

THE ROLE OF MNEMONICS IN INTERPRETING: A CASE STUDY IN ARMENIA

Lusine Tonoyan¹, Heghine Isahakyan²

^{1,2}PhD, ¹Assistant Professor, ²Associate Professor
M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak
Gyumri, Armenia

Abstract: This paper studies the crucial role of mnemonic techniques in conference interpreting. In written and oral translation both the perception and the exchange of information are more complex compared to communication with a single language. Interpreters serve as mediators in the communicative process; they do not actively engage in the interaction. Thus, interpreters are definitely recognized for their objectivity and impartiality.

One of the most significant challenges faced by interpreters is delivering the message accurately. This task goes beyond merely converting the source language into the target language; it involves a deeper level of understanding. In both translation and interpretation, the primary focus must be on conveying the message without personal bias. Hence, a well-developed memory is of utmost importance for interpreters. Memory training exercises are by all means highly effective and beneficial for the interpreters.

Keywords: conference interpreting, mnemonics, memory tools, switching

I. INTRODUCTION

In the world of globalization, the relationship between countries has become really tight, which has increased the role of translators.

“The translator’s task is to convey the content of the original text holistically and accurately by means of another language, preserving its stylistic and expressive features. Unlike a retelling, a translation must convey not only what is expressed in the original, but also the way it is expressed in it. This requirement applies both to the entire translation of the text as a whole, and to its individual parts” (Рейкер, 1974:7).

According to N.K. Garbovskij (2007), a translator is a person who is multilingual and can speak to two cultures concurrently. They are sometimes referred to as “the servant of two masters,” however this description is not objectionable if the translator is serving two different cultures. Translation is a specific instance of bilingualism, according to J. Moonen (Cf. Гарбовский, 2007). Both languages are used and present simultaneously in the speech act during the translation process. With his left foot in one nation and his right in another, the translator in the process of translating takes on the appearance of a character from the classic French-Italian movie “The Law is the Law.”

Every aspect of a communicative act involving translation is far more intricate than in a typical one-language conversation. The communicative act is twofold in many aspects. The translator, who is at the center of this communication act, alternates between sending and receiving speech and changing the format of the message on a regular basis. The definition of translation is an interlingual transformation process.

V. Larbaud believes, a true translator certainly combines the most valuable and rare human qualities: extensive knowledge, rich and agile memory, self-denial and patience, scrupulous honesty and intelligence (Larbaud, 1946).

N.K. Garbovskij (2007) rightly asserts, if someone has made a sincere decision to translate and does not already possess any of these traits, they can be acquired during the translation process. To truly become a master of the complex art of translation, we must first familiarize ourselves with the work that our forebears did for at least two millennia—that is, during the time for which at least some documentation has survived in the annals of translation history. First and foremost, the experiences of our forebears enable us to recognize the close relationship between translation work and society as a whole, as well as the function of translation in the advancement of civilization. (Гарбовский, 2007:14).

II. METHODS

In this study the following methods are implemented: qualitative and quantitative research analysis, as well as the method of comparative study.

III.DISCUSSION MNEMONIC TECHNIQUES

Undoubtedly, the operative memory plays a crucial role for interpreters as it enables them to retain lengthy passages of text or other data until they need to reproduce them in a different language. Interpreters can enhance their memory skills by employing several memory strategies. Among these strategies are chunking, association, mnemonics, visualization, and repetition. You can remember knowledge more readily if you can visualize it. Chunking is the process of dividing voluminous data into manageable, comprehensible, and smaller pieces. Association is a method for establishing links between new and preexisting knowledge. The focus of this article is on mnemonics and repetition as two very powerful memory-training strategies. One can train and perform mnemonic exercises and repetition drills to assist expand one's operative memory (Tonoyan & Isahakyan, 2023). Very often interpreters have to remember a wide range of information - numbers, dates, names, titles - which cannot be restored from the context. The information needs a quick and exact interpretation into the target language. That is why great attention should be paid to logical memory organization and associative memory, as well as the memory not based on logic and the non-associative one. The interpreter is expected to switch quickly from one language to another one both perceiving on the one hand and producing on the other hand, i.e., encoding and decoding information while dealing with the source language and the target language. Several exercises presented below are essential for memory development and improvement and they definitely create a crucial base for simultaneous or consecutive translation. We can start with simple and easy repetition drills and go ahead with more difficult ones for memory training. There is a very important key point here to be taken into account – every task must be implemented without anything written or without note-taking.

