

INTERPRETING SERVICES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S INSTITUTIONS

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1 - History of Interpreting

The origins of the profession of simultaneous interpretation are traced in the ancient times. However, it was not until a century ago that interpreting started to be associated with a professional status. A turning point in the modern history of international interpreting was marked by Paul Mantoux's interpreting for the Allied leaders at the Paris Conference in 1919. His brilliant performance influenced a transition from chance interpreters to adequately skilled professionals working at the League of Nations and the International Labour Office in Geneva. Incorporating specific technical subjects during international discussions contributed to the need for expert linguists. This led to the establishment of the first School for Interpreters in Geneva in 1941 which trained the candidates in whispering and consecutive interpreting.

As neither of these methods was efficient, the system of simultaneous interpretation emerged. Andre Kaminker, one of the first simultaneous interpreters in the history, attributed the invention of the whole system to Mr. Finlay and Mr. E. A. Filene. Gaiba (1998) explains that they developed the device known as IBM Hushaphone system, used for the first time at a session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in 1927. Additionally, Tryuk (2007) states that at the same time the phenomenon of simultaneous interpreting was applied in 1935 during International Congress of Physiology in Leningrad where Ivan Pavlov's speech has been translated simultaneously into English, French, and German. However, before the war interpreters did not actually perform a true act of simultaneity. They used the equipment typical of simultaneous interpreting but they applied different methods, which Gaiba denotes as "simultaneous successive interpretation" and the "simultaneous reading of pretranslated texts" (Gaiba, 1998: 31). He explains that in the former the interpretations were simultaneous only with each other, but not with the original speech. At the League of Nations and the ILO, for instance, the interpreters would take notes on the original speech, employing consecutive interpreting. When a speech terminated one of the interpreters would translate consecutively into his language,

immediately the others sitting in the booths gave their version of the speech in a target language on the basis of their notes. The latter allowed interpreters to translate the speeches in advance and read them at the same time as the original delivery. These two variants applied the Filene-Finlay system, but not for simultaneous interpreting as we observe today.

In fact, the art of simultaneous interpreting came into force at the Nuremberg Trial. Because of the special linguistic features of this event, the organizers realised that the previous methods had to be altered. Firstly, the charter stated that all the proceedings should be translated into German as it was understood by all of the defendants. Consequently, consecutive translation would only increase the length of the trial. Gaiba (1998) mentions that it would be impossible to ask the whole International Military Tribunal to speak and understand German. The defendants, as well as English, French, Russian, and American judges and prosecutors should have the right to speak and hear their own language. The tribunal could not limit itself to one working language since the members of the bench and prosecutors had to interact in order to conduct a consistent prosecution. Gaiba raises the question, “who was the person that first thought of extempore simultaneous interpreting as the optimal solution to Nuremberg linguistic problems?” (Gaiba, 1998: 34). He states, “there appears to be controversy among the sources, which indicate alternately Justice Jackson, the U.S. Chief Prosecutor, and Leon Dostert, later Chief of the Translation Division at Nuremberg” (Gaiba, 1998: 34, 35).

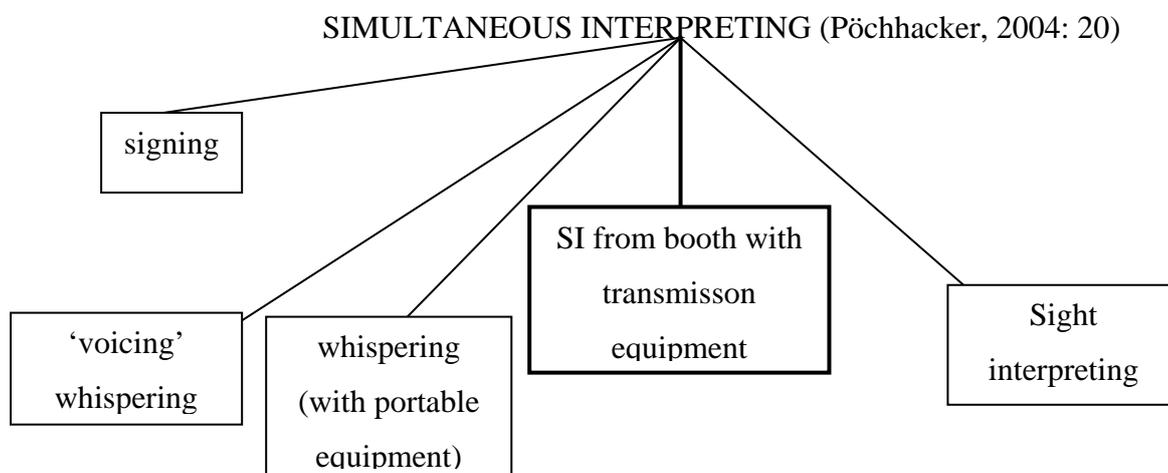
Interpreters were recruited in a two- step process. Initially, candidates were tested for language skills in their home countries, then they were sent to Nuremberg where Dostert checked their competence in simultaneous interpreting. Finally, for the first time in the history the world marvelled at the phenomenon of simultaneous interpreting in the crowded Nuremberg courtroom. Gaiba (1998) reports that everybody could select the interpreted version of their choice or the original speech called ‘verbatim’ by means of switches installed at every seat and connected to the earphones. The dial consisted of five channels: verbatim speech, English, Russian, French, and German. There were twelve interpreters in the room who were divided into four desks according to the language into which they translated. Only one interpreter spoke at each desk, and only three interpreters translated at the same time in the courtroom. Gaiba explains, “when German was spoken, for example, the German desk was silent. Their microphone was switched off, so that the verbatim speech was carried o channel one (verbatim) and channel five (the German channel)” (Gaiba, 1998: 62). The Nuremberg Trial has become a path leading to the invention of simultaneous interpreting which was regarded as a revolutionary branch of translation. Soon triggered by an expanding professional market and rising numbers of graduates, national and international professional organisations of interpreters were formed in the

