended only 20 symbols, of which he deemed but 10 essential:

Rozan's 20 symbols (Rozan 1956)

Four symbols of expression:

:	think (claim, feel consider…)	I :	UK :	we :
"	say, talk, take the floor, address the meeting; (make a) statement…			
⊙	discuss, debate, deal with, consider, examine…			
OK	approval, agreement			

Three symbols of movement: three types of arrow

→	orientation or transmission: give, supply, lead to, … etc.
↗	increase (development, improvement, progress, recovery,
↘	reduction, decrease, fall, slide, slowdown….

Six symbols of correspondence:

/	relation: which; by (e.g. 'somewhat affected by tax cuts': infl / tax↓)
=	equality, equivalence, similarity
≠	difference
[]	framing; in which; containment (e.g. 'situation which we find ourselves': sit^{n} [we])
+	additional, new; furthermore, moreover, also…
–	less, reduced, removed, cut (budget) etc.

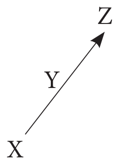
'**Substantive symbols** ' for common concepts (minimal recommendation):

Country, nation(al)	☐	
International	☐—☐ or ⊖	
World, global, universal	W	
Question, issue, problem	?	pb
Members, participants	Ms	
Trade, commerce	TR	

Sketches: a picture is worth….

A final method for capturing information symbolically is to draw a simple **sketch or diagram** to represent something the speaker is describing. This can work particularly well when the speaker is conveying visuo-spatial information, such as distances, directions, layout, routing, dimensions, etc. For example, in a speech about the history of geocentric vs. heliocentric theories of the solar system, the relative locations of the various heavenly bodies and their orbits could be represented with a simple drawing. Naturally, you will tend to use this technique more readily if you are visually inclined (cf. 'rich encoding', CC-4.2.1.1), but it is nonetheless a very valuable technique to add to your toolkit.

A simple example of using space on the page to picture meaning: when the speaker is talking about an increase *from* a certain amount X *by* a certain amount Y *to* a certain amount Z (something novices *very* often fail to get right the first time), you can write a large upward arrow, then 'hang' the figures in the appropriate positions on the arrow:



The above devices – simplification, abbreviation, symbols and diagramming – intelligently applied allow you to capture information content succinctly and unambiguously. They combine with layout to make not only the meaning but also the structure and logic apparent at a glance.

Combinations and extensions

When discussing tips for abbreviation or simplification, or useful and handy symbols, you should never forget that notes are used *generally* as cues to remember an element of meaning, and only *exceptionally* to note actual words or phrases to be translated or spoken (like names, numbers, deliberate oratorical effects or soundbites, or quotations).

In other words, fixed tokens, whether symbols or abbreviated words, should be few in number, symbolizing a whole conceptual area rather than just a word – and therefore usable flexibly according to context. For example, the colon **:** can symbolize belief in general, expressed not only as 'think' but also 'consider, judge, estimate, be of the view that', etc. (Myers 1976: 90–1).

Since the note system will be customized by each individual, it can be developed imaginatively and creatively, especially by combining symbols (see Myers 1976: 95–8 for examples). After this development phase, however, it should largely crystallize, becoming stable and consistent.

Instructors should show students their own symbols, but should refrain from imposing them. This will help you see what kinds of ideas and concepts it could be useful to have fixed symbols for. For example, the instructor might show you a simple umbrella-like symbol that she uses to represent the general concept of ‘protect/ defend/ preserve/ safeguard/ shelter’. You may or may not adopt the umbrella symbol for this concept, but you will also notice that ‘protect/defend/preserve/safeguard/shelter’ is a semantic category that could be *worth* having a fixed symbol for in your personal toolkit. If you want to adopt a fixed symbol for it, you can then decide whether to copy the instructor’s umbrella symbol, or find a different one that is more intuitively appealing to you.

You can also assign your own stable meanings to conventional symbols such as Greek alphabet letters, e.g.:

γ (gamma)	government
π (pi)	politics, political
θ (theta)	theory, theoretical

Symbols can be **combined** with each other, and with other note-taking devices such as superscript tags, e.g.

⊖ for ‘world’, ‘global’, ‘international’; Chinese 化 for ‘-ize/-ization’; thus, ⊖^{化} for ‘globalization’
⊙ for ‘meeting’, ‘to meet’; thus, ⊙^{ed} for ‘met’ (past tense); →⊙ for ‘attend the meeting’
→^{g}⊙ ‘en route to the meeting’; ⊙^{g} in the course of the meeting
?^{ble} for ‘questionable’
$\underline{\Delta}$ for ‘very risky’, ‘major threat’ etc.

Families of symbols can be developed around a common concept, for example

☐ ‘country’ ⇥☐ ‘imports’ ☐→ ‘exports’
↗☐ ‘developing country’ ☐↗ ‘developed country’

Over time, it is always interesting and useful to see different samples of symbols and their combinations in the notes of other students and professionals. Multiple instructors in the school should therefore give demonstrations and share samples of their notes – even (perhaps especially) instructors who work with different languages.[21] But new symbols are best added into your individual note-taking toolkit gradually, and only when they make good sense to you personally.

A few rounds of Slow Notes exercises will help instill each new device in your repertory, insofar and however you may have use for it.

21. Surprisingly, in over 60 years of formal conference interpreter training, no-one has yet assembled a corpus of recordings of authentic speeches and their actual live interpretations by master interpreters together with their original consecutive notes and self-commentary on the note-taking devices and conventions employed.

5.4.4 Note-Taking III: completing the toolkit

This final stage in acquiring note-taking technique completes the toolkit with some valuable devices for saving time on recurring items, and for improving cohesion and visibility for delivery, plus additional tips and refinements for marking mood and emphasis, and more precise and fine-grained capture of nuance and detail. Many of these devices will have been observed during instructor demonstrations, but not necessarily taught or practised as techniques per se.

Here are some of the remaining most commonly used and useful devices (Standard Method and later refinements):

1. *Arrows*: Arrows are a precious resource, whether to indicate causation or consequence (written horizontally), increase or decrease (vertical or sloping), etc., with variations to show intensity, speed, etc. Gérard Ilg[22] has shown (in unpublished material circulating in European schools and institutions) the rich possibilities of curving, thickening, dotting, waviness, double arrow-heads, etc. to show different types of movement, in particular for reporting economic trends:

   plunge ↡ bottom out ⤷ plateau (verb.) ↗ etc.

2. *Brackets*
   i. Simple brackets () can be used to mark secondary information, digressions or parenthetical and even 'throwaway' remarks that are not omitted (unless the interpreter is forced to summarize; see CC-4.2.4), but can be produced faster or with less emphasis. (This will come in useful when marking text for sight translation and SI-text, to isolate central and secondary elements at a glance; see also CC-9.2.3.1). For example:

      Speaker: 'This is my first time here – though admittedly I did come through the airport once back in the 90s – and I am delighted…':

      My 1^{st} visit (ok airport 1^{ce} 90s)
      ☺

   ii. A large curly bracket {}, or a straight vertical line, can group items in a set to which a single 'operator' applies. For example

      'In the next few years the government will need to tackle unemployment, transport infrastructure, higher education and social services, all of which are suffering from chronic under-funding'

22. Formerly Chief Interpreter at the ECB and BIS (Basel) and interpreter trainer at ESIT (Paris) and ETI (Geneva).

Nxt yrs
Gov D fix ~~jobs~~
Tr infr
Hi Edu } / →
Soc Serv funded

3. *Mood and emotion* should be recorded if they are expressed locally in a speech, and this is easily done using punctuation, symbols and, especially, smileys: ⁇ for surprise, shock, puzzlement; ! for satisfaction, excitement; Δ (with or without an exclamation mark) for danger/beware/caveat; ☺ for 'delighted', 'glad', 'fortunately'; ☹ for 'unfortunately', 'unsatisfactory', 'the not so good news is…'; 囧 (*jiong3*), Chinese texting shorthand for annoyance, embarrassment, awkwardness; etc.
4. *Ad hoc labels for recurring keywords:* Assign a short and easy 'ad hoc' abbreviation or symbol to important keywords that appear in a given speech or context with high frequency. For example, during brainstorming for a speech on the topic of healthcare, you may decide to use HC for 'healthcare', D for doctors, W($) for welfare (payments), etc., in addition to your usual all-purpose abbreviations, like gov for government, NHS for national health service, insc for insurance, [Chinese] 众 for public, etc.

5.4.5 Demonstration and practice

Following discussion, comparison and critique of various students' notes, the instructor can write up a set of notes up on the whiteboard, to demonstrate how to apply the relevant techniques. It should be clear by this point that the instructor's notes are not being presented as a model for slavish copying, but just as an example of how to use the method effectively.

Exposure to multiple instructors' (or advanced students') note-taking during this phase will help you help gain a sense of the range of possibilities (and perhaps steal some nice tricks and symbols).

This process of taking slow, 'ideal' notes can be used to practice using each new element of the method. After all the technical components of the Standard Method have been presented, practised in Slow Notes format and well assimilated, you will be ready to pick up the pace.

In the next phase (Coordination), both the rate of presentation and the length of passages will be progressively increased until you are comfortable taking notes on naturally-paced speeches or segments of three or more minutes and can read your notes back consistently without getting stuck.

The first stage of consecutive with notes is now over: you have acquired all the techniques and devices of the Standard Method step by step and can apply them comfortably in Slow Notes, and to some extent on easy trainer speeches delivered at a controlled speed. In the next stage we learn to deploy the method in real time.

5.5 **Coordination** (mid-S1)

5.5.1 Objectives, materials and focus

The focus and objectives of Coordination are:

- in terms of *process*: to coordinate listening, analysing, and noting in real time, on structured trainer speeches delivered at normal speed, without missing anything;
- in terms of *product*: accuracy and completeness as to facts and logical structure, reliably and completely retelling the detailed content (not just the 'gist') of the passage.

Materials: longer segments (2–3.5 minutes at a time) of fluent trainer speeches (without artificial pauses), i.e. clear, structured speeches delivered by the instructor,[23] slowish at first but at gradually increasing speed, but still only in class and with close supervision and feedback. (Group practice outside class can begin after completion of this stage: see 5.5.4.)

5.5.2 Making choices in real time

As passages become longer and the input rate speeds up, you will now be under pressure to note more selectively – but without 'throwing the baby out' and omitting to record the basic elements you will need to reconstruct the discourse several minutes later. The instructor will therefore not leave you entirely to your own devices just yet, but check that you are noting just enough to trigger correct recall of all the ideas and to support a complete rendition. Where there are obvious opportunities for making notes clearer, simpler or more concise, if not more artful, the instructor should point them out.

The key questions for discussion will be:

23. See TG-2 Appendix for a Speech Difficulty Index (SDI) and definition of 'trainer speech'.

- ► What information must be noted down?
  - Appropriate cues/keywords for each point/idea/information element in the speech (be selective!), plus:
    - ✓ all links;
    - ✓ all numbers, names, dates, technical terms, lists;
    - ✓ any quotes, sound bites and motivated expressions where word choice counts.
- ► What is the clearest and most economical way to capture each element?
  - ✓ TL slightly preferred over SL; simplification, abbreviation, symbol, diagram.
- ► Do the notes as laid out on the page clearly reflect the structure of the message?
  - ✓ Verticalization, indentation, stacking, boxing.

5.5.3 The method and the individual

Each individual expert in full consecutive will naturally develop a unique personalized technique, but always based on the same principles of layout, structure and economy. In customizing the method, you should make full use of the possibilities of *conceptual extension* – words can evoke whole semantic fields and associations – and learn to think creatively.

For additional inspiration, it does no harm at this stage to trawl the few books that have been written on the subject for new ideas, in the spirit of Bruce Lee: "adopt what is useful; reject what is not; and add what is specifically your own" (See Further reading at the end of this chapter).

5.5.4 Group practice

Once you have mastered basic Coordination, what you will need most is intensive and regular practice.[24] But to avoid independent practice being counterproductive, it should only begin when:

- basic note-taking techniques are in place and you are deploying them without too much difficulty on straightforward 'trainer' speeches (mid-late Coordination);
- you have learned how to choose appropriate topics and materials and make proper speeches (CC-4.5.2).

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24. As well as *deliberate practice* (TG-2.6.2), key to achieving expertise in all forms of training in specific skills.

Working together in pairs or groups outside class is vital to getting enough practice – but to make this work, some fairly precise guidelines are necessary to ensure that each session is useful and stimulating instead of frustrating or demoralising. These guidelines are set out in detail in Appendix C to this chapter. Ideally, the first few group practice sessions should be facilitated or supervised – even in lieu of regular class if necessary – to make sure procedures and requirements are understood and implemented. We recommend that students devote at least the same number of hours to group practice as the total weekly skills class contact time (usually 8–10 hours) that a typical course might provide.

5.6 **Experimentation** (late S1, early S2)

5.6.1 Focus: adaptation and flexibility

> the proportion of memorizing vs. note-taking will vary greatly from one interpreter to the next and depends on the subject matter, the stress factor, the language combination, the training and personal preference of the interpreter as well as his professional experience. (Weber 1989: 164, cited in Liu 1994: 110 / Liu 2008: 159)

> The consensus among those who have taught note-taking in a systematic manner is that any system should be highly individual but based on common-sense rules of *efficiency* and *economy*. (Ilg and Lambert 1996: 78)

Having assimilated the basics of the standard method and practised them in real time for a few weeks on easy input (Coordination), you must now test the flexibility of your technique and develop and adapt it further through exposure to a wider variety of speech textures, from the informative to the tightly argued, and the impressionistic to the whimsical.

One of the greatest challenges for cognitive science (though a boon for human inventiveness and adaptation) is individual variability. How people make sense of speech depends not only on their basic language proficiency and topical preparation but also on their memories, reaction speeds and knowledge schemas. The relative redundancy of a passage, and thus the level of attention and depth of processing it needs, are also partly *subjective*, depending on your familiarity with the ideas, the content, even the particular speech style.

Depending on background and natural endowments, students will find different things easy or difficult, progress at different speeds, develop different procedures and shortcuts to expertise, and take different notes and use different linguistic means to produce different versions of the same speech. When testing recall without notes for short speeches, Taylor (1989: 178) found that "each student followed an individual path through the network".

5.6.2 Materials and objectives

Materials: Selected real speeches, still semi-prepared and orally delivered, but varying more widely in terms of genre, style, density ('texture'), factual vs. conceptual content, subject matter and delivery (including student-generated speeches, which will be inherently more difficult and variable than trainer speeches), also gradually varying in speed. Longer segments can now be given – occasionally up to 4–5 minutes – with more involved argumentation.

Objective (process): Experiment and adapt personal note-taking system on authentic speeches of different types, to see what works best in terms of ear-pen span, maximum vs. sparse notes, verbal and visual memory etc., personalizing the Standard Method for individual comfort.

Objective (product): Guided by clear layout and pointers in notes, use connectives and prosody to make the product more structured, meaningful and communicative.

You should realize by now that the type and amount of notes needed – or the intensity of attention to the speech *without* taking notes – will vary between and within speeches. Authentic speeches, where the speaker makes no compromises in rhythm and information density for the sake of trainee interpreters, will illustrate both the variety of speeches in real life, and the shifts of texture or rhythm *within* a speech that may need sudden changes of gear in note-taking. Within the space of a few minutes, a speech can range between tentative argument development, sudden examples with proper names, titles, numbers, a wistful or humorous anecdote or a literary citation. Sensitivity to these shifts and the ability to adjust the balance of attention accordingly between listening, analysis, note-taking and forward planning, are key to effective consecutive.

You should now begin to put notes back in their rightful place, to be used or not, or to different extents, as the occasion, *speech texture* and *genre* require. In an informative statement like an economic report, we must pay attention to factual and numerical precision; in a debate, to persuasive, powerful argument structure with its links, sequences and contrasts; in social, ritual or ceremonial speeches (laudatory, diplomatic, valedictory), to the choice of words.

Longer class sessions on the same topic, when they can occasionally be organized, will show how notes may need to be very complete at first, whereas as the meeting moves on, and the interpreter becomes more of an insider, less and less may need to be noted.

5.6.3 Time and motion: varying the 'Ear-Pen Span'

Having grasped the basic challenge of 'ear-mind-hand' coordination on fairly even and predictable terrain, you should now discover the 'how and when', or time-and-motion aspect of consecutive with notes on shifting input, testing the limits of your Ear-Pen Span (cf. the Ear-Voice Span or EVS in SI) for risks and benefits. In addition to managing attention, you will find that different things stick in the memory for a shorter or longer time, depending also on the context provided and the amount you think about them. You should learn to recognize the particularly volatile elements – especially names, numbers, lists and technical terms – that have to be noted immediately, while still fresh in acoustic memory; and how you may sometimes have to jot down an incomplete note, then find time to fill in the idea if necessary.

If you are correctly analysing and weighing both the meaning and significance of what you hear for the speaker, and its possible difficulty for memory or translation, this variation in the 'density' and texture of the speech should affect both the *quantity and type* of notes, and the *timing* of note-taking. An anecdote, a visual description or image, an allegory or a joke, may be best remembered by listening without taking any note (other than a simple cue or keyword as a place-marker for the passage), while facts and figures may need little cognitive or imaginative processing, but intensive, precise, efficiently abbreviated notes to ensure accuracy.

In terms of *timing*, the amount of analysis needed for a segment, and/or the likely span of its survival in memory, should prompt a natural variation in the Ear-Pen Span, with a shorter lag for information-rich passages (especially for context-poor items like numbers, lists or names), and a longer one for more conceptual passages, or for looser, more redundant presentations. Some patterns are fairly predictable and universal, such as the to-and-fro between old and new information, which in more communicative speech is more regular and often prosodically marked.

In short, a consecutive interpreter needs to be able to **change gear**, between finely-meshed and relatively complete noting – when the speech is packed with facts and figures, or the interpreter is still unfamiliar with the discourse and speakers – and a more sparse and selective note-taking, using mainly cue-words and links, when the interpreter can rely on memory and context.[25] Being constantly attuned to the speaker's intent ('*vouloir-dire*') and alert to topic shifts is key to the control needed for good consecutive.

Some more universal features of short-term memory should now also become apparent at this stage:

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25. In other words, on a rich mental model of the speaker's message: cf. the alternation between reliance on the 'situation model' and the 'textbase' observed in text recall (Kintsch 1998): see TG-5.2.3.

- noting a fact, a name or a number takes less time and thought than capturing a logical sequence, which in turn takes less time than finding an elegant turn of phrase (open-ended). Get the simplest job out of the way first.
- for fast lists, use the primacy and recency effects[26] to choose your own order of noting – but remember to make the items appear on the page in their original order (for example, if the speaker says 1-2-3-4-5, you might first write 1-2 and then immediately write 5, but leave a big blank space in between, then go back and fill in the 3-4).

5.6.4 Class organization and feedback

The main focus of class sessions will now be real Consecutive, with some occasional sight translation (more ST will be done later: see CC-7.). Outside class, students must also practise these skills together regularly in groups following the guidelines in Appendix C. In class feedback, you should expect not just comments on what was 'right' or 'wrong' in the target-language versions, but targeted, individualized diagnostics and advice about what specific things need work and *how* exactly to work on them.

5.6.5 Exercise: Real Consecutive (end of Semester 1)

Procedure

1. *Speech:* Before each class, the chosen speaker – who can be a student at this point, or a TA (see CC-4.5, TG-5.6) – carefully prepares a speech that will last around 20–25 minutes in total, but can be divided into 6 or so passages of equal length (or one for each student in the class), say of 3 to 4 minutes. The speech should be on a topic of general interest and delivered in a semi-prepared oral register. The speaker prepares a simple brief about the speech, stating its topic, the identity of the speaker, the nature of the conference, the composition of the audience, any relevant background, and some of the key terms and technical jargon that might appear in the speech. This brief is circulated to classmates at least 2–3 days before the class in which the speech is to be made, to allow them to prepare. From mid-Experimentation, some real speech recordings can be used, preferably video.[27]

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26. cf. in SI, see CC-8.4.2 and 8.6.2 on timing and tactical choices.

27. One student can be put 'in charge' of the speech: s/he finds a suitable video recording, prepares an outline with background, terms etc. for the class, facilitates brainstorming, starts and stops recording at appropriate places, and acts as 'speaker' if questions need to be asked (cf. Group Practice Guidelines in Appendix C).

2. *Preparation:* Students read up on the topic in both source and target languages, acquire background knowledge, anticipate the content and arguments in the speech, prepare bilingual glossaries and for Bcons (CC-3.2.1.3), activate collocations and handy expressions on that topic in their B language.

3. *Discussion of preparation strategy and contextual activation:* In class, students share the results of their research, discussing what important things they have learned about this topic during their preparation, and describing specifically where and how they found useful information in both languages (not just "on the internet"). Share glossaries, compare terminology, and anticipate what key arguments might be made by this speaker, given her/his capacity and background, the nature of the meeting, the audience, and possible controversies, sore points, sensitive issues or hidden agendas.

4. *Delivery:* The speaker should have familiarized herself thoroughly with the content of the speech and be able to deliver it fluently from a point-form outline or consecutive-style notes, as a semi-prepared presentation (see CC-4.5 for a speech-delivery typology). The speech is recorded. All students take notes together with the instructor. The speaker pauses every 3–4 minutes for interpretation. Each speech chunk is timed.

5. *Interpretation:* A student is chosen to interpret. All interpretations are digitally recorded and timed.

From this point on – normally, from late Semester 1 or early Semester 2 – class exercises should increasingly be treated as real-world interpretation in a real-world conference, resembling real-life conditions both in terms of the input speeches (and opportunities for preparation and contextualization) and demands on the performance. All of the rules are strictly applied:

- the interpreter goes to the podium and begins interpreting without delay;
- the interpreter may seek one – no more than two – quick clarifications from the speaker before beginning, if necessary (and must do so professionally, in the speaker's language);
- the interpreter must not get stuck, but must finish on her own;
- the audience (i.e. the other students, the instructor, TAs, observers) do not say anything, offer any prompting, or create any distraction during the interpreter's delivery;
- the interpreter must project her voice, avoid humming, hawing and backtracking, and generally try to use good public speaking skills.

6. *Other students:* While the interpreter is delivering her interpretation, the other students switch to a **different colour pen** and mark directly in their notes anything that they believe needs to be discussed and improved in the interpretation (mistakes, omissions, strange-sounding formulations).

7. *Feedback and discussion:* After the interpretation is finished, and not before, the instructor may ask the student for a general self-evaluation of her performance, then give general and more detailed feedback – possibly inviting other students to flag errors, contradictions, etc. – and hint at problems to elicit self-correction by the interpreter.

An appropriate procedure for feedback and discussion in group practice sessions (in the absence of an instructor) is given in Appendix C.

8. *Homework.* Each student gets a copy of the recording of the original speech. Outside class, each student listens to the recording and follows along with his/her own notes, to analyse note-taking technique and identify ways to improve the notes for economy, structure, clarity/legibility, deverbalization, and better capture of details and nuance. Students can also listen to their own recorded interpretations and critique their own performance.

Use of the notes for delivery

The basics of using notes to optimize the delivery phase should by now be understood, but this technique should be revisited and brought up to professional level towards the end of the Experimentation phase. Here are the main guidelines for using notes and the notepad for optimal flow, coherence and continuity.

As you work through the notes,

1. *Read ahead and look up*: Take in the first box, look up at your audience, speak, then as you near the end of the rendition for that box, glance ahead at the next one. Work on looking at the audience more than at your notes.
2. *Project*: Speak confidently; be expressive, lively and natural.
3. *Control rhythm*: You know about the need for momentum; now increase control, with brief pauses, acceleration etc. where rhetorically appropriate; but also adapt tone, pace and completeness to the needs of the meeting.
4. *Be concise and relevant*: Generating more words than necessary may help to get warmed up and be convincing in the early stages, but as soon it becomes clear what is most relevant, aim to be *concise*. Interpret and edit the information in your notes as necessary, and use the context you have acquired *during the speech* to make corrections, eliminate pauses, apparent contradictions and repetition (more on this in 5.7.2 below).

Here is an example of using later context in the same segment to rectify an earlier misunderstanding and avoid contradiction:

> *Speaker*: "When China will actually overtake the US economy in terms of absolute size is hotly debated. But what isn't in debate is that on current projections, China's economy is likely to be the largest in the world before the end of the third decade of this century. <u>On a significant number of measures, China already stands well above the rest."</u>
>
> [Here you may have noted something like "No. 1", or "in the lead in many ways".]

> *Speaker* continues with examples showing that China is *among the leaders*, but not ranked first, on some indicators:
>
> 'In 2010, China was the world's largest merchandise exporter….'
> 'China was the world's *second-largest* merchandise importer in 2010…..'
> 'China is also home to the world's largest automotive market….'
> 'In 2010, China was the *fourth-largest* exporter of commercial services…'
> '…it was the *third-largest* importer of commercial services'; etc.
>
> At this point you realize that a more nuanced rendition of the underlined sentence is needed.

In particular, try to synthesize sentences that express more of your notes. Avoid the dreaded wordiness problem, where you make each item in a box into a sentence! Here is an example of the kind of wordy rendition that you might be 'trapped' into when you look too narrowly at one line or element at a time, without making an effort to look ahead, take in the whole box and synthesize:

> We firmly believe that this goal, this goal to help people achieve better sanitation standards in their environment, is a goal that can be realized. Every year, actually to achieve that goal we, as the world, would only have to invest 9.5b dollars every year. And that is extremely affordable to us as the international community.

This entire idea could be stated as economically as "This goal of achieving proper sanitation for all could be achieved for as little as 9.5b dollars a year."

Notepad management

As you begin to do longer and more fluent passages, you should develop sound practices of note(pad) management to improve flow and avoid errors. To be sure to immediately find the beginning of your notes for the segment you are about to interpret, some habits should become second nature:

i. When the speaker stops, draw a double or triple line to mark the pause for interpretation. When the segment requires multiple pages of notes, turn each full page back 180° so the steno pad is opened flat on the desk. Then, simply flip them all back to instantly find the beginning of the passage.
ii. During delivery, to allow look-ahead and continuity while turning the pages, grip the bottom of each page and slide it upwards so that it bulges outward, letting you see the bottom of one page plus the next page at the same time. Avoid spurious noise when turning pages – don't brush the microphone.
iii. After delivery of a passage, the pages of notes you just delivered from should be folded back *under* the notebook. This should be enough to avoid mistakes – but if you feel it necessary to cross out passages as, or after, you deliver them, do so discreetly, softly, and nowhere near a live microphone.

How to take notes standing up
This uncomfortable and sub-optimal condition is unfortunately often unavoidable in real life, and is par for the course at all kinds of ceremonies, receptions and dinner functions, where a lectern or podium is typically provided for speakers but (disgracefully) not for the interpreter. The notepad must be firmly supported on a forearm, with the writing hand on the page while writing, thus restricting legible writing to the top two-thirds of the left half of the page. Using a large folio to support the notepad also helps, if available. Some (but not all) interpreters may find it handy to have a smaller notepad ready for these occasions.

5.6.6 Experimentation: summary

In Experimentation, you have practised on speeches calling for different kinds of noting strategy, both in the amount and type of notes, including: more speeches of mixed texture – some facts, some argument, some visualizable description, etc.; speakers in different styles, from casual to (somewhat) formal; somewhat faster input, with some real-life video recordings; and longer passages. In adapting to these variations, you should have further personalized your technique. Your instructors should have shown you how to use the consecutive mode to eliminate contradictions and unwanted redundancy and improve coherence, and how to begin to think ahead and plan your production when arranging your notes on the page, and perhaps to note some choice words and expressions to use in TL.

The interpreter should be able to adapt technique, and the balance of her attention, not just to the variations of style and density *within* a speech, but also to the wide variety of speech genres and styles in real life. For example, soon it should no longer seem strange to you, at certain times, to stop writing and watch the speaker for ten or even twenty seconds[28] at a time – a prospect that would terrify the beginner. Conversely, you should also be prepared to note furiously when lists of names and numbers come up.

At this stage, students should expect detailed and frequent feedback, as the aim is to clear up any problems with the note-taking process, so that the focus can shift to the product.

28. For example when the speaker is telling a joke, describing an easily visualizable scene, or hesitating, backtracking at length. (For the extraordinary potential of visual memory, see Yates 1966; Spence 1983.)

5.7 **Consolidation** (mid-S2 onwards)

> Note-taking is not easy to master. But the interpreter's craft does not lie in note-taking, which should become insignificant to the experienced interpreter compared to the efforts of analysis, retaining the sense, and finding the right tone.
> (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 27, our translation)

5.7.1 Focus, objectives and materials

Towards the end of the first year – after several months of serious practice – you should have developed a fairly flexible, personalized note-taking technique. The next stage should take you to the quasi-professional standard required to qualify for SI training (through continuous assessment or a Midpoint Exam: see TG-3.4). This will require a dual focus: on consolidating your customized note-taking method in terms of reliability, precision, coherence, flow and presentation, through extensive practice; and on extending the range of input to cover all the types of authentic speech commonly interpreted in consecutive in the target domain – in other words, now including more formal, official and ceremonial speeches, delivered at real-world difficulty and speed. The objectives for this stage can be summarized as follows:

Process: refining technique and increasing control

- Further *extend the range of input*, practising on fully authentic speeches in all styles commonly encountered in the target market. These will include both factual-descriptive and more abstract and stylized material, as well as discursive speeches with complex arguments and logic, and ritualized and ceremonial speeches. Importantly, some speeches may now be (partly) scripted and read-out, challenging note-taking with higher input density.
- Develop '*whole-segment' coherence*, using the *look-ahead* provided by the long consecutive mode to do value-added editing (of unintended contradictions or unwanted redundancies – don't delete deliberate repetition for emphasis!). Increase overall control, and make time for *forward planning*, restructuring speech passages into typical TL discourse structure for smoother and more idiomatic delivery.

Product: speed, precision and audience orientation

- *Delivery*: the interpretation must now be fast and crisp. Both SL speech and interpretation are now routinely timed (with a stopwatch). The interpretation should generally not take up more time than the original, say 70–80% if it is not too dense and when working into A, through a combination of smart expression and more fluent (but never rushed-sounding) delivery.
- Tighten up *precision* on numbers, names, technical terms, and in general clarity of exposition.

- Learn to *optimize* (5.8.4): make time to attend to how to render tricky or sensitive words or phrases, and, where appropriate, to clarify any obscure (e.g. cultural) references.

Materials: Speeches for consecutive should now be increasingly diverse in terms of genre, speed, coherence, etc., interpreted in longer segments (4–5 minutes, occasionally up to 7 minutes), and authentic: by the Consolidation phase, input should have switched over completely to real speech (recordings and/or visiting speakers) that is fully representative of the real-world settings in which conference interpreters work in this mode.

5.7.2 Coherence: leveraging the consecutive mode

Pressure calls for boldness, but also caution, and we must learn how to use the advantages of consecutive (which depends on firm overall control of each segment), as well as managing its drawbacks. In consecutive (as opposed to SI), more clarifying context can be gathered before speaking, and redundancy, repetition or apparent contradictions can be resolved over the whole segment. On the other hand, something may remain unclear or truncated at the end of a segment.

The interpreter must gain enough control to process even longer segments as a whole, using information arriving later to refine or correct what was noted earlier, and polish or tighten the whole before speaking. If the segment ends on something unclear – say, the last in a series of four points – you may ask the speaker for clarification. However, if this happens frequently, it may be less disruptive to 'phase-shift' (if the dialogue is not too interactive), rendering only '1-2-3', holding '4' and passing back to the speaker until clarity comes – say with 5, 6 and 7 in the next segment – then rendering 4+5678 as one passage (you may also have to do this if you are interrupted before finishing a segment).

5.7.3 Precision

Precision is a hallmark of the professional, who should aim to be able to reproduce a message in TL with all its nuances, detail, fine shades of meaning, and neither more nor less hedging or vagueness than the original. Added vagueness in particular is very common in students, and should be eliminated by closer listening and finer note-taking. In a longer passage, students will often fail to indicate or remember the definiteness or vagueness of a statement, and say, for example, 'We will have to tell them no' instead of 'We will probably have to tell them no'; or 'these measures do not work' instead of 'often/sometimes do not work', 'have limited effect' – or vice versa. Hedging should *always* be marked in the notes (with a dotted line, for example), so that anything *not* thus marked can be rendered definitely and unequivocally. Conserving precise levels of intensification (extremely, somewhat, not un-…) and modality (will, could well, might…) is also a key determinant of fidelity.

Noting all links, implicit and explicit, helps to assimilate the logic of the speech, but you should NOT read them out mechanically as noted. For example, where you have noted 'so', you might say 'for this reason,…'; where you see 'coz', you might say 'There's an explanation for this:…' or 'for the following reasons' – and so on, depending on the context and your own unfolding speech. Also, in some cases, the link you noted *explicitly* to help you picture the logic might best be left *implicit* in your actual rendering, for reasons of style or because you feel the speaker only wanted to *hint* at the link without making it explicit.

Style: Words only need to be noted *as words* when the speaker seems to have chosen a specific term or turn of phrase deliberately, for its rhetorical or stylistic charge (or technical precision, or political correctness). Where this is clearly the case, the chosen term – or better still, an idea for rendering it in the target language – should be noted exactly, rather than simplified or symbolized (Ilg 1982, 1988; Myers 1976; Orlando 2010).

In Consolidation, then, we should attend more and more to the product – what reaches the audience:

- First, in terms of **completeness and accuracy**, it is now time to eliminate any residual errors and omissions in your performance. These can usually be attributed to a failure of comprehension, of concentration (attention management) or of note-taking technique, but a serious distortion of the message that reaches the listener may also result from a cumulation of subtle minor problems and shifts that must be tracked down and clarified with the help of the class and your instructor.

  Pay special attention to **beginnings and endings**. For each new speaker, and especially a new session of the meeting, notes should be on the full side until the context and relevance of different items falls into place. Also, extra care is needed to hear and note the last few words of a segment or speech, which can all too easily be lost under the pressure to start interpreting, and though they may sometimes sound like an afterthought, often contain a crucial fact, conclusion or punchline. A five-second delay (ten at the most) is acceptable in such cases – don't be rushed (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 30).
- In terms of **packaging and presentation**, you should now have enough control to attend to the overall timing and rhythm of your rendition. Beware of dwelling too long on secondary and tertiary points in consecutive (this often reflects a problem with notes or formulation), keeping in mind the overall balance of the rendition.

5.8 Polishing and Advanced Consecutive (Year 2, S3-S4)

5.8.1 Focus, objectives and materials

Focus: In the second year, the main focus will be on SI, but you must also continue to practise and perfect your consecutive skills. As your professional debut approaches, you must start to project yourself into real-life consecutive interpreting situations to get a better feel for the constraints and possibilities of this mode (sitting in on meetings where professionals are working, though hard to arrange, will be valuable). You must become aware of **user expectations**, and of **audience reception**: to what your listeners are *hearing* – your voice, volume, rate, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, fluency – and what they are *seeing*: eye contact, your facial expression, posture, gestures, movement, physical appearance, and how you manipulate notes and documents.

Last-mile consecutive training should have three objectives, pursued in distinct class sessions on materials or situations at different levels of difficulty:

1. To **polish performance**, aiming for a product that (in reasonable conditions, on standard but challenging materials) is not only accurate and complete but also polished and well-expressed, with momentum, pleasant and meaningful intonation, and eye contact with the audience.
2. To learn to **cope with** severe **pressures** in difficult conditions, and meet demands for more complex and hybrid tasks, such as presentations that use multiple media (speech, slides, text – for example, a PowerPoint presentation or a speech with text to be sight-translated).
3. To understand how and when communication can be **optimized** in consecutive mode, and the interpreter's initiative and responsibility in seeking to do so, with its risks and limits.

The prerequisite for meeting these advanced demands of real-life consecutive interpreting is a complete, flexible and dynamic mastery of note-taking and using the notes for delivery.

5.8.2 Polishing the product

By Y2, your coordination in the capture phase should be flexible enough to leave time to occasionally jot down ideas for good turns of phrase in the output language (newly-acquired SI reflexes will help) and aim to do justice to the speaker's **tone** and **style**, recreating the linguistic and rhetorical quality of the original while also reflecting the explicit/implicit balance as closely as possible. Subtle local emphasis and contrast, but also touches of humour, gravity or irony, can be tagged in notes (using smileys, ?! etc.) and restored using the expressive resources of the TL, through an apt choice of words but also and often more easily, through intonation and rhythm, and where appropriate (except in highly constrained settings), body language.

One advanced test of technical mastery of the capture phase is the *resequencing exercise* described in CC-4.2.4.2, which can now be attempted with notes: present the message in a different order, not just rearranging the elements within a 'box', at sentence level, which is routine, but switching the order of whole ideas or paragraphs without impairing or distorting the impact of the presentation as a whole. The text must obviously be carefully chosen (and in practice, this technique must be used judiciously).

In the delivery phase, students should now only need to *glance* at each box before speaking, observing the 70/30 rule: 70% eye contact (minimum), 30% note-reading (maximum). Students should **watch videos** both of themselves and of professional experts (sometimes broadcast on TV).

5.8.3 Coping with pressure

Resourcefulness and poise will become critical as you prepare to face professional assignments 'at the table', where you may have to cope with severe challenges, in terms of input (fast, dense, confused or technical), format, sudden interruptions, or requests for summary or gist, or for your advice or comments (for discussion of a range of common real-life hazards, and of the interpreter's role, see Chapters 9 and 10 respectively).

Some clients may be impatient (some may be fluent in both languages), or may use documents or slides without warning, or forget to pause unless interrupted. You must remain confident and professional throughout, but you may have to insist on the conditions necessary to do your job, such as documentation and a strategic position at the table. Refinements and complications that you will have to train for before facing the reality of the market include

- turn-taking management for Q&A and bilateral discussions;
- using visual aids like overheads and PowerPoint;
- mixing consecutive interpretation with sight translation;
- summarizing selectively, globally, or to order;
- document control (for names, titles, text extracts to be inserted using sight translation).

When input speech conditions are challenging, you will have to engage your whole brain, including perceptual experience. At times, looking at the speaker and experiencing the speech directly may be a more useful basis for an adequate rendition than the disconnected fragments of words and facts that are all you will have if you try to note everything with your nose in the pad and get left behind. Various **strategic fall-backs** are available for specific hazards:

1. *Very fast input*: Be content to note 'stepping stones' that are clear, bright and solid. These will also serve you well for a bullet-point summary if requested.
2. *Stylistic challenges*: Experience the rhetorical effect directly, trusting that the words will come as you relive it during rendition, but jot down any choice TL expressions that may occur to you. Visual, emotional episodic memory may prompt you to say things better, quicker and more naturally than relying entirely on your brain's language area to translate words from another language.
3. *Density:* Note new information only, use ad hoc abbreviations (preferably having prepared these as soon as the topic is known), don't forget explicit links, and use (unambiguous) pictures or mini-sketches where necessary. A simple asterisk or smiley to mark the place where a joke was told, or a danger was graphically described, will often be enough to bring it back instantly – but only if you stopped writing long enough to get the point!
4. *Opacity* (accent, confused speech): Again, look at the speaker. Making time to glance at this visual source of clues may be more rewarding than you think in terms of comprehension. Remember to create and use a feedback loop between the interpreter and the speaker: if you look at the speaker and raise your eyebrows subtly, you may be able to prompt him to rephrase the point for your benefit, without calling attention to the problem 'in public'.

Complex, hybrid and mixed-media variations on consecutive (e.g. Consecutive with ST) will be introduced and practised in the last semester (CC-9.2.3.1).

5.8.4 Optimizing communication

Consecutive is done in a wide range of formal and informal settings where you will often be expected and/or have various opportunities (not available in SI) to smooth and optimize communication. The responsibility and freedom to do so will vary, and may depend on setting-specific conventions (CC/TG-10.3, 10.4), and on situations and personalities (cooperative vs. adversarial, cultural or political codes, etc.).

The professional consecutive interpreter must learn to judge the users' mediation needs, understand the scope of her role in different situations, weigh the risks and benefits of adopting more or less proactive positions, and make choices about how far to go (and when and where *not* to go), responsibly, prudently but effectively, on what we have called the 'optimization continuum', explored in more detail in the next section.

Again, sufficient control of the basic processes to leave attention for word choices and other kinds of flexibility (structuring, sequencing, summarizing) is a prerequisite for making the on-the-spot communicative and ethical judgments that are often needed, especially in the more exposed position of consecutive, to deal with issues of face, tact, diplomacy or contrasting cultural norms. This is all part of Professionalism, which complements the three basic components of language, knowledge and skills, and entails an understanding of the conventions and flexibilities of the interpreter's role in different settings, the need to secure adequate working conditions – good acoustics, a strategic position in the room, a seat and/or a microphone stand, and a writing surface – and the wider issue of professional ethics. This final level of expertise is addressed in chapters CC-10 and CC-11.

The optimization continuum

In TG-12.2.2 we propose the following definition of the interpreter's goal 'by default', drawing on the terms of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), where 'cognitive effects' are roughly equivalent to what has been called the 'message' in Translation Studies:

> **Default goal of interpreting:** to make accessible to your audience the cognitive effects intended by the speaker as you understand them, at reasonable processing cost and risk, using whatever communicative devices available in the output language are appropriate and effective to do so in your projection of the listeners' available contexts.

In CC/TG-9, we describe some exceptionally difficult circumstances ('hazards') in which interpreters cannot fully meet this default requirement, but must resort to various coping tactics and fallback solutions to ensure at least basic fidelity to the speaker's intent or the main thrust of his message.

In other cases – notably in legal settings – specific norms may discourage the interpreter from projecting the listener's available contexts and require a more literal, constrained style of interpreting, with less leeway to use communicative devices.

'Optimization', by contrast, refers to efforts to go *beyond* the default requirement, where you are free or encouraged to do so, with a view to *improving* the quality of communication through the interpretation (technically, its 'relevance'), by reducing the audience's processing cost and/or enhancing the cognitive effects they can derive[29] – in other words, facilitating access to the speaker's intended meaning.

Coping, then constrained, default and optimized interpreting can thus be seen as a kind of continuum (Table 5.2). Another, more radical step in the interpreter's 'proactivity' may be taken if you are asked to go beyond simply facilitating the

29. Optimization has the interesting consequence that optimal fidelity may result in not only more or fewer words, but also more or less of the semantic content than default fidelity, which in turn may be semantically less complete than constrained fidelity.

Table 5.2 The optimization continuum

Coping	Constrained	Default	Optimization	Strong mediation
Interpreter having difficulty meeting the default goal due to **input characteristics:** too fast, dense, accented, unclear	Interpreter subject to **externally-imposed** fidelity and/or role **norms**	No particular problems: aim for optimal fidelity	**Speaker having difficulty** communicating *relevantly* with target audience	**Parties having difficulty** relating to each other, or reaching settlement or agreement, but must **ask** interpreter for special help
Coping tactics (CC-9.3.1), limiting the damage	E.g. judicial ‘verbatim’ constraint	Default goal of interpreting (see above and TG-12.2.2.5)	Form Content Process see below (5.8.4.1) and TG-10.4	Arbitration, advocacy

communication of meaning to actually helping the participants reach some agreement, or to engage in some form of advocacy (see 10.4.2 for discussion).

Since culture is embodied in language, enabling mutual communication between people speaking different languages (our primary goal) inescapably entails some judgment, adjustment and repackaging, informed by our special knowledge of the cultural and linguistic differences, to close a communication gap that would not be bridged by just converting equivalent words and phrases (Viaggio 2005/6, al-Zahran 2007: 152–3, 256; Pöchhacker 2008). Mainstream descriptions of the conference interpreter’s work recognize the need for what we shall call *optimization* in this sense, especially to bridge more or less subtle cultural gaps:

> …cultural difficulties […] can manifest themselves both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, a speaker may make references to political, economic, social, academic institutions and systems, intellectual concepts or television catchphrases (the list is endless) that have no direct equivalent in the language of the person they are addressing, and indeed may be totally unknown – and therefore meaningless – to that person. The interpreter’s task is to instil meaning into the text for the target audience, if necessary (and if possible) by providing the requisite explanations or even changing the original speaker’s references, provided this conveys to the audience precisely what the speaker wanted to say. Implicitly, and much more insidiously, the intellectual approach to any given question – and therefore the means used by a speaker to express their ideas – will depend on the speaker’s cultural background. Certain forms of expression – understatement, hyperbole, irony, etc. – may be difficult or even impossible to reproduce in a different language in given circumstances without betraying the intentions of the speaker.
>
> (Jones 1998/2002: 3–4)

while warning against over-translation:

> The conference interpreter must be able to provide an exact and faithful reproduction of the original speech. Deviation from the letter of the original is permissible only if it enhances the audience's understanding of the speaker's meaning.
> (Jones 1998/2002: 4)

As we can see in the table, optimization is itself a mini-continuum, from the inevitable reformulations imposed by a change of language (default interpreting), through more conscious adjustments of **form** or **content**, to 'off-line' facilitation of the **process** or procedures of the interpreted exchange. Finally, more active mediation in the stronger sense of providing arbitration, conciliation or advocacy, while not within the interpreter's default role, may be ethically justified and/or requested in certain situations (CC-10.4.2; TG-10.5).

5.8.4.1 *Degrees and types of optimization*

The optimization (or mediation) continuum is a theoretical construct, one of several in this book that are based on a mix of experience, observation and evidence and presented as an aid to teaching.

Just as the complex inferencing involved in ordinary, everyday speech comprehension is not fully accessible to consciousness, the mediation that an interpreter provides is not fully within her conscious control. Our overriding goal is to communicate speakers' intended messages in a live, shared and fast-moving situation, and we cannot always isolate and consciously choose a mediating 'strategy' in the heat of the action.

The 'optimization index' of our interpretation can also never be set at zero, since purely linguistic mediation is impossible, or meaningless. Languages carve up the cognitive and cultural universe differently, so that translation cannot escape some degree of semi-conscious optimization (although it can certainly be negative, in a bad translation that obscures communication).

However, with growing awareness, some default positions may crystallize for different situations, and room can be made for applying conscious and deliberate optimizing strategies.

The middle range of the continuum shown in Table 5.2, consisting of degrees and types of more or less conscious optimization, is where most interpreting is situated, and is the focus of training in this dimension of the task. Finally, the endpoint – mediation in the strongest dictionary sense – is generally considered as beyond the interpreter's role, entailing her intervention as a distinct agent (CC-2.1.7; see also discussion in TG-10.5).

Each type of optimization may occur either spontaneously as a by-product of the instinctive drive to make communication more transparent, or be done more consciously to achieve **better effects** for the audience. Each type may also be achieved in various ways, depending on time constraints or judgment.

All the optimizing procedures listed here – optimization of form, content or process – occur in interpreters' practice in the field, as attested by numerous examples in the literature (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Angelelli 2004a; al-Zahran 2007; Wang 2012). From these studies it appears that each kind of optimization is sanctioned to different extents in different settings. Thus, while the natural inclination of a trained and motivated interpreter is a 'global' optimization of communication in which linguistic, cognitive, cultural and social gaps may be more or less bridged unconsciously, there are situations in which some attempts to optimize can or should be consciously resisted, or enhanced; and some entail risks. Once you have understood their implications, how far you should or should not go will depend on your judgment, the setting and the situation.

1. Optimization of **form**

In 'formal' optimization, the interpreter repackages the message to improve style or coherence, changing *how* the speaker said it but not *what* (s)he said. Formal optimization means presenting the speaker's ideas in a way that is more clear, interesting, persuasive and/or memorable for the TL addressees than direct transposition would be. This covers a whole range of possible stylistic and rhetorical adjustments, such as:

a. *Managing information flow:* using attention-focusing devices to put emphasis on key arguments and underscore conclusions; generally being more concise, especially on minor points, asides, redundant or obvious content.
b. *Organization:* making the presentation easier to follow with clearer logical and structural signalling, parallelism; introducing previews, 'point labels', and/or recapping or summarizing; re-ordering content into a more cognitively-friendly, TL-appropriate or rhetorically effective sequence.
c. *Style:* manipulation of register (being more or less formal/polite); being articulate – using apter phrasing, introducing more idiomatic or punchier expressions to replace bland ones (e.g. using a nice TL proverb, even when the SL speaker used no special turn of phrase); skilfully employing rhetorical devices such as a TL alliteration or rhyme, parallelism, ironic understatement, etc.
d. *Presentation:* deploying sophisticated public speaking skills, including assertive and animated delivery, paralanguage (pacing, prosody and body language), etc. to improve the rhetorical impact of the speech.

Optimization of form is encouraged in the European tradition of conference interpreting (perhaps to varying degrees between schools[30]). In diplomatic interpret-

30. For example, the ESIT in Paris has traditionally been seen as promoting a more visible, expressive interpreter than the ETI in Geneva. But all schools, at the very least, encourage concision and clear logical signalling.

ing, it may be either highly appreciated (at least by one side), when it helps the principal come across well; or strongly resented, usually when the interpreter is seen to be embellishing, or has misread or obscured the tone the speaker intends to convey. It is theoretically forbidden in court interpreting, where some studies claim to show that shifts of register alone may change the jury's impression of the witness's credibility (e.g. Berk-Seligson 1990/2002: 196; see CC-2.3.1.4). The ability to optimize in this way relies most obviously on the interpreter's language proficiency, including communicative and rhetorical skills.

Note that all these types of formal optimization are easier to perform in **consecutive** than in SI. Also, the choice of how and how much to optimize varies with individual interpreters. Some interpreters pride themselves on a plain-vanilla style, others on being able to help speakers make persuasive, powerful presentations. The former style is perhaps better suited to court interpreting; the latter will be more often welcomed in business and media interpreting. In conference and diplomatic interpreting, either style may be called for at different times.

2. Optimization of **content**

Optimization may extend beyond form into content, where the interpreter decides to add, change or omit elements of *what* the speaker actually said, again in the interests of better communication.[31] Examples would include

Explaining:

a. Annotating/explaining references that will be unfamiliar to the TL addressees, be they cultural, institutional or idiosyncratic to the speaker.
b. Explicating implicit meanings that may not be obvious to the addressees, or are too indirect to be understood by listeners in the contexts available to them.
c. Clarifying passages that would be vague, ambiguous, obscure or opaque even to SL listeners, based on the interpreter's knowledge of the situation and the speaker's position or intention.
d. Elaborating on or completing fragmentary or incomplete statements.

Correcting:

e. Correcting obvious speaker errors, such as mispronounced names of people or places in the host country, spoken numbers that do not match the numbers clearly displayed in the slide being presented, etc.
f. (in consecutive) Discreetly consulting the speaker if (s)he says something that appears to be wrong, before rendering it.

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31. This strategy is explicitly justified in skopos theory, where the function of the target text is placed above strict fidelity to the content of the source text (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Vermeer 1996; Nord 1997).

Filtering/Omitting:

g. Omitting non-rhetorically justified repetitions.
h. (in consecutive) Summarizing excessively lengthy or rambling passages.
i. Omitting ‘thinking-out-loud’ musings, half-expressed or abandoned thoughts and incomprehensible ‘throwaway’ digressions.
j. Replacing ‘unhelpful’ cultural references with something simple and direct.
k. Censoring out cultural or political blunders, for example in diplomatic settings, to avoid possible misunderstanding or giving offence.
l. Softening or toning down language that is rude, aggressive or potentially offensive (e.g. with sexual or blasphemous connotations).

Some adjustments may involve both content and form – for example, for politeness, adding (possibly culture-specific) titles, honorifics, styles and other markers, in addition to courteous word-choice, intonation and register.

Optimization of content relies to a large extent on the interpreter’s **knowledge** of speakers, listeners, situations and cultures. It also requires **judgment** of the associated risks and benefits, taking into account appropriateness in the setting, the relevant rules and conventions and the licence allowed to the interpreter.

‘Changing the content’ may sound radical and unjustified, but can also be just one way of helping to bridge cultural gaps (in the terms of the ASTM definition of the interpreter’s role, ‘taking into account the cultural and social context’), i.e. minimal ‘intercultural mediation’. Some examples to illustrate this are given under Professionalism and Ethics in CC/TG-10.4.

3. Optimization of **process**

In this third type of optimization the interpreter makes an intervention in her own capacity, in order to facilitate or manage the communication process. For example, the interpreter:

a. asks the speaker to clarify, explain or repeat something for the interpreter’s benefit (consecutive);
b. requests the chair to ask the speaker to slow down, and/or to see to it that the interpreters get copies of texts in the booths (simultaneous);
c. hand-signals people to indicate that they can’t all talk at once if she is to interpret one person at a time;
d. clarifies her role to the participants and requests that they follow certain norms for interpreted interactions (turn-taking discipline, length of segments, etc.);
e. draws attention to a potentially significant ambiguity that she cannot safely resolve or is not willing to take responsibility for resolving;
f. draws attention to an interpreter error (not necessarily her own), and offers an improved version (see also CC-9.3.3);

g. intervenes to clear up a cultural misunderstanding;
h. tries to sort out apparent communication failures (whether or not due to interpreting error), for instance by offering to try to summarize to the parties what each has understood and how their understandings seem to be different, in the interest of sorting out the misunderstanding and moving the meeting forward.

In ad hoc or less formal situations especially (e.g. in some community interpreting) an interpreter may be invited to be more proactive, or may volunteer to for reasons of conscience, for example by

a. taking more control of the exchange by interrupting or otherwise regulating the flow of talk;
b. assuming a moderator or chairman's role; or
c. providing additional commentary or information.

These additional functions spill over into still stronger roles that an interpreter may adopt, including *arbitration*, where the interpreter actively helps the parties to reach an agreement, or *advocacy*, in which the interpreter speaks on behalf of parties who may be perceived to be at a disadvantage, or unable to defend their own interests even with the help of the 'standard' interpreting service, or helps to present their own case in a better light.

5.8.4.2 *Stronger forms of mediation*

According to Jean Herbert, a pioneer of the profession and early trainer of conference interpreters,

> The mission of the interpreter is to help individuals and communities to acquire a fuller knowledge and a deeper understanding of one another, and […] to come to an agreement *if they should want to do so.* (Herbert 1952: 3; original emphasis)

By convention in the conference interpreting profession, the interpreter's default role normally stops short of mediation in this stronger, 'arbitral' sense. If the parties want to try to talk things through and try to come to an agreement, we are there to help them overcome their linguistic and cultural differences. But it is not generally considered part of our role as interpreters to try to bring them together or to mediate between them.

This more explicit mediating role obviously entails more risk and/or more responsibility. Depending on the situation, your decision to go beyond the default role may contribute to saving lives or to endangering them, to expediting the resolution of a dispute or to complicating and delaying it. A case has been reported from the healthcare sector, for example, where an unintimidated interpreter was able to save a patient from having the wrong leg amputated (Viaggio 2005/6: 190). Conversely, serious confusion results, in many settings, when the 'interpreter' pursues a separate agenda as commentator, celebrity or promoter of a cause, since by definition not all listeners are linguistically equipped to notice and allow for the distortions.

In short, though this extended role may be ethically justified in some situations – especially if all parties have accepted it – 'strong' mediation is not really the interpreter's job.

Conscious and unconscious optimization: some conclusions

In the mind of any translator, and perhaps especially under the temporal and other constraints of interpreting, only a small tip of the complex linguistic and cognitive processing involved can be accessible to deliberate decision-making at any time. Much of it will be instinctive, as in ordinary verbal communication, and much of it will rely on the now internalized knowledge and mental procedures acquired in training. The 'once-only' nature of interpreting makes it necessary to internalize much of this complex skill, and this integration process will inevitably fuse the communication and translation (cognitive and linguistic) processes, save for occasional conscious spotlighting, in the mature act of interpreting.

Needless to say, one of the risks we take in moving along the continuum is to jeopardise our status as a neutral and impartial mediator.

The appropriate extent of mediation or optimization by the interpreter depends on multiple factors, including convention, power relations (ratification), ethical considerations, and sometimes on explicit agreement between interpreter and client (and/or user), and to a large extent on the **setting**. In legal interpreting, *all* the above-listed forms of would-be optimization by the interpreter are normally proscribed. In **conference interpreting**, generally encouraged or tacitly accepted optimizing includes formal optimization of the types listed above, and the first content adjustments in each category: 'Explaining' type (a), 'Correcting' types (e) and (f), and Filtering/ Omitting types (g) and (h). Some kinds of content optimization – (b), (i) and (j) – are more context-sensitive, and would depend on the situation, the interpreter's confidence and a weighing of added-value vs. risk. Finally, (c) and (d), clarifying or elaborating on passages based on the interpreter's knowledge of the situation, and (k) and (l), which involve toning down or censorship, are controversial, and more likely to be done only by an affiliated interpreter with *insider* knowledge of the situation and the speaker's intention or position (CC-10.3). As for 'process' optimization, alerting listeners to ambiguities that the interpreter cannot resolve might be justified by the goals of fidelity and communicative transparency, not to mention wider ethical considerations, although her responsibility in choosing whether or not to do this is debatable.

At this stage, this list is provided as a guide and as food for thought. In the next few months of the course, these issues will come up regularly in classroom and group practice. We return to them for a more thorough treatment under the heading of Professionalism (CC-10).

5.9 Summary

This chapter has presented exercises and classroom procedures for training to an advanced level of expertise in consecutive interpreting in five stages, starting with the key principles and features of the note-taking method that is used in some form by most professionals, and concluding with a description of the role and mediation challenges that are a distinct feature of the consecutive environment with its close proximity to the participants in the exchange.

A simple model (Figure 5.1) showed the two steps in consecutive interpreting – capture and delivery – and their respective challenges. (See TG-6.8 for a review of research.)

Once you have acquired the basics of note-taking (5.2–5.5), start practising consecutive regularly in groups outside class, continuing (as also in class) right through the course to the final diploma, with steadily more realistic input and higher expectations. Appendix C below sets out guidelines for successful group practice.

The skills developed for full consecutive and sight translation prepare for SI. However, in the booth, you will have to understand, analyse and speak at the speaker's pace, so linguistic flexibility and agility will be even more critical. The next two chapters are devoted to two activities that will help with this preparation: Sight Translation with all its variants (CC-6), and Language and Knowledge Enhancement (CC-7).

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Readings on Consecutive Interpreting for students

We recommend the following readings for students. Those interested in more in-depth research into consecutive interpreting, including how professionals take notes, how our memories work, cognitive load and the distribution of efforts in the two phases, will find an overview of the literature, with additional references, in TG-6.8.

Rozan 1956: La prise de notes en interprétation consécutive
[In English and Polish: Rozan 2002. Note-taking in Consecutive Interpreting]

Bowen and Bowen 1984: Steps to Consecutive Interpreting
Dam 2004: Interpreters' notes: on the choice of language
Gillies 2005: Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course
González et al. 2012: Fundamentals of Court Interpretation: Theory, Policy and Practice (Chapter on Consecutive)
Ilg 1982, 1988: (two articles in French)
Ilg and Lambert 1996: Teaching Consecutive Interpretation (See Appendix B below)

Jones 1998: Chapter 3 on Note-taking in Consecutive Interpreting
Liu 1993/2008: (in Chinese)《逐步口譯與筆記》
Matyssek 1989: Handbuch Der Notizentechnik
Myers 1976: Introduction to consecutive interpretation
Seleskovitch 1975: Langage, langues et mémoire. Etude de la prise de notes en interprétation consécutive
Sassoon & Briem 2014: Improve Your Handwriting

Appendix A

The Rozan method of note-taking for consecutive interpreting

Rozan described notes for consecutive as a sketch of the speech "which the context illuminates and fleshes out with meaning/sense", and summarized his method in **seven principles** and twenty basic symbols to cover all needs.

The seven principles are:

1. **Recording and rendering the idea rather than the words.**
2. **Rules of abbreviation:** Abbreviated forms must be clear and unambiguous. If there is time, spell out the whole word; if not, note the first and last letters. Use short but precise words (like *aid* or *help* for 'make a contribution'). Use marks for tenses; abbreviate common prefixes and suffixes.
3. **Links and continuity:** Links should always be noted either by ***short words*** (a few are enough to cover the main links found in discourse: *as, why?, tho, but, if, as to/re:, so*, + for 'moreover, also', = for 'likewise', ≠ for 'in contrast'), or by ***arrows*** and ***connecting lines*** (see below).
4. **Negation** and (dis)approval are key features that must be clearly noted (e.g. *OK, no* or a slash).
5. **Emphasis** can be shown by underlining once (or twice), attenuation by dotted underlining.
6. **Verticalization**: Notes should be organized *down* rather than *across* the page, and items can be superposed (for lists); grouped, or shown as subsidiary, using brackets; or hierarchically structured.
7. **Indenting** should be used to show subordination of ideas and to avoid repetition.

Rozan proposed using a small stock of **symbols** for recurring common concepts (*think, say, discuss, approve, want/can/should, meeting, before, after, now, trade, policy, energy*). Functional or relational symbols were classified in three types:

- ***expression***, e.g. **:** for *think, claim, feel*, " for *say, talk, take the floor, discuss, debate, consider*;
- ***movement***, e.g. up, down and horizontal ***arrows*** for *reduction, decrease, fall, slide, slowdown; cause or transmission*;
- ***correspondence***, e.g. / by, = same as, ≠ different from, [] 'in which'.

Connecting ***lines*** can be used to connect items and avoid noting twice, and ***mood signs*** like ! △ ☺ can tag local tone and effects.

Appendix B

Ilg and Lambert (1996) list a dazzling range of sources of abbreviations and symbols, of which just a small selection is given in the box below:

Some sources of abbreviations and symbols – for selective use (Ilg & Lambert 1996)

Common acronyms and short forms: ASAP, BTW, OK, PR, HQ, hi-fi, VIP, info, lab, QED, RIP, ID…
Greek and Latin prefixes: lex, pax, iso-, tox, psy, tele, iso-, sync…
Colloquialisms and slang: hi!, bye!, wow, biz,
Typographical signs, smileys ('emoticons'): ?!, !!, ☺, ☹
Headline monosyllables: act, aid, aim, ban, bar, bet, bug, cap, cut, hike, jam, pay, key, nil, rep, win…
(and verbs: cow, dub, eye, gag, ink, nix, spur, spurn, tap, vet, vie)
Paired quasi-words: M&A, Q/A, E/W, I/O
Abbreviations: eco, agr, pol, soc, Gvt, cf., re, viz
Institutional initialisms: UN, EU, US, NDRC, LLDC, NYSE
Keyboard signs (used according to personal code): //, [], %, $, #, @, &, ", +, ~
Mathematical and scientific signs: <, >, Hz, ±; and superscripts, subscripts, etc.

Appendix C

Guidelines for group practice

These guidelines focus mainly on practice in Consecutive (and Sight Translation) since it is in this phase (mid-late S1) that students will begin to practise outside class in groups. From S3, instructors will provide guidance for practising in SI and SI-text (see CC-8.4.6), but some basic rules have been added here.

1. Forming groups

Ideal size: 3 or 4 students. If possible, the group should include one student with an A in each of the other students' source (passive) languages. Students working into B can then be checked for language quality by students whose A is the target language (TL).

2. Group session frequency, duration and time management

Students should devote at least 8 hours per week to group practice (all modes). Examples:

2-student group: 1h30 per session
3-student group: 1h30–2h per session
4-student group: 2h per session

For maximum fairness and efficiency, try to keep track of time so that each participant gets a chance to be 'lead' interpreter (if speeches are being done into more than one language) once or twice in each session – assuming that at least 15 minutes will be needed for each full consecutive: for example, 5 minutes for delivery, 5 minutes for interpretation, and 5 minutes for feedback and discussion (perhaps more with recording and playback).

3. Choice of speeches

Golden rule: Work from 'semi-prepared speech', where the speaker has thought about the structure and content of his presentation, has prepared and delivers from an outline and/or notes, but is to a significant extent verbalizing spontaneously (see 4 (iv) below). Avoid using read-out written texts until the advanced stage of training (second year, see CC-9).

Language direction: Practise into your A language only for the first few weeks before starting to work into B.

Speech types: Students should practise regularly and frequently on speeches with a *discursive or argumentative structure,* i.e. which present a reasoned argument with data and examples, using information as a tool of persuasion. This is the most common form of discourse found in international conferences, and includes most presentations in the political, academic and corporate worlds. Narrative discourse, which tells a story, is used in some oratory, but should be readily handled by interpreters who have mastered the discursive genres.

Other genres which occasionally feature in conferences, and should occasionally be practised, include

i. *descriptive*: for example, presenting the provisions of a new law, or the structure or functions of an institution;
ii. *speeches/texts with numerical content*: e.g. economic or business reports comprising numerical data, statistics etc. (an important challenge requiring quite a lot of practice, especially in SI, where teamwork is recommended);
iii. *ritual and ceremonial*: opening speeches, speeches of welcome or congratulations (as at launches, inaugurations, opening ceremonies, signing ceremonies); and toasts, tributes or eulogies, which should usually only be attempted into a native language (A).

Members of the practice group take turns to prepare speeches and act as speakers in the practice session (see next point). For a discursive speech, for example, the speaker will present arguments for and/or against a point of view, or on a topical issue (or a traditional ethical or moral issue: cloning; separatism; religious freedom; euthanasia, etc.) with examples; report on a debate seen on TV or in parliament; make an appeal for a specific government policy; etc.

The best speeches contain a clear thread of argument, with some (but not excessive) details such as proper names, figures, qualifying expressions, and exemplification.

