
FUNDAMENTALS
OF COURT
INTERPRETATION

THEORY, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

SECOND EDITION

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Chapter 35

Consecutive Interpretation

Consecutive interpreting (CI) is the oldest form of interpreting, but professional interpreters consider it the most difficult mode (see Section 1). Seleskovitch (1978a) calls CI “perhaps the most noble of all types of interpretation” (p. vi). This chapter provides an overview of the skill of CI and its application in the judicial setting. Section 1 presents a definition of CI, Section 2 presents the skills required, and Section 3 concludes with recommendations for developing and improving those skills.

1. Definition

In CI, the interpreter waits until the speaker has finished the source language (SL) message before rendering it into the target language (TL). The SL message may last anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes, and the rate of speed and density of discourse vary with each speaker and subject matter (Agrifoglio, 2004; Viezzi, 1993). CI involves complex mental tasks of language perception, storage, retrieval, and generation, as described in the section on human information processing in Chapter 33. Because of this complexity, many interpreters consider CI more difficult than simultaneous interpretation (SI).

Until the early 1940s, CI was the only mode of interpreting used, except experimentally (Baigorri-Jalón, 2000). Due to technological innovations, SI came into use after World War II, and CI has become less frequent in conference interpreting. Seleskovitch (1978a) cites statistics indicating that CI constitutes only 10% of the interpreting performed at international conferences, primarily those involving just two languages. Gile (2001) also asserts that “consecutive is gradually disappearing from the market,” although there are interpreters who dispute that. Gile himself qualifies his assertion when he goes on to note: “This claim is made mostly in Western Europe; in other markets, and in particular in Asia and in Eastern Europe, consecutive seems to be as lively as ever, due to its distinct advantages over simultaneous (less costly, less cumbersome in terms of equipment, more flexible over time and space)” (n.p.). Thus, CI still has specific uses, particularly in court interpreting, but also in international gatherings as well. For more information on the use of CI in court interpreting and the comparative advantages over SI, see Chapter 19. Weber (1984) states that CI is used in conferences whenever a high degree of accuracy is required, and “when participants in a meeting find it useful to have additional time for reflection during interpretation” (p. 34). This is because, as Seleskovitch (1978a) notes, in CI “the interpreter has the advantage of knowing the line of argument before he interprets,” although she cautions that “few activities require such concentration or cause such fatigue” (p. 31). More recently, Russell (2002, 2005) has conducted research specifically contrasting CI and SI in the court setting and has concluded that CI is more accurate.

As with SI, there is a major difference between the CI employed by court interpreters and that employed by conference interpreters. Conference interpreters generally wait until the speaker has gone on for several minutes (though Kalina, 2002, reports that in many markets CI is now performed phrase by phrase rather than in long segments) and do not render a verbatim version of the message in the TL. They often condense or edit the message, eliminating paralinguistic elements such as pauses and hedges, and may actually make it sound more coherent, succinct, and smoother than the original. Court interpreters, however, must not omit a single element of meaning, whether verbal or non-verbal. In court interpreting, CI is used primarily for testimony given on the witness stand or in depositions, and for questioning the defendant by the judge (at arraignment, sentencing, or similar situations). A question is asked in English, the interpreter renders it in the witness' language, the witness gives an answer in that language, the interpreter renders that answer in English, and so on. Because the interpreter represents the voice of the defendant to the court and vice versa, it is imperative for the interpreter to capture every element of the SL message and transfer it as wholly and faithfully as humanly possible. This is the challenge of consecutive interpretation in the legal setting. Any distortion of style, meaning, disorganization, or nonfluency in delivery will negatively impact the credibility of the witness and the effectiveness of the speaker (Berk-Seligson, 2002a; Hale, 2004; McCroskey & Mehrley, 1969; O'Barr, 1982; see Chapter 19).

2. Skills Required

Bowen and Bowen (1980) describe CI as having the following components: (1) discourse in the SL, (2) understanding and analyzing this discourse, and (3) reconstituting it in the TL. Thus, the interpreter perceives the SL message, processes it for meaning, and generates a TL version of the message, and, as Garretson (1981) points out, the "psychological" aspects of consecutive interpretation require the intensive use of memory. A number of specific skills are involved in this process: listening, prediction, memory, notetaking, and situational control. Gile (1995) provides additional insight into the CI process in his Effort Model. He points out that there is a lag:

Between the moment the information is heard and the moment it is *written down*, or between the moment it is heard and the moment the interpreter decides not to write it down, or again between the moment it is heard and the moment it disappears from memory. . . . Another point is that the Production Effort during the first phase of consecutive interpreting is associated with the *production of notes*, not with the production of structured natural language. (p. 179)

This is an important distinction, because as will be seen below, the interpreter's notes are not a verbatim record of what was said, but simply an aid to the interpreter's memory.

2.1 Listening

To be able to process the SL message accurately, the interpreter must be able to listen effectively and attend to meaning. The term "attending" is often used to describe the type of listening that interpreters engage in. The difference is that hearing is a passive process involving an involuntary reaction of the senses and the nervous system, while listening is a voluntary, conscious effort to process the input selectively. Attending is the most alert,

deliberate form of listening. It is no coincidence that we use the expression "to pay attention" in English. When we pay attention, we are giving awareness, interest, and effort in order to receive information (or comfort or entertainment, depending on the setting). Active listening is hard work, which is why we do not give our attention indiscriminately.

Listening tends to be ignored or taken for granted, however, on the assumption that there is no need to devote any effort to it. In fact, we spend 45% of our time perceiving auditory input (Weaver, 1972). Research on listening comprehension reveals that three related levels of discourse processing are involved in listening: (1) propositional identification—that is, identifying units of meaning in the message, (2) interpretation of illocutionary force—determining the speaker's intention, and (3) activation of real world knowledge—calling up the appropriate scripts or schemas (Richards, 1983). Richards describes the processes involved in listening comprehension as follows:

- (1) The type of interactional act or speech event in which the listener is involved is determined (e.g., conversation, lecture, discussion, debate).
- (2) Scripts relevant to the particular situation are recalled.
- (3) The goals of the speaker are inferred through reference to the situation, the script, and the sequential position of the utterance.
- (4) The propositional meaning of the utterance is determined.
- (5) An illocutionary meaning (the speaker's intention) is assigned to the message.
- (6) This information is retained and acted upon, and the form in which it was originally received is deleted. (p. 223)

When this model is applied to court interpreting, in step (6) the interpreter does not entirely "delete" the form of the original message, but rather retains it in memory for comparison with the TL version to ensure conservation of every element of meaning. Richards (1983) also presents a taxonomy of listening skills which includes (among others) the following abilities:

- To retain chunks of language of different lengths for short periods
- To recognize the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances
- To detect key words (i.e., those which identify topics and propositions)
- To guess the meanings of words from the contexts in which they occur
- To recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals
- To predict outcomes from events described
- To infer links and connections between events
- To deduce causes and effects from events
- To distinguish between literal and implied meanings
- To process speech at different rates
- To process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections
- To make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings. (pp. 228–229)

Abbott, Greenwood, McKeating, and Wingard (1981) note that when people listen to a message in a language other than their native tongue, it takes them longer to process the information; they are more likely to make mistakes in comprehension; it is more difficult

to predict outcome; and their memory is more heavily taxed and therefore works less efficiently. In a comprehensive review of the literature on listening, Dunkel (1985) reports research findings which suggest that subjects listening to messages in their second language have a shorter memory span and are, therefore, hindered in their processing capacity. Court interpreters must bear in mind all these factors when performing CI, as they will need to take extra precautions—more thorough notes or more concentrated listening—to compensate for these difficulties when the SL is not their dominant language.

