

**MEMORY IMPROVEMENT TECHNIQUES IN INTERPRETING****Lusine Tonoyan**

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**Abstract.** The stated article discusses some memory improvement techniques which are to be trained by the interpreters in order to remember the information. They are used to enhance both simultaneous and consecutive translation. It is crucial for the interpreter to retain the information and convey it into the target language. Interpreting is definitely a complex process in which memory plays an essential role. Memory improvement techniques, such as snowball, syntactic expansion and speech compression in line with the appropriate exercises are into focus of this study.

**Key words:** interpreting, mnemonics, snowball, syntactic expansion, speech compression

**Introduction**

The academic field of interpreting studies was founded in the latter half of the 20th century. In the early decades of the twenty-first century, a few research projects focused on interpreting-related topics were undertaken in a variety of fields; nonetheless, it was not until the 1970s that interpreting became a major area of interest. In an academic study published in the early 1990s, the term "interpreting studies as a discipline, analogous to translation studies" first arose.

Functionally, interpreting and interpretation are the descriptive words for the activity. An interpreter is a person who conveys a thought or expression of a source language in 'real time'. The English word "interpreter" is derived from the Latin term *interpres* denoting someone "explaining the meaning", making sense of what others have difficulty in understanding (Pöchhacker, 2004, pp. 9-10). The interpreter's job is to translate for the listeners, speaking the target language every semantic component, intention, and emotion of the message that the speaker in the source language is trying to get over. Interpreting is generally done "here and now" to help individuals who wish to communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers.

Though it is difficult to trace the history of early interpreting activities, the assumption that interpreting belongs to one of the oldest professions in the world is due to the use of oral activities in transferring messages from one tribe to others; various tribes with different languages communicate with each other (Phelan, 2001). It is beyond any doubt that interpreting has played, is playing and will play a great role in social, political and business intercourse, consequently, preparing qualified interpreters is of paramount importance.

Learning strategy of interpretation is aimed at developing the skills of fast oral interlingual translation. Interpreting training is divided into preparatory and main stages. Preparatory stage is intensive learning of a foreign language (or two languages) from and into which the translator will learn to translate. Students study, make speeches on various topics, give and take interviews etc. Active comprehensive interpreting training starts at the main stage. Among the exercises used in

different translation schools, the most common ones are: memory training, language switching training, tempo training (shadow repetition), and work over vocabulary, compression and expansion, mastering techniques of translation notation, multilingual conferences. (Alekseeva, 2001).

Memory training is undoubtedly of utmost importance for any professional interpreter. In communication, dealing with translation and interpretation the process of perceiving and sharing information is much more difficult than in one language. Mnemonics, which is a set of techniques that increase memory capacity and facilitate the memorization of information based on building associations, allows interpreters to develop high-quality and positional memory, that is, remembering large volume of information and order of information units. There are various mnemonic techniques. Some of these techniques widely used for memory improvement are snowball, linguistic amplification and linguistic compression.

Snowball describes how knowledge is produced with this method; it starts with one thought that gathers new perspectives and through that grows fuller and richer. This technique guides students towards producing knowledge and developing thoughts collectively. The essential thing is not who wrote what but what new perspectives are awakened in one by what was written by another. This technique is applied in translation and interpreting as well (Learning Scoop).

The exercises on syntactic expansion are the complicated variant of the snowball. The aim of this technique is not only the further improvement of the operative memory, but working out the abilities of the double-stage perception of the utterance. The first stage consists in highlighting and perception of the chief, essential and nuclear information. That is why it is necessary to rapidly highlight and remember the main sentence structure: the subject, the predicate and the secondary parts of the sentence needed for the completion of the idea. During the second stage the supplementary components carrying additional information are used. The double-stage perception of the utterance, with the division of the information into the main and secondary, the essential and additional, optimizes the process of translation and guarantees its adequacy. To make the remembering easy it is advisable to start with the native language and only after some training to pass to the foreign one (Verbickaja, Beljaeva & Bystrickaja, 2009).