Avoid:
- over-local content (localized social issues which members of the speech community would usually discuss only among themselves);
- over-specific or technical matter (stock market movements and strategies), including culturally specialized material (fashion, humour, popular music…);
- information unlikely to be communicated orally, still less interpreted (excessively dense facts and figures, weather forecasts, sports results and commentary);
- translations.

In an average daily newspaper or magazine, this will probably leave around 15% of the articles as raw material for oralised presentations (CC-4.7.1.1).

4. The Speaker…

i. **Chooses the topic:** Use the opportunity of taking the Speaker's role to explore new or unfamiliar topics, even though they may appear dry and unappealing at first sight (e.g. insurance, accountancy, sports contracts, drug certification…), and introduce your classmates to them by explaining the context before speaking.
ii. **Prepares** enough speeches (or speech segments) to give each student in the group an opportunity to work from that language. In any given practice session, each student should be able to interpret two passages.
iii. **Sets the scene, describes the (simulated) speech context and situation** before starting, having thought up a plausible scenario for this particular communication, imagining who might be telling this story, giving this description, or defending this point of view, to what audience, in which situation, and if appropriate where, when etc. S/he should also give any unfamiliar proper names, keywords and in the case of technical subjects, any technical terms; students can then briefly brainstorm for relevant vocabulary.
iv. **Does not read or recite text** (in consecutive or free SI): A speech based on a written text (such as a newspaper or magazine article) should be at least 'oralised' (CC-4.7.1.1), or better still, assimilated in advance and presented from notes. Do not read out written text! – except, obviously for SI-with-text or sight translation; however, even in these cases, the speaker must first have read through the text carefully to her(him)self, to ensure natural and meaningful delivery (intonation, pausing, etc.).
v. **Times** her/his speech and the consecutive renditions, and informs the group afterwards, during evaluation and discussion.
vi. **Is responsible for recording** the speech and rendition(s).

For SI and SI-text, the speaker should *not* wear headphones, nor try to monitor the interpretation, and while speaking, should not look at the interpreters in the booth, but at the audience (e.g. two or more students, TAs or visitors listening to SI as users).

5. Feedback, discussion, objectives

It is helpful to fix clear and precise objectives at the start of each session, and to concentrate feedback on these points. Comments should focus on the *objectives set for the current week or month in the course.*

Remember that examination juries follow three 'macro-criteria' in assessing performances:

- fidelity: the rendition must be complete, and accurate (free of distortions, unjustified additions and omissions);
- clarity and quality of expression;
- presentation (delivery): fluency, momentum (Consecutive, ST), posture.

Feedback from members of the practice group *may address all the following aspects* of the performance (remembering that more *tact* may be needed for some aspects than for others) –

Fidelity: precision vs. …
i. vague, fuzzy, wishy-washy or woolly descriptions, time sequences or arguments;
ii. unnecessary elaboration or circumlocution;
iii. subtle (and not so subtle) shifts in meaning (explicit or implicit);
iv. collapsing or merging of distinct facts or ideas, resulting in distortion or loss of information.

Structure: main vs. subsidiary points; links and connectives; reference and cohesion.

Presentation (crucial to an interpreter's credibility):

i. *Voice:* should be firm and confident, and project well; clear, crisp diction.
ii. *Delivery*: pace should be regular and sustained; neither too slow, nor breathless. Consecutive should be timed (aim at 75% of original).
    a. *tone* should be natural, i.e. neither a flat monotone, nor artificially cheerful;
    b. eliminate *verbal tics* (erm, aah, mmm…), stammering and excessive self-correction and restarts;
    c. *intonation* should be intelligent (expressing meaning) and adequately but not exaggeratedly modulated (especially in SI).
iii. *Language:* quality of expression, clarity, transparency of meaning, appropriate register, terminology and style; richness or poverty of vocabulary (word choice); when working into B, accent must not be distracting.
iv. *Posture*: (in consecutive and ST) maintain regular eye contact with addressees; do not mumble, or read notes with head down; restrain exaggerated gesticulation or facial contortions.

Recommended procedure for giving feedback

Basic principle: (consecutive or sight translation) wait until interpreter(s*) has (have*) finished the rendition(s*) before making comments. For SI, it is preferable for students to leave the booths and exchange feedback around the table.
(*when the same speech segment is interpreted into more than one language)

Order of comments:

1. Interpreter evaluates her(his) own performance.
2. (Consecutive) speaker's impression: was s/he betrayed (diluted, distorted…)?
3. Comments by other members of the group (accuracy and presentation).
4. Comments and suggestions by teacher/supervisor, if present.
5. Purely linguistic suggestions (grammar, synonyms, idioms etc.) (native speakers).

► Avoid repetition of comments already made.
► Be demanding but fair. Don't forget to mention good points of the performance as well.

Some examples of priority focus for feedback:
First few weeks (of consec or SI): completeness, clarity and accuracy of content.
Semester 2: logic, sequence, cohesion, links, clarity of argument.
Semester 3: fluency, posture, timing; register and terminology.
Semester 4: + flow, momentum, language, style, presentation.

How to receive (critical) feedback:

By getting back in the saddle and trying to do better! So, avoid too much negative feedback towards the end of the session. More specifically:

For consecutive: correcting one's *notes* after the show isn't much use. More usefully, find a clearer symbol or abbreviation to use next time, or clearer layout (verticalization, indenting, reference line, etc.), for easier recognition (legibility) and capture of ideas; or (both consec and SI) be warned of the dangers of getting distracted and missing key input…

Useful expressions, idioms, technical terms etc. can be noted in a separate notebook for future review and reference.

6. Role of supervisor (e.g. teaching assistant)

If a **supervisor** is present, he/she:

- in consecutive, listens and takes notes; and during the rendition (SI, consec, ST) records her observations and suggested corrections;
- waits for group members to give their feedback before commenting;
- starts with positive comments;
- points out problems of technique: s/he may ask to see the student's notes and make suggestions;
- encourages discussion, tries to relate problems to general principles (e.g. when problem encountered is 'typical' or recurrent), and invites group members to suggest and discuss possible solutions and strategies;
- draws attention to problems of presentation (posture, voice, gesture etc.), which may be forgotten or downplayed by students.

CHAPTER 6

Sight Translation

6.1 Introduction

Sight Translation (ST) is the oral translation of a written text, either 'cold', or after it has been read out, in which case the original text may be handed to the interpreter before or after being read. ST is therefore not to be confused with SI-text (CC-9.2.3.2), where the interpreter uses a copy of a speaker's text to help in *simultaneously* interpreting the speaker as he reads from it or uses it as a basis for his presentation, but with priority to what the speaker actually says, which may be different.

ST is occasionally needed in real life when texts are read out in meetings that are otherwise being interpreted in consecutive, so it is a mode in which we must be proficient. But it is also a powerful training tool, because seeing a text in one language while having to produce a faithful yet idiomatic version of it in another forces us to develop a technique to resist linguistic interference. Here for the first time we must process text in one language while speaking another. An audience will also appreciate and expect fluency and momentum, so sight translation is also excellent preparation for SI, especially if we control the amount of look-ahead (keeping it short, as in SI), to encourage chunk-by-chunk processing and/or anticipation, or if we gradually increase the speed, and the requirement for an accurate but natural-sounding product.

Sight Translation also highlights the differences between written and spoken language, since it involves a *double translation* in one, so to speak, i.e.:

a. from one language to another,
b. from written text, designed for reading, into oral discourse that listeners can follow comfortably, mobilizing public speaking skills.

In other words, in ST we learn to acquire meaning from one pair of media (text, language 1) and convey it in a different pair of media (speech, language 2). This double conversion – of both language and medium – requires extra detachment or 'deverbalization' from the written SL text forms. Though more rarely needed in real life than consecutive or SI, Sight Translation proper (as distinct from paced, drip-fed text chunking) is therefore a valuable exercise that will pay off for both SI and SI-text – but only if we remember that unlike ordinary text-to-text translation, ST must be done fluently, using the text as a basis for a single continuous presentation with no significant pause or interruption. A professional performance takes a special effort to combine momentum and detachment while respecting completeness and accuracy.

6.2 Steps to full Sight Translation

Most schools will include some occasional Sight Translation almost from the start, then gradually raise the bar with progressively longer and harder texts and higher demands on performance. We start with some sight translation in Initiation, mainly to highlight the danger of linguistic interference (CC-4.8.3). The class focuses on clarity of expression, deverbalizing and avoiding syntactic and lexical calques, including not just the false cognates (*faux amis*) that are notorious between cognate languages, but a whole range of deceptive surface similarities that lie in wait between *any* two languages, even the most different.[1] In this initial stage, always paraphrasing the text into the same language first, before translating, helps to keep the renditions meaning-based. At this stage ST should be used only occasionally and not take up more than 25% of class time.

By the middle of the second semester (S2), after students have more or less mastered basic consecutive skills (Consolidation), Sight Translation can be taken on in earnest, building up to quasi-professional performance (4–5 minutes) by the end of the first year, in the following steps:

i. From mid-S1, skip the paraphrasing step before interpreting, but still allow very generous time to study the passage after it has been read out; then reduce it gradually (from late S1).
ii. Early-S2: Begin using more challenging authentic texts, such as prepared topical speeches by political leaders (addressed to international, not domestic, audiences), foreign ministers, ambassadors, agency heads; background/briefing documents on current issues from officialdom (e.g. G20, OECD, think-tanks); but also ceremonial speeches (openings, closings, special occasions, toasts, etc.).

1. For example, in Chinese, 底线, literally ‘bottom line’, refers to minimum acceptable conditions, not net earnings or a conclusion; 文明, literally ‘civilization’, often refers to acceptable public behaviour, e.g. not spitting, littering, yelling, jumping queues, smoking indoors, refusing to yield one’s seat on the subway to a pregnant woman, etc.

iii. From mid-S2: Include more formal and written texts that challenge deverbalization and reformulation more severely. Basic techniques of segmentation, syntactic simplification and open grammar (6.3.2 below) are indispensable to achieve the control and fluency needed for professional ST.
iv. Controlled-input ST exercises, foreshadowing the SI condition: these are described below.

6.2.1 Controlled Sight Translation

In this section we present the full class procedure with both instructor's and students' roles:

i. *Presentation of text*
A text is projected on the overhead screen for the whole class to look at. (The text must be VERY BIG and clearly legible to all in the room.) A student is called upon to read a paragraph out loud.

ii. *Calque sensitization*
The instructor may first offer a literal translation to demonstrate the awkwardness that results from staying too close to the original text, then ask a first student to produce an idiomatic version (in the same language, the student's A), which is then discussed. At first some students may take a while to recognize calques and accept that there are more idiomatic yet faithful ways of expressing the same thing in the TL, even in their A language. For B-language students, this is a good opportunity to permanently delete certain cliché versions from their mental lexicons.

iii. *Deverbalization*
A second student can then produce another clear but different version of the same paragraph, using different expressions and structures as far as possible. This will mean thinking outside the box and being creative, and may take some gentle cueing and prodding. The instructor can also suggest helpful heuristics, such as 'try changing the parts of speech, turning nouns into verbs'. Depending on the text, this might go on for one or two more rounds, perhaps even with a change of register.

iv. *Flexibility and 'Starting differently'*
Next, the instructor imposes sentence beginnings on students, e.g. 'Start the first sentence with the words "Were it not for"…'; 'Now start it with "Had X failed to…"; Now try "Absent…"; Now try "Without…", etc. In mixed groups, we suggest starting with the easier versions and asking for these from B-language students, then calling upon the A-language students to attempt the more difficult ones.

Alternatively (or additionally), the instructor can ask a student to try rendering a sentence beginning with the second word (or phrase), the third word (or phrase), then the fourth, etc. 'Starting differently' can be a powerful heuristic in the early stages of learning SI, to help escape the bonds of SL syntax – a key technique that will be taken up again later in SI under more realistic, online conditions ('Taking the plunge', CC-8.4.1).

v. *Compression*[2]

Finally, the instructor invites shorter versions that capture the same meaning: compress the language, eliminate redundancy (and the patently obvious) and then progress to précising the paragraph (bullet points of key ideas only). Discuss prioritization choices and whether they are maximally relevant.

By late S1 or early S2, ST on this procedure can become the main focus of some class sessions (50–75%). Delivery should pick up pace and momentum, and can be timed and compared to the time taken by the original.

6.2.2 Full Sight Translation (S2)

For Sight Translation proper, the text can be either

a. given to students to scan for a few minutes, or
b. first read out, then handed over, or
c. handed to the student then read out – all with or without additional preparation time.

When the text is first handed out, as in (a) or (c), students can learn how to enhance their performance by judicious **marking** (a technique which will come in useful later in SI with text). Reading out then handing over, on the other hand (b), trains students to **listen hard** and form a **structured mental model** of the discourse, then scan the text and combine these two representations to optimize production.

For the purpose of this exercise, there should no departures from the text, which is read out as written – though the chosen reader will of course aim for intelligent, natural-sounding oral delivery, as though speaking in public.

Here is an example of a relatively accessible text in 'international officialese', appropriate for ST at a Midpoint Exam (TG-3.4.1) thus preparing students to begin

2. See Viaggio (1992/1995) for a stimulating and entertaining presentation of an English-Spanish ST exercise with a strong focus on concision/condensing/abstracting.

SI-with-text on similar material in S3. At this stage, TL equivalents for proper names (underlined) can be given in advance.

> The political partnership between the EU and ASEAN has led to closer co-ordination in addressing global challenges, from terrorism to climate change, and from sustainable development to the fight against communicable diseases. Positive engagement is already under way in these areas, and there is room to take our co-operation further. Democratic and human-rights values are a vital adjunct to the EU-ASEAN relationship. Just as the EU has expanded human-rights protection and promotion in its domestic and foreign policies – including through a Charter of Fundamental Rights – the advent of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights provides a new basis for collaboration in this important field. The remarkable transformation underway in Myanmar will further strengthen EU-ASEAN relations. At the ministerial gathering, we will jointly commend the significant progress made by Myanmar towards a democratic future.

Procedure:

i. Students listen to the presentation of a passage approximately 2 minutes in length, then read it over for 1 minute. (This extra preparation time is then progressively shortened, and eventually skipped).
ii. A student is then chosen to deliver a fluent, communicative oral interpretation in the other language. All the rules of delivery that apply in consecutive also apply here: the interpretation must be delivered clean, in one pass, without backtracking, stalling, hemming or hawing.

Each exercise should be timed by the instructor (in class) or group leader (in practice sessions) using a stopwatch. At this stage, as a rule of thumb, and depending on text difficulty and density, a text sight-translated from C or B into A should not take longer than the time taken by the original oral presentation, and from A into B, not more than 20% longer.

With the whole text right there in front of you, completeness is expected, and the focus can be placed on **clear**, **intelligible**, **natural expression**, free of calques or translationese. As in other modes, students inevitably go through an Experimentation phase in which they discover how far they can scan ahead on different kinds of texts, what markings are most useful, and how to rapidly weigh the pros and cons (risks and benefits in terms of expression, flow and accuracy) of more or less ambitious re-ordering. The main problems are likely to be with speed, fluency, intelligibility and interference. Also, working from more challenging, realistic texts will clearly expose any language comprehension deficiencies in the more formal registers that are not generally tested in Consecutive (but will be later in SI-text and 'blind' SI-text) – a further justification for the inclusion of an ST-based exercise in the Midpoint Exam.

Naturally, in real life, speakers can and will skip some content, elaborate on some points, edit the text in real time as they deliver it, jump around in the speech, interject the occasional throw-away line etc., requiring the interpreter to do a hybrid of consecutive and sight translation, taking notes in the margin or between the lines if space permits, or on a separate notepad, and then jumping back and forth between the text and notes during delivery. This more demanding real-life exercise is described in CC-9.2.3.1 and is to be left for the latter part of the second year.

6.2.3 Sight Translation into B and as preparation for SI

As students prepare to do SI, the focus of their efforts will differ according to language combination. Multilinguals who are offering SI *into A only* from one or more B(cons) or C languages can rely more on native suppleness for expression (as well as topic familiarity), and focus on deepening comprehension and general knowledge, while bi-actives aiming to work both ways between A and B, usually in SI (ABsim), will find active B production the main challenge. But Sight Translation will help *all* students (including A-A bilinguals) to recognize and use the plasticity of language, and resist calques and linguistic interference. Since flexibility in reformulation and concision will be more challenging into B, students working into A can be called on first when focusing on this production aspect of the exercises.

Sight Translation into B should only be introduced gradually, once students have become comfortable with the basic ST technique into A – as indeed for all new skills. But ST into B is a superb preparation for SI into B, as well as being a highly manageable and flexible format for teachers, with the text allowing second attempts, paraphrases, alternative solutions, summaries of selected passages etc., much more easily than SI in the booth.

For Bsim combinations, therefore, we recommend intensive classroom work in ST and its variants, focusing not only on technique (for ST as a task in itself) but also on reformulation – which inevitably entails a strong dose of language enhancement in the process (CC-7).

ST is also effective in *preparation for SI into B*. In the early stages, students can sight-translate a text from A to B, then after discussion of linguistic expression, go into the booth and do the text again as SI with Text. At a later stage, the following order may be effective:

1. SI first (instructor delivers from text, which students do not get);
2. Play back and review performances together against the text;

3. ST-based exercises to improve both B-language expression and technique;
4. Re-do SI on the same text, incorporating improved expressions and techniques.

Also, practice in more linear rendering – keeping as close to the original order as idiomaticity allows – will be a necessary skill later for certain kinds of speeches, especially formal texts, and when the subject matter is relatively unfamiliar. This linear-rendering constraint can also be relaxed, when the exercise format allows (i.e. when whole paragraphs or text are shown rather than drip-fed input), to let students try creative but accurate reformulation of larger chunks.

6.2.4 Word order, context and 'syntacrobatics'

In the course of these preparatory text-based exercises, students will typically complain of conflicting word order as a main obstacle to fluent translation, particularly in certain language pairs (e.g. between SOV Japanese, or partially SOV Chinese and German, or VSO Arabic, and SVO[3] English or French). As explained in CC-8.6.3, in the heat of the action of real-life interpreting, linguistic problems are usually overcome by professionals using context and other clues.

Students do not yet have the rich background knowledge schemas of professionals. But professionals also have various 'syntacrobatic' tricks that they may not even be aware they know. During class discussion, some recurring patterns will emerge, and some common solutions and techniques can be given for dealing with them. Analysis-driven, meaning-based interpretation, looking ahead, and concentrating on formulating naturally in the TL should overcome most problems; but specific 'escape' tricks can be shown to students for handling troublesome structures when other, contextual resources are lacking and/or there is no look-ahead (as may happen later, in real life, when text is read out for SI). To prepare for SI, specially designed drip-feed variations on ST are needed. (For further discussion of word-order issues with examples, see 8.6.3 and TG-8 Appendix A.)

3. SVO and SOV refer to languages in which the dominant order of elements in a sentence is 'Subject-Verb-Object' or 'Subject-Object-Verb' respectively. VSO- (Arabic, Irish) and even OSV-dominant languages also exist, but are rarer. Most languages are mixed – German has dominant SVO in the main clause, SOV in the subordinate clause – and differences exist between any pair of languages, though some are more potentially disruptive to SI than others, especially when read out without prosodic support.

6.3 Pedagogical ST variations as preparation for SI (S2 and S3)

Creative and interactive variations on sight translation can help to prepare students for SI by developing techniques for reconciling the conflicting constraints of drip-fed input that is revealed one chunk at a time and the need to produce a clear, meaningful 'joined-up' product. In these exercises, segments of text are delivered either orally or visually (uncovered gradually on a screen), at first in comfortable self-contained units, then in more or less linguistically awkward chunks, so that students can begin to experience key aspects of the simultaneous condition: limited look-ahead, the need to scour the mental discourse model for clues, and the balance to be found between boldness and caution in formulation. For the moment, students must take the instructor's word for it that these seemingly artificial and constraining exercises are somehow beneficial; but this should become obvious when they begin SI.

The exercises are designed to elicit various SI techniques, including 'open grammar[4]' (6.3.2 below), chunking and joining, knowing when to wait, stall or temporarily approximate, and on-line problem-solving ('what would you say if you couldn't think of the exact word for X', or 'if you weren't sure about Y'), all in an off-line format.

6.3.1 Pre-segmented Sight Translation: chunking and joining

Along with anticipation (CC-8.6.4), **chunking** – also called segmentation, *saucissonnage* (Ilg 1982) or the 'salami technique' (Jones 1998/2002: 91 ff.) – is at the core of interpreting skills, not only for free SI, where there is no look-ahead, but also when text is available (as in ST or SI-text), for several reasons: looking ahead may take time and effort, falling too far behind the speaker may be dangerous, and there is no guarantee that speakers will follow the text. Interpreters must therefore be able where necessary to produce something for each short successive phrase, to relieve memory and keep up but without trapping themselves (by using 'open grammar'), while joining up the chunks to produce output that is both accurate and idiomatic.

To illustrate, here is an example of 'salami paraphrase' from English to English, from Jones (1998/2002: 91–2); we have added slashes:

4. Kirchhoff (1976); Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989: 148–9); Setton (1999: 243).

> *Input:* Japan, in the light of the ruling of the international panel / and following the non-payment of the compensation by the American steel-exporters, / which the US authorities have not forced them to pay, / despite their legal obligations and the assurances they have given, / has decided to act unilaterally, / which they are perfectly entitled to do in the case of non-compliance with an international panel ruling – and that is the case here /- by imposing punitive duties on the import of certain flat products, / although long ones should remain unaffected, at least for the immediate future.
>
> *Output:* The international panel has made its ruling. / Compensation has not been paid by the American steel-exporters. / The US authorities have not obliged them to pay, / although they have legal obligations and have given assurances in this respect. / So Japan has decided to react unilaterally. / It is quite entitled to do so, as the ruling of the international panel has not been respected. / It will impose punitive duties on imports of some flat products. / Long products should not be immediately affected.
>
> (Jones 1998/2002: 91–92)

Some units here are somewhat longer than appropriate for the exercise (and 'Japan' is delayed for a few chunks) but it gives the general idea.

As an introduction, students are given a short time to study a pre-segmented text (after the usual short briefing on its background and communicative situation). The text is then read out, pausing after each chunk, which must then be produced in the output language in such a way as to join up the chunks into a coherent, accurate and as far as possible idiomatic flow. This exercise can begin in late S2 and continue in SI-Initiation from the start of the second year, with unseen (scrolled or drip-fed) input. Procedure and examples are given below. The exercise should be done on relatively formal, written texts with complex sentence structures (see TG-2 Appendix A, SI-Initiation 'Strand B', for text difficulty index).

Procedure:

i. The instructor distributes a text to the class with slashes drawn in, dividing up sentences into segments of approximately 4–8 words, at phrase/clause boundaries.
ii. The instructor – or a student reading in her B, for practice – reads out one paragraph, while the class listens. The class is given one minute to study the text.
iii. A student is then asked to interpret the paragraph linearly into her A language, following one key rule: all information before one slash must be rendered into the target language before moving on to the next chunk. No cheating is allowed: even though you already know what is coming next, you aren't allowed any look-ahead in your interpretation. (Some chunks will be easy to render linearly, others more difficult, and some – to beginning students – seemingly impossible. The instructor can vary the difficulty in accordance with class progress.)

iv. The instructor facilitates discussion of the techniques used to join up the chunks into TL sentences, focusing on the more difficult and interesting ones. Did the interpreter produce natural-sounding sentences? Were the 'seams' invisible? The goal is to neutralize any 'weirdness' in the TL presentation by intelligent, flexible sentence construction and effective use of connectives. The class can offer more versions, and the instructor can afterwards offer any useful tips or tricks that the class has not yet worked out. Regularities can be noted and filed away for future use.

To begin with, a similar text can be chosen for *same-language* chunking paraphrase in the students' A language (from A to A) just to get the idea. However, the focus in Jones' example above is on chunking, with only some elementary 'joining' ('although', 'so'). The following worked example more closely resembles a possible approach to a real (formal) speech in English, with TL output by (a) a first-year Chinese-A student (with some prompting), and (b) a young Russian-A professional, after minimal explanation. The two outputs are glossed into English in the right-hand column, preserving the TL word order merely for purposes of illustration.

> It is now over 12 years / since Hong Kong entered the new constitutional order / as part of China / under the principle of "one country, two systems". During this period, / judicial independence has been universally recognized / and accepted to be of pivotal importance to Hong Kong. / The constitutional guarantees / for an independent Judiciary / have been fully implemented.

Table 6.1 Chunking and joining

Input	**Chunked output**	**(literal English gloss)**
It is now over 12 years	十二年多以前,	*More than 12 years ago*
since Hong Kong entered the new constitutional order	香港开始实行新的宪政安排,	*Hong Kong began to implement new constitutional arrangements*
as part of China	成为中国的一部分,	*becoming a part of China,*
under the principle of "one country, two systems". During this period,	奉行一国两制的原则。在此期间	*applying the principle of one country, two systems. During this period*
judicial independence has been universally recognized	司法独立一直被公认为	*judicial independence has universally been recognized*
and accepted to be of pivotal importance to Hong Kong.	是对香港至关重要的	*to be extremely important to Hong Kong*
The constitutional guarantees	宪法中保障	*Within-[the]-constitution guarantee[d]*
for an independent Judiciary	司法独立的规定	*rules of judicial independence*
have been fully implemented.	也得到了全面的实施	*have also been fully implemented*

English to Russian:

Input	**Chunked output**	**(literal English gloss)**
It is now over 12 years	Прошло уже 12 лет	*Ago/have passed already 12 years*
since Hong Kong entered the new constitutional order	[как] В Гонконге установился новый конституционный порядок	*[since] in Hong Kong [there] arose a new constitutional order*
as part of China	Теперь это часть Китая	*Now it is part of China*
under the principle of "one country, two systems". During this period,	Применяется принцип 'одна страна, две системы'	*[There] applies the principle of one country, two systems*
judicial independence has been universally recognized	За это время получила распространение идея независимости судебной системы.	*During this period, [has] received recognition the idea of [the] independence of the judicial system*
and accepted to be of pivotal importance to Hong Kong.	Все понимают, что она имеет для Гонконга принципиальное значение	*All understand that this has for Hong Kong primary importance*
The constitutional guarantees	Это конституционные гарантии	*These [are] constitutional guarantees,*
for an independent Judiciary	Конституционные гарантии независимости судебной системы	*constitutional guarantees of the autonomy of the judicial system*
have been fully implemented.	Теперь они полностью реализованы	*Now they have been fully implemented*

Neither Russian nor Chinese allows simply tacking on a prepositional phrase after a verb phrase, as in English (entered…*as* part of China….*under*…). Both interpreters therefore either (i) 'refresh' these chunks with new verbs ('*There applies*' (Применяется) for 'under'; '*becoming*' (成为) for 'as part of'; '*pursuing*' (奉行) for 'under') – a good example of a generalizable and applicable language-specific heuristic that will be of help to students – or (ii) start a new clause (Now it is part of China; Now they have been…). Along with simplified constructions (It is…since > ago…now), and creation of subjects to replace passives (is accepted > all understand that), the chunks become syntactically more autonomous (open grammar) and thus easier to join up. In the Russian (young professional's) example there is somewhat more joining, and some audience-friendly addition and recapitulation. 'During this period' is remembered and held over until the next chunk for better flow.

6.3.2 Imposed starts and constructions

ST proper can be followed by an exercise to stretch trainees' linguistic agility, also foreshadowing the constraints of SI: now students are asked to start their TL sentences from a few different alternative points in the original text, and in a few different ways. The instructor can also impose the choice of starting words, or the use of a particular grammatical structure, or require already-begun sentences to be continued (by the same or another student) in unexpected directions. This can also help into-B students to activate structures that have no parallel in their own A language and that they may therefore under-utilize – for example, in English, an -ing construction, or "Unless…", "Subject to…", "Regardless of…", "To the extent that…", etc. (CC-7.4.2). The instructor goes around the class to elicit multiple versions of the trickier passages.

> **'Open grammar'**[5] is a key ability for dealing with the limited look-ahead of SI, where language must be produced to render what is known or anticipated at each point in time without prejudice to possible continuations. The interpreter must always be able to continue the current sentence, wind it up and start a new one, and accommodate any unexpected twists and turns in the speaker's meaning, without sacrificing accuracy or natural, idiomatic expression, thus avoiding the need to backtrack. For example, when a speaker says 'with a view to…' in an already complicated or unwieldy sentence, we might begin afresh with 'This means/meant that…', letting us continue with a finite clause that will be more flexible and manageable than an '-ing' construction.

6.3.3 'Consecutive from text'

In another variation, a text is read out and students take notes as if for consecutive. The text is then given to one student who is asked to do it *from the text*, not from her notes. It should be explained that this exercise is not just a sneaky trick to entertain the instructor, but a reminder of the value of keeping analysis fully switched on while taking notes. With a good discourse model fresh to mind, the

5. For readers of German, see also Kirchhoff (1976) for what was probably the first description of 'offene Satzplanung'.

text can be scanned for memory cues to trigger recall of the message, not merely or primarily for verbal information to be converted from one language into another.

6.4 Summary

The fluent, accurate and communicative oral translation of a written text is a skill that is expected of a professional conference interpreter, sometimes without a previous view of the text. But three features of sight translation also make it an excellent training tool:

- it can be done in two steps, with a chance to read and/or hear the text first, hence without the pressure of simultaneity present in consecutive with note-taking and especially, in SI;
- it tests the key ability to extract meaning from words and re-clothe it in idiomatic target language without being trapped by the source-language word choices and structures;
- the presentation of the text can be chopped up, slowed down or speeded up to simulate and prepare for the challenges of fluent, uncompromising simultaneous interpreting with and without the support of text.

In the last of these applications, Sight Translation will be used by the instructor under controlled conditions in class, but students should practise ST proper regularly throughout the course, varying the format and gradually shortening the time allowed for preparation of the text, and steadily raising the standard they set themselves in terms of momentum, fluency and precision.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Agrifoglio 2004: Sight translation and [other modes of] interpreting: comparative analysis
Dragsted & Gorm Hansen 2007: Exploiting synergies between translation and interpreting
Lee Ji Eun 2012: Skills for sight translation
Weber 1990: The importance of sight translation in interpreter training

CHAPTER 7

Language and knowledge enhancement

7.1 Introduction and overview

Language is the main tool of an interpreter's trade, and no profession, perhaps, requires a richer, more flexible and agile oral use of language. All interpreting trainees, however linguistically gifted, will need to enhance their linguistic proficiency in-course, to different degrees – not just learning more words, but targeted to meet the specific needs of interpreting:

- in *comprehension,* which must be broad (speaking styles, accents), deep and comfortable, even at high input speeds (C languages typically need most work, but also B);
- in *production*, working on clarity, fluency and quality of expression (with the main focus of enhancement obviously on B, especially on the extra speed and flexibility needed for Bsim);
- in *language transfer,* by increasing linguistic flexibility, and by building the mental phrasebook of ready equivalents that can be used reliably – though never blindly, of course – for recurring technical or 'boilerplate' terms, but also turns of phrase, such as collocations, topic-shift devices and sentence-framing structures common in mainstream discourse.

Language and Knowledge Enhancement go together, because familiarity with the subject matter of what we are interpreting is needed to understand and speak convincingly, and to be able to focus our attention on the speaker's message. Knowledge is prerequisite to techniques like reformulation, anticipation or compression, and is a more solid friend when things get tough than mere coping tactics (CC-9.3.1). To complement your own research, your school should offer special modules in the subject matter and terminology of key domains for conference interpreting like economics and finance, public international law, parliamentary procedure, budgets and accounts, or the language and conventions of research, and/or more specific briefings relevant to a local target market (see TG-7.4.3).

After briefly recalling the specificity and goals of L(K)E for interpreting (7.2), this chapter presents a series of activities and exercises to do alone, or with a partner or in a small group – and ideally, with a demanding coach – to enhance comprehension (7.3), production (7.4), and lexical resources (7.5). For reasons of space, examples are mostly in English (currently the language most commonly needing enhancement, whether as B or C, and the most common candidate among professionals for upgrading from C to B), as are the bulk of resources and references. However, all this material should be readily transposable to other languages and combinations.

Note that this chapter focuses on *in-course* study to maintain and improve your proficiency in languages that have *already been accepted* as part of your language combination. Tips for further training on how to **add a C language**, or **upgrade a C to a B** or a Bcons to a Bsim (by private study or in short dedicated courses you may wish to take later in your professional career) can be found in TG-14.3.2.

7.2 Language enhancement for interpreters: specificity and goals

7.2.1 Specificity of LE for interpreting

Language for interpreting is 'language for a specific purpose' (LSP) – not in the usual sense of being focused on a particular domain, but oriented to the distinct demands and peculiarities of language use in this job. Our languages must be adapted to more specific uses than the L1, L2 and L3 of mainstream language teaching:

1. An interpreter's active languages must be especially **agile, fast** and **flexible**: we have no control over what the speaker wants to say, how, or how fast, and we are judged on the product, not the process.
2. We must set different goals for our **active** and **passive** languages: native style and eloquence in A, near-native oral proficiency in B, comfortable understanding and fast reading in all three.
3. Since we always process two languages at once, we must constantly battle and thwart the demon of **linguistic interference** (CC-4.8.3).
4. For us, linguistic proficiency means above all **linguistic readiness**. Knowing a language is one thing; having the right expression, or an acceptable one, ready at the right time is quite another. This takes three combined skills: long-term maintenance, short-term acquisition of specific domain language, and rapid activation – and developing the habits (reading) and tools (glossaries) to support them.
5. Finally, a small bonus. Interpreting per se does not call for equal proficiency in all four modalities: understanding and speaking are crucial, fast reading is useful, but fine writing (let us say prose composition) is not required.

These peculiarities explain the special focus we have to give language enhancement for interpreting: on comfortable comprehension, speed, flexibility, resourcefulness, lexical activation and resistance to interference.

In particular, though, realistic and efficient language enhancement for interpreting must carefully target these different abilities, with different exercises and activities for passive (comprehension) and active (production) proficiency. For production, significantly more focus and effort must be devoted to the B language, which is harder to shape and maintain, especially under the pressure of interpreting. You will always be able to understand much more than you can say (even in your mother tongue), but in a B language we must realistically aim to master and use a more restricted, though clear and reliable, active linguistic toolkit than in A, since a language learned after the pre-adolescent optimal (or 'critical') period can never be mastered quite like the A language of childhood and education (Paradis 2004: 59–60; see TG-7.5 for discussion). It remains an artefact which, however superbly constructed, must be used strategically and constantly nourished and maintained.

Even if spoken fluently and more than adequately for conversation, or even for more advanced applications like teaching or lecturing, a learned language is much more prone to break down, or become patchy, awkward, laborious or vague, under the specific but different stresses of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

Also, as language professionals, interpreters are held to a higher standard than sovereign speakers when it comes to language mastery. Conference delegates might praise one of their colleagues for his 'perfect' command of English, while that same proficiency level might be deemed weak or even unacceptable for a conference interpreter's B language. To take a more striking example, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon works in English and addresses formal meetings of the United Nations in that language, since his native Korean is not a UN working language. But a conference interpreter with the same spoken command of English as Ban Ki-moon's would not be considered to have this language as a 'true B'.

Can an acquired, non-native language be developed into a robust, convincing, near-native tool of expression for simultaneous conference interpreting? This remains a real challenge for a language acquired late, since no amount of cramming, however modern, can replace the implicit syntactic and pragmatic competence acquired in the 'critical period' – roughly, before puberty (Penfield and Roberts 1959; Lenneberg 1967). Any language learned after that window has closed remains a less plastic instrument of active expression, with a narrower keyboard, a somewhat artificial 'shape' in terms of things we can talk about more or less fluently, and vulnerable to interference from the dominant language. However, provided you accept this, researchers in bilingualism recognize (and real-life examples attest) that with enough motivation, exposure and practice, an acquired language can be developed into a robust and expressive tool for interpreting (for some scientific background, see TG-7.5).

7.2.2 Goals of L(K)E for interpreting

Language (and also Knowledge) Enhancement (LKE) is not a stage in conference interpreter training, but an ongoing process that begins before admission to the course and continues through life. However, we need to set clear goals for the training course.

In **comprehension**, we must aim for enhancement in three dimensions: in *breadth,* to be able to understand the widest possible range of speaking styles (and thought processes) and other cultural and individual variations, but especially, a wide range of accents; in the *degree of comfort* with which we understand, to leave some room for the other tasks of interpreting (thinking, deciding, choosing words and formulating); and last but not least, in *depth* of understanding, which is needed to support core SI processes like anticipation. Anticipation (CC-8.6.4) is a good example of a facilitating process that depends on thorough comprehension at two levels: linguistic, to recognize a sentence pattern or the first half of a collocation, and thus predict its possible continuations and decide whether and when to wait, stall, chunk or 'tail' the SL structure; and cognitive-pragmatic, to sense the general direction of the speaker's message, which helps more fundamentally with the choice of words and tone. This is not based in magic, or telepathy, but on two sources: familiarity with the situation and subject, and the many subtle cues in ordinary speech, from connectives through certain intonation contours, to a knowledge of discourse conventions that may be specific to a culture, a national bureaucracy, or an international institution (like the UN or the EU). We can only take this 'predictive' level of comfortable comprehension for granted on familiar subject matter in our native language. For interpreting, it must gradually be extended to our other languages, and to unknown genres, domains and registers.

The range of styles and contents that we must able to follow comfortably should be as broad as possible, but we can give priority to the registers and domains most common in professional conference interpreting, with some additional variation between regions and markets.

In terms of **speech production**, rich and expressive language resources obviously make for better public speaking, but a special agility is also needed for some aspects of interpreting-specific technique. For example, in **consecutive**, the sequence of notes taken for a particular idea or segment may not go easily into the target-language: for delivery, we must be able to start a grammatical sentence from a point chosen at a glance, and finish it elegantly. Similarly, and more urgently, in **SI** we cannot expect incoming utterances to have an amenable structure, and must often pick entry points to begin our own sentences, then adjust and complete them as more information comes in. This often means chunking long sentences, sometimes reordering their elements, and always reconnecting them seamlessly with appropriate connectives and anaphora ('this', 'that', 'it', 'do so'), as the target language requires. Such 'syntacrobatics' are the inevitable corollary of a shift between languages in real time, and especially when working into a B language, can be just as challenging as finding the right words without delay. And of course, when we have to deal with fast, incoherent, dense, or even over-redundant or hesitant speeches (CC/TG-9), paraphrase, gisting and compression are vital survival skills.

Since the first premise for interpreting is to understand, students will need to continue deepening and broadening the range of speech types and contents they can follow comfortably in their B and C languages. But the main focus of language enhancement will usually be on activating and shaping the **B language**, especially in subject matter domains and registers most relevant for professional conference interpreters. Because of the natural limits on proficiency in an acquired language (see TG-7.5.1), this training in particular must be focused, intensive and realistic.

Language proficiency goals, unlike interpreting skills, are hard to define incrementally in terms of levels and expected performance and stages to be reached by a given point in the course – in part because of the different knowledge domains, familiar and unfamiliar, and registers to be tackled, and also because very demanding and complex interpreting tasks may lead to a deterioration in output language quality due to processing overload. By its very nature, language enhancement is a lifelong process. But young interpreter trainees should strike while the iron is hot and new synapses can be forged. The process is ongoing and open-ended, and the deadline for each goal is 'as soon as possible'!

In terms of goals for **knowledge enhancement**, what an interpreter should know is even harder to specify (see discussion in CC-4.8.5). Conference interpreting is as much knowledge- as language-intensive, not just because we cover such diverse and specialized subject matter, but because being familiar with what is being talked about makes such a huge difference to the attention ('processing capacity') we can spare for interpreting (see TG-6.8.3.2), and thus the fluency and quality of our performance. In the communication professional, language and knowledge become inseparably interwoven in a composite network of associations. The more efficient and complete that network is, the faster the appropriate phrasing if the knowledge is structured in robust, coherent schemas for instant cognitive mobilization, to help you make judgments on relevance that are critical to optimize the impact of your interpretation (CC-5.8.4) or to survive at high speeds (CC-9) – not to mention saving you the embarrassment of saying nonsensical things that are immediately transparent as such to everyone else in the room.

As of the early stages of training, general knowledge will make a big difference to the amount of new information that you have to process at the same time as you are learning new skills. Put another way, if appropriate knowledge schemas are already in place in your long-term memory – and better still, have been associated with TL expressions and made more accessible to working memory by preparing the assignment, making a glossary etc. – these complete schemas will be instantly activated by the speaker's words and automatically 'boot up' many of the concepts, names, issues etc. that are relevant to what the speaker will discuss, are likely to come up explicitly, and will now no longer need an additional activation effort.

Knowledge can be roughly divided into general, socio-cultural, domain-specific, and encounter-specific (CC-2.4). You can gradually deepen and broaden the first three by general and selective reading and listening as described in this chapter. The training programme should offer classes in the two key domains of economics and law, perhaps even for compulsory credit, and/or in more specialized domains relevant to the target market (TG-7.4.1), but these will not be enough on their own. The fourth – local or 'encounter-specific' knowledge depends on the quality of your preparation of each assignment. A good approach to knowledge enhancement is to set yourself two rules: (i) prepare each assignment thoroughly by trying to imagine and research anything that speakers at the event might possibly talk about; and (ii) after each exercise or assignment, make a note to learn more about whatever gaps in understanding and knowledge may have constrained you, and resolve that they won't do so again in the future.

7.2.3 Independent study and practice

In addition to feedback in interpreting classes on points of language (mostly into B) and intensive coaching in dedicated language-enhancement classes, the third important component of LE is practice by students in their own time, pairing up across language combinations (my A language is your B language, and vice versa, or similarly with more languages in a larger group). Work partners with 'mirror' or complementary language combinations can help each other by explaining word usage where the dictionary fails, trying out new learned vocabulary in contexts and checking for appropriateness and naturalness, or listening critically to each other doing the various exercises – reading out loud, repeating/shadowing, gisting, paraphrasing, speechmaking – and then redoing them where necessary to avoid making the same mistakes.

Most of the exercises described in the next sections should first be explained and demonstrated by the instructors in language enhancement class. Some may seem obvious, but it is important to follow the instructions closely and keep them distinct. For example, listening for comprehension should not be confused with practising interpreting.[1]

Students with a Bsim should devote at least 6 hours per week specifically to language and knowledge enhancement exercises, in addition to their dedicated LE class (into B) and 8–10 hours per week of interpreting practice in pairs and small groups (see TG-13, Table 13.2).

Using language in a social context

All work and no play is a poor recipe for fulfilment, and outside school, any would-be interpreter should actively enjoy using their B language as widely as possible in a more relaxed social context, for instance by joining clubs, civic groups, drama or debating societies, or doing volunteer work – while always paying attention in conversations to how native speakers make subtle, even unconscious corrections by repeating back to you improved versions of things you have just said.

7.3 Comprehension (B and C languages)

7.3.1 Objectives

Novices approaching interpreting from a language-learning background often have a skewed attitude to language, seeing it as an ocean of words to be learned for instant recognition and translation, and/or underestimating the *variability* and *roughness* of the way language is used in reality by different speakers in different situations, or the density and high register demands of formal and legalistic texts at the other end of the spectrum.

Speech may be written or spoken, prepared or improvised, formal or colloquial, general or technical, fast or slow, coherent or disorganized, fluent or choppy, standard or accented, conventional or original, dense in information or redundant and repetitious. Each speaker has an individual style, and the interpreter has no choice or control over these parameters. To avoid dispersion and stay focused, goals for comprehension must be both set very high and realistically circumscribed. A job-worthy conference interpreter must be able to extract at least the main idea or communicative intent from discourse of almost any linguistic complexity, however incorrect the grammar and confused the expression. However, she is *not* expected to understand (still less interpret) technical material without preparation.

1. Research shows that listeners who avoid mental translation demonstrate better L2 listening comprehension (Vandergrift et al. 2006; Bloomfield et al. 2010).

Another way of formulating this comprehension goal is to say that you should aim to get from *listening to the language* (like a language learner or a linguist), through *hearing the language* (that is still getting in the way), then *listening for meaning* (with some effort) to, finally, *hearing the meaning* (the normal tuning in our native language). Comprehension is only part of interpreting. You must be able to follow the message conveyed in real-time speech, not on the edge of your seat and using maximum concentration, but fairly *comfortably*, since surplus attentional resources will be needed for analysis, memory and formulating the product (cf. Gile's Effort Models [Gile 2009]: see CC-8.1.3, TG-8.6.1.2).

The ideal goal to aim for is *comprehension equivalent to native speakers* of the language, at least in domains and registers most relevant for professional conference interpreting. This goal (though strictly speaking unattainable) is a good proxy for comprehension sufficient for most interpreting purposes, and must now replace the student's previous benchmark, which may have been simply their own past proficiency, or that of stronger students in the class.

More specific, down-to-earth goals for ***comprehension*** are:

1. *to understand* spoken discourse reliably and confidently across a wide range of topics, speech-types and registers, delivered with different accents, at increasing speed, and with varying levels of complexity and idiosyncrasy;
2. to increase *reading speed* and the ability to extract meaning and information from written texts efficiently and effectively;
3. to deepen *cultural competence* by using materials containing cultural allusions, quotations from literature and other significant documents, references to social and political traditions, beliefs, history, and folklore, stories and games learned by children, colloquialisms, regionalisms and slang;
4. to cultivate the ability to read between the lines and interpret culturally specific patterns and cues (body language, devices of persuasion, irony), and sensitivity to nuance, tone and subtle manifestations of underlying values. (Adapted from Leaver and Atwell [2002: 270] and the descriptions of competence in intercultural communication and in listening at ILR level 4.[2])

Comprehension can be enhanced by more active versions of the language comprehension activities of everyday life – ***reading*** and ***listening*** – and by occasional in-depth analysis of various genre-specific texts.

Note also that the functional definition of a C language – thorough comprehension, but no need to be able to express oneself – is somewhat strange and artificial in regard to the way we normally learn languages. The division between active

2. http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm#l4p (Accessed February 14, 2016). http://www.govtilr.org/skills/ILRscale3.htm (Accessed December 10, 2015).

and passive knowledge in the brain is not likely to be that clear-cut. Reading aloud and speaking a C language, too, are very likely to improve our feel for the language.

7.3.2 Reading for language and knowledge enhancement

There are many ways to read, but for LKE we must read with some deliberate focus. The most common distinction made is between *intensive* and *extensive* reading.

Intensive reading focuses on the language of the text, which may be deliberately chosen for its difficulty, and has been the traditional and for a long time the only method used in conventional language teaching. Reading a text that is just above our current level of comprehension and word-power slowly and thoroughly, checking all expressions, analysing, summarizing and making sure the text is thoroughly understood at every level, clearly helps to consolidate either a B or a C.

Extensive reading, by contrast, aims to cover as much ground and variety in reading matter as possible, flagging new expressions and other points only in passing, to go back to and check later. Recent research[3] suggests that extensive reading is at least as effective as intensive reading for generally improving comprehension, since more expressions are encountered over time than by concentrating on one short text and the dictionary, and are learned by the active process of inferring their meaning in context.

Try to develop a curiosity for areas which may not seem interesting at first sight, such as government administration, public policy, insurance, healthcare, crime prevention, trade, migration, corporate finance, etc. Occasionally, read a whole quality magazine, starting from the least interesting article. You need not read every single article to the end, and at this stage you need pay less close attention to sports, fashion and entertainment (unless personally interested). C-language students should do extensive reading on high-school level textbooks and primers in subjects like physics, biology, social studies and history, to ensure range of comprehension and passive vocabulary. B-language students should do the same, but also learn relevant vocabulary for active use.

Active reading with a heightened awareness of the way the language is being used (structure, style, rhetorical impact), trying to get into the writer's skin, whether *reading aloud* or sub-vocally (but as if reading to someone), is an excellent way of activating a B language, especially for delivery – pacing, chunking, intonation, stress, fluency – as well as helping to imprint good expressions and patterns in memory. Best performed on pseudo-oral discourse such as crafted political speeches, this exercise is to extensive reading as shadowing is to listening (see 7.4.2.1).

3. Huckin and Coady (1999).

All three types of reading are therefore necessary for interpreters, with a bias toward extensive reading especially for passive language enhancement (B and C) and widening the knowledge base (and as a side-benefit, to find source material for speechmaking), some intensive reading for both, and extra, active reading for active (B) enhancement.

Here are some suggestions for appropriate reading materials:

Level 1: Background and orientation (by Semester 1)

- good books (especially contemporary bestsellers) in *non-fiction* genres like business, economics, social issues, international affairs, history, biography, culture and popular science;
- high-quality magazines in economics and business (e.g. *The Economist*, *Harvard Business Review*), diplomacy (*Foreign Affairs*, *The Diplomat*) and science and technology;
- introductory textbooks on contemporary geopolitics, international relations, macroeconomics, management, law, social science, negotiation;
- books and other materials about your A-language culture (history, society, geography etc.) in your B language, and vice-versa.

Level 2: Professional texts: general but directly relevant to the work of conference interpreters (by Semester 2, and ongoing throughout the course and beyond)

In addition to reading general non-fiction and current affairs, students should now start focusing on texts that are directly relevant to the work of professional interpreters. Appropriate materials include

- contemporary speeches and articles by government leaders, heads of international organizations and prominent public intellectuals;
- major reports issued by international organizations, such as reports of 'high level panels' or 'panels of eminent persons' appointed to study pressing world issues and present recommendations, and regularly published reports such as the World Bank's *World Development Reports*[4] (WDRs), the OECD's *Economic Outlook* and *At a Glance* series, etc.;
- white papers, i.e. official position papers setting out government policy on specific issues;
- reports on contemporary issues from think tanks, NGOs and interest groups based in different countries, from across the political spectrum;
- research papers on different industry sectors and markets, for example issued by consulting firms and financial institutions;
- annual reports of major companies.

4. Available at http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr (Accessed December 10, 2015).

In schools where term projects are required, but also as part of the interpreting course (see e.g. CC-8.5 in SI-Consolidation), students can collect texts in a particular genre and compile the core vocabulary, clichés, jargon etc. of the corresponding sociolect in one or both languages: language of meetings, government-speak, international-community-speak, marketing-speak (which changes very fast), UN-speak, management consulting-speak, etc.

Level 3: Specialized texts (from Semester 3)

In the second year, reading should be expanded to include

- documents, reports and statements from various intergovernmental meetings (e.g. the UN and its specialized agencies, the EU, OECD, World Bank, G20, IMF, etc.);
- international organization statutes, rules of procedure and sample Chair's notes for running a meeting through all aspects of conference procedure;
- hardcore economics reports (e.g. IMF, the Fed);
- legal texts (especially international conventions and resolutions adopted by international organizations, but also business contracts, briefs, and judgments);
- academic papers and scientific research in different disciplines.

Note that there is no reason to drop your usual leisure reading on topics that interest you – sports, fashion, movies, celeb gossip, hobbies, etc. – all of which may crop up sooner or later in an interpreter's work. This can contribute to the cultural competence already flagged above.

General principles for reading

In **extensive** reading, you don't need to understand every word. Read for meaning first: when you encounter a word you don't understand, figure out what it means from the context and keep going. When tackling an unfamiliar knowledge domain, start with a primer in your own A language first, then work on L2 materials. This will turbocharge the dual (LKE) learning process, since background knowledge is a "major determinant of learning from text…. To learn effectively, we need hooks in prior knowledge, long-term memory, or personal experience on which to hang the information to be learned" (Kintsch 1998: 330).

This can be complemented with more 'intensive' practices for interpreters, done off-line:

► Stop at regular intervals to summarize the main ideas, arguments and logic.
► Explain to yourself out loud and in your own words, or jot down in outline form, the gist of the passage. You will master the content better the more you can "take an active role in […] learning – making inferences, filling gaps, generating macrostructures, elaborating, and the like" (Kintsch 1998: 330).

- Underline unfamiliar words and expressions as you go, but look them up *afterwards*. Make sure you understand all of them in context, and then pick out a smaller number of useful words and expressions that you would like to learn to use actively. Do this using the special method described below in 7.5.2 : 'How to (re-)learn words'.
- Realize that not all comprehension problems are lexical or even linguistic in nature: apart from looking up words, you will need to do some background research on the topic at hand to fully make sense of the content, especially as you push outside your personal comfort zone.

Over time, work on increasing your **reading speed**. Develop the ability to *scan text*[5] in your B/C language rapidly and efficiently. Practise attacking the text with a highlighter, marking up topic statements, key arguments, transitions, contrasts and conclusions as quickly as possible. Then, summarize the text out loud and in your own words in your A language, glancing at what you highlighted as necessary.

7.3.3 Listening

Listen regularly and attentively to high-quality oral discourse in your different languages, especially B and C, to increase the range and depth of your comprehension. Suitable sources include current affairs commentary and analysis, talk shows, lectures, presentations, debates, parliamentary and legal proceedings (including TV courtroom dramas), press conferences, and where possible, actual conference recordings of both formal speech and interactive discussion, including Q&A. Listening exercises should be done on a standalone basis (not part of interpreting exercises) and should be broken up into sessions of 20–30 minutes. Two sessions a day would seem a good place to start.

You should also start listening to samples of *accented speech* as of the first year.[6]

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5. If you are a native speaker of a language written in an alphabetic script, but have a B or C language like Chinese or Japanese that uses logographic writing, learning to read and scan it fast enough for preparation, and later, for sight translation and SI with text, may be a major challenge. Start working on faster reading as early as possible, practising every day until you can read a text in around 10 minutes (maximum 15) that a speaker will take 15 minutes to deliver, and can also scan it when necessary for main ideas, logic, structure and conclusions in just 5–7 minutes.

6. In practice, understanding accents better than the average listener is expected as part of an interpreter's competence. Listeners who understand a second language may surreptitiously switch channels when having difficulty understanding a speaker using their own language; interpreters have even been asked to interpret from heavily accented English into standard English (albeit usually without the speaker's knowledge!).

Level 1 (by Semester 1)

- talks, lectures and presentations on general subjects, delivered by native speakers, at moderate speed (spontaneous and semi-prepared speech);
- talk shows, news analysis, current affairs commentary aimed at a general audience (spontaneous and semi-prepared speech);
- news bulletins (formal, more scripted);
- audiobooks and podcasts in non-fiction genres like economics, social issues, international affairs, management, history, biography, culture and popular science.

Level 2 (by Semester 2, and ongoing through the course and beyond)

- formal speeches by government leaders, ministers, ambassadors, etc. from different countries;
- press conferences and media interviews;
- political debates;
- public hearings (such as US congressional hearings);
- interviews, debates, discussions aimed at a more sophisticated audience (e.g. the BBC's Hard Talk, Dateline London or World Debates);
- more sophisticated talks and presentations by native speakers in various accents and by non-native speakers with reasonably clear accents;
- professional recordings of more difficult discourse, e.g. *The Economist* audio edition.

Level 3 (from Semester 3)

- Formal and scripted statements from meetings of international organizations, delivered at increasing speeds and by non-native speakers with progressively stronger accents (e.g. UN recordings);
- parliamentary discourse and debate;
- technical presentations on subjects requiring preparation;
- fast, idiomatic speeches addressed to insider audiences, with colloquialisms, regionalisms, slang, jokes and/or cultural references;[7]
- loose, semi-coherent speech (as in fast-paced panel discussions among insiders speaking casually and elliptically);
- where appropriate, culturally challenging material.

7. From definition of ILR -5 competence, see http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm#l4p.

General principles for listening practice

1. In each category, start with slower speeds, familiar topics and clear accents; gradually progress to faster speeds, unfamiliar topics and difficult accents.
2. Listen to the recording – or at least problem passages – over until you understand everything, consulting someone else only after multiple attempts to figure out the tricky parts in context.
3. Get help from a native speaker to identify unknown words and segments, and to help with any missing cultural context, nuances, idiosyncracies.
4. OR, use a *word-for-word transcript*. Transcripts are now available for many speeches found on the C-SPAN, UN and US State Department websites, or even on CNN.[8] If you are using a read-out text (like the *The Economist* audio edition), simply pull out the original text and study that.
5. When working with a transcript or source text, experiment with different combinations of listening/reading. For example, listen once, then read the script and look up unfamiliar expressions, then listen again.
6. After listening once, listen again in sections of one or two minutes and practise summarizing in your A language.
7. In your listening practice, focus occasionally on the language cues and devices that good speakers use to organize their speech and signal its logic and structure to their addressees, as well as to "command, argue, persuade, dissuade, negotiate, counsel, and show empathy".[9]

Thanks to the internet revolution, interpreting students today can enjoy unprecedented access to all kinds of authentic speech material for listening and interpreting practice, with abundant online sources in audio, video and transcript form. Several leading universities now offer open courses online; for example, Yale University has made available a wide selection of introductory courses, with each class available in video, audio *and* transcribed text formats.[10] (See Further reading for more useful sources.)

For European interpreting students in particular, the EU has created a Speech Repository[11] that is accessible by students at registered schools, with hundreds of speeches, both 'trainer' level[12] and authentic in all EU and some other languages,

8. http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/ (Accessed August 1, 2015).

9. From definition of ILR-4 level competence: http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm#l4p (Accessed August 1, 2015).

10. Available at http://oyc.yale.edu/ (Accessed December 10, 2015).

11. http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/stat/slides/presentation_slides/3912basic/K_Dara-Lepoura_presentation.pdf (Accessed August 1, 2015).

12. See TG-2 Appendix for a definition of 'trainer speech' and a Speech Difficulty Index.

selected and graded by EU interpreters, and an accompanying e-learning tool with which trainees can do mock interpretation and send recordings to their instructor.

This hugely positive trend for interpreters can be expected to continue, and students from the digital native generation will be more adept than their instructors at finding and using online resources. In future, the instructor's contribution may therefore be less in terms of *finding things* to practice on than in helping to *filter* materials, to make sure students are working on appropriate materials and sources for the stage they are at in their training.

7.4 Production (A and B languages)

The priority goals for enhancing **production** can be listed as follows. In A, most of these abilities will improve naturally with daily interpreting practice, but in B they must be worked on deliberately:

i. improve precision and fluency, working towards native-like performance that is virtually error-free (Angelelli & Degueldre 2002: 82);
ii. develop paraphrasing, gisting and simplification strategies to communicate complex ideas effectively while staying on safe ground linguistically ('say more with less');
iii. make language production more *automatic* (though in interpreting, not before having analysed and understood), to free up resources for higher-level processing and improve delivery/fluency;
iv. learn to use the pragmatic *discourse devices* (persuasive and cohesive) characteristic of the language: prosodic prominence, intonation, marked or expressive word order, connectives, unobtrusive delaying and postponing devices, hedging, and other discourse-organizing devices and markers;
v. reconfigure the mental lexicon around common, useful collocations, expressions and patterns that can be retrieved and articulated in whole chunks ('prefab' lexis, or 'ready-made language'), and evoke more expressions in the *same language* (the intra-linguistic or thesaurus dimension: learn how the B language expressions *fit together*);
vi. build a stable, reliable and highly-available cross-linguistic 'mental phrasebook'. This applies to all combinations, but interpreters working into B, especially, cannot rely solely on instinct and deverbalization, nor can they hope to achieve the required levels of *speed* and *idiomaticity* without some ready-made 'pennies in the pocket' (Gérard Ilg, p.c.).

And in the B language especially:

i. eradicate (or at least minimize) systematic errors. Different students may have different error profiles, requiring a different and customized focus: e.g. pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammar;
ii. activate under-favoured *constructions* and devices, especially those useful for SI which may not have equivalents in the A language and therefore may not come readily in B (e.g. for Chinese students in English: contrastive stress, reduced reference, nominalizations, relative clauses, gerund(ive)s, and passives).

7.4.1 Enriching the A language

Since we must express other people's thoughts, expressed in their terms and at their own pace, it seems trivial to observe that an interpreter's A language – her main language of production – must be richer and much more flexible than an ordinary native tongue. Also, while the sounds, rhythms and grammar of our mother tongue are imprinted more or less indelibly from childhood, the lexicon can shrink or expand depending on practice and exposure. Nor can we take for granted our ability to speak fluently and convincingly about things that may never before have concerned or interested us. To be a good interpreter, you don't have to be a lawyer, doctor, engineer, politician, or financial guru, but you must be able to sound like any one of these.

There is always room for enhancement of the A language. Much depends on your background and education (CC-3.2.1.1; TG-4.2.1), but the following exercises and habits, applying deliberate practice techniques (Ericsson 2007; see also TG-2.6.2) will help to nurture your mother tongue and develop and maintain it as a powerful professional tool:

i. Read good authors and listen to good speakers, as recommended above (especially reading at Level 2, paying particular attention to style and register).
ii. Practise presenting complex or formal material to a critical audience.
iii. Make sure you can produce clear, precise and persuasive language on any topic before trying to use rare words, proverbs or quotations.
iv. Try written paraphrasing, précis writing, translation, prose composition, editing your own writing or another's, or having your own writing edited by another. These are all exercises that can test and enrich your expressive ability in your native language.

v. Make sure you have a basic competence in the language of ceremony and ritual, needed for the valedictory speeches, obituaries, awards, tributes, commemorations and the like that regularly crop up in professional practice, and which are best done (all other things being equal) into an A language.
vi. Register control: practise rendering a speech or text in a lower or higher register, e.g. formal to colloquial or informal; oral to bureaucratic/official/written and vice-versa; 'journalese into neutral civil service prose' (Mackintosh 1989); in English, try rephrasing pompous text (Latinate English) in words of one syllable (Germanic English), and vice versa. (See Appendix for examples.)
vii. Study manuals on style, rhetoric and the art of speechwriting; analyse finely-crafted political speech; develop sensitivity to nuance, oratory and the devices of persuasion. This is part of lifelong learning for an interpreter.

7.4.2 Strengthening the B language: exercises and activities

Since the toolkit of active vocabulary and structures is smaller in a B language, it must be very solid and flexible. The B-speaker must know exactly how each 'tool' can be used syntactically, and its meanings and connotations.

A good deal of B-language enhancement will involve researching and mastering the correct and authentic usage of words and expressions that you half-knew. This section provides a compendium of recommended exercises and activities to develop B-language proficiency, building on those already suggested for pre-candidates in CC-3.4 and adapted and expanded based on our own experience and other sources (in particular, Déjean le Féal 1976; Mackintosh 1994; Donovan 2002; Gillies 2013).

These are the main angles of attack for enhancing a B language:

1. *Imitation and immersion*: repeating or shadowing good quality native speech; planned immersion and study periods in a B-language country; and regular social activities in the B language.
2. *Remedial linguistic polishing*: targeting problem areas in grammar, pragmatics, register, and lexical range and usage.
3. *Deverbalization or 'interference-proofing' exercises*: sight translation and its variants; paraphrase (simplifying and controlled); oralising, gisting and abstracting; rethinking and reformulating awkward sentences.
4. *Feedback on interpreting performance* focusing on use of the B language, in class or working with a partner or in groups, re-doing the passages to improve expression.

5. *'Whole task' exercises:*
   a. Preparing and delivering formal presentations, then taking (critical) questions.
   b. Presenting a summary of an article followed by evaluation of ideas and elaboration of counterarguments.
   c. Practising taking tough criticisms on content you presented and then defending effectively without getting flustered ('verbal judo in B').
6. *Fast written translation into B,* corrected by a partner.

Details of these exercises and activities are given in the sub-sections below.

7.4.2.1 *Imitation and immersion*

Reading aloud (Level 1, from pre-admission – see CC-3)
Take a text that you haven't read before and try to deliver it as professionally as possible. Choose a strong, well-written and structured text and read it out loud, fluently, with good momentum. Make sure to highlight the key words with your voice, and pause in the right places. The idea is to 'get into the skin' of the author or speaker: read persuasively, aiming to understand and identify with the author's tone, structure, logic, emphasis, choice of words, etc., until you feel that you could easily summarize or paraphrase the text in your own words and can increasingly anticipate what is coming.

Reading aloud in this controlled way is excellent training for pronunciation and diction and inhabiting the rhythm of the language. It develops skills in delivery, and more specifically, articulation, correct stress and intonation patterns, and 'look-ahead' to achieve effective rhythm on long sentences. This exercise is best supervised by an A-language work partner, to avoid reinforcing bad habits. Speed pressure can be varied – fast and slow reading present different challenges – and performance should be recorded and reviewed.

When reading, notice also good expressions and devices used to persuade, entertain, dismiss or highlight, and the most economical ways of saying things. Highlight these or note these down, and choose some later to adopt in your personal active vocabulary.

Memorization and recycling
Read a text sentence by sentence, repeating each sentence without looking at the text, then analyse and memorize useful patterns, structures, and expressions to be recycled in your own interpretation.

Repeating and shadowing
Consecutive 're-speaking' or simultaneous verbatim shadowing of good native speeches, with playback to oneself to check on and correct weaknesses, and if available, to a native speaker for more feedback, can be especially useful to improve

prosody (and in English, especially, the all-important intonation[13]), cadence, accent and pronunciation.

Level 1: Repeating
Using a recording that you have listened to carefully and now understand fully, play back the speech through earphones in 1- or 2-sentence segments, and repeat, imitating as closely as possible the native speaker's natural, fluent pronunciation and intonation. Also pay close attention to native speakers' conscious and unconscious self-corrections.

Level 2: Verbatim (phonological) shadowing (Semester 3: to be done only after a few weeks of SI training)
Listen to a speech through earphones, and follow with a very short lag, staying just a word or two behind the speaker. Repeat exactly what s/he says, focusing on copying the speaker's accent, articulating connected speech naturally and using idiomatic intonation and stress.

