



UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

DIVISIÓN DE CIENCIAS POLÍTICAS Y HUMANIDADES

---

The use of interpreting techniques: Memoirs of a  
novice interpreter

---

**monografía**

Para obtener el grado de  
**Licenciado en Lengua Inglesa**

PRESENTA  
Harif Santiago Caro Sosa



Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México, noviembre de 2020





UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

DIVISIÓN DE CIENCIAS POLÍTICAS Y HUMANIDADES


The use of interpreting techniques: Memoirs of a novice  
interpreter

Presenta:  
Harif Santiago Caro Sosa

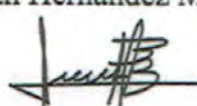
Monografía para obtener el grado de Lengua Inglesa

COMITÉ DE SUPERVISIÓN DE MONOGRAFÍA

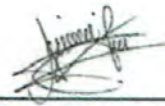
Asesor:

  
Dra. Edith Hernández Méndez

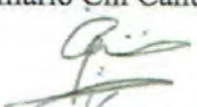
Asesor:

  
Mtra. Ana Bertha Jiménez Castro

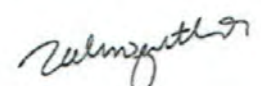
Asesor:

  
Mtro. Hilario Chi Canul

Suplente:

  
Mtra. Lizbeth Gómez Argüelles

Suplente:

  
Mtra. Vilma Esperanza Portillo Campos

Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México, noviembre de 2020



## **Acknowledgements**

I want to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Dra. Edith Hernández Méndez, Teacher Ana Bertha Jiménez Castro, Teacher Hilario Chi Canul, Teacher Lizbeth Gomez Argüelles and Teacher Vilma Esperanza Portillo Campos for taking the time and effort to help me finish this monograph, without their knowledge I would not have been able to complete this work. I want to specially thank Dra. Edith Hernández Méndez for her patience during the years she helped me shape this final work and never giving up on me.

This work is dedicated to my wife because she is the love of my life and my reason to be a better person and I want to thank more or less my mother in law, because she always knew the right words to motivate me to go forward and finish, to my son because he has made me take risks I never thought possible and view life from a new perspective, finally to God for giving blessing me with a loving happy family, this work is to make them proud.

## Table of contents

Introduction.....	6
Justification.....	12
Method.....	13
CHAPTER I.....	14
Contextual Framework.....	14
1.1 Detention Facility.....	15
1.2 Healthcare.....	16
1.3 International Bridges Subteniente Lopez and Chactemal.....	17
1.4 Muelle Fiscal.....	18
CHAPTER II.....	19
Theoretical Framework.....	19
2.1. Simultaneous Interpreting.....	20
2.1.1 The importance of texture in simultaneous interpreting.....	22
2.1.2. The Effort Model of Simultaneous Interpretation.....	23
2.2. Consecutive Interpreting.....	25
2.2.1 The importance of structure in Consecutive Interpreting.....	27
2.3. Interpreting Neutrality.....	28
2.4. The translation order as a translation strategy.....	28
2.5. Liaison Interpreting.....	29
2.5.1 The importance of context in liaison interpreting.....	30
2.6 Training to become an interpreter.....	32
CHAPTER III.....	34
Memoirs of a novice interpreter.....	34
Ideas over context and texture.....	38
Applying Theory.....	41
The translation order.....	42
Liaison Interpreting.....	43
Simultaneous Interpreting .....	44

CHAPTER IV.....	45
Conclusions and recommendations.....	45
References.....	49

## INTRODUCTION

An interpreter is a person who has a lot of weight over his shoulders as he/she is a mediator between two parties trying to establish a connection or relation. It is important to set aside the difference between translation and interpreting, even though the difference may be redundant and obvious, because they represent two different actions, Chesterman and Wagner (2010) state that “we do have two words, translation and interpreting to refer to the separate activities of translating the written word and interpreting the spoken word” (p.05).

An interpreter is a person who translates orally the messages between speakers that express themselves in different languages; the work of the interpreter is similar to the translator’s since it involves the understanding of a source language and a target language, but the processes and techniques used to deliver the messages are different (Zanier, 2002). There is the assumption that some people are born with the gift of being good translator or interpreters, and some other people lack the talent for such activities. There are people that are good at subjects involving numbers and mathematical formulas and some other people avoid these subjects to pursue something more related to humanities, so the same thing could be said about interpreting or translation. In order to be proficient in these activities, just natural talent will come up short to meet expectations, therefore the person needs the practice and technique that come with years of practice, ideally combining both the natural talent and experience (Haywood, Thompson & Hervey 2009).

It is a fact that there is involvement of translators and interpreters in many aspects of our day, but still there are different points of view about the importance of the role of such professionals. There is a shadowy line that separates interpreting and translation from the low status from a high status. Translators often feel their profession is underestimated, as historically there have been professions that have had more recognition than interpreting and translation. This low recognition is not only from the general public but from the professional community as well, since they do not value the complexity of the processes involved (Baker, 2011).

In the other hand both the American and British laws the translator is permitted to work in an adaptation of the original work but is subordinated to the original author who has

control over the publications and the exclusive rights to do derivative works, but since at the same time copyright is considered to be the creation of a medium of expression not an idea, as the new work is created in another language it is allowed to be deemed as original work allowing the translator to be copyrighted in the translator's name (Venuti, 2018).

Interpreting has its own problematic regarding the importance of the role of the interpreter. The interpreter might feel humiliated as people think that his sole job is to repeat what is said and he is never given the chance to give his own opinion, and being considered talking machines and on the other hand the interpreter might be considered his job of utmost importance and be overconfident considering the fact that sometimes summits and meetings could never proceed or take place without their presence (Gerver & Sinaiko, 1978, p. 9).

I consider that the thought that interpreters are like taking parrots is far from the actual role of the interpreter. Gerver and Sinaiko (1978) state that in order to interpret one first needs to understand the topic, otherwise it would be almost impossible to convey in another language what the interpreter cannot understand in the source language. The speaker might be a scientist or university-trained people who have an approach to an intellectual problem. The interpreter should possess the same frame of mind capable to understand the topic and carry the mental process.

As mentioned before there is no defined line or general perspective on how important these professions are, it depends on the context, the situation and the people involved in the process. It could be considered that as translation and interpretation are involved in many aspects of the everyday life, there cannot be a clear consensus as how important they are.

To understand the importance of interpretation, one should know what it means and implies. According to Kade (1968), quoted in Pochhacker (2004, p. 11), "Interpreting is a form of translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language." This definition of interpretation expresses the time pressure in which the interpreter has to reformulate a message in order to convey the same message in another language. Interpreters have to run several processing activities and process the information almost immediately and simultaneously leaving no opportunity to work on diverse ways to convey the message (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 51).

In the world we live today, the definition of interpretation has broadened since there are different ways to act as an interpreter and the need for an interpreter has developed beyond just oral rendition. Pochhacker and Schleisinger (2002), quoted in Kalcikova (2014, p. 10), describe interpreting as an “interlingual, intercultural oral or signed mediation, enabling communication between individuals or groups who do not share, or do not choose to use, the same languages”.

A broad definition of interpretation should reveal that there is a broad range of different individuals that use interpreting as a tool to communicate between each other to shorten the cultural gap and to connect by overcoming language barriers. The importance of interpreting in the world we live in is explicit when considering that humans have been linked by interpretation even before a writing system was invented. Vermeer (1992), quoted in Pochhacker (2004, p. 9), pointed out that evidence in expressions in the Germanic and Scandinavian cultures of people performing interpreting activities can be traced back around the year 1900 B.C. to Akkadian, the language of Babylonia. The purpose of interpretation in those days was, as stated before, to connect to other cultures and reach other parts of the world for cultures that were looking to spread across nations. Diplomacy in this kind of contact is inherent if a good relationship needs to be established between parties, such is the case of the peace treaties that took place during the World War I. In the Armistice procedures, commissions were established to examine different topics deemed sensitive between the Allies and the German army, the meetings were held in German, English and French. The interpreters were officers of different armies that had knowledge of those languages. In the first stages of the League of Nations, when the official languages were English and French, interpreting grew in prestige (Zanier, 2002).

Interpreting had a key role at that moment since the use of interpreters was needed to carry out the conference between the officials. These conferences marked an important point of reference in the history of interpretation since it was due to the conferences between nations that the conference interpreting was born as a discipline. The beginning of conference interpreting saw the light during the Nuremberg Trials in 1945, where simultaneous interpreting was used for the first time (Phelan, 2001), as quoted in Kalcikova (2014). Until that day, conferences used the consecutive form of interpreting, but it would have taken more time to complete the trials if the consecutive interpreting was used;



therefore, Colonel Leon Dostert deeming possible to listen to a message and transmit it simultaneously in another language found the solution to use equipment as headphones, receivers and recordings, as mentioned in Zanier's study (2002).