early 1950s. Together with the International Federation of Translators (FIT), the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) was established as a professional body with worldwide individual membership. Pöchhacker concludes, “based on a code of ethics and professional standards adopted in 1957, AIIC proved highly successful in regulating interpreters’ working conditions and establishing a high profile for the profession on an international scale” (Pöchhacker, 2004: 29). The European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Court of Justice of the European Union are among the European Union’s institutions that employ interpreting services.

2 - Models of Interpreting

Interpreting can be divided into the following modes: simultaneous, consecutive and liaison. Simultaneous interpreting occurs when the listener hears the interpretation at the same time as the speech is delivered. Phelan explains that the interpreter sits in a booth equipped with headphones and a microphone. The booth contains a volume control button, a mute button and a relay button used for listening the interpretation from another booth. “ Because of the high level of concentration required for simultaneous interpreting, interpreters do not usually interpret for more than thirty minutes at a time” (Phelan, 2001: 7). They have to process incoming information in one language and produce interpretation in a second language so it is often necessary to hear more details in order to generate a correct interpretation.

Pöchhacker (2004) subdivides SI into whispered interpreting (also known as chuchotage), which is done not by whispering but by speaking in a low voice. It is possible when the interpreter works next to one or a couple of listeners and provides a rendition without the transmission equipment. He also distinguishes sight interpreting in which “ the interpreter’s target- text production is simultaneous not with the delivery of the source but with the interpreter’s real- time (visual) reception of the written source text” (Pöchhacker, 2004: 19), and signing when the interpreter alternates between reception (reading) and production (signing). The forms of SI are presented in the following diagram:



Simultaneous interpreting additionally includes relay interpreting. The mechanism of relay is applied when the language combination of the interpreters available makes direct interpreting impossible. Pöchhacker defines it as “indirect interpreting via a third language, which links up the performance of two (or more) interpreters, with one interpreter’s output serving as the source for another” (Pöchhacker, 2004: 21).

The next mode is known as consecutive interpreting. In this case the interpreter listens to a speech while taking notes then begins the rendition when the speaker has finished the source utterance. CI is considered “double simultaneous” because it can be divided into two phases. The first one focuses on simultaneous listening and note-taking, whereas the second one involves simultaneous reading of notes and translating. The interpretation is not a summary, but a complete rendition of the original speech. Since there are no booths, practice in public speaking is useful as the interpreter has to deliver the speech in front of the audience. Note taking developed by the pioneers of conference interpreting in the early twentieth century is crucial to CI. When interpreting consecutively, interpreters use a system of abbreviations and symbols which are the result of experience and individual styles. Pöchhacker (2004) explains that CI with systematic note taking is referred to as ‘classic consecutive’ in contrast to ‘short consecutive’ without notes, which employs short-term memory.

Further distinction relates to liaison. Munday explains, “liaison interpreting typically implies dialogic, face to face interaction and is therefore often used interchangeably with dialogue interpreting” (Munday, 2009: 204). It tends to take place in more intimate settings, with fewer participants than during a conference. One can also add retour interpreting which involves

interpretation in both directions using two languages.

3 - *Types of Interpreting*

The activity of interpreting has evolved in the course of history in a variety of settings. The most important types of interpreting include:

Conference interpreting as defined by Munday "is generally understood as the most prestigious and highly professionalised form of interpreting, usually in the simultaneous mode, as represented globally by AIIC, valued most highly by NAATI, and practised in international fora such as the UN and EU institutions" (Munday, 2009: 175). It flourished as a result of the boom in international meetings after World War II. What is distinctive about this particular type is that it takes place within a particular format of interaction that is conference.

Court interpreting was introduced with the establishment of institutions for the enforcement of laws and administration of justice in order to ensure that even those not speaking the language of the authorities could be held to account. Training and experience are crucial, since court procedures are formal and language is specialised. Different modes of interpreting may be applied to achieve this aim, including sight translation of court documents. Pöchhacker (2004), therefore, distinguishes between the broader notions of legal interpreting, or judicial interpreting, and courtroom interpreting. In the context of European Union, this type of interpreting applies to the institutions such as the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal.

Community interpreting occurs in the public service spheres, such as, medicine, law, education, or welfare services. As explained by Wadensjö, "involvement in face- to-face interaction emphasises the community interpreter's role as both a language and social mediator...community interpreters have to handle real- time dialogue- more or less spontaneous and unpredictable exchanges of talk between individuals speaking different languages- and they also have to interpret in both directions" (Wadensjö cited in Baker & Saldanha, 1998: 44).

Business interpreting is regarded by Pöchhacker (2004) as a 'primeval type of interpreting' since some of the first mediated encounters between communities speaking different languages served the purpose of trading and exchanging goods. Interpreters must have a good command of the language of business and economics in order to be successful facilitators of business.