2.2 Prediction

The notion of predicting outcome has been mentioned frequently by researchers who have studied listening comprehension, and those who have studied interpreting specifically (Gile, 1995; Lederer, 1978; Moser, 1978). One study (Abbott et al., 1981) emphasizes that:

Our task is made easier by our ability to predict what is likely to come next and our ability to select which stretches of material we will pay maximum attention to and which we need not bother too much about. (p. 61)

Just as prediction plays a major role in the ability to perform accurate and efficient SI, it plays an equally significant role in CI.

The schema that is brought to bear in human information processing, as described in Chapter 33, also plays a role in prediction. As Le Ny (1978) states:

The ordinary speaker selects the words he pronounces as a function of these pre-existing schemata. The “natural” listener also usually interprets the words he hears as a function of them, and during the discourse he anticipates the words to come as a function of these schemata. (p. 291)

Redundancy is another critical factor in understanding messages. In the example cited by Abbott et al. (1981), “she put on her gloves to keep herself warm,” the words “she,” “her,” and “herself” are redundancies; the listener could miss two of the three words and still understand the message (p. 68). During the course of a conversation, especially on the telephone, some individual words may be garbled or may not be heard, but listeners are able to understand the message anyway because of their knowledge of the context. They may not even be aware of having missed a word, for the mind automatically fills in the gap. For example, if you hear someone say, “I’m going to run out to the *smghf* to get some groceries,” the message you will get is “I’m going to run out to the store to get some groceries” because that is what you will expect to hear, based on prior experience.

Abbott et al. (1981) also emphasize how listeners pay particular attention to key words that link sentences and clauses together and suggest the next idea: “a reason (because), a contrasting statement (but, however), a result (so, therefore), an addition (also, not only that), a rephrasing (in other words, that is to say), or an example (for instance)” (p. 62). Another illustration of how listeners tend to predict outcome is cited by Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), “Mary heard the ice-cream man coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and rushed into the house” (p. 113). The listener knows that Mary is a little girl, and she is going to get money to buy ice cream, even though nothing in these two sentences says that:

This kind of intuitive leap is very common in human information processing. Abbott et al. (1981) caution, however, that:

Efficient listeners and readers never switch off completely, because they have learnt that their predictions are occasionally wrong; the unexpected sometimes

happens and we have to be prepared to modify our expectations in light of what we actually hear or read. (p. 62)

Thus, although prediction is a natural element of human communication, it poses obvious dangers to the accurate processing of messages. The individual's decision, whether conscious or unconscious, about what the message really was is affected by that person's own biases, expectations, and knowledge, and distortion can easily result. Court interpreters should be particularly aware of this phenomenon and make sure they interpret what they actually heard, not what they expected to hear.

2.3 Memory

All of the writings on CI that have been cited here (Bowen & Bowen, 1980; Gile, 1995, 2001; Ilg & Lambert, 1996; Seleskovitch, 1978a; Weber, 1984) emphasize the vital role played by memory. Indeed, Seleskovitch (1978a) states that "memory and understanding are inseparable" (p. 34). The function of memory in human information processing is discussed in detail in Chapter 33. To sum up that discussion briefly, the interpreter stores the SL message in memory and processes the message for comprehension by activating the relevant modules and schemata. These schemata contain the meanings associated with the SL terms in the message and probably the appropriate TL terms as well. Once the interpreter has formulated a proposed TL version of the message, she checks it against the SL version originally stored in memory, and if the two versions match, the interpreter utters the TL version, inserting paralinguistic elements where appropriate.

2.3.1 Strategies for Enhancing Retention

Some methods of increasing retention capacity are presented here. One of the most effective ways to improve retention and retrieval is to organize the incoming information to make it more manageable. This process of organizing is often referred to as "chunking," but some researchers (Kelly, 1979) call it "segmentation." Whatever it is called, the process involves dividing a message into meaningful units, possibly changing the sequence of ideas, to render it more understandable. Thus, to cite the example in Chapter 33 of this unit, the interpreter who hears the question, "On the night of the incident in question, Mr. Jones, what were you and the woman you say you are living with doing?" does not process the twenty-three words individually, but rather reduces them to four phrases or propositions, each of which can be remembered by means of a key word or visual image. In this way, interpreters limit the number of bits that have to be stored in memory, and relieve the burden on their limited retention capacity.

As noted earlier in this chapter, attentive listening is a key factor in this organization process. Another important element to consider is the nature of the input (coherence, density, speed of delivery, and other factors). Baddeley (1976) notes that the storage of information in short-term memory (STM) seems to rely on acoustic encoding (remembering the sounds of words), while storage in long-term memory (LTM) relies on semantic encoding (analysis of meaning). Semantic encoding allows for a greater storage capacity than acoustic encoding does. Studies have shown that when the delivery of the sensory input is rapid and the content meaningless, subjects tend to employ acoustic encoding; they focus on individual words. When the message is meaningful, semantic encoding takes place, and the data are not easily forgotten (Baddeley, 1976). Bransford and Franks (1971) found in a study of subjects' ability to recall information that the subjects

“did not store representations of particular sentences. Individual sentences lost their unique status in memory in favor of a more holistic representation of semantic events” (p. 348). Le Ny (1978) hypothesizes that expert interpreters discard nonsemantic information from their memory more quickly than noninterpreters, and that this rapid decay of nonsemantic information facilitates the processing of semantic information. To maximize their memory capacity, therefore, interpreters must pay attention to the underlying meaning of the message rather than to the individual words that comprise it. As Atwater (1981) says, “once you have begun paying attention to a verbal message, it is vital that you understand what you hear. For understanding is the key, to both listening and memory” (p. 93).

What makes the court interpreter’s job much more difficult than that of the conference interpreter is that the court interpreter cannot entirely discard nonsemantic information such as pauses and hedges, because they must be included in the TL version in order to provide a legal equivalent of the SL message. Still, focusing on the semantic information—the underlying meaning—is a valid strategy for the court interpreter because it makes more storage capacity available for nonsemantic information.

Assuming that memory is unlimited, the problem the interpreter faces is not storage capacity, but retrieval. Because so much data are stored in memory, it may take longer to find a given item. Memory is like a cross-referenced index card file: The more ways one has to index items or the more associations one has with items, the more easily they are retrieved. Or, looking at it from a different perspective, the more pathways that lead to an item, the more likely the individual will be able to take one and find what she is looking for. This is why it is so important for interpreters to analyze a message as they hear it and to organize it into meaningful units (forming associations or pathways connecting things that are already stored in memory), rather than focusing on individual words.

