Study on "Deverbalization" in Teaching Note-Taking in Consecutive Interpretation*

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Abstract—In consecutive interpreting, mastery of note-taking in interpretation cannot only relieve the pressure of interpreters, but also provide a clear logic structure, and improve the quality of target langrage output. Note-taking also needs deverbalization, and "focus-on-meaning". The author tries to figure out teaching strategies of note-taking in consecutive interpretation (CI) according to years of study on interpreting teaching practice. In interview to the students and careful observation to student interpreters' notes, "focus-on-meaning" can improve efficiency of note-taking in consecutive interpretation.

Keywords: note-taking in interpretation, memory, "focus-on-meaning", deverbalization, study on interpreting teaching practice

I. INTRODUCTION

Good memory is an essential skill of an interpreter, but notes play an indispensable role in consecutive interpretation (CI). In CI, interpreter have to listen to and discern the information of the source language, carry out logical analysis, short-term memory and note-taking at the same time, and then continue to listen to the subsequent information of the speaker. Within a few seconds after the speaker finishes his speech, the source language information must be expressed in the target language by combining short-term memory and notes. This kind of high-intensity work places high demands on the interpreter's memory. However, people's short-term memory capacity is limited, so interpreting notes play a very important role. A good command of interpretation note-taking can not only reduce the memory pressure of the interpreter, but also provide a clear logical framework for the interpreter. Note taking is not dictation, nor shorthand. Note-taking is an aid for the interpreter to listen and understand in the work of interpretation, to grasp the meaning and extract information for expression, not to copy the original text. It can play a role of "reminder", and it is the extension and supplement of memory. Therefore, note-taking requires the interpreter to grasp the meaning of the speaker's speech, to "deverbalize" the original form and record the meaning in the fastest and clearest way.

II. "DEVERBALIZATION" AND "FOCUS-ON-MEANING"

The School of Paris Hermeneutics put forward the hypothesis of triangle translation process; that is to say, the process of meaning generation "deverbalization" is added in the understanding and expression. It holds that interpretation is not a simple language conversion, but also a process of natural separation of language meaning and language form. According to this theory, in the process of interpretation, between the understanding of utterance and the reproduction of the target language, meaning will "separate" from the specific expression of the language and exist independently. Interpretation theory holds that interpretation is a kind of communication activity, and the task and goal of interpretation is to convey the meaning rather than the language symbol itself. The essence of interpretation should be explanatory. The target of interpretation is not the language, but the meaning of the speaker. Liu Heping pointed out that "although all kinds of languages need unique ways of expression, their thoughts are interlinked. Once you grasp the meaning of information, you can choose to express it in a free way." [1] It can be seen that the core of the school of hermeneutics, namely, deverbalization, requires "focusing on meaning" in interpretation. "Meaning is in a state of consciousness in the brain after it is produced, which can be expressed in any form of language" [1], that is to say, it can even be expressed in symbols.

III. THE ROLE OF LOGICAL ANALYSIS BY "FOCUSING ON MEANING" IN NOTE-TAKING IN CI

In fact, in the whole process of interpretation, it is necessary to use "deverbalization". In the listening stage, the interpreter should pay attention to the information of the speaker rather than the speech symbols; in the short-term memory stage, the voice of the original language is fleeting. If an interpreter wants to remember the language form of the original language, no matter how good the interpreter is, he cannot remember the speech lasting for several minutes. However, he may quickly grasp the meaning of the original language, and the meaning will stay in the brain for a longer time; in the expression stage, a good interpreter is not word for word interpretation, but the extraction of information, that is, That is to say, after obtaining the meaning of the original language, it can be flexibly reorganized with expressions that conform to the language convention of the

target language. As a matter of fact, many people neglect that note-taking need to "deverbalize" and then "focusing- on meaning".

Good interpretation notes can stimulate the translator to analyze the source language content, which is the process of "logical analysis" of the source language information. The process of interpreting note taking is like picking out pearls from a container mixed with sand and pearls. There are large and small pearls, and they need to be strung with a string in order of size to form a beautiful bracelet, and then sent to others. Here "sand" is unimportant information in the speech and "pearl" is key information in the speech. Interpreters need to learn to identify the "key information". The "string" is the logic in the speech, and the "bracelet" is the notes with key information and clear logic recorded by the interpreter. The process of giving the bracelet to others is the process of expressing in the target language.

