STRATEGIES OF THE SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETER IN ENGLISH RUSSIAN INTERPRETATION

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Abstract: This article examines the principal strategies employed by simultaneous interpreters in the English Russian language pair. The study analyses strategies of compression, generalization, anticipation, paraphrasing, and syntactic restructuring, with particular attention to how typological differences between English and Russian shape strategy selection under severe time constraints. The article draws on established models of simultaneous interpreting — including Gile's Effort Model and Chernov's probabilistic prediction framework — and argues that effective simultaneous interpretation depends not only on bilingual competence but on the interpreter's ability to adapt strategies dynamically to the demands of the communicative situation.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting, interpreter strategies, English Russian interpretation, compression, anticipation, intercultural communication, translation transformation

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются основные стратегии, применяемые синхронными переводчиками в паре английский — русский язык. В исследовании анализируются стратегии компрессии, генерализации, антиципации, перефразирования и синтаксической перестройки, с особым вниманием к тому, как типологические различия между английским и русским языками влияют на выбор стратегии в условиях жёсткого временного ограничения. Статья опирается на устоявшиеся модели синхронного перевода — в том числе на модель усилий Жиля и модель вероятностного прогнозирования Чернова — и доказывает, что эффективность синхронного перевода определяется не только билингвальной компетенцией переводчика, но и его способностью гибко адаптировать стратегии в соответствии с требованиями коммуникативной ситуации.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz-rus til juftligida ishlaydigan sinxron tarjimonlar qo'llaydigan asosiy strategiyalar ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqotda kompressiya, umumlashtirish, antitsipatsiya, qayta ifodalash va sintaktik qayta qurish strategiyalari tahlil qilinadi; bunda ingliz va rus tillari o'rtasidagi tipologik farqlarning qattiq vaqt cheklovlari sharoitida strategiya tanlashga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishi alohida e'tibor bilan o'rganiladi. Maqola sinxron tarjimaning mavjud modellariga — xususan, Jilning sa'y-harakat modeli va Chernovning ehtimoliy bashorat qilish nazariyasiga —tayanadi hamda sinxron tarjimaning samaradorligi faqat ikki tilli kompetensiyaga emas, balki tarjimonning kommunikativ vaziyat talablariga muvofiq strategiyalarni moslashuvchan tarzda qo'llay olish qobiliyatiga bog'liqligini asoslaydi.

I. Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) is widely regarded as one of the most cognitively demanding forms of professional language activity. Unlike consecutive interpreting, SI requires the interpreter to listen to and comprehend the source-language message while simultaneously producing its equivalent in the target language — two complex linguistic operations that must proceed in parallel, with virtually no temporal gap [Chernov, 2007]. The result is an extreme cognitive load that leaves little room for deliberate decision-making.

The English-Russian language pair presents a particularly rich field of inquiry for interpreting researchers. English is an analytic language with a relatively fixed word order and minimal inflectional morphology; Russian is a synthetic language characterised by an elaborate system of inflections and comparatively free word order. These typological differences generate specific challenges in SI and exert a decisive influence on the strategies an interpreter may choose at any given moment [Visson, 2007].

The aim of this article is to systematise and describe the core strategies used by simultaneous interpreters working in the English-Russian direction, and to examine the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural factors that govern strategy selection in live interpretation. The analysis draws on the theoretical frameworks of Gile [1995], Chernov [1987, 2007], Seleskovitch and Lederer [1984], and Pöchhacker [2004].

II. Theoretical Background

The concept of interpreter strategy has been approached from several theoretical perspectives. In the broadest sense, a strategy in SI may be defined as a conscious or automatised plan of action directed at resolving a specific translation problem within the constraints of the simultaneous mode [Gile, 1995]. What distinguishes SI strategies from those of other translation forms is their real-time, non-revisable character: the interpreter cannot pause, review, or correct without disrupting the communicative event.