Wortman, Loftus, and Marshall (1988) define this type of interaction with information as “deep processing.” They postulate that memory is divided linearly into STM and LTM; information intended for long-term storage is processed differently than that which will be stored for a short time:

When people simply repeat something to themselves without considering its meaning (as they tend to do when they rehearse a telephone number), they may maintain that information in short-term memory effectively enough, but it may never become part of their long-term knowledge. In contrast, when people take a new piece of information and mentally process it—form an image of it, apply it to a problem, relate it to other things—it is more likely to be deposited in long-term storage. (p. 158)

Whether data will be successfully stored in memory depends on a number of subjective factors. People remember information better if they want to remember it, or if they know it is useful to them. For example, interpreters who do not like seafood and do not use seafood terminology are more likely to forget these terms in their working languages. It is at this level that learning takes place. To ensure that newly learned information is stored in memory, full understanding must take place at the beginning. When interpreters hear an unfamiliar word, they should ask questions about how the word is used in various contexts and look it up in various references. After determining the meaning and usage of the term, they should record it in their personal glossary or make notes next to the entry in a dictionary. When learning a new concept, such as a legal proceeding or a technical procedure, interpreters should organize the information into a logical sequence. It also helps to reinforce the storage by using the new concept or term whenever the opportunity arises.

It is important to point out that all of the senses, not just hearing, enter into the processing of spoken messages. Aural, visual, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory cues all play a role in memory, although the first three predominate. Moreover, individuals focus on different sensory stimuli, depending on their aptitudes. This is particularly true of visual and auditory perception; some people are “visualizers,” and some are “verbalizers.” Studies show, however, that although visualizers are more confident of their ability to retain and recall information, they perform the same as verbalizers on memory tests (Baddeley, 1976). Researchers have also found that visually recorded information takes longer to retrieve from memory, but also lasts longer. In addition, concrete information (facts and figures) is better retained with visual memory, while abstract information (concepts, principles, and ideas) is best remembered after being explained and understood in conversation (Atwater, 1981). For the court interpreter, it is useful to take notes (providing a visual record) of numbers and names, but copious notetaking may interfere with the understanding of more abstract information.

2.3.2 *Forgetting*

Just as important as the question of how we remember things is the question of how we forget. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a variety of subjective and objective factors determine how data is stored in memory. Once information is stored there, another factor enters the picture: time. Over time, the memory “trace” or pathway may be gradually obliterated or masked by data that is stored subsequently, if the initial data is not strongly embedded (that is, if there are few associations with it, and therefore little reinforcement). In addition to the loss of memory due to subsequent input, which is known as “retroactive interference,” forgetting can take place if data that is stored first makes a particularly strong impact and effectively blocks the storage of subsequent input. The latter process is known as “proactive interference.” Whether a person remembers better what was heard first (the “primacy effect”) or last (the “recency effect”) depends on how much time elapses before the person is required to recall the data, and on whether the individual has a chance to reinforce the storage of the data by “rehearsing” it or actively thinking about it. If recall is delayed and no rehearsal is possible, first-heard items are more likely to be remembered (Baddeley, 1976).

Another factor that determines whether a message is retained is the amount of new information it contains (Le Ny, 1978). If the interpreter has many associations with a particular item in memory (i.e., the person has heard the terminology many times before and is very familiar with the subject matter), retrieval is relatively easy and the interpreter’s processing capacity is not overloaded. Wortman et al. (1988) stress that people tend to decide what is important and relevant, and therefore what should be stored in memory, on the basis of their schemata. Schemata also help people interpret the meaning of the new information, and to elaborate on what they learn, enabling them to supply the necessary details according to their expectations. For example, during testimony about a burglary, the interpreter calls up a burglary schema in both the SL and the TL, which contains background knowledge of common situations that arise in burglaries, tools employed, methods of breaking in, and associated phrases such as “casing the joint” and “posting a lookout.” As a result, upon hearing the term “safe,” the interpreter will know without consciously thinking about it that the term refers to a box in which valuables are kept, not a state of being secure and free from harm. Similarly, upon hearing a new term, the interpreter will be better able to understand its meaning and to store it for future retrieval through associating it with other terms related to burglaries. Thus, the more knowledge and experience interpreters have in a wide range of subjects, the easier it is for them to retain and recall information.

In addition to the interference that can come from internal factors, extraneous factors can interfere with retention and recall. One of the most important of these is stress. The effect of stress on memory is a matter of degree, however. Studies have shown that moderate levels of stress or arousal can actually enhance performance, but after a certain point the impact becomes negative; people who are in a state of high physical or mental anxiety (Loftus, 1980) are unable to "pay adequate attention to important cues in their environment and thus may miss information that is crucial for accurate memory" (p. 82). Thus, if an interpreter is flooded with stimuli unrelated to the SL message, such as physical cues signaling a headache, fatigue, or anxiety about possible challenges from attorneys, and other issues, the interpreter is unable to attend exclusively to the SL message.

Other irrelevant stimuli that may interfere with the retention and recall of the SL message include visual cues (the witness may be wearing a particularly flashy tie, for instance) or auditory cues (people talking loudly in the hall, or perhaps an annoying speech mannerism of the witness). These factors can distract interpreters from the task at hand. Clearly, then, interpreters need to be in optimum physical condition so that such irrelevant stimuli can be kept to a minimum, and they need to be mentally alert and confident in order to concentrate all their energies on processing the SL message to generate a TL rendition.

In conclusion, we remember what is meaningful to us. For something to be meaningful, we must be able to associate it with prior experiences, emotions, linguistic knowledge, and other elements. The more associations we have with something, the easier it is to remember. The key to remembering data is to analyze it as it comes in and to organize it into a minimum number of "chunks." Acting on the input somehow (classifying it, visualizing it, taking notes on it, or experiencing an emotional reaction to it) helps us to retain it. As Seleskovitch (1978a) states:

You only remember something if you have paid attention to it, if you relate the significance and meaning to your own experience; in short, if you reflect on it in such a way that you experience what is commonly known as "awareness." Memory is much more dependent on what you do with the information than on how your senses perceive it. (p. 37)

2.4 Notetaking

Perhaps the most common memory aid that people use in every aspect of life is notetaking. They jot down phone numbers, grocery lists, reminders about things to do, and other tasks. Professionals in all fields use specialized notes to help them perform a variety of tasks, and interpreters are no exception. The notetaking system that has been devised by conference interpreters is discussed later on in this section.