Syntactic expansion and speech compression are polar different skills but they are both necessary for the interpreter. As a matter of fact, they are skills for collapsing and deployment of information based on the ability to highlight the chief idea, to see and build up logical connections. The possession of the skills of linguistic compression provides the interpreter with the control over the time both in the simultaneous and in the consecutive translation. In case of the simultaneous translation the interpreter must “follow on the orator’s heels” and falling back even for 10 seconds may be unpardonable: the sense of the utterance is lost. In case of the consecutive translation the interpreter must quickly and fully reproduce the speaker’s words. It is inadmissible that the translation will sound longer than the speech itself. The latter is especially important when translating from Armenian into English as the structural differences between these languages, as well as the cultural differences – the Armenians love for long phrases) “objectively” make the Armenian translation longer compared to the English original.

### **Methods**

The following methods are applied: comparative study, qualitative and quantitative research analysis.

### **Discussion**

#### **TASKS ON MEMORY IMPROVEMENT**

All the exercises illustrated in this section train non-associative memory and enlarge the volume of the operative one. Students start with snowball, then pass to more complicated techniques – syntactic expansion and speech compression. They learn to perceive on ear the syntactic structure of complex and compound extended sentences, to find their sense nucleus and the periphery. The exercises are concentrated on both languages - English and Armenian. The exercises presented below are only a model. Teachers can make use of various materials from different information sources. Moreover, they can edit or create their own types of exercises.

**Exercise 1.** The first student reads the incomplete sentence, the second one continues it and adds one more sentence:

1. Since everyone is present, I think it...
2. It was only when I came home that I noticed that I had been...
3. We saw lots of interesting things when we were...
4. The water in the lake was so warm that it was...
5. I had a good look at the picture yesterday and I think it is...
6. This is the house where the writer lived, now it is...
7. No use discussing the matter with me unless...
8. You cannot imagine a more delightful person to...
9. It was growing dark and they still had...
10. I do not know the rules, but I think it is...

**Exercise 2.** Students repeat the sentences after the teacher (each student has their own one). When the last extended sentence is heard, they may check whether they have memorized the whole sentence:

- 1. In the heart of Kentucky, there once lived a man.  
2. In the heart of Kentucky, there once lived a man named Harland Sanders.  
3. In the heart of Kentucky, there once lived a man named Harland Sanders, affectionately known as the Colonel.
- 1. Once upon a time, a farmer had a goose.  
2. Once upon a time, a farmer had a goose that laid one golden egg.  
3. Once upon a time, a farmer had a goose that laid one golden egg every day.
- 1. Liam, a linguist, arrived in a small village to study a mysterious dialect.  
2. Liam, a linguist, arrived in a small village to study a mysterious dialect. He met Sarah the village librarian, who introduced him to local speakers.  
3. Liam, a linguist, arrived in a small village to study a mysterious dialect. He met Sarah, the village librarian, who introduced him to local speakers. Each referral led to another, and soon, the entire village joined in to help Liam. Together, they uncovered the dialect's secrets.
- 1. On a sunny morning, Sarah found an old journal in her attic.  
2. On a sunny morning, Sarah found an old journal in her attic. The first page mentioned a hidden treasure in the woods.  
3. On a sunny morning, Sarah found an old journal in her attic. The first page mentioned a hidden treasure in the woods. Excited, she followed the clues and discovered a chest filled with long-lost family heirlooms, sparking cherished memories and a renewed connection to her heritage.
- 1. Anna had always dreamed of becoming a writer but never found the courage to share her stories. One day, she decided to post a short tale online anonymously.  
2. Anna had always dreamed of becoming a writer but never found the courage to share her stories. One day, she decided to post a short tale online anonymously. To her surprise, the story received overwhelming praise and comments from readers.  
3. Anna had always dreamed of becoming a writer but never found the courage to share her stories. One day, she decided to post a short tale online anonymously. To her surprise, the story received overwhelming praise and comments from readers. Encouraged by the positive response, Anna continued to write and eventually published her first book, making her lifelong dream a reality.