As history has shown the benefits of interpreting, we must keep in mind that interpretation is a human process that is bound to the abilities and ethics of an individual. A mistake or an error in judgment conscious or unconscious from an interpreter can lead to serious repercussions. In a courtroom the role of the interpreter might not be seen of great importance by attorneys or judges but it can change the outcome of a trial. People involved might not pay attention to the pragmatics of the language and so the interpreter can change the tone of the witness' testimony, or make the attorney questions more harsh or antagonistic than they are, or make it sound softer and more cooperative. These changes affect the perspective of those involved and the interpreter could take advantage of the linguistic mechanism to suit personal purposes (Berk-Selingson, 2017).

In the same way translation can be used for personal purposes and can shift or modify cultural trends and should be used with the same degree of responsibility. During the 90's decade new investigations emerged that extended beyond the range of linguistics into issues of translation and cultural formation. Translation studies scholars found that textual practices were used by governments, publishers, universities and other institutions of power to manipulate culture with the purpose to maintain power (Gentzler, 2008). In western Europe the translation of the Bible was the center of conflict between ideologies for a thousand years during the sixteenth century (Munday, 2012). The interpreter should always keep in mind how important it is to keep loyal to the profession and not let personal needs or beliefs get involved in the process.

According to Toury (2012, p. 6) "Translators may therefore be said to operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating". This means that the translator need know the needs of the particular cultural environment they are in, understanding the culture and people within it. Interpreters should operate the same way, as they should also be aware of the cultural differences and similarities between people and act in favor not only of the people into which he or she is interpreting for, but in favor of the communication and the connection between those people as well. We live in a time where we are constantly connected to news and media stream from around the world, due to this

connection people develop fears for what might happen to the world and its environment. There has not been another time where awareness for cultural differences and intercultural understanding is needed (Bassnett, 2014).

Interpreting has been used until today to connect nations around the world for the development of the societies. When the representatives of different cultures and communities reach an agreement for establishing and nurturing political relations, they rely on mediators in what is called diplomatic interpreting (Pochhacker, 2004). By establishing those relations, people are able to be exposed to new and more advanced technologies developed in other countries.

Mexico is not an exception in this kind of relationships and connections with other countries and cultures. The relation between Mexico and The United States of America goes deeper than just sharing borders and Mexico's relation with the rest of the world is also important since these kinds of political relations nurture the importing and exporting of products and the exchange of international services needed for the growth of businesses and economies. When establishing these relations, English acts as the *Lingua Franca*, enabling communication among countries.

Since a large portion of the income that Mexico receives from other countries is from tourist destinations, the number of American tourists and people around the world that also use English as *Lingua Franca* to communicate is large in number. Since there are services and products that other countries provide to Mexican citizens and business, they share political, economic and even religious relations to meet those demands. In this way, Mexico has a vast number of people that act as interpreters across the country to satisfy those aforementioned needs. It is well known that English is the *Lingua Franca* among different countries and nations and the relations held with those countries; therefore, the need for interpreters qualified to perform at the most professional levels. As time goes by, new technologies are created and the field of interpreting is always in constant need for interpreters able to cope with today's world needs. The demand for high quality trained professionals with skills in memory practice, active memory skills and note taking techniques made universities create programs and workshops aimed to the interpreter training (Kalcikova, 2014).

As the interpreting profession developed, interpreting programs have been created to train professionals in universities around the world. According to Phelan (2001), quoted in Kalcikova (2014), the first university programs were the University of Geneva of interpreting in 1940, Vienna School of interpreting in 1943, and Georgetown University Division of Interpreting and Translation in 1949.

In Mexico, there are university programs that consider interpretation as a profession that needs constant training since it broadens its horizons to the new coming technologies of today. For example, the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG) offers a Master's program in English-Spanish translation and interpreting, and in the capital city of Mexico, the Instituto Superior de Intérpretes y Traductores S.C. offers a Bachelor's program in interpreting. Additionally, the Universidad Madero (UMAD), located in the state of Puebla offers a master's in interpreting and translation designed for the training of future professionals in the field of interpreting.

The University of Quintana Roo offers a BA program in English Language Teaching, for which undergraduates need to fulfill credits distributed in 10 semesters. According to the UQROO web page, the program aims to train professionals to be able to design better and more creative teaching environments using the proper methodology and techniques. Although this program is not aimed at training translators and interpreters, students have the option to take four courses on translation and interpretation.

In spite of the fact that the English B.A. program from University of Quintana Roo (UQRoo) lacks an educational program that targets students interested in interpreting or translating, there are many alumni who seek for jobs in the tourism industry, government institutions or in an educational context where the use of interpreting and translation is used on a daily basis. The experience of these people who have chosen to work in these work areas is diverse and valuable to share as other can learn from it. Therefore, in this monograph, I will describe my own experiences and memories as a novice interpreter. This monograph is aimed at:

- Describing three of the current interpretation techniques: liaison, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting described by Hatim and Mason (2005).
- Self-assessing my own interpretation experience in order to provide insights and recommendations.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

This monograph is intended to be a guideline mainly for those students in the English Language Teaching B.A. program at the Universidad de Quintana Roo or anyone interested in interpreting. Since this monograph is going to include current interpretation techniques, methods and the analysis of such techniques when applied during my experience as a novice interpreter, professors can also benefit as interpretation trainers by knowing in advance the expectations and needs in the professional world and how to prepare the students. Students from the English Language B.A. program would benefit from the suggestions provided in this monograph, since the suggestions regarding interpreting techniques may broaden their range of topics and knowledge about interpretation and the skills needed to develop. By reading this monograph, future or novice interpreters could also learn about future complications that they may encounter.

Professors in the English Language B.A. program and other programs that train interpreters can also benefit from reading this monograph, since it provides interpreting difficulties I have experienced, and the lesson learned from those experiences. This monograph also provides suggestions to improve course syllabi of interpreting and translating from an English alumnus' point of view. Teachers could use these experiences and suggestions and compare them with the current training being provided in the classrooms, so teachers can add, adjust or modify their training courses for the improvement of their students and future interpreters.

## **METHOD**

In order to make this theoretical framework I did a documentary research in order to learn more about interpretation and the strategies that have been developed to facilitate interpreting and to make it more effective. I made my research using different printed books, as well as different available online resources such as monographs and thesis work by graduates of the English Language Teaching B.A. program at the Universidad de Quintana Roo, who were also interested in interpreting, as well as online dictionaries and official documents.

I interviewed each department supervisor in order to have a general and accurate ideas of the importance and responsibilities that rely on each department at the National Institute of Immigration. I checked the contact information available online in order to know what states the institute has offices and where people can seek help from them, to help describe better the contextual framework of this monograph.

I kept a short log that I used during my interpreting experience. The log helped describe personal and accurate memories during my time working at the detention facility located at the Chetumal-Huay Pix Highway No. 578 Industrial neighborhood and providing me with firsthand material I could use to explain the methods I used during my interpretations. This context helped me describe the challenges faced and the choices made.

Finally, I contrasted the needs I encountered when I started working at the National Institute of Immigration, like not having the appropriate vocabulary in a legal or medical situation, or not having experience performing liaison interpreting, and the expectations I had when I started the major. Due to my experience I was able to make suggestions to future interpreting students of the English Language Teaching B.A. program at the Universidad de Quintana Roo and teachers.

## **CHAPTER 1.**

### **Contextual Framework**

The INM (National Institute of Immigration) as stated in their official web page is an independent government agency in charge of regulating the entrance and exit of all foreigners in Mexico. This agency provides different types of services, for different kinds of foreigners. The INM has the task to enforce Mexico's Immigration law, which aims to take care of those non-regular foreigners entering the country respecting their human rights as well as regulating which foreigners can stay and live inside the country. In order to provide these services, the INM has established offices in all states along the country, mainly in the capital cities of the states.

The immigration office I have worked for is located at the Chetumal-Huay Pix Highway No. 578 Industrial neighborhood, just outside Chetumal City in the state of Quintana Roo. This is the only office in the whole state which has a detention facility.

There are two additional offices located in the international bridges that connect Mexico with Belize. In those offices, the immigration officers are the ones in charge to regulate foreigners and Mexicans entrance and exit. They have direct contact with foreign people from all parts of the world. Due to this contact, communication between the immigration officers and people has to be established.