Daniel Gile's Effort Model [1995] provides one of the most influential frameworks for understanding why strategies are necessary in SI. The model proposes that an interpreter allocates finite cognitive resources across three simultaneous efforts: Listening and Analysis, Production, and Memory. When the combined processing demand of these efforts approaches or exceeds available capacity — as frequently occurs with dense or fast-paced source speech — the interpreter must deploy compensatory strategies to reduce load without critical loss of meaning.

Ghelly Chernov's probabilistic prediction theory [1987] offers a complementary perspective. Chernov argues that an experienced interpreter does not wait passively for each unit of source-language input but actively anticipates the likely continuation of the utterance on the basis of semantic, syntactic, and situational cues. This predictive capacity is especially important in English-to-Russian SI, where the gram-

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matical structures of the two languages diverge significantly enough to make a purely sequential, word-by-word rendering practically impossible.

The Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT) developed by Seleskovitch and Lederer [1984] at the Paris School (ESIT) proposes that interpreting is fundamentally an act of sense extraction and re-expression rather than linguistic transcoding. According to this view, the interpreter first constructs a non-verbal "sense" from the source message, then reformulates it in the target language. This framework underlies strategies such as paraphrasing and cultural adaptation, which prioritise communicative equivalence over formal correspondence.

III. Core Strategies in English-Russian Simultaneous Interpreting

A. Compression and Omission

Compression is arguably the most frequently deployed strategy in SI. It consists of condensing the source-language message while preserving its essential communicative content. In the English-Russian pair, compression is structurally motivated: a Russian rendering of an English text is typically 15–20% longer due to the morphological elaborateness of Russian word forms, case endings, and verb aspect [Visson, 2007]. If the interpreter attempts a structurally faithful rendering at natural speech tempo, they will inevitably fall behind the speaker.

Omission, a more radical form of compression, involves the deliberate deletion of elements judged redundant or recoverable from context. Hedging devices, rhetorical repetitions, and phatic expressions are common candidates for omission. For example, a phrase such as "As I have previously mentioned, and as the data clearly show..." may be rendered simply as "Как показывают данные..." without any loss of propositional content.

B. Generalisation and Specification

Generalisation involves replacing a specific concept in the source language with a broader category in the target language. Interpreters resort to this strategy when a precise equivalent is not immediately retrievable from working memory, or when a fully accurate rendering would require an explanatory aside incompatible with the pace of the source speech. A highly technical term, for instance, may be rendered by its superordinate concept with acceptable loss of precision in non-specialist contexts.

Specification works in the opposite direction and is particularly relevant in English-to-Russian translation. English contains a large inventory of semantically broad, high-frequency verbs — make, get, have, do, take — that require lexically specific Russian equivalents. The interpreter must select the appropriate Russian verb rapidly, drawing on contextual and collocational knowledge. This demand for lexical precision is a distinctive challenge of this language direction [Komissarov, 1990].

C. Anticipation and Probabilistic Prediction

Anticipation is a strategy unique to the simultaneous mode. Because the English predicate typically follows closely after the subject, the interpreter receives the semantic key to the utterance early in the sentence and can begin producing the Russian equivalent before the English source sentence is complete. This is not guesswork but principled prediction informed by discourse structure, topic knowledge, and speaker style [Chernov, 1987].

The importance of anticipation is magnified by the structural divergence of the two languages. English non-finite constructions, post-modifying participial phrases, and right-branching relative clauses often deliver crucial information at the end of the sentence — precisely the position the interpreter may not be able to wait for without creating an unacceptable lag. Correct anticipation allows the interpreter to produce fluent, natural Russian output; an erroneous prediction forces a mid-stream correction that may be difficult to execute without noticeable disruption.

D. Paraphrasing and Cultural Adaptation

Paraphrasing is employed whenever a structurally direct equivalent is unavailable or would produce an unnatural target-language utterance. Idiomatic expressions are a primary trigger: English idioms such as "to bite the bullet," "to get the ball rolling," or "to read between the lines" have no structurally analogous forms in Russian and must be rendered through meaning-equivalent expressions or brief explanatory phrases.