Level 3: Smart shadowing[14]
Listen to a speech through earphones, and do same-language SI, trying to paraphrase or reformulate some of what the speaker is saying while expressing the same meaning. Start with occasional synonym substitution, and gradually work up to more complete paraphrasing, as well as some restructuring and compression.

General principles for repeating/shadowing practice:

- Pick good recordings by native speakers, preferably sticking to one standard variety (e.g. British English, American English). Choose speakers who are known for good delivery (e.g. Blair, Clinton, Obama) or, use professional book recordings.
- Record yourself doing these exercises and get feedback from a native speaker.
- Again, start with slower speeds and familiar topics; gradually progress to faster speeds and unfamiliar topics.

Studying the anatomy of discourse

Alongside practising public speaking in B (CC-4.5), you should study and analyse certain key devices used in B-language speeches, from basic mechanisms to more sophisticated rhetorical devices. However, you may not be able to identify all the most important ones on their own; a qualified instructor should devote class time to pointing them out. Key features to focus on include:

i. *Reduced reference (ellipsis, substitution)*, is an indispensable linguistic device, without which language would be impossibly redundant, by which a speaker gives an entity – a person, a ship, an organization, a concept – its full name at the first mention ('the San Juan College of Advanced Studies'), then an abbreviated name

13. See e.g. Shlesinger (1994).

14. This is also an SI introductory exercise (CC-8.2.1).

('the College'), then a pronominal reference (he, she, it…). Each language has its own rules for doing this, which may not come naturally to all language learners: in English, for example, when to use 'this' and when to use 'it'; how to sense whether the entity is still fresh enough in memory; how to use relative pronouns ('of which', 'by when', 'whereby'; not all languages have them), and handy pro-forms like 'do so' or 'likewise', that stand in for whole clauses; and the constraints of style.

ii. *Discourse markers* and 'signposting' devices to signal main points, minor points, links, transitions, concessions and conclusions.

iii. *Qualifiers and hedges* to soften, relativize or put things in perspective.

iv. *Prosodic prominence* to highlight contrasts (English uses contrastive stress; other languages may use vowel lengthening, for example, or a particle instead of prosodic effects).

v. *Rhetorical questions, fronting, cleft constructions, etc.*: be aware that many such devices are highly 'marked' and should be used sparingly, for effect, and only when confident.

You should also carefully study the texts and recordings of high-quality political and ceremonial speeches in your B language, analyse their rhetoric, memorize good excerpts, and cull useful patterns.

Planned immersion and study periods in a B-language country
To be beneficial, casual visits to the country of your B language will make little difference: your stay must be planned and structured, with deliberate study, practice, and sustained immersion in the language and culture, and even 'debriefing' by locals or your instructors where possible: students "do not just need exposure; they need answers to questions and explanations that they can rarely get by simply being immersed in a target language/culture" (Angelelli & Degueldre 2002: 92–93). Some guidelines for making the best use of your stay will be found in CC-3.5.

Social activities in the B language
If a stay in a B-language country is difficult or impossible, you should find and join activities that provide regular contact with the B language and culture and its speakers, such as volunteer work in a community centre, or (for a student with French B, for example) joining the French Drama Society at her university, to produce and act in drama productions and interact with French-A students organizing, rehearsing and socializing.

7.4.2.2 *Remedial linguistic polishing*

Remedial linguistic polishing exercises will usually be necessary (and usually language-pair specific) to target problem areas in grammar and usage, and develop the use of neglected constructions. One or more of the following may need work:

Syntactic agility and range

i. Practise using grammatical devices that are either:

- compulsory in your B but not your A language (like tense and/or agreement in English or French vs. Chinese); or
- commonly used in your B and offer structuring alternatives not available in your A language (such as the –ing constructions in English).

ii. Grammar self-correction:

To eliminate stubborn problems with grammar in your B language, it is essential to be made aware of them every time, and try again until you succeed[15]:

- As of your first semester, note the sentences in your recorded performances that your instructor or work partner identifies as ungrammatical, replay and correct them, again with someone to check.
- As of S2, do Sight Translation into B, a sentence or two at a time, with your coach, LE instructor or work partner, and self-correct ungrammatical passages that they point out to you.
- In S3, if still needed, do 'Online Cloze' (CC-8.2.1), shadowing the instructor or a work partner reading a text in your B language that has been stripped of the relevant features – articles or tenses, for example – and restoring them in real-time. Start with only one missing at a time, then progress to multiple features. Have a classmate follow your shadowing against a copy of the text and show you afterwards where you went wrong.

Pragmatic competence: devices and patterns

Class time can be devoted to specific pragmatic devices, markers, fillers, connectors, verbal 'lubricants' etc., using cloze-type exercises in which all such links are deleted, or in some cases pencilled in in the A language, to be reconstituted in the B-language text by the students. Students will also need to develop their ability to 'spin their wheels', saying nothing new in a plausible tone of voice, for the purpose of padding when dealing with excessively slow speakers (CC-8.4.2).

Register-switching (7.4.1 [vi]) is very difficult in the B language, and is not recommended before students begin SI into B, if at all. However, it can be tried on individual phrases and sentences (examples in Appendix) before progressing to speeches.

15. See TG-7 for language learning references.

Lexical drills and consolidation
Consolidating, extending and stabilizing your viable (available, reliable) personal lexical resources in the B language is a major part of language enhancement, and is therefore dealt with separately in 7.6 below. Methods include studying and collecting collocations, then selecting some for your active vocabulary, learning strong frames and ready-to-go patterns into which keywords can be slotted, active phrase-book building, and finding short synonyms for longer expressions. This activity will continue in some form well beyond graduation.

7.4.2.3 *Deverbalization and interference-proofing*
These may be needed to help break out of the native-language linguistic rut:

Sight translation
Regular A to B practice in all the variants and forms of ST is an excellent way to limber up a B language for simultaneous interpreting (CC-6).

B-to-B paraphrase
Paraphrase in the B language is a challenging exercise, but extremely productive, since paraphrasing as a task is so closely related to interpreting. Here are some realistic procedures:

i. *Controlled B-to-B paraphrase*, one sentence at a time: the instructor imposes the first word of the output sentence, or suggests partial solutions (both lexical and structural).
ii. *'Unseen' B-to-B paraphrase*: Take any suitable text in your B, read it through once, then try to paraphrase it live in the same language, out loud, a paragraph at a time. Substitute as many words as possible, while recasting the sentences as much as possible. At first don't worry about seeming silly or long-winded.
iii. *On-line (SI) B-to-B paraphrase (aka Smart Shadowing, see 8.2.1)*: try the same exercise in the booth. Start with synonym substitution, then progress to recasting (noun to verb constructions, splitting or merging sentences, etc.).

Experiment with paraphrasing techniques such as

- using *synonyms* or negated antonyms (small > not very large; rigid > not supple, inflexible);
- using hyponyms and *superordinates* ('roads, ports, bridges and the like' > transport infrastructure);
- *changing sentence structures* by inversion, active-passive switching, double negation, etc. (see Appendix for examples). In a booth-worthy B language it should be possible to produce more than one paraphrase for each idea (Mackintosh 1989).

- *chunking and joining (segmentation)*: chopping long sentences into short ones, which entails supplying appropriate cohesive links and connectors, including intonational stress (with ample guidance and suggestions from the instructor). This is also a good preparatory exercise for SI (see CC-8.2.3).

To expand the student's range of discourse genres and topics, texts for paraphrasing can be chosen to target certain registers, specialized vocabularies, forms of discourse, etc.

Oralising and gisting
In these exercises long or difficult formulations are replaced with shorter, easier ones in simple language that means the same thing, paring down a passage to its essentials.

Gist extraction, as described for Initiation (CC-4.2.2.1), is a good indicator of the depth of comprehension of a B or C language. It tests the ability to follow a complex set of arguments and sub-arguments (again, a text with fairly convoluted style should be chosen) and to distinguish between primary and secondary propositions (an ability correlated with competence in a language: Longley et al. 1978).

Procedure:
i. *Oralising*: take a text that you haven't read before and try to deliver it as an oral speech, as professionally as possible. Break up long sentences, use simple constructions, introduce some redundancy (to reduce density and facilitate audience comprehension), add in discourse markers.
ii. *Gisting*: after reading, listening to or delivering (an oralised version of) a speech, look away and retell the main points clearly and coherently in your own words.
iii. In general, practise using simple language to explain complex content and ideas.

Transfer drills (reformulating): students are presented with sentences and phrases in their A language that are tricky or difficult to translate into B, brainstorm possible renderings with the instructor, and discuss good versions in a variety of contexts.

7.4.2.4 *Linguistic feedback on interpreting performance*
Linguistic feedback after a specific interpreting performance, with suggestions for improving B-language output, can be provided (immediately or on recordings):

- in class, after dealing with issues primarily of technique; but into-B, as technique is gradually mastered, feedback will increasingly involve suggestions for better formulation;
- after class, bilaterally between instructor and student or in a session dedicated to B-enhancement;

- more regularly, by a practice partner whose A language is the student's B;
- in one-on-one LE coaching with a special LE instructor.

For maximum benefit, record your performance into B (speaking or interpreting) for playback to a native speaker of your B language. This can be done at any stage in the course, from delivering a talk based on an outline (Level 1), through consecutive (Level 2), then Sight Translation, SI and SI-text (Level 3). Have your partner critique your B output sentence by sentence, pointing out and correcting all language-related problems (accent, word choice and collocation, grammar), and re-do each passage, in chunks of about 30s to 1 minute, until your partner approves. The procedure can focus on a specific problem each time, such as verb forms, singular/plural, articles, etc., and is a powerful way to overcome stubborn grammar problems and root out fossilized errors.

When a partner is not available – as is sadly often the case – regularly record and listen to yourself critically, trying to identify and correct pronunciation, grammar and usage errors before re-doing the passage. Note carefully any systematic, recurring problems in your output; practise using structures, devices and patterns that you have tended to use incorrectly; and monitor for improvement over time.

7.4.2.5 *Written translation into B*

This additional activity may be useful, if time allows, for students with problems of register, precision and major grammar problems (less so for those with a background in written translation, or who are insufficiently spontaneous in oral mode, or too perfectionistic in the sense of unrealistically searching for *le mot juste*).

Find a non-literary, non-technical text on a general or current affairs topic and translate it fast into your B language in one pass only, without going back to revise. Give it to a native speaker to talk you through all your mistakes, pointing out all language problems (grammar and expression). It is not necessary for the native speaker to look at the original, or to polish the translation – the only goal of this exercise is to point out your incorrect or inelegant usage of your B language. Self-correct, and note carefully any systematic problems in your output. Then practise actively using and recycling correctly the structures, devices and patterns that you have tended to use incorrectly. Monitor for improvement over time.

All of the above are useful exercises that should be done regularly throughout the two years of conference interpreter training.

Finally, what about word power? In the B language, finding the right word, a shorter expression or an apt paraphrase all take more time, effort and working memory space. Better automaticity of word retrieval, where possible, will help. Having a good stock of readily available equivalents is not a substitute for thinking and analysing the speech, but having words ready while self-monitoring to check that they fit the context will be less effortful than searching each time from scratch. Indeed, faced with the recurring technical jargon of modern conference discourse, all interpreters develop a stock of such equivalents over time, in all language directions, B/C into A as well as A into B.

7.5 Lexical availability: managing words

Conference interpreting students are often the brightest of the best graduates of university language departments. But they may have owed their past success in large part to a powerful memory for vocabulary, and a gift for mimicry. Those who have *only* these skills, without flexibility, knowledge and analysis, will not survive as interpreters, however spectacular their apparent linguistic performance.

Even students with real potential for interpreting start the course setting too much store by word power. As they wrestle with new skills, they come to recognize the need both for *flexibility,* and *realism* about finding words under pressure. However, soon they will again need to learn stock phrases – this time in new domains like economics and international community jargon – but should now see, if only instinctively, that a different kind of strategic organization of this knowledge is necessary.

7.5.1 Building the 'bilingual phrasebook'

Unlike the standard bilingual dictionary or glossary which lists equivalents for individual words and phrases in alphabetical order, an interpreter's mental lexicon is arranged much like a bilingual (or multilingual) Roget's *thesaurus*. It links together phrases and expressions that match, but also warns against ones that don't (false cognates, for example), and enables look-up of *groups* of expressions both within *and* across languages.[16]

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16. In the very popular glossaries compiled and handed out worldwide by Gerard Ilg from the 1960s onward, these thematic clusters – such as the vast collection of words for 'rising' and 'falling' in economics – were also associated with generic signs and symbols for consecutive note-taking (in this case, variations on up and down arrows).

Interpreters must be able to sound humorous, grave, elaborately polite or solemn as occasion demands. Another much-in-demand Ilg product line – since bootlegged and widely distributed like the rest – was an exquisite multilingual selection of terms and flowers of rhetoric that were guaranteed to make you sound good in legalese, officialese, obituaries, tributes, honours, resignations, etc.; and last but not least, for anxious German Cs, invaluable compendia of Swiss or Austrian terminological curiosities then still in common use.

Any trainee interpreter, especially if working into a B language, must spend time building a store of stock phrases, expressions which run through all types of discourse which can make an interpretation sound effortless when properly used. One category of such expressions includes smooth introductory gambits, or phrases for linking, changing topics, etc.: "My subject today, Ladies and Gentleman, is…", "Let me turn now to my second point", "Are there any objections? Seeing none…", etc. Such banal but invaluable expressions can be found in handbooks like Malcolm Goodale's *The Language of Meetings*, and home-grown lists such as those compiled for and circulated in schools by Gerard Ilg (regrettably unpublished).

Students can and should compile their own lists of these and other useful expressions in their vocabulary notebooks.

Here are some simple ways to start building a stock of useful, well-learned and reliable expressions and equivalents across and within your working languages (however, not more than a few hours a week should be devoted to this activity, to avoid falling into lexis-driven habits):

1. *Parallel reading* of texts in two (or more) languages.
   Read the original text and a (high-quality) translation in parallel, noting good versions, and fixing any stilted renditions by coming up with your own better solutions. Abundant material for this exercise can be found on the websites of organizations like the UN.
2. *Collecting and studying* occasion-specific *speeches* in both languages (e.g. opening and closing speeches, toasts, awards, tributes), comparing and culling useful patterns.
3. *Skimming* topical *glossaries* and vocabulary lists with special attention to domains that are relevant to the work of professional interpreters, such as government administration, health, environmental protection, energy or even capital markets.

This activity need not be as random, open-ended or inefficient as it sounds, but can pay off both in the short run, as part of targeted preparation and activation, e.g. for **mock conferences** (9.2.6.1), and in the long run, as a check on comprehension and 'coverage' of vocabulary that an interpreter should have learned at least once in her working languages. Even after reading reams of material on all topics, the 'last 5%' of the lexicon is notoriously elusive, and ten or twenty minutes occasionally browsing visual dictionaries and topical vocabulary lists can fill a lot of gaps in areas one would otherwise neglect. For example, one may not choose, or have the time, to read whole books or reports in two or more languages on automobile repair, pathology, biology or nutrition, unless preparing for a specific meeting; but it is handy to make sure you know 'clutch', 'suspension', 'measles', 'mumps', or the names of common flowers, trees, animals, foods, etc., all of which may come up without warning in a wide range of meetings.

Without trying to memorize all pairs of terms, just skim through thematic and visual bilingual dictionaries to expose yourself to and absorb parallel lexis in both languages. You will surely notice some sets that stand out as potentially useful in your active resources.

Filling lexical gaps

Your residual lexical comprehension gaps are likely to be low-frequency items that you have to wait some time to meet in natural discourse. A faster and more efficient way to fill these gaps is to cull idioms, punchy phrases, and sound bites from recent speeches by leaders and public intellectuals, and/or review published lists of idioms, proverbs, maxims, neologisms and loanwords (for example, from French and Latin in English) – ideally, ranked according to frequency and/or introduced and illustrated with examples in contexts – and find good possible translation solutions for each of them. Try reducing an idiomatic phrase into a nice, punchy single word in TL. Then try your hand at interpreting passages that contain these idioms in different contexts.

7.5.2 How to (re-)learn words

Having encountered new words and phrases, students will sometimes take them out for a test drive in their interpretation before they have learned enough about how to *use* them. The result may be a very nice word used in an inappropriate or awkward way, or too much effort spent on inserting it into a sentence correctly, resulting in hesitation and decreased communication impact. Some guidelines for consolidation:

- Remember: when interpreting into B, use words that you are already comfortable with. If in doubt, 'older' words are better. Step 1 is *using what you already know correctly*. Step 2 is to re-learn words you (think you) already know, paying attention to how use them correctly in common, useful collocations, phrases and sentence patterns. For example, everyone knows the verb 'to discuss'; but can you 'discuss on' an issue? Everyone knows 'talk about'; but can we say "today, I want to talk something about…"? Having been corrected once, make sure that you fix the problem permanently.
- Every time you learn a new word (or are tightening your grip on an old one), make sure you:

- ✓ look it up in a good corpus-based learner's dictionary, like COBUILD, then also search for it on the web or in an electronic corpus to study how it is used in context; simply retrieving a couple of TL equivalents from an electronic dictionary is inadequate.
- ✓ know its *frequency*. You want to focus on mastering frequently-used expressions for active use, not fancy, rare ones.
- ✓ know exactly what it means (denotation *and* connotation; register).
- ✓ know how to pronounce it properly (including where the stress falls).
- ✓ know how to use it (how does it fit into a sentence?).
- ✓ compare it to some useful synonyms, antonyms, and related words, and understand their different nuances.
- ✓ know some idiomatic and clever ways to translate it in a few different contexts.
- ✓ master at least five collocations/phrases/patterns using that word, and memorize some recyclable productive frames into which you can slot words to make your own sentences.

This last point is important, but often overlooked. Lewis (1997), observing that language consists to a large extent of 'prefabricated chunks', proposes that the best way to learn words for active use is in multi-word units, e.g. strong collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions, and ready-to-go frames into which words can be conveniently slotted. This is probably even truer of the formal and 'routinized' language we encounter in conference interpreting. Moreover, assimilating and recycling prefabricated chunks of language may help make production in B not only more accurate and idiomatic, but also more fluent and less effortful, and may even help make prosody (intonation, stress, chunking) more natural-sounding.

The following method, based on Lewis's recommendations, is to be applied to new language encountered in reading, listening, or interpreting exercises that seems important and useful enough to warrant installing it firmly in your active vocabulary, and to old language that you thought you could use correctly but discovered you couldn't, for example after being corrected by your instructor or a native speaker.

In a dedicated **active vocabulary notebook**, record whole expressions containing the headword, i.e. the word of interest. Start with the expression you initially encountered, and then find more. Here are some quick methods that our students have found useful:

- ► consulting collocation dictionaries and corpus-based advanced learner dictionaries (see References below);

- searching authentic texts, for example in a collection that you have saved on your computer;
- searching on relevant websites, targeting your search, for example by including 'site:europa.eu' or 'site:un.org' in the search box to restrict your search to the EU or UN domain, and accordingly for national government sites, where a lot of bilingual texts can also be found;
- searching online corpora (COBUILD, the British National Corpus [BNC],[17] or the TIME Magazine Corpus of American English[18]);
- using 'web-as-corpus' query and concordance tools, such as the EU's IATE or http://www.linguee.com (but you will have to be careful about the quality of what you find); and, of course;
- asking native speakers for some examples of how the word is used in typical patterns and sentences (easiest and fastest of all!).

But *don't record all the expressions you find*. Be selective, looking for (a) strong and frequent collocations, (b) patterns that are new to you, even if you already knew each of the individual words, and (c) expressions and frames that seem particularly useful and relevant to your needs (Lewis 1997: 80). In addition, keep your eyes open for B-language words and phrases that seem 'difficult to translate' into your own A language.

Building on Lewis's example (1997: 112) of how the word 'criticism' could be explored, here is a list of interesting collocates we quickly identified following the above procedure:

VERBS commonly used with 'criticism'

attract	face	come under	draw
be the subject of (much)	level ~ against	respond to	be open to
retract	dismiss	side-step	handle
deserve	react to	become a target of	provoke
dispel	ignore	turn a deaf ear to	etc.

ADJECTIVES commonly used with 'criticism'

repeated	sharp	undeserved	harsh
unfair	hard-hitting	positive	constructive
unkind	well-intentioned	tactless	etc.

17. http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/ (Accessed August 1, 2015).

18. http://corpus.byu.edu/time/ (Accessed August 1, 2015).

From within this set of possibilities, we might then select the following ones that we wish to adopt actively, and record them in our active vocabulary notebook, as follows:

VERBS	ADJECTIVES	
Attract	harsh	
Become a target of	blunt	
Level (at/against)	sharp	+ CRITICISM
Side-step	hard-hitting	
Provoke	severe	

Next, find some good sentences from authentic B-language texts that exemplify the patterns you want to assimilate. Study the meaning of these patterns in context. Look for useful frames into which you can easily slot words to make useful sentences, and record them in your active vocabulary notebook, for example:

The government's move to…attracted severe criticism from….
The company became a target of harsh criticism after it announced…
Among the criticisms levelled at the World Bank, perhaps the most hard-hitting is the observation that…
The president deftly side-stepped earlier criticisms…by announcing…

Memorize these patterns, and try filling in different words to make your own sentences. Regularly review your notebook, and try to use these frames to translate sentences from your own A language. (This can be a fun game to play with a partner.) In the process, you can also try to identify some elegant and idiomatic A-language versions where possible; for example, in Chinese, 'become a target of criticism' could be rendered as "众矢之的". Having collected some **ready versions** in this way, you will have as an additional bonus some very nice and idiomatic A-language expressions ready to go when you meet B-language expressions that may seem 'difficult to translate'.

Lewis underscores that "new items need to be recycled if they are to be fully acquired" (1997: 49). So having identified and recorded these useful patterns and frames, you need to make a conscious effort to use them repeatedly, for example when making presentations and when practising interpreting into your B language (see TG-2.6.2 on deliberate practice).

In sum, building and maintaining productive lexical resources in a B is an ongoing process that requires a systematic effort. It is most effective when it is **targeted** (prioritizing *relevant, recyclable* usage), when greater attention is paid to **larger prefabricated units** such as collocations and frames, and when these lexical items are **actively recycled**.

7.5.3 Using advanced second-language learning textbooks or media

Finally, despite the specifics of language enhancement for interpreting described in the introduction to this chapter, standard SLA (second language acquisition) resources can be useful for targeted B language enhancement. Having identified any particular personal weaknesses (for example, in pronunciation, grammar, intonation/prosody, or vocabulary), these can be tackled by working through advanced B language coursebooks or courseware, ideally with a native speaker partner or instructor if possible. For example, many Asian students with English B could benefit from targeted drills in stressing the right words for contrast and emphasis.

You can also work through domain-specific (LSP) textbooks to enhance your passive and active command of language in relevant fields. Look for titles like "Financial English", "Legal English", "Scientific English", "Medical English" – and, of course, Goodale's *The Language of Meetings*.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Leaver and Shekhtman 2002: Developing Professional-level Language Proficiency

English language enhancement
Goodale 1987: The Language of Meetings (English conference phraseology)
Mackintosh 1989: English up-date. (English language upgrade exercises)

Multilingualism
Paradis 1993, 2004, 2009 (Linguistic, psycholinguistic, and neurolinguistic aspects of bilingualism)

Appendix A

Flexibility exercises (English example)

Instructors can compile similar lists relevant to their students' B languages.

i. **Registers** (practice conversion in both directions)

More formal	More colloquial
A (more) satisfactory agreement	A good/better deal
Achieved positive results	Did a good job
Invest considerable amounts in, make a major financial commitment to	Throw money at, put/sink (a lot of) cash into, bankroll (a project),
Not (currently) in a position to predict events, make a reliable/accurate estimate/forecast (at this time)	We don't (exactly) know (just) yet

More formal	More colloquial
In other words	What we're saying is
I shall try/seek/endeavour to explain to them	I'm going to tell them
Complete our task, achive our goal/objective within the allotted timeframe	Get it done on time
Highly, extremely probable	Very likely
At present unwilling to	Don't want to just now
Initiate discussions/talks/negotiations	Start talking
Enter into the heart of the matter	Cut to the chase, get down to brass tacks
Readily understandable	Easy to see
I submit, I (would) suggest	It seems to me
Seek a solution	Try to work something out
If I may be allowed to state my view, venture an opinion (on this issue)	Let me say something (about this)
Acknowledge the realities of the situation	Face facts
Be forced to declare/file for bankruptcy, suspend commercial activity, go into receivership	go to the wall; go out of business, go bankrupt
Balance our budget	Make ends meet
Show/post a surplus, a deficit	Stay in the black; be in the red
Devote more attention to, attach greater emphasis to, address…as a priority	Look at more closely, think more about
In addition, furthermore, moreover	And
Order of magnitude	Ballpark figure

ii. Sentence linking and building

Practice in building complex sentences, using neglected constructions or gerund(ive)s, participles etc. (-ing), and common and useful 'hinges' and links (which means that…, the fact that…, etc.):

Connect up as a single sentence expressing a relation of cause and effect, without using 'because':

A	B	Sample answer
HE WAS SENT TO PRISON	HE STOLE A WATCH	*He was sent to prison for stealing a watch.*
SHE PASSED HER EXAM	SHE DID NOT MAKE ANY EFFORT	*She passed her exam without even trying*
SHE WENT TO LONDON	SHE DIDN'T PASS THROUGH BRUSSELS	*…without passing….*

Sample instruction: 'Form a single sentence starting with A/starting with B'

A	B	Sample solutions
I DON'T SPEAK GERMAN	I GO TO FRANCE ON HOLIDAY	*Connect using different constructions; reverse order…*
YOU DON'T KNOW ECONOMICS	YOU CAN'T BE A TRANSLATOR	*(Reverse and) use 'if'/ use 'unless'/ use 'without'*
I DECIDED TO GO	I FOUND OUT IT WAS SUNNY	*When…/…when…/ Having found out…*
I SAW HE WAS TIRED	I GAVE HIM A PILLOW	*('use an -ing form')*
NEVER GO SKIING	BRING SUNCREAM	*join up using 'without'*
I WALK TO THE STATION	I TAKE THE BUS TO THE STATION	*Use 'instead'/ reverse; Eliminate repetition.*

Use of 'by… -ing':

HE REACHED THE LIGHT BULB	HE STOOD ON A CHAIR	He reached… by standing
WE FINISHED ON TIME	WE STARTED EARLY	By starting early,…
WE SOLVED THE PROBLEM	WE TURNED IT AROUND	….by turning…
I SPOKE FRANKLY	I CONVINCED THEM	I convinced them by…

CHAPTER 8

Simultaneous interpreting (SI)

8.1 Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) is widely seen as the skill that distinguishes conference interpreting from other specializations. **Free SI** – when the interpreter has no text or speaker's notes – is performed with no look-ahead, under severe time pressure, and with no safety net. You have little or no chance to look things up or go back on what you have said: the first pass is final. Synchrony (and our imperfect memories) means we have to start speaking while the speaker is still in the middle of a sentence, yet still make not only sense, but the speaker's sense. Translating each phrase as it comes in won't work: we have to tune in to the speaker's train of thought, expressing it as precisely and as naturally as possible. Listeners don't need to know how this works: they expect clear and faithful running speech, and even – on TV or in public events – a professional broadcaster's voice. The simultaneous interpreter's job is demanding, high-pressure and high-risk.

But SI is also an exciting and mentally stimulating experience, still attracts wonder in the layman and retains a somewhat magical and glamorous image. There is a clear distinction in the public eye between ordinary 'translating', which requires 'knowing languages', and 'simultaneous translation', which seemingly requires two brains – interpreters are often asked 'How do you do it? How do you listen and talk at the same time? Do you have to understand what you're translating? Do you remember anything afterwards?', and the perceived cognitive complexity of the process has attracted the interest of linguists and cognitive psychologists.[1] At the same time, the historic move out of the conference room and into SI booths (see history, below) took interpreters out of the limelight, making technical skills more important than the 'stage' aspects of performance.

1. "The fact that simultaneous interpreting can […] be mastered by at least some language users may force a modification of current views on the role of working memory in language comprehension. As they stand, these views would in fact regard simultaneous interpreting as an impossible skill" (de Groot 2000: 61).

8.1.1 The SI set-up

The simultaneous interpreter works in a booth that offers acoustic isolation and a direct view of the speaker or the room, and delivers a target language version of speakers' presentations into a microphone with a lag of just a few seconds. (In multilingual meetings, there is generally one booth per language, each broadcasting on a different channel; delegates can select the channel they want to listen to on their receivers.)

SI is *teamwork* – first, because this is demanding and tiring work, requiring teams of two to three interpreters per booth taking turns every 20–30 minutes; second, because the off-mike interpreter in the booth can (and often must) help her on-mike partner by finding documents and text, writing down numbers and names, pointing to terms in a glossary, etc.; and third and more generally, because to ensure coherence and continuity of service, the team must share all information and documentation, and in multilingual meetings involving several booths, take each other on relay (CC- 9.2.3.3).

SI requires a sophisticated technical set-up with competent technicians and high-quality sound. But to work to best effect, it also needs competent, cooperative speakers who speak clearly, pace themselves, avoid reading, and make sure to give the interpreters copies of their texts or presentations in advance – a condition that, since the earliest days of SI, is all too often more honoured in the breach (see CC-10.2.1 on the relationship between working conditions and quality).

8.1.2 The origins and history of SI

SI was born in the last century as an offspring of two parents – technological innovation and the new multilateralism in international affairs, which meant multilingualism and the accelerated pace and gradual expansion of international discourse. Pioneered as 'telephonic interpretation' at International Labour Organization (ILO) and Comintern meetings in the mid-to-late 1920s, it was decisively tested after the war at the Nuremberg Trials of 1945–6, then was soon adopted at the United Nations, and beyond (Gaiba 1998; Baigorri-Jalón 2004b).

The UN Secretary-General's memo of 1947 recommending the adoption of SI at the United Nations – in the face of fierce competition from consecutive – highlighted the benefits that still explain its popularity today: SI saves time by allowing interpretation into multiple languages simultaneously, ensures greater continuity of meetings, with less distraction and better concentration, and affords "the psychological advantage to the speaker of knowing that the entire audience is able to follow his remarks as he delivers them." These advantages outweighed the few recognized drawbacks: the near-impossibility for the speaker to monitor the accuracy of the translation; the inconvenience of wearing headphones; the risk that some speakers might speak too fast; and the unsuitability of SI for drafting sessions and similar small meetings discussing the linguistic form of texts[2] (Baigorri-Jalón 2004b: 25).

Today SI has become the default mode of interpretation in all international organizations (most famously at the UN, with 6 languages, and the EU, currently with 24, and counting) and multilingual meetings, both public and private. In countries with more than one official language – from Canada, with two, to South Africa, with 11 – SI provides critical support in administrative, legislative and judicial bodies; and on the private market, SI has overwhelmed Consecutive at all but the smallest bilingual meetings, given its advantage as a time-saver. Accordingly, the most recent statistics (Neff 2014) suggest that SI accounts for 85–90% of AIIC members' assignments.[3] By now, all conference-goers expect 'instant translation' as a matter of course, and no interpreter can access the international conference circuit, with its attractive pay, status, variety and opportunities for travel, without offering SI.

Today, we must increasingly do SI from statements read out from a prepared text that is sometimes supplied to us in advance (**SI-text**) – or all too often, without it, a thankless task that we might call 'blind SI-text'. An up-close but less satisfactory variant, done without equipment and no doubt since the dawn of history, is called **whispering** (*chuchotage*) (CC-2.2.4.1).

When SI was first rolled out in public, notably at the highly mediatised Nuremberg trials, and during the first few years of its history, it was regarded with a mixture of wonder and scepticism. Psychologists, linguists and translators and many others doubted the possibility of accurate translation in real time, or even of talking sense while listening at the same time. Others saw it as magic, or bluff, or a spectacular but purely linguistic feat.

The last seventy years have shown SI to be a fully-fledged if complex form of mediated communication, adaptable to any topic, event or language pair and a valuable service to the international community – but only if competently performed.

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2. SI is in fact provided at UN drafting sessions as a matter of course. However, texts are almost always presented, discussed and revised in English. We are not aware of any research documenting the extent to which delegates actually listen to or benefit from the interpretation, but it seems likely that nowadays, the interpreters play little if any real role in many such meetings, which often continue beyond schedule without interpretation.

3. AIIC Statistics: Summary of the 2012 Report. http://aiic.net/page/6878/aiic-statistics-summary-of-the-2012-report/lang/1 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

SI is challenging but by no means magical; it can be done well, even superbly, by bi- or multilinguals with certain aptitudes, but only under a few key conditions: that the interpreters are *skilled*, *prepared* and *properly equipped*. The interaction between these factors should become clear in the course of this chapter, and is further analysed in the final theoretical section, and in CC-10.2.

8.1.3 How does SI work?

The most striking differences when moving from consecutive to SI are time pressure and simultaneity (no look-ahead). Analysis now has to be squeezed in not only with listening but also with speaking. Time and effort must be saved wherever possible, and all obstacles to fast understanding and speaking removed, to 'make room' for analysis and formulation. Moreover, since SL and TL overlap in time and in aural perception, a special effort is needed to keep the two languages separate and avoid interference.

How, then, does simultaneous work? If in consecutive the interpretation generally follows 2–3 minutes behind the speaker, in simultaneous the 'lag', though variable, is usually around 2–3 seconds. We usually can't wait for a complete sentence, but must put our speech together using units of meaning as they come in, supported by the mental model of the speaker's intended message that is taking shape in our mind, projecting possible ways the utterance and the speech might be going. This phenomenon, known as 'anticipation', is a natural part of all speech comprehension[4] and, not surprisingly, plays a key role in SI (Chernov 2004): see 8.6.4 for a fuller discussion.

These 'units of sense' (Lederer 1981: 115 ff.), though grammatically incomplete, can usually be expressed in some way, but we must be able to sew them together as we go along into a fluent and faithful version in the target language. This naturally takes some syntactic and cohesive dexterity while also attending to the macro-structure of the discourse, and monitoring and controlling what we are saying for overall sense and pragmatic equivalence.

Of course, we have to do all of this very rapidly, coordinating listening (and looking), thinking, speaking and monitoring, and often also finding documents in the booth, locating text in documents, or checking terms in a glossary. SI is thus the ultimate test of listening comprehension, because in the heat of this action the interpreter must grasp the meaning of the incoming SL speech fast, intuitively and

4. In addition to the semantic associations activated by each word we hear, it is probable that hearers constantly make and update anticipatory logical and syntactic hypotheses as utterances are unfolding (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 205-6; Groefsema 1998).

reliably. To make matters more complicated, with both languages running through our brains we have to make an extra effort to 'deverbalize' (CC-4.3.1), i.e. actively pull meaning out of the original wording and resist the perils of literal transposition, to produce target language that is both idiomatic and makes sense.

In short, SI is a balancing act that means making room, or making time, for the priority of each instant, by exploiting knowledge of topic and setting and relying on pattern recognition, readily available terminology, the flexibility of language, and automating some simpler and recurrent transfer processes. Knowledge helps to anticipate, and linguistic agility is needed to cheat time and memory limitations by segmenting, compressing, paraphrasing or anticipating. Without sufficient knowledge and linguistic freedom, there will be little hope of developing the more advanced flexibility needed to handle increasingly fast, difficult and technical speeches. This is why both general knowledge and verbal agility are prerequisites for beginning SI, along with the analytical reflexes developed throughout the first year of training. Two more basic abilities that have been developed in Initiation, and will be tested on more challenging speeches, are *simplification* (for compression and prioritizing) and *generalization* (for placeholding anticipation, see 8.4.3).

For training purposes, here is a simple diagram (Figure 8.1) showing the key ingredients and operations of successful SI. Each box and shape is a potential weak point that can be worked on with appropriate exercises and practice, though all are present and interact every time we interpret:

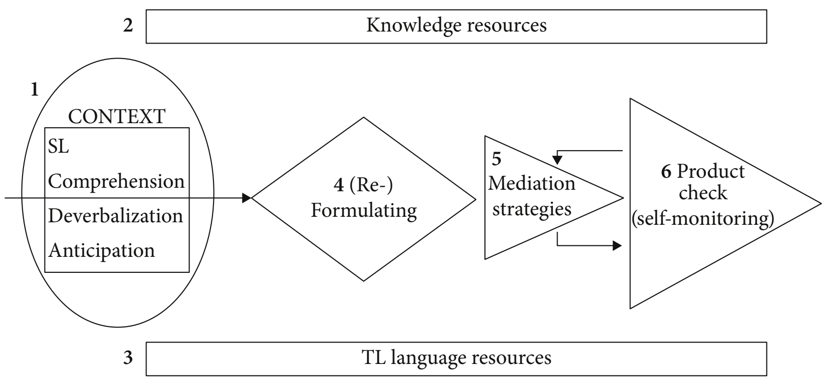

Figure 8.1 Resources and processes in SI: a simple diagram

Figure 8.1 is by no means a detailed description of the SI process (for a fuller process model highlighting vulnerable points in the process see TG-8, Appendix B, Figure 8.1), but a simple checklist of the main steps and the skills involved. These presuppose the abilities already developed from Initiation through Consecutive and Sight Translation: sharpened attention and memory (active listening) for robust *comprehension* with deverbalization and anticipation (**1**), mobilizing and using knowledge (**2**), and expressive proficiency (public speaking) (**3**).

To make sense, you must first understand the speaker in context – who is speaking to whom, where, when and why – analysing, deverbalizing and (silently) anticipating as much as possible (**1**). Context (general and local knowledge mobilized from long-term memory [LTM] plus current perceptions) combines with linguistic decoding to generate meaningful representations in working memory.

This much is common to all interpreting modes, but the forced linearity of SI mandates *reformulating techniques* (**4**), such as chunking, 'starting differently', or voiced anticipation, to produce a faithful yet idiomatic version. These in turn depend on heightened TL language skills (**3**): flexible syntax and lexicon and rich pragmatic packaging. At higher speed and density of input, some additional tactics will be needed, such as compression and even gisting (CC-9.2.4).

We have to reformulate to restore the meaning idiomatically, but this still does not quite get us to the finished, listener-oriented product. There is more to *mediation* (**5**), with or without a language change: cultural and cognitive gaps between speaker and audience, or diplomatic constraints, may call for additional shaping of the product, weighing the relative risks and benefits between a strategy aimed at optimizing communication (explanation, commentary, domestication vs. foreignization, toning down or saving face, etc., vs. more literal, 'safer' and constrained interpreting: CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4).

(6) *Self-monitoring*: With all this going on we must remember to keep an ear open to check our own output or self-monitor (**6**), discreetly adjusting or repairing where necessary, based on what we hear ourselves saying, or on new information or context coming in, or audience reaction, where available (all as in normal speech), or even on additional external input in the form of help from a boothmate.

These labels are shorthand for complex operations that are discussed more fully elsewhere in this book. *Comprehension in context* has been analysed in earlier chapters. *Reformulation* refers to the core activity of SI, the joint processing of the different inputs and the choice of language output. Successful interpreting requires *both* sense-based and form-based translation[5] – in other words, free, deverbalized formulation complemented with a ready supply of stock reliable linguistic equivalents (and sometimes, rigidly imposed terminology). A core skill lies in sensing where each is appropriate and possible, and coordinating the analytic, retrieval and formulation processes needed to produce the mixture.

5. See Setton (2003).

More complex tactical and strategic dimensions of the task will be addressed as we move through this chapter and the next. They include local tactics for managing the SI condition, focusing on the central diamond in the diagram (4), and the strategic trade-offs between optimization and processing constraints that we must make from second to second, consciously or unconsciously. You will learn on-line reformulation techniques, but also the habit of approaching each successive segment aware of the choices, priorities, costs and risks of your own resources (memory, lexical availability), especially in your B language, and of the state of knowledge and expectations of the audience – and making quick decisions.

At first you will naturally find yourself struggling to listen, analyse, find words, speak and monitor yourself all at the same time. Gile's Effort Models (Gile 1995/2009) are a useful heuristic that helps to understand the need to **allocate processing capacity**, or attentional resources, to keep up, and the dangers of certain notorious 'problem triggers' in the input. However, as discussed in TG-6.8.3, recent research and modelling in cognitive science on the flexibility of memory, attention and knowledge organization suggest that mental processing capacities, while clearly limited, are not fixed, hard-wired quantities. Attention allocation can become more efficient for a particular, often-practised task with increasing expertise, for the activation and mobilization of relevant knowledge (schemas), and for the manipulation of concepts and linguistic forms in working memory. SI can thus become less tense and stressful as relevant schemas and language become more available, and some procedures become more automatic. In other words, if SI is a tightrope (Gile 2000), we can develop the expertise to (sometimes) dance on it.

Each component in the diagram can work for or against you depending on its richness and degree of adaptation to the task. The virtual boxes and shapes can be seen as expandable or shrinkable in size, depending on the amount of help the process gets from each one – the roomier and more supportive, the smoother the process; the narrower or poorer each resource, the greater the risk of blockage or breakdown, with obvious knock-on consequences for quality down the line: Gile's 'failure sequences' (2009: 171–3).

Thus the main obstacles to successful SI, singly or in combination – and therefore also the potential weak links to watch for – are:

1. SL language comprehension
2. General knowledge and topic preparation
3. Active TL language availability
4. Speed and adequacy of (re)formulation
5. Self-monitoring

This chapter describes the first four stages of a five-stage SI training programme for students with strong and *flexible* linguistic skills, and general knowledge well above the average, who have already completed the preparatory work described in previous chapters and qualified for SI training (TG-3.4.1 and TG-13.2.5.2). On this basis, and with appropriate guidance and exercises, you should be able to provide workable SI from natural, coherent and relatively standard speech within 12 to 15 weeks of your first orientation session in the booth.

This still leaves some way to go before you will be ready for real-life interpreting, since 'natural, coherent and relatively standard oral discourse' has become almost the exception in international meetings. Many users of our service now take SI for granted, speaking or reading out papers extremely fast on technical, complex topics or in very formal, heavy and jargon-laden language and without providing the text in advance. Speakers giving PowerPoint presentations often talk haphazardly 'around' the slides. Also, more and more speakers use a non-native language, adding the hazards of obscure grammar and pronunciation. To prepare for all this, the exercises will gradually approximate to real-life conditions in a final, last-semester stage of training that we have called **Reality** or the 'last mile', described in CC-9.

8.1.4 SI training in five stages: An overview

SI is generally the main focus of the entire second year of a two-year postgraduate training course, though off-line preparatory exercises, mainly ST-based (CC-6.3), and in some programmes even simple SI, may begin in the first year (TG-3.3.5, Table 3.1: course timeline 'option B'). Students naturally progress at different speeds at different times, but we have distinguished five broad stages: **SI-Initiation, Coordination, Experimentation, Consolidation and Reality**.

I. **SI-Initiation** (3–4 weeks)

This is an introduction to the unique environment of an SI booth, where you learn to listen while talking under the constraints of simultaneous interpreting: time, speed, incremental input, and 'no backspace or delete buttons'. Three kinds of activity are alternated:

a. *On-line* (booth): After booth orientation, trying out SI on very easy, slow and redundant speech with generous pauses, experiencing the whole task at once, 'on-line' but in the easiest possible format.
b. *Off-line* (classroom): introduction to the essential techniques of SI using controlled sight-translation or paused-input exercises, as described in CC-6.3, but now on somewhat more difficult input materials. These help to see the

structural issues and acquire the reflexes of deverbalization, chunking (working with short units of meaning), open and flexible grammar, and mental anticipation.

c. Comparing modes: doing the same or similar speeches in consecutive, sight translation and SI to illustrate the different constraints and possibilities of each mode.

Materials: In this phase and the next, input materials are almost entirely instructor-generated trainer speeches (TG-2.5.5 and TG-2 Appendix).

Goals: (i) hear (don't miss anything), think, then speak; (ii) make sense; (iii) don't waste time looking for fancy words or expressions. In off-line drills, learn the basic techniques for transcending or 'cheating' the linearity of the SI condition.

As we move into Coordination, the on-line and off-line strands of Initiation converge in a key transitional exercise: **Spoonfeeding** (8.2.4). The instructor pauses less often and more briefly, as students practice implementing all the basic techniques of SI: most importantly, keeping pace with the speaker by working with short units of meaning, chunking, deverbalizing, and reformulating, while staying attentive to the sense and direction of the unfolding message.

II. **SI-Coordination** (around 4 weeks)

Spoonfeeding moves into higher gear (**Faster Spoonfeeding**, 8.3.1) with speeches delivered more evenly, but still at slightly slower-than-normal speeds (see TG-2 Appendix for difficulty parameters) with generous but natural pausing, until this too is eliminated and you are interpreting fluent speeches, though still at first with **Training Wheels** (8.3.2) – i.e. first in consecutive – then **Simultaneous Consecutive** (8.3.3). These artificial supports are then gradually removed until you can keep up comfortably on fresh trainer speeches at around 110–120 wpm – in short, we have lift-off (8.3.4).

Goal: completeness. *Keep up* with the speaker without talking nonsense and without missing any part of the message, coordinating listening, thinking and speaking effectively by applying the techniques learned. Control is achieved when you can comfortably get everything without falling behind. Once you have mastered this on slowish, easy trainer speeches, more authentic live speeches will be given. Around mid- to late Coordination, the instructor starts inserting some numbers, lists, unfamiliar names, and occasional formal passages.

III. **SI-Experimentation** (8.4: about 5 weeks, at first only into A)

You are now ready to experiment with time, rhythm and lag on a wide variety of semi-prepared oral presentations, delivered fluently and authentically by a range of different speakers, and find your way to a comfortable, effective and eventually robust individual style. Teaching is process-oriented (TG-2.5.8), with close and intensive instructor supervision and frequent detailed reviews of individual recordings.

> **Materials:** Varied speeches and presentations – *not* artificial trainer speeches – by different speakers in different styles, genres, argument structures and speech patterns, with alternations of conceptual development and factual content (nuggets), on varied but general topics and in standard language at normal speed (up to 120–130 wpm).
>
> **Practice outside class** must continue regularly in advanced consecutive and ST, then, from about half-way through the SI-Experimentation phase, in SI. Follow the guidelines closely for best results (8.3.6 below, and CC-5 Appendix C for group practice). At the end of each class, instructors can hand out carefully selected (or custom-made) recordings for students to do as homework, for feedback. At first you can do the speech more than once and hand in your best attempt.
>
> **Goal: 'perspective'**. At the end of this stage, you should have achieved good control on more varied speech materials, while also widening your perspective on the overall logic and direction of the speech, opening the way to anticipation. The challenge from now on is to find ways of 'making room' to improve your output without losing touch with the speaker – by falling behind, catching up, elaborating, accelerating, simplifying, then compensating, etc., at different times, and generally seeing what works. The pattern of input to output depends on many different subjective and objective factors and will therefore vary, even for equivalent levels of overall quality, from one interpreter, speech and occasion to another. Close supervision should continue throughout this stage.

The next phase, Consolidation, will make much bigger demands on knowledge and (domain-specific) language, so you will need to step up preparatory off-line Knowledge and Language work (CC-7) in the specific target domain(s) about to be tackled, with assigned parallel readings, listening, glossary preparation, and frequent and intensive Sight Translation practice on directly relevant texts.

As soon as your technique begins to stabilize on free input, the instructor will introduce a new mode – **straight SI-text** (i.e. delivered verbatim, without departures, and at first with ample time for text preparation), focusing on authentic speeches in the target domains. The ST-based offline exercises from Y1 can be resumed to warm up. By the end of S3, you should be able to do routine straight SI-text on authentic speeches at normal reading speed without falling behind (8.5.5). More realistic and unpredictable delivery patterns will be simulated later (CC-9).

From the late Experimentation phase onwards and through to the end of the course, **mock conferences** should be organized regularly, with an emphasis on preparation and teamwork (see TG-9.4.1 for procedure). At first (early-mid S3), speeches should be semi-prepared only (see CC-4.5 for a speech-delivery typology) and not too demanding, on general topics.

IV. **SI-Consolidation** (8.5: around 12 weeks, from mid-late S3 to mid-S4)

Input speeches will now all be fully authentic and training will focus more and more explicitly on preparing for the diploma (PECI: see TG-11) and the market. Having experimented and largely stabilized free SI technique through exposure to a wide variety of impromptu and semi-prepared speeches on general topics, you can now move to more challenging material – faster, denser, formal, read-out, and semi-technical – aiming to achieve sufficient control to keep up, be clear and complete, and use correct register and terminology. To this end, SI-Consolidation has a triple focus:

i. **Gain familiarity with the discourse, jargon and terminology of the (target) market domain(s)** for better confidence and control. Having the standard equivalents ready for recurring cliché terms and patterns ('greasing the groove') will free up your attention to monitor yourself and polish your product in the final semester. After paying close attention to detail and technique in Experimentation, instructors will now focus more on targeted (domain-specific) knowledge and language enhancement to support the consolidation of students' skills at a higher level. This involves training in conference preparation techniques, and classwork on domain-, topic- and institution-specific materials with advance preparation, including more formal and written discourse (SI-text). Instructors will choose materials and delivery formats that incrementally add hazards and difficulties such as speed, density, numbers and some accents.

ii. **Accumulate as many 'booth-miles' as possible**, practising the full task independently outside class, monitoring each other, on representative authentic conference materials, now including more formal, denser and faster speeches (>130–140 wpm), including some SI-text, with more or less preparation as appropriate.

iii. **Consolidate technique**: this is the last opportunity to iron out any residual problems such as sluggish or over-hesitant reactions, a non-viable lag, inadequate links, or gaps in hearing leading to information loss, guessing, fuzziness or dilution. In this respect, feedback will necessarily be individual.

Goals: A two-tiered expectation of performance can be set for Consolidation by late S3 or early S4, depending on the input:

i. On '*standard*' speeches (authentic, but mainstream, in a prepared domain, and 'doable') you should be able to keep up at speed, producing a complete, fluent and effective interpretation that demonstrates solid understanding of the subject matter and uses authentic register and terminology for the target domain.

ii. On more challenging, faster, denser and semi-technical material, aim to stay afloat and be complete and comprehensible.

Students with Bsim can start **SI into B** as soon as – but not before – they are over the hump of experimentation and stabilizing technique in B/C>A. Prepare for this during early SI-Experimentation by doing regular and intensive A-to-B sight translation, both in class and independent (recorded) or group practice.

V. **Reality: the last mile** (last semester: see CC-9)

The three components of this final phase of training (described in CC-9) should bring students up to professional readiness for the market.

i. **User orientation, polishing and optimizing communication:** Evaluation of performance and feedback now shifts overwhelmingly to the listener's perspective, and thus to the coherence, user-friendliness and clarity of the output (all also important for giving relay), and the ability to optimize where appropriate, after weighing the risks and benefits (CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4).
ii. **Advanced and challenging tasks**: Intensive practice on tasks that are common in everyday interpreting (such as giving and taking relay), including such variations as SI-with-text with departures, highly formal or technical speeches, complex mixed-media input (SI with PowerPoint where the slides are text-heavy and a source of interference; multimodal/hybrid interpreting, including consecutive with text), wider variations in speed, cohesion, accent, diction and originality, unusual topics, and culturally challenging speeches.
iii. **Hazards and (near-)impossible conditions:** Finally, in the second half of the final semester, you will get a taste of some of the real hazards of real-world conference interpreting – in other words, conditions or user expectations that range from extremely difficult to unreasonable and impossible – and some guidance on dealing with them, with the focus on both preparation and Professionalism (CC-10, CC-11). We can sometimes *adapt* to these conditions (survival or coping tactics), or *mitigate* them by securing guarantees of reasonable working conditions, as a prerequisite for providing quality; but we must know the limits of feasibility.

In summary, once you have understood the challenges in Stage 1 (Initiation), and practised the basic techniques of SI in Stage 2 (Coordination), you should discover in Experimentation that the key to reliable and versatile professional expertise is in sensitivity to widely varying forms of discourse and the ability to adjust technique to the speaker's rhythm, and the product to the occasion.

Only when you have begun to consolidate this ability in an emerging individual style – which will also depend largely on your memory, attention, knowledge and language resources – can you start to handle conditions approaching those of real life. The authentic speeches and more realistic conditions that will become routine in Consolidation will need still more conceptual and verbal agility, but also serious topical and lexical preparation and terminological readiness (quasi-automatic retrieval of the jargon and transcodable components of discourse); and for some kinds of discourse – such as unprepared dense, formal input – specific techniques such as tighter chunking closer to the original text structure.

Exercises, procedures and pedagogical notes for each of these phases in turn are presented in this chapter and the next.

8.2 SI-Initiation: discovering SI

8.2.1 Orientation

✓ Use of equipment, protocols and booth manners
✓ Ear-voice coordination

8.2.1.1 *Settling in: the booth, equipment and manners*

New habits are best formed in a realistic environment. Whether or not this is your first visit to an SI booth, your instructor will explain not just how to use the equipment, but also the conventions and manners of working there as a team. Each of the main design features of a standard booth (ISO 2063 or 4043, see CC-10 Further reading) has been fought for by interpreters, and has its own importance: a direct view of the room, soundproofing, fresh air exchange, temperature control, spacious desktop, comfortable chairs that roll silently, room for documents, desktop lamps with dimmers, and light on-ear headphones. You will learn how to use the microphone, cough button, volume control, tone dials, input and output channel buttons (explanation of relay can be saved for later), and how to optimize sound reception and visibility (there may also be a video screen), minimize spurious noise for users, and work comfortably and effectively in a team.

Hands-on practice is the best way to learn the technical aspects of SI: you can start by testing the equipment, then try it out by giving speeches (or doing consecutive, see below) from the booth to your classmates who listen through delegate receivers, alternating roles. In this process you should discover:

- how to avoid making noise while taking a sip of water or manipulating papers (no rustling or, worse, letting pages brush against the microphone);
- how to speak into the mike, maintaining an even distance and comfortable speaking volume;
- how and why to use the cough button (never the on/off switch!) to momentarily mute the mike in the middle of a speech;
- how to adjust your headphones so as to listen and speak at the same time, finding your dominant ear and either partially or completely freeing the other ear, to hear yourself (Lambert 1989);
- how to make sure you are on the correct output channel;
- how to adjust the volume and tone controls;
- how to share the booth and co-operate with a colleague: how to pass the microphone to a boothmate in the middle of a speech, etc.

It is important to understand booth protocol from the very start. The cardinal rule of the booth is that the only sound that should ever be transmitted out over the microphone is the on-mike interpreter's voice rendering the current speaker. When the microphone is live, everyone else in the booth must maintain absolute silence. The on-mike interpreter must use the mute button to ask a question of a colleague, to clear her (his) throat or take a sip of water. When interpreting is not taking place, the microphone must be turned off. Whenever you enter the booth, the first thing to do is to check that the microphone is off before you say anything out loud. Also, always mute or turn off your mobile phone *before* stepping into the booth.

8.2.1.2 *Orientation exercises*

Once all this is clear, we can start doing a few exercises:

Orientation exercise #1: Consecutive interpreting from the booth

Students first listen to the speaker through headphones and take notes, then turn on the mike and deliver a consecutive interpretation through the SI system. Feedback is then given on (*inter alia*) distance from mike, voice quality and volume as transmitted through the system, undesirable extraneous sounds (breathing, licking lips, turning pages, crossing things out), use of the cough button, etc. This consecutive exercise from the booth is best done several times before starting Smart Shadowing.

Orientation exercise #2: Smart Shadowing in A (aka *same-language SI*)

Some trainers have recommended 'shadowing' a speech (following close behind the speaker and repeating exactly what he says in the same language) as a warm-up or preparatory exercise for SI. This 'dumb' (verbatim) shadowing can be done once only, if at all, for the sole purpose of practising with the equipment and getting comfortable in the booth, as it is trivially easy, at least in your own A language, and has nothing to do with interpreting (see TG-8.6.3 for discussion). (However, this kind of shadowing can be beneficial for active B-language enhancement, to 'absorb' the pronunciation, rhythms and prosody of native speakers – see CC- 7.4.2.1).

Alternatively, 'Smart Chatter' (*bavardage intelligent* or running commentary, TG-8.6.3) will do just as well for this one-time settling-in session – but again, you should be quite clear that this is not interpreting (though for a different reason).

Once you are comfortable in the booth and know how to operate the equipment, you can immediately proceed to **smart shadowing,**[6] an exercise that more usefully approximates SI, requiring both deeper processing of the message and reformulation in the output.

In this exercise, you shadow the *meaning* of a speech in your A language but try to paraphrase it as much as possible in real time, substituting words or

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6. Also called (simultaneous) 'within-language paraphrase'.

phrases, using different sentence structures. Unlike 'dumb' shadowing, this is far from trivial. At first, you can try to substitute one or two words in every sentence, but you should soon aim for a 20–30% reformulation rate, then try gradually to rephrase and restructure more over each session. When you achieve a rate of over 70% replacement of original words and structures, you are essentially doing real SI, albeit still in the same language. Students with a robust, flexible command of their A language should be able to achieve this on a variety of material within a few weeks of practice. Recordings of speeches from a consecutive class can be used as source material at first.[7]

Here are some examples of increasingly thorough online English-to-English paraphrases of a straightforward, undemanding speech:

> Instructor: Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning.
>
> First, I would like to thank the Press Commission for arranging this seminar and bringing me here to chair it. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Fernando, who has taught me a great deal over the past couple of months about freedom of expression in India, and who has gone far beyond the call of duty to make this event a success. This is my first visit to India and I am enjoying it very much indeed – although one early encounter with Indian bureaucracy has persuaded me that everything I have ever heard about it is true!
>
> Student (basic): *First I want to thank … the* Press Commission *for arranging this seminar and for inviting me here to be Chairman. Especially…. I would like to thank Mr Fernando… who has taught me a lot…. in the last two months …about freedom of expression in India… and he has worked very very hard …to make this event successful. …. This is my first time visiting India.. and I like it very much… but one encounter with bureaucracy … has convinced me that the stories I heard are all true.*
>
> Student (30%): *Let me first thank the* Press Commission *for organizing this seminar and for inviting me here to be Chairman. Especially…. I want to say a big thank you to Mr Fernando… who has taught me a lot…. about freedom of expression in India in the last few weeks … and has worked so diligently …to make this event a success …. This the first time I have been in India, it is a very nice country … but one meeting with local bureaucrats … has convinced me that the rumours are all true.*
>
> Student (70%): *Thank you to the Press Commission, which has organized this event, and thanks for inviting me as Chair. Let me thank M. Fernando especially, I have learned a lot from him over several weeks about the freedom of expression in this country. And he's gone out of his way to make sure this will be a good seminar. I've never been to India before, it's a great country – but I have already run into some red tape, so I know it isn't just a myth.*

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7. Note, however, that this exercise will be much more difficult in a B language at this stage, so (if the instructor recommends it), you should target a more modest replacement rate at first, say of 1–2 words per sentence.

Like the first paraphrasing exercises in Initiation (CC-4.3) as a prelude to Sight Translation, **Smart Shadowing** is designed to *break the attention to form and shift it to meaning.* This is basic to SI technique. In this more dynamic, on-line version, you are listening to a speech and trying to paraphrase it in the same language in real time, much as simultaneous interpreters process speech: using different words and structures while conveying the same message as faithfully as possible – i.e. sense-preserving reformulation, but without translation. (That this is not an artificial made-up task, like dumb shadowing, but a natural sibling of SI, is attested to by the fact that interpreters occasionally do this absent-mindedly during conferences – and may go on for several seconds before being alerted by a colleague!)

At this stage, you may find on-line reformulation difficult and demanding: when you do achieve a high reformulation rate, you may well be exhausted and only able to sustain it for a few minutes at a time. Don't worry: it will get easier with practice.

Orientation exercise #3: *On-line cloze (and error correction)*

As a supplementary exercise, students can shadow a speech from which words, phrases and/or sentence endings have been deleted. The instructor explains that blanks in the speech will be signalled by some meaningless sound ('bzzz') or throat-clearing, but that the speech will continue without pause. The students shadowing the speech must fill in a plausible word or phrase to complete the sense. The original text can be handed out afterwards for reference, with the deleted segments highlighted.

In a fun variant, you can smart-shadow speech (see above), but correcting the instructor's ridiculous errors or slips of the tongue, e.g. "So a few days ago I was briefly in the capital of China, the ancient city of *Cairo*, and…".

8.2.2 Initiation 'Strand A': easy SI on line

In the second or third week, students can try their first SI from very easy talks delivered by the instructor, who may use material that is already familiar from other classes or give the class an outline in advance with the main points and key phrases. Appropriate genres include

- narratives and simple descriptions (my first impressions of living in X-land, flat hunting, travel experiences, shopping);
- simple 'how-to' presentations, e.g. 'the worst and best ways to ask for a raise'; 'tips for coping with jetlag'; 'how to overcome procrastination and get things done'; 'how to run an effective meeting';

- instructor's personal commentary or story-telling on items in the news: "So, I guess everyone knows that last week X happened. Well, as it turns out…".

After several sessions, content and structure will become slightly more substantial, but presentation will still be simple, easy and redundant. Examples include

- light commentary on familiar current issues in major countries relevant to students' language combinations, based on blogs, editorials, or the teacher's own semi-improvised observations. Examples: small business creation in poor countries, or anecdotes to illustrate the positive impact of mobile phones on emerging country economies;
- stories with a commentary, lesson or moral,[8] or talks about interesting experiments and counter-intuitive findings about people and life: Do people make more or less risky decisions when they are part of a group? When many bystanders are around, is it more or less likely that one of them will help in an emergency? Does multitasking let you get more done, or less? Can you really learn to tell when someone is lying? Why are some words more persuasive than others, and what are they?

The objectives for this embryonic SI are simple (in addition to learning booth manners and how to use the equipment):

✓ **hear everything and get the point across**
✓ **make sense, don't talk nonsense**

To meet these goals, at this point you can obviously paraphrase and even simplify if necessary. Whatever happens, don't get hung up searching for the best word.

8.2.3 Initiation 'Strand B': controlled input (off-line)

Alternating with and in parallel to this free and easy encounter with SI, this strand aims to initiate you gradually to the technical constraints imposed by the lack of look-ahead in this mode and the linearity it imposes in the face of longer and more awkward sentence structures.

8. *Fairy tales* or parables have traditionally been recommended for SI Initiation: "to show students how easy it is to express something familiar in their own language, take a story or legend common to both civilizations […] such as, for French and German, Little Red Riding Hood" (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 171–2). However, assuming such cross-culturally well-known fairy tales can be found, they may be too familiar and overlearned (and also not in an appropriate register) – so this can be fun, but probably only productive for one or two sessions at most.

These **frozen SI** exercises are designed to develop SI technique by simulating one difficulty (the lack of look-ahead) but suspending another – time pressure and simultaneity. The following are variants on what is essentially the same exercise, to develop three key SI techniques: chunking, concision and anticipation.

8.2.3.1 *Drip-fed or Scrolled ST* (late S2 or early S3 [TG-3.3.2])
This exercise is a more advanced variant of the **Pre-segmented Chunking-and-Joining** exercise (CC-6.3.1), which can be done first to warm up. Again, a formal text with complex sentences is chosen and students are briefed on its general content, background and communication situation. Now, however, there is no opportunity to look ahead: instead of seeing the whole passage first, you will only take in the successive chunks one at a time – either read out by the instructor, who then pauses, or scrolled down on a screen. Students take turns to render each visible chunk as far as possible, linking it to the previous discourse and with due regard for fidelity and acceptable language. The instructor provides clues and (every now and then) practical tips for handy phrases and linking devices to show how (smaller) successive chunks could have been handled as units and elegantly joined up, with the necessary small adjustments, without meaning loss or distortion. Such specific suggestions may indeed often be linguistic, covering useful links, alternative phrasing and so on. These will be especially precious to students working into Bsim (CC-2.6.1; CC-7.4.2.4).

8.2.3.2 *Chunk-by-chunk interpreting (oral input)*
In this exercise, an authentic formal speech is played chunk by chunk from a recording, in stop-start format, with students again interpreting each chunk before the next is played. You should first be given some idea of the topic and context of the speech, so the exercise also offers an opportunity to train the reflex of **anticipation**, which – like attention, memory and mental modelling – plays a central role in all speech comprehension, but must be intensified and enhanced for interpreting (8.1.3, 8.6.4).

This exercise can also focus attention on a source of comprehension (and anticipation) that has not yet been addressed: **prosody**. In a communicative speaker, both local intonation and various rhythmic patterns provide constant rich clues to where the speech is going (for example, distinguishing central vs. secondary information by a change in speed, volume or diction, as with 'throwaway' lines and afterthoughts). An example (from Setton 1999: 10–11) shows how prosodic contrastive stress on different words in the same English 'if' phrase might cue different anticipatory formulations in French (which marks contrasts differently):

The NGO Forum has recommended a monitoring procedure.

However IF we adopt this text…	*Admettons que nous approuvions…* (Assuming we adopt…)
However if we ADOPT this text…	*Mais une fois ces mesures votées…* (But once these measures are passed/become law…)
However if WE adopt this text…	*Mais l'aval de notre commission…* (But this Committee's approval…)

Anticipation is made possible by abundant pragmatic cues in the texture of (especially communicative) speech, as well as by the interpreter's knowledge and environment. The better you can mine these sources to understand what is going on, the more control and look-ahead you can achieve.