Most of the departments at the INM have contact with foreign people. The department of *Regulation* is where foreigners apply for any kind of status other than the tourist status. The department called *Control* is in charge of validating all the documents in the applications. In order to do this, the immigration officers in charge of the task have to go out to street and locate the foreigner and check their living conditions. Other departments inside the INM offices are *Actuary* and the *Detention Facility* which are responsible for the wellbeing of the foreigners living in the detention facility.

## 1.1 Detention Facility

When a person arrives to the INM offices in Chetumal, they are taken to the Detention Facility. In the Detention Facility there are immigration officers working 24-hour shifts. The immigration officers give them what they need for personal hygiene and foreigner's belongings are stored for safety. Then the foreigner is called on to give his or her statement to the immigration officers. For this, he or she describes how they entered Mexico and what places they have been since they left their home country, and that statement is very important since it goes to the foreigner's legal file and this document helps in determining if the foreigner can stay in Mexico or not. When the foreigner is satisfied with what has been written, both he or she and the immigration officer have to sign the statement.

According to the Federal Immigration Law, second paragraph about the rights and obligations of immigrants, the article 14 states that independently of what the foreigner's legal situation might be, if the person is unable to speak Spanish, a translator or interpreter who knows his or her mother tongue shall be provided to facilitate communication. If the foreigner is deaf but knows how to read or write, the person shall be interrogated by an interpreter.

The Human Rights Law for foreigners transiting in Mexico also employs article 14 of Federal Immigration Law to emphasize the importance of an interpreter or translator during the foreigner's statement. The Federal Immigration Law was last modified on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2011, and the procedures were last modified on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2012. The modified law makes great emphasis on how important it is to make sure the foreigners have a clean and transparent legal procedure, but the institute for which the law was created considers any other language apart from Spanish irrelevant when it comes to hiring new professionals capable to cope with the necessities of the job.

Other government institutions such as Poder Judicial de La Federación (Federal Judicial Authority), Instituto Estatal de la Mujer (National Institute for Women) and the Centro de Readaptación Social (Social Rehabilitation Center) often get in touch with the INM so they can provide an interpreter. Sometimes foreign people break the law, and their

legal problems go way beyond from not being legally in the country; sometimes their problems have to deal with drugs and domestic violence, for example, and the lawyers are unable to communicate with the defendants, witnesses or victims, so those government institutions get in contact with the INM to send someone for the interpreting part of the process.

## **1.2 Healthcare**

Some of these foreigners, who are detained, have been found after trying to run away, and they have starved for days. Some of them dehydrated and it is usual that they are already suffering from a disease they developed in their home country. In these situations, the doctor waits for an interpreter to prescribe any kind of medicine to the patient. At the moment of the medical checkup, the doctor uses some technical words when talking to the patient. Once again, since there are no professional interpreters available, the novice or volunteer interpreter has to be able to make communication happen between the doctor and the foreigner using English as a *Lingua Franca*.

The *Detention Facility* is also in charge of taking those people whose legal procedure dictated that they cannot stay on Mexican soil back to their home countries. This a program called “Policy of repatriation”, in which the immigration officer accompanies the foreign person all the way back to their home countries, which sometimes means going all the way to Argentina or Italy. The department investigates with help from the foreigner’s embassy the legal background and the embassy contacts the foreigner’s family in order to communicate them that their relative is safe and will be returned to his/her country of residence. When the investigation is completed, the immigration officers in the Detention Facility proceed to buy the return tickets and make the required arrangements



### **1.3 International bridges Subteniente Lopez and Chactemal**

The international bridges are located in Santa Elena, which is a cross- border small town located approximately 15 kilometers from Chetumal City in the state of Quintana Roo. These two bridges connect Mexico with Belize. They are crossed daily by thousands of people since tourists traveling from south America use these bridges to get to Cancun City and then to Mexico City to finally get back to their countries.

Even though the rights and obligations are stated in the Immigration Law available at the INM web page online and they are written at the back of the Forma Migratoria Multiple (Tourist card) the foreigner has in their possession at all times during their stay in the country, there are still are moments of confusion at the moment of leaving or entering the country, in this case the immigration officer has to solve doubts and make sure the foreigner understands the rights and obligations when staying in Mexico.

One of the Immigration officers' job is to collect fees. These fees give the tourist the right to stay in Mexico for 6 months doing tourist activities. In addition, the immigration officer checks passports and documents in search of any kind of irregularity that may suggest that they are false, as well as registering private cars at the filters looking for people trying to enter illegally into the country.

## **1.4. Muelle Fiscal**

In Chetumal, there is an international pier that offers the service from two water taxi companies that travel from Caye Caulker, Belize and from San Pedro, Belize to Chetumal every day, one each company per day. The Muelle Fiscal is the authorized area in which the passengers can step into Mexico. People use these water taxis to travel from Cancun to South America and vice versa. Most tourists prefer this way of traveling over the international bridges because it is a faster way to get to San Pedro. The immigration officers in this place experience the same issues when dealing with tourists or foreign people as the other two bridges, international Subteniente Lopez Bridge and International Chactemal Bridge. The officers working in this specific need language and interpretation skills to understand and communicate properly in English when necessary with foreigners.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter, liaison interpreting, consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting are described as well as the methods and abilities needed for a person to develop interpretation skills.

When a person is interested in interpreting, that person should first ask him or herself the reason to be an interpreter. To be an interpreter is an important job and the social significance it holds is big enough to be considered. The social significance of interpreting is the ability to establish communication, considered as one of the great treasures of mankind. When people are unable to communicate among themselves, owing to linguistic or a cultural barrier, the interpreter has the rewarding task of helping people to overcome these barriers. It is rewarding when interpreters realize that they are being useful, and they have an increase in self-esteem by work for someone who needs their knowledge and they are the ones who make the communication possible (Zanier, 2002).

There is not only one technique or method to follow to act as an interpreter. There are different types of interpreting techniques, which vary depending on the situation or where the interpreting takes place. The interpretation techniques that I am going to be focusing on because of my work experience are, liaison or community interpreting also known as dialogue interpreting, consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting, but there are also other types of interpreting that happen under very specific situations such as sight translation, escort interpreting, telephone interpreting, and television interpreting, among others.

Since the act on interpretation can take place basically at any place or situations related to any topic, Kalciková (2014) states that “interpreting is a wide term and as such it encompasses many subcategories” (p.9). Kalciková classifies different types of interpreting depending on the situation the interpreter intends to interpret, such as court interpreting or community interpreting. From my perspective, the most frequent interpreting techniques I used as a novice interpreter were, as mentioned before, **liaison or community interpreting** and **consecutive interpreting**.

In interpreting, sometimes it is necessary to take an active role during the process of interpreting since, sometimes “translation problems” can occur. Translations as well as the act interpreting are processes where complex decisions have to be made. The translation problems arise when the translator or interpreter does not have the necessary information at the right moment (Heizmann, 1994). When the interpreter lacks the necessary information to continue with the interpreting, the interpreter must act as a “mediator”. So whether the interpreter has to conduct either a simultaneous interpretation or a consecutive interpretation, the interpreter has to commit with the action of interpreting since his or her opinion plays an important role on the interpreting process, and since not always the information is verbal.

The interpreter has a role and participates in the process of message exchanges, he resolves turn phenomena or silence. The interpreter can also be influenced by social or linguistic factors like the status of the participants, levels of indirectness and explicit understanding of the progression of talk. The interpreters can influence the direction and result of an interpretation process (Roy, 2000).

The interpreter has to distinguish between gestures and body language, as Heizmann (1994, p. 2) points out that “nonverbal information plays an important role in the interpreting process”. Consequently, the interpreter may not have the necessary information to complete the message and could get an active role in the conversation to fill the information gap that exists between parties the interpreter has to act as a mediator and actively participates in the dialogue.

## **2.1. Simultaneous Interpreting**

Simultaneous interpreting could be considered as the most difficult interpretation technique from the three interpretation techniques in this monograph. Riccardi (2002, p. 76) states that simultaneous interpreting “has been defined in cognitive psychosocial terms as a complex human information-processing activity composed of a series of interdependent skills”, since it requires experience and a level of training above **consecutive interpreting** and **liaison**

**interpreting.** Simultaneous interpreting is considered a highly specialized form of interpreting that requires a special aptitude from the interpreter since he or she has to be able to listen to the speaker and repeat the words in a different language with almost no time in between, which requires a great deal of training and experience (Zannier, 2002).