- The task put forth first deals with numbers, rows of numbers and logical operations.
- Rows of numbers are read in the source language and correspondingly repeated after the reader without breaking the sequence and the same training is carried out in the target language. This drill begins with one- or two-digit numbers. The rows might be added according to training time or some other factors:

1.	0	7	9	3
2.	11	2	5	1
3.	2	4	3	7
4.	5	8	1	3
5.	12	7	0	10

- The task becomes more complicated by practicing two-digit numbers only or two- or three-digit numbers or mixed ones:

1.	13	30	19	31	1.	8	75	14	28
2.	11	25	52	44	2.	62	30	222	40
3.	22	46	17	71	3.	18	24	9	111
4.	54	25	11	34	4.	25	455	300	16
5.	12	19	69	99	5.	0	50	500	15

As to English the following is to be highlighted while practicing this memory improving technique with numbers: the attention must be concentrated on the pronunciation of the numerals ending in -teen and -ty.

- The next stage can be performed in even a more complicated variant than the previous one. The rows of numbers are read in the source language and correspondingly repeated by:
 - a. adding 1;
 - b. subtracting 1;
 - c. adding 10;
 - d. subtracting 10, etc.

After training the rows of numbers in the source language the technique of switching is implemented. The first number is read in the source language, the second in the target language, the third in the source language again, the next in the target one and so forth. After several trainings the numbers should be read without pauses and at a high speed. The more the rows of numbers are trained the faster the tempo is. The tasks are done until the pace is super-fast. It can be achieved by hard everyday training.

When the training with numbers is achieved in a sufficient and reasonable way, it is time to pass to the words. Repetition drills are carried out in the same way as with numbers, however this time the target tools are the words.

- The next tasks involve words, sequences of words combined with numbers and logical operations.
- Words from various categories are read aloud in English and then repeated by the listener, maintaining the order. This same exercise is also conducted in Armenian. The sequences can begin with simpler, shorter, and more commonly used words (as in Group A) and gradually progress to include longer and more complex words. (as in B):

- A)
- | | | | | |
|----|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| 1. | rug | desk | chair | shelf |
| 2. | doctor | teacher | dentist | cook |
| 3. | pear | cherry | banana | kiwi |
| 4. | road | path | way | street |
| 5. | baseball | basketball | football | volleyball |

- | | | | | |
|----|---------|----------|---------|-----------|
| 1. | գիրք | քանոն | նետին | սրիչ |
| 2. | հայերեն | ռուսերեն | չինարեն | ճապոներեն |
| 3. | սմբուկ | լոլիկ | վարունգ | պղպեղ |
| 4. | գլխարկ | զգեստ | տաբատ | գուլպա |
| 5. | արջ | աղվես | առյուծ | գայլ |

- B)
- | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. | spectacular | mesmerizing | brehtaking | majestic |
| 2. | harrowing | horrendous | appalling | hideous |
| 3. | exemplary | exquisite | consummate | impeccable |
| 4. | enormity | depravity | monstrosity | atrocious |
| 5. | subtraction | addition | division | multiplication |

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|----|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | չնաշխարհիկ | գեղատեսիլ | դյուրիշ | անզուգական |
| 2. | ուզեղաղեն | հրեշաղեն | անճոռնի | անբարեստես |
| 3. | սարսափել | զարհուրել | երկյուղել | սահմոյել |
| 4. | հանդուգն | անվեհեր | սրտապինդ | առյուծասիրտ |
| 5. | ջատագովել | տարփողել | ներբողել | բարեբանել |

- The following task involves reading rows of words and then repeating them while identifying the odd word in each row. This exercise is also conducted in Armenian:

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. | oak | palm | tulip | birch |
| 2. | eagle | cat | pelican | crow |
| 3. | bathroom | bath | soap | brush |
| 4. | fox | bear | pig | wolf |
| 5. | shelter | mansion | building | lane |

- | | | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. | կեչի | կաղնի | կակաչ | կենի |
| 2. | ծիծեռնակ | առյուծ | ագռավ | արագիլ |
| 3. | պահարան | խոհանոց | լոգարան | ննջասենյակ |
| 4. | ծիրան | դդմիկ | նուռ | կեռաս |
| 5. | գրիչ | զագոջախ | մատիտ | թուղթ |

- The next task involves repeating lines of words and adding one word related to the topic. This exercise is also conducted in Armenian:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | computer, xerox, fax, _____ (cell phone) |
| 2. | China, Japan, Thailand, _____ (India) |
| 3. | trousers, jeans, pants, _____ (shorts) |
| 4. | chemist, physicist, pharmacist, _____ (biologist) |
| 5. | comedy, romcom, horror, _____ (western) |
-
- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | աշխույժ, գվարթ, ուրախ, _____ (առույգ) |
| 2. | դուռ, պատուհան, պատ, _____ (կամար) |
| 3. | ճայ, բու, ճնճուկ, _____ (սարյակ) |
| 4. | Երևան, Գյումրի, Լոնդոն, _____ (Փարիզ) |
| 5. | զնացք, ավտոբուս, հեծանիվ, _____ (ավտոմեքենա) |

The repetition training of word sequences in English and Armenian is followed by switching, as in the case of numbers illustrated above.

- The lines of words are translated into Armenian:

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|
| 1. | bridge | road | crossroad | highway |
| 2. | pineapple | mango | strawberry | raspberry |
| 3. | Beijing | France | Japan | Spain |

4.	fork	plate	spoon	knife
5.	cousin	nephew	niece	stepsister

- The lines of words are translated into English:

1.	ծունկ	սոնաթաթ	արմունկ	վիզ
2.	հեռուստացույց	ռադիո	համակարգիչ	գարթուցիչ
3.	բրինձ	սսպ	լոբի	ձավար
4.	գայրույթ	վախ	տխրություն	ուրախություն
5.	կարմիր	սև	նարնջագույն	սևեգույն

- The sequences of words are read aloud in English and then repeated by the listener adding one more word related to the topic switching into Armenian. The same exercise is carried out in Armenian - the sequences of words are read aloud in Armenian and then repeated by the listener adding one more word on the related topic switching into English:

- turn up, turn down, turn on, _____
 - newspaper, tabloid, article, _____
 - mouse, screen, button, _____
 - silver, gold, steel, _____
 - sun, moon, star, _____
-
- կացին, մուրջ, մեխ, _____
 - տաճար, եկեղեցի, վանք _____
 - տիեզերագնաց, հրթիռ, ձգողականություն, _____
 - արվեստ, երաժշտություն, կինո, _____
 - կետ, դեֆին, ձուկ, _____

Such preparatory training, conducted separately with numbers and words, is followed by sequences of word combinations consisting of both a numeral and a noun:

- The sequences of word combinations are repeated in English. Then the same task is carried out in Armenian. After several trainings in English and Armenian the tasks are trained by switching into the target language, as well as into the source language:

1.	9 tulips	20 roses	16 daisies
2.	16 cars	71 trains	6 plains
3.	308 days	45 months	24 weeks
4.	34 seconds	82 minutes	60 hours
5.	21 houses	56 apartments	17 cottages

1.	14 գիրք	20 մատիտ	5 թերթ
2.	8 բանան	15 խնձոր	10 նարինջ
3.	102 նստարան	63 կամուրջ	9 թունել
4.	10 կենդանի	82 սողուն	63 թռչուն
5.	35 դպրոց	7 հիվանդանոց	2 խանութ

IV. CONCLUSION

For interpreters, it is very important and it is even a rule to finish a sentence begun. They must be proficient language users. They must possess such skills as to be able to transform the message from the source language into the target one, in this case study from English into Armenian and on the contrary. Memory development tools are very helpful for the interpreters to learn and to recall the information. They also assist in retaining information sequentially. Through appropriately designed exercises, interpreters can develop memory skills that are essential for effective conference interpreting. With a well-trained working memory, interpreters have an effective tool for encoding and decoding information. Mnemonic tools enable interpreters to recall large amounts of information that would otherwise be challenging to remember.

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