

A Further Study of Interpretation Learning Strategies Employed by Successful Interpretation Learners

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Abstract—This study was undertaken to find out the interpretation learning strategies employed by successful interpretation learners to achieve the accuracy and fluency of interpretation and the relationships and interactions between them combined with the previous study on interpretation learning strategies to achieve completeness of interpretation. The significance of this study is to theoretically enrich the existing studies on interpretation learning strategies and practically shed some lights on interpretation learning for future learners.

Index Terms—interpretation learning strategies, successful interpretation learners, completeness, accuracy, fluency

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the researcher published an article titled *A Case Study of Interpretation Learning Strategies Employed by Successful Interpretation Learners* (Li, 2004), which was to find out interpretation learning strategies, especially the completeness of interpretation, employed by three classmates of the researcher who had all successfully passed *Advanced Interpretation Test*. This paper is a further study to fulfill interpretation learning strategies in accordance with Bao's three criteria, namely, completeness, accuracy and fluency of interpretation, in which accuracy and fluency are the focus of this study, and then to set up a model to systematically ravel out their interrelationships.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part discusses the key terms in this study, theoretical bases and previous studies on interpretation learning strategies.

A. Key Terms in This Study

This section discusses the key terms of this study: definition of successful interpretation learners, criteria of interpretation, especially Bao's criteria of completeness, accuracy and fluency, and definition of interpretation learning strategies.

1. Definition of successful interpretation learners

The researcher has made clear about the definition of successful interpretation learners in her previous study (Li, 2014) that successful interpretation learners are considered to be interpretation learners who have successfully passed *Advanced Interpretation Test* which is one of the training programs for talents in short supply and is considered one of the most authoritative tests in examining the command of interpretation with its high difficulty and low pass rate.

2. Criteria of interpretation

As is discussed in the previous study of the researcher (Li, 2014), with the same situation as translation criteria, there is no unified criterion for interpretation, which could be perceived differently in terms of different perspectives and considerations. Taking all the criteria into consideration, the researcher considered Bao's criteria of interpretation are the most comprehensive ones and are happened to coincide with the criteria of *Advanced Interpretation Test*. It is on this basis that the researcher categorized interpretation learning strategies.

Bao is a professor in Beijing International Studies University. In his monograph *An Overview of Interpretation Theory*, he proposed interpretation criteria of completeness, accuracy and fluency.

a. Completeness

According to Bao (2005), completeness refers to comprehensive and full interpretation of the main points of the contents, original intention and connotation in the original language. Based on a survey made by the researcher, most of the students believe completeness is the most difficult to achieve, and the researcher's previous study has made a detailed and complete description and done a comprehensive research on interpretation learning strategies with this criterion.

b. Accuracy

As is described in Bao's book, accuracy refers to the exact meaning of the key connotative meaning, important terms

and figures conversion. This criterion is mainly manifested in the following aspects in detail: accurate expression of emotional information in source language, transmission of culture and social information in source language that could be taken into account in interpretation, effective transmission of paralinguistic and other information beyond language, accurate interpretation of political and technical terms (including jargons), accurate interpretation of proper nouns, accurate conversion of figures and codes and interpretation of some key grammatical information and internal language meaning that could be taken into account.

c. Fluency

Fluency refers to bilingual facility and smoothness, as well as perfection of other relevant target language expression techniques, such as pronunciation, intonation and tone of voice, etc. It mainly covers the following aspects: sense of hierarchy of target language organization, fluency and pronunciation clarity of the target language, organization of paralinguistic like intonations in target language and timely feedback of communication effect.

3. Definition of interpretation learning strategies

Interpretation learning strategies are involved with learning strategies in the area of interpretation. Thus it would be necessary to discuss language learning strategies at first. However, it is far more difficult and complicated to give a standard definition.

Weinstein & Mayer (1986, P.43) define learning strategies as “the behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that is intended to influence the learner’s encoding process”.

Chamot (1987, P.12) puts forward that “learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information”.

According to Rubin (1987, P.37), “learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly”.