Cultural adaptation, a related strategy, involves replacing a source-language cultural referent with a functionally equivalent target-language concept. References to institutions, social practices, or cultural phenomena that are transparent to an English-speaking audience may be opaque to Russian listeners, and vice versa. The interpreter must make an instant decision about whether to adapt, transliterate, or briefly explain — a decision that has direct implications for communicative effectiveness [Ter-Minasova, 2000].

E. Syntactic Restructuring and Segmentation

The typological distance between English and Russian makes syntactic restructuring one of the most frequently required strategies in this language pair. English favours nominalisation — the conversion of verbal or adjectival concepts into noun phrases — which is a dominant feature of formal and academic discourse. Russian, by contrast, tends toward verbal constructions, and a literal rendering of English nominalisations often produces stilted, unnatural Russian. The interpreter must "unpack" these noun-heavy structures into fluid Russian sentences in real time [Shveitser, 1988].

Segmentation involves breaking a long, syntactically complex English sentence into two or more shorter Russian utterances. This reduces the memory load associated with holding an incomplete syntactic frame in working memory while simultaneously producing output, and is consistent with Gile's recommendation to simplify processing whenever total effort demand threatens to exceed available capacity [Gile, 1995].

IV. Factors Governing Strategy Selection

Strategy selection in simultaneous interpreting is not arbitrary but is shaped by a convergence of objective and subjective factors. On the objective side, the most significant variables are the speaker's rate of delivery, information density, discourse type (political, scientific, legal, business), and the degree of subject-matter specialization. A fast speaker de-

livering dense technical content places maximum demand on the interpreter's resources and forces more frequent recourse to compression, generalization, and segmentation.

On the subjective side, the interpreter's prior knowledge of the topic, familiarity with the speaker's style, and accumulated experience in the language pair are decisive. An interpreter with deep subject-matter expertise can anticipate more reliably, retrieve technical equivalents more rapidly, and tolerate higher information density without quality loss. Conversely, in unfamiliar domains, the interpreter will rely more heavily on generalisation and paraphrase [Pöchhacker, 2004].

The direction of interpretation also matters. English-to-Russian is generally considered more demanding than Russian-to-English because the interpreter is processing input in a foreign language while producing output in the native language. The syntactic divergences described above — particularly the late delivery of predicates and modifiers in English complex sentences — are felt most acutely in this direction [Visson, 2007].

Finally, the cultural dimension cannot be separated from the linguistic. English and Russian carry distinct cultural frameworks, and the interpreter operates at the intersection of two communicative traditions. The ability to recognise culturally-loaded language — allusions, humour, understatement, register-specific conventions — and to resolve it rapidly is as important as grammatical competence, and constitutes a core element of professional interpreting skill [Seleskovitch, Lederer, 1984].

V. Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that the strategies of the simultaneous interpreter form a coherent, cognitively motivated system rather than an ad hoc collection of techniques. In the English-Russian language pair, the typological distance between the two languages makes this system especially complex: the interpreter must manage not only the cognitive demands of the simultaneous mode but also the structural asymmetries of two grammatically distinct languages and the cultural asymmetries of two distinct communicative traditions.

Compression, generalisation, anticipation, paraphrasing, and syntactic restructuring each serve a specific function within the interpreter's cognitive economy. Their effective deployment — calibrated to the demands of the specific communicative event — is what distinguishes competent simultaneous interpreting from mere bilingual relay. Further empirical research, including corpus-based analysis of authentic English-Russian interpreted output, would allow for a more granular description of how these strategies are distributed across different discourse types and speaker profiles.

This study contributes to the broader dissertation research on the linguistic and cultural aspects of simultaneous interpreting based on English-Russian material, providing a theoretical and descriptive foundation for the subsequent empirical chapters of that work.

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