Sign language interpreting popularly known as 'interpreting for the deaf' refers to interpreting between a signed and a spoken language, although it may involve interpreting between a spoken language and a signed form, called 'transliteration'. As Phelan specifies, "sign language interpreting is provided for deaf or hearing- impaired people who cannot understand the original speech" (Phelan, 2001: 14).

4 - Interpreting Skills

Nida claims: “translators are born, not made” (Nida cited in Gile, 1995: 3) which may imply that interpreting or translating skills are gifts that can be mastered, but if an individual lacks this talent the best training might be of no avail. According to a German interpreter- Gertrud Dietze, “to be an interpreter you have to like languages... to like the effort that goes into learning and maintaining a high level of language”. Another conclusion may be drawn that becoming an interpreter requires knowledge and aptitude. In terms of knowledge, International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) features complete mastery of the target language(s) into which the interpreter works. This involves a broad idiolect as well as the ability to express oneself accurately and fluently in a variety of registers. Similarly, Gile stresses: “conference interpreters are required to be able to make speeches at a linguistic level commensurate with that of the personalities they interpret, be they diplomats, scientists, politicians, artists, or intellectuals” (Gile, 1995: 5). In- depth knowledge of the source languages from which the interpreter works is also crucial. AIIC explains that it enables the interpreter to understand the English spoken by non-native speakers and to be familiar with a large number of synonyms, idiomatic expressions, proverbs and quotations. Needless to say, university degree or equivalent is the basis of preparing for interpreting as a profession. Yet another component focuses on general knowledge and understanding of current affairs.

AIIC also defines aptitudes in relation to necessary skills and personal traits. The ability to analyse information and conveying the meaning as well as intuition are of prime importance. Before delivering the utterance, interpreters have to analyse everything they hear and absorb it so that they can transfer what they have understood to the listeners in another language and another culture. This entails using their intuition to anticipate what the speaker is going to say. Another important factor is the speed of reaction and ability to adapt without delay to speakers, situations and subjects. The speakers are unknown to the interpreter who needs to adjust to different accents, pace and style of each individual. In the context of European Union, it often happens that MEPs do not take into consideration the fact that their utterance is simultaneously interpreted into other languages. They tend to use elaborate discourse, jokes or metaphors which may not have a translation equivalent in a target language which involves the ability of paraphrasing the speaker. Similarly, they often speak fast or read from the paper they have prepared in advance which involves a quick output. As pointed out by Marzocchi the European Parliament interpreters frequently face problems related to the speed of delivery and “the oral delivery of written texts, with the specific prosody related to reading aloud, the lesser redundancy, and other obstacles due to the syntactic and semantic complexity of planned, written speeches”

(Marzocchi, 1998: 70). Additionally, powers of concentration is the initial quality for the prospective interpreter. Clearly, a lapse in concentration may result in losing the thread of an utterance both by the interpreter and the listeners. It is significant to be a skilful speaker so pleasant voice and public- speaking skills are required. Despite working under pressure, the interpreter’s delivery must remain smooth as to retain the audience’s attention.

The importance of enumerated aptitudes is also explained by Kalina (2000). Kalina (2002) summarises the components of the interpreter’s output in the following table:

Semantic content	Linguistic performance	Presentation
Consistency	Grammatical correctness	Voice quality
Logic, coherence	Adherence to TL norms	Articulation
Completeness	Comprehensibility	Public speaking
Accurateness	Stylistic adequacy	Discipline
Unambiguity	Terminological adequacy	Simultaneity
Clarity	Discretion	Technical mastery
Reliability	Lack of disturbances	Conduct

(Kalina in Garzone, Viezzi, 2002: 125, Figure 1)

She remarks that interpreters working at conferences, in negotiations, or in media are expected to render a professional service, based on the skills they have acquired during their training. Equally important for the interpreting profession are the mental capacities, such as, excellent functioning of memory, the ability to perform at a high level of concentration, as well as self motivation and extraordinary tolerance to stress. Finally, AIIC lists the interpreter’s high degree of intellectual curiosity displayed in the extensive knowledge of current economic, political or social issues. This quality is particularly important in the case of European Union’s interpreters. In order to be well prepared, interpreters have to be knowledgeable about all areas of EU activity. Due to the fact that the scope of topics discussed during parliamentary meetings is extensive, interpreters have to be familiar with current issues and the political views of the Members of Parliament as well as to be up to date with the international political situation and the latest developments. Interpreters are at the core of multilingualism; their task is to ensure that language is not an obstacle during international encounters. Moreover, they have the role of communicators. As Gertrud Dietze states, “I make people understand each other whatever they say, even if they say the opposite of what I hold as truth”.

