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PREPARATION FOR INTERPRETATION: TRAINING VS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

The author of the study considers the problem of preparation for interpretation activities during interpreters training at the university. The preparation for the interpretation services is not given sufficient attention in the process of interpreters training. Oral translation activities at the university are aimed at the result - the product of interpretation, and not at the process – the interpreting activity. The article studies the indisputable importance of the interpreting technical side – the preparation for the interpretation (making glossaries, communicating with the customer, working with the submitted documents, etc.). The purpose of the article is to identify the main discrepancies between the process of preparing for professional and training interpretation, and to eliminate them in interpreters training process. The study uses materials from students training (faculty of translation and interpretation, Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University (LUNN)) – videos, glossaries, presentations, etc. As part of the study, the author also collaborated with students who carried out professional interpreting activities on real interpretation projects (interpretation during the visit of foreign delegations to Nizhny Novgorod). The results of the study confirm the need for introducing the block devoted to pre-translation preparation (compiling a glossary, communicating with the customer, watching videos, searching for information on the topic, etc.) into interpreters training. The gap between professional interpretation activities and training interpretation is rather wide; therefore, students need real professional experience to develop their skills.

1. Introduction

In interpreting practice, there is general idea that interpreters work better when they prepare in advance. However, there are few modern studies that examine the process of preparation for interpretation activities. Most researchers are forced to quote a limited number of sources on this subject, as well as the majority of modern Russian studies and articles about interpreters' training do not examine the problem of preparation for interpretation (Anosova, 2017; Bubnova, 2018; Garbovsky, 2017; Matyushin, 2017a, b; Moshchanskaya, 2016; Zigmantovich, 2017).

Interpretation activities involve mastering such types of interpretation as consecutive, simultaneous, sight translation etc., which are characterized by a number of temporal, spatial, technical, stylistic, substantial features. Also, as mentioned by Alikina and Shvetsova (2011), "the spatial and temporal organization of the work of an interpreter is characterized by the formula "here and now" (p. 94). However, the success of the interpretation process is largely determined by the effectiveness of the advanced preparation. Interpretation training focuses on the result – the product of interpretation, and not on the process – interpretation activities. That is why during studies the indisputable importance should be given to the technical side of the process – preparing for interpretation, making glossaries, communicating with the customer, working with the submitted documents.

2. Problem Statement

Though, the process of preparing for a training interpretation does not correspond to the process of preparing for a professional one. The idea that it is necessary to study separately the process of preparing for interpretation in scientific papers is not common. However, there are authors who seek to emphasize this aspect of interpreters training, speaking of the importance of training to simplify their work. As noted by Volkova and Sivukha (2018), preparation for translation and interpretation activities is a fundamental, but often underestimated, and sometimes misunderstood element in interpreters training.

As mentioned by Alikina and Shvetsova (2011), "even professional interpreters with rich experience and excellent reputation often face with difficulties, not only when translating or interpreting specialised, technical messages, but also while translating or interpreting relatively simple speeches on general topics" (p. 95). The main reason for these issues is a lack of advanced preparation.

Alikina and Shvetsova (2011) refer to the preliminary preparation for interpretation such elements as: physical mood, psychological mood, information search. In its turn, the physical mood includes such aspects as functioning of the equipment, location of the event participants, physical condition of the interpreter, his appearance; the psychological mood consists of awareness of the tasks set for the interpreter – this also includes getting information about the upcoming project and its participants. Finally, the information search implies the completion of (permanent) knowledge about the world in general and about the upcoming event in particular (here most researchers turn to speak about general interpreter's erudition).

Indirectly, other experts also address the issue of preparation for the interpretation activities when discussing interpreter's erudition (Chernov, 2016; Galaz, 2011; Gile, 2018; Luccarelli, 2006; Moshchanskaya & Polikarpov, 2017).