**Exercise 3.** Students compress the given information in English. After a good preparation and hard practice, they are instructed to translate into Armenian the whole, as well as the compressed variant:

1. Unable to forget the Great Depression, America fostered its familiar position of free trade, and sought to eliminate trade barriers both to create markets for American agricultural and industrial products, and to ensure the ability of West European nations to export as a means to generate economic growth and rebuild their economies.
2. In 1949 the United States led the effort to create a military alliance to compliment economic measures, establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization based on the principle of collective security.
3. The next year the National Security council undertook a full-fledged review of American foreign and defense policy in a document committing America to assist allied nations anywhere in the world, which seemed threatened by other countries aggression.
4. Television had a powerful impact on social and economic patterns, exposing Americans to increasingly sophisticated advertisements for products said to be necessary for the good life.
5. Though men and women had been forced into new employment patters during World War II, once the war was over, traditional roles were reaffirmed, men expected to be breadwinners, women assuming their proper place was at home.

**Exercise 4.** The first student reads the incomplete sentence, the second one continues it and adds one more sentence:

1. Երբ անցավ մի տասը օր, և կոիվը բավական հեռացավ քաղաքից, նրա մեջ հանկարծ զարթնեց այրված տունը տեսնելու փափագ, ուստի նա որոշեց. . .
2. Ձիավորն այնքան էր շտապում ամրոց հասնել, որ ձիուն գրեթե ուժասպառ էր արել, բայց նրա առջև բացվեց մի այնպիսի տեսարան, որ. . .
3. Ոչ ոք չի ասում այն, ինչ մտածում է, բայց ամեն ոք խոսում է. . .
4. Այրին, նայելով երկրորդ որդուն, որ մի կատաղի հայացք էր գցել իր վրա, ասաց, որ . . .
5. Ծերունին, ինչպես երևում էր, մտքի թելը չկտրելու համար սկսեց տենդորեն լրացնել նախադասությունը մինչև. . .
6. Այսօր եթե ինձ հարցնեն, թե ինչ է հարստությունը, կասեմ, որ դա. . .
7. Թե որքան խոր մենակության մեջ էր նա թաղել ինքն իրեն, անշուշտ, իմացա միայն այն բանից հետո, երբ. . .
8. Գարնանային գիշերն արդեն կիսվել էր, իսկ ես, պատուհանի մոտ նստած, դեռ շարունակում էի. . .
9. Ամեն անգամ օտար երկրներում շրջագայելիս նոր աշխարհներ տեսնելու հաճույքի հետ զգում եմ նաև. . .
10. Հայոց երկնքում կապույտ լռության մեջ արծաթացուլ ձյունագագաթներով երկնածիգ լեռներն են սուզված, իսկ օտար երկինքներում. . .

**Exercise 5.** Students repeat the sentences after the teacher (each student has their own one). When the last extended sentence is heard they may check whether they have memorized the whole sentence:

- 1. Լինում է, չի լինում մի փոքր, բայց Կախարդական երկիր է լինում
- 2. Լինում է, չի լինում մի փոքր, բայց Կախարդական երկիր է լինում, անունը՝ Այգ:
- 3. Լինում է, չի լինում մի փոքր, բայց Կախարդական երկիր է լինում, անունը՝ Այգ, որը հազար հրաբուխներ, հազար ջրհեղեղներ և հազար Դևեր փորձել են քարուքանդ անել:
- 1. Էյֆելյան աշտարակի գաղափարը ծնվել է որպես Ֆրանսիայի մուտք՝
- 2. Էյֆելյան աշտարակի գաղափարը ծնվել է որպես Ֆրանսիայի մուտք՝ ցուցադրելու արհեստը և տեխնիկական կարողությունները