8.2.3.3 *Circle Game (Interpreters' 'Consequences')*[9]

Consequences is a traditional parlour game in which each player takes a turn choosing a word or phrase to gradually build up a story, e.g. "[man's name] and [woman's name] were in [place name]. He said to her: [….] She said to him [….]. The consequence was […] etc." Each player writes, folds the paper to hide the words, then passes it on; at the end the story is read.[10]

Our version, for interpreter training, is somewhat different: the instructor reads a text out in short segments (a few words, a phrase, perhaps a clause) which students take turns rendering into the TL, each picking up exactly where the previous one left off. The teacher begins by reading the first segment out loud; the first student then responds, either by rendering that segment into the TL, by saying 'pass', by padding or stalling with neutral material, or with a partial version that renders some of the meaning but leaves part to be reinstated in the rendition of the next chunk.

The instructor then reads the second segment, and the second student must pick up where the previous student left off, either

- rendering the second segment,
- *or*, (if the last student said 'pass'), rendering both segments together,
- *or* something in between: whatever the first student left out should be restored in the second (or at the latest, the third) interpreter's version.

As the instructor reads on, each student in turn has to pick up where the last left off, making a flowing, coherent speech.

9. In Chinese, this could be called "接龙".

10. This description by courtesy of Wikipedia. Another version of the game is known as 'Madlibs'.

Example (English gloss in brackets):

Instructor:
我对于亚洲的未来 (‘*I with regard to Asia’s future…*’)

Student 1:
My take on Asia’s future

Instructor:
和增长前景 (‘*and growth prospects*’)

Student 2:
growth prospects

Instructor: 很乐观 (‘*very optimistic*’)

Student 3: …is bullish.

Instructor:但这并不意味着
(‘*but this certainly doesn’t imply*’)

Student 4:
But that doesn’t mean that

Instructor:
一切都好 (‘*all is good*’)

Student 5:
there are no problems.

Instructor:事实上亚洲的确
(‘*in fact Asia certainly…*’)

Student 1: …pass

Instructor: 正面临着许多挑战
(‘*is facing many challenges*’)

Student 2:
Actually the region has multiple challenges

Instructor: 这次的危机告诉我们
(‘*this crisis tells us*’)

Student 3: and the crisis has made it clear

Instructor: 亚洲并不是孤立的
(‘*Asia is not at all isolated*’)

Student 4: that Asia is by no means isolated.

For more worked examples of chunking and joining technique, see TG-8, Appendix A.

8.2.4 Transition to real SI: Spoonfeeding

Spoonfeeding is the bridge that will take us from these preparatory exercises to doing actual SI on fluent trainer speeches (TG-2, Appendix), in SI-Coordination.

Spoonfeeding is halfway between on-line and off-line. It is done *in the booth* but under very controlled input conditions, with a built-in feedback loop: the instructor adjusts input based on what s/he is hearing from the student (Setton 1994).

The input materials used for this exercise are instructor-generated **trainer speeches**, delivered with pauses. Students are in their booths and interpret simultaneously. The instructor serves as speaker, but wearing headphones so as to monitor performances while delivering the speech. For this exercise, the instructor reads an easy pseudo-oral[11] speech in the students’ B/C language for interpretation into A, one chunk at a time, with a slight pause after each sense unit within the sentence and again between sentences.

This exercise should be carefully explained to students before starting, so that they know what to expect: this is a continuation of the segmentation exercises done off-line, but what is different now is that it is paced, and you have to keep up. SI is

11. For our speech typology, see CC-4.5 and the SDI appended to TG-2.

not about trying to talk fast in the pauses! The instructor is listening to you, making sure you have started each chunk, but will not wait for you to finish it before delivering the next one, so your voices *will* overlap. The input will gradually speed up and pauses will become fewer and shorter over time.

Here is an example of a spoonfed English speech with satisfactory student responses, at this stage, in Chinese and French:

Teacher	**Chinese A student**	**French A student**
Good afternoon, everybody. [pause]	大家下午好！	*Bonjour tout le monde.*
I'd like to spend a few minutes [pause]	我想花几分钟的时间	*je voudrais prendre quelques instants*
talking about a rather controversial issue [pause]	讨论一个颇有争议的话题	*pour vous parler d'un problème*
which has been much aired in the press lately [pause]	最近媒体一直都在关注	*qui fait couler beaucoup d'encre [dans la presse] ces derniers temps*
and this is the idea that the RMB should be [pause]	我说的是人民币	*il s'agit de l'idée que le renminbi/ la monnaie chinoise*
allowed to rise against the dollar [pause]	是否应该对美元升值	*devrait pouvoir apprécier par rapport au dollar*
as has been called for repeatedly [pause]	因为我们经常听到	*comme on l'a souvent proposé*
by the US government [pause]	美国政府做这样的呼吁	*euh notamment à Washington*
as a means to bring about a rebalancing [pause]	说这样可以… [*student waits for the WHAT*]	*qui y voit un moyen de rééquilibrer*
of the world economy. [pause]	使世界经济恢复平衡。	*l'économie mondiale*
Now, despite the argument that…	有人主张, ..[*student prepares to bring in 'despite' later in utterance as a 'however'*]	*Or même si certains prétendent…*

The instructor is speaking naturally – or reading, but sounds natural due to good text selection and good delivery skills – on a topic that is familiar to students. What is different from normal delivery, however, is the artificially slow speed (but not too slow,[12] perhaps around 90–100 wpm) due (mostly) to the pauses inserted between the chunks, each a relatively self-contained meaningful segment, or 'unit of sense'. Skilled instructors will be able to check student performance in real time and pace

12. Speech that is *too slow* adds a difficulty, that of padding neutrally and convincingly to produce a comfortable and reassuring flow for listeners: see 'slow and rambling speakers' under 8.4.2 below.

their speech based on information density and the flow of new/given information, for example speeding up when recapping an argument and then slowing down for the transition into a new point.

Anticipation drill

As we recalled in 8.1.3, the more attentively we follow someone speaking, the more likely we are to form expectations about what they are about to say, sometimes even predicting more or less exact words and sentence continuations. For interpreting, this kind of anticipation is a key process that relieves effort in all modes, and in SI helps us to escape word-order traps between languages and maintain fluency. Anticipation must therefore be honed by practice from the Initiation stage; but as we shall see, it must also be handled with caution, since actually *voicing* a predicted continuation – in effect, saying something substantive *before* the speaker has said it – can be risky: if you get it wrong you will at minimum have to backtrack and correct yourself, and at worst you risk misrepresenting the speaker and causing an incident. Weighing the risks and benefits of voiced anticipation is discussed in 8.6.4.

Here are two examples for spoonfed interpretation into English, one from Chinese and one from German (with a word-by-word gloss in italics below the original. Additional worked examples will be found in TG-8, Appendix A):

> 大家都知道,"股神"巴菲特向来非常注重他的公众形象，不过，在这次听证会上
> *As everyone knows, 'God of Stocks' Buffett has always been very concerned with his public image, but at this particular hearing*
>
> 竟然乱了阵脚，回答了跟他的投资理念… **PAUSE**
> *he surprisingly got all discombobulated and answered with* [*in-relation-to his investment philosophy…*
>
> Note: On-the-ball students will already know where this is going and may begin vocalizing it during this pause…
>
> "在投资的时候，我们不要远离自己所熟悉的范围" **PAUSE** again –
> : *"when investing, stick with what you know"*[…

The instructor waits until all student interpreters 'get it', then continues:

> ………完全不符的话。
> ……*completely at odds*]][13] *words.*

13. This passage literally translated but in normal English word-order might read: "…[…*Warren Buffett*] *has always been very concerned with his public image, but at this particular hearing he surprisingly got all discombobulated and answered in a way completely at odds with his investment philosophy that when investing you should stick with what you know*".

Note that such 'doubly-embedded' constructions, notorious to syntacticians, can nevertheless occur quite naturally and comprehensibly in speech in many languages: see also the German Transport Minister examples on the next page and in TG-8 Appendix A.

Example B (Anticipations are underlined. See TG-8 Appendix A for more worked examples.)

German speech, chunked	Literal translation	Possible chunked output
Unsere Aufgabe ist es, /	*Our task it-is,*	Our task
die negativen Auswirkungen der Mobilität /	*the negative effects of mobility*	is <u>to ensure that</u> the ill effects of mobility
– wie z.B. die Erzeugung von Abgasen – /	*– such as e.g. the production of exhaust fumes –*	such as traffic pollution
mit Hilfe innovativer Technologien zu minimieren.	*with the help of innovative technologies to minimize*	can be minimized using innovative technologies.
Ich arbeite deshalb im Rahmen /	*I (am) work(ing) therefore in the framework*	I am therefore working
unserer verkehrswirtschaftlichen	*of our transport-economic*	within our
Energiestrategie mit Unternehmen der Automobil-/	*energy strategy with firms of the automobile*	strategy for energy in the transport sector,
und Mineralölindustrie zusammen, /	*and oil industry together*	and in partnership with the oil and auto industries
um den Weg für einen umweltfreundlichen/	*(in order) to the way for an environment-friendly*	to <u>find</u> a way towards
Kraftstoff der Zukunft freizumachen –/	*fuel of the future to clear*	a green fuel for the future,
ein Kraftstoff, den sich die Autofahrer /	*a fuel, which (it) the drivers*	a new fuel which motorists
leisten können und der die Umwelt schützt. /	*afford can and which the environment protects*	can afford and which does not harm the environment.
Dieser Kraftstoff soll mit hohen Anteilen /	*This fuel shall with high shares*	This fuel would
regenerativer Energieträger in der Energiekette/	*of renewable energies in the energy chain*	<u>be produced</u> with a high content of renewables
herstellbar sein und den Einstieg /	*produceable be and the [Acc.] entry-into*	and <u>would make possible</u>
in innovative Antriebe ermöglichen./	*in[to] innovative power-drives make possible.*	the use of innovative motor technology.
Hierdurch erwarten wir in absehbarer Zukunft	*Through this, we expect in foreseeable future*	We hope that in the near future
einen deutlichen Schub /	*a clear push*	this will bring tangible progress
bei der CO2-Minderung.	*in CO_2 reduction*	in reducing CO_2 emissions.

8.3 **Coordination and control** (around 3–5 weeks)

This phase will take us by stages to the 'take-off' on fluent (albeit still easy) speeches, using consecutive as temporary support along the way (Training Wheels and Simultaneous Consecutive). This is where you learn to combine listening, thinking and speaking in real time.

8.3.1 Faster Spoonfeeding

In this higher-gear Spoonfeeding, speeches are again delivered at first with pauses at natural break-points within sentences, and generous pauses between sentences. While checking that students are keeping up, the instructor or speechmaker adjusts the delivery speed and rhythm, gradually reducing or eliminating most within-sentence pauses, and shortening the inter-sentence pauses, to approximate natural speech. The overall pace of delivery is gradually increased until students are successfully interpreting fluent trainer speeches of intermediate difficulty, with only minimal pausing or self-repair.

8.3.2 SI with Training Wheels (Consecutive first)

SI with Training Wheels (Déjean le Féal 1997) makes it possible to keep up with fast-ish, fluent speeches in SI by first getting a chance to familiarize yourself with the arguments, construct a mental discourse model, and resolve any problems of translation or expression *before* you attack the speech in simultaneous.

Procedure: Students first do consecutive on a passage (either 6–7 minutes as Déjean le Féal suggests, or in 3-minute segments) delivered live by the instructor or speechmaker from notes. After discussion of the consecutive performance and any major problems of comprehension, translation and expression, students go into the booths. The speaker then delivers the same passage again, to be interpreted simultaneously. Although the ideas will be the same or very similar, the speech won't be identical, as it is not being read out word for word but is being oralised from notes. On reaching the end of the original content, the speaker can go on for a few more minutes, in Fast(er) Spoonfeeding mode, or until performance falters (students lose the thread, stop making sense, or can't keep up). The SI performances are reviewed and discussed; then the exercise continues with the next passage.

After several sessions, as the interpreters demonstrate better mastery of SI skills, the speechmaker can start to introduce more significant deviations and new content into the second (for-SI) delivery of each passage, and can continue on for longer at the end of each passage.

8.3.3 'Simultaneous Consecutive'

Simultaneous Consecutive is a new mode of interpreting that is described in more detail in TG-6.6.4. Pending further studies on its applicability in professional practice, this can be a useful training tool, as a more challenging version of the Training Wheels exercise.

Procedure: In our training adaptation of Simultaneous Consecutive, students sit in their booths and watch a 5–7 minute passage of the SL speech on video while taking notes as though to deliver the passage back in consecutive – but then, instead of students delivering the consecutive, the same passage is immediately played again to be done in SI, using the notes for support. The main differences from the classic Training Wheels exercise described above are:

1. the speech is strictly identical both times, as it is played from a recording;
2. although the students take consecutive notes, there is no consecutive interpretation, nor is there any discussion of the content of the passage or of how to express any of the ideas before interpreting it in simultaneous.

8.3.4 Take-off: real SI on fresh trainer speeches

After these transitional exercises, you should be ready to attempt real SI on fresh trainer speeches delivered at nearly normal speed (say around 120 wpm, see the SDI[14] in TG-2 Appendix A). This is simply the logical end-point of Faster Spoonfeeding, when the instructor finally takes off his/her headset, stops listening to check that you are keeping up, and delivers the (trainer) speech normally, without any accommodation, or plays a suitable speech from video. (Student speeches will not be controlled enough as input for this stage, and should not be used before Experimentation.)

The main problems that you will typically encounter when you progress to fluent trainer speeches are:

a. **Gaps in listening**, resulting in missed ideas. The most vulnerable ideas will tend to be unpredictable new ones that are expressed compactly, in just a few words, and then are not repeated and can't be inferred from the context.

   The effects of patchy listening will be most devastating when the problem occurs just at a topic shift: you miss the new topic, you become aware that the speaker has gone on to talk about something new, you are hearing commentary on some new topic, but you just can't figure out what the new topic *is*.

14. SDI: Speech Difficulty Index.

b. **Falling too far behind** the speaker and then dropping content. This can be due to spending too long looking for the right words (and forgetting to listen); failing to segment effectively, trying to do sentence-by-sentence consecutive, thus overloading working memory; and/or also not hearing what the speaker is saying, or simply being too wordy.
c. **Not making sense**: you may seem to be keeping up in terms of producing words, but at times say things that sound very odd or would be hard for listeners to follow or understand, due to insufficient analysis, reformulation, unwitting calques or language interference.
d. **Choppy output**: on-off, 'morse code' production, like phrase-by-phrase interpreting with long pauses, possibly also missing some content so that the product is not coherent: the student has not yet achieved overlap between listening and speaking.
e. Worst of all – **bluffing** to try to cover up patchy listening or comprehension: the student 'samples' some keywords from the input and fakes a fluent version based on background knowledge, generalities, platitudes, vagueness and guessing.

No-one will have *all* these problems, of course – some will do very well on this relatively easy input, helped by the adrenaline rush of doing 'real SI' – but these are the main things for you and the instructor to listen for when reviewing your recordings, and to target consciously and eliminate when next in the booth.

8.3.5 Coordination and control: summary

The preparatory exercises for SI, through the Initiation and Coordination stages, each focus on some aspects of the process and relieve others, while still keeping the spirit of real interpreting. Drip-fed ST-based drills (**Chunking-and-Joining, Scrolled ST, Circle Game**) focus on texture and reformulation technique but relieve the pressures of time, simultaneity and interference (two language channels overlapping in the interpreter's mind). **Spoonfeeding** enforces chunking under live conditions but with a brake on speed and simultaneity. **Training Wheels** and its variant **Simultaneous Consecutive** then impose time pressure and simultaneity, but relieve listening effort by first rehearsing the content in advance in consecutive. This careful progression of exercises 'triangulates' onto the full challenge of **real SI**, as **Faster Spoonfeeding** leads into **Take-off** on fluent trainer speeches delivered with no accommodation.

The objectives of Phase 2 (Coordination/Control) – all into the A language only – are to achieve (on fresh trainer speeches at natural speed):

1. Completeness (not missing any part of the message);
2. Simultaneity (keeping up with the speaker); and
3. Clarity (intelligibility, making sense, finishing sentences, not backtracking).

Again, as in the SI-Initiation stage, linguistic style and polish are not yet required.

After a session with any of the recommended exercises, and from the very start, performances can be played back and discussed in class. During the whole Coordination phase, in particular, you may be surprised at what you missed. But there will also be instances where certain words were not heard or even remembered, with no negative effects on the rendition. This can lead to an interesting discussion on attuning attention to the most informative peaks in the input ('new' information: see TG-12.2.4), which are different in each new speech and speaker – reminding us that forgetting many of the *words* of the original is a normal, indeed necessary part of the process of understanding.[15]

8.3.6 Supervision and independent practice

From this point, when you have achieved basic Coordination – hearing everything and delivering a complete, coherent version – you can begin practising on your own. Start with speech recordings that you interpreted in consecutive class a while back, and that were thoroughly explored and discussed in class, but that you haven't heard for a couple of months. In group practice sessions, start out using Training Wheels: the student making the speech first delivers it in passages that the rest of the practice group interpret in consecutive, and discuss (see Guidelines in CC-5 Appendix); then, the speechmaker re-delivers the speech, covering mostly the same content, but freshly verbalized and with some variations, for SI. The speechmaker should *not* wear headphones or try to monitor the other students' simultaneous interpretation – nor on any account try to 'spoonfeed' material like instructors, or her delivery will suffer, spoiling the exercise.

Individual practice is far more useful when you have someone listening to you, not only to get and make a careful note of any feedback, but also to help you practise speaking communicatively, addressing a real person or audience. Also, record your work and listen to it critically afterwards (see also 8.4.6).

15. Sachs (1967).

8.4 Experimentation (and personal style)

By now you should have understood the basic challenges of SI and mastered basic techniques for capturing and reproducing meaning while keeping up with fluent but still interpreter-friendly trainer speeches. You should be ready to move on from this idealized but artificial input to tackle a steadily widening range of real-life speeches on which to stabilize your technique and style – nothing too dense, technical or jargon-heavy yet, but discursive, semi-prepared speeches by real speakers addressing real audiences (preferably on video), on substantial issues and talking freely and at normal speed.

The purpose of this stage is to practice technique on a variety of different speakers, topics and genres, while consciously exploring and trying out different things: how and when to adjust lag, adopting a shorter or longer EVS as needed; where to take a freer or more literal approach; how and where to selectively compress or expand the wording of the message, or add a quick explanation or cultural footnote in real time; to anticipate the speaker, or conversely, suppress the instinct to anticipate *aloud*; to stall unobtrusively or approximate when the speaker is unclear, then catch up and/or specify when the meaning has become clear; and to learn how to self-correct responsibly after getting something wrong in the interpretation.

You can also experiment with making a note while doing SI. Some interpreters prefer to write down numbers or names, for example, before rendering them, while others prefer to spit them out quickly without writing them down. You can also now begin to practice working with a **boothmate**: the helper can assist by writing down terms and numbers and even – when the on-mike interpreter pushes the mute button and looks over, signaling a request for spoken help – by speaking quickly and concisely to supply the needed information. (You should of course *never* speak unless the on-mike interpreter has muted the microphone; the audience should only ever hear the voice of the on-mike interpreter, never any in-booth discussion, tips or help.) (See also CC-11.2.3.3.)

You should also have understood by now how language, knowledge, technique and anticipation are exploited jointly to overcome the apparent difficulties of SI. Experimenting with a wider variety of authentic speech, with more changes of texture (and some more realistic 'bumps' on the road, like more and larger numbers and some names) will help internalize these strategies and crystallize them into a viable individual style.

Finally, in Experimentation you should get a first taste of simultaneous interpreting with a text (SI-text), delivered verbatim and not too fast, after you have prepared it (8.4.4).

8.4.1 Starting and staying free: open grammar

SI takes poise, readiness and agility – to mix Eastern and Western metaphors, sometimes like kung fu, sometimes like a Texan rodeo. However a speaker starts and develops the next sentence, you need to keep your options open, which will depend on where and how you are standing and the point of attack you choose, and how you keep your balance when he bucks or weaves unexpectedly.

Blindly starting to render a sentence by translating the first word is risky, as you may be led up the garden path – but so is waiting until the end of the clause, or stalling, which can become a bad habit that causes you to fall behind. Whether you tend to be over-hasty or over-cautious, you need a third alternative. To improve your agility and 'syntacrobatics'[16] – the ability to avoid getting trapped by the input speech structure – this is a good time to do a few more rounds of the 'imposed starts and constructions' exercise (CC-6.3.2), but this time from the booth. At first, this technique will look like just a trick for cheating particularly awkward sentence structures, but once mastered, this meaning-preserving TL agility will become second nature whatever the structure of the input.

The instructor chooses sentences with either awkward or deceptively straightforward openings and structures (or better still, texts with a high concentration of such sentences), according to language pair and direction, sometimes imposing starts and sometimes proposing open-grammar devices that leave you ready to deal with any continuation.

In English, for example, the following sentences, beginning with prepositional phrases or subordinate clauses, will help to practice 'jumping in' into any target language:

> *With the economy picking up again after a long period of stagnation….*
> *Although only a minority of countries ratified the convention in the first five years…*
> *While drivers in their twenties are usually assumed to be reckless…*
> *Notwithstanding the continued prevalence of dengue fever in parts of Western Malaysia…*

Each sentence can be presented on a screen, or read by the instructor, who then tells the student with which word or component (in SL or TL) to start her rendition. For example, in each of the above openings (other structures can be used in other language combinations), ignore the subordination (opening preposition, subordinate conjunction, etc.: *although, which, notwithstanding*) and instead start with a subject noun, but restore the meaning, where necessary by making later, downstream adjustments. For example, you might say (in your target language) something like:

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16. Setton and Motta (2007).

The economy has picked up …, SO…
Only a minority [ratified etc.…], BUT…
Drivers in their twenties […], BUT…, etc.

Or you may choose to delay longer, or restructure more boldly:

We have seen a long period of economic stagnation, but now the economy […] and…;
In the first five years after the convention was signed…;
Dengue fever remains prevalent […]. Nevertheless, …, etc.

Other solutions may be found, but as long as they help you keep control of the meaning while freeing you from structural traps, you will have got the trick.

What is more or less familiar, what should be spat out and what can be put off, is largely individual, and the result of a very complex interaction of factors (see the box below on timing and tactical choices). But the exercise aims to instil basic SI reflexes: if you feel the sentence is awkward, don't jump in at the first constituent, try the second or third; or try using a different part of speech – recasting a heavy noun phrase as a verbal construction, for example; or add a 'hinge' that frees you to go on without changing the meaning ('[this] is something that…'; 'this is an issue that…'; 'this means that…'). This 'open grammar'[17] approach combines naturally with chunking-and-joining or framing and filling (8.4.3 below; see also worked SI examples in TG-8, Appendix A).

The following examples illustrate the risk of 'garden-pathing'[18] and the open-grammar techniques that can offset it, balancing tactical stalling, chunking and anticipation to keep up while cheating awkward structure and managing memory capacity:

Example A: The opening Chinese utterance begins with a phrase – 'Cross-cultural marketing' – that turns out to be part of a complex *Topic* phrase, about which something further can then be said, rather than a *Subject* as it would normally be in English in this position. The Topic then continues – 'can [it] or can't [it] be successful' – and is followed by the Comment/Predicate '…[this] depends on…' :

Speaker: 跨文化营销…. (pause) … 能不能成功….. …. 要看……
[Rough translation: *Intercultural marketing …. can or cannot succeed… depends…*]
SI novice: …Intercultural marketing …… whether Intercultural marketing can work…

17. 'offene Satzbildung' (Kirchhoff 1976/2002)

18. Being 'led up the garden path', i.e. trapped by the continuation of the sentence so that you have to backtrack.

> The student is forced to backtrack and repeat herself because she mistook the structure as 'word-order-friendly' and was in too much of a hurry to start translating literally. This trap might have been avoided either by waiting, or by chunking ('*Intercultural marketing – does it work? Well, it depends [on]…*')

This language-pair-specific explanation may help to understand the problem, but the *basic technique is universally valid.* (The classification of a language as 'SOV',[19] 'SVO', 'OVS' etc., refers only to its *dominant* word order.) Corpus analysis of SI performance shows that expert interpreters may choose not to jump in at once even when the structure looks perfectly harmless – for example, a German sentence starting with "*Der [XYZ] ist…*" ("The XYZ [a complex Noun marked as Subject] is…") (Setton 1999: 209). This is not to say that the professional interpreter should avoid producing a parallel structure ("The XYZ is…") – all things otherwise being equal, that may indeed be the best default strategy. The point is that IF s/he senses, instinctively or for any other reason, that a different approach might be preferable (perhaps involving waiting, stalling, or anticipation), she knows that her developed 'syntacrobatic' abilities, and her appreciation of the consequences under current conditions of input speed, density, etc., give her some freedom of choice. Dumb 'structure-for-structure' rules are irrelevant to (meaning-driven) interpreting, and in SI, possibly dangerous.

Instructors will find appropriate texts, with constructions that prompt or require flexible approaches, in their various language combinations. Here are two more examples, from English and French:

> **Example B:** "Behind the higher-than-expected savings rate of recent years there is a fall in asset prices."
>
> 1. *Behind*: ignore, just mentally note its function (that the causes of the next phrase will be explained).
>
> 2. …*the higher-than-expected savings rate of recent years*: delivered fast, can be remembered as a chunk long enough to decide whether to render it as a noun phrase, or make it into a sentence, which might also easier to digest by the listener: "The savings rate has been higher than expected…". If the latter, it will need to be followed by something like "This may be explained by/is due partly to…" (= 'behind').
>
> 3. …*there is a fall in asset prices.*
> If (2) was rendered as a noun phrase, 'behind' still needs to be covered by 'is due to…'.
> If (2) was rendered as a separate clause or sentence, 'there is' would already have been anticipated.

19. SOV: Subject-Object-Verb; SVO: Subject-Verb-Object.

Example C: (from a speech given in 1990s by the then French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin):

"*Donner de nouveaux moyens au développement de la coopération, j'ai commencé de le faire en engageant dès la formation du Gouvernement la réforme des instruments de coopération.*"

1. *Donner de nouveaux moyens au développement de la coopération,*
   Literal translation: 'Give (giving? to give?) new means to the development of co-operation,…': an action X, without explicit subject, tense or modality
2. *j'ai commencé de le faire*
   'I have begun to do it [X]'
3. *en engageant dès la formation du Gouvernement*
   'by?/while? recruiting?/encouraging? launching…? as soon as the government was formed…
4. *la réforme des instruments de coopération.*
   …the reform of the instruments of cooperation' [= development aid]).

Possible tactics here include

i. Begin with parallel 'Topic' structure: and continue with a 'hinge': "Providing more funding/resources to expand [=*développement*] development aid [=*coopération*] <u>is something that</u> I have already begun to do….";
ii. Anticipate/restructure: "We must give…"; *or* "New resources for…(…were ordered as soon as…)". *Engager* is ambiguous, so best wait until hearing *la réforme*…, then continue with … "as of taking office/as soon as the new Government was appointed, by launching…"

These examples show how awkward input of different kinds can occur in every language.

8.4.2 Time, rhythm and lag

The time, freedom and comfort we have in SI certainly depend on the type of speech we have to deal with, and on our preparation and linguistic resources. But there are ways of gaining – or losing – control. If you are too far behind, or busy looking for a word, when the speaker is saying something difficult or unfamiliar, you may lose content or come unstuck. If you are too close, or lock yourself into certain sentence constructions, you may have to clumsily backtrack or restart.

This is the core of SI technique, and by now you should be getting a feel for the constraints and possibilities. Experiment freely with a longer or shorter lag to experience the advantages and drawbacks, testing the limits until you find your own rhythm without losing control. While experimenting, you won't really be able to keep such a close check on what you're saying – close self-monitoring will come later, when technique is stabilized – so record your sessions and play them back to check the consequences of your experiments.

Sometimes a metaphor can help:

How much lag do I need?

Imagine driving along unfamiliar mountain roads at night in a thick fog, following a friend who lives at the top of the mountain and knows the road well. To get there safely, you need to keep your eyes on his taillights at all times – if he gets too far ahead of you, you might make a wrong turn and fall off the cliff, but if you follow him too closely, you might rear-end him. Judging the right distance will depend on a few key factors: how fast your 'lead car' (the speaker) is driving (speaking), how thick the fog is (density, accent, lack of meaningful intonation), how well you know the road (the subject matter), how responsive your brakes and gas pedal are (availability of terminology and coping tactics, anticipation), and how high the cliff is (your risk tolerance as a function of the speaker, event, audience, stakes…). Sometimes you will need a shorter lag and at other times a slightly longer one. There are potential risks and rewards associated with both.

Here is an example of a trap when working from Chinese into English (in Chinese, 'after China's accession' is expressed as 'China's accession after'):

Speaker: 中国加入世界贸易组织 '*China accede WTO*' [no tense marked]
Interpreter: China's accession to the World Trade Organization….

Speaker: 不仅使自己从中得益，而且也为世界经济贸易...
not only means itself [can] gain benefit, but also, for world trade…
Interpreter: …has not only benefited China, but also…

But consider this case:

Speaker: 中国加入世界贸易组织 [*China accede WTO*]
Interpreter: China's accession to the World Trade Organization…
Speaker: …以后，一直坚定不移地遵守世贸组织的相关规则
'*…after/since* [= postposition], *always unwaveringly comply with WTO relevant rules*'
Interpreter (hears 以后 ['after'] only after already committing to that opening, and has now been garden-pathed and is forced to backtrack and repair):
'Or rather… SINCE China's WTO accession, it has strictly adhered to the rules of the organization…'

If you are creative enough, there is almost always *some* way of recovering such situations – for example, after hearing 'since', you could continue '[China's accession…] *has been followed by* unwavering adherence…'. However, such creativity may take more practice and experience than you have at first (or may take a lot of effort to sustain through a whole day's work, even for a seasoned professional). A more efficient approach is to become sensitive to the high risk of such possible continuations in your source languages, and develop caution and a small stock or handy devices (that the instructor may give you) to use when caught out.

The key message to retain about lag is that it depends on the texture and nature of the incoming speech, and the interpreter must be ready to change gears at any time: to quote Shermet, "the balance will constantly shift in the course of a single speech and from one speech to another, just as a driver shifts gears and drives faster or slower and leaves more or less space between cars depending on traffic and road conditions…"; but "generally speaking, it can be said that in 'oral translation' [i.e. on formal, rigid discourse with little room for creative paraphrase: see CC-8.5.4] the interpreter's pacing is much closer" (2012: 129).

Slow and rambling speakers: padding and recapping

Finally, we may sometimes encounter extremely slow, hesitant and/or repetitive – and possibly also redundant – speakers. Why not just wait? Remember that the audience cannot see you and will become uneasy if they hear nothing – or worse, groans or muttering – for more than about 6–8 seconds (though this reaction may vary for, say, Finns vs. Latin Americans). You may therefore sometimes have to 'pad' neutrally, spinning wheels without affecting the speaker's message (though this may be inadvisable in some more constrained, formal situations).

Instructors can play or simulate a few very slow, tentative or rambling speeches and provide useful tips (especially into B) on how to stall or repackage with all manner of expressions like 'As I was saying', 'to continue', 'furthermore', 'in other words', 'let us now proceed to address another aspect of this issue…' etc., depending on context. If a speaker is both slow and rambling, we may even be able to improve (optimize) communication by occasionally doing a quick recap (a few words up to a sentence or two), with vocal emphasis, to make sure our audience gets the speaker's point. However, this is best only done in small, informal meetings.

8.4.3 Framing and filling: using placeholders

An important technique that must be dared at first, but then becomes second nature (and has been found throughout SI transcripts[20]) is a form of approximation followed by compensation where you use a generic placeholder to keep the TL sentence going, then subsequently find a way of making whatever addition, specification or qualification is needed to complete the content, or align on the speaker's exact meaning, either because it has only now become clear, or because you have just thought of the exact term. For example, when a speaker launches into a long title such as 'The Philadelphia First District Juvenile Court Appeals Division',

20. Setton (1999: 226, 235) and *passim*. Lederer (1981: 266) had also observed in her SI corpus how interpreters proceed in SI by 'successive approximations', and the tactic is also well described by Kohn and Kalina (1996).

the interpreter cannot render it in French until it is complete, but knowing what kind of entity it is immediately on hearing 'First District'…, can start by saying '*un/le tribunal dont l'intitulé complet*…' ('a court whose complete official title is…').

In the following real-life example,[21] the German verb 'is also addressed' (*miterfasst*, underlined) comes at the end. The dots in square brackets show where it would normally have come in English, which is where the interpreter inserts a generic 'placeholder' verb *is treated* (dashes indicate pauses):

> Der europäische Subventionsbetrug wird – das ist hier in Ihrem Kreis schon gesagt worden – in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [……] durch den in den siebziger Jahren eingefügten Paragraphen zweihundertvierundsechzig des Strafgesetzbuches – gegen – Subventionsbetrug miterfaßt
>
> Interpreter: *European subsidy fraud – as has already been said in this particular seminar – is treated in German law in article two six four of the criminal code*

The same advance approximation or placeholder technique is used in the next segment, and the meaning is fleshed out after the verb arrives (*is protected*):

> – und damit dürfte – das ist auch schon zum Ausdruck gekommen – der Schutz des Finanzsystems des Mißbrauchs der Subventionen der europäischen Gemeinschaften in unserem Land – in Kern befriedigend [……] und vor allen Dingen in gleicher Weise wie der Schutz des deutschen Subventionssystems erfasst sein
>
> Interpreter: *…and, as has already been said in this seminar, the protection of the financial resources of the European Community is therefore dealt with, I think, satisfactorily; and dealt with in the same way as the budget of the German government is protected.*

Instructors will be conscious of the special need to drill this technique in certain language combinations, but it will also be helpful with certain idiosyncratic speaking styles.

This can also be one temporary expedient for dealing with a word or expression you don't know. If a speaker describes some phenomenon (in English) as 'a sad reflection of the *zeitgeist*…' but you don't know this term, you can omit the phrase, or just say 'sadly': with luck, the speaker may repeat the reference, this time saying 'unfortunately, as I say, this is all too typical of the trend in this day and age'. (For general advice on what to do when stuck, see CC-9.3.2.)

A basic underlying ability that is prerequisite for this technique is *generalization*.[22] When a speaker is named, but inaudibly, it may be possible to say 'the previous speaker'. Similarly, we can get away with saying 'this body' for an organization,

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21. From Setton (1999); transcript supplied by Sylvia Kalina. Similar examples can be found with Chinese coverb structures (Dawrant 1996).

22. Generalization obviously requires some knowledge, to identify the superordinate category that the term belongs to (see CC-4.8.5).

or 'the device', 'the compound', 'the instrument' or 'this legislation' respectively for an apparatus, a chemical, a treaty or a law whose exact name has escaped us; or even, *in extremis*, making creative (but sparing) use of an all-purpose pronoun like 'this'. In the case of a logical link – when a connective is inaudible or blurred by accent, for example, so that it is unclear if two examples have been given to illustrate the same thing, or a contrast, or just a sequence etc. – avoid using either 'furthermore' or 'but/on the other hand'. Keep the link vague or neutral, then add in the relationship afterwards if and when it suddenly becomes clear and there is time to specify.

Beware, however: this technique should not be abused, as it can dilute the message with too many obvious empty words – especially if other problems distract you so that you don't have time to add the specification! Also, voiced anticipation can be risky, especially in high-exposure situations, as explained later (8.6.4).

The worked examples in the box below may help to understand the complex interaction between different factors when making such tactical choices on line.

SI timing and tactical choices (1)

We have seen that timing and optimal 'entry points' in SI depend on three main factors:

1. **A viable production base**: Have I got enough sense to start saying something? Since sense comes from both incoming words and context, this base can consist of

a. EITHER, a '*unit of sense*' (Lederer 1990: 115 ff.) that fully expresses or completes an idea, or – more typically, at the beginnings of sentences – a self-contained unit that can be translated with little or no risk, e.g. 'Furthermore, …', 'Next point …', 'A better example …', as well as most adjuncts specifying time, place or circumstance ('Since our last meeting, …');

b. OR, enough context and general sense of the direction of the speech to stall by padding, guessing or anticipating even without much evidence from the actual words heard so far. For example, to avoid a long and uncomfortable pause when a speaker starts off hesitant and confused, and syntax or word meaning is still unclear: 'Erm, I think we can run, er…well, at least, just, at this point….', the interpreter can say '*Ensuite, … enfin je vous propose la chose suivante…*' ('Next, let me suggest this…').

2. **Memory**: Do I risk forgetting if I try to hold it in memory and delay expressing it? The answer depends on the density and newness of the information, especially for the interpreter, and on certain attested facts about short-term memory, such as (i) primacy and recency effects: the first and last items of a list may be remembered first, the others later; and (ii) the 'solubility' in memory of different items: numbers and unfamiliar names cannot always be associated with the surrounding meaning, so memory for them is very short. Finally, expressing the content rehearses the memory of it and 'renews' it in the target language.

3. **TL Availability**: Which part of the input do I have TL words most ready to express, lexically (a viable equivalent) and/or syntactically: can I continue or finish the current sentence, start a new one, produce a meaningful link? In either case, the first words uttered can either be definitive (if you find the perfect phrase….) or, if meaning is still vague, a placeholder, adjustable later (8.4.3 above).

In the next chapter (CC-9.2.4: SI timing and tactical choices [2]) we will see how all these factors and more can help you to survive very fast and dense speeches.

8.4.4 Introduction to SI-text (mid-Experimentation)

It is best to start practising this new mode with 'straight' SI-text – i.e., where the speaker reads verbatim without any deviations. This is essentially a paced sight translation done from the booth, but here you must both deverbalize *and* segment to preserve maximum linearity while staying clear and idiomatic (rather than trying more extensive restructuring as may sometimes be appropriate in ST proper), and aim to keep up with the speaker at all times, preferably never getting more than half a sentence behind, at most. Importantly, too, you must never get *ahead* of the speaker.

Texts of moderate difficulty should be used (but with 'written' sentence structure), which the instructor will read out naturally, though somewhat more slowly at first than would be typical in real life. Students experiment with three-way **ear-eye-voice coordination.**

Apart from the usual factors of difficulty like speed of delivery and the interpreter's (un)familiarity with the subject matter, the specific challenges of SI-text depend on the degree of writtenness and complexity of the text, the time available for preparation, and the speaker's adherence to the text. In real life, speakers often deviate from their texts without warning – adding, skipping or changing content. This more difficult exercise is postponed until CC-9.2.3.2, where we present a full description of techniques.

8.4.5 Practising with numbers

Accurately rendering numbers is a notorious challenge in interpreting, even in consecutive, but especially in SI. However, the difficulty varies significantly depending on (a) whether they come up in isolation or in a sudden concentrated barrage; (b) the context in which they occur: it's harder to catch a number flying by if you had no warning it was coming and your mind is occupied on reconceptualizing some abstract discourse, with a generous lag; and of course, (c) the (mis)alignment between the numbering systems of the source and target languages (see box in CC-5.4.3.2) and how fast and reliably you have learned to convert them.

Targeted practice on numbers in context has been shown to be beneficial (Cheung 2008), and we consider it indispensable. For SI, start practising from the Experimentation phase on passages and speeches that contain a few numbers surrounded by relatively uncomplicated argumentative discourse, then in the

Consolidation phase move on to passages with more and denser numerical data, including lists, popping up unpredictably in the midst of a narrative or argument.

8.4.6 Independent practice in SI

From Experimentation through Consolidation and the final polishing of your SI performance, you will only make real and tangible progress, whether practising alone or with a partner, by applying the techniques of **deliberate practice**,[23] rather than just casually doing a few exercises on random materials, choosing easy stuff, quitting when it gets difficult. Here are the key principles:

- *Choose practice materials very carefully*: they should challenge you but still be 'doable', and should be relevant and current.
- *Be contextualized:* Before interpreting a speech or text, make sure you know its main topic, background and context, issues touched on, technical terms, setting, etc. (by getting briefed by the speaker or whoever chose the speech and briefly brainstorming with your partner, and/or having read around the topic first, if necessary).
- *Practice with a good partner*: both of you must be focused, demanding and proactively give immediate feedback.
- *Record yourself* to listen to your performance in more detail.
- *Have a goal in mind* for your practice, either the current focus of classwork and teacher attention, or an individual challenge or problem that needs work; and get your listener/partner to give detailed feedback on this particular focus of attention, in addition to any more general feedback.
- *Do challenging passages twice*: when targeting a specific personal challenge in SI, or on difficult, new or unfamiliar speech-types, or when working into B, do each speech (or key passage) *twice*. After a first attempt, you can do some off-line exercises on the same material (e.g. sight translation) targeting the necessary improvements, and then immediately do the same speech (or passage) again in SI, with your partner checking for improvement.

  For especially difficult and demanding speeches/texts, especially those with lots of *jargon and routinized phrasing* (in SI-Consolidation: see 8.5.4), it is worth doing passages *several times*, and returning again to the speech after a few weeks, to make it stick.

23. More details are provided in TG-2.6.2.

- *'Fine' (intensive) practice*: break up your practice when working with a partner. Don't interpret a difficult 30-minute speech in one go and then just get general comments. Do the speech in passages of 5–10 minutes, to get more detailed and immediate feedback on each passage, then try again.

However, in addition to working in this deliberate practice mode, don't forget to also do many 'flight-miles' on regular speeches, to stay in touch with the once-only condition of real-life SI, where each speech is new. But even this kind of practice should always be done either with feedback from a practice partner, or recording yourself for critical self-evaluation, and to set your next personal goal (see below). As for any other skill, practising alone without any kind of feedback is a waste of time, and may in fact be harmful, as you will be more likely to 'plateau' (get into a rut and be unable to progress further) and, worse, settle into hardened bad habits.

Both kinds of practice are necessary: 'fine' practice in stop-and-start mode, with immediate feedback, and 'extensive' practice with longer turns, on more routine, 'doable', typically spontaneously formulated speeches that are suitable for practising on your own, then listening to your own recording and self-checking, then continuing on the same or a similar speech and trying to improve. In extensive practice, you can do some longer turns of 20–30 minutes to build stamina and flow. When listening to yourself, don't just listen for problems of language, translation or technique, but also – and increasingly as you approach the final exam – for smoothness of delivery, pausing patterns, breathing, etc.

After a few weeks of Experimentation, you should have developed a flexible and reliable technique that works on a wide range of real speeches. You should now see that complex or obscure sentence structure is not a hazard but a routine part of all speech, and you should be able to deal with all kinds of bumps in the road using deverbalization, segmentation, anticipation, provisional framing (generalization) then filling or compensating, concision or expansion for fast or slow speakers, and a viable lag (EVS) that allows enough meaning to come in to make sense without running the risk of falling behind and losing any part of the message. In the next stage, you will need to consolidate this competence with robust self-monitoring, as a final check on the success of this mix of techniques in producing an accurate, fluent and intelligible product. You will also take a big step closer to reality by coming to grips with dense, formal and institutional discourse, delivered fast, with an accent or from written text.

8.5 Consolidation: from basic to confident SI

8.5.1 Overview and objectives

Two or three months after starting SI, you should now be able to keep up fairly comfortably on speeches of intermediate difficulty, i.e. of medium speed and density, on an accessible topic, delivered live and in a clear and in a more or less standard accent. You may still be caught out by some tricky passages, and playback will reveal where you missed things, or said strange things without realizing it; and you may still not be quite satisfied with your own powers of expression. But you should now be experiencing SI as a single and exciting task, in which language, on-line skills and knowledge interact to achieve coordination, instead of listening, memorizing, looking for words and speaking all getting in each other's way. In particular, the importance of **familiarity with the topic** should be increasingly obvious.

The next phase, Consolidation, means a leap in difficulty: you will now finally be interpreting real, authentic discourse from the most representative mainstream domains of conference interpreting. This will include more formal, complex and text-based speech in institutional and official registers, delivered fast, often from text, and in a variety of accents. The two things you still need to achieve confident SI on this authentic conference discourse are: a thorough understanding of the language and subject matter – including the 'house style', usage, and conventional translation equivalents of key institutions – and hundreds of hours of deliberate practice on relevant input (8.4.6). The goal now is to build up your familiarity and comfort level, one domain at a time, honing your reflexes and sharpening your SI technique until you can handle this more challenging real-world material with confidence.

Most interpreters will work in a wider range of settings than just formal intergovernmental meetings, but the institutions are still the traditional bread-and-butter of our profession. We can broadly distinguish three important domains:

- **international organizations** like the UN and EU (the largest employers in terms of interpreters and days), including other specialized or regional bodies like the IMF, World Bank, APEC, etc.;
- **national institutions and diplomacy**, with a focus on the country's government and its policies, positions and priorities;
- the **private market**, spanning a range of industries that regularly call on the services of professional conference interpreters: financial services, ICT, pharmaceuticals, automotive, sports, but also NGOs, international trade federations, unions, and many more.

Schools may have slightly different target markets depending on their location and language offering, but for many students, one or both of the UN and/or EU families will be key employers with which they must be thoroughly familiar, while still being equipped to adapt to a wider diversity of other genres and settings. Thematic blocks can also be constructed around materials from major extended international events (Conferences of the Parties to international conventions, Ministerial Meetings or Special Sessions, World Summits, UNGA, Davos, etc.). Such blocks can target a particular domain – international security, economic and financial affairs, climate, energy, environment, trade, employment or human rights, or even a specific industry that is a major employer in the local market, for which your instructors will help you get access to abundant documentation, including videocasts and speech transcripts.

This exploration of authentic materials should also, over time, cover topics in finance, banking, ICT – and whatever is currently 'hot' in the local private market – and should counterbalance the formal IO discourse with the more colloquial (but still specialized) talk of advertising or marketing executives, management consultants and a variety of geeks, campaigners, NGOs etc. Less common topics and genres should also be visited occasionally for a break and variety, either at mock conferences, or in a guest lecture that is challenging, interesting and original, calling for more on-the-spot conceptual analysis, resourcefulness, and creative and flexible language.

Your instructors should tell you well in advance what domain is to be tackled next, so that you can spend a few weeks preparing until you are fully conversant with the chosen institution or theme, its discourse, and the subject matter under discussion. This process can then be repeated, rotating through different institutions, meetings and topics in concentrated blocks of two or three weeks or more, depending on the school's main targets.

The international organization sector is an excellent place to start in the Consolidation phase, because of the abundance of up-to-date reference and practice materials available online in all the relevant languages. For illustration, 8.5.3 below sets out a procedure for learning all about the UN and practising SI on General Assembly materials.

To summarize, the aims of the Consolidation phase are as follows:

1. Consolidate technique through **extensive practice**, doing hundreds of hours of boothwork in and out of class.
2. Increase confidence and control by preparing and practising on fully **authentic target-market materials**, **one domain at a time**. Familiarity with institutional and mainstream subject matter, discourse patterns and jargon will improve anticipation and reduce cognitive load, freeing up capacity for self-monitoring, and eventually optimizing communication, or in difficult conditions, survival (see CC-9.3 and 9.4).

3. Use this domain familiarity to practise on **challenging speeches** delivered from written text in a formal register at faster speed or with an accent, and including institutional jargon, names, numbers, technical terms and other hazards.
4. Consolidate technique in **SI-text** on these more difficult written statements (still read out more or less verbatim), with progressively less time for preparation.

In this stage you will be practising extensively on your own or with a partner. For best results, follow the principles of **deliberate practice** (TG-2.6.2): focus on personal areas of weakness and specific challenging aspects of the task (using designed or partial tasks where appropriate); record and monitor your performance; work regularly with a coach who can give you immediate feedback; self-correct and repeat performance on problem passages and texts until satisfied.

Abundant sources of ideal authentic material that can be found online include audio and video recordings, plus official transcripts and translations in all the organization's languages, for the United Nations General Assembly[24] (UNGA) and the European Parliament.[25] National government departments carry leaders' and ministers' recent speeches, often viewable on YouTube. There is also C-SPAN,[26] and, in the US academic style, the TED talks,[27] etc. (see TG-2.5.5).

Regular mock conferences will also provide an opportunity to discover **relay interpreting** (discussed more fully in CC-9.2.3.3). Relay is also an excellent litmus test of the clarity and coherence of **simultaneous into B**, which Bsim students will have begun toward the end of Experimentation.

8.5.2 Knowledge and preparation

Preparation is crucial to good interpreting. The more we know and understand about an event, and about each speaker's background, topic, motivations and concerns, the better we can anticipate; the better we can anticipate, the more attention we have to spare; the more attention we can spare, the better we can hear ourselves to check and polish our production on line. In short, you should be realizing by now that information is at least as valuable as learning set equivalents.[28]

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24. http://www.un.org/en/ga/ (Accessed December 11, 2015).

25. http://europarltv.europa.eu/en/home.aspx (Accessed December 11, 2015).

26. http://www.c-span.org/ (Accessed December 11, 2015).

27. http://www.ted.com/talks (Accessed December 11, 2015).

28. Roland 1982: 7 (cited in Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2014) tells us that in some national armies in the Ancient World, interpreters were identified by the emblem of a sphinx. The three ages of

You should already be better informed than the average educated world citizen in several domains that run through international discourse and the world of conference interpreting: world politics, geography, government, economics and statecraft, diplomacy; how institutions are organized, conference and meeting procedure; current global issues, conflict hotspots and controversies; contemporary social, ethical, legal, medical and humanitarian issues; management, budgeting; the world of business, including leading companies and key personalities, and recent advances in science and technology.

This must be kept updated, but we also need to be able to rapidly acquire information relevant to each assignment. The topics of international meetings are many and various, especially on the open market. You may not realize what is 'technical' and needs special preparation, so a special module on **Conference Preparation** techniques is usually organized from the middle of the third semester (CC-9.2.5.1). At first, preparation of complex thematic blocks involving substantial new knowledge and terminology will be directed by the instructor (students tend to underestimate the amount of work involved) but you will soon be left to do this work yourselves, with only spot checks made on the depth of your knowledge and the adequacy of your glossary.

If a sizeable chunk of time in Consolidation is devoted to a major domain like the EU or UN, the subject matter covered will also be a fair proxy for the areas of current concern to the international community at large.

8.5.3 International community-speak: talking the talk

This section sets out a three-step procedure for immersing yourself in one major institutional discourse domain – in class, alone and working with a partner or a group – over a period of about a month. We have chosen the UN for this illustration because of the abundant materials and detailed instructions for preparing for the accreditation test that are provided on the web; a similar programme can easily be organized for the EU institutions. (Acknowledgement is due to the UN's own dedicated site[29] from which most of the procedure described here is directly taken.)

In this dedicated study-block (which some schools may manage to combine with a visit) you will become thoroughly familiar with the target organization, how it works, and its main sphere of action, by reading its statutes, rules of procedure,

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the interpreter today can be defined by the 'fuels' whose availability we are most sensitive to: language for the student, information for the professional… and energy for the veteran!

29. https://languagecareers.un.org/content/examinations-interpreters (Accessed December 12, 2015).

recent reports, minutes of meetings etc., but also outside materials including Wikipedia, recent media reports, op-eds, think-tank and critical comment. In the process you will also assimilate the language of intergovernmental/IO meetings in general and of this body in particular, including a lot of 'boilerplate' language for which ready versions in TL will be needed. Much of this is highly *routinized* in all languages, so having the corresponding expressions ready will help you sound authentic, and save effort both for you (through automaticity, see below) and your listeners who are used to and expect this phrasing and terminology.[30]

Automating where possible: greasing the groove

Expertise in cognitive skills involves extending processing capacity by acquiring and recognizing 'schemas', and automating parts of the job (Clark 2008: 82). Several authors have recognized the potential of partial automaticity through pattern recognition and developing viable equivalents to increase speed and control, while remaining vigilant against false regular patterns, thus freeing up attention for the main task of interpreting the speaker's message:

> The speed with which you process difficult vocabulary and syntactic structures depends partly on practice and experience. The more you translate, the more well-trodden synaptic pathways are laid in your brain from the source to the target language, so that the translating of certain source-language structures begins to work like a macro on the computer.… (Robinson 1997: 30)

> …any translation act will become reflected in a memory trace that connects the two terms of the translation; the more often the same two terms (words or longer phrases) co-occur in a translation act, the stronger the memory connection between them will be. (de Groot & Christoffels 2006: 198)

An important function of the SI-Consolidation phase is therefore to make some operations automatic, where possible, by recognizing regular patterns and 'greasing the grooves' for fast interlingual transfer.

Step 1: Initial upstream preparation

For schools targeting the UN market, students can begin this upstream preparation as of S2 in a two-year course, and can focus on these texts in sight translation class:[31]

i. Listen to UN Radio[32] and follow UN RSS feeds and podcasts, noting key UN concepts, vocabulary and titles and researching them.

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30. For an interesting discussion, see Heltai (2004).

31. All these steps are taken directly from 'Additional Ways to Prepare' on https://languagecareers.un.org/content/examinations-interpreters (Accessed August 23, 2015).

32. UN Radio: http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/index.html (Accessed December 12, 2015)
UN TV: http://webtv.un.org/ (Accessed December 12, 2015)

ii. Study UN organizational structure.[33]
iii. Read and study the UN Charter.[34]
iv. Obtain a variety of meeting reports and texts to study in parallel versions in your languages. (The UN publishes official documents in all six languages.)
v. Download actual speech recordings to practise listening on at first (and later to practise interpreting). For example, you can download recordings of all the statements made at the General Debate (video or audio of the original speaker, plus audio of the original interpretation in your language by a UN interpreter) together with the matching PVs ('Procès-Verbal' records) – the published transcript in English, and other languages if available. Create a personal study library, categorizing speeches by topic and complexity.

Step 2: Rehearsal (or 'Cheating'[35])

You are now ready to start interpreting these authentic UN materials. You can ease yourself into this more challenging material with *Rehearsal* drills, where you study the SL transcript before interpreting the speech, and refer liberally to the official translation – hence the alternative name for this exercise, 'Cheating' (Gillies 2004).

Here is a sample study plan in the early SI-Consolidation phase for a student working out of English into one of the other five UN languages.

> *Materials:*
> Statements from the General Debate: video, audio, PV.
> *Procedure*:
> i. Read through the PV of a statement in English. Identify and look up things you don't know how to say in TL – not only specialized terms and names, but also procedural things, general international organization jargon and routinized language.
> ii. Now read the translation (if available), or listen to the recording of the UN interpreter in your language. Cull out all the relevant expressions and any good 'ready versions', and learn them.
> iii. Optional: do a sight translation from the text, and try to recycle the expressions and ready versions you have just learned.
> iv. Play the video of the original speech and do it in SI, first (easier) while looking at the text, then increasingly (harder) without looking at the text.
> v. Then listen to the recording of your performance, check and fix mistakes.

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33. http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/index.shtml; http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/index.shtml, http://www.un.org/aboutun/chart_en.pdf (Accessed December 11, 2015).

34. http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml (Accessed December 11, 2015).

35. With acknowledgement to Andrew Gillies.

vi. Do the speech again and get everything right.
vii. A few days later, and then again several weeks later, do the same speech again, without preparation or text support, and check that you are still getting everything right.

An alternative sequence might be as follows (if there is an official TL translation available):

i. (Easiest): Do SI from the video while referring to the standard translation, oralising it, but following the speaker segment-by-segment.
ii. (Harder): Do SI-text, referring only to the SL text. Afterwards check against the official translation.
iii. (Hardest, but initially after doing (i) or (ii) first): Do the same speech in free SI without looking at any text, then check against the original text and its official translation.

Step 3: The real thing… (no cheating)

Once you are sufficiently familiar and comfortable with this material, begin to wean yourself off all artificial support and practise interpreting UN speeches 'cold', checking *afterwards* against the PV and the original interpretation. This is the procedure that the UN itself recommends in its online guide to preparing for the Competitive Examination for the Recruitment of United Nations Interpreters.[36]

8.5.4 SI technique and 'oral translation'

In international organizations like the United Nations family, as well as certain national institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and increasingly, parts of the EU, a significant part of the discourse to be interpreted consists of formal, crafted, recited presentations (read from carefully prepared written statements). This style is often found when meetings consist mainly of a sequence of monologues, and calls for a technique that we are now practising, described by Shermet (2012) as 'oral translation', in contrast to the 'standard interpretation' we use for the free or impromptu speech found in more dialogic, interactive discussions (even in the same organizations).

The first feature of 'oral translation' is an expectation of formal accuracy and completeness, tracking the original as closely as possible. Discourse in this style is more likely to be monitored by meeting participants.

A second salient feature is the expectation that standard, established equivalents be used smoothly and with little or no hesitation. Structural agility remains vital; but mastering routinized language, style and terminology here is more

36. https://languagecareers.un.org/content/examinations-interpreters (Accessed August 4, 2015).

important than the spontaneity and imagination needed for other, more impromptu speaking styles.

Third, these formal, prepared, written speeches contain long and complex sentence structures, which require very good segmentation technique to keep up with the speaker. This is best practised in sight translation.

Fourth, with familiarity this kind of discourse clearly becomes easier. For example, it may be heavily laden with names of committees, projects or funding facilities, and set formulaic phrases and jargon. The seasoned professional (especially a staff interpreter) knows what each of these entities is and does, and exactly what it is called in her target language. With this familiarity, s/he can work in relative processing comfort, often anticipating the speaker, reformulating in bigger chunks, and lagging somewhat farther behind where necessary to improve style and coherence without dangerously overburdening working memory. Conversely, an interpreter with a different style might make use of this familiarity bonus to track the speaker very tightly, because s/he can react very fast to what s/he is hearing, has highly available TL ready versions, and can anticipate what the speaker is about to say.

In 'standard interpretation' in particular, students who observe experienced professionals in the booth are sometimes surprised at their more elastic lag on certain speeches or passages (cf. Moser-Mercer 1997). But the novice, who is still relatively unfamiliar with the entities and events referred to, and the specialized language, does not have this luxury, and to be safe will usually need to be closer behind the speaker. It will take months (or years) of immersion and practice in this discourse world to achieve the comfortable fluency of the experienced professional, whichever style they develop. But the learning curve becomes gentler with each new domain.

Crafted political speeches by world or national leaders are another genre that is text-based, often monitored, and often not provided to the interpreter in advance. A related genre, common in some circles (such as the Non-Aligned Movement), but also generally in opening and closing sessions and other ritual events, is rich in honorific and ceremonial formulae. Students should also begin to study samples of these speech types as of this stage.

8.5.5 SI-Text (continued)

SI-text will be done regularly throughout SI-Consolidation. Indeed, in some meetings (like the UNGA) most if not all of the input speeches will be delivered from text. It will soon be clear how SI-text technique must be adapted to variations in the way the text is delivered (verbatim or not, fast or slow), and to the time available for preparation. Some speakers will oralise, paraphrase and even omit and add material – so the priority must be on *listening* (after having read the text) over reading.

Sometimes, a dense text will be given to you with little time for preparation, but fast reading and the ability to highlight key words and passages will help you keep track if the speaker reads very fast. At this stage, since the language will at first seem dense, formal and unfamiliar, practise at first on texts read without deviations; but aim to gradually reduce your preparation time, and (also very gradually), have the reader speed up the pace of delivery (see CC-9.2.3.2).

8.5.6 Consolidating the product

The other goal of Consolidation, alongside discovering this more formal material, is to consolidate the **product**. As the context and jargon become more familiar, more of your attention can be freed up for **self-monitoring**, so that, at least on speeches of standard difficulty, you can work on sounding clear, natural and engaged, using meaningful prosody to make your interpretation easy and pleasant to follow. Pauses must be in the right places, not in the middle of what should be uttered in one breath, i.e. one tone unit. Sentences must be complete, not only grammatically but now also prosodically: for example, after a complete idea, avoid making a tentative pause (rising/questioning intonation in English) as opposed to a final one (in English, with falling intonation). Avoid rushing through paragraph-shifts with no pause, e.g. "that is why this must be done now. Mr. Chairman, the other thing I would like to address is…" all in one breath.

Remember that in SI, your listeners have access to only a disembodied voice. Interpreters, like radio announcers, must compensate for the missing visual dimension with *extra*-clear diction, intonation, rhythm and cohesion, and avoid falling into a monotonous drone, a breathless jumble, or, conversely, an artificially engaging, falsely modulated but meaningless patter.

Students may now also have to make a renewed effort to eliminate empty fillers (ums and ers) and solecisms that were targeted in public speaking but may creep back under the pressure of SI.

8.5.7 Consolidation: summary

By the end of this stage of training, your technique should be stabilized on speeches of standard difficulty in a prepared formal domain. Congratulations! if you have made it this far, you are successfully interpreting the stuff that 'real' simultaneous interpreters make a living doing – formal speeches and statements made by leaders, ministers and diplomats in the main international organizations. There is still a little way to go to shore up your competence on the whole range of difficulties and hazards of the most demanding real-life discourse, with combinations of fast speed, strong accent, specialized language and high information density on less familiar or even technical subject matter, possibly combining multimedia presentation (slides, speech, text, video) and hybrid multi-mode tasks (like consecutive with sight translation), as well as special challenges like loose, incoherent discussion among insiders, or speech features that call for strategic judgment, such as culturally-loaded or elliptical content, untranslatable jokes or offensive and off-colour remarks.

These complications will be addressed in the 'last mile' of training described in the next chapter. Also, you will need to accumulate still more booth-miles, varying genre and topic, while also practising working in relay and/or into your B language. These more complex conditions will be simulated in mock conferences, and your instructors should be able to organize one or two visits to see professionals working, and to practise at real-life meetings in dumb booths.

Simultaneous interpreting has been analysed, modelled and discussed by 'practisearchers',[37] cognitive scientists and experts in translation studies. Some frequently-asked questions are briefly answered below, but students interested in the main theories and controversies will find discussions of key issues in TG-8.6 and the works listed in Further reading at the end of both these chapters.

8.6 Understanding SI: some theory

We close this chapter with some tentative answers to four common questions about simultaneous interpreting:

i. How is it possible to listen and talk at the same time? ('multitasking')
ii. How far behind the speaker should I be? (the interpreter's 'lag' or ear-voice span)
iii. How can you do SI between languages with different sentence structures? (word-order asymmetries)
iv. Can I or should I predict what the speaker is going to say? (anticipation)

8.6.1 'Multitasking' and expertise

SI seems to involve doing several things at once – listening and understanding, finding the right words in the target language, speaking and checking your own output. This has led some observers to see it as an example of 'multitasking'. But this term can be confusing when applied to SI.

37. Interpreters who do research on interpreting – a term coined by Daniel Gile.

> When we can perform one or more tasks on automatic, our cognitive system is freed up for parallel processing, more commonly known as multitasking. In other words, we can devote working memory resources to complete one task while we perform the others automatically. This works fine until the primary task demands our working memory resources. (Clark 2008: 82)

In classic laboratory multitasking experiments, subjects are made to do multiple tasks with different goals (like trying to follow a story while identifying shapes on a screen) or in different modalities – perceptual, cognitive and motor, e.g. reading and/or listening and sorting coloured bricks into piles. Tasks like these compete for *focused attention* and therefore can't really all be done properly at the same time. But we often combine activities which each claim only *partial or low-level attention* – for example, ironing and thinking about a family member while keeping an ear open for the weather forecast on the radio. These simple tasks can easily be done simultaneously albeit perhaps by rapid sampling or switching between them.

Beginners in SI have trouble coordinating listening/analysis, formulating, speaking and self-monitoring, even on fairly slow and easy speeches, so they miss segments of input (listening deficit) or produce truncated or meaningless sentences (production deficit), often without realizing it, as shown when later interviewed (self-monitoring deficit). Similarly, in the ironing example, a sudden focusing of attention – radio static just as the weatherman is talking about imminent storms in your area – would interrupt your thoughts about your cousin, making you put down the iron, or burn a hole in your shirt. SI is indeed experienced as 'multitasking' *by the novice*, vulnerable to the slightest distraction in one or another task, or to breakdown in the face of faster and more difficult input.

Fully understanding a speaker and translating what s/he says elegantly and convincingly are more difficult tasks than ironing and half-listening to the radio. But unlike these tasks, they can be combined because they are linked (or should be) to a *single common unfolding mental representation* – the speaker's message.

Beginners have to 'multitask' *consciously* much more in SI because they have yet to coordinate listening and speaking, and/or are still too focused on the words in both languages, creating two different thought streams – or even three, if we add worrying about translation problems. In expert interpreters, enough of the secondary processes like linguistic comprehension and formulation are automatic to let them focus their attention on the unfolding experience of the speaker's message, to which each language stream is linked but without distracting from it – at least while all is going well. The balance between the primary experience of understanding and secondary tasks like formulating, speaking and self-monitoring may be quite comfortable *except* when some block in these peripheral processes (strong accent, ambiguity, trouble finding a word, etc. – see the diagram in TG-8, Appendix) demands special attention, which involves *conscious resource-splitting* and real multitasking, potentially destabilizing unitary processing.

We do not have neurological evidence for this, but psychologists studying text comprehension and recall have found that experts relied not only on semantic information decoded from the words of the text, but also on a situation model of the story, built by enriching this textbase with their own background knowledge, and allowing them to relate new input to more general patterns from previous experience (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Kintsch 1998). Experts in many different fields – from chess to air traffic control – have been found to work with such models and schemas, which may override rigid locally-applied rules for increased efficiency (Ericsson 1996; Kohn and Kalina 1996).