Many researchers have investigated the function of notetaking in retention and recall (most in the context of students taking notes on university lectures, but some in the field of conference interpreting), and have identified a number of factors that determine the usefulness of notes. In a review of the literature, Dunkel (1985) indicates that the research findings are contradictory, with some studies suggesting that notetaking may interfere with listening comprehension while others conclude the opposite. The speed of delivery may be a decisive factor; one of the studies cited revealed that "taking notes during a very rapid presentation may interfere with listening, while at slower speeds, it may enhance listening by increasing the concentration of the student" (p. 27). Efficiency of notetaking is another element that contributes to usefulness. Howe (1970), in particular,

found a positive correlation between the “efficiency” of notetaking and the ability to recall information later. In other words, the fewer notes taken, the better the recall. This finding is corroborated by the empirical conclusions of conference interpreters who have written about CI (Gile, 1995; Gillies, 2005; Herbert, 1968; Ilg & Lambert, 1996; Rozan, 1956; Seleskovitch, 1975; van Hoof, 1962).

Researchers who have studied the effects of notetaking on retention and recall focus on two different aspects of the process: the act of taking notes and the notes themselves. For example, Mikkelson (1983) states that:

The act of taking notes (deciding what to write and how to place it on the page) appears to aid in the analysis and processing of the information, and the interpreter is more likely to remember something that s/he has acted upon him/herself. (p. 6)

On the other hand, Dunkel (1985) cites a number of studies that “lent strong support to the external storage function of notes; the having and reviewing, rather than the taking per se of notes facilitated recall performance” (p. 22). Elsewhere in her review of the literature, Dunkel notes that “several researchers have concluded that the encoding benefit of notetaking actually accrues from having the opportunity to review notes and not from the mere act of notetaking itself” (p. 70). Lambert (1983), whose study dealt specifically with conference interpreters performing CI rather than students taking notes on lectures in the university setting, contends that both approaches are valid:

The object of notes is to supplement memory efficiency, and individuals normally take notes with either or both of two aims in mind:

- (1) Notes can be perceived as an external storage mechanism where the interpreter uses notes as a means of reproducing and storing knowledge for later consultation;
- (2) Notes can also be examined via the note-taking process itself, where it is seen as an encoding mechanism that facilitates retention in that taking notes may contribute to the learner’s acquisition of knowledge, in other words, his “learning,” in a relatively direct manner. (p. 5)

2.4.1 Interpreter Notetaking System

A unique system of notetaking has been devised, analyzed, and explicated over the years by conference interpreters (Gillies, 2005; Herbert, 1968; Ilg & Lambert, 1996; Rozan, 1956; Seleskovitch, 1975; van Hoof, 1962). This notetaking system can also be used in court interpreting, although due to differences between court and conference interpreting mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, certain modifications must be made. Mikkelson (2006) provides examples of the application of this system to courtroom testimony.

The underlying principle of the notes used by conference interpreters—commonly known as the “Rozan (1956) method,” after Jean-François Rozan, who first recorded and analyzed the notetaking system he observed conference interpreters using—is that the SL message is abstracted into symbolic form to make it easier to convert into the TL. It is important to remember that the notes are an aid to memory, not an end in and of themselves; interpreters concentrate on attending to and analyzing the SL message as they hear it, and try to keep the notes to a minimum. Very few words of the original message are written down because interpreters focus on ideas, not words. They make very careful choices of what to write in their notes, selecting “key words” that will trigger their memory of an entire concept when they read the notes later. These key words may not even have been uttered in the SL message, but are representations that are meaningful to the interpreter. In addition to words, interpreters use a variety of other notations, as shown below. Each in-

terpreter's notes are unique and personalized, and even another interpreter who knows the system may not be able to read them. Weber (1984) points out that "there are as many different note-taking systems as there are interpreters" (pp. 36–37), and that such a system cannot be imposed on another or learned by rote. However, there are some common characteristics and common sense approaches that are worthy of mention.

2.4.2 Techniques

The following techniques are used in the Rozan (1956) method to abstract ideas from the SL message:

- (a) Placement of ideas on the page: indentation, verticalization.
- (b) Abbreviation: common abbreviations such as "atty," "info," "OK"; abbreviations from science (H₂O, Au); shorthand notations; and others.
- (c) Symbols: mathematical and scientific symbols, Greek letters, arrows, punctuation marks, lines of negation, individualized symbols.
- (d) Lines: negation, relationship, repetition, numbers, circles, underlining for emphasis.

2.4.3 Examples

Here are some examples of typical statements that an interpreter might take notes on, with sample notes provided in Figure 35.1.

Figure 35.1. Sample Notetaking I

↷ Sat 11-9
 (day)
 \$ take / safe / off
 g base
 .1
 1.
 John " \$6,500

- (a) Now, drawing your attention to Saturday, November 9, the day of the incident, when the money was allegedly removed from the safe in the office, did you call your employer before or after John told you the \$6,500 was missing?

Comments on Figure 35.1: Note how few whole words are written down. The symbol ↷ is used to indicate focusing on, looking at, etc. The parentheses indicate an apposition or parenthetical remark that digresses from the subject a little or adds details. Note how the ideas are indented as the story progresses, with the most subordinate ideas being placed farthest to the right. It is clear that the interpreter is analyzing while listening, and establishing a hierarchy of ideas in logical progression. The next concept, about the money being removed from the safe, is brought out slightly to the left be-

cause it is more important than "the day of the incident," but still subordinate to the main idea of the question. The \$ denotes money of any sort; "taken" is shorter than "removed" (an arrow might be used here as well), and the squiggly line underneath refers to the uncertainty of the statement ("allegedly"). The slash is a line of relationship (often representing a prepositional phrase), linking the money to the safe to the office (each of which is indented to show subordination). Then the J symbol, referring to telephone communication, is brought out all the way to the left to begin a new idea (the heart of the question). The word "boss" is used because it takes less time to write than "employer." The two symbols • | and | • are placed vertically, with a question mark at the side, to indicate that they are of equal hierarchy and that there is an alternative between them (the word "or" would serve just as well). And the last idea, a subordinate clause, begins with an abbreviation for John, the " symbol for talking, the line above \$6.5 to denote thousand (\$6.5 million would have two lines above, and so on), and the line of negation represents the concept of "missing."

Figure 35.2. Sample Notetaking II

H re ① / 9-29-88
 (if recall)
 atty off
 ♥ ? if atty ? ?
 | Q
 | A
 Q : qnes = agnt / DEA
 || W? / you ?
 A no
 |
 Q when
 A he "

- (b) Mr. Hernandez, referring to the deposition you gave on September 29, 1988— if you recall giving that deposition in your attorney's office—I would like to ask you if you remember plaintiff's counsel asking you the following questions and you giving the following answers.

Question: Were you aware that Mr. Jones was an undercover agent of the Drug Enforcement Agency during the period that he worked for you?

Answer: No, I didn't know he was with the Drug Enforcement Agency at that time, not until later.

Question: When did you find out?

Answer: I found out when he told me himself.