People interested in this particular technique of interpretation have to be aware that in addition to the training they have to go through, the interpreters usually work under stressful conditions which can be the breaking point for some professional pursuing this career. As Riccardi and Viezze (2003, p. 51) explain “the constant information load, the time factor, the tremendous amount of concentration required, fatigue, the confined environment of the booth, etc. Several empirical studies have confirmed that simultaneous interpreting is indeed a high-stress occupation”. One must consider the day on day stress that the profession required before taking the decision of becoming an interpreter. Sometimes the abilities and or resources of a person cannot match the demands of a job. Stress could be harmful and have physically or emotional consequences in a person’s body. What may be stressful for a person may not be for another one, that is why a person must consider the individual characteristics like personality and coping style (Riccardi and Viezze, 2003).

Simultaneous interpreting happens, as the name suggests it, at the same time as the person who is given the message is talking. In simultaneous interpreting the message is delivered by fragments of speech and the interpreter has to react and interact with the utterances that come one after the other. In order to fully understand the process of simultaneous interpreting one must take into consideration the technical equipment that plays a major role in the process since the interpreter relies on that equipment to receive the input and also to provide the final output of his interpretation.

As Riccardi explains (2002, p. 76) “Interpreters render the source text into the target language with a very short time lag after the speaker’s output thanks to the technical equipment by means of which interpreters hear the voice of the speaker and are heard by the audience”. It can be assumed that, in simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter has to work only with a partial view of context and the structure of the text; this situation makes the interpreter rely more on the emerging texture in order to make sense, because the reception and production of text take place almost at the same time (Hatim and Mason, 2005).

As it was mentioned before, the act of simultaneous interpreting is a complex task that requires the interpreter to be in a constant state of receiving input, analyzing that input

and then making decisions to provide the final rendition, but in order to reach that final state of the final rendition the interpreter must be capable of retain the information in order to analyze while interpreting at the same time. This is where the importance of memory comes into place, since without it the interpreter would not be able to remember the message. This buffer storage is useful for retrieving information after the interpreter is done with the previous message. The interpreter may also do a final check before to see if there is another thing that could fit in the message or start production. Even if the interpreter decides to start production right away and then the interpreters feels a mismatch, the interpreter can go back and the original message would still be there for a retry (Hauenschild and Heizmann, 1997).

### **2.1.1 The importance of texture in simultaneous interpreting**

The interpreter is required to know the necessary elements needed in an interpretation to function in a real-world scenario such as improvisation and cultural knowledge; to perform mental processes, to reformulate or to summarize large renditions of speech. In addition, Hatim and Mason (2005) emphasize that the interpreter needs elements such as context, texture and structure as a point of reference, this elements aid at the moment of having a general idea of what the dialogue to come is going to be about. Depending on the type of interpreting the interpreter can identify which of these elements are missing and can decide what element he or she can focus on in order to understand better the dialogue and anticipate ideas and sentence structures that may come up during the dialogue.

For instance, Hatim and Mason noticed that in simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter has constraints Hatim and Mason (2005, p. 38) stated “in simultaneous interpreting, the input is received piecemeal and the interpreter’s task is basically to react and interact with utterance 1, then utterance 2 and so on, allowing for the inevitable overlap between the various elements of the sequence”. Hatim and Mason stated that since the interpreter has deal with the interpretation in small portions and treat the utterances isolated from the rest, this can affect the cohesion and understanding of the interpretation. If the

interpreter identifies the structure or the context of the dialogue, then it would be easier for him or her to anticipate ideas and words and even complete sentence structures.

By using anticipation strategies, the interpreters can develop an idea of future sentence structures to come and formulate a hypothesis or even negotiate meanings and the vocabulary that might be used according to the texture in the messages, in this way the interpreter can know in advance what context and structure to use in the interpretation.

### **2.1.2. The Effort Model of Simultaneous Interpretation**

The Effort Model was developed basically to be used as a framework for interpretation students. It provides a simple explanation of the processing capacity of the students. Even though the mental operations conducted by the interpreters could be defined as complex, the Effort Model simplified these mental operations into three efforts as presented by Gile (1997, p.198). The listening and analysis effort (L) consists of all comprehension-oriented operations that range from the analysis of the sound that is perceived by the interpreter to the identification of particular words and the final meaning of a sentence. The production effort (P) is defined in the simultaneous mode as a group of extended operations that vary from the first mental representation of the message to be delivered, to the planning of the final rendition or speech to give and even the speech plan implementation. Finally, the memory effort (M) is the high demand short-term memory during the course of the simultaneous interpreting, in which the interpreter has to perform several mental processes in order to come up with a final message to be formulated in the target language (TL).

For instance, the interpreter has to use the short-term memory in between the moment when hearing the message in the source language (SL) when the interpreter has to process the message and the moment when the message is formulated in the target language.

During these times there might be several factors that might put additional difficulty to these processes, bad sound, strong accent, unclear logic, errors in the SL speech, among others. An interpreter may use these definitions in order to understand the processes involved during the course of simultaneous interpreting, but the efforts do not have to act one at the time or independent from one another. When interpreting a speech that consists of three different sections, the efforts could work at the same time addressing different sections of the speech at the same time whether they have to do with memory, production or analysis.



## 2.2. Consecutive Interpreting

Consecutive interpreting is the most common form of interpreting since it covers a wide variety of situations in which the consecutive interpreting is used. These situations can be diverse such as court interpreting, medical interpreting or business interpreting.

As previously mentioned, the personality of a person can be of great help in order to cope with the stress of interpreting. Some people are attracted to the excitement of being in the type of situation where interpreting is needed such as court interpreting where things can take a dramatic turn. The profession of the translators is usually calm, since they spent most of the time working behind a computer or doing research in libraries. On the contrary interpreters move around the world, travel constantly and can work in exciting cases in front of an audience. The interpreter is usually noisy and more outgoing than translators since they have to keep up with the pace of the different scenarios where they have to interpret. Interpreters have to be in the middle of the dramas developing in the courts and pay full attention to what is going on and speak when necessary, so the interpreter cannot be shy or introverted. The cases and laws keep the interpreter studying constantly and they also have to follow the rhythm of moving between courthouses, jails and offices of attorneys (Edwards, 1995).

In addition to having an outgoing personality in order to transmit the message and cope with the interpreting environments properly, the interpreter is required to have also a great memory. Consecutive interpreting consists of two separate phases, which are the reception and comprehension phase and the production or reformulation phase. In the first one the interpreters listen and analyzes the source, then based on the analyzed input the interpreter subsequently takes systematic notes that are design to work as memory triggers for external memory storage in the next phase. In the reformulation or production phase the interpreter then conveys a target text with the notes and memory and the information stored in the memory (Gambier and Doorslaer, 2010).

According to Mikkelsen (1995) quoted in (2000, p.42) in consecutive interpretation the interpreter's memory also plays an important role in the process of interpreting, many interpreters consider consecutive interpreting as the most difficult form of interpreting because of all the information memory has to hold for keeping all aspects of the message in the source language, especially when a question or answer is long or not very coherent.

In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter has to render the first part of an argument or dialogue, for this the interpreter waits for the speaker to finish a sentence and then the interpreter has the opportunity to render the message orally in the target language (Zanier, 2002). Visual notes aid memory in the goal to complete the task, they can be considered as the skeleton structure of the speech. The original message is a group of related ideas and they follow a chronological order or an order of importance for the speaker. The interpreter has to learn how to recognize the importance of those ideas or the importance of following the chronological order of such ideas and create a quick and consistent way of noting them. The notes would become a visual representation of the original message, or course they would have to be clear for the interpreter at least, so that the interpreter can transmit the same message (Gillies, 2017).

Little difference can be found among the different explanations from author regarding the process in interpreting. As Riccardi states (2002, p. 75) "The interpreter listens, analyses the message, memorizes it, takes notes and then delivers it in the target language. The interpretation comes after the original speaker has finished his or her statement".

Daniel Gile (2002) also provides a comprehensible definition of the process of consecutive interpreting. In consecutive interpreting (CI), the interpreter alternates with the speaker translating SL speech segments of at least several sentences after the speaker has completed them and has paused for translation. CI can therefore be viewed as a two-phase process: a listening phase during which the interpreter listens to the SL speech, and generally takes notes, and a reformulation phase, during which the interpreter makes a TL speech from memory and from notes. (p. 167)

As Phelan (2001), quoted in Kalcikova (2014, p.10), adds that in consecutive interpreting "the interpreter listens to a speech while taking notes" and when the speech has ended "delivers the speech in his or her native language", it is important to know that

consecutive interpreting or dialogue interpreting happens only after a segment of speech has been given, and this can vary in length (Zanier, 2002).

