

NORMS OF USING COMPRESSION IN THE SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING PROCESS

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Abstract. Simultaneous interpreting is one of the most complex forms of translation, requiring interpreters to process and reproduce speech in real time. Because interpreters work under strict time constraints and high cognitive pressure, they often rely on specific interpreting strategies to manage information efficiently. One of the most important strategies used in simultaneous interpreting is compression. Compression refers to the process of reducing the length of the source speech while preserving its essential meaning in the target language.

Keywords: simultaneous interpreting, compression strategy, interpreting norms, discourse processing, interpreter competence.

Introduction. In multilingual communication environments such as international conferences, diplomatic negotiations, and global organizations, simultaneous interpreting plays a crucial role in facilitating communication between speakers of different languages. Simultaneous interpreting involves listening to the source speech and producing the translation in the target language almost at the same time.

This process is extremely demanding because interpreters must perform several tasks simultaneously, including listening, analyzing, remembering, and speaking. Due to these cognitive challenges, interpreters often use various strategies to manage the flow of information effectively. One of the most widely used strategies in simultaneous interpreting is compression.

Compression refers to the process of reducing the length of the source speech while maintaining the essential meaning of the message. This strategy helps interpreters cope with time pressure, complex sentence structures, and rapid speech



delivery. However, compression must be applied carefully to avoid loss of important information.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the norms governing the use of compression in simultaneous interpreting. The paper examines when compression is appropriate, what types of information can be compressed, and how interpreters maintain accuracy while shortening the speech.

Research in interpreting studies has identified several cognitive and linguistic factors that influence the interpreting process. One of the most influential theoretical frameworks is the Effort Model developed by Daniel Gile. According to this model, simultaneous interpreting involves several efforts, including listening and analysis, memory, speech production, and coordination. Because interpreters have limited cognitive resources, strategies such as compression help reduce cognitive load.

Another important perspective comes from the Interpretive Theory of Translation proposed by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer. This theory emphasizes that interpreters focus on conveying the meaning of the message rather than translating every word. Compression is consistent with this approach because it allows interpreters to express the core meaning of the speech in a more concise form.

In addition, discourse analysis research, particularly the work of Teun A. van Dijk, highlights the importance of understanding the overall structure of a speech. Interpreters who recognize the main ideas and discourse structure can apply compression more effectively without losing essential information.

Compression is a strategy that allows interpreters to shorten the source message while preserving its meaning. In many languages, the same idea can be expressed using fewer words or simpler grammatical structures.

In simultaneous interpreting, compression occurs naturally because interpreters must manage time pressure and cognitive limitations. Speakers may use long and complex sentences, repetitions, or redundant expressions. By compressing such elements, interpreters can maintain the flow of interpretation.



Compression may involve several linguistic techniques, including:

- omission of redundant information
- simplification of complex sentence structures
- use of shorter lexical expressions
- summarization of repetitive elements

The main goal of compression is not to reduce information arbitrarily but to ensure that the interpreted message remains clear and meaningful.

Although compression is a common strategy in simultaneous interpreting, it must follow certain norms to maintain accuracy and communicative effectiveness.

The most important norm is that compression must not change the meaning of the message. Interpreters must ensure that the essential information and the speaker's intention are preserved.

Interpreters should focus on conveying the most important ideas in the speech. Less relevant details, repetitions, or filler expressions may be reduced or omitted.

The compressed version of the speech should sound natural in the target language. Interpreters should avoid unnatural or fragmented expressions.

Types of Compression in Simultaneous Interpreting

Researchers have identified several types of compression that interpreters may use.

a) Lexical Compression

This type involves replacing long expressions with shorter equivalents.

Example:

“a large number of people” → “many people”

b) Syntactic Compression

Interpreters may simplify complex grammatical structures.

Example:

“The measures that have been implemented by the government” → “government measures”

c) Discourse Compression



In some cases, interpreters summarize larger segments of speech while maintaining the main idea.

Example:

A long explanation may be summarized into a concise statement.

Compression provides several benefits in simultaneous interpreting.

First, it helps interpreters manage time pressure by reducing the length of the message.

Second, it helps reduce “cognitive load”, allowing interpreters to focus on the most important information.

Third, compression improves “fluency and clarity”, especially when the source speech contains redundant or repetitive elements.

Finally, compression allows interpreters to maintain a “balanced ear–voice span”, preventing the delay between listening and speaking from becoming too long.

Although compression is a useful strategy, it also involves certain risks. If applied incorrectly, compression may lead to loss of important information or distortion of the speaker’s message.

One challenge is determining which elements of the speech are essential and which can be omitted. This requires strong discourse comprehension and subject knowledge.

Another risk is excessive compression. If interpreters shorten the message too much, the audience may miss important details or nuances.

Therefore, interpreters must carefully balance conciseness with accuracy.

Conclusion. Compression is an essential strategy in the simultaneous interpreting process. It enables interpreters to manage time pressure, cognitive load, and complex discourse structures while maintaining effective communication.

The analysis presented in this paper demonstrates that compression must follow specific norms, including preservation of meaning, relevance of information, clarity, and linguistic naturalness. When applied appropriately, compression helps interpreters deliver accurate and fluent interpretations.



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