The content of note-taking is the logical clue of the source language information captured by the interpreter through "deverbalization", using simple words, symbols and lines to record the logical relationship and important information points of the source language information. Therefore, unlike ordinary notes, interpreting notes can not replace memory, and a large amount of information needs to be memorized by the brain.

However, interpretation notes can play a role of "signpost", indicating the logical framework of the source language. Sometimes the information in short-term memory is not forgotten, but it is difficult to extract because of the large amount of information. When the interpreter rereads the notes and recombines the expression, the notes can play a role of signpost. At the stage of expression, the notes can help the interpreter quickly find the corresponding memory in the brain and activate it, so as to express the meaning of the source language in the target language, thus, greatly improving the efficiency of expression and accuracy of information. The logical analysis of "focus-on-meaning" can also deepen the translator's memory of the original information and reduce the memory load.

IV.   A PRACTICAL STUDY OF "FOCUS-ON-MEANING" STRATEGY IN THE TEACHING OF NOTE-TAKING IN CI

Because interpreting notes have the characteristics of "personalization", and inappropriate notes can interfere with the interpreter's understanding and memory of the information, many people think that the teaching of note-taking is unnecessary. "Beginners lack active processing and memory of source language information, blindly listen and record, and they do understand the information at all. When they try to express the source language, they entirely rely on notes, so the effect of interpretation is definitely poor." [2]

Many years' of teaching practice has proved that notes may distract an interpreter's attention and affect the analyzing and extraction of the source language information by the student interpreter at the early stage of the interpretation training, which has become one of the biggest interference factors in consecutive interpretation. As students

focus on what symbols or what language to use for notes, the listening and logical analysis of the information, which affects the short-term memory. As a result, they cannot understand and express the things recorded in notes. However, teaching practice has proved that note taking is very necessary and feasible.

Note taking plays an important role in the teaching of interpretation, and it is also a difficult point. The author has been teaching interpretation for 10 years. At the end of each semester, students have been asked to write down their interpretation learning experience, problems and approaches, and they have been also interviewed. According to the students' feedback, the most difficult thing to master in interpreting learning is interpreting notes. The author has done a lot of research on the difficulties in the training of notes. The main difficulties are as follows: first, student interpreters rely too much on notes while ignoring short-term memory during listening to the speaker. Some students take too much notes, so the speed of note-taking cannot keep up with the speaker's speaking speed, as a result, they have no time to listen and comprehend. During the whole process of listening and note taking, the student interpreter is in such a hurry that a lot of information was missing. Therefore, the notes interfere with the process of listening and understanding. Second, although they know the principle, format and methods of note taking, they are not familiar with note symbols in interpretation, lack of practice and experience, and do not adapt to the speed of the source language. It takes a lot of energy and time to choose what to record information, which language and symbols to apply. 3. They are not familiar with the format and logical framework of notes. Some students concentrate on listening to the speaker, and they do not split attention for taking enough notes. To some students, the notes are illogical. As a result, they cannot understand the notes they take when interpreting. In this way, interpretation notes do not play an auxiliary role in memory.

The main reasons for the above problems are: there is no analysis of the source language information when taking notes; they only write down the source language content mechanically, without many note-taking skills, no logic, no abbreviations and simplified symbols, so the notes are difficult to read. The author has summed up a set of effective teaching methods of note taking in interpreting and achieved good results, according to years of teaching and practicing experience in conference interpretation.

A.   *"Three steps" in note-taking teaching and learning in CI*

First step, at the beginning of note taking teaching, students should not rush to learn note-taking symbols or listen to audio materials to take notes, but first to solve the following two problems: first, at a high level of both listening and short-term memory in interpretation, why do they need to study note taking in interpretation? Second, let the students know exactly what to take as notes, and learn to screen information effectively.

To the first question, students may get the answer. Due to limited short-term memory capacity, interpreters cannot remember all the important content in a long speech. Moreover, numbers, proper nouns, etc. are required to be accurate in interpretation, but brain memory is easy to produce deviation. Therefore, in order to ensure the quality of interpretation, it is necessary to make use of interpretation notes in long-term delivery. Notes are extension and supplement of memory.