5 - *Differences between modes of interpreting*

It is now important to point relevant differences in the process and skills taking into account consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. In the former case interpreters have the possibility of listening and assimilating the incoming information before producing their rendition, whereas in the latter they cannot afford to lag behind the speaker and therefore must produce their interpretation on the basis of shorter source- speech segments. The process of simultaneous interpreting comprises of three efforts- a Listening and Analysis Effort which is linked to the comprehension of the incoming message, a Production Effort required for the production of a target- language speech, and a Short- Term Memory Effort which corresponds to storing the information just received from the speaker. Consecutive interpreting has two stages. The first one is similar to simultaneous interpreting; the only difference lies in the fact that the Production Effort in this case is devoted to taking notes, not producing a speech. During the second stage the interpreter is no longer paced by the speaker but produces a rendition on the basis of his/ her notes. Therefore the distribution of efforts is as follow: a Note- Reading effort for deciphering the notes, a Long- Term Memory Effort which refers to storing the information in long- term memory and reconstructing the speech, and finally a Production Effort for providing interpretation. There are some important differences in interpreting skills that results from such a distribution of efforts. An interpreter working in simultaneous mode has to split his/ her attention between two parallel lines of discourse and at the same time monitor his/ her own output for logic, coherence and linguistic correctness. Thus split attention is one of the most important aptitudes in this mode as well as a prerequisite for a successful performance. Due to the fact that in consecutive mode speech comprehension and speech production stages do not overlap, the level of split attention is lower. In this case the interpreter is only paced by the speaker during listening and taking notes. During the last phase, he/ she can perform at his/ her own pace which decreases the possibility of making errors. Another difference is attributed to the fact that in consecutive mode incoming message is committed to the interpreter's long- term memory in the range of a few minutes, whereas simultaneous interpreting makes use of short- term memory which lasts only up to several seconds. It is also worth mentioning that note-taking is not subject to the same rules of linguistic correctness as speech production as its primary aim is to help interpreter reconstruct the source- language message. Accordingly, faithfulness in note- taking is not an aspect of interpreting which is constantly evaluated by the audience. As for the working environment, consecutive interpreting is best suited for situations involving a small number of people; therefore interpreters working in this mode have a direct contact both with the speaker and the audience. Simultaneous interpreters work in sound- proof

booths because of the high level of concentration required. Because this mode of interpreting saves time it applies to 90 % of conferences and meetings particularly within European Union.

6 - Interpreting for European Union's Institutions

In comparison to any other organisation in the world, The European Union employs the biggest amount of interpreters. Due to the fact that EU treats all of the languages equally, interpretation is crucial to all of the official EU languages. The language arrangements for international meetings vary from consecutive interpretation between two languages, for which only one interpreter suffices to simultaneous interpretation into and out of 23 or more languages, in which case at least 69 interpreters are employed. Phelan (2001) explains that The Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS/SCIC), The Interpretation Directorate at the European Parliament and The Interpretation Division at the European Court of Justice are among three departments within EU which deal with interpreting requirements. European Union interpreters are required to have a degree in conference interpreting, perfect command of mother tongue, as well as to be proficient in a specified EU language and two other official EU languages. When it comes to the vacancies, they are advertised in all EU countries and in the “Official Journal” of the European Communities. The European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Court of Justice of the European Union have a separate interpretation service, but recruitment of staff interpreters and selection of freelance interpreters is organised jointly. Additionally, Phelan (2001) explains that open competitive examinations take place every year. Firstly, potential interpreters are asked to interpret a speech from 7 to 10 minutes consecutively; secondly they interpret a speech in a simultaneous mode from 15 to 20 minutes from three passive languages into a mother tongue. Besides, they are tested for their general knowledge of the EU. In the case of freelance interpreters, they are not necessarily EU national but they are required to interpret into a widely used EU language. In order to be included in a freelance list, they have to pass SCIC test which comprises of both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. Afterwards, they may be offered a minimum number of working days per year. Interpretation Directorate of the European Parliament and SCIC also provide the opportunity for interpreting students to see a real life interpreting. During trips to Brussels, students have a chance to observe professional interpreters as well as to test their interpreting skills.

According to Phelan (2001) the Interpretation Directorate is responsible for providing interpreters for European Parliament sessions and meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg as well as for the Court of Auditors and the Commission services in Luxembourg. Quoting Phelan “the Directorate employs 180 staff interpreters and has a list of over 1000 freelance interpreters”

(Phelan, 2001: 65). Taking into account the Court of Justice of the European Communities, it employs 40 staff interpreters and from 100 to 150 freelance interpreters. The recruitment stage focuses on the legal knowledge and interpreting ability as this type of interpreting is complex and involves a quick output.

The Directorate General for Interpretation (SCIC) is the European Commission's interpreting service which is occupied with providing interpreting services and organising conferences. As annually it provides interpreters for approximately eleven thousand meetings, it is regarded as the largest interpreting service in Europe. Moreover, organisations such as The Council of the Union, The Committee of the Regions, The European Economic and Social Committee, The European Investment Bank, and offices in the Member States rely on its services. According to the official website "at present the Council accounts for around 46 % of the interpreting services provided, followed by the Commission with around 40 %. The remaining 14% are spread over the two Committees, the European Investment Bank and various agencies and other bodies" (<http://scic.ec.europa.eu>). Taking into account organisation of interpreting, the Directorate General supply 50- 60 meetings with interpreters each day. Interpreting is carried out consecutively when two languages are present, and simultaneously in other circumstances. In the latter case at least 69 interpreters are engaged. The most common interpreting techniques are direct interpreting, relay, retour, and asymmetric language coverage in which participants may be able to speak several languages but interpretation applies only to a few. Providing some data from the official website there are 500 staff interpreters, 300- 400 freelance interpreters per day, and 2.700 accredited freelance interpreters which are at the disposal of the Directorate General. It provides some 150 000 interpreter days per year, of which about half are freelance days.