Comments on Figure 35.2: The interpreter begins with an "H" as a reminder that the question begins with the witness' name; the interpreter already knows the name, and thus needs only a reminder. The "re" is a common abbreviation for "regarding" or "referring to." The quotation mark with the circle around it indicates a formal speaking situation, such as a speech or deposition (the common abbreviation "depo" could also be used here). The slash relates the deposition to the date, and the "if recall" is placed in parentheses and intended to show that it is subordinate and a digression from the train of thought. The heart, brought out to the left to indicate that the main idea is being taken up again, refers to wanting or desiring. The question mark denotes "ask." The line after "if" goes back up to "recall" because the same idea is repeated and there is no need to write it twice. "Plaintiff's counsel" is abbreviated, and "asking" is represented by a question mark with the "g" to mark the gerund or participle (grammatical markers like "s" for plural, "n" for the "-tion" suffix, etc., are elevated above the root to distinguish them). "Q" and "A" are common abbreviations for question and answer, and they are verticalized to indicate a list of items of equal importance. The first question is brought out to the left again, to indicate the beginning of a new main idea. The : symbol refers to mental or cognitive concepts (thought, knowledge, etc.). The = sign is used for the verb "to be," and related concepts. The line below "agent" denotes the prefix "under" (a line above would represent the prefix "over," as in "oversee," "overpayment," among others). The slash indicates the genitive relationship ("of the"), and the DEA is a commonly known abbreviation. The || represents two things happening simultaneously or in parallel. The line to "Jones" indicates a repetition of the name. The "W" represents work or employment, with the elevated "d" denoting the past tense. The slash denotes the preposition "for" (another relationship). The answer begins at the left again, and a simple "no" with a line drawn up to the question (to indicate repetition) suffices to convey the idea, with the symbol | • indented underneath. The next question can be conveyed simply by "when," and the final answer shows the "he" underlined twice for emphasis ("himself"), with the quotation mark for the verb "told."

- (c) Well, you see, I wanted to get downtown fast, you know, so I decided to hitchhike instead of walking. So this guy comes and picks me up on Main St., you know, and ... I, uh, ... well, you know, it had been raining the night before, and there was water all over the place, and his car stalled in the middle of a big puddle. So I ended up hoofing it after all, you know?

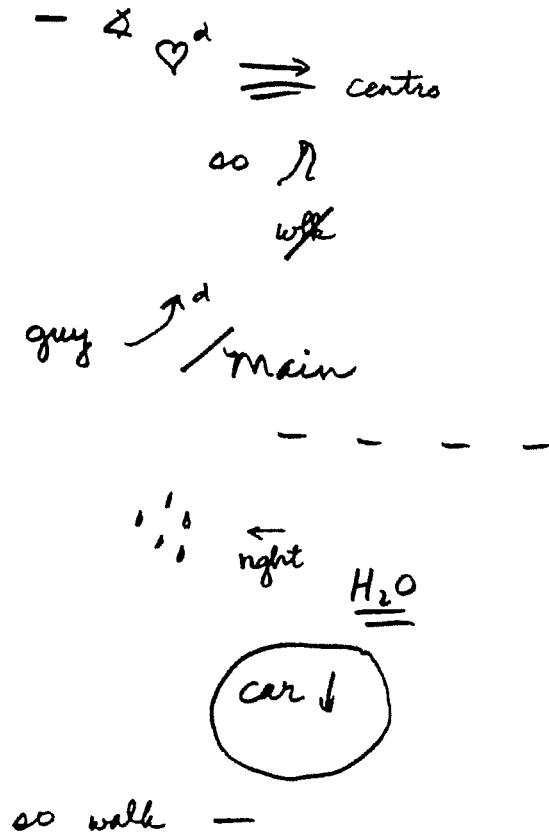
Comments on Figure 35.3: This text illustrates the difficulty of using notetaking in court interpreting. The interpreter must give a conceptual verbatim interpretation of the witness' answer, including the pauses and hedges. The horizontal lines throughout the notes show where there are hedges, but it is up to the interpreter to remember exactly what words were used.

The < symbol is used once again for the concept of "see" (although this is really just a hedge, and should not be confused with the main idea). The heart represents "wanted," and an arrow (underlined for emphasis, [fast]) denotes traveling or moving. The Span-

ish word *centro* is used for downtown because it is more succinct. Interpreters can take notes in whatever language or combination of languages they feel comfortable in, as long as they can understand the notes when it is time to read them back. If a particular term springs to mind and conveys the idea accurately, it does not matter if that word is from a language not involved in the proceedings. A common error that must be guarded against is forgetting which language the notes must be rendered into, the SL or the TL. A generic symbol such as "Sp" or "Eng" at the beginning of the notes may suffice. See Section 2.4.4 for further discussion of this issue.

The "so" is an important word to include because it shows the causal relationship between ideas (an arrow for causality would serve equally well). The interpreter then drew a little picture of a thumb to indicate "hitchhike," and drew a line of negation through the word "walk" to represent the idea "instead of" (the alternative not chosen). "Guy" begins the next idea out to the left; the upward arrow indicates "picks me up," and "Main" suffices to indicate the place. After a few hedges, the next idea is "rain," which the interpreter represented pictorially. The backward arrow above "nght" indicates the past. The abbreviation for water is underlined heavily to denote emphasis, "all over the place." The interpreter first wrote "car" and a downward arrow to indicate the stalling, and then drew a circle around it to portray the puddle pictorially. The final idea, brought out to the left to indicate its importance in the hierarchy, begins with "so" and then represents "hoofing it" with the more general word "walk." The interpreter must remember the register of the term "hoofing it," and render it into the TL with an appropriately "slangy" term.

Figure 35.3. Sample Notetaking III



2.4.4 *Application to Court Interpreting*

As noted above, the unique demands of court interpreting (e.g., conservation, legal equivalence) require some adaptation of this notetaking system. The emphasis of these notes is abstracting and symbolizing, and indeed that is the essence of the interpreting process. But court interpreters must first abandon the concrete structure of the message to penetrate to the underlying meaning and then refer back to the SL structure, which they have retained in their STM, to make sure they reinsert such nonverbal elements as pauses, self-corrections, and hedges. Conference interpreters, in contrast, deliberately eliminate such elements from the TL message. Thus, court interpreters cannot allow a witness to go on for several minutes as conference interpreters do (nor should an attorney consent to such lengthy narrations), and must intervene when they know they cannot retain any more in their STM. Moreover, they must indicate the pauses and hedges in their notes to make sure they reinsert them in the process of giving the TL version. Omission or addition of seemingly unimportant pragmatic markers such as these can drastically alter jurors' perception of the witness (Berk-Seligson, 2002a; Hale, 2004; Mason, 2008).

In view of the rigorous standards of accuracy that interpreters must uphold in the judicial setting, many people wonder why court interpreters do not simply learn shorthand so that they can take verbatim notes and not have to rely on their memory. Weber (1984) points out that shorthand notes are word-oriented, and interpreters must focus on meaning rather than words. If interpreters did take down word-for-word everything the speaker said, they would then be faced with the task of sight translating shorthand notes, which is even more daunting a prospect than sight translating a plain typewritten text. However, there are interpreters who have successfully implemented shorthand into their notetaking process.