To the second question, after discussion, students should be clear that notes should record Keywords (the meaning is recorded, not necessarily the words in the original text), which can trigger the recall of the overall content. Numbers, proper nouns, etc. need precise transcoding, which is a great burden on memory. The listing words in a speech, such as economy, culture, trade, etc., should be taken down. Words indicating logic of the speech, such as however, moreover, because, etc. (the frame of short-term memory).

Through the above methods, students will really understand the necessity of interpreting notes and how to choose the content of notes.

Second step, how to take interpretation notes? In this step, the student interpreters learn the principles and methods of interpreting notes, and the layout of interpreting notes. In this step, students can be given a few pages of words commonly used in interpreting notes before class, creating their own note symbols, and then the teacher introduces commonly used interpreting note symbols in class, such as "meetings", "good morning, ladies and gentlemen", "developing countries", "rapid economic growth", "three months ago".

The main notes include idiomatic symbols, for example, ¥ , $ indicating money, ☆ important things, and ! representing attention.

Mathematical symbols, such as $\approx + - = > < \neq$, etc.

picture marks, ⊙ meeting, arrows, English alphabets or words, US-America,

y→year; c→century; gov→govornment; d →day (d ·tomorrow; d today) etc. abbreviations, such as APEC, SAR→Special Administrative Region.

The demonstration and introduction of these symbols can open up ideas for students to create their own personalized symbols. Interpretation notes, like brain memory, record semi-finished products or information after analyzing and understanding, rather than noting original words.

Both the source language and the target language can be used to record interpretation notes. As long as the principle of "the most efficient and clear" is followed, and the combination of similar and cross class symbols is used, it can often help the interpreter record the speech more accurately and conveniently, for example: eco 合 → economic cooperation, HK→people of Hong Kong.

After mastering these individual symbols, teachers should guide students to find "pearls" from the sand and learn how to connect them with "string" to make "bracelets".

Teachers can demonstrate the format and layout of notes to students on blackboard through practice. The main principles and methods are: vertical layout, the indented form, timely shifting to the next line, the principle of superposition, marking the end, etc., so that students can form a good habit of interpretation notes from the very beginning.

Third Step: the split of attention between memory and notes.

The author has carried out experiments in the interpretation class, and selected English materials with slow and simple delivery speed in the source language. It is found that students' processing of the received information is also in a state of overload. The note-taking process shows that it is not automatic enough, which consumes a lot of energy, and there are a lot of blank spaces in the notes, which will result in information missing in the output of the interpretation. That is to say, most of the new learners of notes are unable to balance the attention split of notes and brain memory. To break through this bottleneck, first, they should be familiar with the notes symbols constantly, so that they can skillfully use them and write down quickly; secondly, they should choose familiar symbols and avoid making them up temporarily; thirdly, when listening to the source language, they should listen to the key words, sense groups and information, instead of listening to word by word, to "deverbalize" and use both hands and brain.

The author has taken the following steps during the teaching of notes: 1. practice students' note-taking from phrase notes to short sentence notes, then to paragraph notes, when students are very proficient in note-taking symbols, teachers can choose a whole text to train them. The teacher can select a large number of Chinese and English phrases in interpretation materials to train the students to make note symbols automatic. The teacher read words or phrases at a faster speed, such as: economic development, education reform, etc., and students are required to note quickly, and then read the notes in source language or target language. 2. Visual note training, that is to let students write notes while reading the paragraph or whole text, so that students can not only be more familiar with their own interpretation note symbols, but also master the format and layout of interpretation notes, to lay a good foundation for later listening while taking notes. Especially at the beginning, the training of visual notes is very important. If students are asked to take notes while listening to an English material, at the beginning, they not only have to comprehend and analyze, but also have to select what to take as notes, and figure out what symbols to apply, as well as the note framework and logical structure. Because they cannot handle multitasks at the same time, the split of attention between brain memory and notes is uneven, as a results, the notes are in a mess at last. When reproduction into the target language, they cannot remember and recognize the notes at all, so their confidence is very affected, and they might lose interest in notes. During years of teaching, the author has found that students should first practice visual note-taking, learning to select the content to be noted, being familiar with the symbols, understanding the principles and framework of notes, analyzing the logic of

information, and "deverbalization" and "focus-on-meaning" when taking notes. Then students can exchange notes. Their enthusiasm increases greatly, thus stimulating interest in notes. With this foundation, listening while noting simple materials might be very effective. 3. Listening while taking notes. It is suggested to train students Chinese-English interpretation notes first, and then English-Chinese notes, because listening Chinese less pressure on students, so they can better balance the attention between the brain memory and notes, and make notes logical and easy to decode. 4. Practice by topic, and then comprehensive training. Through the whole training process, students can form a set of relatively fixed and personalized note-taking methods, which can be used freely. During the above training process, the teacher's demonstration plays a very important role.