To proceed with the European Parliament, the official website informs that it employs 430 staff interpreters and approximately 2500 freelance interpreters. The service was established as a branch of the Assembly's secretariat in 1971. Marzocchi (1998) states that SCIC provides a higher number of interpreters yearly but the European Parliament Interpretation Directorate facilitates meetings with a wider coverage of the 11 official languages of the EU, including various meetings where a team of 33 interpreters is employed. As the same author explains "such meetings include the ordinary plenary assembly, held 11 or 12 times a year over 4 full days, additional plenaries 6 or 7 times a year for two half- days, and the 20 permanent committees, which usually meet for two- three days during one or two weeks every month" (Marzocchi, 1998: 61). DG Interpretation and Conferences supplies interpreters for the meetings of European Parliament as well as for the Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions, the European

Ombudsman, the European Data Protection Officer, the European Commission in Luxemburg and the Translation Centre. It has 380 staff interpreters and provides some 110 000 interpreter days per year, of which about half are freelance days. The European Parliament's interpreters not only travel to Strasbourg for plenary sessions which take place every month, but also accompany overseas conferences, on visits to other parliaments and on election observation missions. According to the requirements listed on the official page, in order to become an interpreter for the European Parliament one has to meet the following requirements:

- Approved academic degree in simultaneous interpreting or
- Approved academic degree in any field and postgraduate qualification in consecutive or simultaneous interpreting or
- Approved academic degree in any field and certified experience in consecutive or simultaneous interpreting.

Staff interpreters are recruited on the basis of competitions organised through the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) whenever there are vacancies. The Official Journal of the European Union also publishes information about such competitions, but apart from this, it also includes a detailed guide to the procedure of recruitment and the obligatory application forms. Those willing to work as freelance interpreters for the European Parliament have to undertake a test in order to be registered on the list of auxiliary conference interpreters. If they manage to complete it successfully they will be included in the list of freelance interpreters and accredited to work. Needless to say, their task is to facilitate communication during international meetings such as plenary sittings, press conferences, or parliamentary delegations as well as to provide a faithful interpretation of the speeches given by MEPs which is not an easy task. As Elsa- Maria Michael, a staff interpreter at the European Parliament, notes, “jokes, swear words, brusque remarks have to be grasped quickly, even if they present an extreme degree of linguistic difficulty and/ or refer to personal or cultural feelings” (<http://www.aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm/page1102.htm>). Accordingly, interpreting parliamentary discourse is challenging due to the fact that it is free and open. However, Michael also explains that European MPs serve a five- year term so interpreters have time to get to know the nature of a discourse of each MP. European Parliament's interpreters translate the speeches into up to 20 official EU languages. In terms of the number of languages spoken within its walls, it is often referred to as “the Tower of Babel”. Simultaneous interpreting is the most frequent mode as it is the fastest one. However, it is not employed during face- to- face meetings and missions away from Brussels or Strasbourg. Whispered interpreting is another way to translate the MEPs

speeches orally. Consecutive mode is also used, but due to the time constraint it seldom applies when more than two languages are spoken. It works when it comes to face- to- face meetings or meetings between individual MEPs and guests on official visits. Currently, retour interpreting is restricted to Finnish interpreters who interpret the speeches of Finnish MEPs into English, German or French to be relayed by other booths. Marzocchi distinguish the following assignments for average interpreter:

- “delegation meetings with counterparts from third countries;
- internal bodies of the EP such as the conferences of group of leaders and of committee chairpersons, or the questors in charge of administrative and disciplinary matters;
- occasional meetings of select EP delegations with the Commission and the Council of Ministers in what is known as ‘conciliation committee’, in the last stage of controversial legislative processes;
- unofficial, cross- party ‘intergroups’ dealing with a wide range of specialised interests;
- the newly- introduced ‘temporary committees of enquiry’, usually in office for a few months;
- the joint assembly with parliamentarians from partner countries of the African, Pacific and Caribbean group (ACP) held twice yearly” (Marzocchi, 1998: 64- 65).

As for the working conditions, interpreters work in booths which come up to international standards; “they are soundproofed, air- conditioned, well lit and furnished with ergonomic chairs, and must give interpreters a view of the meeting room that allows them to follow what is going on”

(http://www.europarl.europa.eu/multilingualism/interpretation_en.htm). Generally there are three interpreters per booth and the complete team for a plenary sitting comprises of 60 interpreters.

The Court of Justice of the European Union, located in Luxemburg, is the next institution which is in charge of interpreting services. Simultaneous interpreting is used in the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal. According to the data provided by CURIA the Interpretation Directorate of the European Court of Justice employs currently about 70 permanent staff and 3000 accredited freelance interpreters. Initially there were only four official languages, however nowadays 24 are spoken. Usually it is the applicant who chooses the language of the proceedings. Every citizen has an equal access to justice; therefore the Courts of European Union have to give everybody a right to speak his or her own language.

It accounts for the necessity of using simultaneous interpreting during public hearings. The interpreters are obliged to adhere to the specific language requirements which depends on the given case in the courtroom. CURIA explains that it corresponds to the following factors:

- “The language of the case, i.e. a language chosen by the parties from among the official languages of the European Union,
 - The language of the Member States intervening,
 - The language needs of the Judges hearing the case,
 - The language of any visiting groups attending the hearing”
- (<http://eulita.eu/sites/default/files/Interpreting%20at%20the%20Court%20of%20Justice%20of%20the%20EU.pdf>).