8.6.2 Lag (*décalage*, EVS)

As we have seen, lag in SI is a complex phenomenon that can be explained by an interaction of three factors or constraints:

First, *memory*: as studies in psycholinguistics have shown (Sachs 1967), and as some interpreting theorists have stressed (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1986 and *passim*), when we listen to a speaker, the words we hear evoke ideas in our mind that can be remembered for longer than the individual words themselves, making remembering those words unnecessary. Some words, however – like names, numbers and technical terms – may not fit readily into an idea and are likely to be forgotten very quickly.

Second, *the information we have available* at a particular point, and whether it is enough to say something. As we listen, ideas take shape (helped by our knowledge) as more words come in. A listener in the audience can choose to let this process continue until the end of the speech, by which time (for most people) parts of what was heard will have faded or merged into a more general memory of the macrostructure of the communication (Kintsch and van Dijk 1992); or s/he can choose to retain certain parts of the speech by taking notes. The simultaneous interpreter can't wait until the end of the speech as a written translator can, or even the end of the passage, like a consecutive interpreter, or for that matter the end of the sentence, like a dialogue interpreter. By virtue of the requirement to start and finish with the speaker, s/he must work with sub-sentence chunks of input, joining them up as best s/he can. Some openings can safely be translated immediately context-free ('Furthermore,…'); others don't make sense at all until several words have come in; but the interpreter usually has some choice about the size of these units, when to start, when to chunk, when to wait or stall, and when to start again.

Third and last: the *words we have available*. Even when we have some meaning ready to express, we must arrange it using words and syntax that are correct and intelligible in the target language. How long I take to say what I have just understood depends on my active wordpower and syntactic agility.

Discussing lag in terms of numbers of words or even seconds behind the speaker can be misleading. Lag has proved somewhat elusive in research – even in carefully timed and synchronized transcriptions of real SI – because of the difficulty of pinning down which items to measure in the SL and TL versions, and of identifying an average that is truly meaningful in terms of local processing choices and constraints.[38] This is because grammar and word order can get scrambled and re-ordered; speeches may fluctuate in speed and regularity, between dense and redundant passages, or between tight lists of names and numbers that can be repeated immediately and conceptual musings that require stalling and thought; and an individual interpreter's lag pattern will also depend on personal factors, such as her own memory capacity for different kinds of information, her familiarity with the topic and terminology, and the predictability of the speech.

What we can say is that a rough *overall average* of around 2–4 seconds is widely accepted as viable and typical of most interpreters, although there are clear individual differences. In the SI-Experimentation phase of training you should find the viable bounds of this elasticity, and what works for you, on different kinds of speech.

Working 'conceptually' with a longish lag, catching up only when necessary to catch frozen items like names or numbers, may work (and even produce better results) when you are familiar enough with the material to store large chunks conceptually, and to summarize easily and accurately if you start falling behind. But this technique obviously won't work – and may even be disastrous – with informationally-dense material where every other chunk contains numbers, technical terms or unfamiliar names, or in the case of diplomatic or official texts, when set terminological equivalents are required even in preference (alas) to intelligent and idiomatic reformulation.

When working with a text (SI-text: CC-9.2.3.3), falling behind is also very dangerous, for another reason: the speaker can easily add, change or omit things (even skip a whole paragraph), and you are lost.

38. For example, Lederer (1981) found an overall lag of about 3 seconds in German to French SI samples from two interpreters, but with some wide variations, from negatives of '*minus*' 5 seconds, when an item is anticipated, to outliers of up to +11 seconds. Ono et al. (2008) measured an overall average of around 2–4 seconds between corresponding individual content words in a very large sample of SI by four Japanese-A interpreters, with a significantly longer and more variable lag for Japanese into English (4.5s) than English into Japanese (2.4s). Lee (2002) found an average of 3 seconds in English to Korean SI for television (where there is greater pressure for a short lag).

Because of the complexity of the process and the many factors described above, it makes little sense for an instructor to berate a student because she was x seconds or y words behind the original at a particular point, *unless* the negative consequences are clear for all to see: the *proof of the pudding is in the eating*. You will soon discover that extremes should usually be avoided, and that long and short lag each have their corollaries. You can follow close behind the speaker as long as what you say stays faithful and easy to listen to; or you can maintain a slightly longer lag as long as you don't miss anything or fall behind, which for names, numbers and lists will mean either quickly catching up, or jotting them down, or – most unlikely – remembering them.

It may be worth adding here that, although a longer lag was traditionally associated with better, more expert SI (see e.g. Herbert 1952) drawing on more context and supported by better domain-specific working memory, surveys have suggested that some users may be bothered by long EVS (Moser 1997: 169–170). Listeners who don't understand the SL at all may only notice the lag when the interpreter makes long *pauses*, or can't keep up with visual information being presented in slides, or continues talking for more than 3–4 seconds after the speaker has stopped. When SI users understand even some of the source language, reports from some markets suggest that more of them (perhaps since more people now understand some English) are explicitly voicing a preference for 'faster' SI, or disprefer interpreters with a longer lag.

A short lag is safer for getting short-span items like numbers and new names, but the resulting narrow window prevents waiting or stalling while complex embedded structures resolve themselves, leaving skilful 'tight chunking' as the only recourse. This is a difficult skill that also inevitably destroys or defers some logical links between the propositions, shades of relative emphasis, etc., which then have to be restored, either linguistically or by intonation.

All simultaneous interpreting is, inevitably and almost by definition, a form of approximation at the first pass. Expertise means learning to analyse and anticipate well enough to achieve a close approximation and then compensate effectively and unobtrusively to restore the meaning temporarily lost due to the inevitable constraints of simultaneity. This whole process can only be achieved by

i. understanding the input well enough to be able to vary one's lag without losing information in memory (which depends on the familiarity and predictability of the input, which in turn depends on preparation, conditions and so on); and
ii. having the linguistic flexibility to approximate and compensate in the output language.

8.6.3 Word order – a problem for SI?

Word-order conflict between languages – when part of a speaker's sentence is 'the wrong way round' for linear translation into the target language – is perhaps the most-cited obstacle to SI. Seasoned interpreters deal with it by a mixture of the standard techniques: chunking (using 'open grammar' and some linguistic heuristics), anticipation (helped by rich background knowledge), and some limited waiting or stalling.

'Awkward' word order is ubiquitous. Most early investigators of SI being Europeans, the focus of interest has been on the difficulty of putting German, Russian, Chinese or Japanese into English or French. In these source languages, a verb or predicate – traditionally seen as the heart of the sentence's meaning, and usually coming early in English – may be delayed until the end. In English or French, nouns usually start the clause, preceded by their article and at most one or two adjectives, then are followed 'comfortably' (to natives of these and similar languages) by the rest of the related information in a relative clause (which…), whereas a German or Chinese speaker may give us all sorts of information about the entity before telling us what it is. For example:

> *der vor nur einigen Tagen geschlossene aber schon von allen zuständigen NGOs als bahnbrechend anerkannte internationale Vertrag gegen illegalen und unregulierten Walfang….*
>
> 'the since-only-a few-days-concluded but already-by-all-relevant-NGOs-as-a-breakthrough-recognized treaty against unregulated whaling….'

Working from this partially SOV[39] order to SVO (English, French, etc.) can pose a problem when there are few clues from context or prosody to help anticipate a verb, or a noun delayed by a long modifier.

But there are also difficulties the other way round. These leading questions beloved of modern TV interviewers will not go easily into any of the seven or eight languages known to the authors:

> How bad is unemployment in Europe? And how much of a scandal, as one previous speaker, the Minister, called it, is it? How worried should we be about…? etc.

For speakers of SOV languages, English is an awkwardly right-branching language in which Noun and Verb phrases (often long and complex) are most annoyingly *followed* by their prepositional-phrase or relative-clause modifiers: achieve x BY doing y, x is so BECAUSE y, do x BEFORE y, do x AFTER y, the x THAT has y attribute, etc. In left-branching languages, the equivalent structures would be premodifiers that would have to come first, *before* their Head.

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39. SOV: Subject-Object-Verb; SVO: Subject-Verb-Object.

From these examples, word order looks like a real headache – and for students in their first contact with SI, it certainly is. In countries just discovering SI training, from Europe in the 1950s and 1960s (for German), Japan in the 1980s and China today, the possibility of good or even acceptable SI between 'asymmetrical' languages has often been initially questioned.

But as readers can readily imagine, this problem, though real, does not belong to the category of 'impossible' obstacles (described at the end of the next chapter), but is just one of many bumps in the road that can be handled with standard SI techniques. Seasoned interpreters deal with it by a mixture of chunking, using 'open grammar' and some linguistic heuristics, anticipation (helped by rich background knowledge), and some limited waiting or stalling. Also, it is far more acute in certain types of speeches, specifically formal or written discourse, where such structures are more common and the 'blind' segments involved may be longer. (Also, no language is purely SVO, or SOV: see the examples in 8.4.1 of English and French sentences starting with verbs or prepositions.)

The SI techniques that interpreters use to negotiate word order – chunking, deverbalizing, reformulating, flexible syntax, generalizing, simplifying or anticipating – draw on basic resources and processes like language, knowledge and inference, and are developed through a series of exercises that we have set out, beginning in CC-6 (Sight Translation). They rely partly on advance clues in the speech, but also to a large extent on knowledge and context, which makes them harder to use by students who are not yet at home in international conference discourse and are still in the artificial environment of a classroom.

It is natural in these circumstances to see the problem as linguistic, and look for linguistic solutions. In Europe, most trainers have discouraged this approach, even when training students in SOV to SVO combinations (e.g. German to French), on the grounds that linguistic restructuring heuristics might be difficult to apply when interpreters are focused (as they should be) on the meaning, not the language structure.

From the literature, however, it seems that such heuristics may be better accepted, and indeed welcomed by students for dealing with recurrent awkward structures in some language combinations – for example, English sentence-final 'by'-headed and 'through'-headed prepositional phrases when interpreting into Chinese or Japanese (see e.g. Tohyama & Matsubara 2006). If students manage to negotiate such awkward asymmetries spontaneously using their acquired technique, there is no need to draw attention to a particular structure per se. If not, these and other troublesome patterns can be analysed in ST exercises when they come up, and the instructor can show common ways frequently used by professionals to resolve them, which can then quickly and smoothly become integrated into the students' SI technique (procedural knowledge).

In professionals, this process becomes internalized as second nature. With experience, interpreters are less and less aware of word order problems. Linguistic asymmetry *can* become a problem even for seasoned professionals in formal (legal or ceremonial) registers, particularly if a text is read out but not provided to the interpreters, since written language is designed to be read (with look-back and look-ahead at the reader's pace) and makes little concession to a listener's preference for 'linear' input. The difficulty increases when the text is read without the listener-friendly intonation that helps interpreters guess where the sentences are going and use their knowledge to anticipate.

Unfortunately, both formal discourse (officialese) and the reciting of prepared texts are now a routine part of an interpreter's fare, especially on some markets. The word-order problem becomes very real when, for example, a formal or legal text containing extended conflicting structures is read out, providing few clues for anticipation, and approximation-compensation (8.4.1, 8.4.3) is risky because users are expecting (and perhaps checking for) a literal, terminologically-exact rendition. We return to this rather specific hazard in CC/TG-9.

8.6.4 Anticipation

As early machine translation enthusiasts discovered, decoding and recoding a text using only a pair of dictionaries and a pair of grammars with no other knowledge external to the text will only rarely and accidentally produce a meaningful translation of an utterance used in real communication. A trained simultaneous interpreter can produce fluent and sufficiently faithful versions of continuous speech with only a short delay only because there is enough information from the incoming discourse, combined with what she knows about the speaker and the event, either to anticipate outright what the speaker is going to say, or at least to sketch the beginnings of an utterance in such a way as to be able to flesh it out and specify it very soon, as more clues come in, without seeming to stammer or correct herself.

Anticipation is key to successful SI. It has been called a 'strategy', but in fact is more like a serendipitous use of a natural tendency of the mind as we listen to speech, automatically looking ahead, projecting sentence structures but also exploring the associations of the incoming words, as part of our drive to gather sense as early as possible (Chernov 2004: 91–92; Altmann & Kamide 2007; Mayberry et al. 2009). As Chernov pointed out, this instinct is to a large extent what makes simultaneous interpreting possible, and developing and leveraging it is therefore a key part of SI training, just as we seek to enhance and leverage other basic comprehension processes – attention and memory – as of Initiation.

In SI, partly due to word-order asymmetries and the lack of look-ahead, interpreters must often *vocalize* their prediction of the utterance's continuation (and sometimes irritate people by finishing sentences for people on social occasions…!) – a habit which, as we saw above, turns out to be a common means of neutralizing awkward structures and asymmetrical word order. One controlled study found that professionals handled 60% of awkward Chinese 'coverb' structures (see examples below, e.g. '在 *zai…*', '对 *dui…*') for SI into English by means of voiced anticipation, against only 23% by 'linear' rendering (chunking) and 17% by waiting (Dawrant 1996: 83–84).

Studies of transcripts have shown that both silent and voiced anticipation are a common feature of SI, and in fact occur not only on awkward sentences or in interpreting between asymmetric languages. Anticipation can be linguistic, based on recognition of a common collocation, or 'cognitive', when the speaker's drift becomes patently clear before he has finished his sentence (Lederer 1986); or indeed both. Any speech can occasionally contain sequences with linguistically predictable delayed elements ('these measures have already played an important or in any case far from negligible instrumental role in…'), and some are trivially predictable on almost purely linguistic grounds:

1. (German-English)
…dass Herr Schmidt früher Leiter der Strafrechtsabteilung in München war bevor er 1983 Präsident des Bayrischen Zentralkriminalgerichts und dann 1988 Präsident des Bundesgerichts wurde.
…that Mr Schmidt earlier leader of the penal law department in Munich was before he (in) 1983 President of the Bavarian Central Criminal Court and then 1988 President of the Federal Court became.

Anticipation can use linguistic cues, but both sentence continuations and the general sense and direction of the speech can also be predicted using other knowledge – of the world, of international meetings and their jargon, and of the event we are interpreting – and therefore increasingly so as familiarity with the speech and meeting grows. In many cases, as Wilss (1978: 348) pointed out, experience and familiarity with forms and meeting procedures helps makes some endings completely predictable – in Example (2) below, 'thank' is predictable at the very latest on hearing 'for the work':

2. (German-English)
Namens meiner Fraktion darf ich den beiden Herren Berichterstattern für die Arbeit, die sie aufgewendet haben, sehr herzlich DANKEN. (ibid.: 348)
On behalf of my parliamentary group may I [the two rapporteurs for the work they have done] cordially THANK.

3. (Chinese-English)
中国代表团收到了秘书处印发的、七十七国集团提出的、题为“粮食问题”的决议草案。
The Chinese delegation has received (the) [issued-by-the-Secretariat, Group-of-77-sponsored, titled-“Food Issues”] DRAFT RESOLUTION. (Zhuang 1991: 253)

4. (Chinese-English)
今年春夏季经济社会理事会就当前世界经济形势和货币、金融、债务、资源流通、贸易和发展等相互关联的问题，进行了比较深入的讨论。
This year’s spring and summer Economic and Social Council sessions [ON the current world situation and the interrelated issues of money, finance, debt, resource flows, trade and development] HELD IN-DEPTH TALKS. (Liu 1987)

Voiced anticipation offers clear potential rewards in terms of fluency, but also inevitably carries some risk of error (just as other techniques – waiting or stalling – carry the risk of overloading memory with the intervening material: SI can also be seen as a constant process of risk management). The continuations in examples (3) and (4) above are less transparently or securely predictable than (1) and (2), even with massive context – for example, the speaker may well say ‘*updated* draft resolution’, or ‘held *very fruitful* talks’.

Anticipation is rarely a sure bet, and voiced anticipation does not have to be an all-or-nothing gambit. The most common type of anticipation that is ‘voiced’, in the sense that it can be detected by a close comparison of synchronized transcripts (Setton 1999), is a kind of sketch or approximation of what seems to be coming, which can then be fleshed out or adjusted (compensated) downstream to align the product more precisely on what the speaker actually said (Kohn & Kalina 1996; Setton 1998, 1999; see 8.4.3 above). In fact, all of SI can be seen as relying inevitably on a process of approximation and compensation, insofar as the speaker has a richer source of knowledge on which to base his choice of words – not least the knowledge of what he is about to say – than the interpreter does.

The technique of ‘approximating’ voiced anticipation is described in the Framing and Filling exercise in the SI-Experimentation phase (8.4.3). It often involves using a generic placeholder, with the option of adding and specifying later when the actual ending is heard. In example (3) above, we can first say “has received ‘the text’” or ‘the document’, then add ‘namely, the draft resolution’ (3). In (4), we can provisionally say ‘discussed’, then complete later with ‘in in-depth talks’ (4).

Example (4) highlights the need for caution: a student who, on hearing the speaker beginning to list the issues (‘ON…’) rashly voiced too specific a prediction, such as ‘issued a statement’, would have to backtrack and correct herself embarrassingly (‘or rather’, …’).

One basic risk lies in unconscious reflexes to linguistic conditioning, as shown in an amusing experiment by Chernov (1979/2002) in which subjects heard and rendered 'Rome was not built in a day' instead of the speaker's actual words 'in a dale'…; or more generally, to a kind of cognitive prejudice (Setton 1999: 62) when words evoke a seemingly familiar belief or position which is then interpreted in 'freewheeling' mode by the interpreter who has relaxed her vigilance, whereas the speaker is actually saying something different.

More generally, the level of risk in voiced anticipation will vary between cautious and more generic language that can be corrected or adjusted downstream, and bolder and more specific commitments that may be more difficult to repair or undo.

In some rare instances, a 'form-vs-meaning' crisis can arise when the interpreter is faced with an awkward structure in a situation where the interpretation is being closely monitored by listeners who are attending at least as closely to the form and choice of words as to their sense, so the interpreter dare not approximate, even provisionally. This may happen in adversarial legal battles, drafting sessions, or high-stakes political and diplomatic situations. For example, when dealing with a delayed SL verb when doing SI into English or French, the standard strategy is to anticipate with a neutral verb and adjust the sense later as required (8.4.3). However, this may not work if, for example, the wrong tense or modality is selected, or the guessed verb has the right denotation but carries the wrong nuance, misrepresenting the delegation's carefully weighed statement of intent or negotiating position in a way that cannot be adjusted at the end of the utterance.

Weighing the risks and benefits, an interpreter might thus choose *Waiting* when there is close monitoring and/or literal expectations, *Approximation-then-Compensation* in a lower-stakes situation, and outright guessing only in very low-risk situations (e.g. thanking the Secretariat for the documents prepared). As a rule of thumb, then:

- ► If you are very sure, and the risk is low, then just go ahead and say what you think the speaker is going to say. For example:

  > 'I'd like to ----[40] [*Interpreter says 'THANK'*] the Secretariat, for the [for this meeting painstakingly produced very high-quality documents [EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION…]]

- ► If you are *somewhat* sure, but feel there is some risk in committing yourself too explicitly, say something neutral, both in meaning and tone, then specify downstream if necessary, weighing the importance of the added information for relevance (and processing-related risk, e.g. the possibility of missing something else while elaborating).

40. In this SL, the verb of which 'the Secretariat' is the object is delayed until the end of the sentence.

- In *high-sensitivity situations*, such as high-profile political events or tense, adversarial situations, use the *utmost caution* – for example, when interpreting a keenly-awaited ECB announcement on interest rates in German, with the verb – raise, lower, leave unchanged? – at the end of the sentence, on live TV.[41] In such cases, *never guess*, and make sure that any advance approximation or placeholder is as neutral and colourless as possible (e.g. 'announce a change'). Above all, at public events and in the presence of media, avoid using any wording in a voiced anticipation that calls attention to itself, or might risk becoming a soundbite or a focus of attention and discussion. In such situations, totally neutral padding, however vacuous, and even inelegant grammar until the message emerges clearly, are preferable to the risk of making a serious error.
- Finally, **in SI-text** where the text is provided, resist the temptation to *get ahead of the speaker,* even just by a phrase – perhaps to achieve more natural word order in the target language. This is dangerous, since the speaker may then deliberately omit that phrase (it may have been included in the text by error). There are attested (but confidential) cases of sensitive information having been wrongly publicised in this way, with serious consequences:

Anticipation and risk – an example

Text as given to interpreter ('check against delivery'):

'Ce protocole comporte une prise de participation de AIR WORLD dans le capital de PLANETAIR <u>à hauteur de 21,58%</u>.'

Text as read by speaker: 'Ce protocole comporte une prise de participation de AIR WORLD dans le capital de PLANETAIR.'

Interpretation as spoken: '……………The agreement provides for Air World ……. to take a <u>21.58%</u> stake in the capital of Planetair.'

The interpreter, seeking more natural style in English, has read ahead to the end of the French sentence, and while the speaker is still reading the words '*dans le capital*' in French, anticipates and speaks the words '21.58% stake' out loud in English on mike before the French speaker has even verbalized it in French. Unfortunately, the French speaker deliberately decides NOT to give the figure, and instead merely says (in French) 'take a stake'. Thus, the commercially sensitive figure has been irretrievably divulged by the interpreter, without authorization.

41. Although in practice, they would be unlikely to take this risk.

The lesson is clear: as a matter of risk management, the interpreter should not let herself get ahead of the speaker, even by one phrase, even when the speaker appears to be reading verbatim, if there is *anything* remotely sensitive, high-stakes, tricky, nuanced or even just substantive involved. If you can't judge, then it is better to be very conservative and use some other technique than anticipation, such as (tight) chunking, waiting or stalling.

Risk management is an important part of interpreting in general, not only in making the second-by-second technical or tactical choices entailed in SI, but also at the level of more general strategy in regard to mediation and optimization (e.g. when dealing with wide cultural gaps). Interpreting, and especially SI, involves constantly making judgments and trade-offs between processing effort, accuracy/completeness, communication impact, and risk (cf. CC/TG-10.4).

8.7 Summary: learning to do SI

Simultaneous interpreting is a cognitively challenging and complex task, but it remains a social act of communication performed live for real people in specific situations, speaking with more or less confidence, sometimes unpredictably, incoherently, hesitantly or incorrectly, sometimes fast, technically and formally, but with specific goals and expectations. Not everyone is cut out for SI, and no-one should embark on this training without the requisite language ability, general knowledge and aptitudes. But with dedication, feedback and deliberate practice, this stimulating and rewarding skill can be mastered in incremental steps, beginning with adequate preparation through various kinds of mental, verbal and textual gymnastics (CC-4, CC-6, CC-7), then progressing through exercises that gradually increase simultaneity (SI Initiation and Coordination), becoming more and more realistic in terms of speed, variety, style and delivery (Experimentation), until students can handle most of the fast, formal and technical material of a typical 21st century conference interpreting assignment (Consolidation). These exercises, reinforced with abundant practice in the booth, and detailed and constructive feedback on performance in class, mock conferences and personal recordings, should take qualified trainees to a level (by the middle of their last semester), where they are ready to discover the full reality – solemn, stimulating or hair-raising – of conference interpreting in real life (CC/TG-9).

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)
See also Further reading in TG-8

History of SI
See Further reading in CC-2

Theory, practice, models
Chernov 1979, 2004: Inference and anticipation in SI
Gile 1995/2009: Effort Models, theory, pedagogy
Jones 1998: (chapter on SI)
Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: interpretive theory (ITT), pedagogy
Setton 1998, 1999, 2005: cognitive-pragmatic (Relevance-Theory) approach
Setton 2003a, 2009, 2013: overviews of models of interpreting in the literature

Sources of practice materials
Community Wiki from interpreting.info:
http://interpreting.info/questions/507/recorded-conferences-or-presentations-for-practisingsimultaneous-interpretation (Accessed August 21, 2015)
Speechpool: http://www.speechpool.net/en/ (Accessed February 13, 2016)
EU Speech Repository:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/cooperation-with-universities/speech_repository.htm (Accessed August 21, 2015)

CHAPTER 9

Reality and advanced tasks

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Preparing for reality

As the last semester begins, you should be able to get the message across on most mainstream speeches, and know how to prepare a meeting, with its subject matter and background, its participants and their agendas and priorities. However, as of your first day on the market – especially in the private sector, without the benefit of a tailored induction programme (like the EU's Newcomers' Scheme) – you could well find yourself in a very difficult meeting that is highly specialized, relatively unpredictable in procedure and content, hard to prepare due to late notice or lack of documents, and sometimes, in working conditions that are poor but not quite bad enough to refuse. Even the best students will find it very difficult to cope without additional preparation for these realities of everyday professional practice.

In the belief that schools should complete the job of training to market readiness, this chapter offers proposals for bridging at least part of this gap within the course with advanced 'last-mile' training, to take you from confident performance on straightforward input in a controlled environment (SI-Consolidation) to reliable professional competence for the real world (Reality).

Up to this point, you have practised on speeches and texts of gradually increasing difficulty in terms of speed, density, style and content. You have learned to interpret from speech to speech (SI), from text to speech (ST), from speech to speech via text (Consecutive with notes), and from speech and text together (SI-text). In real life, combinations of speech, text, slides and relay (via another interpreter's speech) will be routine.

In the last semester, your instructors should provide more and more realistic material, with classes, mock conferences and practica where speakers deviate from their texts, or use slide presentations that have to be done via relay, and consecutive is mixed up with sight translation. In the last few weeks you may get a taste of some of the most difficult – and sometimes impossible – conditions and user expectations that you will face in real life, to work on coping strategies, or (as discussed in CC-10 and CC-11) learn how to try and forestall these hazards by talking to clients.

Knowledge, skills and language now all converge, but the focus of the last few months of training should be twofold: on a more **user-oriented** product as you raise your awareness of the participants and their communicative situation; and on the development of **more agile skills**, as well as **teamwork**, professional judgment, and general resourcefulness for dealing with doable but less predictable material and for surviving in severe and delicate conditions.

9.1.2 User orientation

Your aim should now be to deliver a product that is precise and polished – not just 'acceptably clear' for knowledgeable and motivated delegates, but comfortable to follow for all your listeners. This will mean rooting out hesitations, dysfluencies and bumpy prosody to sound like a confident, articulate speaker, but sometimes also balancing the temptation to eloquence against the shorter lag and extra clarity you will need when colleagues in other booths are taking you on relay.

To achieve this seamless product in challenging real-life conditions – speed, numbers, accents, and the unexpected in general – you will need to have an overview of the whole event, its background and the issues most relevant to participants, and learn to **work with your colleagues as a team**. This means cooperating closely in preparation and document management, and knowing how to give and receive help from boothmates (such as writing down numbers – but you must also be able to manage speeches with names and numbers without help). All this should be practised in regular mock conferences with abundant documentation, relay interpreting, and evaluation by visiting 'pure users',[1] and where possible, **on-site practica** in dummy booths at real meetings, followed by debriefing.

9.1.3 Advanced tasks vs. hazards and impossible conditions

In real life we are sometimes faced with conditions that *combine* several of the difficulties that we have already met in SI-Consolidation – a dense written speech not supplied to the interpreter *and* read out fast in a very strong accent; an incoherent speaker jumping around in a slide presentation that is heavily loaded with barely legible text, adding comments and statistics orally and confusing the order of the slides; consecutive from speeches with slides or mixed written texts; Q & A with a remote speaker on a poor telephone link; an unannounced presentation on a highly technical topic, or quoting poetry, scripture or ancient philosophy; or

1. Pure user (or listener): someone who does not understand anything of the original language and relies entirely on the interpretation.

taking relay from an incompetent interpreter imposed by the client or a delegation – not to mention a variety of unexpected hazards like problems of visibility, speaker errors, and so on.

Dealing with such extreme conditions is a bit like facing climate change: we do what we can to **mitigate** or forestall problems by client communication and personal preparation; but when the storm hits regardless, we must usually **adapt** by coping as best we can. Prevention is better than cure: better to arrange for optimal conditions through the professional relationship than to be thrown back on last-minute emergency crisis management. Without this, the best that can often be achieved is damage control. Your instructors should provide guidance on both fronts: on the upstream and flanking measures you can take to forestall problems, by communicating with clients and users – *mitigation* – as explained in CC-10 and 11; and *adaptation* – advanced skills and emergency tactics (9.2.3, 9.2.4 and 9.3) for managing the most difficult conditions.

9.1.4 Overview of the final semester

The components of this final-semester training are as follows:

1. **User Orientation**
   a. Put yourself in the place of the listener. Be clear, coherent and easy to listen to. Close any gaps in self-monitoring.
   b. Be aware of the live communicative situation, and how the meeting and the event are unfolding. This is usually a quicker route to communicative success than last-minute worries about linguistic details.
   c. Be alert for surprises and ready to make on-the-spot **judgments**, guided by the principles of professionalism (CC-10) in dealing with humour, irony, 'untranslatables', delicate or sensitive material and cultural gaps to be bridged.
   d. Quickly weigh the risks and benefits of a more proactive (optimizing) vs. a more constrained style, avoiding both over- and under-interpreting (CC-4.4.3.1, CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4).
2. **Advanced on-line skills** for more challenging input
   a. Continue to broaden your **range of comprehension**: work on a wider selection of accents, unusual topics and speakers with quirky, confused or unstructured speech styles (9.2.1).
   b. **Extend your skillset** to handle more complex tasks, like advanced SI-text (how to prepare texts received at the last minute) and mixed-media tasks (consecutive with ST, slide presentations on relay) (9.2.3).

c. Round off your **general knowledge** for conference interpreting, with an introduction to additional key domains, such as Parliamentary Procedure, Budgets and Accounts, or the Language of Research (CC-7.3.2; TG-7.4).

3. **Survival skills** for extreme conditions or unrealistic demands
   a. *Mitigation*: forestalling problems through *professional foresight* and interacting with clients. Develop a sense of the users' expectations and be able to judge the feasibility of a task (9.4) against the commitment to provide an acceptable service. This dimension – Professionalism – is further developed in CC-10 and CC-11. Prepare each assignment thoroughly and work with your colleagues **as a team** before and during the event (9.2.5).
   b. *Adaptation*: when mitigation fails, be ready to fall back on coping tactics like summarizing, gisting or literal translation, calling attention to the problem, and other more radical expedients (9.3).

On the first type of input – challenging but still possible – you will now be held to a higher standard of performance, as the emphasis of the instructor's monitoring shifts to the quality of the product, including delivery. On the hardest material, you must find a way to make sense.

9.2 Competence for the real world: complex but routine tasks

9.2.1 Extending comprehension and knowledge

In the last semester of the course you should seek out accents, registers and speech styles that are still unfamiliar or have given you trouble and get used to them through study and practice.

By the end of the course, you should have had a taste of at least the following **registers** and **genres** in your various languages, both from private study (see CC-7.3.2, reading list levels 2 and 3) and through class practice from the Experimentation stages of Consecutive and SI.

All the following should be sampled, but the relative emphasis and time spent on each can be adjusted according to the school's main target markets:

i. *Officialese, national and international*: statements by delegates at the UN or international financial institutions (IFIs: World Bank, IMF); texts and speeches from national government institutions and bilateral diplomacy. This category should be addressed in the first half of SI-Consolidation (CC-8.5).
ii. *Political speech and crafted oratory*, including speeches by national leaders, ministers or opinion leaders in international fora.

iii. *Procedural*, e.g. committee procedure, voting, motions; hearings.
iv. *Business, financial and legal (private market)*: semi-technical to technical presentations and discussions on topics in economics, finance, capital markets, banking (central and commercial), information and communications technology, green technology, corporate/commercial law, etc.
v. *Ceremonial and ritual occasions*: parliamentary opening and closing speeches, awards, valedictory speeches, tributes, obituaries.
vi. *Relaxed, business-like, conversational and colloquial* registers in corporate, academic and social settings; 'purposeful storytelling', inspirational/motivational speaking; TED talks.
vii. A sample of *hard technical topics*, such as medicine, engineering, biotechnology, where relevant for target markets, and only with solid preparation.
viii. Miscellaneous frequently recurring formats including press statements; protests; MC scripts, potted biographic introductions ('let's go round the table and introduce ourselves'; or 'our next speaker holds a BA from… has published on…').

You should now practise on speeches that are both challenging and atypical, and language enhancement should include practice in understanding difficult non-native and regional accents. You will also need knowledge and terminology in some specialized areas that are pervasive in conference interpreting, such as Parliamentary Procedure (if not already begun), Budgets and Accounts, or the Language of Research (including surveys, graphs, statistics, etc., common to nearly all fields in this 'evidence-based' age).[2]

9.2.2 User orientation

Finally making contact with the reality of international conferences is a kind of second discovery: to quote T. S. Eliot,[3] the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time. The native communicative abilities you showed at admission have now been fleshed out with knowledge and skills and can be confidently deployed in interpreting.

By now you should have a new perspective on the job. Many candidates for interpreter training are attracted by the *linguistic* challenge of interpreting; they then go through the mainly *cognitive* process of acquiring new skills and expanding their knowledge until they finally master these skills and can appreciate the

2. Short descriptions of these modules are given in TG-7.8.

3. Eliot, T. S. 1943. *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt.

social dimension of interpreting as a service, where we must be aware at all times of what users actually hear.

The basics of 'user-friendly' interpreting – fluent delivery, clear and intelligent expression, cohesive packaging, pleasant voice quality and modulation – were coached in Public Speaking at the Initiation phase (CC-4.5), practised thereafter when giving presentations or a second version of an interpretation, and tested in Consecutive (CC-5.7, 5.8). In SI, you should already have begun polishing your delivery, and should continue to do so through the last semester – especially into Bsim – with special attention to:

- eliminating audible hesitations, pauses (filled or unfilled) in the wrong places, unnatural prosody and other artefacts of on-line processing;
- using the prosodic devices of the TL (emphasis, intonation, rhythm) effectively and expressively;
- sounding fluent and confident in delivery, and where cautious, still reliable;
- improving voice quality, breathing, and microphone technique.

User-friendly interpreting is more than just voice and delivery. You can give listeners better access to the meaning for less effort in various ways (depending on the setting),[4] including better cohesion and packaging, verbal and prosodic 'signposting', adding explicit connectives and discourse markers, or even making neutral mini-summaries and recaps to restore cohesion and flow when speakers ramble excessively, compressing 'given' and highlighting 'new' information to increase the signal-to-noise ratio, and where necessary and appropriate, simplifying or explaining.

Optimization is more difficult to do in SI than in Consecutive, but there are some quick decisions one can take to make the users' experience of SI more comfortable, at the price of a (reasoned) trade-off in which some norms of fidelity strictly defined, such as completeness, terminological accuracy or polished expression, are sacrificed for the sake of increasing relevance and comfort to users. For example:

i. ***Acronyms*** and ***initialisms*** cannot be assumed to be familiar to all your listeners, and may be meaningless to many or all of them if not spelled out. Also, listeners may not know the official equivalent abbreviation (that you found in the documents) in their own language, or may never use it in practice.

4. Not all these procedures are appropriate in all settings by any means, and norms may vary between different meetings at the same event or in the same organization. For a discussion of this spectrum of interpreting norms, from 'constrained' through 'default' to optimized interpreting, and the various forms of optimization, their implications for fidelity, and their potential risks and benefits, see CC-10.4.

ii. A correct or official ***term or title***, such as the name of a local administrative unit, may not always mean something to listeners, so you may do well to 'annotate' it (CC-5.8.4). You should know the institutions of your SL cultures and nations – and others where possible – and have a ready phrase up your sleeve for, say, 'the Estonian stock-exchange watchdog', 'the Czech environmental protection agency', 'Korean banking regulators' or 'the Vietnamese association of catfish producers' (examples from Minns 2002: 3–4).

iii. Some or all of the audience may be ***non-TL-native*** listeners. More often than not – especially in English – interpreters may communicate better overall by 'centering' their register,[5] using standard, commonly understood language, and avoiding local, slang, rare or literary expressions – and for some audiences, even avoiding 'casual' usage.

9.2.3 Completing the skillset

What is a 'complex task' in interpreting? Compared to basic 'natural interpreting' (in which someone speaks a sentence or two and the interpreter then says the same thing in a different language), full consecutive, sight translation and simultaneous are all already cognitively complex. SI in particular was at first thought to be impossible. Yet as we have seen, all these tasks can be gradually mastered by integrating new ways of listening, attending and capturing meaning, boosting language proficiency and knowledge, and using the context and situation.

Three added levels of complexity can make real-life interpreting much more difficult than 'straight' Consecutive and SI done in favourable conditions:

- ► when *more sources are added*, like a mixture of speech, text and slides;
- ► when *key sources* are *obscured or removed* (lack of documents, reduced visibility or presence);
- ► when *additional demands* are made on the *product* (e.g. to summarize on request, translate literally without delay, or use a professional broadcaster's voice and delivery when working for radio or TV).

9.2.3.1 *Consecutive and ST: hybrids and variations*

Some real-life situations may need a mixture of consecutive (with notes) and sight translation, when speakers read out passages from a prepared script or a written document. Very dense texts are not suited for pure consecutive (CC-2.2.1); for example, this passage read at normal speed (130–150 wpm) would be exceedingly difficult:

5. Shlesinger (1989).

> We conducted a double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized trial to assess the effect of subcutaneous enoxaparin (40 mg daily) as compared with placebo – both administered for 10±4 days in patients who were wearing elastic stockings with graduated compression – on the rate of death from any cause among hospitalized, acutely ill medical patients at participating sites in China, India, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, and Tunisia. Inclusion criteria were an age of at least 40 years and hospitalization for acute decompensated heart failure, severe systemic infection with at least one risk factor for venous thromboembolism, or active cancer. The primary efficacy outcome was the rate of death from any cause at 30 days after randomization. The primary safety outcome was the rate of major bleeding during and up to 48 hours after the treatment period.[6]

For this type of passage, you would definitely need the text – but you would also need to take consecutive notes when the speaker strayed from it to make additional comments.

Variations and mixtures of consecutive and sight translation in real life include

i. 'Consecutive with text': a speech for consecutive that includes passages read from a text, or a text read out (ST) with digressions that have to be done in consecutive;
ii. Consecutive from a mixed-media presentation, e.g. with slides, explanations on flipcharts, whiteboards, or even video clips.

These exercises will help prepare you for these complex forms.

Level 1:

1. Instructor hands out the written text.
2. Instructor reads the text aloud, deleting or adding a few words or a phrase here and there, and adding a couple of new substantive sentences in each paragraph.
3. On their texts, students note the deletions (by crossing out text) and additions (by making consecutive-style notes on the page, between the lines and/or in the margin).
4. A student interprets, making sure that all changes are captured.

Level 2: As above, but the pace of delivery is stepped up and with more improvisation and deviation from the text. Now you will run out of space on the print-out, so your consecutive notes will spill over onto other pages, or a consecutive notebook – so you must mark carefully which 'off-site' notes correspond to inserted speech at which points in the text.

Level 3: The instructor now jumps around in the text, e.g. starting from paragraph 3, then adding something new, then reading from paragraph 1, etc.

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6. Kakkar A. K., Cimminiello C, Goldhaber S. Z., Parakh R., Wang C, Bergmann J. F.; LIFENOX Investigators. Low-molecular-weight heparin and mortality in acutely ill medical patients. N Engl J Med. 2011 Dec 29;365(26):2463-72. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1111288. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22204723 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

Level 4: (extremely difficult): Interpreter does this standing on stage, holding papers and notepad in the air (no lectern) and looking poised while juggling them. (This combination of sight translation and consecutive interpreting is very common at ceremonial events as well as receptions, functions, dinners where you have to work standing up. It is vitally important to have a microphone stand, as there is no way you can manage a handheld mike while taking notes and referring to documents, standing.)

Practising with proper names

In the original text, the medical research abstract in the example above was followed by the names of the main researchers (not all the 383 collaborators credited):

'Ajay K. Kakkar, M.B., B.S., Ph.D., Claudio Cimminiello, M.D., Samuel Z. Goldhaber, M.D., Rajiv Parakh, M.D., Chen Wang, M.D., Ph.D., and Jean-François Bergmann, M.D. for the LIFENOX Investigators'

Lists like this are very unlikely to be read out – they would be quite impossible to render in consecutive without a text – but proper names are a notorious hazard in interpreting and should be deliberately practised in special sessions, first 'statically' (from lists, with a well-travelled instructor to help), then in consecutive and SI, not later than from S3. The amount of practice that you will need to reproduce names recognizably, at least, will vary widely depending on your culture and knowledge of the world.

9.2.3.2 *SI-text: speech delivered from a written text*

We have already used Sight Translation and its variants at earlier stages of the course, as a deverbalization exercise (CC-4.3.2), and as preparatory training for SI (CC-6). When a text is first given to the interpreter and read out in the original language, there is an opportunity for marking and annotating it to direct the eye and help to achieve speed, momentum and user-friendly packaging and prosody when delivering the interpretation. This is also very helpful for SI-text.

Instructors will have introduced 'straight' SI-text – where the text is provided with time to prepare, and read verbatim with no departures – during SI-Experimentation, explaining how the text can be prepared, marked-up and used during delivery, as well as the new challenge of 'eye-ear-voice' coordination and the pros and cons of using the text on line. The main points to remember for SI-text are that:

i. the actual speech as delivered always has priority;
ii. listening is faster than reading;
iii. but judicious use of the text can help to recover a lot of information (especially names and numbers) that might otherwise be lost, especially if delivery is fast or the speaker paraphrases or re-orders the original text.

However, you will need much more practice in the distinct skill of SI-text than has traditionally been provided in schools, since in real life it is very common, and varies widely in difficulty, depending on various factors.

Speeches vary along a continuum of preparedness or 'writtenness'. Let us briefly recall our typology (see CC-4.5) here for convenience:

1. unprepared (off-the-cuff, impromptu),
2. semi-prepared (from an outline or notes),
3. scripted:
   a. pseudo-oral (text written for delivery as a speech) and
   b. recited text (text not originally drafted for reading aloud)

The density and difficulty of a presentation will also vary widely with (amongst other things) the originality of its content and the speaker's oratorical skills. Type 3 (b) is particularly unsuited to SI – and indeed for any oral communication – since it is a message delivered in a medium for which it was not intended. The worst cases an interpreter may encounter are variants of 3 (b) read out fast by a non-native speaker, or poorly and monotonously by any speaker, even native, who has not previously read or rehearsed it for delivery, and perhaps did not write it. This task can become close to impossible if the text has not been provided.

In some institutions, speakers are (still[7]) often advised not to read from a prepared text – at the repeated behest of interpreters, but also, in line with parliamentary traditions and in the interests of better communication. Today, however, despite all efforts to encourage more communicative speaking (CC-10.2.3), reading from prepared text is increasingly common, for various reasons:

> *Exposure*: Political and business leaders increasingly speak under intense media exposure and scrutiny. Every statement made in a written speech can be carefully researched, crafted, polished, and vetted, and the speaker can be sure to avoid mistakes of both content and expression. Teleprompter technology preserves the illusion of directness and spontaneity. (And sometimes a speech may have to be read for protocol reasons, by an official who may not himself have written it, or be personally involved with its content.)
>
> *Time pressure*: Reading a written text is easier than generating a fresh speech. A public figure may have to give five or six ceremonial and substantive speeches in a single day, on different topics and to different audiences, all of whom are expecting a polished performance demonstrating knowledge of the occasion, and delivering compelling messages. Even in parliament-like assemblies, conventions, or more private, informal meetings, speakers may have had no time to prepare and rehearse an interactive presentation, or may want to compress more information into the short time allotted them.

7. This tradition of encouraging extempore speech (or from outline notes) is still upheld in many EU institutions, especially the European Parliament, but is gradually being eroded. In the UN family, it has for some time been taken for granted that virtually all formal statements are delivered from written text.

> *Language*: More and more speakers from all over the world are now obliged to speak publicly in a foreign language in which they are not sure of themselves, and so, understandably, prefer the support of a prepared text.

For all these reasons, more speeches than before are now presented from a text that is either read verbatim (and sometimes uncertainly or monotonously), or used as a basis for live delivery by a speaker who may or may not have written (or even thoroughly studied) the text, but adds in, omits or changes things spontaneously on the fly.

From the point of view of interpreting feasibility, trainable strategies and coping tactics, two very different conditions must be distinguished – interpreting **with** and **without** the **text** of the speech.

Interpreting a speech read out from a text that you have been given is an accepted mainstream skill in conference interpreting, and there are specific techniques for coordinating the use of the two sources – the text and the live speech as delivered. Figure 9.1 shows why SI-text is a skill that is distinct both from the unseen condition of free SI, and from two-phase modes like consecutive and sight translation (and of course, the relatively leisurely back-and-forth process of written text translation). In SI-text, you have up to four sources: one that you *must* use (the speaker); one that you can use or not, but probably need (the text); and one or two more that you may have if you received the text in time to prepare it (your memory and mark-up notes).

	Phase 1 (First pass)	*Phase 2 (Second pass)*
Consecutive	SPEECH MEMORY → NOTES	MEMORY **NOTES** } → SPEECH
Sight Translation	Variable condition: text may or may not be given in advance / read out first in SL	**TEXT** NOTES } → SPEECH MEMORY
Free SI	(*speculative preparation*)	**SPEECH** MEMORY } → SPEECH
SI with/from text	TEXT	SPEECH **TEXT** NOTES } → SPEECH MEMORY

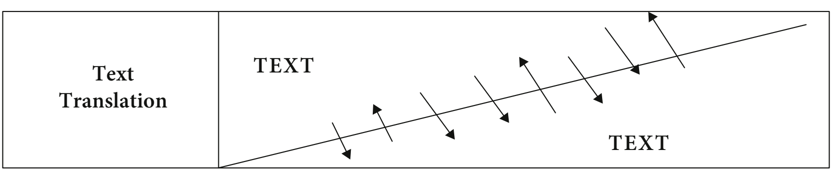

Figure 9.1 Dynamics and resources in different modes of translation

As we can see, SI-text is more complex in terms of sources – more to choose from, but potentially more to attend to – and has other pros and cons. If the text is provided in advance, it allows a first, preparatory pass, but then adds another dimension in the delivery phase – reading – to the overlapping channels that already have to be juggled in SI. However, in this case listening, reading and producing should not be like three unrelated tasks of the kind set in multitasking experiments. Just as free SI is possible because input and output at least share the same meaning, if not the same form, in SI-text the speech is usually at least similar to the text provided. In the event of conflict, the speech as delivered always takes precedence, whether or not (as is often the case) it is explicitly marked 'Check Against Delivery'.

In terms of the difficulty of SI-text vs. free SI, trainers report different perceptions from one region to another. In Europe, SI-text is usually considered harder than free SI, whereas beginning students in China generally seem more comfortable, and perform better – on *straight* SI-text, at least, with a text they have carefully prepared that is then read out verbatim at slow-to-normal speed – than on free SI from an impromptu speaker presented at a comparable speed. We know of no specific research, but this may be attributable to a combination of a reduced interference hazard (non-cognate languages), less exposure to spoken English in China than in Europe, and/or cultural differences in the relationship to the written word.

Since SI-text is very common in real-life (perhaps increasingly so), we introduce it in its easier 'straight' (prepared, read out verbatim) form as early as the SI-Experimentation phase (CC-8.4). However, this 'ideal' SI-text is the exception not the rule, and most speakers will deviate from it in one way or another. This does not mean that the written text can be discarded. What makes SI-text a distinct and challenging task is that in practice, the *interpreter often cannot simply ignore the written text*. A bona fide speaker who chooses to read from a text that he has given the interpreters in advance will reasonably expect them to get across every detail and every stylistic effect, both of which are usually more densely packed and prepared than in extempore speech. To do the speaker justice, you must therefore *prepare the text* – if you get it in time – and devise a way of using it to best advantage online, allowing for possible omissions, additions and other deviations.

In (both ST and) SI-text, then, the quality of interpreting will depend largely on

i. how thoroughly you have prepared the text in advance; and
ii. how skilfully you use these different (re)sources on line, *insofar as they are all needed*.

An interpreter who has visited and marked a text in advance might be compared to a mountain or forest guide who, having reconnoitered the terrain in the days before the expedition, is able to lead the hikers unerringly along the path, showing them clear views of the landscape as well as interesting local details.

Text preparation techniques: managing representations

Interpreters can be quite idiosyncratic in their individual preferences, especially on complex tasks. This section offers a fairly complete description of SI-text tips and techniques for different situations. Students should experiment and find the approach that works best for them.

Whatever the mode, we are always working with the same raw materials – chunks of language and knowledge, represented in one of four ways: speech, text, notes, or memory. When the input is complex and in mixed format, the trick is to *provide yourself* with the kind of representation that will be most helpful and effective to produce the words you choose to convey the message. We cannot do without memory (mental representations) but we can use text and notes as much or as little as we need to.

In SI-text, the text can be read and digested in advance, and can also be marked up to direct the eye during rendition. Also, can make notes on the text to use with it or even instead of it. The best use of a text online depends on both the text type and the individual interpreter. When a text is densely packed with facts and figures, and/or very 'written' in structure, having it to hand to consult while interpreting can greatly increase accuracy and completeness; but it may also be a treacherous distraction when the speaker departs from the script. The choice is individual, since it involves many factors, including different degrees of comfort with eye-ear coordination, time available for text preparation, how fast you can read text in the source language, etc.

Training can develop these **document handling, preparation and on-line co-ordination** skills for use in a range of conditions.

Even when there is good collaboration between event organizers and interpreters, texts to be read may reach you either days or hours, minutes, or seconds in advance (in the last case, too late for preparation). Bearing in mind that we usually have several texts to prepare for a given session, the strategy depends on the time available. This means we have to develop three kinds of strategy for preparation and/or coping on line.

1. *Ample time*: the text is provided *days or hours in advance*. This is the optimal situation, since you have time to study the text carefully, fully absorb its content, style and terminology (building a rich discourse model), pre-solve all translation problems, even rehearse performance, and do a brilliant job in the booth. In this case, the primary inputs when on line are the speaker's voice and your rich memory of the text and the already worked-out solutions; the text is just a secondary reference. However, two points must be noted:

   i. writing out a full translation of a text to be interpreted, in the unlikely event that one has time to do so, *may* help in some cases (such as very literary or 'written' texts or passages, and provided the handwriting is 100% legible), but is subject to caution, since we cannot expect just to be able to read it, but must still check against delivery – the speaker may jump paragraphs or add comments which will escape an interpreter who is engrossed in the proud recital of her literary masterpiece;
   ii. if you prepared the text, even thoroughly, a few days earlier, you will need to glance through it again to refresh your memory shortly before interpreting.

2. *Short notice:* the text is provided *20–30 minutes in advance*. Now the exercise resembles the other 'mixed-input' forms (consecutive and sight translation) in which the two passes are closer together (Figure 9.1). In good conditions (a quiet environment with enough time to read through the text carefully, and provided the text does not require special research or consultation), this may be close to ideal, since the ideas will be fresh in short-term memory; but linguistic interference must still be combatted, and speed and coherence optimized, by notes on the text that perform both suppressing and highlighting functions, and cue some TL expressions and translation solutions.[8]

3. *Last-minute*: texts coming in *too late for preparation*. The interpreter may either
   a. prefer a 'hot potato' strategy, setting the text aside and working purely by ear – especially if the text looks more obtrusive (long crafted sentences) than useful (names and numbers); or
   b. try to do speaker-paced sight translation, but with an effort to be concise, and above all, vigilant, monitoring the speaker to keep up and incorporate any deviations.

8. Depending on the density and style of the material, but also the time available, the kind of reading needed will vary widely between intensive and extensive for different passages in the same text (see CC-7.3.2 for an explanation of these terms) but must never be 'active' reading, which would imprint the words and structures of the source language!

This is a situation where your boothmate can you help find the place the speaker is reading from in the text, if and when needed (CC-9.2.5.2; CC-11.2.3.3), thus allowing you to do some parts 'free' but others, where more advantageous, from the text.

Signposting: marking up text for SI-text
A pilot study of mark-up techniques for SI-text in students and experts (Setton and Motta, unpublished) showed markings falling neatly into three categories:

i. *saliency* enhancers (underlining, highlighting, circling);
ii. *structuring* marks (slashes to break up long sentences, bracketing, arrows, large commas); and
iii. target-language or 'intermediate' *solutions* (words, abbreviations, symbols).

Although no direct correlation could be detected in this study between the number or type of markings and the quality of the performance, there were some suggestive patterns: the top five performers (all professionals with over 10 years' experience) marked more economically, decisively (rarely revising their own markings) and regularly (throughout the text).[9]

Text mark-up can be used as first described for Cue-words and Links (CC-5.3) then for Sight Translation (CC-6), or consecutive-style notes can be made in the margin. Ultimately, the only criterion is what works for you. Instructors can point out the various possibilities from which you can choose and possibly combine – e.g. cue-word highlighting plus consecutive-style notes in between lines of text or in the margins, to capture the main points in a dense paragraph with a few simple symbols and abbreviations to be used as recall cues.

The marked-up text can thus itself be used as much as (or more as) consecutive notes, enriched by memory, than as a text to be converted into TL in 'sight translation' mode. Unless it is the type of text and situation that requires a very close, literal, constrained translation (legal, for example), good preparation and mark-up will make it possible to use just the notes and memory (with the actual speech coming in as a check) – a precious short-cut to reading if the speaker is going very fast.

9. These interpreters made an annotation – a saliency mark, a word or a note – every other line on average, as compared to five such marks every four lines for the five poorest performers (all novices who had just learned the technique); the best experts made restructuring marks every 6 lines on average, the novices every 3.5 lines.

SI-text: key techniques

1. **Using the text in advance**: preparation and mark-up
   - if extremely pressed for time, read the abstract (if there is one) and conclusion very carefully; then scan the introduction, section headings, the first and last paragraphs of each section, and the first line of each paragraph; check for important names and technical terms, numbers, quotes, jokes, literary references, and very long sentences, and mark up accordingly.
   - for the densest parts of the text, make consecutive-style notes synthesizing each paragraph in the margin, highlighting names and numbers in the text.
   - consider if there are any parts that you might want to write out as a full translation (e.g. a stylistically powerful ending).
   - use the remaining time to rehearse your rendition and note some actual output solutions.
2. **Using the text on line**

If the text is dense and involved, attend mainly to the speaker to trigger recall of what you have already read and understood. This will help you keep up. Refer to your saliency markings and any consecutive-style notes you have written between lines or in the margins, instead of looking at the text.

In this more advanced stage, the instructor or speaker can rephrase, correct, jump or add comments to keep students on their toes, with someone assigned to monitor production, either against the text (student or TA), or as a 'pure listener'.

SI-text delivery: managing EVS (lag)

With the whole text in front of you (or so it seems), it may be tempting to think that you can fall behind, and catch up in a pinch by doing a bit of compression – especially if you have prepared the text and are confident that you know its content. The text (or a passage) may be mostly conceptual, with no names and numbers but developing sophisticated arguments that you would like to reformulate to make crystal clear, or with crafted, stylish language that you want to do justice to, but haven't quite had time to find that perfect word or idiom. However, this is very dangerous, because – in this kind of speech as in any other – the speaker may add or change things, or even skip a whole paragraph, without you even realizing it.

Conversely, when working with text, beware – as a safe general rule, but especially in high-stakes contexts – never to *get ahead of the speaker* and render something in the text that he hasn't yet actually said out loud (see the airline takeover example in CC-8.6.4).

Finally, creative reformulation, however 'written' the text may seem, will not be welcomed in a 'constrained interpreting' setting (CC-10.4.1), as when interpreting legal or diplomatic texts, or, of course, when the text is being worked on with the aim of drafting a new version.

SI-text: supporting skills

Add an hour or two a week of practice in **fast reading** to your out-of-class language enhancement activities (significantly more for some B/C languages[10]): this is a precious and even indispensable skill, both for text preparation (when you are given multiple texts to prepare at short notice) and for glancing or scanning ahead during delivery. Aim to take no more than 20% longer to read a text in B/C than an equivalent text in A.

In addition to the exercises described in CC-6, the key techniques for fast reading are:

i. don't articulate sub-vocally;
ii. practise glancing ahead;
iii. use top-down processing to recognize patterns and zero in on key messages and new information.

Additional training activities for challenging SI-text include intensive practice in scanning, looking forward, synthetic paraphrase, syntactic recasting (see e.g. CC-8.4.1), compression and abstracting (9.2.4 below).

Real-life hazards of SI-text

The complexity of SI-text makes this difficult art vulnerable to a range of hazards and traps – for example:

- the speaker changes, summarizes, expands on or omits parts of the text;
- the speaker reads monotonously or poorly, with inappropriate prosody;
- the speaker has an updated version of the text, but the interpreter only has the previous one;
- the speaker suddenly accelerates, or reverts to 'bullet point' presentation, or reads a sentence and perhaps a statistic, here and there;
- the speaker accidentally jumps a page, or reads the same passage twice;
- the interpreter's copy has one or more pages missing, repeated twice, or stapled in the wrong order;
- the text is in barely legible (e.g. if handwritten), or contains scrawled annotations and insertions;
- the speaker has a text in SL, but the interpreter has received only a poor TL translation, possibly of an earlier version of the original.

Any of these hazards may cause you to lose touch with one of your sources – either the text or, much worse, the speech as delivered. If you set aside the text and trust

10. Students whose B/C language uses logographic script (Chinese, Japanese) will typically need much more and longer regular practice, starting earlier (Y1) to achieve adequate reading speed; 'scanning' will not usually be a realistic goal.

to your free SI skills, you may come unstuck on densely-packed facts, names and numbers; if you press ahead with the text regardless, just sight translating as fast as possible, you run the possibly greater risk of falling behind, with consequences ranging from the awkward and embarrassing to the potentially disastrous, such as:

- missing the speaker's spontaneous corrections (additions, anecdotes, qualifications, jokes…);
- racing to catch up but not noticing he has digressed, getting ahead of him, then wondering what to do when he starts reading the paragraph you have just translated;
- saying something the speaker hasn't said yet, and decides not to say (cf. CC-8.6.4);
- rendering whole paragraphs that the speaker has skipped, thus falling so far behind that you can't finish in time, and missing the speaker's key messages in conclusion.

These traps of SI-text frequently trip up beginners and sometimes even professionals. This is why even advanced students need abundant practice in this peculiar art – including, unfortunately, variations on the 'cruel and unusual punishment' described above, such as texts read fast with no time for preparation, where selective compression is the only viable solution.

9.2.3.3 *Relay interpreting: giving and taking*

Simultaneous relay interpreting is used in meetings where not every booth is able to interpret from each language spoken on the floor. In this system, an interpreter – known as a 'pivot' – interprets a speech from a 'rare' language Q into a more common language R, which is then interpreted by her colleagues in other booths into one or more other languages S, T, U, V etc.

Relay interpreting is common, but requires expertise in timing, packaging and delivery, especially in the 'pivot' interpreter, and can be much improved by good teamwork. Although some interpreters will have to provide relay more often than others in their professional lives, all students should practice both giving and taking relay, to understand the challenges of both roles.

Providing relay: the role of the pivot
(adapted from the *Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters* [AIIC 2004/2014[10]])

The 'pivot' has a very special responsibility. Apart from those delegates who are listening to the original, everybody else at the meeting is relying on the pivot to deliver the speaker's message. A good pivot is, first and foremost, a good interpreter; but she must also make a special effort to interpret with the needs of the colleagues taking her relay in mind, and to be maximally clear and helpful. […].

11. http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm/article21 (Accessed December 13, 2015).

Those taking relay cannot hear the prosody of the speaker's discourse, and therefore cannot rely on its intonation, rhythm, and stress to help them follow the thread. Also, because they do not know the language of the speaker, they may not pick up on cultural referents, allusions, and nuances. Moreover, they may lack familiarity with the local circumstances, political, geographical and other, of the country that the speaker represents. They may also find it difficult to repeat names of persons and places in a language they do not know. Added to all this is the extra difficulty of feeling cut-off or one step removed from the speaker and the conference room.

These inherent difficulties of relay interpreting call for the pivot to adopt a special approach, tailored to the needs of colleagues taking relay. The following guidelines should be explained to students:

i. **Relay and SI-text**: If you have received an advance **copy of the speaker's text** in a language that is understood by colleagues in other booths, make sure that they receive it. If you have a copy in your language only and there is time, ***brief*** the colleagues who will be taking relay from you on names, numbers, and terms or key messages of special significance in the text. Even a copy of the original text may help them if it is especially dense in names and numbers or international bibliographic references, in tables and lists, for example.

ii. **Begin speaking immediately**, filling in the first few seconds of lag time with something neutral if necessary, so as to reassure the other booths that they are tuned in to the correct relay channel and that the relay system is working. **Avoid long pauses** in your interpretation, and above all, **do not get too far behind** the speaker, and try to finish with the speaker or as soon after the speaker as possible. Remember, there is a double lag in relay. If you take too long, by the time the colleagues taking relay from you have also finished the next speaker may already be a few sentences into his speech. Keeping your lag short particularly crucial when the speaker is commenting on visual material like tables, photographs or slides (CC-9.4.1).

iii. **Articulate clearly**, particularly in the case of *numbers, names* (people, countries, institutions, acronyms) and *document references*, sometimes even repeating if possible. You may pronounce difficult or unfamiliar SL names in a way that makes it easy for your colleagues downstream, who do not speak the source language, to repeat – mild 'domestication.'

iv. Be **easy to follow**: try to construct simple complete sentences, and avoid using obscure words or expressions.

v. Clearly **indicate each change of speaker**, if necessary by stating each new speaker's **name and identity**. This is important because the interpreters taking relay cannot hear the floor and therefore may not be able to tell when there is a change of speaker, or a change of language, risking either unnecessary relay interpreting or a channel conflict; in some cases, therefore, it may even help to announce the language the new speaker is using.

vi. **Self-correction and clarification:** do not reproduce the speaker's false starts or obvious slips of the tongue, but if you realize that you yourself have not been clear, restate the idea clearly and succinctly. If, after interpreting an idea, you realize in the light of further context that a clarification or revision is needed, make the necessary correction clearly and succinctly. If the speaker makes asides about his/her own speech – for example, after making a mistake, correcting it and saying 'sorry', or mentioning that s/he can't seem to find the right place in a document, etc. – you may add the words 'says the speaker', to avoid any confusion.

All other things being equal, a good pivot should **add coherence** in processing the information, making the relay-taker's job easier in some cases than direct interpreting. But adding coherence, packaging and voice modulation takes effort, so the pivot may be faced with a difficult choice. It is sometimes suggested that the interpreters taking the relay will always prefer clarity and regularity of delivery to speed and completeness (Minns 2002). Yet on some kinds of fast, fact-and-figure-packed speech (a medical research report, for example), *listeners* (and indeed the speaker) might prefer a fast, literal and somewhat monotonous, but complete, interpretation, which would be almost impossible for relay-takers. Finding the right balance between the needs of your speaker and listeners and the needs of colleagues taking relay in other booths (and their listeners) makes working as 'pivot' a stressful and demanding job.

Relay from a slide presentation

In slide presentations, slides may sometimes get flipped before interpreters are finished with them – let alone their colleagues on relay. The pivot must therefore strive to 'feed' the relay-takers fast enough to let them produce a usable version before the relevant slide disappears, to ensure that the audience are all (literally) on the same page. To do this, a pivot may have to do some radical prioritizing, calling for (i) a sense of relevance in context, sorting new from old information; and (ii) confident use of linguistic devices for compressing and bullet-pointing. (If feasible, the pivot or team leader may also ask the speaker (possibly via the chairman) to pause deliberately at the end of the presentation of each slide, before it is flipped over to the next slide.) There are few things worse than to say: 'There are four reasons: number one…, number two…, number three…" – and at that point find that the speaker has flipped the slide and you don't know what number three was supposed to be, let alone number four.

Teamwork in relay interpreting

The pivot has a demanding task and can use any support she can get. The AIIC Practical Guide advises against leaving a pivot alone in the booth and lists ways in which the boothmate can help, by

- writing down numbers, names, terms, and other useful information in large and legible letters;
- finding documents as they are needed, and offering them proactively but discreetly to the working partner;
- helping her find the place in a document that the speaker is reading from or referring to;

- checking that the pivot's microphone is transmitting on the correct language channel, especially after another booth has being borrowing that channel (e.g. the French channel to do Turkish into French, which you could not cover from the French booth).

Learning how it feels both to give and to take relay should make you more constructive and understanding towards the pivot. As colleagues, we do well to express appreciation for a good relay – and thinking twice before rushing into the pivot's booth to complain when the feed was harder to follow.

9.2.4 Compression and abstracting

Perhaps the most gruelling (but routine) challenge faced by professional interpreters today is the high-speed delivery of informationally-dense material for SI – including both texts that are read out, and well-prepared 'meaty' but oralised speeches. Neither can be considered 'unfair' or a hazard…. *if* interpreters have an opportunity to prepare the subject matter, and in the first case, also the text. On line, the most useful skills an interpreter can have to achieve both clarity and fidelity are **compression** and, in more severe cases, intelligent **abstracting** (synthesizing, gisting) – although this latter strategy may not always be acceptable (cf. CC-2.1.2, footnote 5). These skills obviously take linguistic agility, but the real hidden prerequisite is **knowledge**. The interpreter's familiarity with the topic and ready availability of terminology is often *the* single factor that makes the difference between 'doable' and 'impossible'.

In CC-4.2.4 we distinguished concision (conveying the same information in fewer and well-chosen words) and compression (maximal concision plus editing for Relevance) from summarizing, in which significant amounts of information may be sacrificed, and more radically, abstracting (or gisting), which reduces the speech to bullet points. In consecutive, speakers and participants usually welcome a more concise interpretation if it is faithful and complete; not only as a time-saver, but also because, if well done – preserving style, content and impact – it can improve the speech. What is new at this point is the difficulty of applying the technique in simultaneous mode – especially with text – and on more formal and specialized content.