As mentioned previously, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (2005) analyzed the procedures carried out by the interpreters during the processes of interpretation. They highlighted the importance of texture, context and structure. These factors are part of a triad in which each of its members play an important role in a specific type of interpretation whether it is simultaneous, consecutive or liaison. Hatim and Mason (2005, p.35) point out that “the consecutive interpreter tends to focus on information relevant to text structure as this outweighs that yielded by context or texture in what is noted down and used as a basis for delivery”.

### **2.2.1 The importance of structure in Consecutive Interpreting**

In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter has to rely on the structure due to the mental and physical processes implemented, and the interpreter has the advantage that there is no need to anticipate fragments of input as in simultaneous interpreting. The interpreter has to wait for the first interactants to finish one portion of a larger message as this portion of message varies in length, this portion of speech or message adds pressure and it is an extra load on the memory of the interpreter.

This additional load on the memory makes it difficult for the interpreter to rely on the texture of the message since something could be omitted or confusing since context becomes too detailed to be retainable, as Kalcikova (2014, p.42) claims: “consecutive interpreters rely on long term memory which fades very rapidly and forces them thus to remember ideas, not words”

Since the interpreter cannot rely on the texture or the context of the text, the interpreters use the note-taking method as it allows them the use of the information received and record it as ideas that relate to one to another. It is important to highlight that the

interpreter records ideas not words. The interpreter uses these ideas as manifestation of texture and context focusing on the source structure of the message.

### **2.3. Interpreting Neutrality**

Sometimes it is considered that the interpreters job needs to stand from a neutral point of view, and that the interpreter has to be absolutely accurate in the renditions provided, but as Heizmann claims (1994. p.08) “when the interpreter feels that the PI (Primary Interactants) gets restless or impatient with the respective other redundancies, he or she might choose to produce shortened renditions”. The job of the interpreter would be in this scenario not to provide a literal interpretation, but an optimum performance of an interpreter in which the person interpreting must be aware of the Primary Interactants’ mannerisms and body language in order to understand the development of the situation and the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the interactants.

The interpreter must also be aware of the cultural differences between the interlocutors as mentioned before. During the course of a dialogue between the interactants and the interpreter may notice a lack of politeness from one of the interactants, knowing that this is due to the ignorance from the other party towards the politeness conventions of the Primary Interactants (Heizmann, 1994).

### **2.4. The translation order as a translation strategy**

According to Heizmann (1994), the translation order is a concept discussed in written translation theories. The supporters of this concept claim basically that the intended use of a target text should have influence in the choosing of the type of translation to be used and the strategies to be applied. A translation order has to be specific about the intended use of the

target text which is essential to know the communicative function intended, but also in the origin of the source text and information about its author.

If we apply the translation order requirements in a consecutive interpreting or dialogue interpreting situation, we must convey:

- The aim of communication.
- The native languages and cultural backgrounds of the Primary Interactants (PI's).
- The professional, personal etc. backgrounds of the PI's, as far as they are relevant for the dialogue situation.
- The relationship between the PI's, e.g. hierarchical positions that may define a dialogue as symmetric or asymmetric, cooperative or non-cooperative, etc.
- Previous communication between the interactants and its results.

The interpreter can decide which of the interpretation strategies to use depending on the specific needs or the cultural background of the PI's to get the best result often taking the active role as a mediator to conduct the interpretation dialogue properly.

## **2.5. Liaison Interpreting**

The third interpretation technique, liaison interpreting, is also known as court interpreting, community interpreting, dialogue interpreting or public service interpreting. According to Roberts (2002), quoted in Kalciková (2014, p. 12), liaison interpreting “enables people who are not fluent speakers of the official language(s) of the country to communicate with the providers of public services so as to facilitate full and equal access to legal, health, education, government and social services”.

Liaison interpreting is similar to simultaneous interpreting as described by Hatim and Mason (2005) in that both techniques depend on a first portion of a longer message and the interpreter has to deliver the translation after that first portion. The difference is that, in the simultaneous interpreting technique, the interpreter embarks on interpreting the rest of the message since the input is constant, whereas in liaison interpreting, the interpreter has to

consider that first portion of message as a self-contained unit, since due to the nature of the technique, the interpreter has to interact and act as a mediator between two parties and, at some point, even to negotiate to make sense of whatever texture of the message with which they are provided.

### **2.5.1 The importance of context in liaison interpreting**

In liaison interpreting, the interpreter relies on the context of the dialogue. Context helps the interpreter determine the speaker's specific meaning within a specific piece of interaction and also understand the relationship between parties during the interaction, the difference in their power structures and how their background may interfere in the relationship during the interaction. The context can help the interpreter understand how the experience and the emotional charge of the situation may affect the way the parties construct their messages. The interpreter monitors the context of the interaction throughout all the interaction since the parties create additional context and experience with their dialogue (Janzen, 2005).

It is difficult for the interpreter to find clues to try to know in advance the lexical choices that the interactants may use to simplify dialogue, as the interpreter has to deal with a small portion of an entire message. The interpreter is expected to come across what is called *Local Cohesion*, which can be explained as a sequence of two or three sentences, which together form a small portion of an entire message, these sentences can be understood and have cohesion on their own without the rest of the message. The sentences that form local cohesion do not necessarily display the intention of the final message, so any indicator of structure within these sentences would hardly show any kind of coherence or an indicator of purpose of a whole speech.

During the process of a liaison interpreting session, questions and answers are to be expected, and since the interactants communicate through the interpreter, the interpreter could ask for further explanations or details from one of them and this would eventually lead to the interpreter negotiating the meaning of what the interactants are trying to convey. The

set of questions and answers and the negotiations between the interactants and the interpreter lead to unpredictability on how the dialogue will develop, which also makes the road to understanding the meaning of lexical choices and cohesion difficult to follow. Since the interpreter can only manage one portion of the interactants messages, the context plays a very important role, as it helps the interpreter o have a broader vision as the dialogue develops.

## 2.6. Training to become an interpreter

Training is an essential part on the way of becoming an interpreter. During training, the learner is able to recognize the wide variety of knowledge that will be required to be known and the processes involved. As stated by Ildikó Horvárt (2005), quoted in Kalciková (2014, p. 19), self-training is not only a key element in the learning process and independent studying, “but also critical thinking, planning and evaluating learning and reflection, a conscious effort on the part of the learner to continuously monitor the learning process from beginning to end”.

A very important part of training is self-training which will pave the way to make the learner able to manage the vocabulary, expressions or topics to be used during future interpretations of different subjects and, as mentioned earlier, self-training is key for developing short-term memory and acquiring a vast vocabulary and the practice will provide the speed in the response time of the interpreter.

To develop the skills the learner will need in the future as an interpreter, the learner needs to memorize and process information, but not exclusively, as the interpreter needs also to acquire pedagogical aptitudes for data transmitting, as Jones (1998) quoted in Zanier (2002, p. 18) points out that interpreters have to be as good as language teachers when transmitting information to others. The information obtained by the learner is the one that eventually will shape future dialogue between parties. Zanier (2002) lists a set of techniques that improve the learner linguistic skills at the beginning of the interpreting training.

- At sight oral translation of names, dates, measures quantities as well as isolated data, to strengthen the short-term memory capabilities.
- At sight oral translation of sentences, paragraphs or even whole texts.

These set of techniques aims to develop the students’ active listening skills, while analyzing the text and processing the final outcome. The techniques aim to gather general knowledge as well as creating in the learner public speech skills and linguistic creativity to overcome interpretation reformulation processes.



- Oral translation of texts originated from audio or audiovisual source.
- Exercises aiming to the development of note-taking and re-expression of the original text in another language.
- Group work, where students can take turns to carry out the consecutive interpreting, taking turn to discuss their individual performances.
- At sight and consecutive translation from the students' mother tongue into the target language.
- Paraphrasing the original text.

Zanier (2002) considers that interpreter training using exercises that emulate the real-world demands is better for the students. These exercises are considered to be excellent, because as Ballardini (1998), quoted in Zanier (2002, p. 16), describes "it involves similar mental processes, namely message reception, conceptualizing and reformulation".

### **CHAPTER 3.**

#### **Memoirs of a novice interpreter**

As an interpreter in my job, I often come across with different people from different nationalities that are detained while they are in search for a better life style; this means that few of those people speak only their native language, which is not always English. The nationalities of people staying at the detention facility at the National Institute of Immigration`s offices vary and are in constant change; therefore, it is hard for me to know what kind of knowledge may be required the next time my translation services are needed.