The only situation in which interpreters are not present occurs during the Court’s deliberations. French is the working language of the Court and the rules of procedures indicate that its debates have to be held in closed session. When it comes to the aptitudes and skills required of court interpreters, apart from previously discussed qualities, being familiar with the subject matter and legal proceedings is of prime importance. Prior study of the cases as well as thorough familiarity with legal terminology is essential. Faithfulness, distance and neutral attitude are another prerequisites in this type of interpreting. As Edwards, one of the legal interpreters, emphasizes “our role is to make a full and faithful interpretation of courtroom speech...Impartiality helps us keep out of a case by allowing us not to be swayed by sympathy for one side or another. Keeping us out of the case also means not helping, not fixing things” (Edwards in Hale, 2004: 12). Apart from this, court interpreters are obliged to keep in secrecy all of the information which is revealed before and during the hearings.

In conclusion, interpreting is a recent discipline and a considerably new area of research. The European Union institutions employ an excessive number of interpreters who work in different modes. The multiplicity of international meetings contributed to perceiving interpreting as a global service whose primary function is to facilitate communication in multilingual environment providing a high- quality service.

7 - Interpreting Quality Assessment

During a 1998 exhibition on “Interpreting in the new millennium”, Lord Simon of Highbury made the following statement, “with experience, you learn to tell the difference between quite good, very good and excellent interpreters” (Kalina in Garzone, Viezzi, 2002: 121). Taking into account quality assessment in interpreting, researchers have not yet formulated universal quality model which would apply to spoken discourse; in contrast, written translation

has its own standards defined by ISO 9002, DIN 2345, European Code of Best Practice (http://www.aciertotranslations.com/code_of_best_practice_in_translation.pdf)

Since interpreting is constrained by time factor, interpreters are required to anticipate both solutions and problems that may appear during interpreting process. Therefore, quality assessment is supposed to cover what happens before and after performance. Undeniably, interpreters expect to be paid adequately and those who pay for their services expect to be satisfied with their services.

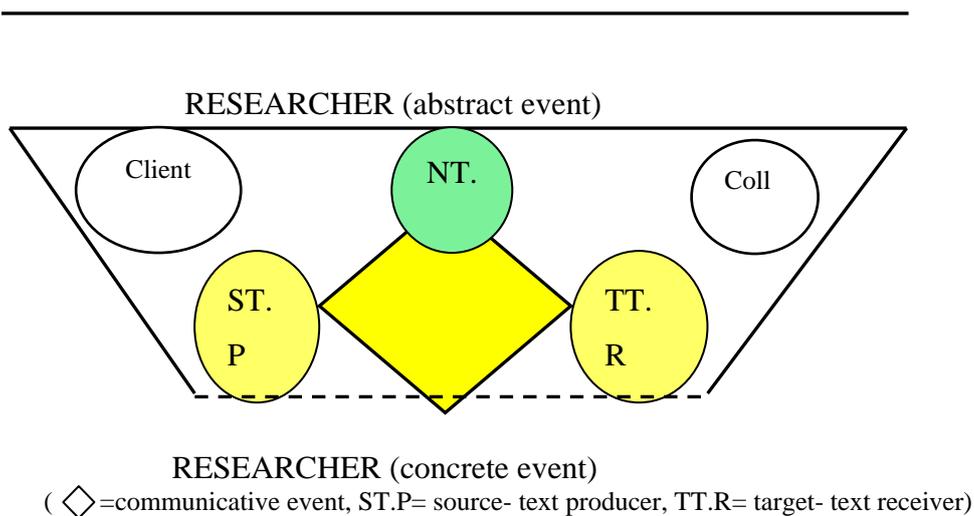
Koch explains that after World War II candidates for interpreting at the Nuremberg Trials were tested for aptitudes such as “mental concentration, fluency, composure, alertness and clear enunciation” (Koch, 1992:2 cited in Kalina, 2005). With the growing demand for professional interpreters, it became clear that professional associations should address the quality of the service; therefore AIIC (Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence) established its own admission committee and criteria perceived as guidelines for interpreters training schools. Kalina (2005) indicates that interpreters working for international organizations, mostly for the European Communities, were required to pass entrance tests in order to verify their simultaneous and consecutive skills and general knowledge of the European Union as well as to guarantee the quality of interpreting. Selection committees in other countries started to test candidates for interpreters by making them interpret short impromptu speeches or sight translating. However, no formal criteria applied to these procedures. The only aspects that were usually taken into account were those which contribute to the acceptability of interpreter’s output such as “smooth delivery, communicative speaking and voice quality” (Kalina, 2005).

Since simultaneous interpreting began to have an advantage over consecutive one, researchers started to get insight into the quality of performance. Kalina (2005) explains that their approach was based on comparative linguistic “with experimental interpreting recordings being made and the results being transcribed and compared with their originals” (Kalina, 2005). The components which had bearing on interpreter’s discourse comprised of number of correct or deleted words and syntactic equivalences as well as propositions and their content. Currently, simultaneous interpreting quality is approached from different angles. Gile (1995) perceives it as a balance between three processing efforts- the Listening and Analysis Effort, the Production Effort and the Short- Term Memory Effort and attributes deterioration in quality to overloading one of them. On the other hand, Pöchhacker (1994) sets interpreting within a conference environment which is seen as a “hypertext” with the quality of interpreter’s output being defined as one aspect of communicative interaction and discourse quality. Yet another approach is suggested by Mack (Mack 2002, in Kalina 2005) who evaluates interpreting on the grounds of

“being able to establish equivalences in terms of content, shape and performance” (Mack 2002, in Kalina 2005). For Vuorikoski, examining interpreting quality means “to investigate whether the substance of the ST argumentation, including the speech act of the original speech, has been conveyed by the interpreters, thereby allowing listeners of interpreting to create an impression of the speech which is equal to the one they would have created had they been listening to the original speech directly” (Vuorikoski, 2004: 71 in Kalina 2005).