Alikina and Shvetsova (2011) note the importance of carrying out an operational information search, in which the interpreter must be able to intelligently allocate the time available for preparation to the existing volume of information. The authors also mention that this skill should be developed in future interpreters during the training process. They suggest that each time professors specify the period for which students need to find a particular information in preparation for translation. We cannot disagree with E. V. Alikina, who rightly notes that in the process of future interpreters training, the method of teaching interpretation is reduced to model the natural conditions of bilingual communication, in which students alternately perform the functions of interpreters, recipients, or experts.

Choi (2005) says that for the interpreters, preparation for the advanced preparation is essential, as it affects the quality of translation. Unfortunately, this aspect of interpretation is often neglected. Preparation is divided into two inextricably linked stages: searching for information on the topic of the project; working with terminology (memorizing). Here we should mention that the interpreter DOES not NEED to be an expert in the field in which he interprets, but he must understand the general meaning of the information being taught. One needs to prepare carefully to avoid logical and comprehensive errors. Delfin Servoz-Gavin (Servoz-Gavin, 2014) distinguishes three types of training (terminological and extra-linguistic (divided into thematic training and preparation for the situation of implementation of up), although, terminological search is just the top of the iceberg.

3. Research Questions

Psychological and physical training of the translator also plays an important role. However, as mentioned by Lazareva (2016), while studying at the University, translation students do not get enough information about how to prepare for translation or interpretation, and therefore novice professionals often have difficulties at the beginning of their practice, which can also affect the quality of interpretation. In order to maintain and improve the quality of interpretation and prepare future interpreters for the specifics of the preparatory work, it is necessary to show students the process of preparing for work at the University during training period. At the same time, it is necessary to understand why little attention is paid to the advanced preparation in the didactics of interpretation, to identify the main features of preparation and create corresponding exercises. Some researchers have already conducted experiments comparing the training opportunities of professional interpreters and students studying interpretation (Christoffels, de Groot, & Kroll, 2006), and the results of this comparison were obvious – professionals outperformed students in terms of their training skills. In our case, it would be interesting to compare the capabilities and results of representatives of the same professional level (students-interpreters) in different circumstances to find out whether the situation of interpretation can affect the motivation of the interpreter and the quality of advanced preparation.

4. Purpose of the Study

Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the main inconsistencies between the preparation for the interpretation in training and professional interpretation activities and their elimination in interpreter training. To achieve this goal, a comparative analysis of the processes of training interpreters in the

conditions of the educational situation and in the conditions of the professional situation of interpretation activities will be conducted. As noted by Gile (2018), a professional interpreter must manage certain strategies for advanced preparation in order to cope with difficulties in understanding the original message and avoid semantic errors. In this case, the researcher understands preliminary preparation for simultaneous interpretation as working with the documents: the program of the event, the list of participants, the texts of speeches, PowerPoint presentations, as well as "external" additional documents, such as mass media, specialized literature, scientific journals, various Internet resources, etc. This list of documents can be called universal – regardless of the type of interpretation or event, most interpreters have to work with such sources of information.

5.   Research Methods

During the research, the analysis of interpretation classes for senior LUNN students was carried out. The author also analyzed the materials used by LUNN students to prepare for the business-imitating game (videos, glossaries, presentations, etc.). The materials were studied by comparison, analysis and synthesis, students' work was also observed and analysed. In order to test the advanced preparation hypothesis the business-imitating game was organised. The main idea of the game was to simulate the situation of real professional interaction: students acted as interpreters at the international competition of Zero Waste projects. Interpreters were familiarised with the topic of the conference in advance and received speakers' presentations 4-7 days before the event. They also had a possibility to contact speakers directly or through curators (professors) to clarify any information. Professors discuss the event with interpreters in advance, explaining the need for information and terminology preparation (compiling a glossary, searching for information on a topic etc.). Totally, 11 interpreters took part in the game (one Russian-French interpreter and Russian-German interpreter for each of the four teams and three interpreters for the jury members - two Russian-French interpreters and one Russian-German interpreter). During interpreting activities, the author of the article conducted observations, which, then, lead to an oral participants' questioning (see Table 01).