Heizmann (1994) highlights the importance of having the information needed before interpreting as the decisions necessary to solve the problems rely on available information. However, in my experience, it has been difficult to be ready with the right kind of information needed to be able to interpret properly and solve the interpretation problems that may arise, since there is no way to possibly know in advance the nationality or the background information of the person that I will assist as an interpreter. The Translation Order explains the importance of having the required information beforehand and I see the benefit of having such information available, but in my experience, I have realized that the information needed in the translation order strategy is almost impossible for me to have, making me unable to create possible solutions for future problems that may arise during the interpretation.

To compensate my lack of knowledge and my inability to access valuable information needed for the interpretation, I get actively involved in the conversation between individuals. I consider that the tips and recommendations Heizmann (1994) provides are the most suitable for me because of the nature of my job. Ignoring any information about the person for which the interpreter is required, leaves me in the position where, as mentioned before, I need to get involved actively in the conversation because I may not have the necessary information to complete the messages being exchanged between parties.

Heizmann (1994, p. 2) claims that “nonverbal information plays an important role in the interpreting process”. To be able to rely on non-verbal information to obtain more from the individual has given me the opportunity come closer to the message the individual

is trying to convey as hand gestures and facial expressions play an important part on the way a message is delivered. On this topic Heizmann (1994, p. 2) also adds “the interpreter has to act as a mediator, e.g. for turn taking problems, and actively participates in the dialogue. This corresponds to a so-called triadic dialogue situation”. This is often the most common situation I have ended up having when interpreting. When the individual is not able to speak fluently English, I end up trying to make a whole of the words being uttered together with the non-verbal dialogue and then I may ask a few questions before having enough confidence that I have understood the message to deliver to finally pass the message to the third party. The quality of the process may vary depending on the viewpoint, as a speech interpreted convincingly may be appreciated by one party but resented by the other one. Quality assessments are key components for the process (Larson, 2008).

My most difficult experience when translating has been with two fisher men from Jamaica that were detained due to drug possession charges with the Mexican government at the time of their detention. When the authorities had to process them to put them inside the detention facility they spoke few English word, which were difficult for me to understand due to their native accent. They end up using variations of a same word to describe similar objects or people and hand gestures to express verbs and tenses, like waving their hands back to express past and waving them forward to express future. They did not know how to call Delegate in the immigration office, so they used to word *lady* and raise their hand above their head to express a level of authority, so we agreed that the word *boss* was an easy word they could remember and use, so the two foreigners from Jamaica then on used lady boss when talking about the immigration delegate. It was difficult to draw the line between my mistakes and my accuracies as there was no one who could asses in the process. As mentioned earlier in this monography the pragmatics on the interpretation must be considered as well since they might affect the outcome of the process, even though it was conscious or unconscious.

As mentioned earlier in this monograph the interpreter needs a great amount of vocabulary and general knowledge about other countries and the way their cultures interact with other and the world, so during the early stages of the interpreter to be at the university the student will realize what tools will be of great use and the means to reach them. However, part of being a student and a future interpreter is the collision between the aspirations and

hopes of the students with the reality of how things work in the real world or a real interpreting scenario for interpreters. As part of the real world some of the urges of the interpreter may be foreshadowed by the needs of the workplace towards the interpreter.

The interpreter may have a preference towards simultaneous interpreting that was born from practicing material at the university, but in the interpreters' professional life chances in which the interpreter could work as a simultaneous interpreter are very limited. The professional life of the interpreter is not always going to follow teacher instructions when a real interpreting situation at hand requires improvisation or meaning negotiation.

At the University of Quintana Roo, I took as a part of my curriculum the following subjects, Translation 1 and Translation 2. The translation courses were followed by Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2. During the interpretation courses the teacher implemented a class designed to enhance and, in some cases, create the listening, speaking, symbols creation and memory retrieving skills needed for interpreting.

The interpretation courses were of great importance for me since during these classes my classmates and I would discuss with the all class possible meanings of words and reformulation of the sentence texture, this would eventually create confidence in the students by getting used to hearing and writing exercises.

The teacher targeted consecutive interpreting and the development of the skills and abilities on the students as I mentioned before Zanier (2002) listed techniques required at the beginning of the interpreting training for skill development that will eventual shape future dialogue between interactants. The use of dictionaries and online resources as well as translating names, quantities to strengthen the memory skills during evaluations period helped me understand the importance of having a wide vocabulary and the variety of topics an interpreter needs to have contact with.

A very common situation in class was that the other students and I would have to practice our listening and interpreting skills with extracts from sophisticated articles, these articles often varied from cottage and funeral pyre building to the UN and world economy summits.

As helpful as the practice during the course turned out to be for me, the professional interpreting had little to do with UN and economy related topics. In my professional field I have to deal more with medical and court interpreting more than

anything. I would have preferred that the practice in interpreting classes would have been more related to real life interpreting scenarios which were within the student's job possibilities' reach, such as medical, legal, political or in the tourism industry.

In real life I have come across situation in which the vocabulary practiced during classes was useful and I realize that even if I lack the experience or skills to perform as a simultaneous interpreter because the university facilities did not have the proper equipment, the interpretation courses did game some of the required tools for the craft.

One example of a situation when the course practices where useful was during a visit of a group of workers from the embassy of Canada. During service in my job's shift I had to interview a group of 4 people from Canada that were having problems to communicate the reason of their visit to Mexico to the officer in charge of stamping passport to enter the country. They said:

“We were asked to give several talks in an agriculture and environment summit in Chiapas and we are staying for two weeks in Mexico...”

- (Nos invitaron a dar pláticas en una cumbre de agricultura y medio ambiente llevada a cabo en Chiapas y nos quedaremos por dos semanas México...)

(Personal translation)

In this case I had experienced consecutive interpreting practice in classes and the word summit was frequent in the extracts that the teacher would use so I used symbols that I remembered using for describing the words “summit”, “environment”, the verb -ing, past tense and others to render the message they wanted to convey and pass it to the officer in charge. The problem I noticed is that the interpretation courses goals do not care or aim to satisfy the real-life job needs. It is reasonable that the teacher would have preferred to sacrifice practicing with a text related to a local and simple topic over complex ideas, acronyms, names and symbols to jumpstart the developing of our short-memory retention.

It's been previously described the importance and purpose of translating names, quantities and isolated data. Translating paragraphs or complete texts are considered an “excellent exercise” as quoted by Ballardini (1998) due to the processes carried out by the students' mind receiving, conceptualize and reformulate the information Zanier (2002).

## Ideas over context and texture

As a worker that acts as an interpreter on occasions I now appreciate the importance of focusing on ideas over context and texture, as the situations in which I have to interpret consecutively are more than the ones in which I have to use Liaison Interpreting.

In consecutive interpreting I mentioned how Kalcikóva deemed important to extract ideas from the dialogue as “long term memory which fades very rapidly” therefore the interpreters should focus on get “ideas, not words” Kalcikóva (2014, p. 42).

The importance of focusing on ideas during the interpretation classes was highlighted throughout the two interpreting courses as the teacher would read extracts from economic, oil, and UN articles with technical term and specialized words.

The teacher expected us to choose freely symbols and letters with a particular feature that represented specific ideas such as money, worldwide, investment, pollution and so on. As he read the texts we would use those symbols to save time since it is hard to keep track and our memory could omit or make a mistake, so we would rather focus on the idea or several ideas instead of context or texture.

After practice the teacher would ask us to paraphrase the original text, realizing that when put together the ideas are the structure of the text. Kalcikóva (2014) suggests due to the additional load that context puts on the brain to focus on ideas not words since long-term memory fades rapidly and contexts eventually is too detailed to be retainable. The teacher would evaluate if the structure was well organized and the ideas manifested really conveyed what the texts expressed.

As an interpreting teacher I now realize he focused on practice and attaching symbols to ideas more than anything else, to make the students able to transmit what they are listening in the SL into the TL effectively.

In order to transmit the message effectively I established a set of rules that represented if a verb was in the past or future tense, or if the word was a derivation of a noun or a verb, for instance my symbol for the word **investment** was a capital v (V) with a circle inside it, so the symbol for the word **investors** which is a derivation of investment with the

addition of the suffix –**ors** was the capital v but with the letters **rs** that represent for me the plural form of the noun(Vrs).

If the general idea of the extract in that particular part of the text was that people put money into a building project and the past tense is key to make sense, a simple line in front of the symbol would give me a hint of the past tense being present in the original text, a line on the opposite direction would give me a hint of the future tense presence.