There is an inherent danger in notetaking that interpreters, court or conference, must guard against. It is all too easy to become excessively absorbed in the notes themselves and forget to attend to the message as it is being uttered by the SL speaker. If interpreters do not look at the speaker, they will miss valuable nonverbal cues. Many novice interpreters make the mistake of scribbling away while the SL message is coming in, but then have trouble deciphering their notes afterwards because they did not understand the overall meaning. They have an impressive list of facts (if they are fortunate enough to be able to read their handwriting), but they cannot link them together in a meaningful way. In other words, they cannot see the forest for the trees. It is important to remember that notes are merely a mnemonic aid.

Given the shorter length of the messages that interpreters deal with in the judicial setting, and given the limitations of the Rozan (1956) method of notetaking, one might question the usefulness of notetaking for the court interpreter. Indeed, there are many instances when the court interpreter does not need to take notes at all. A survey of interpreters who are certified to interpret in the federal courts (Mikkelsen, Vásquez, & González, 1989) revealed that most interpreters do not use notes for the storage and retrieval of every utterance in courtroom testimony. Of the interpreters who responded to the survey, 26% reported that they take notes during "every interpreting event"; 26% said they do so "often"; 31% said "sometimes," and 14% said "rarely." The majority of the interpreters reported that they take notes only on long questions and answers or those that contain specific data such as names, dates, numbers, and addresses.

Other factors that determine whether notes are taken, as indicated by the interpreters in the survey, include the nature of the proceedings or the event and the fatigue interpreters experience. Sixty-six percent of the respondents also indicated that they are more likely to rely on their memory (as opposed to only 11% who rely on their notes) to retain paralinguistic elements of the SL message such as pauses, hedges, and self-corrections. This

survey did not investigate the language dominance issue, but based on the findings reported by Abbott et al. (1981) and the research cited by Dunkel (1985) with regard to foreign language comprehension, it may be that interpreters are more likely to take notes when the SL is their “B” (foreign or acquired) language, but not when it is their “A” (mother) tongue. Because court interpreters must interpret bidirectionally (questions interpreted from English to the witness’ language, answers interpreted from that language into English), this issue is less relevant to their work. As for the language in which notes are taken, there is disagreement among experts. Although almost all of them recommend that the notes be as alingual as possible, they recognize that key words are a major feature of interpreters’ notes. In fact, Abl-Mikasa (2008) reports that interpreters’ notes adhere much more closely to the linguistic form of the source message than previous experts had theorized. Whereas some advocate taking notes in the TL, others contend that it should be done in the SL (for an extensive discussion of the issue, see Dam, 2004). Empirical studies have found that interpreters actually tend to mix languages in their notes, but recent research suggests that the issue is not SL versus TL, but rather A language versus B language. Dam (2004) found that interpreters have a strong preference for taking notes in their A language. Following up on Dam’s work, Szabó (2006) posits that the choice of language may depend on the languages in the interpreter’s combination rather than SL versus TL or A versus B language; she also notes that many interpreters tend to use a lot of English in their notes even when English is not one of the languages they are interpreting, possibly because English is more efficient than other languages and because most notetaking instructional materials are written in English. Although court interpreters do not rely exclusively on notetaking to help them recall the SL message, they do use notes extensively in certain situations. A great deal could be learned by conducting research on the factors that enter into the interpreter’s decision as to whether or not to take notes, and which language(s) to use when taking notes.

2.4.5 Principles of Notetaking for Court Interpreting

The following general principles, based on the applicable features of the Rozan (1956) method and the specific demands of the judicial setting, can serve as a guide for notetaking by the court interpreter.

- (a) Take only the notes you need. The majority of the questions and answers in typical witness testimony are short, and the interpreter may not need to take notes at all. If a short answer contains an address, interpreters may write down just an abbreviation of the address and nothing more. As interpreters gain experience, they will be able to gauge their memory capacity and will know how many notes they need to take, if any. Once interpreters decide to take notes, they should choose what to write judiciously, writing only words or symbols that will help them to remember the message.
- (b) Abbreviate, writing only what is meaningful to you. If the answer contains a description, such as “he had black hair, brown eyes, and a thick beard,” the interpreter might take the following notes:

Figure 35.4. Use of Abbreviation for Eyewitness Description

Bl h
Br ey
Thk brd

Abbreviations are very personalized and are based on the interpreter's own experience. If the interpreter has an extensive medical background, for example, "stat" may be used to mean "immediately, right away, quickly," whereas another interpreter would have to write more. If "def" is what the interpreter always uses to signify the defendant, those three letters are sufficient, but if the interpreter does not often use that abbreviation and fears she might confuse it with "definite" or "defer" or another similar word, the interpreter needs to use more letters of the word (e.g., "dfndt"). It is risky to invent ad hoc abbreviations or symbols that will mean nothing five minutes after they are written. The selection of symbols and abbreviations must be rigorously practiced. Once the interpreter has made a judicious choice of what to write down, abbreviation should be used as much as possible.

- (c) Use pictures, diagrams, and relative position on the page. Some testimony lends itself to a graphic depiction, while other testimony may be more word-oriented. If the witness gives an answer that can be easily visualized, the interpreter may choose to draw a picture rather than noting down words. For the descriptive answer given above, the interpreter might draw the picture presented in Figure 35.5.

Figure 35.5. Graphic Depiction of Eyewitness Description



Notetaking is just one strategy that allows the interpreter to use the consecutive mode to its fullest potential. The following strategies permit the interpreter to exert considerable control over the situation without inhibiting the people who are trying to communicate.

2.5 Situational Control

The rigorous accuracy requirements of interpreted testimony limit the interpreter's capacity to retain all of the content of lengthy utterances, even with the mnemonic and notetaking techniques described above. Many interpreters respond to the situation by controlling the turn-taking, that is, by intervening to interpret in shorter phrases. In limited situations, and only rarely, it may be wise to exert control over a speaker. The competent interpreter strives to be as unobtrusive as possible in the course of proceedings, but even the most practiced interpreter may have an occasional need to interrupt testimony, ask for repetition, or use gestures or physical proximity to slow speech. Overuse of these techniques, however, may indicate a need to work on the major or subskills of interpreting. Because nonverbal, visual cues (facial expressions, gestures, and the like) are just as important as verbal cues in the perception of messages, it is important for the interpreter to sit next to the witness, or to

stand next to the defendant when the latter is being addressed by the judge, and be able to see the defendant's entire body (for a discussion of the lack of visual cues in remote interpreting, see Chapter 43). Since it is also important for other parties in the courtroom to be able to see the witness, interpreters should position themselves in such a way that they do not block anyone's view, particularly the jury's. Proper positioning is extremely important in CI and can forestall a situational control problem. For further discussion of the issue of the interpreter's position in the courtroom, see Units 7 and 8.