Table 01. Interpreters' advanced preparation for the business-imitation game

Total	Thematic glossary (+)	Information search (+)	Contact with speaker (+)	Interlinear translation (-)
11 persons (100%)	4 (36%)	9 (81%)	3 (27%)	5 (45%)

Among team interpreters (8 persons):
- 4/8 interpreters compiled a thematic glossary in advance after they reviewed the speaker's presentation;
- 6/8 interpreters carried out a superficial information search on the topic;
- 2/8 interpreters carried out a detailed search for additional information;

- 4/8 interpreters made interlinear translations of the speech in advance and followed it in the process of interpreting/translating the presentation.

Among the interpreters working with the jury (3 persons):

- 3/3 interpreters contacted their customer (speaker) in advance and discussed the presentation;
- 3/3 interpreters received scripts of their customers' performances in advance and conducted a preliminary information search;
- 0/3 interpreters compiled a thematic glossary;
- 1 interpreter from 3 compiled a made interlinear translation in advance and followed it in the process of interpreting/translating the presentation.

Figure 01. Business-imitation game for LUNN students-interpreters/ Nove Zasorina mber, 2019

The analysis of the interpreters' work shows that they do not fully understand the essence of the advanced preparation – they prefer to make interlinear translation rather than prepare a glossary, moreover, most of them neglect the search for additional information (Figure 1).

At the same time, the same research was carried out with another group of students who were invited to interpret on several business meetings for one of the enterprises in the region. The professor held personal consultations with these students and talked about the process of advanced preparation for interpretation. Each of the students prepared a thematic glossary in advance and got acquainted with information about enterprises. During interpretation, the professor partially accompanied the students. In the process of interpreting in a real situation of intercultural interaction, students showed a higher level of readiness than in the business-imitating game. It can be assumed that this is due to changes in the interpretation conditions and an increased level of stress.

6. Findings

A comparative analysis shows that future interpreters do not take the preparation process enough seriously, unless they are placed in conditions of increased stress, in which the level of responsibility for the work done is increased or there is the prospect of some benefits (payment, reputation, etc.) according to the quality of services provided. During preparation for interpreting as part of their studies at the university, most students do not compose a glossary; however, they often make interlinear translation of

speeches, which is not an effective tool for successful interpretation. Future interpreters do not understand the essence of the preparation process in interpretation, and often believe that the search for additional information on the topic of interpretation or related topics can be replaced by a simple term search in a dictionary (often bilingual). The results of the analysis, however, show that there is a small subgroup of students who competently carry out preparatory work. Students who worked in real conditions of professional interpretation activities, prepared for the project with a professional interpreter who helped in the process. Nevertheless, the more professional skills have formed and the more conscious the future interpreter is during the preparation, the less he needs professor's participation.

7. Conclusion

Apparently, in the methodology of interpretation a special unit dedicated to the advanced preparation is needed. Purely technical exercises – as compiling a glossary, communicating with a speaker, watching videos, searching for information on a topic, using directories/dictionaries – can be introduced in the training process. For the moment, the gap between professional interpreting activity and training situations is rather large, that students do not fully feel all the responsibility they are to show during their work. So, real interpreter experience is needed. Of course, it is clear that all the students will not get the opportunity to interpret for professional issues during their studies that is why real case situations should be introduced in training process. To reach this goal one can create a set of cases, work out a number of specific simulated situations – here is one of the ideas considered in the present study, when we practice in modelling real situations of intercultural communication. Particularly, professors can create a set of exercises to prepare their students for interpretation in a real situation of intercultural interaction. Such exercises were suggested by E.V. Alikina and Yu.O. Shvetsova: a discussion of current news from a university, city, country, world; tests for general erudition; limited time for the Internet search; searching for needed terminology in parallel texts; compilation of a thesaurus / Mind Maps.

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