In SI generally, concision is often a mark of quality, but compression and even abstracting may also be necessary for resource management and even survival, when it is the only way of keeping up with the speaker. Most authors agree that beyond a certain threshold of combined speed and information density, "simplifying, generalizing, general economy of expression, and where necessary omission [will be needed] to convey as much as possible of the speaker's meaning in as few syllables as possible" (Jones 1998: 102) – and, we would add, to meet the priority aim of combining fidelity and clarity.

To quote a former UN Chief Interpreter, "(t)he ability to abstract ought to be among [the interpreter's] most basic and cherished qualifications. An interpreter who cannot abstract is very much like a soldier who, once out of ammunition, doesn't know any better than surrender" (Viaggio 1991: 14). Like us, Viaggio also distinguishes between **compression**, which is an act of 'syllable-shrinking', a condensing of linguistic form that requires finding the 'briefest and aptest ways of expression', and **abstracting**, an act of 'content-slicing' that involves paring the speaker's message down to its essentials (ibid.: 5 and passim).

Viaggio observes that when speeches are too fast and dense, a 'full semantic translation' is either impossible, or, even if the interpreter could speak that fast, would be unintelligible or very hard for delegates to follow through their headphones. By trying to translate everything that a fast speaker says, a beginner (in particular) risks producing garbled nonsense. If we can't say it all, we must decide what to say: "Only ten sentences out of a full speech may be little, but it is something; one thousand disconnected words is nothing" (ibid.).

Depending on the pressure, we can first try to cut purely linguistic redundancy, then begin to abstract or gist, cutting out elements "that are relatively less important, can be conveyed by paralinguistic means, or are already known" (ibid.: 1991). Abstracting is more cognitively demanding, since it will usually also involve compression but will require even closer intelligent listening for ideas, and analysis of their relative importance, their newness vs. givenness ("the degree to which they are not known already"), and their amenability to expression through paralinguistic means.

Viaggio recommends a two-step ST-based drill that we can develop into a three-step exercise:

1. Sight translation of an entire text in 'full semantic translation' ('saying all of it');
2. Sight translation of the same text *with compression*, trying to say the same thing in fewer words, say, 2/3rds to 3/4 of the first version (as already practised in CC-4.2.4.1);
3. '*Sight-gist*', abridging the text to the "bare minimum content perceived as important by the speaker and/or the audience" (ibid.), say, a third the length of the first version.

Steps 2 and 3 can be done after giving students time to highlight the minimum semantic elements necessary to get the message across (as in CC-4.2.4.1).

Viaggio points out that abstracting, "like précis writing, needs thorough analysis and rigorous hierarchization" and therefore "needs the whole functional perspective of the text" (ibid.: 5).

But how do we transfer this skill to the limited look-ahead conditions of free SI?

Here are some suggestions. Before doing a speech, ask yourself: What will the audience be most interested in learning from this speech? What do they probably already know? Then try:

1. On-line *compression*: deliberately practice SI (see 8.4.6) with a very long lag, starting with easier speeches delivered fast, forcing yourself to be as concise as possible in terms of linguistic expression.
2. On-line *summarizing*: do the same exercise again at this next level, now also editing out unnecessary details, and old (given) information. Focus on the big picture, bearing in mind the needs, purposes and positions of the speaker and the listeners. Is the speaker for or against the proposal? What are their objections? This is crucial for judging relevance.

Whether practising compression and abstracting in free SI or SI-text, the speech should obviously be delivered fast; and at this stage, more technical material can be used (but in the context of a prepared session).

Needless to say, these techniques also depend on some prerequisite language ability and knowledge and skills.

Two keys to streamlining: Knowledge and Language

Saying the same thing in fewer but apter words takes:

1. Advanced *language proficiency,* in particular (see CC-7.4.2.1 (iv)):

    a. a mastery of paraphrase, hypernyms or generic terms and short synonyms, and of *reduced reference* ('this', 'it', 'do so', 'likewise' etc.);
    b. idiomatic linguistic signposting devices, for clear verbal bullet-pointing and topic-shift marking;
    c. sophisticated word choices, but also fast, quasi-automatic retrieval of the relevant lexis.

The *linguistic readiness* described in CC-7 becomes critical here. Survival is only possible in extreme conditions if as much of the process as possible can become virtually automatic, or reflex action. You must be able to access the most useful words and phrases immediately – both the high-frequency 'packaging' language and jargon ('pat phrases', Jones 1998/2002: 104), and the terms specific to the meeting. This point is reached in stages:

    i. research to assemble the active vocabulary that is most useful, and build the interpreter's (mental) 'bilingual phrasebook' of one-to-one and one-to-several correspondences;

ii. hours and weeks of practice;
iii. priming key words and phrases for a particular event by rehearsing, re-learning or repeating them – perhaps using a glossary from previous assignments, now refreshed and updated – immediately before going into the booth (Setton 2003).

2. *Knowledge* of the world but especially, the subject matter, meeting, situation and audience, to be able to decide what is 'new', or most relevant, and prioritize. To generalize, you must know what wider categories items belong to in the local context. As Viaggio puts it, "sense will, of course, be basically carried by words; but […] not <u>all</u> the words, and […] not <u>just</u> the words […;]" (1991: 2): every text is situated; situation and context contribute to meaning; and not all words contribute equally to meaning.

These techniques are therefore crucially dependent on **advance topical preparation** and ongoing awareness of the meeting situation.

The performance goal for very fast speeches should be **survival** and **clarity**: don't be 'thrown', aim to give the main points and to make sense.

SI timing and tactical choices (2): factors in survival

In CC-8.4.3 we listed the basic factors in choosing an optimal entry point for a sentence in SI. To close this section, let's see how a wider range of factors must guide our tactics under very challenging conditions where 100% completeness may not be a realistic goal.

Imagine dealing with either of the following sentences, delivered in an informationally dense speech and so fast that the interpreter hears almost the whole segment before having time to react:

1. *[given that] the ILO and WHO have now confirmed the launching of a joint programme to monitor exposure in lead-smelting and galvanizing plants ….*
2. *But GM and Chrysler's managers have denied suggestions that the forthcoming merger will cost 3 billion dollars and 350,000 jobs.*

Priority must go to the facts expressed in the central predicate:

1. (they) are addressing (the problem of…);
2. (they) deny (the prediction).

At this speed and density, stumbling even for a second on the technical acronyms (GM, ILO) risks missing the substantive nuggets at the end of the sentences, or even the main message. Disaster can be averted, at the price of losing some information, by making sure we hear and convey the *core news,* resorting if necessary to *superordinates* and *generics* ('UN agencies', 'in metalworking', 'will be expensive', 'add to unemployment', etc.):

- In metalworking factories the UN is going to check workers' health.
- UN agencies are going to monitor pollution [to workers] in lead and other metals industries.
- GM and Chrysler (major car makers) say the mergers will not be expensive and cause many lay-offs.

We can see how the following factors contribute to survival, and even to quality:

✓ *World knowledge*: about WHO, ILO – or failing that, knowing they are UN agencies; about GM and Chrysler – or failing that, knowing they are big car makers. Better still, knowing a merger is planned (having read the papers) would help recognize or even anticipate that information.

✓ *Syntactic agility*: being able to put together a viable sentence in whatever order is either chosen or forced by memory and relevance priorities.

✓ *Lexical availability*: having equivalents ready for the various actors and actions mentioned.

✓ *Skill ('craft-specific' expertise)*: approaching each segment *aware* of these choices and priorities, of their costs and risks and of your own resources (lexical availability, memory, notably into B), and making a quick decision.

✓ *Pragmatic overview*, *professionalism*: awareness of the status of the segment in the unfolding argument, and hence the need also to communicate the import of 'now' and 'but' in the respective sentences (by a whole phrase, or by intonation), and restore whatever might have been lost in the restructuring. This is what keeps listeners awake and focused. In consecutive interpreting we saw how indicating links, local emphasis and emotion in strategic places on the page helps us restore the thrust of each idea and the balance of the whole speech naturally and effectively in the output language. In SI, this is done with the tools of oral speech, as appropriate to each language: melody, rhythm, pauses, changes of speed, and contrasting tonal stress, particles and adverbials like *of course, and so on, let's take…, on the other hand, frankly, nevertheless,* 当然，我们都知道，不过，而且，不管怎么样，也就是…, *doch, wohl, ja, même si, d'ailleurs, pourtant, invece, inanzitutto, en fin, sin embargo, то есть,* etc.

9.2.5 Making life easier: preparation and teamwork

Despite all the necessary drills and exercises, and the warnings and techniques that instructors give students to help them face challenging market conditions, interpreters are not condemned to a life of passive suffering at the hands of impossible speakers, alleviated only by whatever coping tactics we can use in the booth. More to the point, 'tactics' like compression and abstracting are impossible without **topic familiarity** (CC-8.5.2–8.5.3). Preparing the assignment thoroughly is half the battle to avoid or relieve difficult conditions. Also, both for preparation and during the meeting, working with colleagues as a team invariably leads to better service.

9.2.5.1 *Conference preparation (Semesters 3 and 4)*

The professional (and especially the freelance) interpreter often finds herself among a small group of people who have met before, perhaps frequently, to provide a service that some but not all may need, and that will lengthen or inconvenience the meeting – and as **an outsider**. She must not remain one for long. An understanding of the purpose of the meeting and the issues at stake, as well as its main players, are as important as learning its subject matter and terminology.

Many assignments involve specialized topics requiring extensive preparation, often without documents provided even after pressing requests. Interpreters must therefore also know how to autonomously acquire and manage specific local information for short-term use.

As with all professional tasks, expertise includes actively seeking out help from all information sources – advance preparation and interaction with the client, and then on-site, from visual, vocal, paralinguistic and environmental clues. Key names and titles – of individuals or office-holders, firms and departments, products, technologies, programmes and so on – must be learned or handy for reference, and ad hoc abbreviations prepared.

Many leading interpreting schools offer a special class on conference preparation, in which students will learn to give themselves a 'crash course' in an unfamiliar specialized domain: this means identifying, evaluating and studying source and reference materials in both/all languages, *focusing on understanding the basics* – how do things work? what are the key terms of art? who does what? what are the issues? what is in the news? – then locating parallel texts, researching terminology, culling useful phrases, identifying shortcuts (and for consecutive, thinking up handy abbreviations), and creating glossaries for advance study, on-site reference, and to prime themselves by last-minute reviewing. The main guidelines for preparing an assignment are summarized in the box.

Guidelines for conference preparation

Event preparation:

- Identify the **type of meeting** (Gile 1989: 10–11), its **format and organization**, from documents supplied and/or all other available sources. Try to get an overall picture of a large meeting, its 'intertextuality' (Luccarelli 2006).
- Know the **parties involved** and their interests, anticipate their likely positions (and not just those at the meeting: if you are hired by a company in a certain industry for their meeting, make sure you know the names of their competitors and competitors' products; or for a meeting on famine relief, the main NGOs active in that area and the countries and regions affected).
- Search for **recent news stories** relating to the meeting's subject matter and parties concerned: be up to speed on the state of play, right up to the day of the meeting.
- Search for **recent speeches** and articles by the **main players**.
- Prepare **materials provided by the organizer** thoroughly, of course, but never assume that they are enough.

Topic preparation:

- Get the **big picture and the essentials** clear first. If you have no background in the topic area, start with e.g. *For Dummies* titles, How Things Work, online primers, Wikipedia entries, etc. to hang things on[10];

12. cf. Kintsch (1998: 330).

- **Be curious** about everything. Interest comes with discovery as 'appetite comes with eating' and helps to learn better.
- **Start with** material in **your A language** for a quicker introduction to an unfamiliar domain.
- Select **a few quality sources** (texts) instead of browsing at random: your online search will probably yield thousands of results that are not ordered by clarity, relevance, accessibility or level of detail. Time selecting a few quality sources at this stage is well spent.
- Don't ignore **existing ready-made sources** of bilingual (or multilingual) terminology such as topical glossaries (online or in books – sometimes in an appendix to a subject matter book), thematic visual encyclopaedias, perhaps even LSP textbooks.
- **Don't confuse terminology with knowledge**. Don't be the interpreter who knows how to say everything but not what it means. For example, to render a speech on 'deleveraging' in another language, you need to know what leverage is to begin with. What is it for? How is it calculated? Is it good or bad? What exactly does deleveraging mean? Who needs to do it and how exactly? By how much? Is it easy/hard to do? What will be the consequences? etc. Thus, when the instructor asks 'what is deleveraging?', the student who just says '去杠杆化', 'desapalancamiento', or whatever, is giving the wrong answer.
- Make a **good glossary** that is logically sorted by section/subtopic, and alphabetically. Memorize it and use it to test yourself repeatedly: practice spitting out technical terms quickly, going backwards and forwards through the glossary covering up one column, and going and from one language to the other and then back again.
- Once you are familiar with the domain and have prepared and memorized a good glossary, do a lot of **sight translation** on the relevant texts you have acquired to further 'grease the groove'.
- Learn to **use technology** for managing documents, knowledge, terms. Documents are now instantly available, can be marked up, and offer full-text search over the cloud; and specialized terminology software is available for interpreters.

Last-minute, on-site, during and after the meeting:

- Ask for **briefings** where possible: but prepare thoroughly first, then maximize the value of the briefing session by asking questions and requesting additional information.
- Attend rehearsals or dry runs of the event to hear speakers practising.
- Check for last-minute agenda/schedule changes and organize documents (Lucarelli 2006).
- Pay attention to the issues and terms that come up at the meeting, research them in real time as necessary, and **update your glossary** throughout the meeting. Afterwards, save it for re-use, and continue to update it over time when you do meetings on the same topic.

Making and using glossaries

Preparing a glossary has several functions. Making a list of terms and expressions in your working languages as you go through and compare the documents is an excellent way of **learning** and assimilating the terminology you may need in the meeting; this glossary can then be reviewed just before the meeting to **prime** the terms for immediate availability; **consulted** while working; and **stored** as a reference (and last-minute activator) for future meetings, updating it each time. A robust glossary for long-term use (with regular updating) should include explanations of terms as well as just cross-language equivalents. AIIC[13] makes the following recommendations:

> **Preparing a glossary** (From the AIIC Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters)
>
> In your glossary, include not only unfamiliar technical terms, but also recurring **topical items** of a more general nature, in order to contextualize yourself and to increase their 'availability', so that they are on the tip of your tongue when you need them. Pay attention to **usage** that is **specific** to the particular body or topic at hand; a Management Committee in one context may be Steering Group in another. It can be helpful to make a separate list for acronyms, titles of officials, and the names of committees.
>
> Make sure that you know how to **pronounce** names and other proper nouns, and, if necessary, include an indication of their pronunciation in your glossary. Similarly, make sure that you know the names of all the relevant countries in all your working languages, paying attention to any that may have changed as a result of political developments.
>
> In compiling your glossary, whether on a computer or on paper, make sure that you have a logical system for **sorting terms** (e.g. by subject, organization, committee, etc.) in alphabetic order for each language so you will be able to find the term you are looking for quickly.

A glossary made in this way is always tailored to the individual – highlighting different expressions, or varying between concision (as a *crib-sheet*) and completeness (as a *reference*). But glossaries should always be **shared with colleagues** in a spirit of teamwork and to maximize the performance of the whole team (and free-riders will find that borrowing someone else's glossary is no substitute for making your own….). Also, comparing glossaries "[may reveal] gaps in your own preparation, and you may find that there are other translations for terms that you have already captured" (AIIC 2004/2014).

9.2.5.2 *Teamwork*

Conference interpreters almost always work in teams, and it is usually the whole team's performance, rather than individual interpreters', that is judged by users. As we have seen, team members preparing the same conference should share glossaries and useful information sources – perhaps also practising together. On-site teamwork and coordination are necessary among one or more teams working on a meeting or larger event (even when one or more booths are apparently working 'autonomously' to and from a rare language), and especially vital in each booth.

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13. AIIC (2004/2014), Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters, Section 2.2. http://aiic.net/page/628/practical-guide-for-professional-conference-interpreters/lang/1

A booth is a confined and potentially stressful workplace, and certain conventions of behaviour and organization have naturally evolved for colleagues working together, from deciding on turns to knowing how to hand over or take over the microphone, how to offer help or receive it, and in some cases, how to decide who does which speaker for optimal results.

The do's and don'ts of teamwork in professional life, including in-booth co-operation and manners, are set out in CC-11.2.3.3. Best practices can and should be learned and cultivated at school, notably in mock conferences, and can also be observed during practice visits to real-life events (though this will not always be guaranteed! – hence the need for debriefing).

9.2.6 Simulation and reality

All trainees in practical vocations rightly expect their instructors to provide opportunities for practice in the most realistic situations possible. For interpreting students, these are of three kinds:

1. *Mock conferences*: simulated mini-events that can be organized and staged by students, who take the roles of chairperson, speakers and discussants as well as interpreters (first-year students at the table for consecutive, seniors in the booth), under supervision of instructors who may provide a topic and documentation, as well as feedback and debriefing. These are typically organized at regular intervals throughout the course (for details on organizing mock conferences, see TG-9.4.1).
2. *Internships and working visits* to real-life venues, for instance in an international organization, where you can observe professionals working on a meeting and practice on the same material with the microphone off in an unoccupied 'dummy' booth.
3. And finally, after graduation, *mentoring* with experienced senior colleagues, and/or further training (see TG-14), to continue to improve, find your feet in an organization that has recruited you, or add another language or, perhaps, knowledge in a specialized domain.

To make the most of these opportunities, active preparation and involvement is indispensable: just as visiting a country isn't enough to learn a language, professional interpreting won't rub off on you by watching and listening to it. To get the best value from your internship, prepare the topic and the meeting as thoroughly as possible, applying the research techniques learned in the Conference preparation class. Use the documents that you have been given to make a good glossary. Don't underestimate the importance of assimilating the right terminology and language for the meeting – but don't be content to learn words: explore every aspect of the topic that might be relevant, using online and other resources, until you are sure you understand the background to what is going to be discussed, and the main issues and controversies. Your instructor should accompany you and provide feedback and debriefing afterwards.

9.3 Expertise and survival

As we move from difficult and complex but routine tasks to conditions at the limit of feasibility, it is time to explore various techniques on the cusp between advanced expertise and sheer survival tactics.

9.3.1 Crisis management and coping tactics

Experienced interpreters have published practical tips, strategies and coping tactics for dealing with difficult situations. Here are the best-known ones, most of which have been listed in particular by Gile (2009: 204–211) and Jones (1998/2002). On closer inspection, some are basic cognitive reflexes, some are enhanced SI techniques (expertise), and some are truly emergency expedients:

1. *Basic cognitive processes*
   a. 'Reconstructing the segment' with the help of context.
   b. Changing the order of elements in a list. This technique leverages the phenomena of 'primacy' and 'recency' effects in recall,[14] but requires caution when the order is significant.
2. *Interpreting technique (Skills)*
   a. Lengthening or shortening the Ear-Voice Span (lag).
   b. Segmentation (chunking) to unload short-term memory.
   c. Taking notes in SI: when numbers or names cannot be rendered immediately (e.g. due to word-order asymmetries), they can be noted down to lessen memory load.
   d. Compression: 'syllable shrinking'; 'a condensing of linguistic form that requires finding the briefest and aptest ways of expression' (1989/1991).
3. *Professionalism*

- *Teamwork*: Get help from your boothmate for a word or phrase, to find a document that is being quoted, or the place in a document where a speaker is reading from (CC-9.2.5.2, CC-11.2.3.3).

14. Primacy and recency effects: early and late items in a list are more likely to be recalled than middle items (Ebbinghaus 1913).

- *Document handling*: consulting resources in the booth (documents, glossary, computer).
- *Referring delegates to another information source*: for example, if a speaker gives the reference of a document, suddenly reads out a passage from it, and continues to speak very fast, the interpreter can simply refer listeners to the document (and paragraph, if known), saying 'as on the screen/in the document/the handout'.
- *Calling listeners' attention to a problem* (by interrupting, in consecutive, or over the microphone in SI).
  Pro: This may be in the best interests of the meeting if the interpreter has not understood something; participants can then decide whether they want to ask the speaker to repeat it.
  Con: The risk of losing credibility.

4. *Expedients and fall-back solutions, waiving 'default' norms of interpreting*

- *Abstracting (gisting)* in the sense of "content-slicing […;] paring the speaker's message down to its essentials" (Viaggio 1989/1991). Whereas compression ('syllable-shrinking') is part of basic interpreting technique (see above), still more reduction may be needed as an expedient for speech that is too fast and dense, at the cost of some details of content as well as style (if any) (Jones 1998: 107–112). But as far as possible, omissions should still be as selective and conscious as possible, based on the interpreter's judgment of what might be redundant or less relevant information.
- *Generalizing or paraphrasing:* when a specific item or its exact translation or pronunciation escapes you, you can:
  a. *generalize*: replace a segment with a superordinate term or a more general speech segment, e.g. 'the enzyme' for 'streptokinase', 'the speaker' for 'Mr Stephen Wedgeworth', or 'a specialist' for 'an otorhinolaryngologist' (examples from Gile 2009: 206; Jones 1998: 112). There is a risk of dilution, though delegates may infer what is meant;
  b. *explain or paraphrase,* when unsure of the translation of a term, or a culture-specific concept or entity. The benefit of clarity must be weighed against the time available.
- *Offer an alternative product or form of interpreting* (AIIC *Practical Guide):* "If a speaker is reading at breakneck speed from a written text that has not been provided to the interpreter, s/he may be justified in saying over the microphone that it is impossible to provide a complete and accurate interpretation, perhaps offering to provide a summary […]".

- *'Sports commentator' mode*: when input is too disconnected or opaque (due to accent, syntax, or some other major obstacle to comprehension), the interpreter can just try to convey the thread or general topic of the speech, but speaking in the third person to signal that a full interpretation is not being attempted. Example: 'The speaker is now discussing [Topic]. She is apparently critiquing the traditional quota-allocation approach'.[15]

As Gile points out, each tactic has its pros and cons, both for the quality of communication *and* for the interpreter's own processing capacity management (for example, adding a short explanation in SI may help delegates understand, but risks missing subsequent input, or overloading memory).

9.3.2 What to do if you don't know (or are unsure)

Interpreters may sometimes have serious doubts about what they have heard, and/or how to deal with it. Anything that seems incomprehensible to us may also be so to native listeners; what seems surprising or shocking may or not be so for all listeners; and speakers may of course make slips and errors. But beware – there is also a good chance that it is your comprehension, understanding or judgment that is at fault (or a bug on the line) (cf. Jones 1998/2002: 108). Here are some guidelines:

1. If a speaker is **unclear**, **vague**, **obscure**, **ambiguous** or **elliptical**, there are various possibilities:
   a. If you are confident about the intended meaning, and that the speaker meant to be clear: paraphrase to make it clear to listeners.
   b. If you are not confident about the intended meaning, but are sure the speaker intended to be clear,
      - in consecutive: do not be afraid to ask for clarification before interpreting.
      - in SI: *Don't over-explain* what you think the speaker is saying. The meaning may become very clear a few sentences further on – and it may not be exactly what you originally guessed; or the speaker may *want* to be vague (see below). Be cautious, keeping it deliberately literal, general or noncommittal until you can see where the speaker is going, then clarify as you go (in SI, we have called this technique

15. Another legendary example, attributed (perhaps apocryphally) to interpreters attempting to render a jocular, possibly ribald American speaker for a Japanese audience: 'the speaker has just told a joke, please laugh'. (An ethically less acceptable version of this, in which the interpreter warns the audience that the speaker is about to make a joke, appears in Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* comic strip (1976). http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/2014/07/25. Accessed December 13, 2015.)

‘framing and filling’ or ‘approximation-compensation’ – see CC-8.4.3; see also CC-4.4.3.1 on the risks of over-translation).

c. If the vagueness or ambiguity seems intentional, just try to preserve the same degree of (im)precision (the case of UNSC Resolution 242 is a famous example[16]), and leave it to listeners to ask if they wish to. Do not embarrass the speaker by pushing for clarification (see CC-4.4.2).

2. Apparent speaker error or *faux pas*: If the speaker says something that sounds like it couldn’t possibly be right – it is completely implausible, contradicts common sense or common courtesy; or if s/he seems unintentionally to have made a serious cultural blunder or *faux-pas*:

   - if possible (in consecutive), check discreetly with the speaker before interpreting, if proximity and client relationship allows;
   - if not possible – as in SI – use your best judgment; ‘just translating’ may or may not be the safest option. Consider being conservative and listening a bit to see if perhaps you misheard (or check with your boothmate before rendering).

3. If something seems ‘untranslatable’, or in your judgment would not be understood by your listeners if translated without explanation (a culturally-conditioned formula or reference, for example), but that the speaker intends them to understand: do not hesitate to clarify or explain: your cultural and linguistic knowledge are part of the expertise that users of your service expect you to deploy to help them communicate.

4. If you really cannot render something, or are forced to approximate or generalize radically with no hope of compensating later, say so: for example, ‘the speaker is quoting Horace in Latin’. For impossible puns or jokes, Jones proposes a variant on the ‘Japanese gambit’ described above (see footnote): simply say ‘the speaker made a[n untranslatable] pun/joke’ (ibid.: 112).

5. The speaker is angry, rude and/or aggressive: even if you judge it preferable to soften his offensive language, make sure it is understood that he is angry.

6. If you haven’t understood part of the speech for any reason – unknown word, accent, technical problem – and have had to resort to one of the emergency tactics listed above, don’t forget to check for next time, by a search of the documentation, or by asking a colleague, or a meeting participant who knows the technical vocabulary in two or more languages.

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16. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_242#French_version_vs._English_version_of_text (Accessed December 13, 2015).

These guidelines are consistent with basic principles of **risk management**, which derive from the basic dos and don'ts of interpreting first set out in Initiation (CC-4.4.2), and are applicable when using techniques like voiced anticipation (CC-8.6.4), or when aiming to optimize communication in various ways (CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4):

- do not guess until you have evidence one way or the other, and the meaning has become clear.
- don't say anything dumb or implausible unless you are 100% sure the speaker said it (rather than that you have misheard, misunderstood or imagined it).
- do not embellish or over-interpret; if uncertain, be cautious and wait for more context (or ask the speaker to clarify).
- anticipate special difficulties like literary quotations, avoid committing yourself (see 'open grammar', CC-6.3.2, CC-8.4.1): never announce a joke or a direct quotation – for example, on hearing 'in the words of Goethe…', best say, for example, 'to paraphrase/according to Goethe' (examples from Jones 1998/2002: 111).

If you have real doubts about your ability to render a quality service, for any reason – sound quality, extreme technicality, impossible speed, etc. – then transparency (i.e. explaining the problem) is required for reasons both of professional ethics and legitimate self-preservation.

9.3.3 Explaining the problem: on-line disclaimers and transparency

It is also important to know how to – and be ready to – let the audience know if there is a problem. Explaining on line may be necessary in at least these three situations:

1. *'Says the speaker'*: In case of doubt about having understood something that is clearly significant: for example, the phrase 'Slovak speakers' in a discussion on schools in Slovenia might be a slip of the tongue, or might indeed refer to a small minority of Slovak speakers with special needs. If really in doubt the interpreter may add 'says the speaker'. If a mistake seems very likely, however, Jones (1998/2002: 108) suggests saying "the speaker said X but I think he means Y".
2. *Explicit disclaimer*: If the interpreter is unsure of her rendition of an extended passage or a whole speech, she may quickly make a general disclaimer at the end: "the speech was not fully clear to the interpreter" (ibid.: 108).

3. *Interruption of service:* When reliable interpreting is impossible, in extreme cases, you should explain before switching off the mike: for example, "the speaker is reading too fast from a text which the interpreter does not have"; or (when a speaker's accent is so thick that key words cannot even be guessed at) "the interpreter regrets it but she cannot understand the speaker's accent".

9.3.4 Survival: a matter of conditions and conscience

According to Gile (2009: 211–214), interpreters – descriptively speaking – seem to choose their tactics, consciously or unconsciously, according to five principles or 'laws':

1. *Maximizing information recovery*, aiming for local completeness and maximum detail.
2. *Minimizing interference in information recovery*: interpreters "seek to recover as much information as possible on each segment without jeopardizing the recovery of other segments".
3. *Maximizing communicative impact:* in a technical conference, this may amount to maximizing information recovery, but in media interpreting, speed and flow might be favoured over information.
4. *The Law of Least Effort*: this prevails in all human activity, but is 'an unwelcome intruder' in professional interpreting.
5. *The Law of Self-Protection*: interpreters "may be tempted to give precedence to tactics [to cover up their own poor or mediocre performance], sometimes, in effect, against Laws 1 and 3".

Gile observes that the relative influence of these five laws on an interpreter's behaviour depends largely on two factors: working conditions, and professional and personal ethics. When working conditions are bad, with long working hours, insufficient manning strength, bad visibility of the conference room and the screen or lack of interest in the presentations on the part of the delegates, etc., the Law of Least Effort may gain more weight, to the detriment of Laws 1 and 3. In terms of ethics, "if interpreters are conscientious, they will endeavour to maximize information recovery by giving priority to Laws 1 and 2 […]. If they are less conscientious, they may let themselves succumb to the law of least effort and the law of self-protection" (2009: 214).

Discussion of these factors is taken up in CC-10 and CC-11, also with reference to the risks and rewards of optimization (CC/TG-10.4), where the focus is on improving communication rather than on survival.

This takes us to the end of our course – or at least, of its core 'cognitive skills' strand. The ground covered so far, plus the modules on Professionalism and Professional Practice described in the next two chapters, should prepare trainees to acquit themselves honourably in most real-life conditions. To make sure graduates are ready for real life, the final Professional Diploma should test skills in consecutive and SI (with and without text), and on speeches that may be fast, fairly technical, presented with slides and in moderately non-standard accents, and contain numbers and unfamiliar names. On these complex but routine tasks, examiners will expect accuracy, completeness, clarity, fluency, resourcefulness and a user-oriented style and presentation. (For a description of a fully-specified final Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting [PECI], see TG-11).

Future interpreters should be warned, however, that real meetings will often bring even more severe challenges. Conference interpreters polled in the AIIC Workload Study (Mackintosh 2002) cited the most stressful factors in professional practice as (in order of importance) 'fast speakers' (78% of respondents), 'speaker reading from text' (71%), 'frequent change of subject matter' (64%) and 'lack of background material' (60%). The 2009 AIIC survey (Neff 2011) added 'unintelligible speakers' in second place.[17] When the interpreter is confronted with more than one of these problems *at the same time*, her job can become well-nigh impossible. In the last weeks of the course, instructors should help students to take stock (with examples) of the full range of conditions that may arise in the field, and how they can be managed, or merely survived (or refused), by 'mitigation' as well as 'adaptation'.

9.4 Hazards and impossible conditions

Since our leading training programmes were designed, conference interpreters have seen conditions improve in some ways (though unevenly): better booths, equipment, training and support in some large institutions, for example. But geopolitical changes, the rise of English, the technological revolution and the general acceleration of exchange have made the working environment less interpreter-friendly, in terms of conditions – speed, presentation, format, technicality and contact with participants – but also linguistic demands, with pressure to work both from and into more languages.

Meetings today are increasingly specialized and technical, and compressed into shorter timeframes. Speakers now routinely read out written statements, or

17. 'Unintelligible speakers' are flagged more often in Europe and Asia-Pacific – mostly non-English native speaking territories – and complaints about the lack of supporting documents increased markedly between 2004 and 2009 (Neff 2011).

race through slide presentations uncommunicatively, at breakneck speed, and often with a strong accent. English, by far the most common source language, is in many meetings more often spoken by non-natives than natives, with varying degrees of success.

In the multilateral sphere, new languages increase the need for relay (sometimes double relay), often with an interpreter working into a B language serving as the 'pivot'; worldwide, probably most interpreters must now work both ways in SI. At many events, there is little opportunity to obtain materials in advance to prepare; at best, these will come on-site, if at all, and interpreters who push for them too aggressively may be seen as troublemakers. There are times when one version of the famous Peter Principle (Peter & Hull 1989) seems to be operating in the once magical world of interpreting: "anything that works will be used in progressively more challenging applications until it fails".[18]

How far can we go in adapting to this 'new normal'? Some of these challenges, but not all, can be met by improved and extended training. As Moser-Mercer puts it, "the interpreter's brain is not ever-expanding to accommodate the demands of prepared speeches read at extraordinary speed, long working hours, numerous successive assignments far from home and family, frequent changes of subject matter, and an entirely new approach to document production" (2005: 221).

Exceptionally difficult conditions are discussed at more length in TG-9.6, but we have kept three examples here to show future graduates what they may be up against, and how they might survive with a mix of mitigation and adaptation.

9.4.1 Multiple channels or 'mixed-media' interpreting

In mixed-media or multiple-source SI (see Figure 9.1 and 9.2.3.2 on SI-text) we must sample and integrate several inputs – speech, text, slides, memory, our own notes, etc. – to weave a single, purely oral product, which must itself be adjusted for listeners who have access only to the interpreter's voice and perhaps a view of the speaker (and in some cases, the slides, if in a language they can read).

In handling multiple sources, expertise consists of tapping or suppressing different perceptual or cognitive channels as needed at each moment to assemble the desired product without being distracted. This may range from simple, instinctive behaviour (like closing the eyes, or leaning forward to get a better view of the room), to having relevant documents ready in the booth, or more sophisticated techniques such as marking up a text to help with delivery.

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18. http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Peter_Principle.html

With multiple sources, in particular slide presentations, the interpreter must also make tactical judgments. The slides may be in SL, or TL, or a third language (in English, for example, for Chinese-French or Russian-Japanese SI), and a presenter may use the text and graphics on the slides in different ways – either reading out text, or commenting (possibly from a prepared text), or some combination of these – summarizing, omitting and adding information. S/he may also tell the audience 'I will let you read this slide on your own' – but without necessarily pausing.

Different meeting participants, understanding either the language of the slides, and/or of the speech, will therefore have access to more or less information. As interpreters, we must **weigh time and effort against communication goals**: you may have time to render some of the slide information that has not been read out by the speaker, but you must also judge whether the speaker intends to present it or not, and whether or not your own listeners can read the slide in the original language on their own or not. Many users who need or prefer to use interpretation from *spoken* English will nevertheless be able to *read* English-language text on slides.

A particularly difficult situation arises when the **speaker talks 'around'** a text-laden slide presentation, but without actually reading any of the bullets; for example:

> here [on this slide] are the three major reasons why these initiatives fail according to our China Executive survey last year, and I think point 2 is particular salient to this discussion given what Joe was relating in his presentation, and frankly point 3 probably won't come as much of a surprise to any of you familiar with the ABC fiasco in which I was, thank goodness, only peripherally involved….

Here you might choose to abandon the speaker momentarily and **race to do a sight translation** of the slide, **then summarize the speaker's comments**.

Multimedia presentations range from the bizarre to the impossible. The text provided, the slide captions, and what the speaker actually says may all be highly complex, and completely different. Occasionally, a (non-native) speaker may show slides with text that is virtually incomprehensible (perhaps machine-translated as a well-meaning gesture), which the harassed interpreter only realizes is garbled as s/he begins to read it out loud. The best strategy here is to look away, and just work from the speech; or if that is also obscure, just skim the slides for clues.

An extreme case of polyphonic (not to say cacophonic) input – interpreting 'Oscar Night' on Italian television – is entertainingly described by Amato and Mack (2011), who list the following combined hazards for this assignment:

No business like show business: interpreting Oscar Night on Italian TV

- several hours' night work with little time to prepare;
- uncontrolled sound quality (often with interference, and with not clearly audible speech);
- lack of control over the microphones;
- limited possibilities for interaction in the booth;
- an unbalanced workload between the two interpreters;
- a variety of speech types;
- many different speakers with different accents;
- many read-out texts;
- high speech rates;
- many culture-bound elements and proper names;
- many quips and jokes.

And last but not least, multiple simultaneous inputs at both ends of the intercontinental link: music, sound effects, speakers at the award ceremony, US and Italian TV off-stage commentators, written information on screen, videoclips, subtitles – and the need to refer constantly to the 'Bible', a procedure manual provided by the TV station (Amato and Mack 2011[19]).

9.4.2 Screened-off: tele- and remote interpreting

The last few years have seen a steady rise in the use of remote or tele-interpreting, at best from a screen (but that may be in a different location from the meeting), at worst from only an audio link (see CC-2.3.1.9 for an overview). This development has had a lukewarm reception from interpreters, at best, not only because it threatens to curtail our opportunities for travel, but because direct experience tells us (and some research seems to confirm, see e.g. Mouzourakis 2003, 2006) that the loss of co-presence with participants, and of some or all of our control over what we see, adds significantly to stress and fatigue.

Even on site at a meeting venue, you may increasingly be asked to interpret from a video screen, when the booths provide an inadequate view, or no direct view at all, for various reasons – shortage of meeting rooms equipped for interpreting, badly designed conference centre or poor meeting room layout due to lack of consultation between organizers and interpreters, or even in some cases, just

19. With a significant contribution from the late Straniero Sergio.

because the organizer wants to 'hide' the interpretation.[20] Ironically, therefore, in such cases monitors may be welcome and even indispensable.

Many schools have also equipped their booths with monitors. As explained in CC-10.2, good working conditions require co-presence and a direct view of the meeting room. To prepare for today's realities, students should experience both situations, direct and remote – but with an RI set-up that fully meets professional standards. Remote interpreting with no view of the speaker *and/or* poor sound quality – over an ordinary telephone or VoIP link, for example – is (quite rightly) universally discouraged in conference interpreting and should therefore not be taught in schools.

9.4.3 SI-text from an unknown language (with the help of a translation)

To do free SI from, say, Klingon, you obviously need to have that language in your combination; but we are sometimes asked to interpret a speaker we don't understand, without the help of relay, by reading out or sight-translating from a written translation of the speaker's text while s/he speaks. The twin risks are, obviously (apart from the quality of the translation and the speaker deviating from the text) falling behind or getting ahead of the speaker. The Klingon delegation (though this is real life, not science-fiction) may therefore send someone who understands Klingon and the TL to sit next to you and point to where the speaker has got to in the text. If no such 'pointer' turns up, you might still manage somehow if you can identify matching landmarks in both speech and text, such as proper names or loan words, and possibly major pauses at paragraph breaks.

9.5 Summary

This chapter has described exercises, activities and objectives for the 'last mile' of training in preparation for the Professional Exam (PECI: TG-11) and full market readiness. After consolidating technique on realistic, authentic input and steeping yourself in the subject matter, discourse and terminology of the target market (S2 and S3), you will need to devote much of the final semester to practising on the more complex tasks and conditions that are routine in today's world – fast, dense and non-standard speech, mixed modes and media, relay and remote interpreting – and be prepared, as far as is reasonable, to cope with some extreme conditions.

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20. This is among the many problems described in this chapter that can be forestalled where possible, by adequate communication with organizers (CC-10 and 11).

The focus of feedback should now have shifted from the details of processing and technique to the ‘social’ or service dimension of the job. It is time to polish your product, aiming – on ‘doable’ input, at least – to provide a user-friendly, relevant and useful communication service in all circumstances. The keys to providing this all-round seamless service lie in preparation, teamwork, advance communication with users (to understand their needs and expectations, and mitigate in advance the risk of being asked to do the impossible), then minute-to-minute awareness of and adaptation to the unfolding event and situation.

Novices should understand that while trained expertise is always a necessary condition to provide acceptable service, some conditions are so severe as to make the standard promise – a complete and reliable rendition, idiomatic style and register – quite impossible to fulfil, in all professional conscience and despite interpreters’ best efforts. In such cases, the limitations must be explained to clients – preferably in advance, through user education, or if necessary due to last-minute problems, as a warning – by the host institution if any, by the Chief Interpreter/consultant interpreter, and/or by team leaders on site so that they can match their expectations to feasibility.

Communicating with users helps to match what can realistically be done to their (informed) expectations. The nature and possibilities of interpreting are not that well understood outside the profession, and it usually takes deliberate client education efforts to make users aware of what we need to work effectively, and the limits on what is feasible. Bad conditions are imposed not out of malice, but ignorance. Guidelines for relations with users and clients will be found in the next two chapters (CC-10.2.3 and CC-11.2.2.5).

Advance information on the agenda, main issues, participants and other key aspects of a meeting is usually indispensable for interpreters to be able to provide quality service. But interaction between organizers and interpreters must go both ways. Many problems can be avoided ahead of time by getting documents and on-site briefings, or even last-minute face-to-face presentation walkthroughs with speakers. Useful information to gather from clients (and through your own research) includes background material such as news releases, personal bios and company profiles. On site, it helps to find out if speakers plan to make jokes, cite poetry, etc., and to check the pronunciation of exotic names and titles.

This process usually needs to be driven by the interpreters, since clients and speakers often don’t realize how knowledge- and preparation-intensive good interpreting is. Your first assignment should convince you that contextual information is even more valuable than terminology: although you will always need fast reflexes and lightning on-line judgment, many emergency expedients will be unnecessary if you have been properly prepared and briefed to begin with.

To succeed at this level you will need another layer of competence, which we call *Professionalism*. The next two chapters deal with working conditions, professional ethics and conduct, including client relations and communication with clients and users to secure proper conditions, understand their needs and expectations, and where necessary, negotiate your role, and/or judge when it is appropriate to adjust the default settings of interpreting to 'constrain' or optimize the service (CC-10). Finally, CC-11 describes the conference interpreting 'ecosystem', explains how to get work and manage your career, and offers some best practices for interacting with our various partners in the exercise of the profession.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Concision and compression
Jones 1998/2002: Conference interpreting explained, 95–104
Sunnari 1995: 'Saying it All' vs. Synthesis
Viaggio 1989/1991, 1995: compression, gisting, sight translation

Relay interpreting
AIIC Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters, section 3.5
http://aiic.net/page/628/practical-guide-for-professional-conference-interpreters/lang/1 (Accessed December 14, 2015)
Shlesinger 2010: Relay interpreting

Conference preparation
Gile 2002: The Interpreter's Preparation for Technical Conferences
Luccarelli 2006: Conference Preparation

Remote and video-conferencing (for media interpreting, see also CC-2)
Braun and Taylor 2012: Video-mediated interpreting
http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/ (Accessed December 14, 2015)
Mouzourakis 2003, 2006: vision and presence in remote interpreting, and a technical perspective

AIIC Guidelines on remote conferencing
http://aiic.net/page/143/guidelines-for-remote-conferencing/lang/1 (Accessed December 15, 2015)

CHAPTER 10

Professionalism and ethics

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 From skills to professionalism

Expertise in interpreting begins with a progressive nurturing, interaction and integration of three basic components: language, knowledge and skills; but it ultimately requires a fourth component, which we call Professionalism (Figure 10.1).

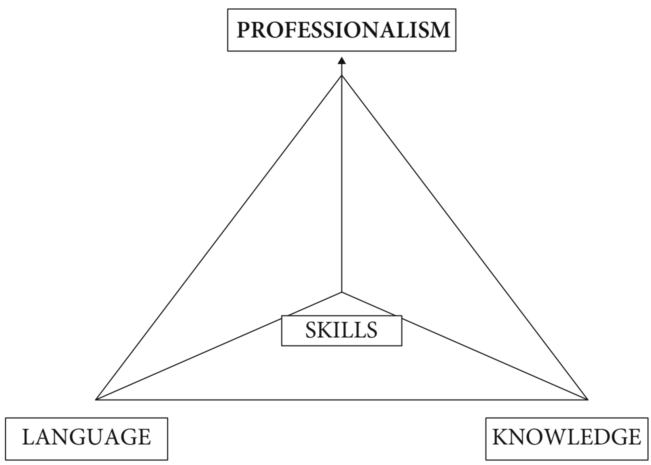

Figure 10.1 The pyramid of expertise in interpreting

The essence of this quality is the ability to make appropriate judgments and decisions in the best interests of those who rely on us, based on an understanding of the potential and limits of our craft, of the key relationships, norms and conventions of professional practice, and of the ethical principles that must govern the role of a mediator. All-round expertise will continue to develop with experience and reflection, but these aspects of Professionalism can and should be instilled during training, once the foundations of technical competence are in place.

10.1.2 Professionalization and professionalism

In some Western societies, practitioners of certain high-status vocations providing a vital service to society, like doctors and lawyers, traditionally took an oath (*professio*) – the Hippocratic is the best known – to abide by certain principles in the exercise of their profession, in the interests of those they serve and of society at large. Some hallmarks of a 'profession', as opposed to a mere job or occupation, are that its practitioners:

- possess and apply specialized knowledge and skills, acquired via institutionalized training (usually lengthy, at postsecondary level, and followed by a structured apprenticeship);
- qualify for practice through a credentialling or certification process;
- provide a valuable service, for compensation, that carries significant responsibility and is also in the public interest;
- perform to high standards of competence;
- adhere to a code of ethics and standards of practice; and
- are accountable to a professional body or association that (self-)regulates the profession.

Professions thus enjoy high social status and a high level of autonomy, responsibility and internal cohesion, and uphold high standards of competence and ethics.

Efforts towards the full professionalization of conference interpreting have been underway since the 1950s (see Tseng 1992 for a model of this process). It is fair to say that conference interpreting as practised by AIIC members is close to possessing all the attributes of a profession, but it has yet to achieve the final milestone: 'occupational closure', barring amateurs and unqualified practitioners from professional practice through a system of mandatory licensure, sanctioned by the state. Medicine or law, for example, cannot be legally practised without a licence in most countries. Access to a profession that has achieved occupational closure typically requires completion of a professional degree, membership in the professional association, *and* a licence to practice acquired through an examination-based process.

This is not yet the case in conference interpreting anywhere in the world. Professional training, though recommended, remains optional; certification through professional exams is still school-based and fragmented, lacking harmonised standards; and membership of the professional association, and adherence to its codes of ethics and practice, is purely voluntary. Efforts to promote an international convention on the definition and recognition of the profession are still ongoing.

International organizations all recognize conference interpreters as professional staff (in the UN, for example, being employed at professional grades P-3 to P-5). But outside the world of international organizations, conference interpreting is not *recognized* as a profession, with a protected professional title, in most societies.[1] In particular, the private market sector remains entirely unregulated: in no country is licensure or certification yet *mandatory* to work as a conference interpreter; thus, anyone can put him- or herself forward as a conference interpreter without any training, qualifications, accreditation, or binding ethical code. The result is free-for-all 'grey markets', with unqualified practitioners (and unscrupulous intermediaries) undercutting the interests of unaware clients and users.[2] In some places, grey market practitioners may significantly outnumber professional interpreters who are trained, qualified, and bound by a code of ethics – and many clients cannot or care not to distinguish between them. To quote Gile, "[s]ociologically and economically, this situation is not favourable to top-level professionals: their status and working conditions tend to be dragged down by the existence of interpreters and translators at 'lower' levels rather than the other way around" (2009: 5).

Conference interpreting is a niche occupation with limited visibility to the public at large; but another obstacle to its recognition as a full profession is probably the non-exclusive nature of its cognitive base. Unlike the body of technical knowledge shared by lawyers or doctors, interpreters' knowledge of language, culture, and the world, sophisticated as it may be, is not privileged or unique (and their knowledge of the subject matter is by definition shallower than their delegates'). Our skills, too, are often not *perceived* as special – especially in consecutive, which is seen by the layman as 'just' listening and retelling, a task within reach of anyone with the right languages. Other factors may include the high proportion of women in the interpreting profession – 'feminized' occupations are still widely considered

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1. In certain Canadian provinces, there does exist a protected title 'Certified Conference Interpreter'. For example: "The Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) is the only professional association in Ontario empowered by law to confer the title of 'Certified Conference Interpreter'. To obtain the title, a conference interpreter must pass a national examination or present equivalent credentials." (http://www.atio.on.ca/services/certification.php Accessed December 13, 2015.) However, even in these provinces, anyone can claim to be a conference interpreter and hang out a shingle: certification is not mandatory.

2. Note that 'grey market' in our use of the term refers to the market sector that is served by practitioners who are untrained, unqualified and/or not bound by a code of ethics, and that is typically characterized by poor quality, inadequate working conditions, and/or unethical practices. 'Undercutting' refers to quality and conditions, not the legitimate practice of competing on price to provide quality services that meet professional standards.

lower-status than male-dominated ones[3] – and the relatively short training period of two years (and still a scant one year in some schools).

But an occupation does not have to be officially recognized as a profession for its users to benefit from professional behaviour on the part of its practitioners. Professionalization in *all* sectors of interpreting is fundamentally in the interest not only of interpreters but also of clients, users and society, and is indeed well underway in public-service and community-based interpreting in some countries (and with more complete codes of ethics and standards and practice than exist for conference interpreting: see Appendix A), in line with better recognition of the rights of linguistic minorities. This process can only be driven by the profession itself, and the role of schools is critical in terms of selecting, training, and certifying high-quality practitioners, developing the theory and research base for the profession and fostering professionalism in its future members.

Professionalism can be defined as technical competence plus a commitment to provide the best possible service while adhering to defined ethics and standards as a responsible member of a professional community. This combines the three dimensions of Professionalism in interpreting: **craft**, **ethics** and **service**.

10.1.2.1 *Craft professionalism*

Another historical tradition, parallel to the emergence of the professions, brought conscientious artisans with pride in their occupation together in guilds or *crafts*, and indeed many pioneer conference interpreters were attached to preserving this sense of the '*métier*' of interpreting (Seleskovitch p.c.; Luccarelli 2004). What sets interpreters apart and makes the craft aspect particularly salient is their technical skills, and their ability to adapt to each new live situation – both of which are crucially dependent on working conditions, especially those that ensure optimal access to the unfolding context via sound, visibility and information.

Craft professionalism means mastering the skills of our trade. This entails understanding the *tools* of the craft (chiefly our minds and brains – specifically, language and knowledge resources – but also our voices), its *materials* (equipment and documentation), *environment* (the meeting and setting), and *processes* (preparation, the techniques of the main interpreting modes, the dynamics of interlingual mediation), and being aware of our potential and limitations. Students should have acquired much of this basic craft mastery by the last semester of training. However, interpreting is not performed in the peace and quiet of a workshop, but in contact with society: craft skills only become operational with an understanding of the ethical and service dimensions of professional practice.

3. See e.g. Harris (1992).

10.1.2.2 *Moral and ethical professionalism*

Ethics is a branch of moral philosophy that seeks to derive principles of right and wrong behaviour, of which one application is in rules to guide the exercise of a profession. Professional interpreters are bound by ethical precepts and standards that govern their behaviour and guide their choices. One such precept follows directly from craft professionalism, which implies a promise of quality service. An interpreter has a duty to accept only assignments for which she is qualified, and to do her best to *secure* the necessary conditions to work to a high professional standard. To promise a standard of quality while accepting conditions that make it impossible is unethical. We explore this relationship between working conditions and quality, and the need for ongoing client education, in 10.2 below.

Although there is no one governing body or unified ethical code for all interpreters across all sectors and markets, there are some widely accepted tenets of interpreter ethics, including competence, confidentiality, fidelity, integrity, impartiality, collegiality, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest. Students of interpreting must internalize these canonical principles and be familiar with what they mean in practice. They must also be familiar with the specific standards, conventions or norms that will apply in their own target market sector. Applying these principles and norms is not always straightforward, and may sometimes call for complex judgments under pressure in fast-moving situations. Perhaps most tricky, and controversial, is managing the interpreter's role and its boundaries, where expectations of neutrality or loyalty vary, and different circumstances may alternately license or limit different levels of intervention and optimization. The moral and ethical dimensions of professionalism in interpreting are discussed in 10.3.

10.1.2.3 *Practical or 'service' professionalism*

For much of their training, conference interpreting students are focused on language, cognitive processes and technique, but the purpose of interpreting is ultimately to help people communicate, making it a quintessentially social activity in which providing a satisfactory service means cultivating an enabling and productive relationship with everyone else involved. As a premise, students must learn about the market for interpreting services, its ecosystem and the distribution of roles, and how to interact with recruiters, colleagues and clients (CC-11). They must acquire 'practice of the profession' skills, some specific to interpreting, others generic to freelance practice, including appropriate business practices for handling offers of work, negotiating fees, working conditions and contracts, avoiding conflicts of interest, and managing scheduling, accounting, taxes, etc. Not least, they should receive guidance about professional development and, generally, how to be healthy, happy and successful in their job. This social and practical dimension of professionalism is discussed in CC-11.

This composite definition of professionalism in three interacting dimensions – craft, moral, and practical – aims to balance realism with a commitment to excellence. It should replace the naïve, 'heroic' but misguided notion that an interpreter can or should try to interpret any kind of discourse in any situation and any conditions.

10.2 Working conditions and performance

An important consequence of our triangular definition of Professionalism is to make it incumbent on interpreters, as the expert service providers who know most about the conditions needed to do a good job, (i) to do everything possible to ensure that these conditions are met, and (ii) when conditions turn out to be sub-optimal despite all best efforts (see CC-9.4), to make sure that users' expectations are realistic *in the conditions they have provided*. Both may require **client education**. Ethical professionalism entails the pursuit of excellence, so clients who recruit properly trained, competent interpreters in good conditions may be pleasantly surprised; but craft constraints mean that sub-optimal conditions justify reduced expectations, or in aggravated cases, discontinuation of service.

10.2.1 The interdependence of conditions and quality

Given the diversity of situations and the inherent imperfections of all communication, 'quality' in interpreting is notoriously hard to pin down (though a good set of general indicators can be assembled for testing purposes: see TG-11). In practice it will always be determined jointly by several factors: the interpreters' abilities and best efforts (including training, skills maintenance, preparation, commitment and teamwork); their working conditions; and the clarity of their understanding with their users.

From the early days of modern conference interpreting (and especially of SI, after 1945) it was clear that quality in this complex task could only be promised under certain key conditions. Proper working conditions are such a fundamental concern for conference interpreters that insisting on them has been enshrined as an obligation in the Code of Professional Ethics of AIIC,[4] taking up a good third of this text. Even the best interpreters cannot but work poorly in bad conditions – just as even a star surgeon would perform a less than perfect appendectomy in the patient's kitchen with a rusty fruit knife. Surgeons, fortunately, have more control over their working environment, tools and choice of co-workers. But interpreters,

4. http://aiic.net/code-of-ethics (Accessed December 13, 2015).

on the private market in particular, work in constantly changing, client-provided environments, with client-provided (or -denied!) tools and materials, and sometimes, unqualified client-provided colleagues.

Before entering this profession it is vital to understand what proper working conditions are, why they are important, and how we secure them by communicating and negotiating with clients and event organizers at different levels, from collective agreements between the professional body (AIIC) and major institutional recruiters, through client education, signing master and individual contracts, and finally, maintaining effective communication with clients and users before, during and after the interpreted event.

10.2.2 Working conditions in conference interpreting

The conditions for successful interpreting can be broadly summarized under a few headings: information, access, equipment, team composition and strength, user cooperation, and a category we can describe as autonomy, dignity, privacy and rights over our work – plus the usual workload and rest provisions common to all occupations, as adapted to the pressures of this profession. The key conditions for optimal performance are listed in Table 10.1, followed by additional explanations.

Table 10.1 Optimal working conditions for conference interpreting

- Access to maximum relevant **information** and **documentation** about the meeting for preparation, and in the case of technical or complex subject matter, one or more **briefing** sessions;
- Qualified **professional interpreter colleagues** with the appropriate (125 Hz–12.5 kHz) knowledge and experience, who work as a harmonious team;
- Comfortable **team strengths** (requisite number of interpreters) and language coverage;
- **For SI**, **booths** designed to ISO[5] standards (ISO 4043; 2603) of comfort, ventilation, soundproofing and especially **visibility:** optimally, a direct view through the booth's front window of the speaker and proceedings, plus an in-booth monitor synched to the in-room projection screen for slides and videos; and a direct view through the booth's side windows of colleagues in neighbouring booths;
- Standard **SI equipment**: one console for each interpreter, with **light on-ear headphones** (not over-the-ear headphones that enclose the ear), and good **sound quality** for both interpreters and participants: a clean audio signal of sufficient volume, free of hiss, buzz, interference, or extraneous noise;
- Provision for fast **delivery** to the booths of **late-arriving texts and presentations**;
- **Competent speakers** who are mindful they are being interpreted – who **avoid reading**, pace themselves and make an effort to be clear (and ideally, come and speak with the interpreters in advance about anything 'special' in their speech);

5. ISO: International Organization for Standardization.

- **Access to speakers and participants** as necessary;
- In-booth **access to the internet** for online terminology and information;
- For consecutive and whispering, optimal **positioning** of the interpreter, hands-free microphone (i.e. on a stand), and working surface for documents and notepad;
- **Autonomy and privacy**: the freedom to speak in the booth, off-microphone or by pressing the mute button, without being overheard or recorded; and to organize work rotation autonomously within the team;
- Reasonable **working hours**: no more than two working sessions a day, each not exceeding three hours and separated by a non-working break of 90 minutes (AIIC);
- Adequate remunerated time for **travel** days, **rest** days, and **preparation**;
- **Feedback** (even during the meeting) plus debriefing afterwards, for better cooperation and better interpreter performance the next time;
- **Copyright:** reservation of the right of re-use of the service, i.e. no recording, webstreaming, broadcasting or transcribing the interpretation without consent and compensation (CC-11.2.2.3) – and the right to re-record prior to release if the interpreters so wish.

First, **information** is essential to successful interpreting. All necessary information and documentation should be provided to the interpreters *well in advance of* the meeting, for preparation, including at least the event title, topic and purpose (agenda and minutes of previous meetings), identities of organizer, speakers and audience, presentations, texts, scripts, and all relevant background; optimally, where possible, also professional translations into all relevant languages and a vetted glossary of terms; and briefing by organizers and/or speakers. *During* the meeting, the interpreters (or their team leader) should have **access** to speakers and event organizers as necessary, and receive documents as they become available. Feedback is welcome, both during and after the meeting, in the interests of further improving quality.

AIIC's Professional Standards[6] stipulate minimum **team strengths –** i.e. the number of interpreters required – on the grounds of the physical and mental fatigue caused by sustained concentration, and their consequent impact on quality.[7] Team strengths are determined according to "the mode of interpretation, the number of languages used, the language classifications of the interpreters making up the team, the nature of the conference, its duration and the workload" (AIIC, ibid.). Examples for some simpler meeting configurations are given in Table 10.2, with explanations below; team strengths required for larger multilingual meetings are listed in detail on the AIIC website.

6. AIIC Professional Standards Art. 6. http://aiic.net/page/6746 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

7. For example, research indicates a drop-off in quality after extended turns (beyond 30–40 minutes) in the SI booth (Moser-Mercer et al. 1998).

Table 10.2 Recommended team strengths: examples
(from AIIC Professional Standards, Art. 6)

Number of languages	**Minimum number of interpreters**		
	Consecutive	**Simultaneous**	**Whispering**
One or two languages into one (e.g. French and/or German into English only)	*	2	2 (max. 2 listeners)
One language into two (e.g. French *into* but not from English and German)	*	4	
Between two or more languages, all directions (e.g. English into French and French into English):			
Two languages into same two	2(1)	3(2)	
Three languages into three	3(2)	5(4)	
Four languages into four	–	8(7)	

For **consecutive** interpretation of a two-language meeting with two-way interpretation the ground rules require at least two interpreters, though AIIC allows one in 'exceptional circumstances' that are somewhat vaguely defined.[8] On this basis, where AIIC leaves the cells blank (for 1–2 languages into one, or one into two, in Consecutive) we would also recommend 2(1), with some caveats: from one language into two, one interpreter with the right language combination (say, C and/or B2 into A and/or B1) might work solo, but only for one session in a day (3 hours or less); for a full (6-hr) day, two interpreters would be needed (but could then each work into a different language).

For **SI**, at least *two interpreters per target language and per booth*[9] are required (even for one-way interpreting) to ensure quality and adequate coverage, with three preferred for bi-directional booths.[10] There should be as many booths as there are target languages, (except for the case of two-language conferences where a single bidirectional booth may suffice). The team should be put together in such

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8. "[For consecutive interpreting], under exceptional circumstances and provided the principles of quality and health are taken into full consideration, it shall be possible to recruit just one interpreter instead of two" (AIIC Professional Standards, Art 6.1 http://aiic.net/page/6746 Accessed August 3, 2015).

9. In a waiver granted its Canada region, AIIC has recognized that an interpreter can reasonably work alone in SI for a single turn of up to 40 minutes. http://aiic.net/page/1625 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

10. The Canada region of AIIC has published its own standard for bidirectional booths: <4 hours = 2 interpreters; 4–6 hours = 3 interpreters; > 6 hours, 4 interpreters.

a way as to avoid systematic relay, but "when there is no alternative to the use of relay for a given language, the team shall comprise at least two interpreters able to provide a relay from that language; [and] if the relay is provided from a two-way booth, at least three interpreters shall work in that booth" (AIIC Professional Standards, Art. 6).

These team strengths can be reduced to the figures shown in brackets in the table in 'exceptional circumstances', such as very short or simple meetings; but should be increased for meetings with long working hours and for particularly intensive meetings, or specialized meetings at which technical papers are delivered (where interpreters will need much of the break between their turns to prepare newly-arrived papers). The challenges of securing team strengths from difficult clients are discussed in CC-11.2.2.5.

For whispering, team strength should be at least the same as for SI, adjusted for the number of listeners: two languages into two for two listeners, for example, could be handled by 3(2) interpreters, as in normal SI.

Standard **equipment** for which clear guidelines exist include an appropriate **SI installation**, providing sufficiently high sound quality, a channel for each language and one additionally for the floor, appropriate consoles, microphones and headphones for interpreters and participants; and **booths**. ISO standards for mobile (ISO 4043) or built-in (ISO 2603) booths, promoted by AIIC's Technical and Health Committee,[11] stipulate parameters like size, ventilation, accessibility, visibility, sound-proofing, lighting and furniture (chairs and work-surfaces) (see also Grée 2006 for a summary of key requirements).

The moral obligation to secure the best possible conditions to ensure the best possible quality of service in the circumstances applies universally, regardless of whether the interpreter's *role* in the interaction is more fixed, as in court or traditional conference interpreting, or locally negotiated as in some other settings (CC-2.3). This requires the **cooperation of users** and input from both sides: the service providers are either themselves qualified interpreters, or, if they are an agency or a full-service consultant interpreter, are responsible for providing them (reflecting a collective responsibility of the profession for training), as well as technicians and equipment; while the users of the service are responsible for enabling the necessary working conditions (in cooperation with the service provider) for quality interpreting. To coin a phrase, it takes two to tango.

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11. http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm?page_id=136 (Accessed February 12, 2012).

Securing good working conditions

How much control interpreters have over defining their own working conditions and terms of service is a key indicator of professionalization and autonomy.

For **staff interpreters in international organizations**, good material conditions are generally assured thanks to these institutions' long experience of organizing multilingual meetings, and their regular collective negotiations of terms of service and standardized working conditions with AIIC, on behalf of all interpreters. Deviations are rare, except on missions in more remote locations. Information on AIIC **collective agreements**[12] and guidelines should be given to students as part of their introduction to the realities of professional practice.

However, the behaviour of speakers cannot easily be controlled (see CC-9), and access to documentation is nowadays increasingly patchy or even completely overlooked, despite reminders from Chief Interpreters and insistent requests from team leaders. Interpretation services can carry out periodic information and advocacy campaigns for participants on how to work best with interpreters, through presentations, flyers or briefings. On site, team leaders can ask Chairs at the beginning of each meeting to draw attention to the interpretation and the main dos and don'ts for making the best use of it. When necessary, the team leader (or senior interpreter in the English booth) can briefly occupy the English channel to request, via the chair, that speakers slow down to a reasonable pace, and provide their texts to the secretariat in advance if they intend to read – a 'mitigation' measure on the climate change analogy, as described in the last chapter. After that, what adaptation is expected of interpreters when these conditions are *not* met will be a matter of internal agreement, in which the main player and intermediary will be the **Chief Interpreter** (or Head of Language Services, etc.) or on-site team leader.

In-house interpreters in companies or government departments are more likely to be seen as employees than as professionals, and may consequently have much more difficulty securing good working conditions.

On the **private market**, securing working conditions is more complex and may often involve intermediaries, and the interpreter's **contract** plays a critical role (CC-11.2.2.2). This environment is described more fully in CC-11.

Whatever the setting and terms of employment, the interpreter should not hesitate to make reasonable demands in the interests of improving quality – for example, to rearrange furniture, seating or mobile booths to improve audibility and visibility, get technicians to optimize sound reception, etc. – and use all available aids: in the courtroom or in private arbitrations, for example, the interpreter should request a display screen in order to be able to see the real-time English transcript being produced by the court reporter: this can greatly facilitate accurate rendition

12. http://aiic.net/agreements (Accessed December 13, 2015).

(from English into the other language), in particular of complex questions containing numbers, names and dates.

The key to a successful client-interpreter-user partnership in the interests of quality is therefore a combination of interaction, persuasion and constraint: customer education and a binding contract.

All other things being equal (qualified interpreters, physical working conditions, etc.) the most common obstacle to satisfactory interpreting arises when the interpreters are prevented – typically, by an unqualified, obstructive or unhelpful intermediary – from being in direct contact with the true 'content owner(s)' of the meeting, i.e. those who know exactly what is going on and can provide access to background, materials, speakers and texts and who can arrange the necessary technical briefings (see also CC-11.2.1–11.2.3).