There is a number of factors which decreases the quality of interpreting. First of all, in international organisations such as European Union, teams of interpreters consist of both permanent staff and freelancers. The former can take advantage of quality assurance measures taken by the organisation in the form of, for instance programmes of in house training; whereas the latter have to manage their quality assurance. Another challenge to interpreting quality is a tendency to locate interpreting booths far from speakers’ platforms. As a result, physical distance makes it difficult to grasp all interaction in the conference hall and interpret speakers’ body language. An additional obstacle to the quality of interpreting is a combination of languages an interpreter is expected to work within. The higher the number of an interpreter’s working languages, the more probability that he or she will be less aware of all linguistic nuances of each of them.

According to Pöchhacker (2001) in the late 1980s, interpreters and listeners started to assign different criteria to quality of interpreting. Gile (1991 in Pöchhacker 2001) viewed the “communication configuration” as involving both the interpreter having the role of “Sender” and the users having the roles of “Receivers”. He enriched this classification by adding the “Client” who commissions and pays for the service. Some additional distinctions also take into account “the interpreter’s colleague(s), associates or representatives of the client or users as well as persons with an analytical or research interests” (Pöchhacker, 1994:123, Moser- Mercer, 1996: 46 in Pöchhacker, 2001: 411). The relationship between different perspectives is illustrated by Viezzi in the form of the following figure:

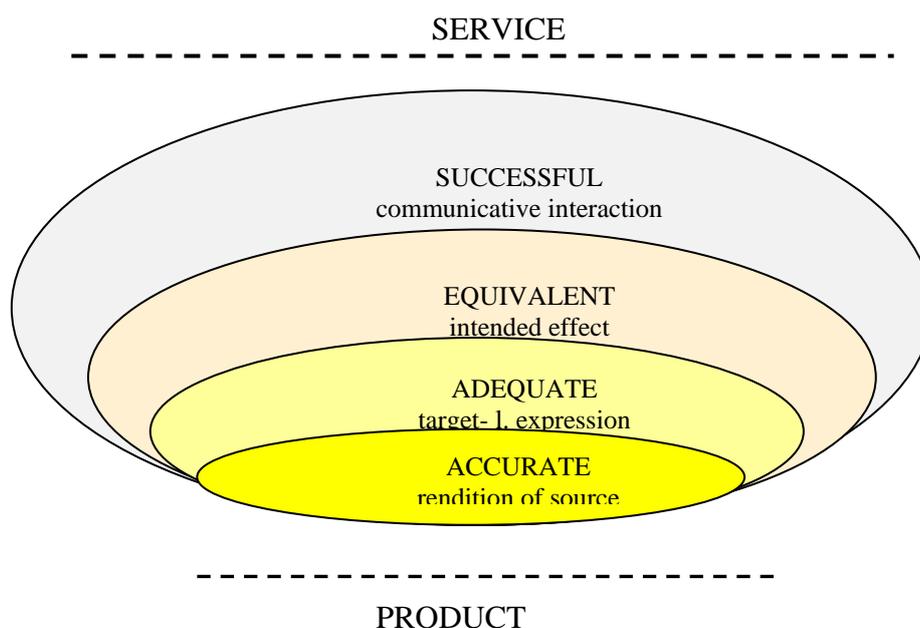


(Viezzi, 1996: 12 in Pöchhacker, 2001: 412)

Providing explanation to the above figure, the participants involved in the communicative event of interpreting are depicted within the figure of triad which consists of the interpreter (INT.), the speaker (ST. P) and the listener (TT- R). Clients and Colleagues are presented as additional positions from which interpreting quality can be judged. Furthermore, the figure is intended to illustrate two analytical distinctions crucial to the study of quality in interpreting. It refers to the “external observer” who may examine “the various actors’ attitudes, needs and views (‘norms’) either ‘off-site’, with regard to an abstract (hypothetical or previously experienced) interpreting event or with reference to a concrete communicative event in a given communication situation” (Pöchhacker, 2001: 412). The later approach allows the researcher to access the communicative event directly which is marked in the figure by the broken line which at the same time separates him/ her from the rest of the participants. Consequently, examination of quality in a concrete interpreting event can be based either on the recordable product or on the overall process of communicative interaction. As Pöchhacker emphasises “these two perspectives- product orientation and interaction orientation- are of fundamental importance also to the key issues of quality standards and assessment criteria” (Pöchhacker, 2001: 412).