- Որովհետև միաբանությամբ չենք վարվում, — պատասխանեց մեկը:
  - 2. Մի անգամ աստղերը հավաքվեցին, և նրանցից ամենաձերերն ասացին:
    - Մենք բազում ենք ու շատ: Ուրեմն ինչու՞ չենք կարողանում լուսավորել ցերեկն ու գիշերը արեգակի և լուսնի նման:
  - Որովհետև միաբանությամբ չենք վարվում, — պատասխանեց մեկը:
    - Եվ որոշեցին, նախ, հալածել ու փախցնել արեգակին: Միայն թե, երբ լուսինը ծագեց, հաղթվելով նրանից՝ աստղերն ասացին:
      - 3. Մի անգամ աստղերը հավաքվեցին, և նրանցից ամենաձերերն ասացին:
        - Մենք բազում ենք ու շատ: Ուրեմն ինչու՞ չենք կարողանում լուսավորել ցերեկն ու գիշերը արեգակի և լուսնի նման:
      - Որովհետև միաբանությամբ չենք վարվում, — պատասխանեց մեկը:
        - Եվ որոշեցին, նախ, հալածել ու փախցնել արեգակին: Միայն թե, երբ լուսինը ծագեց, հաղթվելով նրանից՝ աստղերն ասացին:
          - Եթե մենք լուսնի լույսից այսպես աղոտացանք, ապա ի՞նչ կլինենք, եթե արևը ծագի:
            - Զղջացին աստղերը և խոստովանեցին իրենց պարտությունը:

**Exercise 6.** Students compress the given information in Armenian. When they are well-trained, they are instructed to translate into English the whole, as well as the compressed variant:

1. Ամեն անգամ Այգը նորից դուրս է եկել խավարից, ծլել-ծաղկել է՝ կարծես մի անմահական պարտեզ, և նորից շարունակել է Անմահական պտուղներ տալ, որտեղից անմահական ջուր և անմահական պտուղ տանելու գալիս էին աշխարհի ամենահեռավոր վայրերից՝ թագավորներին, թագուհիներին, իսկ երբեմն էլ՝ ամբողջ թագավորություններ փրկելու համար:
2. Այգ երկրի հնագույն Ավագանի մոտ էր ապրում Հալիվորը, ով ազատ ժամանակ ճակատագրեր էր գրում, դեռևս իրեն չճանաչող ճամփորդներին երազներ էր ուղարկում, ապագան էր նայում Ավագանի մեջ և երբեմն էլ թեյ խմում Աստծո հետ:
3. Մի անգամ իր տնակի դռան բռնակը փոխելուց հետո Հալիվորը գնաց Ավագանի մոտ՝ դրանից դուրս թափվող ջրով լվացվելու, և կռացած ձեռքերն էր լվանում, երբ հանկարծ ապագան ցույց տվող Ավագանի մեջ նկատեց իրեն քաջ ծանոթ Չարբահար Քամուն՝ Հավերժական Ճոճանակի մեջ անշարժացած:
4. Հալիվորը գիտեր, որ անշարժանալ կարող է հոսող գետը, վերևից ցած ընկնող գինով լի բաժակը և անգամ Աստծուն նամակ տանող Սև Ագռավը, բայց Հավերժական Ճոճանակն ու Չարբահար Քամին՝ երբեք, քանի որ շարժումը նրանց բնույթն էր, նրանց էությունը:
5. Սյունիքի մարզում՝ Տաթև և Որոտան գետերի կիրճերի միջև ձգվում է եռանկյունաձև ժայռեղեն մի թերակղզի, որի վրա կառուցված է Տաթևի վանքը, որի տեղն ու դիրքը տեսնողին ստիպում են ևս մեկ անգամ հիշել, որ մեր հայրենիքի հին ու հնագույն հոգևոր ոչ մի կառույց պատահական տեղում չի ստեղծվել:

### Conclusion

Thus, memory, like any other skill, needs daily practice and hard work. It is an indivisible part of any interpreter's life improving their performance and enhancing the quality of interpreting. Different mnemonic techniques provide the interpreter with improved memory, quick reaction while understanding and recalling the information. The exercises on snowball, syntactic expansion and speech compression are of great significance both at the stage of passing to the simultaneous translation and at the stage of learning consecutive translation, since it is really essential and urgent for the interpreter to be able to rapidly analyze the information, process it due to the principle of

significance – basic and additional, to express the main idea of the utterance in the maximum compressed form. They help to remember the sense of the speech and the logical ties within it.

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