10.2.3 Client relations, education and expectations

While interpreters are expected to know best what is needed to do their job, we should also aim to understand possible variations in users' needs, especially if trade-offs might be needed between different aspects of what we understand as 'quality'.[13]

10.2.3.1 *Guidance for event organizers, speakers and users*

Not surprisingly, organizations which have not only institutionalized but even 'constitutionalized' interpreting, such as intergovernmental bodies like the EU or bilingual national Parliaments, are highly motivated to ensure quality interpretation, and are thus at the forefront of efforts to help users understand how to make the best use of the service (and their example has been followed by some well-organized interpreter-run consultancies; see CC-11.2.1.1). Tips and recommendations for (private market) event planners and users of interpretation have been published by AIIC,[14] some institutional interpretation services and consultant interpreters. Here are some typical examples, drawing on guidelines from two

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13. We know from user surveys (the largest so far, commissioned by AIIC, is reported in Moser 1997) that the most widely shared primary expectation is for 'faithfulness to (the meaning of) the original' (Moser 1997: 8, 17), and that clarity and coherence are usually more important than 100% completeness of detail. But perceptions of quality vary depending on the setting, type and content of the meeting, the occupational group, users' familiarity with and dependence on interpreting, and other factors. Participants in technical meetings require correct terminology (ibid.: 166), while in TV and media-style events, voice quality and modulation may be paramount.

Expectations also vary between individual participants in the same meeting, and some studies have suggested that, even when users clearly state their professed criteria, the interpreters or individual performances they actually prefer do not necessarily match them (Collados Aís 1998).

14. AIIC Guidelines For Speakers: http://aiic.net/Viewpage.Cfm?Page_Id=29 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

institutions (DG-Interpretation in the EU Commission, CPIS[15]) and a consultancy, Calliope.[16] Participants are informed or reminded that

- Interpreters are *your allies* in communication, and are there to help you communicate;
- Interpreters have taken a vow of confidentiality (for users who may be wary of supplying texts in advance).

If you are a **speaker,** REMEMBER you're being interpreted [CPIS] and for best results,

- speak at a **moderate (/reasonable) pace** [SCIC, CPIS, Calliope];
- speak **freely** or on the basis of notes or bullet points [SCIC], rather than reading from a script: "written text is very different from off-the-cuff speech: it has much more complex sentence structures and much denser content". Even someone listening to the original language may find it difficult to take in the message in every detail[17] [SCIC; CPIS, Calliope];
- preferably, use your native language [SCIC];
- avoid 'code-switching' between different languages which, depending on the length of segments switched, may be difficult or impossible to manage for interpreters;
- **articulate names and numbers clearly**; explain **acronyms** [Calliope];
- if you are presenting from a text, slides or other written material (e.g. video), make sure the **interpreters have a copy** (e.g. of the **text** or **slide presentation**) in advance;
- be prepared to **brief interpreters in advance** on a difficult topic, and/or talk to them about anything tricky or unusual in your speech;
- **when presenting slides,** give your listeners time to finish listening to the interpretation before flipping to the next slide;
- make sure your **microphone** is on and speak directly into it [SCIC, Calliope], at a distance of about 10–15 cm [4–6″], but do not tap it or blow loudly into it. Move your cell phone away: interference from cell phones and/or more than

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15. CPIS: Canadian Parliamentary Interpretation Service.

16. 'Ten Golden Rules of Conference Interpreting' http://www.calliope-interpreters.org/calliope-resources-event-planners-and-speakers/ten-golden-rules-conference-interpreting. More complete tips are given in Calliope's excellent video, 'Smart Speaking' which has also been distributed world wide: see http://www.calliope-interpreters.org/calliope-resources-event-planners-and-speakers/smart-speaking (both accessed December 13, 2015). Original (though perhaps over-hopeful) recommendations to speakers include advice on how to read slides and avoid overloading them with information.

17. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/working-with-interpreters/tips-for-speakers/index_en.htm (Accessed December 13, 2015).

one or two live microphones around the table, and other background noises, can simply drown the speaker out [CPIS];

- Make sure you have **access to a headset**, in case you are asked questions in a language you do not understand.

Some guidelines succinctly explain the SI process for the layman and what interpretation 'can and cannot do':

> [in SI], the interpreter is (i) saying what the speaker said about four seconds ago, (ii) analysing what the speaker said about two seconds ago, and (iii) listening to what the speaker is saying right now…. all at the same time. [CPIS]
>
> Interpretation *IS*
>
> - An instrument that enables verbal communication among people who speak a different language
> - Live, quasi-simultaneous verbal transmission of what you are saying, in the other language
> - Rendering of your message – your MEANING – as accurately as possible
> - A synthesis – or summary – of your meaning when you are speaking very quickly
>
> But it *IS NOT*
>
> - Word-for-word translation of your remarks into the other language
> - Instantaneous, with no lag
> - Intended for speeches that are read, especially if they are read quickly [CPIS]

Listeners should be aware that:

> - There will always be a lag. The lag is an integral part of the interpretation process. [CPIS]
> - When more than one person is speaking at the same time during a discussion, they cannot all be interpreted. The interpreter will focus on the most continuous, or "main" speaker. [CPIS]
> - When speakers switch languages in mid-sentence, the interpretation can seem choppier to the listener..[…] the interpreter has to 'shift gears' in mid-sentence. [CPIS]
> - When texts are read quickly and the interpreter has not been given a copy, the interpreter is forced to summarize and drop some content. You can ask the speaker to read more slowly.

The CPIS presentation ends on a reminder:

> Interpretation is there to help you communicate, and conveys your message to speakers of the other language. There are many different variables at every meeting, like sound, speakers, accents, subject matter and so on. No two meetings are the same. Interpretation is a communication challenge, a human art, and as such contains natural variations. No two days, and no two interpreters, are the same – and something unexpected often happens.

10.2.3.2 *Ideal conditions and reality: room for compromise?*

Given the variability of settings and situations in which interpreting is done, realistic professionalism often means securing the best conditions *possible* – which may in some cases only be *adequate* (or even sub-adequate), as some authors acknowledge (see also Hönig 2002):

> Optimum quality in professional interpreting implies that an interpreter provides a complete and accurate rendition of the original that does not distort the original message and tries to capture any and all extralinguistic information that the speaker might have provided ***subject to the constraints imposed by certain external conditions***. (Moser-Mercer 1996: 44, emphasis added)

Problems with interpreting often reflect a mismatch between client (or user) expectations and the performance of the service provided. Like any provider with a commitment to excellence and confidence that his promise can be kept, interpreters should strive to provide a service up to and indeed **beyond clients' expectations**. We can improve user understanding, and perhaps also our working conditions, by confidently and repeatedly explaining the **realistic limits on performance** that must be traded off against the 'realistic' difficulties a client may have in providing optimal conditions. Clients must understand what they *cannot* expect – for example, a perfect rendition of a poem in SI, or of a diplomatic speech read out from a text that has not been provided, and in poor sound conditions – and what they can, from a team of qualified interpreters working in good conditions.

Minimum conditions for emergencies

There are of course situations in real-life, particularly in non-conference settings, where interpretation is needed urgently – when lives or health are at stake, for example – but where optimal conditions cannot all be guaranteed. Even then, however – and precisely because the quality of communication may be paramount – some key conditions are indispensable for interpreting to be reliable (assuming basic competence in the interpreter(s)). *For these situations only* we can list the following minimal conditions:

- **Information**: the interpreter must be given some general indication of the encounter in terms of its parties and its topic;
- **Audibility** for both interpreter(s) and participants;
- **Cooperative participants**, aware that they are being interpreted under emergency conditions and ready to make some accommodations;
- **Reasonable work/rest regime**, to be adjusted to the number of interpreters available and working.

In short, the better the users appreciate the challenges of the task, the better their cooperation. Hence the importance of client education.

Our best efforts to secure proper working conditions may not always be successful. Ignorance of how interpreting works is by no means the only issue: other obstacles include security concerns (embargoed texts are often withheld from interpreters, as if they were members of the press), too many (and/or incompetent or obstructive) intermediaries, and/or quite simply, client motivation. The cost of providing good working conditions will only be justifiable to users if making interpreter-mediated communication a success is a priority to them, not an afterthought or an irrelevance.

10.2.4 Professionalism: a virtuous circle

Figure 10.2 shows how 'craft' confidence and skill in client education should combine to enable a 'virtuous circle' when organizing interpretation for multilingual meetings, through positive feedback between conditions, the client-interpreter relationship and performance at the table or in the booth. Professional behaviour and performance creates trust and satisfaction, encouraging clients to listen to interpreters' arguments for good working conditions and see that they are provided, making it easier for interpreters to provide a quality service.

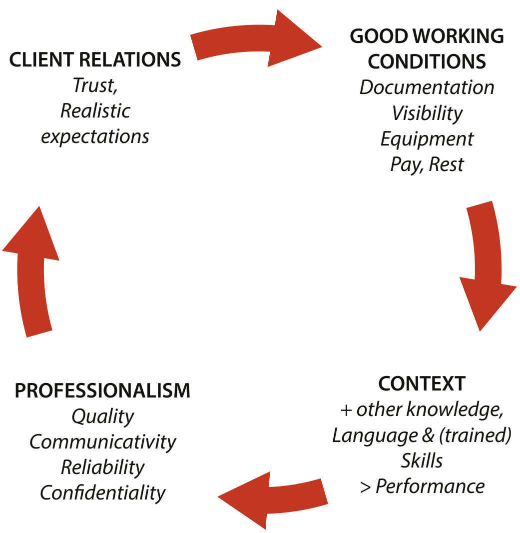

Figure 10.2 The virtuous circle of professionalism

As we can see, the relationship also depends to a large extent on **trust**, which is earned not just on the strength of the interpreter's technical competence, but also, in many situations, on her ethical conduct, and her ability to strike the right balance in terms of role, style and technique in difficult situations. This is the moral and ethical dimension of professionalism.

A key to establishing the 'virtuous circle' pictured in Figure 10.2 is the publication and observance of transparent, accountable, and operational **codes of conduct**. These expressions of the moral and ethical dimension of professionalism, and the challenges to formulating and implementing them in the diverse situations of real life, are explored in the next section.

10.3 Professional conduct, ethics and standards[18]

10.3.1 Introduction

Professional standards and ethics are the hallmark of a profession. Interpreting ethics, unlike those of regulated professions like medicine or law, are neither codified nor protected by law, but must be upheld collectively by consensus in the interests of the profession and its users (Figure 10.2 above).

A recent survey of published codes (Bancroft 2005[19]) shows differences of emphasis in different sectors of interpreting with respect to the interpreter's role (Appendix A). The AIIC Codes are the least explicit on issues like neutrality or fidelity. In multilateral organizations – the heartland setting of conference interpreting – the interpreter's role is defined by the international status of the 'client' and is clear-cut. But the conference interpreting skillset, and by extension the profession, also reaches deep into the private and national public sectors, and into regions and markets where – especially in consecutive mode – different norms regarding the interpreter's role may be dominant (see 10.3.3).

Skillset and ethos

Conceptions of what is acceptable or desirable in terms of the interpreter's role are not uniform even among freelance conference interpreters worldwide. This may be because the conference interpreting skillset is now deployed well beyond the profession's traditional domain in multilateral organizations with their ethos of full interpreter neutrality and assimilated settings. In some markets and sectors, where the affiliated-interpreter paradigm is historically dominant (e.g. in diplomatic interpreting) or resurgent (high-level business interpreting), interpreters will be comfortable with situations in which they are attached to one side of an exchange. Elsewhere – around the main multilateral centres – many conference interpreters will work overwhelmingly or exclusively in settings where it is easy, and accepted by clients, to work in a fully neutral role, and may thus see this as the only acceptable paradigm, or at least a universal aim to be sought by the profession.

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18. "Documents about ethics or conduct serve to regulate interpreter behavior and address issues of 'right and wrong,' whereas standards of practice typically offer practical strategies to promote quality interpreting" (Bancroft 2005: vii).

19. Conducted for the NCIHC ([US] National Council on Interpreting in Health Care).

10.3.2 Universal and near-universal principles

A recent survey conducted to prepare a code of ethics for US healthcare interpreters (Bancroft 2005) found a number of (near-)universals, with some differences of emphasis between segments of the profession. Standards for **legal interpreters** focus on confidentiality, impartiality, accuracy, and the need to follow the rules and regulations of the court; codes for **community and healthcare** interpreters are more often preoccupied with interpreter roles and boundaries, cultural mediation, client (or patient) well-being, and promoting client-provider relationships to ensure that the consumer's end needs are met (Bancroft 2005: vii); while published professional standards for **conference interpreting** display a salient concern for logistics, contractual issues and working conditions (see Appendix A for examples, including the AIIC *Code of Professional Ethics*[20] and *Professional Standards,*[21] and the more general ASTM[22] code). In contrast to court, medical or community interpreting (Mikkelsen 2000: 54), AIIC does not offer detailed standards of practice with guidance on how the general ethical principles are to be applied in real situations.[23]

The key (near-)universal principles most relevant to conference interpreting are

1. **Confidentiality**
2. **Competence** and commitment to high standards
3. **Integrity**
4. **Impartiality** or **neutrality**
5. **Fidelity** ('accuracy and/or completeness')

Three of these five principles are clear-cut; two are more complex and controversial. **Competence** and **integrity** are aspired to by all professions, and can apply across all sectors and settings of interpreting, as can **confidentiality**, subject to some limited legal or higher moral exceptions. **Impartiality** and **neutrality** are less straightforward, and **fidelity** is perhaps the most vexed issue in all translation. The following sections deal with each of these principles in the work of the conference interpreter – the authors' main area of expertise, and the main focus of

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20. http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm?page_id=54 (Accessed December 13, 2015).

21. http://aiic.net/page/205/aiic-professional-standards/lang/1 (Accessed December 13, 2015).

22. ASTM Standards of Professional Conduct. Formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials. ASTM, is an international standards organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus technical standards.

23. There are some informal publications, such as the AIIC Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters, at http://aiic.net/page/628/practical-guide-for-professional-conference-interpreters/lang/1 (Accessed December 13, 2015).

this book – with some additional comments on other domains where conference interpreters may also work, such as court and community interpreting.

10.3.2.1 *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is universally recognized as a cornerstone of professional ethics for interpreters across all sectors and settings, vital to winning the trust of principals. Many of the notorious incidents that have damaged the reputation of interpreters in history have been breaches of confidence or abuses of privileged information, or have resulted from undeclared conflicts of interest.

Interpreters may serve a wide range of events and discussions of a political, military, scientific or commercial nature without noticing anything particularly sensitive being said that would be likely to change anything if publicized. However, they cannot be the judges of this, and most importantly, to preserve our clients' trust, we must avoid even the *appearance* of indiscretion. We must therefore cultivate the habit of not revealing or discussing anything related to a meeting, or even other matters regarding the organization of meetings, that has not otherwise been made public.

In the case of any closed-door (non-public) event – probably the majority of all assignments – this rule thus forbids passing on any information about the meeting regardless of the medium (idle chatter, postings of text or photos on social media, tweets, detailed references in personal CVs, etc.: CC-11.2.4.1) or the recipient, including to other interpreters not on that meeting. In the case of an explicitly *secret* meeting, this confidential information also obviously includes the fact that it has taken place and who attended it.

Practical guidelines include sharing relevant information only within interpreting teams on the same meeting, and taking security precautions with documents and devices. Documents no longer needed should be permanently deleted from all devices, and hardcopy returned to the organizers, or if this is not possible, shredded.

Professional confidentiality can of course be overridden by a legal decision, or by a higher moral imperative, such as the obligation to report criminal activity or save lives (Grée 2001).[24]

In-house interpreters may be legally bound to secrecy by the terms of their employment contract, but clients should feel able to place equal trust in freelance professionals, who must respect confidentiality whether or not they have signed a non-disclosure agreement, as they are often asked to do. In short, subject to the limited exceptions listed above, professional conference interpreters must observe strict confidentiality as a matter of ethics and in the interests of the profession.

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24. Perhaps because this could arguably apply to military content, interpreters of such material are usually required to have security clearance and sign contracts with explicit confidentiality clauses.

10.3.2.2 *Competence*

Competence entails a commitment to maintaining high standards of performance, and includes

- making sure you have the *requisite skills and knowledge* (which entails preparing assignments), and declining any assignment for which you are not qualified or will not have time to prepare);
- ensuring that the necessary *working conditions* are in place to enable quality work, including appropriate documentation and/or background information for preparation;
- committing to professional development, and generally promoting quality.

10.3.2.3 *Integrity*

Integrity includes:

- *honesty*: avoiding or declaring conflicts of interest, and deriving no personal gain from information obtained in the exercise of the profession;
- *responsibility*: being on time, reliable, not making promises you can't keep, not cancelling bookings without cause;[25]
- *solidarity*: cooperating and sharing knowledge with colleagues, supporting beginners, and affording colleagues moral assistance and collegiality;
- refusing any job or situation which might detract from the dignity of the profession or bring it into disrepute.

Conflict of interest

The requirement to avoid or declare a conflict of interest (cf. AIIC Art. 2.2; ASTM 13.4.4) applies to any freelance interpreter, but cannot meaningfully hold in the same way for an *in-house* interpreter in a company, for example, who may well have a material interest in the success of the negotiation (promotion, stock options…), nor in many other cases where the interpreter is not expected to be in a fully neutral role, but is employed by and 'affiliated' to one of the parties (see 10.3.3 below). There may be different views within the profession as to how an independent interpreter should handle, for example, offers from two or more companies bidding for the same contract (see our case study in TG-10.2.2). A safe general guideline can be found in the ASTM Standard Guide (Appendix A), which requires interpreters to declare anything that may create the 'appearance' of partiality (ASTM 13.3.6).

25. The AIIC Code of Ethics also forbids accepting more than one assignment for the same period of time, a provision probably specific to conference interpreting and designed to deter the irresponsible (and greedy!) temptation to earn a fee from one employer on time already committed to another – with possible (and attested) disastrous consequences if the first employer should need the services of the interpreter at short notice.

10.3.3 Neutrality and the interpreter's role

The principle of the interpreter's impartiality, or 'neutrality', is well-known and features prominently in most published codes of interpreter ethics.[26] Interpreter impartiality is universally accepted in the sense that the interpreter must do her conscious best not to let her own personal views or preferences influence her interpretation. Complete neutrality, understood as the requirement to provide strictly equal service to all parties to an exchange, is the norm in international organizations, but is not universal, since in many settings – diplomatic, business, military – interpreters are typically employed by one side, to which they are expected to provide preferential service in some respects.

While some attempts at a more explicit definition of the interpreter's role have been made (in court or healthcare interpreting, for example – see Appendix A), in many situations the interpreter will have to use her judgment. It is clear that, for basic linguistic and cultural reasons, 'just translating' is not a viable solution. There is therefore lively debate in the literature and online discussion fora[27] around the issue of a more or less proactive role for the interpreter, and whether (or when) to tone down offensive language, correct apparent errors, explain possible misunderstandings or otherwise mediate or intervene in the proceedings.[28] These issues are addressed in 10.4 with a special focus on conference interpreting.

The modern conference interpreter will usually find herself in one of two frameworks in which the interpreter's role is relatively well-defined and understood by all parties:

a. *shared*: the interpreter(s) is/are employed by an intergovernmental organization or another international or multilateral entity organized on similar principles, and works neutrally for all parties meeting under its auspices;
b. *attached* or affiliated: each party employs its own (team of) interpreter(s), as is more or less the rule in diplomatic, business, in-house, or military interpreting.

26. Though somewhat ambivalently: see e.g. the extracts from the Standards of Professional Conduct in the ASTM (2007) Standard Guide, Art. 13.3.6 and Art. 13.4.4, in Appendix A.

27. e.g. interpreting.info.

28. For an excellent discussion of role issues in court and health interpreting, and arguments for and against advocacy, see Mikkelson (2008) and references therein, see also in Further reading at the end of this chapter.

10.3.3.1 *The shared or neutral interpreter*

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) were the modern (post-World War II) conference interpreters' first clients. As an employee of these bodies, whether as permanent staff or on a short-term (freelance) contract, the interpreter's role is that of an international civil servant, acting impartially and independently, with allegiance not to any member state but only to the organization and its objectives as set forth in its charter. In that capacity, they "are not, in any sense, representatives of Governments or other entities, nor are they proponents of their policies" and "should not seek nor […] accept instructions from any Government, person or entity external to the organization" (ICSC 2002, paragraph 8).[29]

When an interpreter is employed, whether as staff or freelance, by an intergovernmental organization (IGO) or some other international organization (IO) modelled on an IGO, the *client's norms* require her to be neutral with respect to all parties to the encounter, not even favouring her employer in the guise of the organization's secretariat. (This is essentially the role envisaged by AIIC). In this paradigm, the interpreter is generally expected to adhere to the following principles, although they may be relaxed in some situations, or there may be different interpretations of how they apply, as explained below and in subsequent sections:

1. *No reaction:* Suppress your own convictions and opinions, never betraying your own sympathies in the interpretation (e.g. through tone of voice, audible reaction, level of animation, let alone side commentary). This is achieved not by 'just translating' without thinking too much about the issues, but takes self-awareness, discipline and sometimes some effort, and must be instilled from 'day one' of professional training. To cite a judge writing on court interpreting: "The [interpreter's] impartiality […] will depend on a heightened state of consciousness which alerts the interpreter to possible deviations prompted by interference from his or her own value system" (Cunha Rodrigues 2003).
2. *No (appearance of) partiality:* Avoid any conduct that could convey even the appearance of partiality (cf. ASTM 13.3.6). Impartiality is necessary in all shared interpreter situations, but strict formal prescriptions on behaviour that might create even the *appearance* of partiality are found only in adversarial contexts such as legal interpreting, where interpreters may for example be required to avoid "unnecessary contact with parties".[30] Elsewhere, interpreters may often

29. International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). 2013. *Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service*. http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/general/standardsE.pdf (Accessed February 14, 2016).

30. NAJIT [USA] National Association of Judiciary Translators and Interpreters: Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities, Canon 2. See Appendix. http://www.najit.org/about/NAJITCodeofEthicsFINAL.pdf (Accessed December 13, 2015).

have lunch with delegates; and some interpreters are even married to national representatives, in both the intergovernmental (UN/EU) and private market spheres. In stark contrast, a court interpreter would on no account be allowed to interpret for his/her spouse, and would be dismissed for going out to lunch with the accused.

3. *No comment*: Refrain from making any public comment on any meeting or matter that might detract from your image of neutrality and impartiality. Keep your personal opinions private.
4. *No conflict of interest:* Avoid scrupulously any conflict of interest, withdraw if one is unavoidable (or the impression of one could be given), and derive no personal benefit from the outcome of the meeting or from confidential information gleaned at the meeting (AIIC Code of Ethics, Art. 2.2; ASTM 13.4.4). There may, however, be differences of appreciation about what might (seem to) be a conflict of interest for an interpreter, justifying refusal of an assignment: see discussion in TG-10.2.2.
5. *Interpret everything transparently*: Interpret everything that is said, including your own utterances made as interpreter, to preserve transparency.
6. *Do not take instructions* from any party on the style or and content of your interpreting. The neutral interpreter must refuse any request by a party to omit, summarize, embellish, tone down, or render something a certain way that is misleading, or inconsistent with her own professional judgment.
7. *No extra service:* Refrain from offering any party extra or additional (or reduced) service. For example, "[i]t would not be appropriate for international civil servants to prepare for government […] representatives any speeches, arguments or proposals on questions under discussion." (ICSC 2002, paragraph 24). The AIIC Code of Professional Ethics in fact forbids members from providing other services at meetings for which they have been engaged as interpreters.

   In IGO settings, the role of the interpreter is indeed rarely extended beyond interpreting. Interpreters are rarely asked even for cultural guidance or advice, except in small consecutive meetings; they may offer it neutrally if asked, or sometimes even spontaneously (though with circumspection), to be helpful *to the meeting as a whole*, but never to one party only. However, this restriction may be relaxed even in IGOs, when interpreters go on missions, or in small, less formal meetings.

And, not least:

8. *Equal fidelity:* A neutral interpreter will do her very best to render each speaker's message as accurately, clearly and effectively as possible, following the norm of 'rotating side-taking' or Sender-loyalty (Gile 2009: 33–34). Certainly

there can be no 'ideal' transparent conduit, despite our best intentions and efforts – among other things, due to speakers' (and interpreters') varying competence[31] – but multilateral organizations and others modelled on them ratify, protect, facilitate and indeed require (both staff and freelance) interpreters' observance of this norm.

10.3.3.2 *The attached or affiliated interpreter*

In bilateral settings, notably in diplomatic and business interpreting (but also military interpreting), it is standard protocol for each side to employ its own interpreter(s), who is (are) usually responsible only for interpreting the remarks of that side into the language of the other. In this paradigm, interpreters are attached to one side, and accountable to codes of conduct set by their employer – be it the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Pentagon or a private corporation. These clients can thus benefit from having an interpreter who is fully up to speed on their situation, position, policies, jargon, speech style, etc., by virtue of constant exposure as insiders, access to internal working documents, confidential briefings, etc. The client may indeed ask 'their' interpreter (albeit not publicly) to correct or amplify the interpretation it receives from the other side, provide additional commentary, suggestions, reminders, etc.

This arrangement is often appreciated by clients where there are large cultural gaps to be bridged. The attached interpreter is expected to serve not just as a language specialist, but also as a consultant with insight into the other side's culture, and will often be asked for advice, analysis, cultural explanations etc. by her principals. Her brief may also involve a tacit or explicit request to perform certain services: summarize, paraphrase or omit, offer opinion, suggest responses, participate in debriefings, help draft talking points, take notes and write up minutes, or do written translation, for her Client/employer's side but not the other.

In terms of fidelity, attached interpreters cannot be held to the requirement of strictly equal 'Sender-loyalty', insofar as they may optimize interpretation for some speakers in ways they might not do for others (10.4) – for example, by offering additional comment or insight for their own side's benefit, or by improving

31. Perfect equal fidelity (the 'transparent conduit') can only be an ideal to strive for, given our own different backgrounds and cognitive environments, subjective processes of comprehension, empathy and affinities and limitations on expressive ability. Despite best intentions and conscious efforts, any interpreter will always find some speakers more or less congenial or easier or harder to understand at various levels than others, and will thus, inevitably and without meaning to, communicate some speakers' messages more effectively than others. As Gile points out (2009: 33–4), "even technically, the need to make choices when Translating is incompatible with transparent neutrality as implicitly taught in school translation" (2009: 33–4].

the clarity, cultural appropriateness or persuasiveness of their own side's presentation. But they are ethically bound to provide default *basic fidelity* to all speakers, forbidding misrepresentation or distortion of any speaker's message (CC-4.4.3, 10.4 below, and TG-10.4.3).

10.3.3.3 *Ambivalent and unstructured situations*

These two types of status – 'shared' and 'attached' – can be seen as the two basic paradigms. What is expected of the interpreter is usually clear to all in most assignments, in the traditional (IO model) or extended (business, diplomacy) domains of conference interpreting, in legal and courtroom interpreting, and in many PSI settings (Tipton 2008). But interpreters may also find themselves in hybrid or mixed situations, or informal, unstructured settings where the users of the service are themselves unclear about their role.

For example, an interpreter (or a team) may be employed and paid by one party, but asked to provide interpretation for the meeting as a whole. The interpreter(s) would then naturally revert to the fully neutral norm of 'rotating side-taking', interpreting all participants' words with equal, maximum possible fidelity. However, conflicts or incidents may arise that make it necessary to seek or defer to the client's instructions in some respects, especially when the parties are adversarial. Two simple case studies are presented and discussed in TG-10.3.1.

Interpreters may also occasionally find themselves in **informal situations** where the principals and clients have little or no experience of interpreting practice or procedures or notion of the interpreter's role. Here the responsibility for making the ground rules clear may fall morally on the interpreter. Thus another principle that might be added to professional ethics, derived from 'fairness to all parties', is **transparency**: to do one's best to ensure that all parties to the communication understand the interpreter's role, status and the service expected.[32]

However, in **community-based** and other unstructured or informal settings, certain kinds of strict verbal neutrality may not be suited to ensuring transparent, effective communication. Personal and immediate medical, legal or humanitarian interests may be at a stake for one or more parties (a witness, a suspect, a defendant, an applicant for asylum) who may not know the conventions, and transparency about the interpreter's role cannot usually be taken for granted. A **more proactive role** may therefore be ethically warranted in every respect – procedure, form and content.

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32. Nord (1991), writing on Translation generally, describes *loyalty* as "a basic moral principle governing relations between human beings […]. Since conventions determine what a reader expects of a translation, the translator has the responsibility not to deceive the users of the translation by acting contrary to the conventions without telling them what he is doing and why" (1991: 91).

To clarify *procedures*, interpreters working in these settings in particular should be trained to give a one-minute **standard briefing to their users**, in simple and clear terms, explaining their role, what they will and will not do, and that the parties should address each other directly.

As regards *content and form*, the playing field between communicators may be so blatantly uneven, in terms of information needed to understand the message, that the interpreter has an overriding moral obligation to compensate for likely distortions, rather than provide 'identical fidelity' to all parties – for example, by adjusting a lawyer's register for an illiterate asylum applicant, or a doctor's for a patient; giving explanations, correcting misunderstandings, or even supplying additional, perhaps life-saving information, about a patient's symptoms, or an asylum applicant's situation, which the speaker may have forgotten or failed to express. As we have seen, healthcare interpreting recognizes the superior criterion of the patient's well-being. (Here too, 'attached' status may be preferred, when patients use a close friend or family member as an interpreter.) This implies a brief to introduce any information that may help, even if it is not solicited by the health professional.

10.3.3.4 *The interpreter's visibility*

The interpreter's *visibility* has been a much-debated issue. Some codes advocate a discreet and conservative role for the interpreter: she shall "assist […] neutrally and unobtrusively"[33] and "avoid calling undue attention to him/herself…" (ASTM 2007, Standards of Professional Conduct, Art. 13.3).

Invisibility should not be confused with passivity: as we have seen, interpreting involves highly active processing and constant analysis, alertness to the environment, mobilization of personal knowledge, and judgment. Al-Zahran captures this paradox to some extent:

> it can be argued that the interpreter as cultural mediator is a neutral *actor* in the sense that he/she is disengaged from the primary parties' interests, which might be conflicting in nature, but a bipartisan *individual* when it comes to understanding what is said. (2007: 155; our emphasis)

In their default role, interpreters should be like the black-clad stagehands in *kabuki* theatre (*kuroko* 黒子) who come on stage among the actors to move props and change scenes but are conventionally treated as invisible. The 'invisibility' of an interpreter should not be confused with timid voice or posture, but is achieved by superimposing the interpretation precisely on the footprint that the original speech makes on the meeting. This **active invisibility** is achieved through everything from posture to word choice and vocal tone: anger or indignation, for example, should

33. Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters (2013), p. 12.

be conveyed by the interpreter through word choice and a 'symbolically' indignant tone, rather than yelling and gesticulating like the speaker.

On the other hand, interpreters should be *ready* to be more or less proactive, helping communication but without imposing themselves. In a survey of the self-perceptions of conference, court, medical/community and over-the-telephone interpreters in three different countries, Angelelli (2003) found that they "did not consider their role to be invisible in any of the settings", and that they felt "they played a role in building trust, facilitating mutual respect, communicating affect as well as message, explaining cultural gaps, controlling the communication flow and aligning with one of the parties in interactions" (Angelelli 2003: 26).

In some situations, interpreters may need to be more directive and visible, showing participants how they can help to improve communication, for example when participants have limited experience in the use of interpreting services (Donovan 2008; see also TG-10.5.2). Beyond a certain point, however, the extension of the interpreter's role must be explicitly ratified by users, as explained below (10.4.2).

What to do if you are challenged

Whether in consecutive or SI, participants may sometimes directly challenge the fidelity of the interpreter's version. This may be sincere, but it is also unfortunately sometimes used by participants in bad faith, as a negotiating ploy or to try and go back on what they have just said. In the case of a justified correction of fact or language, accept with apologies; if the correction is unjustified, wrong or clearly in bad faith, but not really significant to the meaning, it is sometimes best to demur and trust to the discernment of observers. However, in the case of a false challenge that would distort the message, it is necessary for the interpreter to stand her ground, especially if other participants do not understand the languages involved.

10.3.4 Morality, conscience and individual preference

Whatever the role conventions of the setting, professionalism does not mean leasing one's services regardless of the cause and methods being served, like a mercenary. Interpreters can and should decline assignments not only for 'craft' reasons – conditions or qualification – but also on ethical grounds, and they are justified in refusing to violate ethical and moral principles, even if they are already on the job.

On grounds of conscience, an interpreter should refuse any service that in her judgment might benefit criminal activities, or contribute to suffering or endangering life.

Interpreters are sometimes asked "Would you interpret for an extremist (terrorist, dictator, murderer, fanatic, etc.)?" Here the principle of transparency may be a guide: one defensible position would be to accept only if counter-argument is provided for in the event – as it is in properly constituted legal proceedings, but not a political rally with only supporters present. One legendary interpreter of the mid-20th century, André Kaminker (of Polish-Jewish origin), interpreted Hitler's first major speech in 1934 live for French radio (Signoret 1976: 15; Gaiba 1998: 30) thus helping a whole nation to recognize Hitler for the monster he was.

It would also be morally defensible, and possibly vindicated by law in some countries, to refuse to interpret a speaker denying the Holocaust or another documented genocide, though this is controversial, since it might be argued that it is better to expose evil, on the example of Kaminker and the radio station. Interpreters in this situation often resort to adopting a special flat, robotic tone to signal their disassociation from the content they are conveying.

Finally, some adversarial situations may severely constrain the interpreter's ability to work ethically, and acceptance of such assignments must be left to individual vigilance and conscience. In an extreme case – discovering the 'interview' one has agreed to interpret is an interrogation under torture, for example – this decision may affect the interpreter's own safety.

10.4 Fidelity and optimization

10.4.1 Fidelity

The interpreter's primary mission is to be a trusted bridge between people who need to communicate across a language barrier, so the commitment to reflect each speaker's meaning as faithfully as possible should be at the core of our professional ethics. This principle is indeed explicitly spelled out in most codes, under different names (e.g. ASTM 13.4.5: see Appendix A, Table 10.6 and see Bancroft 2005) but not in AIIC's Code of Professional Ethics for conference interpreters, where it is apparently taken for granted.

Fidelity in translation is a highly complex issue and the subject of a time-worn debate about when and where translators or interpreters should lean toward more literal ('form-based') or interpretive ('meaning-based') approaches, or when they can or should try to optimize communication in the process. Academic and theoretical definitions aside, user expectations vary (as they do in written translation), including in regard to literalness. Readers will find a fuller discussion in the Trainer's Guide (TG-10.4) with examples of ways in which it is acceptable, indeed desirable, for interpreters to optimize the form (or even content) of utterances in the interests of better communication (see also below).

The basic guideline for fidelity in conference interpreting is straightforward, but it also helps to have a menu of options for when obstacles arise.

Your default task is to convey to the best of your ability exactly what each speaker intends to say as you understand it, including information content, arguments, logic, tone and mood, as clearly and communicatively as possible. When encountering a difficulty, you will have to use your judgment, or if still unsure, choose among the options set out in the last chapter (CC-9.3.2) for the different situations of consecutive (where you can ask for clarification before interpreting) and SI, where different strategies are needed.

As these options show, you have three resources to fall back on when in trouble: your own judgment, communication with the speaker, and teamwork (help from a boothmate). Of these, your own judgment is the final backstop, the one resource that should always be available (for example, when doing SI and your boothmate has stepped out, or there is no time to communicate). Be aware, then, that your judgment is as important a tool of your profession as your linguistic or technical skills and your knowledge. Clearly, too, the more you know about the speaker's communicative intentions and concerns, the better you will be equipped to make difficult decisions.

Finally, sometimes it will be impossible to achieve the 'default fidelity' described above, for any of several reasons: sudden acoustic interference, a speaker with a very thick accent or who is reading impossibly dense material at speed, rapid bursts of numbers, names or literary citations, or any of the other problems described above or in the last chapter – and no help is at hand.

In such cases, do not guess or make things up, but aim for **minimal** or **basic fidelity**: say what you have understood, however simply, avoiding any risk of misrepresentation or distortion of the speaker's basic communicative intent. Ethically, in the event of client interference, an interpreter may defer to an instruction not to interpret, under the client's responsibility, but should always refuse any instruction to distort or misrepresent a speaker.

Importantly, if you are **in doubt**, but must say something (as in SI), the safest option is to be **non-committal**: do not risk saying, for example, that the speaker is for or against a proposal, and never explicate or over-interpret something you are unsure of. As explained in CC-9.3.2, these guidelines are designed to meet the requirements of professional ethics (commitment to fidelity, honesty, integrity, transparency), not just of your own survival. Instructors should provide multiple examples for discussion (see TG-10).

10.4.2 Optimization vs. 'strong mediation'

As explained in Chapter 2, the interpreter's job can never be to 'just translate' in the sense of transposing words from one language to another. Whether in a completely independent role as 'shared' interpreter, or employed by one side, our job is to make listeners understand as fully as possible what speakers mean to say. As we have seen throughout the course, this will routinely mean inferring in part what speakers mean to say, and freely choosing words and expressions that will best express that in the context, a process which in itself must often take us away from word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase standard equivalents.

But even this 'default' or minimal requirement is often not enough. To ensure full communication, we will often be expected to go one step further to make the speech as comfortable to understand as possible, or to overcome cultural barriers, by *optimizing* communication using various devices that go beyond 'translation' in the strict sense: explaining, paraphrasing, asking for clarification and rephrasing, and even discreetly adjusting tone, register or the choice of an example or an illustration. These are usually operations that the interpreter chooses to do consciously, and that carry risks and responsibilities, and should therefore be discussed with case studies in class.

Interpreters and translators are often seen as linguistic and even cultural 'mediators', but sometimes (typically in less formalized settings), we may be asked or encouraged to go beyond just ensuring communication to actually helping the communicators find an agreement or a way of settling a problem. This is a more active or 'strong' kind of mediation, in which the interpreter acts in part as an advisor, or even a referee. This is not traditionally part of the interpreter's role, though it may make a valuable contribution in some circumstances. But it carries special responsibilities and risks, so several conditions must be observed. Before (exceptionally) accepting this role, you must be sure that:

- It is clearly necessary, and no qualified professional mediator is available.
- You have been explicitly invited to do so by the parties, who must all agree to your taking this role (though of course, not necessarily to accepting any advice you may give).
- You feel able and qualified to do so: Do you understand the positions and interests of all the parties? Do you have enough information to assess the situation and mediate in this way?
- Expectations are realistic, and you are granted the leeway needed to do your best in this role – for example, extra time to think, if you are expected to interpret as well… – which may entail some control over the rules of exchange, rather like a moderator or chairperson.

Here again, your instructors should bring case studies to discuss the complexities of this extended role in class.

10.5 Summary

Professionalism is the fourth, keystone component of expertise, operationalizing interpreting competence in the real world. Professionalism describes the way we manage, optimize (and perhaps promote) our service to users and clients, in which quality, trust and working conditions are interdependent. Professionalism has interacting craft, moral and practical dimensions: we make a commitment to competence, integrity and confidentiality, and to securing the best conditions for quality work, aiming to create mutual trust and transparency about the service promised and the interpreter's role and user expectations.

The norms of neutrality and fidelity are less clear-cut. Professional interpreters are expected to be impartial in the sense of not letting their own beliefs, preferences and sympathies show in their interpretation, and to convey each speaker's meaning faithfully, and at a minimum, without distortion or misrepresentation. However, full neutrality in the sense of equal service and 'Sender-loyalty' (Gile 1990) cannot be expected of all interpreters. Two broad paradigms seem to exist in current practice. Interpreters in a neutral role, as ratified by their Client's norms and their terms of employment, provide equal and optimal service to all speakers and listeners; those in an 'affiliated' role, i.e. who are employed by or attached to only one party to the communication, may be expected to provide some extra service (optimization) for their principals, which may be construed as an expectation of loyalty, especially in diplomatic, military and even business interpreting.

The conference interpreter's role is more conventionalized in SI than in consecutive, and is more standardized in general than community interpreting and less formal settings, but less constrained than in legal interpreting. In less codified settings, or where participants have limited experience of interpreting, the professional interpreter should adopt a neutral role by default, but try to determine the best arrangement in the interests of optimum communication, and proactively propose and explain her role and procedures to participants, or negotiate it where necessary. This best-practice approach reflects another recommended principle, that of **transparency** in the interests of clarity, realism in expectations, and ensuring a level playing-field for communication. The clearer the interpreter's role, mission and procedures are to all parties in advance, the better.

Interpreters are agreed that they are not meant to be invisible, but helpful where appropriate and welcome. In some cases, however, participants may invite the interpreter to offer advice or otherwise help them reach agreement, and even arbitrate between different parties. This 'strong mediation' is not part of the interpreter's default role, and should only be agreed to under strict and exceptional conditions (see further discussion in TG-10.5.1).

Interpreters will be offered work in a wide variety of environments. Professional ethics require us to adhere to the five principles listed above, but (aside from economic factors and special constraints like military conscription) we are free to choose our assignments or postings. Our work will naturally involve us in competitive and adversarial as well as cooperative exchanges, and we may face challenges to our professional and personal ethics from powerful economic or political forces. As professionals, we are committed to refuse work in inadequate conditions; but we may also do so on moral grounds (for arms dealers, for example, if we are pacifists), or simply out of personal preference.

Otherwise, we may influence the conventions of mediated communication, but can rarely define them. Broadly speaking, interpreters must follow their Client's norms of professional practice, subject to the influence they can bring to bear through their own codes, either to draw the line at requests for unethical or unprofessional practices, or to establish good practice when Clients are unsure about how interpreting works best. We must be prepared for situations in which issues of role, neutrality and allegiance are not always clear-cut, and where we will have to exercise judgment in complying with, proposing, adapting to, negotiating or rejecting conditions and arrangements for interpreting on ethical as well as material grounds.

The next chapter focuses on practical aspects, describing the 'ecosystem' of conference interpreting, with its main players and conventions. In a complete course this will often be the subject of a special module taught in the last semester to prepare future graduates for the profession.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Professional ethics and conduct

Bancroft 2005: The Interpreter's World Tour: standards of practice for interpreters

AIIC Code of Professional Ethics http://aiic.net/page/6724 (Accessed July 24, 2015)

AIIC Professional Standards http://aiic.net/page/6746/professional-standards/lang/1 (Accessed February 18, 2016)

ISO standards on interpreting and related technology http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_tc_browse.htm?commid=654486&published=on&development=on (Accessed February 18, 2016)

For extracts from codes of professional standards in different branches of the interpreting professions, see Appendix A

Working conditions

In interpreting generally: ASTM 2007. Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services

In conference interpreting:

AIIC recommendations: see Appendix A below

Mackintosh 2002: The AIIC Workload Study: Executive Summary

In public service interpreting: NUPIT 2001

In community interpreting: see the *Critical Link* series *(Benjamins)*

In video relay services: see Petersen 2012

The interpreter's role (in court and community interpreting)

Angelelli 2004: Revisiting the Interpreter's Role

Berk-Seligson 1990: The Bilingual Courtroom

Hewitt et al. 1995: Court Interpretation in US State Courts

Mikkelson 2008: Evolving views of the court interpreter's role

Morris 1995: The moral dilemmas of court interpreting

Shlesinger 1991: Interpreter latitude vs. due process (multilingual trials)

Cultural differences

Hall 1976: Beyond culture

Hofstede et al. 2010: Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind

Interpreters in history: see CC-2, Further reading

Interpreters in fiction (literature and film):

Kurz 2007: The fictional interpreter

See the excellent list on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_language_interpreters_in_fiction and for a humorous example on multiple relay from French cinema: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZFr0iwBblk (both accessed December 13, 2015)

Appendix A

Codes of conduct and ethics and professional standards

1. Working conditions

The AIIC Code of Professional Ethics makes the effort to secure good working conditions an ethical obligation "with a view to ensuring the best quality interpretation", and enshrines the key conditions as an article (Art. 7):

Working Conditions (from AIIC Code of Professional Ethics, Art 7[34])

"Members of the Association

a. [shall] seek …satisfactory conditions of sound, visibility and comfort,
b. when interpreting simultaneously in a booth, shall not work either alone or without the availability of a colleague to relieve them should the need arise;
c. shall try to ensure that teams of conference interpreters are formed in such a way as to avoid the systematic use of relay;
d. shall not agree to undertake either simultaneous interpretation without a booth or whispered interpretation unless the circumstances are exceptional and the quality of interpretation work is not thereby impaired;
e. require a direct view of the speaker and the room, and therefore will not agree to working from screens except in exceptional circumstances where a direct view is not possible, provided the arrangements comply with the Association's appropriate technical specifications and rules;
f. shall require that working documents and texts to be read out at the conference be sent to them in advance;
g. shall request a briefing session whenever appropriate;
h. shall not perform any other duties except that of conference interpreter at conferences for which they have been taken on as interpreters."

2. Professional conduct and ethics: general

ASTM (2007) Standards of Professional Conduct,
articles 13.3.1–8, require the interpreter to

- deal fairly, respectfully, and honestly with all parties using his/her professional services.
- strive to ensure effective and productive communication in any given professional situation and make every effort to have working conditions in place that will allow him/her to provide quality interpreting services.
- deliver professional interpreting services appropriate to the specific setting in which he/she is working, but which are not in conflict with professional tenets and do not undermine and/or discredit the profession
- request appropriate documentation and/or background information to allow him/her to adequately prepare for an assignment.
- share professional knowledge, experience and information with colleagues in a collaborative manner.
- avoid any conduct that may result in discrediting the profession or creating the appearance of impropriety or undue partiality.
- avoid calling undue attention to him/herself in the performance of his/her professional duties.
- dress appropriately and in keeping with the setting in which he/she is working.

34. http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm?page_id=54 (Accessed December 11, 2015).

The AIIC Code of Professional Ethics (extracts[35]; emphasis added)

The conference interpreters' international professional association, AIIC, views ethics and conditions as closely linked: Members are bound by a Code of Professional Ethics which comprises both a Code of Honour defining standards of integrity, professionalism and confidentiality, and a summary of working conditions that members are committed to seek.

The *Code of Honour* states that members

- shall be **bound by the strictest secrecy**, which must be observed towards all persons and with regard to all information disclosed in the course of the practice of the profession at any gathering not open to the public (Art 2a)
- shall **refrain from deriving** any **personal gain** whatsoever from **confidential information** they may have acquired in the exercise of their duties as conference interpreters (Art. 2b)
- shall **not accept any assignment for which they are not qualified**: acceptance of an assignment shall imply a moral undertaking on the member's part to work with all due professionalism (Art 3a); [and] give the same undertaking for other conference interpreters s/he recruits, be they members of the Association or not (Art. 3b)
- shall **not accept more than one assignment for the same period of time** (Art 3c)
- shall not accept any job or situation which might detract from the **dignity of the profession**, [and] refrain from any act which might bring the profession into disrepute (Art. 4)
- shall [have the] duty […] to **afford their colleagues moral assistance and collegiality**; [and] refrain from any utterance or action prejudicial to the interests of the Association or its members (Art 6)

The **ASTM** (2007) Standard Guide's **Code of Ethics** (13.4.1–6) calls on every interpreter to

- 13.4.1. [*Conflicts of Interest*] disqualify him/herself from any assignment where a conflict of interest may exist. The interpreter shall reveal any prior contact or association that could create any appearance of impropriety.
- 13.4.2. [*Confidentiality*] protect the confidentiality and privacy of all information obtained during an interpreting assignment. Only in exceptional cases can confidentiality be breached (for example, when the safeguarding of said information could lead to bodily harm or death).
- 13.4.3. [*Competence*] not knowingly accept any assignment beyond his/her interpreting ability or for which he/she lacks an adequate understanding of the subject matter and/or cultural context. In situations where the interpreter cannot easily disqualify him/herself from an assignment, the interpreter shall inform the client of his/her limitations.
- 13.4.4. [*Impartiality*] maintain a neutral attitude during an interpreting assignment. Should objectivity not be possible, the interpreter shall inform the parties involved and shall not hesitate to withdraw from an assignment in the interest of protecting the client and the professional integrity of the interpreter.

35. http://www.aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm?page_id=54 (Accessed October 3, 2011).

- ► 13.4.5. [*Accuracy*] perform his/her duties with the greatest possible fidelity to the spirit and meaning of the communication, without embellishments or omissions, and in accordance with the requirements of the specific setting in which the interpreter is working.
- ► 13.4.6. [*Professional Development*] maintain his/her professional skills by pursuing additional education in his/her working languages, as well as other relevant subjects. The interpreter shall be committed to enhancing interpreting and other relevant professional skills through any available opportunities, including workshops, professional meetings, exchanges with professional colleagues, and staying abreast of current literature and developments in the field.

Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters (extracts[36])

Emotions Shown by the Interpreter (p. 10):
"The jury should judge the credibility of the witness, not take cues from the interpreter. It is imperative that you remain emotionally neutral, expressing only the reactions of the parties for whom you are interpreting."

Interpreter's role (p. 12): "…the role of the interpreter is to assist professionally, neutrally, and unobtrusively so that the proceedings can take place as if no language barrier existed."

Interpreter neutrality (p. 20): "[interpreters] must, like jurors, not let themselves step out of their role as neutrals"; […]

"To reinforce the neutrality of interpreters, some trial judges explain to all parties and potential jurors that the interpreters are nonpartisan and should not be considered as part of either the defense or the prosecution, no matter for whom they provide interpreting services during the case."

Personal opinions (p. 20):

"an attorney [may] approach you for comment regarding the credibility of a witness, asking for an assessment of his client or your sense of the case in general […]; you should politely avoid expressing an opinion so that you do not compromise your professional detachment and impartiality." […]

(p. 21) "you must remain detached and neutral and never offer your personal opinion about any matter related to a case to which you have been assigned as an interpreter."

California Rules of Court: Rule 2.890. Professional conduct for interpreters

(c) Impartiality […]: (1) An interpreter must be impartial and unbiased and must refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias…; [this is] also required of contract interpreters (pp. 83–84).

36. Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters, 5th Edition, May 2013. http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/CIP-Ethics-Manual.pdf (Accessed December 13, 2015).

> **NAJIT [USA] National Association of Judiciary Translators and Interpreters[37]: Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities**
>
> **Canon 2. Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest**: Court interpreters and translators are to remain impartial and neutral in proceedings where they serve, and must maintain the appearance of impartiality and neutrality, avoiding unnecessary contact with the parties. Court interpreters and translators shall refrain from comment on matters in which they serve.

(From Bancroft 2005, *The 'Interpreters' World Tour – An Environmental Scan of Standards of Practice for Interpreters,* a survey conducted for the US National Council on Interpreting in Health Care [NCIHC]).

3. Ethics and standards in specialized areas

3.1 Legal/court interpreting

"Surprisingly, although dozens of codes of conduct can be found for legal interpreters, few standards of practice exclusively addressed court and legal interpreters. In general, there is a concern in legal interpreting with accuracy, completeness, and impartiality. Another important precept is that the interpreter should insert no opinions or advice. In some documents it is made very clear that parties are expected to speak to each other, not the interpreter. Codes of conduct for court interpreters are often dry and to the point, while standards are more richly nuanced." Table 10.3 (Bancroft 2005: 22, Table 6) provides some examples of the types of concerns addressed.

Table 10.3 Ethics and standards in legal/court interpreting ('representative examples')

Codes of ethics and conduct	Standards of practice
• Respect court procedures.	• Meet with LEP client ahead to assess dialect.
• Use first person.	• Hold pre-session with LEP client.
• Interpret everything as said.	• Inform parties that everything is interpreted.
• No practising of law/legal advice.	• Ask them to use direct speech.
• Respect legal privilege.	• Ask them to let the interpreter keep pace.
• Take break if competence will be impaired.	• Allow solo interpreters a break, once per hour.
• Do not discuss privileged information.	• Research the case. Prepare.
• Make no statements about merits of case.	• Arrive early; report to correct person.
• Use soft voice in simultaneous interpreting.	• Ensure good visibility of all parties.
• Use consecutive mode with witnesses.	• Preserve tone and register.
• Summarize only in "three-way-jumble."	• Notify court immediately of errors and correct.
• No side conversations during breaks.	• Consider gender requirements (e.g., rape cases).
• Record proceedings where possible.	• Observe dress codes. Wear identification.
• Do not use recordings (poor sound).	• Advise parties to pace flow.
• If asked to omit something, refuse.	• Intervene to assess/address misunderstanding.
• Respect oath to interpret accurately.	• Explain cultural frameworks as needed.
• Restrict role to interpreting.	• Seek appropriate counseling if traumatized.

37. http://www.najit.org/about/NAJITCodeofEthicsFINAL.pdf (Accessed December 13, 2015).

3.2 Healthcare & community interpreting

"Standards of practice for interpreters in health care differ in significant ways from those for most other fields of interpreting. More than any other area of interpreting, medical interpreting focuses on:

- The consumer's health and/or well being.
- Promoting the bond between provider and client.
- Exhibiting respect for all parties.

[…] All [these documents] take as 'given' that the interpreter should protect the best interests of the patient by supporting the provider-patient relationship. This is an innovative departure that seems to have few historical roots in other sets of standards around the world. Yet similar developments are emerging in Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom".

(Bancroft 2005: 24–26)

Table 10.4 Ethics and standards in healthcare & community interpreting ('common concerns'; from Bancroft 2005)

Codes of ethics and conduct	**Standards of practice**
Do not practice medicine.	Use first person.
Ensure understanding.	Address cultural needs.
Explain cultural differences and practices.	Respect right of parties to disagree without showing bias.
Allow client right to self-determination.	No influence of personal beliefs or feelings.
Maintain professional boundaries/distance.	Avoid behavior (e.g. eye-rolling) that displays bias.
Be caring, attentive yet impartial.	Recognize conflict between patient autonomy and
Use rapport-building skills.	beliefs. Educate provider about culture.
Treat everyone with dignity, respect.	Do not take control or usurp provider's role.
Use appropriate tone of voice.	Respect physical privacy in positioning.
Provide guidance on communication needs.	Protect interpreter's privacy, safety, well being.
Demonstrate empathy, cooperation.	Ensure proficiency through testing and accreditation.
If client speaks English, interpreter should not interpret but step back.	Interpret tone of voice, emotion.
Explain roles, style of interpreting to parties.	Monitor personal biases and cultural beliefs.
Listen attentively.	Apply ethical decision-making as needed.
Use language that is readily understandable.	Monitor nonverbal cues for comprehension.
Foster cross-cultural understanding.	Consider incremental intervention model (C. Roat)
Sight-translate as needed.	Address literacy barriers.
Ensure that informed consent is informed.	Do not sign as witness for signed documents.
Confidentiality should accord with HIPAA[38].	Document signing of informed consent.
Display cultural sensitivity/ knowledge.	Wear appropriate protective clothing.
Meet proficiency standards.	Use consecutive mode in most health care settings.
Avoid stereotyping.	Limit use of summary mode.

38. HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act 1996.

Codes of ethics and conduct	**Standards of practice**
Strive for certification.	Intervene in sensitive, culturally appropriate manner. Respect hospital safety requirements.

Table 10.5 Areas of controversy in guidelines for professional conduct of interpreters (from Bancroft 2005: 27–8)

Statement or principle	**Contradictory statement or principle**
The interpreter should never be alone with the client	Interpreter should spend time alone with the client to assess dialect match or establish a rapport
Be impartial and neutral	Strive to protect the client's well being
Omit nothing	Educational interpreters may omit some things
Remain slightly behind the client	Adopt other positions (sign language and court interpreters also require good sight lines)
No advocacy: interpreter should interpret	Advocate as needed
Decline all gifts	Small gifts (such as food) are acceptable
Interpret offensive and vulgar language	Ask the speaker if they would like to rephrase
Offer post-session information & referral	Restrict activities to interpreting
Interpret gestures, body language, etc.	Refrain from interpreting body language unless meaning is impaired
It is unethical to compete for business	Interpreters may compete for business
Simultaneous interpreting is not appropriate in health care	Simultaneous interpreting may be helpful in health care, especially when multiple parties are speaking
Look at provider and patient	Avoid eye contact with provider and patient
Offer no advice	Some information and referral or cultural guidance are acceptable

Table 10.6 Key ethical concerns in interpreting (summary table)

Scope (NCIHC survey)	**Ethical principle**	**Articles in codes of conduct or ethics**
(Universal)	**Confidentiality**	
	bound by secrecy	AIIC 2a; ASTM 13.4.2
	waive secrecy only with client's agreement or by law	
	waive secrecy only to avoid bodily harm or death	ASTM 13.4.2
(Very common)	**Fidelity**	
	Be accurate/faithful to meaning	ASTM 13.4.5
	Do not add, omit, change	ASTM 13.4.5
	Impartiality/Neutrality	ASTM 13.3.6, 13.4.4
(Very common)	Give no advice; offer no opinions	
	Remain **impartial** and objective	

Table 10.6 (*continued*)

Scope (NCIHC survey)	Ethical principle	Articles in codes of conduct or ethics
(Near-universal)	**Competence**	ASTM 13.3.2
	Maintain **high standards of performance**	
	Require proper working conditions	AIIC 7a & ff., 8; ASTM 13.3.2
	Services appropriate to setting	ASTM 13.3.3
(Very common)	Accept no assignment for which you are not competent	AIIC 3a, 3b; ASTM 13.4.3
	If not competent, withdraw	
	Integrity (commitment, honesty, solidarity…)	
(Near-universal)	Avoid/disclose **conflicts of interest**	ASTM 13.4.1
	Derive no personal gain from confidential information	AIIC 2b
(Common to many codes)	'Honour integrity'	
	Show respect for all parties.	
	Maintain professionalism	ASTM 13.3.6
	Pursue professional development	ASTM 13.4.6
	Do not cancel [a booking] without cause	
	Promote professional solidarity	AIIC 6a, 6b, 7a; ASTM 13.3.5
	Prepare for assignments	
(Somewhat common)	Support beginners	
	Express respect for colleagues	
	Be unobtrusive, fit in	ASTM 13.3.7, 13.3.8
(Rare)	Refuse more than one assignment for the same time period	AIIC 3c
	Refuse other duties at same conference	AIIC 7h
	Uphold dignity, repute of profession	AIIC 4a, 4b, 6b

CHAPTER 11

Introduction to professional practice

11.1 Introduction

The third dimension of Professionalism is practical: trainees are introduced to the 'ecosystem' of the profession and the main players on their future market and the relationships between them, and given pointers on how to find work and manage their assignments, fit into a team and the professional community, develop professionally and personally, and generally manage their career and the balance between their private life and their work as an interpreter.

This information will be precious for future graduates, since many of the conventions and peculiarities of this small and relatively closed profession are not widely known or publicized, and are best learned from the horse's mouth – for example, the etiquette of client-interpreter-recruiter contacts, the relations of co-opetition among freelancers, the difference between firm offers and options, or the important knowledge – notably to avoid despair in the first months after a June graduation – that conference interpreting is highly seasonal work, with peaks in the fall and spring and weeks or months of downtime in the winter and summer.

This dimension is covered in the second module of the Theory and Practice track: **Introduction to Professional Practice**. It should be taught by an instructor with substantial and up-to-date experience of recruiting and organizing teams of interpreters. Every effort should be made to invite in an active consultant interpreter and/or a representative of a professional association, national or AIIC (ideally, an expert on the private market sector) to deliver one or more workshops as part of this module. General guidance may be available from the relevant professional organization (e.g. AIIC, NAJIT, etc.), but many useful tips will be local, and some will be specific to market segments targeted by the programme, so are best sought from a local consultant interpreter.

11.2 Organization and practice of the profession

By far the majority of graduates from interpreting schools worldwide will be looking for work as freelancers on the private market,[1] either alongside work for international organizations, or – in regions beyond the immediate recruitment 'catchment areas' of these bodies – almost exclusively. A responsible training programme has a duty to prepare them for the practical realities of their future working environment.

11.2.1 Where does work come from?

When we work in routine, straightforward meetings for direct clients who understand our needs, no intermediary between interpreter(s) and client or user may be necessary. But in practice, on the private market today (outside AIIC's 'Agreement Sector') interpreting services are increasingly **intermediated**. Organizing interpretation for complex multilingual events, in particular, requires an intermediate planning and coordinating function between the individual interpreters and the meeting organizer. A risk of intermediation is that if the interpreters are cut off from the organizer, the working conditions needed for quality may not be communicated or guaranteed: the less direct the link between those with interpreting competence and the users of the service, the higher the risk of things going wrong. Some commercial intermediaries, including professional conference organizers (PCOs) and occasionally, translation agencies, are competent in managing interpreted events, understand the interdependence between conditions and quality, and play a useful role as a bridge; but others can be incompetent, rapacious or obstructive, acting more like a barrier. The profession has therefore always fought to preserve direct contact between interpreters and clients/users. This is accomplished when the intermediary is a qualified professional interpreter, or a consultancy run by one or more such colleagues, with the necessary negotiating, organizing, interpersonal and business skills (see below).

The **contract** plays a key role, whether or not there is intermediation; and when there is, is especially important to ensure its transparency. There are a number of standard model contracts, some of which are approved by AIIC for its members, that can be adapted with addition of clauses such as disclaimers (see below 11.2.2.2).

1. For reasons explained in TG-13.3.2.2, in some regions, some graduates of conference interpreting schools may provisionally have to accept employment for which they are over-qualified – for example, as bilingual PA to a CEO.

Freelance conference interpreters will receive offers of work from a number of different kinds of parties. It is important to understand the differences between them.

11.2.1.1 *Consultant interpreters*

A consultant interpreter is a professional interpreter who offers a value-added service, either directly to a primary conference organizer or via a PCO[2]/event planner, by acting as a general contractor managing all aspects of the interpretation service for an event. AIIC publishes a list of vetted consultant interpreters who "have the task of ensuring a high-quality service adapted to the client's needs while obtaining optimum working conditions for the interpreters at every conference".[3] Some consultant interpreters work as individuals or as part of a network, but an increasing number are set up and operate as a small business, with partners, staff, an office and a brand.

The consultant interpreter handles all of the client-facing, organizational and transactional aspects of the service, such as: determining interpretation requirements in consultation with the client; customer education; preparing detailed quotations and service agreements; recruiting teams of qualified interpreters, taking into account language combinations, experience, subject affinities and domiciles; either providing or liaising on technical equipment and set-up; obtaining documents for preparation and forwarding these to the interpreters; communicating information to all parties; coordinating the service on site, either in person or through an appointed team leader; ensuring that the interpreters have what they need to perform quality work *and* that the interpretation service is organized optimally in the interests of the client; dealing with last-minute changes, requests and emergencies; processing invoicing and payment; inviting and providing feedback, conducting debriefings, etc.

Consultant interpreters are paid for this service either by charging a transparent 'organizing fee' to the conference organizer/PCO (the traditional practice in AIIC's European heartland) or by marking up the fees they quote to the end user, in line with general subcontracting practice in the event industry; or a combination of both.

For a freelance interpreter on the private market, assignments that come through a good consultant interpreter are likely to be the most trouble-free: 'transaction costs' will be as close to zero as they will ever get on the private market, and working conditions are most likely to be the best attainable for a given meeting or event.

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2. PCO: Professional Conference Organizer

3. From AIIC Guidelines for Consultant Interpreters. http://aiic.net/page/713 (Accessed December 11, 2015).

11.2.1.2 *Colleagues*

Freelance interpreters may also receive offers of work from other freelancers who have their own direct clients. In some markets this may be the primary source of work for freelancers, who may form informal alliances with a group of peers. In this ecosystem, each freelancer has a number of direct clients for whom they provide interpretation from time to time. Interpreter A, upon receiving an assignment from her own direct client, will recruit Interpreter B and C to work with her. Down the road, when Interpreter B gets an assignment from her own direct client, she will then recruit Interpreter A to 'repay' the previous assignment. Essentially, each freelance interpreter in the informal alliance takes turns playing the role of 'consultant interpreter'; some are better at this than others. Often, freelance-recruiters are not compensated, or only minimally, for the work they put into handling the organizational and transactional aspects of the service. Their reward is the goodwill they generate with the colleagues they recruit and the tacit understanding that those colleagues will in turn recruit them for future assignments (the '*retour d'ascenseur*').

This system works best in a local market with simple bilingual interpretation requirements (one room, one booth, two languages), especially with repeat clients who are used to working with interpreters. But most freelance-recruiters would be hard-pressed to organize multi-language, multi-venue interpretation for large, complex events, especially when it involves recruiting interpreters from overseas. This will require more sophisticated management skills, organization, infrastructure, and a considerable investment of time and resources, and is thus best left to experienced consultant interpreters. (It is hard to pinpoint at what precise point a freelance interpreter who recruits colleagues for assignments becomes a consultant interpreter, but this is how consultant interpreters usually get started, working their way up from organizing for small, local affairs to more complex events with other languages.)

11.2.1.3 *Agencies*

'Agencies' refers here to all *non-interpreter* third parties, i.e. all intermediaries other than professional consultant interpreters and freelance-recruiters. These may be translation agencies, event planners, public relations firms, hotels and meeting venues, equipment rental companies, etc. This is the most variable, unpredictable category of intermediary, with the highest risk of problems with working conditions and other unpleasant surprises. Agencies market the same kind of 'package service' as consultant interpreters, but with no guarantee of professionalism. The four most common problems that arise when working through agencies are:

- failure to ensure or even request proper working conditions (e.g. team strength, booth location);
- poor access to documents, presentations, speakers, information;
- unqualified 'interpreters' included on the team;
- late payment (often on the excuse that 'our client has not paid us yet', which is both unverifiable and irrelevant), or non-payment in the event that the service is cancelled, postponed or curtailed.