This is what a sentence using some of my symbols and general ideas would look like, of course always trying to not let any important part of the original idea, meaning or structure out of the final message.

Example:

... 3 groups of investors gathered with the board of directors to discuss future projects...

B

3G Vrs     GTR            Drs discuss      Ps

As mentioned before the interpreting student needs to acquire a pedagogical essence, as Jones (1998) quoted in Zanier (2002. P, 18) explains “that interpreters have to make sure that their capabilities of transmitting data are effective, just as if they were language teachers”.

At work, my interpreting situation needs rely heavily on consecutive interpreting and occasionally on liaison interpreting, as foreigners in the detention facility get medical assistance I had to come up with a simple set of symbols are most common to hear during a medical examination between a doctor and a patient.

During my first experiences as an interpreter a person in the detention facility expressed that he required special medical care due to a car accident he suffered years back, but at that time I was not able to understand what he was asking for specifically.

*...I had a car accident some years ago and I have **seizures** because of **blunt force trauma** in the head, so I could fall at any moment and hit my head again, so I need special medicine and I need to check my **BP** all the time...*

At the moment I lack the medical vocabulary to know that seizures are involuntary movement attacks that some people might get head injuries or epilepsy, I had to look for expressions including blunt force trauma, which is a kind of injury suffered when being hit with a hard object and that BP is blood pressure.

I set a group of specific symbols that may come in handy when talking with a person in a similar situation and those symbols help me summarize concepts and ideas that may require a long time if written. At the time of the interactions between the foreigner and the doctor saving time is paramount because as mentioned by Kalcikóva the dialogue gets “too detailed to be retainable” Kalcikóva (2014, p.42).

The interpretation of the foreigner’s message would include symbols that represent the important ideas in the message which are the car accident suffered years back at the time of speaking, the trauma to the head and the special medication along with the BP monitoring required by the foreigner.

- Zx - Sizure
- BFT\* - Blunt Force Trauma
- BP -Blodd Pressure

These symbols would work together along with the rest of the symbols to provide tense and structure in meaning to separate the different elements in the dialogue, separating the important ideas from the secondary ones.

On occasions I have been taken to offices outside the INM in order to help other government institutions with interpreting on those occasions I lacked the time, online devices and dictionaries. I would later ask the legal authority for background information to anticipate possible sentence structure and vocabulary to come to assign specific symbols during the note-taking process.

In those situations, when the interactants used a technical word or a sentence structure that I would know I would switch to a different word that expressed the same idea in the SL. I tried not to switch to ideas or words that went too far from the original dialogue, for the safe keeping of the message structure as a whole.

...los soldados que te *detuvieron* aquella ocasión fueron *reassignados* a otros estados... ...the soldiers that *arrested* you at that time were **transferred** to other states...

At the moment of the dialogue it was unknown to me if the situation ended up in an arrest or prison detention or if the soldiers involved in the detention or arrest were just send to another soldier camp or actually reassigned and the paperwork involved in the reassignment.



When the dialogue needed the interpreter interference I focused on a simple idea. A more relatable idea makes it easier for the second interactant to understand. The idea was that the soldier was no longer in the city to testify against them. When interpreting I have had to make decisions like the one I just mentioned, always trying not to sacrifice or miss the point of the original idea.

## **Applying Theory**

I believe that a professional should never stop learning. A professional should always try to improve and try avoiding making mistakes and repeating those mistakes. During my first experiences as a novice interpreter in my job I used to rush in and start interpreting the dialogue between the interactants.

I noticed that it was difficult for me to catch up with their dialogue as I would not take notes and interpret the dialogue asking the foreigner for a pause between ideas to convey the message to the second interactant. I used to sacrifice the quality of the interpretation in order to facilitate the procedures established in the detention facility regarding time and place since place, since there is no suitable office or place for a proper interpretation.

I also skipped note-taking or using symbols, as I considered that authorities would not allow such technique as they were more concerned with practicality and preferred to talk with the foreigners at any given moment the authorities were available in a more direct way. I would just interpret the dialogue in the middle of a regular office with other factors such as background noise from people talking and using office equipment that affected the outcome of the dialogue between interactants and the interpreter.

Today I know better and after establishing the importance of a proper interpreting environment I applied some of the theory in this monograph. At the time of interpreting I found difficult to catch up with the dialogue as I had to formulate ideas about the dialogue between interactants. I did not check the cultural, legal or medical background of those involved in the dialogue, so I had to create ideas at the moment of hearing the dialogue, this

made me able to create concepts or ideas and follow the structure of the dialogue at the same time.

## **The translation order**

Experiences have thought me that the translation order must be applied in order to prevent any inconsistencies between the SL and TL. In the moments preceding an interpretation I would now ask for background information to have a general idea of what to expect from the dialogue and the possible ideas or concepts that might be expressed or sentence structures that might be used during the conversation.

The translation order provides me with enough information to set up a group of symbols to make a better use of the time without sacrificing the context of the dialogue. Recalling Heizmann (1994), he explained the importance of the background information of the translation order theory is of great importance because of the fact that it has as mentioned before as much influence in the choosing of the type of translation to be used and the strategies to be applied.

Every person has a unique background that cannot repeat itself, that is why I dedicate the time to finding out those peculiarities in each person to identify the aim of communication. It is necessary to find out the kind of communication that the interactants are going to have, since sometimes the foreign person may not speak English very well, so words need to be established to detect specific ideas during dialogues.

As Heizmann (1994) suggests it is necessary to know if the foreigner had any altercations with previous interpreters or legal authorities in the detention facility because the interpreter needs to know in advance if the dialogue is going to be cooperative or non-cooperative. Legal issues may put the foreigners in a mood where they may turn violent or use aggressive language, so I, as the interpreter modulate the communication between the interactants and its possible results.

## **Liaison Interpreting**

One of the objectives of the INM is to help people to get medical and legal assistance before they return to their home country. At times the foreigners in the detention facility come from countries like Jamaica where they live in almost isolated villages far from main cities, where they have no access to education and other services.

These people often speak in dialect, mixing English with peculiarities from their village areas, this makes communication difficult to reach but as Roberts (2002), quoted in Kalciková (2014, p.12), stated liaison interpreting “enables people who are not fluent speakers of the official language(s) of the country to communicate” in order to have access to services.

When interpreting the dialogue between the interactants it is necessary to get involved in the dialogue in order to negotiate meanings establish ground words for both interactants. The foreigner may not know how the words for boat, medic, food or water in or Spanish so the interpreter’s involvement during the conversation or dialogue is present at all times.

On my experience when foreigner is telling the story of the events that took him to that situation, the foreigner may not follow a straight line when telling the story and the legal authorities may ask questions and vice versa. The interpreter needs as mentioned before to focus on the context of each portion of the interactants messages, due to unpredictability on how the dialogue will develop.

## **Simultaneous Interpreting**

The role for Simultaneous interpreting at the INM is non-existing, since the majority of the interpreting needs required by legal authorities rely on consecutive interpreting. The interaction between legal authorities and the foreigners is often very limited, being necessary the involvement of the interpreter at times to negotiate the meaning of words and develop and explain legal and technical words.

Moreover, the INM detention facilities do not have the equipment or areas required for conducting simultaneous interpreting. From my experience at the INM, interpreting is not given the importance it deserves and the heads of the departments or the immigration officers do not understand how important it is, even though it represents our country for those entering, leaving or filling for a permanent or a temporary resident card.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

This monograph was intended to be used as a guideline for those interested in developing their interpreting abilities for their professional performance. Since this monograph describes situations that helped me define the changes I had to make and the skills I had to improve, students can interpret this monograph as a first-hand look at what to expect in the future. I analyzed the moments where I lacked the time or information needed when interpreting and I remembered not being satisfied with the finished result, having in mind that the work of an interpreter is very important.

I believe that this monograph offers a decent starting point for future interpreters, as they can read from my experience not only what changes or adjustments I had to make to be able to be helpful at work when I was needed to act as an interpreter, but the reasons for such changes. The experiences listed within this work are very similar to others I have been through during my time working at the INM (Instituto Nacional de Migración). Some experiences are similar to others only varying in the type of nationality, topic or age or the foreigner, this means this a pattern that often repeat itself when an interpreter is needed. Future interpreters can concentrate in the skills and topics needed in those situations and use them as an advantage and use them when needed.