If for some reason interpreters feel they are unable to provide a precise interpretation (if they fail to hear a word or phrase, if the witness uses an unfamiliar term, or if they forget part of the answer), they must inform the court and request permission to inquire further. Under no circumstances should they bluff, gloss over the problem word, or try to guess at the answer. Although the option of asking for a repetition of the answer is always available to interpreters, they should bear in mind that the witness is not likely to say exactly the same thing the second time around. Parts of the original answer may vanish without a trace. Moreover, by asking for a repetition of the answer, interpreters may inadvertently influence the witness' testimony by causing the person to think something was wrong with the original statement. Increasing use of recording proceedings may be helpful to the interpreter in this regard.

If the interpreter has missed only part of an answer, it is preferable to interpret the part the interpreter recalls before stopping and asking for a repetition or clarification. Thus, the interpreter might say, "I was walking down the street when suddenly I saw ... Your Honor, the interpreter needs to have the last part of the answer repeated," or "Your Honor, the witness has used a term the interpreter is not familiar with." That way, at least the first part of the answer is in the record and the interpreter can eliminate it from the STM and concentrate on the remainder of the answer. On the other hand, if the problem lies at the beginning of the witness' response, or if the entire interpretation hinges on the meaning of the unknown term, then the interpreter must inform the court of the situation before interpreting any of the answer. Because asking for a repetition or definition of terms can cause these additional problems, it must be emphasized again that interpreters should develop their memory capacity and their vocabulary so that they need resort to this expedient only on rare occasions.

Interrupting the witness for the purpose of controlling the interpreting situation is a controversial issue that merits discussion here. The length of the utterance the interpreter must remember varies from a simple "yes" or "no" response to a rambling, disjointed answer from a witness or a long, complex question from an attorney. A competent interpreter is able to process and interpret 40 to 60 words of question-and-answer testimony without having to interrupt the speaker. In fact, the Federal Court Interpreter Certification Program regards this ability as a minimal performance standard in CI (see Chapter 46).

In the past, it has been standard practice for interpreters to interrupt the speaker in order to break up the speech into smaller segments. Administrative Order No. 85-002 (Superior Court in Maricopa County, 1985), for example, lists the following among its standards of conduct:

In interpreting in the consecutive mode, the interpreter may need to interrupt the discourse of the witness periodically to interpret or to review his notes. These interruptions should only create a pause during the witness' testimony and will not delete or stop parts of that testimony. The interpreter may arrange a system of signals with the witness before taking the stand, so as to facilitate this process.

(Section vii.8)

Similarly, the San Diego Municipal Court's *General Information and Guidelines for Courtroom Interpreters* (1983) states that when it is obvious that an answer is too long and complex for the interpreter to render it fully in the TL, "the interpreter must interrupt the witness and break up his narrative into segments not greater than the interpreter's recall will allow for accurate translation. The essence or gist of a statement is not enough" (p. 7).

This practice has been abused, however, and, because of this tendency, should be avoided. Because no limitations have been imposed with respect to the interruption of witnesses, some interpreters have developed a habit of cutting off the witness at every turn, relying on this technique to compensate for a deficient memory. These interpreters use hand signals to indicate when the witness should stop, and some even go to the extreme of placing their hand near the witness' mouth. When they have finished the interpretation of a segment of testimony, they use a beckoning gesture to signal the witness to continue. The result is a fragmented, staccato rendition that does not allow the actors in the courtroom to assess the witness' testimony adequately.

Thus, although some guidelines sanction the practice of interrupting the witness, it is not universally accepted. A standard principle of trial procedure is that the examining attorney is in charge of the examination process; even judges are reluctant to interfere with this vital means of presenting evidence. Generally speaking, examining attorneys try to maintain control over the testimony by discouraging witnesses from entering into long narratives. When an English-speaking witness does begin a narrative, the attorney may object and ask that the answer be stricken from the record. When the actors in the courtroom must wait for the interpretation, however, they do not have that ability to control the witness. Attorneys and judges should explain to witnesses to be mindful of the fact that the amount of information an interpreter can store has its limits.

Faced with extremely long utterances by witnesses and attorneys, the interpreter therefore has two options: (1) attempt to interpret it consecutively, relying on memory and notetaking, and run the risk of losing some of the paralinguistic elements of the answer or (2) interrupt the witness and interpret the answer in smaller segments. The interpreter has an obligation to conserve every aspect of the witness' answer, and should make every effort to avoid summarizing. The second option, interrupting the witness, should be regarded by the interpreter as a last resort.

A number of important factors must be taken into consideration by the interpreter when deciding whether it is appropriate to interrupt the speaker. The primary consideration, of course, is conservation of meaning. If, and only if, the SL message is so lengthy and complicated that the interpreter is unable to convey every element of meaning, even using notes, it is better to interrupt the speaker than to risk an incomplete interpretation. On the other hand, interpreters must bear in mind that they have an obligation to ensure that the communication process is as close as possible to that which would occur if there were no language barriers. Interrupting an attorney who is carefully formulating a question to elicit specific testimony, or a witness who is trying to give a precise and complete answer to a question, is disruptive and adds another complication that would not be present if the speakers all understood the same language. Witnesses may find it intimidating to be interrupted in the middle of testimony and may say less than they otherwise would. Moreover, as Erickson, Lind, Johnson, and O'Barr (1978); O'Barr (1982); Berk-Seligson (2002a); and Hale (2004) have made evident in their research, the speech style of the witness plays a fundamental role in the jury's evaluation of that witness' credibility.

Thus, it is clear that interrupting witnesses or attorneys entails the risk of adversely affecting the communication process. Court interpreters must make every effort to develop their listening, notetaking, and memory skills sufficiently so that they will rarely have to interrupt attorneys or witnesses. Sometimes, however, interruptions are unavoidable, as attested by the survey of federally certified interpreters mentioned earlier in this chapter (Mikkelsen et al., 1989). While only 3% of the interpreters stated that they interrupt a speaker at "every interpreting event," 16% reported that they do so "often," and 49% indicated that they interrupt witnesses or attorneys "sometimes." Twenty-four percent of the interpreters reported interrupting the speaker "rarely," and 9% said they "never" interrupt.

When interpreters feel compelled to interrupt the speaker in order to ensure an accurate interpretation, they must do so with the least possible disruption of the flow of communication. First of all, interpreters must choose the right moment to intervene: If witnesses or attorneys are interrupted before having a chance to complete their thought, the interpretation may be misleading because subsequent words might alter the meaning of the message. Moreover, witnesses may lose their train of thought and be unable to complete the answer. And there is always the danger that an attorney will begin a follow-up question immediately after the interpretation, not realizing that the answer was not completed. On the other hand, if interpreters allow the witness to go on too long before intervening, they will be unable to give an accurate and complete interpretation. Therefore, it is important for interpreters to know the limits of their memory capacity and choose the appropriate point to interrupt before they have reached that limit. This technique is one that requires much practice and experience.