B. Cultivating students to build a framework of notes through logical analysis and "deverbalization"

The real difficulty of taking notes is not to write more or less notes, using source language or target language, using symbols or arrows. The emphasis of notes should focus on training students to listen to a speech, memorize by analyzing information while writing down notes. This is a "multi-task". As Seleskovic said, "For experienced translators, notes can be invaluable, but for those who are learning to translate, ... note-taking can be an obstacle in the beginning. Distraction, multi-tasking can only be achieved through continuous practice" [3].

The author has done an empirical study of E-C interpretation for the junior students of translation major, and has found that the quality of students' interpretation has a lot to do with notes. Moreover, good interpretation, to a large extent, reflects that both the interpreter's short-term memory and notes use the mechanism of "deverbalization", and then "focus-on-meaning", so as to clearly record the logical framework of the source language, which plays the role of road signs.

"In particular, interpreters sometimes refer to the role of visualization in the memory of the original text. Indeed, when notes are recorded according to specific and concise rules of layout, they can be regarded as a visual memory prompt to display the logical structure of the original text [4]." It can be seen that the logical analysis of notes also plays a role of "visual cue" for memory.

For example: In 1984, China sent a delegation of more than 350 people to attend/ take part in 23rd Olympic Games in Los Angeles. They returned with great success, and won 15 gold medals, 8 silver medals and 9 bronze medals, so it ended the history that China has never won a gold medal at the Olympic Games.

As shown on the right ("Fig. 1"), it is the author's demonstration of notes for students.
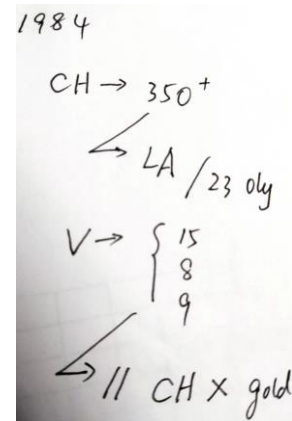

Fig. 1. China in Olympic Games in 1984.

In this way, the notes clearly show the logical framework of the source language when students When the students finish the notes and start to express in the target language, the notes play a role of "visual cue". In this way, students can easily express the logic and meaning of the original language. And the picture above shows that the interpreter's "focus-on-meaning" when taking notes.

The author has done a lot of research on "what is the relationship between the amount of notes taken by student interpreters and the quality of interpretation output", and found that the relationship is not very close, but more lies in the degree of the interpreter's "deverbalization" and the degree of logical analysis and understanding of the source language ("Fig. 2").
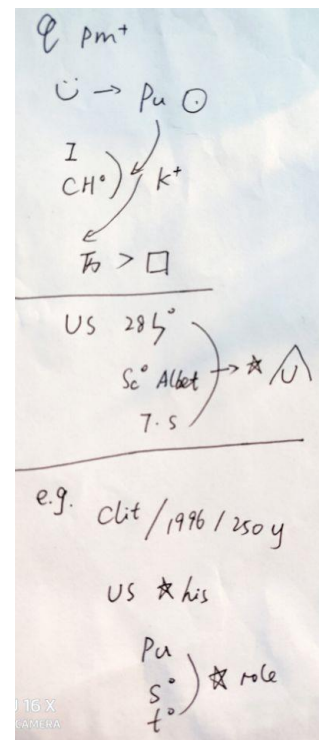

Fig. 2. Opening remarks.

The above is the notes demonstrated by the author for the students in class, which clearly shows the logic of the speech, pays attention to the meaning of the speech, and plays a very good auxiliary role in the output of the target language.

V. CONCLUSION

In the process of teaching and interviewing students, it is found that the students trained by this method pay more attention to the meaning of the speaker in the process of interpreting notes, instead of sticking to the speaker's wording, and learn "deverbalization". In a word, the application of "focus-on-meaning" strategy in the teaching of oral notes can effectively improve the skills of oral notes, both in theory and in teaching practice.

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