This monograph has helped me to offer a guideline for students and also to go over the procedures and methods I use in order to be prepared as a professional. I have made suggestions at work for the improvement and better results of the interviews when interpreting, but still there is no proper space and tools in the work place, this is harmful to my result as an interpreter because there is no a quiet place where I can concentrate in utterance of the person, I often interpret in the middle of an office while everyone around me is talking and office noise is in the background. I had the intention of starting a log describing in detail verbs, nouns, topics or the foreigners background from in order to establish base topics and phrases commonly used, this in order to beneficiate this monograph, the students and myself. The work conditions made it impossible for me to start the log, being almost impossible as there is no way to know in advance weather you are going to be called to interpret for the detention facility or another government institution

asking for collaboration from the INM or if the interpreting is going to be conducted by another person because I was not on duty.

The INM has no official interpreting or translating department. It can be against common sense that an institution whose objective is to help foreigners from all parts of the world that arrive to Mexico, has no department specialized in making sure communication between the immigration officers and foreigners is carried out sound or that the officers working for the institute have the basic skills for communicating with English speaking people. In overall one thing that always was an obstacle is that no one is aware of the importance of interpreting and as such they do little to beneficiate it.

The main difficulty was not knowing anything about the person before interpreting, so basically I just ended up interpreting in the dark, without any knowledge about the person, age, gender, name or even what the topic was going to be about, the situation would end up being more complicated as the authorities conducting the interviews were often more interested in asking questions that needed complicated answers regarding the situations that made the person travel through different countries ending in Mexico, without me getting any briefing or important information about the case. I consider that one of the main restrictions in the work environment would be the time and the little resources provided. There is no library, books or dictionaries that can be used to help the people working in the detention facility and whenever some books are donated they are lent to foreigners staying at the detention facility and the books end up being vandalized and torn apart to write notes or letters. Moreover, the officers are constantly being changed for others and shifted back again on monthly periods, this prevents for any type of protocol for the improvement in the communications between the immigration officers and the English speakers can be established, regardless of the fact that for the authorities running the institute, preparing the officers in interpreting or translating is not important.

By providing my personal experience, future interpreting students and interpreting teachers can have a general view of the work environment and the shortcomings in my particular workplace. They can take those experiences and shape them into a curriculum in order to be better and more prepared interpreters. They can know in advance people's

overview about interpreting and explain the importance of it to those who take it lightly and not giving the importance it needs.

The students can identify what mistakes I made and avoid making the same when interpreting in the future. Teachers can have a real-life example which can help them change topics in the courses, add vocabulary or even what skills need more training to developed interpreting skills even further than what they deem appropriate. I provide a real-life experience which the students and teachers can know what difficulties, former students meet after completing the coursework and how they can prepare for them.

I recommend to the University of Quintana Roo to pay a close look to the students of the English major needs according to the field they are considering taking in their professional lives, the curriculum as of today covers only a very narrow spectrum in which the students have to train themselves to be able to have the required skills and knowledge for jobs different than the field of teaching.

An important part of the students enrolling the English language major will end up moving to the north area of the state of Quintana Roo to try to get jobs in the tourist industry and things related with it. The English language major is used as the means to an end, which from my experience is not always teaching. I have seen students using their English language major degree to apply for jobs as receptionists or sales people in hotels, which for me is sad in two ways, one because the time an effort put in those hours trying to get good grades in subjects like philosophy or grammar is wasted, its valuable knowledge that will not be used by the student as the job profile requires something entirely different. The other way is because teachers in the English language mayor prepare themselves to offer good classes and mentoring to a great number of students during the mayor, helping them with the speaking abilities and writing skills, but the effort and all the knowledge could end up sitting there unused.

My suggestion is to take into consideration the different needs from different types of students that need the major for different reasons. The English language major might had been created to form English language teachers or academics, but as there are students with other possibilities in mind seeking help fulfilling their dreams of becoming professionals.

I believe the University of Quintana Roo as a house of studies should meet those needs because they rely on the University to prepare them for life, which is not often as we believe it is at age 18 when most of us start attending the university.

As this work is about my experience as a novice interpreter in my professional life I can suggest that additional interpreting courses be available. The English language major offers two interpreting courses after finishing translation 1 and translation 2 courses. Having the possibility to specialize in interpreting after the base courses in the major are finished would be of paramount importance for those interested in developing speaking skills and interpreting practice. To broaden the topics during the interpretation practices would make the students feel comfortable and be fit to perform in any type of work environment. Additional training could provide experience that otherwise is none existing with the current curriculum.

Future interpreters should never feel comfortable with the skills and knowledge that they have, they should always thrive to be better. As the professionals they should always state the importance of their work and never, ever let others undermine their work, I believe it is the only way we can start making a difference and make people start noticing the importance of interpretation.



## REFERENCES

- Baker, M. (2011). *In other Words: A coursebook on translation*. New York. Routledge.
- Bassnett, S. (2014). *Translation*. New York. Routledge.
- Berk-Selingson, S. (2017). *The bilingual courtroom. Court interpreters in the judicial process*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press.
- Chesterman, A. & Wagner, E. (2010). *Can theory help translators?: a dialogue between the Ivory Tower and Wordface*. New York. Routledge.
- Edwards, A.B. (1995). *The practice of court interpreting*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
- Gambier, Y. & Doorslaer, L. V. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of translation studies: volumen 1*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
- Gentzler, E. (2008). *Translation and identity in the americas*. New York. Routledge.
- Gerver, D. & Sinaiko, H.W. (Eds.). (1978). *Language interpretation and communication*. Plenum Press. New York.
- Gile, D. (2002). *Conference Interpreting as a Cognitive Management Problem*. London. Sage.
- Gillies, A. (2017). *Note-Taking for consecutive interpreting: a short course*. New York. Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Mason, I. (2005). *The translator as communicator*. New York: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Mason, I. (1997). *The translator as communicator*. New York: Routledge.
- Hauschild, C. & Heizmann, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Machine Translation and translation theory*. Mouton de Gruyter. New York.
- Haywood, L. Thompson, M & Hervey, S. (2009). *Thinking Spanish translation. A course in translation method: Spanish to English*. New York. Routledge.
- Heizmann, S. (1994). *Human strategies in translation and interpreting*. Retrieved from <http://www.mt-archive.info/BCS-1994-Heizmann.pdf>

- Janzen, T. (2005). *Topics in signed language interpreting*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
- Kalcikova, T. (2014). *Technology in interpreter training*. Brno: Masaryk University.
- Larson, M.L. (Ed.). (2008). *Translation: theory and practice, tension and interdependence*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
- Munday, J. (2012). *Introducing translation studies*. New York. Routledge.
- Pochhacker & M. Shlesinger (Eds.) *The interpreting studies reader* (pp. 163-176). New York: Routledge.
- Pochhacker, F. (2004). *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Riccardi, A. (Ed.). (2002). *Translation studies: perspectives on an emerging discipline*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Riccardi, A. & Viezzi, M. (Eds.). (2003). *The interpreters' newsletter: number 12*. Università degli Studi di Trieste. Trieste.
- Roy, C.B. (2000). *Interpreting as a discourse process*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Russell, D.L. (2000). *Interpreting in legal contexts: Consecutive and simultaneous interpreting*. Calgary. University of Calgary.
- Toury, G. (2012). *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
- Venuti, L. (2018). *The Translator's Invisibility*. New York. Routledge.
- Zanier, V. A. (2006). *Basic Elements of Consecutive Interpreting*. Chetumal: Universidad de Quintana Roo.
- Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG) (n.d.) *Maestría en Traducción e Interpretación Inglés-Español*. Retrieved February 11, 2016 from <http://www.uag.mx/maestria/traduccion-ingles-espanol/>
- Universidad Madero (UMAD) (2016). *Maestría en Interpretación y Traducción*. Retrieved February 11, 2016 from <http://www.umad.edu.mx/maestria-en-interpretacion-y-traduccion.html>

Instituto Superior de Intérpretes y Traductores (ISIT) (2016). *Instituto Superior de Intérpretes y Traductores*. Retrieved February 11, 2016 from [http://www.isit.edu.mx/el\\_ISIT.html#](http://www.isit.edu.mx/el_ISIT.html#)

Secretaria de Gobernación, Instituto Nacional de Migración (n.d). Retrieved February 11, 2016 from [http://www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Oficinas\\_y\\_Horarios](http://www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Oficinas_y_Horarios)

Secretaria de Gobernación, Instituto Nacional de Migración (n.d). Retrieved July 29, 2018 from <https://www.gob.mx/inm>

Secretaria de Gobernación, Instituto Nacional de Migración (n.d). Retrieved July 29,2018 From <https://sre.gob.mx/component/phocadownload/category/2-marco-normativo?download=294:ley-de-migracion-dof-25-05-11>