This is not to say that all agencies are bad. There are some that are familiar with and subscribe to the professional tenets of conference interpreting and can act as an efficient and transparent facilitator. But these are a minority. It is best to exercise caution, and be sure to sign a detailed written contract (see 11.2.2.2 below).

11.2.1.4 *Direct clients*

Individual freelance interpreters may also receive offers of work from direct clients, i.e. actual end users who require interpretation for an upcoming event. In this case, the interpreter may act as freelance-recruiter/consultant interpreter; or, if not comfortable playing this role, may pass on the request to a more experienced colleague on the understanding that s/he will be included on the team recruited.

Beginners can expect that it will take time to build up a roster of direct clients on the private market, especially in mature markets with well-established providers. Some markets, such as Japan, are very highly intermediated, with little work coming to interpreters from direct clients. In other markets, freelancers with entrepreneurial personalities and a well-developed network may end up working primarily with direct clients. This will require a whole set of skills in event and assignment management (see 'consultant interpreter' above) and standard document forms (guidelines for organizers, tips for speakers, standard service agreements, invoice forms, etc.).

Working directly for clients saves intermediary fees, but may make significantly more demands on your time than when assignments are (professionally and competently) intermediated and all you need to do is 'prepare and perform'. Transaction costs are especially high when dealing with short, non-recurring assignments: one can easily spend the equivalent of two working days handling all the peri-assignment aspects of just a one-day engagement. Make sure you take this into account when thinking about fees. Since essentially the same amount of work goes into organizing a one-day vs. a five-day assignment, longer assignments are more economical, but on the private market are relatively few and far between.

11.2.1.5 *'Co-opetition': managing business relationships with collaborators-cum-competitors*

Freelance interpreters on the private market compete for work opportunities. Their rivals include both other freelancers and agencies. However, because interpreting is teamwork and it is often intermediated, they may often find themselves collaborating with these same 'rivals' on one assignment while competing against them for another. This situation can be described as 'co-opetition'. In such an environment, it is important to manage business relationships carefully and ethically. In particular, should you accept to be *recruited* by one of your 'competitors' for an assignment, you must work under that competitor's 'brand' for that assignment and not interfere in your competitor's business relationship. If you are not prepared to do so, you should refuse the assignment.

To this end, all freelance interpreters on the private market must understand an unwritten convention that has largely contributed to the orderly and congenial functioning of this small international profession over the years, according to which certain norms of 'ownership' are understood to apply to clients and assignments. In all cases where you are not working with your own direct client, the client and the assignment are understood to be 'owned' by whoever recruited you, be it a consultant interpreter, a freelance-recruiter, or an agency. This means that there is a clear division of labour: you are responsible only for preparing and performing, and the recruiter is responsible for all 'client-facing' aspects of the engagement. All peri-assignment matters will be taken care of by the recruiter, through whom any questions or issues should be channelled.

The most serious violation of this 'norm of ownership' would be poaching a client away from your recruiter. If you accept to be recruited for an assignment by any recruiter (consultant interpreter, freelance-recruiter, or agency), you must also accept that both that assignment *and all subsequent assignments* flowing out of that assignment 'belong' to that same recruiter. If you do a good job and there is positive feedback on your performance, the recruiter will hire you for the next assignment (subject, of course, to your availability). But under no circumstances should you be in contact with the client directly about future assignments. Always refer inquiries back to the recruiter who gave you the assignment. Your integrity will be appreciated, and will be rewarded with *trust*, and more offers of work from that recruiter in the future.

A seeming 'grey area' (at least in the minds of some freelancers) exists when it comes to third parties you may encounter on site at the meeting. What should you do if a delegate from an outside organization, not the meeting organizer, approaches you on site, compliments you on your interpreting performance, and asks for your business card with the intention of hiring you or recommending you for future assignments? The conservative and indeed default answer would be to do the same as in the above case: thank them for the compliment, and refer them to the recruiter who sent you; again, you can expect that the recruiter will appreciate your integrity and will assign you to whatever meetings arise from the referral, subject to your availability. Indeed, on some markets, such as Japan, it is common for freelance interpreters to be issued business cards by the agencies that recruit them, displaying their names but the contact details of the agency.

But should you feel, as do some freelance interpreters with a strong sense of entitlement, that you yourself should have 'ownership' of all third-party inquiries and offers of work arising as a result of your performance on an assignment that came to you through the intermediation of a recruiter, be aware that the situation involves a conflict between your interests and the interests of the recruiter. If that is your position, it is only fair that you should make it clear to the recruiter in advance. Few, if any, recruiters will be happy with the idea of freelance interpreters promoting their own services to potential direct clients encountered at recruiter-intermediated meetings. So check the recruiter's policy ahead of time; if you don't like it, then don't take assignments through that recruiter.

As a rule, then, only hand out personal business cards and contact details at assignments that you organize for your own direct clients. In all other cases, refer inquiries to the person who recruited you.

Finally, today the whole concept of contacts and networking has become more complex with the advent of social media. As a general principle, do not proactively invite the (prospective) client to link to you; if you receive an invitation from the client to link to them, think twice before accepting. If you do accept, keep a record of the history of this relationship, so that if it results in an offer of work three years down the road, you will remember to refer it to the appropriate recruiter.

11.2.2 Inquiries, offers, contracts and schedule management

Schedule management is vital for freelancers in any profession. One important fact about interpreting work of which students should be aware is its seasonality: on most markets, there is a distinct lull in activity in the winter and in summer, usually (with some variations) in January and February and from mid-July to mid-September, with peaks of work in May-June and October-November. Future graduates must be warned about this, especially so that they don't despair when they receive no offers for two months after graduation (usually in June…), and rush to take a poorly paid but stable in-house job.

11.2.2.1 *Options, firm offers, contracts*

Freelance interpreters can expect to be contacted in relation to potential future assignments at different stages in the planning process, with varying degrees of certainty about whether the assignment will go ahead. It is therefore very common for inquiries to come in and then not to pan out. This could be because the meeting itself does not go ahead; or the meeting does go ahead, but in a different city, or without interpretation; or the meeting goes ahead but with interpretation sourced elsewhere. Moreover, it is common to receive inquiries for potential assignments that conflict with each other on the calendar, especially during the busy season.

A dilemma for freelance interpreters, therefore, is how to manage their professional calendar. If you have a pending, as yet unconfirmed assignment for a certain date, and then receive another inquiry for the same date, what should you do? Can you say 'yes' to all incoming offers, and then wait to see which ones will pan out? And if they all pan out, take the best one for yourself and farm out the other(s) to your friends?

The AIIC Code of Ethics is unequivocal: "Members of the Association shall not accept more than one assignment for the same period of time." Over the years, the profession has worked out a system that solves this problem very effectively – but this system is only thoroughly understood and consistently practised by professional recruiters such as the interpretation services of international organizations and, on the private market, by AIIC consultant interpreters and some freelance-recruiters. When dealing with agencies and direct clients, you may well have to explain, and would be wise to take precautions: put a 'valid until' date on all quotations, sign a written contract with a cancellation clause, and require a deposit payment to lock in your time.

Table 11.1 Inquiry vs. option vs. firm offer/contract
(from AIIC Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters)

An **inquiry** is simply a request for information about your potential availability. This is a preliminary stage of contact, and no obligations are undertaken by either the recruiter or the interpreter.
An **option** is an offer of work that is subject to confirmation. In accepting an option, you are giving the recruiter a right of first refusal for the dates concerned. This concept is sometimes confusing for beginners. When you accept an option, it means that (a) once the assignment is confirmed, the recruiter will let you know immediately and will engage your services for the dates specified under the agreed terms; (b) if the assignment is cancelled, the recruiter will let you know immediately and release you from the option; and (c) before the option is either confirmed or cancelled, if you receive a firm offer for another, conflicting assignment, you will, before accepting, first contact the holder of the option and give them the right of first refusal, at which point the option holder must either confirm the option or release you.

A **firm offer** is one which, when accepted, creates a binding commitment between the interpreter and the recruiter. A firm offer can be made and accepted orally or in writing, including by email. Acceptance of a firm offer is usually followed up by signing a **written contract**, which is a formal written agreement setting forth the agreed arrangements, working conditions, and the rights and obligations of each party.

When you are discussing a potential assignment with a recruiter, **seek explicit clarity about whether you are being presented with an option or a firm offer/contract**. Keep your engagements calendar up to date, and clearly mark the status of each meeting as either option or firm. Often (but not always), a contact develops into a contract sequentially, from inquiry to option and then to firm offer, followed by a written contract. It is important to be clear about what stage of the process a potential assignment has reached, and what obligations you and the client have respectively undertaken at each stage in the process.

Second, after accepting a firm offer, **protect yourself by signing a written contract with an explicit cancellation clause**, stipulating the fees that will be paid to you if your assignment is cancelled (or curtailed). Beware of recruiters who are happy to give you a 'firm offer' but who refuse to back it up with a written contract containing a cancellation clause. Without such a written contract, you are at risk, because if your assignment is cancelled, it can be very difficult if not impossible to get paid. It is especially important to make sure that you sign such a contract **before you turn down other work for the same period**. If you have accepted a 'firm offer' from a recruiter who then refuses to sign a written contract with a cancellation clause and you subsequently receive a conflicting firm offer, give the first recruiter one last chance to put it in writing; if they still refuse, cover yourself by writing them formally, removing yourself from the 'firm offer' and stating the reason.

NB: All contracts entered into with organizations with which AIIC has concluded a collective agreement (known jointly as the 'Agreement Sector') are governed by the corresponding agreements, all of which contain cancellation provisions. If you have any doubts about particulars, get in touch with the professional delegation of the organization in question for clarification.

Third, **if you have committed to an assignment, do not try to get out of it because someone else has offered you something more attractive**. This 'No Replacement Rule' is a fundamental part of our professional ethics. Accepting an assignment is a personal commitment, and once you have committed yourself, it is unethical to accept another assignment for all or part of the same period of time, and it is unethical to attempt to have yourself replaced for frivolous reasons.

If, after accepting a contract, you need to be replaced or *serious* and *valid* reasons, first find out if a suitable colleague is free on the date(s) concerned, without providing further details. Next, approach the person who recruited you to see if the colleague you propose is acceptable as your replacement. Remember, however, that the person who recruited the team will have taken care to ensure that it is balanced linguistically and otherwise, and will not be pleased if you disturb that balance. Be aware that your reputation for reliability will suffer if you ask to be replaced.

11.2.2.2 *The contract: standard and special provisions*[4]

The importance of securing good working conditions has been explained in CC-10, but long experience has shown that a simple verbal agreement with the client on terms and conditions is not enough. Ideally, each interpreter should have an individual contract signed by the 'owner'[5] of the meeting that covers, inter alia[6]:

i. **Meeting details**: its title, topic, date(s), venue, languages, meeting hours, organizer, conference website, etc.
ii. The **interpreter's assignment**: the mode of interpreting, language combination to be covered, on-site times/working hours, etc. Anything 'special' should be highlighted, e.g. extra consecutive for side meetings, working meals, site visits; very early arrival on site required (e.g. for security reasons, or for an early morning meeting with speakers); standby for possible night sessions, etc.
iii. **Preparation**: what documents and materials will be made available for preparation, and when; any briefings or rehearsals; etc.
iv. **Travel arrangements**: if travel is required, the contract should set out the arrangements for booking and paying for airfare (or train fare), ground transfers, hotel, etc.
v. **Logistics**: team leader/on-site coordinator, team members, team strength; provision of conference meals, etc.
vi. **Financial terms**: *fees* for working days, travel days, and rest days; *allowances* to cover meals and incidentals; *reimbursable expenses* or *travel budget*, as when the interpreter is asked to pay out of pocket for her own airfare and/or hotel; *overtime charges* that will apply when meetings run over, or if the interpreter is called upon to be on site outside the scheduled working hours; and the *cancellation fee* that will apply in the event that the interpreter's service for the date(s) in question is cancelled or curtailed after the contract is signed.
vii. **Terms of payment**: amount of advance deposit to be paid to the interpreter to secure the booking, method of payment and due date; expected amount of the final balance (subject to adjustment for overtime, actual amounts to be reimbursed, etc.), method of payment, and due date; interest rate for late payments.

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4. This is a general discussion of contract-related issues in professional conference interpreting, but we are not lawyers and this is not legal advice, which should be sought from a lawyer; we assume no liability.

5. This could be either the actual end user / meeting initiator and organizer, or the general contractor who has recruited the interpreter to work at the meeting. In the latter case, the intermediary assumes full responsibility for ensuring that working conditions are met and fees are paid in full and on time.

6. This is a relatively long and complete list of things that ideally should be covered in a contract, though such detailed contracts are unusual in the real world.

viii. **Working conditions**: standard clauses to guarantee the key working conditions necessary for quality in conference interpreting (such as having the booth in the meeting room with a direct view; having a clean sound feed; receiving any texts to be read out in advance, etc.; see CC-10.2.2) and – crucially – allowing the interpreter to **discontinue service without penalty** if conditions are such that quality work is not possible or the interpreter's health/safety are jeopardised. For example, the AIIC Individual Contract stipulates in its general conditions of work that:

   a. ISO standards 2603 and 4043 lay down the requirements for built-in and mobile booths and simultaneous interpreting equipment. If these standards are not complied with and the interpreter responsible for liaison with the organizer considers that the quality of the booths and technical equipment is not good enough to enable the team to do its work satisfactorily, or that they represent a danger to health, the team shall be under no obligation to provide simultaneous interpretation.
   b. If a text has to be read aloud during the conference, the organizer shall see that the interpreters receive a copy of it beforehand […]. The speaker shall be warned by the organizer that the reading speed for a text for which interpretation is to be provided must not exceed 100 words per minute (3 minutes per double-spaced typewritten page). The interpreter shall be under no obligation to provide interpretation of written statements if he or she has not received the text of the statement in sufficient time to study it.
   c. If films are shown during a meeting, no interpretation of the sound-track shall be provided unless the sound is transmitted directly to the interpreters' headphones and unless the script has been supplied to the interpreters beforehand and the commentary is spoken at a normal speed.
   d. The use of television screens, either in order to improve the direct view of the speaker and the hall, or even, in exceptional cases, as its replacement, is only acceptable with the advance consent of the interpreters involved.

ix. **Recording/broadcasting/webcasting/stenotyping**: a clause reserving the interpreter's copyright in his or her interpretation and stating that the interpretation is not to be recorded or re-used by any party unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the interpreter (see below).

x. **Excusal/replacement of the interpreter**: a clause allowing the interpreter to withdraw from the assignment for serious reasons, without penalty, to be replaced by an equally qualified substitute who will work under the same terms.

xi. ***Force majeure***: this refers to a clause to cover liabilities in the event that either the interpreter or the organizer is prevented from fulfilling the contract due to some major event beyond their control (*force majeure*, 'act of God', e.g. natural disaster, airport strike, civil unrest, war…). The standard AIIC contract currently includes no such clause, which may therefore have to be negotiated separately.

xii. **Liability and indemnification**: it is highly desirable to include a clause to the effect that the interpreter will be held harmless with respect to any and all claims that may arise from her interpretation, although this may be difficult to formulate legally and in a way acceptable to clients; AIIC model contracts do not currently include such a clause. For self-protection, interpreters can also include in their contracts a clause requiring the organizer to remind speakers to provide copies of their texts/presentations and to speak at a reasonable speed, and exempting interpreters from the obligation to interpret when this condition is not met.[7]

xiii. **Legal considerations**: jurisdiction, dispute settlement procedure, etc.

We certainly advise signing a detailed contract covering all of the above and any other concerns when working for a direct client or an agency. This will minimize unhappy surprises, and any client who is not willing to sign a proper contract is not a client you want to have. AIIC makes available a standard contract template for the use of members, which instructors may hand out as a model and/or walk students through in class.

When a consultant interpreter or 'freelance-recruiter' recruits the team, the traditional procedure is for the consultant interpreter to sign a master contract with the meeting organizer, then prepare an individual contract for each interpreter to be signed by the meeting organizer and each interpreter. Though more secure, this is somewhat cumbersome in terms of paperwork and transaction costs. In practice, nowadays many interpreters are comfortable having their individual contract signed only by the consultant interpreter, or even, when the recruiter is a known and trusted peer (and especially, perhaps, in some cultures), dispensing with an individual contract on the understanding that the recruiter/consultant interpreter has a master contract with the organizer stipulating terms and guaranteeing proper working conditions for the entire team.

7. A recent AIIC-UN agreement provides that, whenever recorded interpretation is made available over the internet, the client shall post, place, state or otherwise indicate on all reproductions, broadcasts or other public or private uses of the recording the following disclaimer: "Interpretation serves to facilitate communication and does not constitute an authentic record of the proceedings. The original language is the only authentic version. No liability shall be incurred by the interpreters in the exercise of their function." The EU, EP, IMF and other IOs are now using essentially identical language.

11.2.2.3 *Recording of interpretation and copyright provisions*

One important provision flagged above concerns **copyright** on recordings and other secondary uses of the interpreting service. More and more clients – private or public – want to record the interpreters' output, for various reasons. But interpretation (oral translation) of speeches at a conference is a service provided for on-site, one-time use only, and is an original work within the meaning of the Berne Convention,[8] over which the interpreter holds exclusive copyright and other rights under international law. Thus, no-one may record the work of an interpreter without the interpreter's knowledge and permission, and this should be clearly stated in all contracts. The re-use of an interpretation in any form, such as audio recording, video recording, transcription (including by live stenography), radio or video broadcasting, webstreaming/casting and any other form of transmission via the internet, whether on secure websites or otherwise, is subject to the **consent** of the interpreter who holds the copyright, and in principle also requires compensation, especially in the event of commercial re-use.

If the meeting organizer or any other party wishes to record the interpretation, not for internal archival purposes but for distribution and/or re-use, it must therefore enter into a separate written contract with each interpreter (including those providing relay) for assignment of copyright. This contract should stipulate, inter alia, the exact use that will be made of the recording, the period of such use, and the fees that will be paid to the interpreter for this use. (In our experience, recording fees range from 50% of interpretation fees upwards, depending on the nature and duration of re-use.) We would also advise that the contract should indemnify the interpreter against any claims arising from the re-use of the interpretation, and should allow the interpreter to re-record any passages the interpreter would like to improve. More details may be found in the AIIC Memorandum Concerning the Use of Recordings of Interpretation at Conferences.[9]

In the case of staff and in-house interpreters, the general conditions of employment will usually automatically transfer copyright to the employer, but interpreters can legitimately ask to be warned when their work is to be webstreamed or otherwise re-used, not least on the grounds of 'audience design' – it may be necessary to explicate some things more clearly or otherwise take into account the different context (or lack of it) available to a wider audience not present in the meeting room; or to attend more to voice quality for a media performance, etc. (CC-2.3.1.8, CC-9.4.1). Some organizations have acceded to this request. The

8. Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (completed at Paris 1896, last revised 1979).

9. http://aiic.net/page/58 (Accessed December 11, 2015).

UN-AIIC Agreement now requires the organization to post a disclaimer (see note 7 above) when it webcasts interpretation, and provides that whenever such files are broadcast or otherwise made publicly available, any responsibility or liability shall be vested in the Organization.

11.2.2.4 *Accepting and refusing assignments: criteria*

As elsewhere, the 'freedom' enjoyed by freelance professionals in what is still an officially unrecognized, unregulated profession must be balanced by some obligations to be sustainable: as Bob Dylan has it, 'to live outside the law you must be honest'![10] You are free to refuse assignments for reasons of personal preference as to topic, venue, rates offered etc., or because you want some time off; but you *must* (ethically) decline an assignment if you do not feel qualified given the subject matter and level of the meeting, or do not have time to prepare adequately, even if extra pay is being offered for preparation (CC-10.3.3.1).

11.2.2.5 *When client requests conflict with quality*

For economic reasons or out of ignorance, clients may often ask interpreters to work in conditions that are not conducive to quality interpreting. The most common such requests are for reduced team strengths, or simultaneous interpreting without the proper equipment:

i. *Requests for reduced team strength*

Minimum team strengths – the number of interpreters needed to ensure quality in humane conditions – are recommended by AIIC in its Professional Standards for different modes and numbers of languages, as explained with examples in CC-10.2.2, Table 10.2. Team strengths are perhaps the most difficult standard to uphold in negotiations with cost-conscious clients. Reduced teams may be deemed acceptable for 'easy' (and short) meetings; but these are rare, and workload and difficulty are notoriously unpredictable (see CC-9). Clients may offer more money per person for a reduced team, but accepting higher pay undermines the argument for guaranteeing quality.

Simultaneous interpreting is teamwork. No interpreter should ever accept to do solo SI except under the most exceptional circumstances, and then not for more than 40 minutes *maximum*. Outside of that limited exception, solo SI is unethical: research points to a decline in quality beyond 30–40 minutes (Moser-Mercer et al. 1998). Teams of two interpreters per booth are therefore a minimum, though three should be aimed at as the norm in bidirectional booths (for full-day meetings), and four required (and routinely provided in major international organizations)

10. From 'Absolutely Sweet Marie', *Blonde on Blonde*, 1966.

for very long working hours or with very dense and technical content with many written presentations.

On the private market, there is increasing pressure to accept teams of two interpreters (instead of the recommended three) to work in bi-directional booths even for demanding full-day meetings. For many years the profession has fiercely resisted this trend, which is known to be exhausting for the interpreters, but it is hard to demonstrate at what point quality will suffer, given the multiple and combined factors that make one meeting much more demanding than another. Speaker behaviour, for example – coherence, accent, reading – is a key and unpredictable factor. Also, some interpreters may prefer higher pay for more intense work, and be prepared to compete with their colleagues on this basis, making consensus well-nigh impossible, particularly given the savings to clients, especially when airfares, accommodations and allowances for three versus two interpreters are involved. An additional factor compressing team strengths is the trend towards bidirectional booths between each language and English, now overwhelmingly the main floor language (hence, no English booth).

For simultaneous **whispering** (CC-2.2.4.1), the same team strength should apply as for proper SI, i.e. a minimum of two interpreters take turns doing continuous whispered SI for any meeting lasting more than 40 minutes: again, this should be non-negotiable in the interests of both reliable interpretation and the interpreter's health and wellbeing. AIIC recommends a maximum of two listeners per interpreter. Otherwise, team strength should also be increased in circumstances that would call for an enlarged team in regular SI.

The AIIC Code of Ethics specifically enjoins interpreters NOT to work without a booth, and to perform whispered interpreting only in exceptional circumstances. However, realistically, since no meeting rooms have unlimited numbers of fixed booths or space to install mobile ones, delegations speaking 'rarer' languages will need an interpreter (usually their own) to whisper for them and occasionally work back into a 'mainstream' language of the meeting in consecutive. However, it is important that such groups are warned to expect only 'commentary' whispering, not a service comparable to real SI from a team working in a soundproofed booth.

On the business interpreting market, requests for whispered interpretation are very common, even for small, often bilingual meetings (10–20 people) in a cramped boardroom (with no room for a booth) at which only 2 or 3 participants are monolingual. The interpreter sits with the monolinguals and whispers for them. It is very important to get regular team strength for these meetings, which are exhausting – and can be demotivating when the person you are whispering for is not paying full attention.

ii. ‘*Bidule*’ *interpreting*

Organizers may sometimes ask interpreters to do SI without a booth, using a portable ‘tour guide’ kit, known in the profession as a *bidule* (French for ‘gizmo’, ‘thingamujig’) (CC-2.2.4.2). In its most basic form, the kit consists of a battery-powered microphone-and-transmitter module for the interpreter, and battery-powered receivers with headphones for delegates. In this set-up, the interpreter does whispered interpreting, listening to the speaker acoustically, not through headphones, and doing simultaneous on the spot without a booth. As in regular whispering, this is far from ideal, since the interpreter must listen to the speaker over her own voice, making both listening and self-monitoring difficult, with the risk of missing things. The only difference from pure whispered interpreting is that the interpreter’s voice can reach more listeners as a result of the electronic transmission, so while this technical set-up is entirely unsuitable for SI, it is useful for **short consecutive in noisy environments**, such as tours of factories and crowded tourist sites – its original design purpose.

A more sophisticated (but less common) set-up for *bidule* SI consists of a clip-on microphone/transmitter module for the speaker; a receiver for the interpreter that allows the interpreter to listen to the speaker *through headphones*; a second microphone/transmitter module for the interpreter to speak the simultaneous interpretation into; and receivers for delegates to listen to the interpreter with. This more sophisticated, two-channel set-up is basically SI without a booth: the interpreter can listen to the speaker through headphones, which is certainly an improvement over trying to listen acoustically while speaking at the same time; but the interpreter is still physically present in the room and vulnerable to noise and distraction, and her voice will also be heard by delegates who don’t want to hear the interpretation.

On quality grounds AIIC therefore recommends accepting *bidule* work only if ALL the following criteria are met:

- exceptional circumstances: visits to factories, hospitals and similar establishments or remote field visits;
- short meetings (e.g. 2 hours);
- limited number of participants (e.g. a dozen);
- two-way equipment, i.e., two transmission channels, one from the speaker’s microphone (essential) to the interpreter’s earphones, one from the interpreter to participants;
- compliance of such equipment with IEC914 standard, and with a qualified technician on hand;
- the **same manning strengths as for ordinary SI** (CC-10.2.2).

11.2.3 Key interactions

11.2.3.1 *Interaction with meeting organizers*

For the sake of efficiency – but also to avoid suspicion of client-poaching (11.2.1.5 above) – interaction with meeting organizers is best left to the designated team leader, who may be the original recruiter (consultant interpreter), or a team member designated by him. The team should, however be represented by an interpreter – not just an agency or other intermediary – for on-site interaction with the meeting organizers.

Whether working for your own direct client or through an intermediary or recruited by a consultant interpreter, basic general rules of professional conduct apply, especially:

i. Be **punctual**: make sure you are on site at least 30 minutes before the start of the meeting, and earlier still if the meeting is large and complex. This reassures your client and team-leader, but no less importantly, allows you to **obtain and prepare documents** arriving at the last minute.
ii. Dress appropriately to the setting.
iii. Do not hesitate to request documents and information where necessary (through the appointed intermediary where appropriate), but otherwise be unobtrusive and discreet.

11.2.3.2 *Interaction with delegates*

Approaches from delegates requesting service or offering work should be referred to the team leader or consultant interpreter, as discussed in 11.2.1.5. Otherwise, interpreters may often have 'social' contact with conference delegates in the course of an assignment – for example, at functions – where they may be praised or questioned about their work ('my niece is studying languages, could she become an interpreter?'). Apart from looking and dressing the part, it is best to stay low-key and avoid drawing attention to oneself or monopolizing attention. Otherwise, helping dinner-table companions to communicate is fine and will be appreciated, but unless you have been explicitly assigned to this task, try to explain gently, if necessary, that you need time to eat – for example, because you must resume work soon.

11.2.3.3 *Interaction with colleagues*

Keep relations collegial and professional at all times. The interpreting community is a very small world, and colleagues will likely be your number one source of work on the private market. Some further tips:

- When recruited or recommended for an assignment by a colleague, take good care of the client, and after the assignment, contact your colleague to convey thanks and report on how everything went.
- Avoid gossip, and in general, criticism of colleagues, which has a tendency to find its way to the person you are talking about, and as often as not in a distorted and magnified form.
- Even when not working together on a meeting, treat colleagues as collaborators first and foremost, even if some may otherwise be competitors. We can't always choose whom we work with, but we do our best to be on good relations with all colleagues for the sake of the working atmosphere. (A special effort may be needed on extended assignments and missions, and when you have had previous 'run-ins'.)
- Have a clear system for turn-taking and sharing the work, and be a team player.

Teamwork and booth manners

Basic booth manners should have been explained in SI-Initiation (CC-8.2.1.1) and booth teamwork practised in mock conferences (CC-9.2.5.2), but graduates will soon find themselves working in that tiny space with people they don't know, so the basics may need to be refreshed. Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of dos and don'ts, and some guidelines for sharing work and helping each other:

- Don't occupy more than your *share of space*, furniture, surfaces and coat-hooks…
- *Personal hygiene* is always appreciated, but fragrances, after-shave, etc. should be discreet, or avoided.
- *Documents:* Keep working documents neatly sorted and tidy. If there is only one set of documents for the booth, ideally they should be sorted according to the order of agenda items and kept in the middle of the working surface within everyone's reach. Never take documents out of the booth (e.g. for preparation) without checking that enough copies remain for your colleagues. Always be ready to help your colleague on mike by finding a document, or pointing to a place in a document (and if necessary, fetching any newly distributed documents from the meeting room).
- *Establish a rotation before the meeting starts*. In some booths, by tradition the senior interpreter begins; in other booths, the rotation may be determined by drawing lots (literally). Going by the clock makes for greater predictability, but sometimes it makes better sense to divide the workload by speaker, or based on the team members' own strengths and affinities. If one colleague in the booth has worked very recently on the current or a closely-related meeting (if she is a staff interpreter in an organization for example), then s/he should start.

- *Do not make any noise in the booth when a microphone is live*. The only sound that should go out over a microphone is that of the on-shift interpreter's voice rendering the current intervention. When the mike is on, avoid pouring water, shuffling papers, eating, slurping tea, or any other noisy procedure. Even more importantly, nobody should ever hear the interpreters' private comments, discussion, laughter, etc. coming over the interpretation system. To minimize risks and preserve the privacy of the booth, only have the microphone on when actually interpreting. Always turn off or mute mobile phones before entering the booth.
- *Mute button*: when you are on mike, use the mute button if you need to cough, sneeze, speak with your boothmate, or otherwise make noise.
- *Do not yell (or murmur indistinctly):* when interpreting, speak directly into the microphone (maintaining a constant distance of around 18cm [7″] is about right for most) in an 'indoor' voice appropriate for a 4 sq. m. [40-odd sq. ft.] enclosed booth with other people in it. If you are yelling, it is probably because you have your input volume turned up too high and/or you are wearing your headphones on both ears.
- *Receiving help*: be receptive to your boothmate's assistance if you can, but do not feel obliged – your colleague should understand – and try not to reject it aggressively (see below for a more extended discussion). Remember to use the mute button to consult your colleague when necessary instead of turning off the microphone.
- *Giving help:* Be helpful with documents, writing down numbers and finding terms. If your colleague seems to be having difficulty, provide help silently and discreetly; but never insist, push paper under his/her nose, wave, nudge, etc… *Do* go out to cough, sneeze, etc.
- *Input volume:* When sitting with colleagues who are working, turn off the loudspeaker on your own console[11] and monitor the meeting through headphones. When you take your headphones off, or when you leave the booth, be sure to turn the volume down to zero.
- *When working as pivot* for relay, start talking straight away so colleagues on relay will know they are on the right channel; speak as clearly and coherently as possible; try to keep lag short (especially during slide presentations), and finish promptly with the speaker, avoiding 'overhang'. Immediately free your output channel, as another booth will need it straight away for the next speaker.

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11. If necessary – in some modern SI systems, all console loudspeakers are automatically shut off when any microphone in the booth is active.

- *Turn-changing:* Find a comfortable way of indicating that you are ready to take over, but never try to do so without warning or your colleague's acknowledgement. Be ready to take over at all times in an emergency, but especially as of a few minutes before the due time. When ready to *hand over*, never stop abruptly without checking that your colleague is ready, and try to keep your lag short for the last sentence before the switch. On SI with text, the passive interpreter can suggest a place to switch by drawing a line between two paragraphs in the text.
- *Terminology:* Share any relevant glossaries and documentation freely; keeping them to oneself, or being a 'free rider' who never prepares but uses others' work, are equally antisocial and unprofessional.

There may be different reasons, other than fair sharing of the workload, for **allotting speakers** among members of a booth: for example,

- ► when only one colleague has had time to prepare the speaker's text;
- ► when one colleague can understand a particular speaker's **accent** better (one working from A into B, say, rather than C into A);
- ► when a special **output register** is required – flowery, solemn, ironic or emotional – all of which are best done into an A language.

Also, when texts come late, it may be easier for A-language readers to **speed-read** them and scan for key information and terms.

To help each other in all these ways, interpreters should stay in the booth when they are not working. Interpreters need rest and air occasionally, but the **sustained presence** of all interpreters on the team is recommended practice, since even if no help is needed, stepping out for any significant time carries the risk of losing the thread of the discussion and missing something crucial that is then referred to and discussed indirectly when we return to the mike. If the meeting is routine and relatively trouble-free, and the boothmate does not seem to need specific help, it may sometimes be possible to rest somewhat while following the meeting from an adjacent empty booth. But many problems can often be forestalled or solved by a colleague who is there in the booth and ready and able to help (and by having documents that are neatly classified and neatly arranged within reach, and/or, if the problem is an unknown word, a handy computer).

What to do if your boothmate makes an error

An interpreting team is responsible as a unit, and the booth as a unit within it. Because of the cognitive pressure of SI, the assisting boothmate will likely hear and understand tricky passages – for example distorted by a heavy accent – better than the colleague on mike; but occasionally may also hear her colleague make a significant error. What should she do? How can she alert her?

Such corrections can often be made seamlessly, without causing any disruption or embarrassment whatsoever. Ideally – if boothmates are attuned and work well together – many kinds of problems can easily be silently 'signalled' by the helping interpreter – by facial expression, body language, gesture, pointing to something in the room, a number in a document, a term in the glossary – and the working interpreter can self-correct unobtrusively and carry on without missing anything.

As a second best, and depending on the type of problem and circumstances (complex problem, input pressure, speed) the working interpreter – if s/he is aware of a problem – may hold the mute button down for a second or two and turn to the boothmate, who can then speak out loud (off mike, for the working interpreter's benefit) to convey the minimum clear information needed to set things straight.[12] The working interpreter then releases the mute button, makes the necessary correction or addition on-mike and goes on to catch up with the speaker. In other words, if you have a problem and need help from your boothmate, be ready to press the mute button, as s/he may need to speak out loud to help you. A written note may sometimes be necessary, or clearer – unless scribbled, which is worse than no help at all – but takes time and may come too late for a local or one-off problem (though it will be very helpful for a recurring term).

For serious errors/misunderstandings that can't be quickly self-corrected by the on-mike interpreter based on a simple prompt: the assisting interpreter signals an emergency turn-shift to the active interpreter, who lets her take over straight away. The new active interpreter comes on mike and quickly and efficiently sets the record straight – without unduly embarrassing the colleague she took over from. This technique is for emergencies and should be used sparingly.

For any of these techniques to work, (a) the assisting interpreter must be actively monitoring, and (b) the active interpreter must keep her boothmate in her range of vision and be mentally ready to receive and react to her signals/suggestions. This is a best practice for good teamwork in SI.

Ethical practice requires that an interpreter be alert to the possibility that s/he has made a serious error and open to taking an opportunity to correct it. If boothmates are not receptive to cooperation or alert for help, or the passive boothmate is afraid to give offence, or the working partner is oblivious to, ignores or resents offers of help, such corrections can be disruptive, embarrassing, and counterproductive – resulting in sometimes extended (cascade) errors and misunderstanding (when the interpreter has failed to understand some crucial bit

12. This is another very good reason for interpreters to work with one ear free of their headphones (CC-8.2.1.1).

of information that is necessary to make sense of what follows) that could easily have been avoided. Many interpreters may feel obliged to correct a major error later if the opportunity arises – for example during their turn – which may or may not be appreciated.

If a colleague makes an obvious error, on no account interrupt or correct her aloud while the mike is on. If the error is not too serious, whether you choose to point it out to her later depends on the collegial relationship and mutual trust you have managed to build – so building such relationships can only benefit everybody. If the error is very serious, and the colleague is unaware of it, you should be able to agree to let the team leader and/or participants know; it may not be necessary to say who made the error, if it can be avoided.

If you feel – as may sometimes happen – that your colleague seems to be completely incompetent, your status as a beginner may make it awkward to do anything, and usually, someone else will have noticed. This situation may seem to create a potential conflict between two tenets of professional ethics – upholding high standards, and collegial solidarity – but if the colleague's performance is so poor as to jeopardise the credibility of the booth or even the whole team (and thus, incidentally, the profession), ***and*** s/he ignores offers to help or take over, try to approach a more senior colleague whom you feel you can trust, and ask him or her to double-check.

11.2.4 Freelancing as a business

Freelance interpreting is a business in which, like any other, even the best product must be marketed: to demonstrate your prowess at the consecutive table or in the booth, you first have to get there. Every contact you have with a client or recruiter (including your colleagues) offers a chance to display your professionalism. Be reachable and responsive, replying to emails quickly, clearly and relevantly (avoiding errors of spelling and grammar…) and in a friendly and professional tone. The quality of your actual interpreting is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success on the market; much will depend on the impression conveyed throughout the peri-assignment process, the timeliness and professionalism of the interpreter's communication, being on time and visibly well-prepared, and looking and acting the part.

Generic business and coping skills related to managing a freelance occupation in general – whether as a journalist, translator or copywriter, for example – are widely available on the internet, so schools can confine themselves to key points, focusing on what is specific to interpreting.

11.2.4.1 *Marketing, networking, personal branding (CVs, social media etc.)*

Your **curriculum vitae** is an important marketing tool: keep it up-to-date and make sure it is free of spelling errors, which signal sloppiness. Be honest: if you did dumb booth practice at a UN meeting, don't list that meeting as though you were a real interpreter there; if the EU was represented on your exam jury, that doesn't make you an 'EU-certified interpreter'.

Consider grouping meetings you have done by subject area, and/or having different lists of sample assignments for different subject matter areas.

Only put assignments and assignment-related information on your CV that are in the public domain; anything that is not, such as private commercial discussions, should be anonymized as appropriate by disguising client names, as lawyers do (e.g. 'M&A negotiations between multinational company and niche producer'). Many interpreters don't realize that they may be breaching client confidentiality merely by listing such talks on their CV, if they include the names of the companies involved or enough details to make the participants inferable.

Be extra-careful with the assignment information you include if you post your full CV online or send it out to agencies: some agencies (translation companies, equipment providers) *data-mine* the CVs of freelance interpreters for sales leads, to identify clients/meetings that might represent future demand, and then target them with sales calls. Some unscrupulous agencies will even bid on a project with your CV (with or without your knowledge) and then, after getting the job, substitute cheaper interpreters. If in doubt, before submitting a CV to an agency, mark it with wording like "submitted to ABC agency on (date) for sole purpose of bidding on XYZ assignment – not to be used for any other purpose". This way, the agency won't be able to use your CV for any purpose without your knowledge and consent. This is another good reason to give agencies lists of domain-relevant assignments only.

However, do understand that it is normal for intermediaries to ask for your CV without your personal contact details on it when submitting it to end users for review during the bidding process.

The use of **social media** has elicited a statement by chief interpreters[13] (2011) to the effect that social media "can be used in a positive sense to raise awareness about the profession and to attract young people to interpretation studies" but "can also adversely affect the perception of the profession" by violating confidentiality, but also objectivity, impartiality [and] respect. The statement urges "common sense" (and is short on specifics), but warns against "sharing negative professional experiences in public, expressing disrespectful views on colleagues, employers,

13. Declaration on Use of Social Media By Head Interpreters of National and International Organizations (HINTS), Geneva, October 2011. See http://aiic.net/page/3870/recommendations-on-social-media-issued-by-heads-of-interpreting-services/lang/1 (Accessed December 11, 2015).

meeting participants or even posting meeting documents". Some go further and point out that information posted on social media is technically the property of the media concerned.[14]

As an additional guiding principle, interpreters should make sure, as in the past, that they are NOT a source of news about the meeting. This means limiting tweets or other posts to publicly accessible AND neutral, objective information only – photos only of areas where photographers are allowed (or booth shots, provided that neither confidential documents, nor other details, such as. faces, captions etc. in the meeting room, are visible, and that everyone in the shot has given permission[15]); and similarly, only publicly available facts about the meeting, e.g. "The meeting began in Madrid today", but no personal commentary on its atmosphere, progress achieved, etc. nor even its perceived difficulty for interpreting.

11.2.4.2 *Setting fees*

AIIC Professional Standards (Art. 4) state that "except for those cases where the Association has signed an Agreement, members are free to set their level of remuneration". Be informed of the general range of fees and average fees for different kinds of work on your target market. Read the latest AIIC statistics for your region – lowest and highest fees charged, average – and also know the 'agreement rates' agreed between AIIC and the various organizations (which must be understood as a 'wholesale' price on a transaction with near-zero transaction costs, often not subject to tax).

Fees are negotiable, but working conditions are not. It is crucial to understand that ethical interpreters compete on quality, experience, reputation, and fees – but NOT on their working conditions. Here are some guidelines on setting fees:

- Don't sell yourself short. Large, regular users aside, few quality-seeking clients with infrequent needs are so price-sensitive that their decision will be motivated solely by even a 30% (or higher) fee difference between two providers.[16] Instead, perceived quality, trust, experience and reputation are much more decisive in the professional services sale than is price. And price is also an indicator of quality: some clients might not trust your service if it is priced too low!

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14. See discussion of social media on interpreting.info (a leading site for exchange of information and advice between interpreters), in particular posts by Vincent Buck.

15. However, Vincent Buck advises in a Nov 1, 2011 posting on interpreting.info that "buildings, including interior[s..], are protected by copyright and require the owner's consent for photographic use".

16. In China at the time of writing, the fee difference between recent graduates and the most sought-after senior professionals is as high as 1 : 4–5, i.e. top-level interpreters get paid 4–5 times what qualified beginners make, per day.

- Time spent on preparation is part of the job. Just as lawyers don't just charge for court time, interpreters may legitimately charge higher or additional fees when substantial preparation, briefings etc. are required to do a professional job. Similarly, it is good practice to charge for non-working travel days as well as for non-working on-site time.
- Raise fees every year, at least in line with inflation, but if possible more, to reflect your increasing expertise.
- Price fixing is illegal. All interpreters on the private market are free to set their own fees, and to negotiate any fee they deem reasonable with any recruiter. Nobody is entitled to tell you what you must charge, or try to impose a minimum or maximum fee.

Some fees are not individually negotiable. Most international organization employers operate a two-level pay scale for entry-level vs. more experienced freelance interpreters; staff and in-house interpreters receive incremental pay rises like other members of staff.

Finally, the issue of equal pay. On the freelance market, until quite recently there has been an unwritten convention (and that is still generally observed in many regions, especially Europe) that all members of a team receive the same fee, on a principle of equal pay for equal work, regardless of seniority. Some consider this principle a uniquely appealing feature of our profession, reinforcing solidarity. This may be changing in some regions, aligning conference interpreting on mainstream contemporary free-market practices. Some consider that a beginner and a seasoned senior interpreter are not doing 'equal work', and that more mature expertise and experience should be rewarded more highly, as in most other professions – and perhaps also, that beginners should be allowed to use this competitive advantage to get a foothold on the market.

11.2.4.3 *Negotiating skills*

Don't cave in when you are asked to offer a discount on your quoted fees. Many buyers are trained to systematically push for a lower rate on everything they purchase. Saying 'no' doesn't mean you will lose the business. Read some books on how to negotiate fees.

11.2.5 Joining a secretariat, group or agency

In most regions and cities where there is a significant market for conference interpreting (such as Geneva, Paris, Brussels, New York, Tokyo, Shanghai, Beijing), freelance interpreters have a choice between operating alone, or joining some form of group or secretariat which may help them find more work and manage their calendars more efficiently. There are roughly three types of support structures:

1. Conference interpreters' **secretariats**, traditional in Western Europe: each member pays a regular management fee to the secretariat (usually consisting of a team of one to three secretaries, and known to all major local employers) which maintains availability calendars for each client interpreter with all necessary information about their languages, preferences etc., and may thus accept assignments on their behalf, without taking any additional commission from either side.
2. **Groups or collectives** of professional interpreters (often registered as **firms**) that are self-managed by their member interpreters (one or more of whom may be an AIIC-recognized consultant interpreter) and responsible for their own marketing and business development, with members enjoying first priority in recruitment. Such groups may be local, primarily targeting a national market, or international, with associate members in different centres worldwide. These groups will not achieve complete linguistic and geographical coverage internally and will therefore routinely recruit other freelance colleagues from outside the group to work under the group's brand.
3. **Large or frequent users** of interpretation, such as government departments, multinational companies, and business schools with international courses, as well as **large intermediaries** such as **translation companies** or professional conference organizers (PCOs) that sell a lot of interpreting services, may also maintain a staff of interpreters on full-time or part-time contract or on a retainer arrangement. For example, an interpreter could receive a fixed monthly salary with benefits and in exchange provide up to a certain number of days of service per month. This fixed monthly salary is paid in full whether or not the full number of committed days is used in any given month. When extra days of service are required, the employer will pay an extra fee for the extra days. Typically, the employer will have priority claim on the interpreter's services but the interpreter is free to take outside freelance assignments that do not conflict with their known work schedule. Some such employers will require a review of outside freelance assignments to ensure there is no conflict of interest with the employer (for example, working for a competitor).

Newcomers to a market should weigh the pros and cons – in terms of security vs. dependence – of entering into (semi-)exclusive associations from the outset. Most freelancers are individual free agents (typically registered with tax authorities etc. as 'self-employed'), but informally develop small group alliances, recruiting or recommending each other. As in all societies, most local markets are shared by several cohabiting and competing groups, so it pays to be cautious and as neutral as possible, avoid giving offence, and gain a reputation for independent and reliable professionalism. If you can work ethically with all different groups and recruiters, avoiding conflicts of interest and receiving good feedback from all, you will get more work.

11.2.6 Working for international organizations

Institutions (mostly international, but also national) provide nearly half of conference interpreters' work worldwide (AIIC 2011). Major intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, or the EU (easily the world's largest employer of conference interpreters), maintain a Conference Services division with a Chief Interpreter (or Head of Division) and a staff of in-house interpreters, and recruit freelancers at peak periods and for languages not covered in-house, both for meetings at headquarters and off-site.

Meeting assignments are usually drawn up daily and either posted or read out on an answering machine that interpreters can check to find out if and when they are working the next day.

The Chief Interpreter is the link between the interpreters and the meeting organizer for major issues (similar to a consultant interpreter on the private market), and for larger and off-site meetings ('missions') especially, s/he will designate a team leader (usually a staff interpreter) to liaise with the Secretariat, Chair and participants, collect documents, call technicians if necessary, and check on planned meeting times, warning the office in the event of possible overruns which might need the team to be reinforced or replaced.

Staff interpreters and freelance interpreters work side by side, perform the same responsibilities, and are considered as equal within the team, although freelancers may have to adapt to certain in-house traditions and sensitivities. Staff interpreters often get benefits like home leave, education allowances for their children, and sometimes a rental subsidy, especially if hired as expats.

Most major international organizations (with some notable exceptions, such as the World Bank and IMF) are covered by collective bargaining agreements with AIIC, which posts the current relevant terms and conditions on its website (rates, maximum number of sessions per week, etc.). In terms of working conditions, this is a standardized sector with few surprises (except sometimes on missions).

Preparation is usually easier than for private market assignments (though it may be time-consuming), as extensive bi-/multilingual documentation from previous meetings is usually available, as well as pre-session documents. However, in world organizations, notably the UN family, many speakers have strong accents and commonly read from written texts in a very formal style.

11.2.7 Career paths: freelance vs. staff or in-house interpreter

A job as a staff interpreter in an international organization may be less varied and involve less travel than a freelancer's, but is more secure and comfortable. Preference is partly a matter of temperament, but most interpreters with any choice (i.e. with access to a vibrant freelance market) have traditionally preferred to work freelance for the first part of their careers. In some periods and places, however, a staff job will be more appealing, and these positions may be becoming rarer.

The choice may also be different according to market or region. Traditionally, young graduate interpreters in Europe have begun on the freelance market (for travel and variety), and only a minority may find a staff post later in their careers, although EU enlargement has recently opened up more opportunities for beginners with the 'right' language combinations to become staff interpreters immediately. In regions with smaller or more difficult freelance markets, graduates will often begin work as in-house interpreters (or interpreter-translators) in a local or national administration or a large corporation. Graduates of a good conference interpreter training programme will be highly prized in such positions for their skills, but may be over-qualified, or find it hard to refuse poor working conditions and long hours.

Instructors should remind graduates that freelance work in conference interpreting is seasonal, that it sometimes takes time to break into the market, and that a few months of patience may be rewarded in the long run. In some cases, however, a temporary job as PA or in-house interpreter-translator may be a way to build up confidence and contacts before going freelance.

11.3 Lifestyle and career: tips and recommendations

> The interpreter who devotes himself exclusively to his profession may suffer gravely from the resultant strain. He should therefore indulge in other occupations and interests [or] in intellectual work which can be carried on at a slower tempo, such as writing, teaching, research. (Herbert 1952: 94)

11.3.1 Stress management, health and wellbeing

11.3.1.1 *Stress factors and health hazards*

Evidence from a major AIIC study of interpreters' workload (see Mackintosh 2002) including physiological data (hormone levels, cardiovascular activity) and survey responses from 600 members of the Association, seems to confirm that interpreting is a stressful activity with high rates of burn-out. Obvious stressors include the need for intense and sustained concentration, public exposure, the high stakes of certain meetings, and sub-optimal working conditions (particularly, difficulties in text and delivery, poor booth conditions and number of turns in the day: Mackintosh 2002; see CC-9.4). Higher stress levels have been measured for media interpreting than for technical meetings (Kurz 2003), and for novices as compared to experienced interpreters (Kurz 2002).

Some interpreters report informally that their *training* was among the most stressful episodes of their career. Schools do well to organize at least one session a year to introduce validated stress management techniques. Stress management seminars designed for interpreters (among others) are occasionally advertised on the AIIC website.

Apart from stress, the other main occupational health hazard to which conference interpreters are exposed is **hearing loss**. Interpreters should get their hearing checked early in their career to establish a baseline, and always keep an eye on their input volume settings.

In addition to generally high levels of task-related stress, **sign-language interpreters** are prone to upper-extremity disorders such as tendinitis, especially when working in educational settings, where hours can be very long (Feuerstein et al. 1997).

Otherwise, interpreters should be aware of the precautions to be taken against the local hazards of the different settings where they may work, ranging from hospitals or prisons through factories, mines, power plants, ships or planes to disaster areas or conflict zones.

11.3.1.2 *Vicarious trauma*

Interpreters must sometimes lend their voices, speaking in the first person, to victims of torture, rape and war, typically when working for war crimes tribunals and truth and reconciliation commissions, and for some humanitarian organizations, but also to other speakers describing acute suffering, in community, legal or healthcare settings. The effects of vicarious trauma that may result, from emotional distress to anxiety and depression, are well documented (Wiegand 2000;[17] Baistow 1999; see also Further reading). Novices must be warned of these effects – which are not always immediately obvious, but can be severe – especially if they are likely to work in these settings.

17. Wiegand (2000) reports post-traumatic stress in interpreters exposed to harrowing testimony of torture when working for South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commssion. Baistow (1999, cited in Pöchhacker 2004: 173) describes psychologically troubling experiences reported by community interpreters from five European countries.

11.3.1.3 *Gender issues and harassment*

One under-researched and little-discussed hazard is the potential for sexual harassment of interpreters. Recent interview-based research in Romania, where the interpreters are mostly women and work on a freelance basis for predominantly male clients, revealed that "harassment is part of the everyday professional life of the conference interpreter" (Spânu 2009: 55). The most common form of harassment reported was verbal harassment, with reports also of "sexual advances, indecent looks and even intimidation and threats" (ibid.: 56). As often in this area, there is little published data on the frequency of this hazard, but it seems likely that colleagues will hardly be immune in a feminized profession serving a largely male clientele, especially in the unstructured business interpreting situations frequently encountered by freelance and in-house interpreters involving long working hours, travel, dining and socializing with clients, etc.

At a minimum, this issue should be flagged during the Professionalism module and resources made available to students for their own study to raise awareness. It would be more than reasonable for schools also to invite an outside expert in to give at least one lecture to second-year students on what harassment is, how to prevent it, and what to do when it happens.

11.3.2 Developing a specialization

In principle, a trained conference interpreter with full documentation and information about the subject matter of a meeting, and sufficient time to prepare, should provide a more reliable service than a bilingual with inside knowledge of the subject matter but no interpreting skills training. Also, in practice, freelance interpreters (and even staff interpreters in large international organizations) must be ready to handle a wide range of topics.

Some domains, however – such as medicine or finance – are so technical that accepting a short meeting is no longer worthwhile given the amount of preparation required. An international radiology convention, for example, may embrace all of anatomy and physiology, plus electronics and photography. A specialization may therefore be worth cultivating when there is sufficient demand, fewer competitors, and thus potentially higher fees.

11.3.3 Financial management

As for freelancing and running any self-employed business, tips and advice are readily available in books and on websites, but it is worth checking off the main points here: keep your finances in order, keep receipts for tax purposes, invoice promptly, have financial planning in place, and make sure you are insured appropriately (medical, life, injury/disability/serious illness) and are saving and investing for retirement. Students should also be given any useful tips and information that are specific to countries (e.g. procedure for charging, reporting and/or recovering VAT) or to working with major recruiting organizations.

11.3.4 Giving back to the profession

Professionalization is ongoing and is driven by responsible practitioners. Future graduates should be encouraged to apply for admission to a professional association (AIIC, for conference interpreters), and to participate actively in the life of the profession, contributing where possible to training, research, discussion fora, seminars, etc. We can also serve the interests of the profession by taking any opportunity offered by the media to explain interpreting to the general public, debunking myths (such as the imminent triumph of automatic machine interpreting: see TG-15) and encouraging young people to enter the profession (but not of course, flouting confidentiality and seeking cheap second-hand celebrity by 'dining on' anecdotes about one's assignments…).

11.3.5 Pro bono work

Many interpreters frequently work on a pro bono basis (as unpaid volunteers) for organizations with limited resources and/or working for a good cause. This is admirable and a valuable service, but is open to abuse – you may be exploited, and risk taking legitimate work away from colleagues – so some caution is required. The basic recognized criteria that justify offering pro bono services are:

i. not-for-profit activities where employers are dependent on donations and goodwill;
ii. a worthy humanitarian cause.

Pro bono work obviously provides good opportunities for beginners to get experience – but not at the cost of responsibility to the profession. Angela Keil, at the time of writing president of AIIC, provides the following useful summary of guiding principles for pro bono work (on interpreting.info[18]):

Pro bono work: best practices

- Agreement to work on a volunteer basis is as binding as a paid contract.
- You should offer the same quality as for a paid contract.
- Working and technical conditions should be the same as usual (team strengths, language combinations and working hours) – this is essential for satisfactory performance.
- It is recommended that the volunteer interpreter complete a contract form with the beneficiary, indicating that no fees are being charged, possibly indicating the amount of fees the interpreter is willing to forego.
- Say no to 'pro bono tourism'. In the event of missions away from home involving travel and subsistence expenses, the volunteer interpreter should first try to ensure that there are no interpreters available at the conference venue, before accepting the mission – it would make no sense, and would certainly create bad feeling, to volunteer your services while incurring travel costs that would be sufficient to pay local interpreters a regular fee to perform the same service.

Professionals offer some additional tips online:

1. To be sure that the request for pro bono services is legitimate, check the list of donors or sponsors, since "it is sometimes surprising to see that an organization claims to have no funds available for professional interpreters but counts several blue-chip companies among its sponsors" (Angie, Germany), or is otherwise clearly not dependent on donations and goodwill (as may be apparent, for example – to take an example from our own experience – if they have spent much more on the dinner banquets than it would have cost to pay the interpreters).
2. Tax or other regulations in some countries may require that the service is declared (for example as a gift), so special procedures may be necessary – for example, invoicing for the full amount with VAT, paying **VAT to the tax office** and transferring the net amount back to the organization, which should then issue a certificate allowing you to deduct the amount from your taxable income.

   Another advantage of actually invoicing and receiving a fee (before donating it back) is to show that what is being donated is a real professional service.[19]

18. http://interpreting.info/questions/77/is-pro-bono-conference-interpreting-frowned-upon (Accessed December 11, 2015).

19. p.c. from Danielle Grée (Calliope Interpreters, Barcelona).

11.4 Concluding remarks

The main lessons and contents of this final-semester Introduction to Professional Practice module, like the earlier Theory module, can be tested in a standalone exam, or by continuous assessment, with a pass required to obtain the final diploma and certification (TG-11.7.2).

This brings us to the end of our description of the content and skills to be taught in a full two-year training course for conference interpreters. For interested readers, including instructors and course designers, the Trainer's Guide (BTL 121) offers a trainer's perspective on the course (overall and stage by stage) as well as chapters on pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment and testing, institutional issues in running a training programme, and further and teacher training.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Professional documentation available on aiic.net

1. Basic AIIC texts, guidelines and studies

AIIC Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters
http://aiic.net/page/628/practical-guide-for-professional-conference-interpreters/lang/1
AIIC Code of Professional Ethics
http://aiic.net/page/6724
AIIC Professional Standards
http://aiic.net/page/6746
Best Practice for Consultant Interpreters
http://aiic.net/page/1765/best-practice-for-consultant-interpreters/lang/1
AIIC Statistics (Neff 2014)
AIIC Workload Study (Executive Summary: Mackintosh 2012)

2. Tips for conference organizers

Choosing the right provider of interpretation services
http://aiic.net/page/247
Checklist for Conference Organizers
http://aiic.net/page/33
What your consultant interpreter needs to know
http://aiic.net/page/243
Guidelines for Speakers [to be transmitted to each speaker]
http://aiic.net/page/29

3. Tips on technical requirements

Checklist for hiring simultaneous interpretation equipment
http://aiic.net/page/44
Technical notes on simultaneous interpretation
http://aiic.net/page/135

Conference equipment
 http://aiic.net/page/146
Guidelines for technicians
 http://aiic.net/page/63
ISO 4043: Mobile booths for simultaneous interpretation:
 http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=1763
ISO 2603: Fixed booths for simultaneous interpretation:
 http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=7587

4. Media interpreting
Checklist for TV interpretation (Bros-Brann 2002/2012)
 http://aiic.net/page/635
Simultaneous interpretation and the media: interpreting live for television (Bros-Brann 2002)
 http://aiic.net/page/630
Media interpreting: a different sort of world
 http://aiic.net/page/149
Essential do's and don'ts when using simultaneous conference interpreters on TV
 http://aiic.net/page/61

(All URLs accessed in February 2016)

Stress and vicarious trauma
http://trauma.blog.yorku.ca/2012/01/06/vicarious-trauma-and-the-professional-interpreter/
 (Accessed February 15, 2016)
Zeier 1997: Psychophysiological stress research

Appendix

The professional examination: tips for candidates

(Based on a draft originally prepared by interpreter trainers and examiners at the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation as revised, adapted and used by the authors.[1])

The days just before the exam
On the last couple of days before the exam, don't wear yourself out with excessive practice. Do a little, but take it easy. You've been learning, practising and honing your technique intensively for two years. Eat well, sleep well, do some yoga, listen to some music, go for a walk…. Going into the exam, the most important thing is to be well rested, alert, and in peak condition to perform.

Visualization / Mental rehearsal
Picture yourself interpreting confidently, professionally, successfully. Show yourself a vivid mental movie of yourself performing exactly how you want to perform. Imagery is an effective way to build self-confidence, manage stress, and 'psych up' for optimum performance.

On the day of the exam
On the day of the exam, you can warm up by doing a little practice interpreting. Doing one or perhaps two 5-minute speeches should be enough to get into the peak performance zone, where you are sufficiently warmed up but not yet tired. Don't overdo it! Getting up at 5 am and practising non-stop until your test slot will wear you out.

What to bring into the exam room
Bring a fresh notepad and not one but TWO of your favourite writing weapons. If you are a pencil person, bring several, because pencils have been known to break under duress. Bring a bottle of water. Dress smartly (it will make you feel more confident and professional) AND comfortably. Make sure your mobile phone is turned off.

Consecutive
Try to note down the beginning and the end as completely as possible. Getting the beginning down pat will ensure you get off to a strong start – you can follow the thread from there. Noting the end down clearly and completely is important as it often contains some important message

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1. The exam tips presented here are based on source material from the Interpreter Training Resources website: http://interpreters.free.fr/misc/examtips.htm (Accessed December 11, 2015).

That original set of exam tips was credited to a number of colleagues, including several who regularly sit on the juries of these exams and in particular Guy Laycock and Anna Grzybowska from the European Commission and Parliament respectively. We have adapted and expanded that base text into the longer collection of tips in the book, but wish to acknowledge that original set of tips as key source material.

that the whole speech has been working towards. So pay special attention to the ending/conclusion: you may even want to note it in longhand.

If you want to ask a question before you start interpreting, make sure it is clear and specific (e.g. "Could you please repeat the name of the Mayor of X?", NOT "What was that bit about the factory, I didn't catch that?"). Then, listen carefully and make sure you understand the answer – don't ignore it or forget it!

Get off to a crisp start. Look at the first box in your notes, take a deep breath, look up at your audience, smile, and get to it. (Don't wait to be asked to start your consec, and don't keep your audience waiting while you pore over your notes.)

Put on a good show:

- Look at the examiners; eye contact is crucial.
- Keep it tidy; be concise and avoid any unnecessary rephrasing/repetition.
- Keep an even pace and interpret with momentum. As a rule of thumb, you should take less time than the original.
- Deliver the messages clearly and confidently.
- Be businesslike and professional. Think of a swan on a lake: above the water it looks majestic, in total control; underneath the feet are paddling away furiously.

When you've done your bit, get up and leave with a polite smile.

Simultaneous
Make sure you have several pens or pencils and some paper in the booth. Open your bottle of water before you start. Only turn the mike on for the actual interpreting, not for the introductory briefing if the speaker gives one.

Sound clear, natural and interested. Don't umm and err. Speak clearly and finish all your sentences. Your smile should be audible to the jury, not your struggling with the speech. You are like an actor who has been given his lines at the last minute but still has to put on a good show.

Look up at the jury and the speaker. You are engaged in a communicative activity and eye contact will help you and your listeners.

Working into your A language, watch the purity of your mother tongue. Phrase things the way a native user would, speaking freely. Read some good mother tongue prose while you are waiting – it will get you into the right language frame.

Working into your B language, don't try to be fancy for fancy's sake. Basic, reliable words and sentences are better than complicated, convoluted ones that may (a) distract you from listening and (b) lead you to make dumb mistakes.

Again, be businesslike and professional. You might say things that are less than ideal, and you may miss out the occasional detail. Don't dwell on it! Move on and keep going.

Use the cough button if you need to clear your throat, and switch off the microphone at the end.

Simultaneous with Text
As simultaneous above, plus:

When preparing the text, use your time wisely. Your first priority is to read for content, to understand what the text is about. Don't do a sight translation and don't think about how you are going to translate every little thing, or you'll get bogged down.

Instead, understand the messages, the logic and the structure. If you've understood the messages, your training and your instincts will help you find nice ways to say things when you are in the booth. If you have grasped the logic and the structure, you will be able to jump ahead and quickly find your place in the text if the speaker skips something.

Mark up the text in ways that will help you process it in the booth – but don't spend too much time on this, because reading for content is more important. While you read, you can insert some slashes to indicate where to chop long sentences, circle/highlight key information, pre-convert large numbers, and write in the occasional TL version for things that may be tricky.

In the booth, remember that ***listening*** is the key. Give priority to listening over reading. The text is there to help you, not to distract you, so don't focus on the written page and stop listening to the speaker. Listening will help you get the messages out faster, so you won't fall behind, and will ensure that you can react to additions and omissions.

General

1. What the examiners are looking for is a reliable interpretation that is clear and communicative. You need to deliver the messages accurately and completely, of course, but it is equally important to be expressive, confident and professional.
2. Exam nerves are normal, but you can channel that nervous energy in positive directions, helping you to be keen, alert and focused, rather than allowing it to interfere with your performance.
3. Think of the exam as an opportunity for you to show the jury how well you can interpret. The examiners want you to do well.
4. Don't worry when the examiners start writing. They have to make notes in order to evaluate you, and it is quite likely they are writing down something like 'good fluency and momentum', 'nice solution', etc.
5. You do not have to be 100% perfect to pass a Professional Examination. If you missed a detail or didn't come up with the best possible way to say something, don't let it get to you. Maintaining your momentum and your poise is of the utmost importance.
6. Put yourself in professional interpreting mode, not exam mode. Pretend that you are interpreting at a real conference, and the jury members are your customers who do not understand the original and are relying on you to give them a clear and reliable interpretation.

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The conference interpreting skillset – full consecutive and simultaneous interpreting – has long been in demand well beyond the multilateral intergovernmental organizations, notably in bilateral diplomacy, business, international tribunals and the media. This comprehensive coursebook sets out an updated step-by-step programme of training, designed to meet the increasingly challenging conditions of the 21st century, and adaptable by instructors with the appropriate specializations to cover all these different applications in contemporary practice.

After an overview of the diverse world of interpreting and the prerequisites for this demanding course of training, successive chapters take students and teachers through initiation and the progressive acquisition of the techniques, knowledge and professionalism that make up this full skillset. For each stage in the training, detailed, carefully sequenced exercises and guidance on the cognitive challenges are provided, in a spirit of transparency between students and teachers on their respective roles in the learning process. For instructors, course designers and administrators, more detailed and extensive tips on pedagogy, curriculum design and management will be found in the companion Trainer's Guide.

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