Mason (2008) conducted a study of turn length and interpreter-induced errors in court testimony, and she found that the error rate increased commensurately with the length of the utterances. Errors were defined as either additions or omissions of linguistic content. Mason reports that interpreters tend to omit more content than they add, and the errors primarily involve "linguistic markers that assign tone and style to the original, such as speech disfluencies and discourse markers" (p. 34). She also cites a study by Linell, Wadensjö, and Jönsson (1992) that indicated "cognitive factors prompted interpreters to often condense the source language discourse by omitting linguistic variables, such as hesitations and discourse markers" (p. 35). The implications of these findings are obviously quite significant for adversarial court proceedings. In light of the work of Erickson, et al. (1978), O'Barr (1982), Berk-Seligson (2002a), and Hale (2004), and as a result of her own research, Mason (2008) advocates the use of "semiconsecutive interpreting" rather than interruptions as a means of coping with the cognitive overload produced by long utterances. In semiconsecutive interpreting, the *speaker* segments the utterances, rather than allowing the interpreter to choose when to begin interpreting. The advantage of this approach is that the pauses come at logical junctures and create shorter turn lengths, lessening the likelihood that the interpreter will omit information or distort the message. The disadvantage, of course, is that the interpreter must rely on the speaker to cooperate by pausing frequently for the interpretation. It is worth pointing out that even conference interpreters, who traditionally interpreted speeches as long as 20–30 minutes (Bowen & Bowen, 1980), are now more likely to interpret in shorter segments as well. Agrifoglio (2004) reports that 3–4 minutes is typical. It may be that the faster pace of today's world is affecting audiences' tolerance for long utterances in languages they do not understand.

Interpreters must adapt to each new person for whom they interpret. If they establish a rapport with the witness, the two can develop a rhythm of turn-taking that will encourage the use of semiconsecutive interpreting and ensure a smooth flow of the communication. When all of the actors in the courtroom are aware that the interpreter must

occasionally intervene in order to ensure an accurate interpretation, there is less likelihood that the witness will alter his or her testimony or that the jury will be misled in evaluating the witness' credibility. If the witness is articulate and the testimony logical, the interpreter may not have to intervene at all, even for lengthy answers, because meaningful information can be retained more easily. On the other hand, if the witness pauses frequently in mid-thought, makes many self-corrections, and gives rambling, illogical answers, the interpreter will have to intervene more frequently to maintain accuracy. In addition, if interpreters are familiar with the subject matter (for example, if a witness is describing the operation of a machine and the interpreter has seen that machine in use), they can retain more information in memory and provide a more accurate interpretation.

3. Exercises for Improving Skills

Since CI involves the same public speaking and analytical aspects that other modes of interpretation require, these skills can be improved by doing the same exercises explained in the following chapter on sight translation. This section focuses on exercises that will help you develop your listening and memory skills.

3.1 Exercises to Enhance Listening/Attending Skills

(1) To increase your awareness of nonverbal cues, observe conversations you cannot hear (e.g., across a crowded room, outside your window, or on the television with the volume turned down). Pay attention to the individuals' facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, and gestures, as well as the distance they maintain from each other, and try to guess what the conversation is about. Do this exercise in all your working languages, if possible, and compare the differences.

(2) Another way to observe nonverbal cues is to listen to someone on the telephone (or in another situation in which you cannot see the person you are hearing) and to analyze the voice tone, volume, pitch, and noises such as tongue clicking and sighing, comparing them with the content of the message. Again, try to do this exercise in all your working languages and compare the difference.

(3) Go to a store with a friend, and ask the clerk about an item on the shelf or rack. Five minutes later, try to repeat to your friend exactly what the clerk said.

(4) When you are conversing with others, frequently ask, "What do you mean by that term?" to determine what other people mean when they talk and how they use words differently from you.

(5) Ask someone to give you directions to a place you know how to get to. Then ask someone to direct you to a place you could not find yourself. Compare what goes on in your mind in the two cases. Do you jump ahead or lose your train of thought?

(6) Analyze your listening errors. The next time you have a conversation with someone and miss part of what the person said, immediately analyze what went wrong. Were you daydreaming? Still handling something said earlier? Distracted by an unfamiliar or emotion-laden word? Was there physical interference?

(7) While listening to a speech or lecture, make an early evaluation of the speaker's intent or point, the solution being proposed, or the conclusion the person will reach. Make another evaluation at the end of the speech. How did your two assessments differ?

(8) Pay special attention to "linkage words" that determine the relationships of ideas (such as "therefore," "however," "unless"). Make a list of such words, and listen to how they are used. Do this in all your working languages.

3.2 Memory-Building Exercises

(1) Pay attention to how your memory works. Are you a visualizer, a verbalizer, neither, or both? When you forget something you heard, try to analyze the type of interference that prevented you from storing or retrieving the information.

(2) To enhance your retention, have someone read a series of numbers (remember that the STM capacity may be limited to five to nine chunks, and how many numbers you will be able to recall depends on whether you can find patterns in them and organize them into chunks). As soon as you are able to give back seven numbers correctly, try the same exercise but say the numbers backward. You need to be capable of retaining the entire series of seven numbers in your STM in order to say them backward.

(3) To increase your analytical skills, read a newspaper or magazine and stop after each story; try to summarize the contents in one sentence. Do this in all your working languages.

(4) Repeat this exercise with oral input. (News magazine shows on television and talk shows on radio are good sources, all available through the Internet.) During a commercial break, summarize the main idea in one sentence.

(5) Have someone record passages of newspaper or magazine articles for you to work with in the exercises listed below (in all your working languages). Try to choose texts about general subjects, without too much technical terminology or statistics. Alternatively, record radio and television talk shows or interview programs (choose programs in which the speakers are talking extemporaneously, not reading from a prepared script). In these exercises, you will not be translating, merely repeating the information in the same language. Gradually increase the length of the passages as you become more adept at the exercises:

- (a) Listen to the passage without taking any notes, and try to repeat as much information as possible.
- (b) Listen to the passage and take down "key words" that will help you remember the content. Then try to repeat as much information as possible. Compare the results you obtained by taking notes to those you obtained without any notes. This will give you an indication as to whether you need to take notes in the interpreting setting.
- (c) Listen to the passage and try to repeat it verbatim (notetaking optional).
- (d) As you listen to the passage, try to condense the information into a few meaningful units, bearing in mind your STM capacity for information. For example, if someone lists a series of jobs that have been held, you can group the jobs by location, type of product, and so forth. A string of numbers can be lumped into manageable chunks (e.g., people tend to state their Social Security numbers in groups such as 348, 26, 9801 instead of 348269801). If the speaker lists all the parts of the body where there is pain, you can rearrange them in logical order

from head to toe. Note, however, that when interpreting actual testimony, the order of the speaker's words should not be changed except as required by the syntax of the TL.

(e) If the subject matter of the text is a controversial one about which you have a strong opinion, pay attention to your reaction while listening. Make sure your rendition reflects the opinion of the speaker, not your own.

(6) Obtain transcripts of question-and-answer testimony and perform text analysis and chunking exercises, as described in Chapter 36. Then, perform the prediction exercises described in Chapter 34. Finally, try to recall the questions and answers verbatim.

(7) Repeat the above exercises, but now interpret between your working languages as you do so.

Note that improving your listening/attending and memory skills is an ongoing endeavor, which you can continue to refine with time and experience.