When it comes to criteria which apply to assessing the quality of interpreting, features such as accuracy, clarity or fidelity are the most common. All of them are product- oriented and set interpretation within the framework of target text as “a faithful image” (Gile, 1991: 198 in Pöchhacker, 2001: 413) or “exact and faithful reproduction” (Jones, 1998: 5 in Pöchhacker, 2001: 413) of the original utterance. On the other hand, the concept of clarity is described as “listener orientation” or “target- text comprehensibility” (Pöchhacker, 2001: 413). Additionally, interpreter is required to represent faithfully the original speaker as well as his/her interests and intentions.

Quality assessment may be related to the process of communicative interaction as such which implies “successful communication” among participants in a specific communicative environment, as approached from subjective points of view and/ or from the position of an observer. Quality standards for the product and service of interpreting are depicted by Viezzi (Viezzi, 1996: 40 in Pöchhacker, 2001: 413) in the form of the following figure:



Assessing the quality of interpreting is problematic due to the fact that those who participate in a communicative event- interpreters, clients, listeners and speakers have different expectations towards the product. Besides, interpreting is evanescent which does not allow repeated evaluation. Even though transcription may be used, Garzone stresses “there is no doubt that to analyse an oral text in written form is not only methodologically incorrect, but also ineffective, owing to the important role of prosody in the expression of meaning” (Garzone, 2002: 107).

A number of authors intended to get insight into the quality of interpreting by means of various surveys. Marrone’s (1993 in Kurz 2001) case study focused on the group of 87 people listening to consecutive interpretation from German into Italian. They rated the importance of the following components: completeness of information, quality of style and correct terminological usage, quality of intonation and delivery as well as the following deficiencies: inaccurate terminology, unpleasant delivery and reproducing the speaker’s faults. The results

revealed that the listeners tended to pay attention to fidelity and completeness of information rather than to the linguistic quality of an utterance. Similarly, Vourikoski's respondents classified output's features in the following order "1. informed, 2. coherent or easy to follow, 3. fluent, 4. accurate, 5. correct terminology, 6. pleasant speech rhythm" (Vourikoski, 1993 in Kurz, 2001: 400). Kopczyński (1994 in Kurz, 2001) examined attitudes and expectations of the Polish users of interpreting services who were divided into speakers and listeners. Both groups attached more importance to the content than to the form. Additionally, fluency was the most important quality for speakers, whereas style for listeners. When it comes to shortcomings, Kopczyński discovered that wrong terminology was the most irritating aspect for both of the groups. His study also revealed that speakers paid attention to the precise rendition of the content of their speech, while listeners to unfinished sentences and grammaticality.

The most elaborate questionnaire involving listeners and speakers, however, was the one conducted by Moser (Moser, 1995, 1996 in Kurz, 2001). As Kurz explains "94 AIIC interpreters conducted a total of 201 standardized interviews (using a questionnaire with open-ended questions and specific questions) at 84 different meetings" (Kurz, 2001: 401, 402). The conferences were divided into four categories: large technical meetings, small technical meetings, large general meetings and small general meetings. Fidelity to the original was the most crucial; spontaneous reference to the content, synchronicity, rhetorical skills and the quality of interpreter's voice appeared to be less important. The research in question drew a distinction between experienced and unexperienced users as the former ranked content match higher than other factors. The general tendency was to attach more importance to essentials than to completeness of rendition across almost all conference types. What is more, the main expectations were related to synchronicity, clarity of expression, sentence completion and a lively voice; while long pauses, lagging behind a speaker, hesitations and monotonous delivery were among the most frequently mentioned distracters. Moser's study also intended on establishing whether there is a correspondence between meetings of a different type and participants' expectations but the outcomes revealed that the criteria remained the same.

Taking into account the perspective of a trainer, Kurz emphasises that interpreting is "a high-skill information processing activity composed of independent subskills which should be taught by processing from easy to more difficult" (Kurz, 1992: 245 in Kalina, 2000: 20). According to Niska the core curriculum should cover the following areas:

- "Theory of interpretation: Introduction to theoretical aspects of interpretation and research findings which have a bearing on interpretation,

- Practice of interpretation: communication skills, voice coaching, public speaking, conference preparation techniques, professional ethics, conference procedures, work practices and conditions,
- Consecutive interpretation: training in consecutive interpreting skills includes a variety of exercises, consecutive interpretation without notes, summarisation, sight translation and note-taking techniques, and cover texts from a diverse range of subject areas, written in a variety of styles and registers,
- Simultaneous interpretation: training in simultaneous interpreting will essentially build on the skills used to practise consecutive interpretation. Additional components include booth techniques and team interaction,
- European Union and international organisations: The aim of this is to introduce students to these institutions, their institutional processes and procedures” (Niska in Tenny, 2005: 49).

In conclusion, it should be now evident that interpreter’s core competence ought to be developed by focusing on skills such as speaking and listening at the same time, anticipating the speaker, memorising, splitting attention as well as coping with stress and concentrating. All of the above mentioned concepts contribute to training qualified interpreters who are able to provide a high-quality service. However, one of the crucial conclusions is that the concept of interpreting quality is hard to be defined due to the fact that it comprises of various aspects and different subjects such as interpreters, clients, users, speakers and trainers, each with a diverse view and perception of quality. The variety of international meetings which take place in the institutions of the European Union as well as other international organizations led to the fact that interpreting started to be perceived as a service intended on facilitating communication in multilingual settings. Therefore, interpreters are supposed to render a professional service based on the skills they have required in the process of training. The achievement of expertise, however, is a gradual process which focuses on training and integrating specific subskills which account for a successful service.

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