Wenden (1987, P.6) holds the view that “learning strategies involve three aspects: 1) language learning behaviors that learners actually engage into learning and regulate the learning of a second language; 2) learners’ knowledge about their use of strategies; 3) learners’ knowledge about aspects of their language learning which may influence their choice of strategy”.

Oxford (1989, P.41) considers “language learning strategies as behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable”.

According to O’Malley & Chamot (1990, P.73), learning strategies are defined as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information”.

Cohen (2000, P.65) believes that “learning strategies are those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, and application of information about that language”.

Drawn from the above definitions given by the scholars at home and abroad, we find that learning strategies can be techniques, approaches, methods, behaviors, actions, activities, and processes. In this perspective of view, the researcher defines interpretation learning strategies in a broad sense: interpretation learning strategies concern with methods and strategies employed by learners, aiming at facilitating and improving their interpretation in the aspects of completeness, accuracy and fluency.

B. Theoretical Bases of This Study

This study is carried out on the basis of two theories: Attribution Theory and Hermeneutics.

1. Attribution Theory

Attribution is a concept from social psychology concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior. As for successful interpretation, learners may attribute it to some learning strategies they employed. Thus the research on learners’ ILS (short for interpretation learning strategies) attribution tends to be more important.

Attributions are considered as the causes or reasons given by individuals for a behavior or event which is related to them or some others (Guo & Li, 2005). Attributions are quite universal in our daily life. According to Forsterling (2001), attributions are also labeled as causal explanations. Pintfich & Schunk (2002) indicate that motivational psychology has been further conducted based on the investigations on the reasons or causes of individuals’ behaviors.

It is supposed that attribution theory plays a significant part in affecting students’ motivation to choose and employ interpretation learning strategies for that interpretation learning strategies are concerned with the management of learning experience in a broad sense. Based on attribution theory, individuals are inclined to seek explanations for their behaviors, and their attribution for past performance would have a great influence on future behaviors. For example, an effective learning strategy may be expected to improve one’s interpretation, and thus one may attribute the positive result to the particular strategy rather than task difficulty or good luck. What attributions successful interpretation learners may ascribe to interpretation is just what this research mainly focuses on.

2. Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a philosophical technology based on phenomenology and existentialism that explains and understands texts, emphasizing grasping the original intension of the texts and the authors faithfully and objectively.

From the perspective of Hermeneutics, understanding and meaning are of the most crucial of the text. Heidegger & Edward (1999) proposed fore-structure of understanding like fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception, by which he

means that interpretation is grounded in something we have, we use and we grasp in advance. His notion has been further developed by Gadamer, who proposes fore-understanding: "What's true of the fore-meaning of usage, however, is equally true of the fore-meanings with regard to content with which we read texts, and which make up our fore-understanding." (Gadamer, 1973: 237)

The link between Hermeneutics and interpretation is mainly on how to interpret the differences in intentions and thought, as well as cultures of the source and target language, besides those in language only, and on how to understand the text of source language and interpret it equivalently in target language. From this perspective, Hermeneutics is thus regarded as a theoretical basis of investigating interpretation learning strategies in this research.

C. Previous Studies on Interpretation Learning Strategies

The researcher has done a survey about studies concerning interpretation learning strategies in her previous study in 2014 and found that there were seldom studies in this field other than three academic theses, two of which were Master's theses, discussing around interpretation strategies from the perspective of SLA (Zheng, 2004), effectiveness of interpretation learning strategies (Yang, 2006) and conceptual dimension construction and empirical assessment of learning strategy for interpreting (Lei, 2011). Thus, the researcher found it necessary to do something in this field. In her previous research, she found that to achieve the completeness of interpretation, successful interpretation learners employed knowledge-accumulation, summarization, note-taking and logical-analysis learning strategies, among which the first three learning strategies were employed by all the three subjects. It indicated that in the process of interpretation learning, they all gave priority to content or meaning over form or language, which was consistent with hermeneutical idea of interpretation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section addresses research questions. The second section describes the research design that consists of the subjects, the instrument, data collection and data analysis.

A. Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the learning strategies employed by successful interpretation learners. Two research questions are addressed as follows:

1. What are interpretation learning strategies employed by successful learners to achieve the accuracy of interpretation?
2. What are interpretation learning strategies employed by successful learners to achieve the fluency of interpretation?

B. Research Design

The research design involves subjects, instruments, data collection and data analysis.

1. Subjects

In order to be correspondent with previous study on interpretation learning strategies to achieve completeness of interpretation, the subjects of this study are still the three MA students from College of International Studies, Yangzhou University majoring in English Language and Literature who have successfully passed *Advanced Interpretation Test*. For the convenience of the research, they are labeled as S1, S2 and S3.

2. Instrument

The instrument of this study was the researcher herself.

Having taken interviews in the previous study, the researcher has known a lot about the procedure and how to alleviate the tension and stress of the subjects. But in order to make sure that the interview could be carried out without flaws, the researcher still conducted a pilot study on the topic of "how do you pass TEM-8" beforehand to review the procedure of an interview.

Being consistent with the previous study, the researcher still prepared an interview guide in accordance with the dimensions that the research questions covered, which was categorized on the basis of Bao's criteria of interpretation, that is, completeness, accuracy and fluency of interpretation, in which accuracy and fluency was the focus of the study.

In addition, the researcher prepared a computer and a microphone to record the interviews for future analysis.

3. Data collection

Given the fact that it had been some time since they took *Advanced Interpretation Test*, it was really necessary to get them together and recall the days they prepared for the test. But what surprised the researcher was that when they talked about the test, it seemed they were so familiar with the test and so eager to share with each other the sweets and bitters of the days they preparing it, which ensured that the interviews could go smoothly and pleasantly.

The same as previous study, considering that the interview may last for too long and that their opinions might be mutually influenced if the three subjects were interviewed together, three interviews were conducted respectively, centering round learning strategies that the subjects employed to achieve the accuracy and fluency of interpretation, each of which involved one subject only.

The interviews were conducted in Chinese rather than English for the purpose of having smooth conversation and

avoiding language obstruction and possible misunderstanding. For each interview the researcher used a laptop and a microphone to record the whole process with the permission of the three subjects.

The interviews were held in the office of the researcher, and each of the interview lasted for one hour or so. The three subjects were very cooperative and showed great enthusiasm and interest in the topic and talked about their interpretation learning experience centering round research questions, including the problems and difficulties they came across, the strategies they had taken and some suggestions they provided for future learners.

4. Data analysis

The whole data analysis involved three steps: coding, categorization and translation. The researcher first applied a set of codes to represent information that may be considered strategies the subjects had taken in the recorded data; then by examining and comparing every piece of code, the researcher classified and categorized them, and in accordance with the criteria put forward by Bao Gang, all the codes that gathered fell into two categories: strategies for accuracy and fluency of interpretation respectively; finally, since the interviews were conducted in Chinese, it was necessary to translate all the relevant information into English.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, it states interpretation learning strategies employed by successful learners to achieve accuracy and fluency of interpretation and sets up a model of interpretation learning strategies.

A. Interpretation Learning Strategies Employed by Successful Learners to Achieve the Accuracy of Interpretation

The three subjects found that interpretations of figures, culturally loaded expressions and technical terms were the most essential to achieve the accuracy of interpretation. For figures interpreting, they employed repeatedly-practicing-shorthand strategy; for culturally loaded expressions interpreting, they employed recitation strategy, literal-interpretation strategy, liberal-interpretation strategy, omission strategy and amplification strategy; and for technical terms interpreting, they employed technical-terms-accumulation strategy and substitution strategy.

1. Learning strategies for figure interpreting

As for learning strategies for figure interpreting, they employed repeatedly-practicing-shorthand strategy. They believed that there is no short cut than constantly practicing shorthand.

S1: Figure interpretation is always the most difficult part in interpretation, as expressions are not equivalent between Chinese and English for figures above 5 digits, and this causes complication for me. Also, the ways comparison is expressed in Chinese are in some respects different from those in English. For example: in Chinese we say “化肥产量比1986年增加了4倍”, while in English we shall have to say “the output of chemical fertilizer has been raised five times as against 1986”. Apart from these, it is also difficult to interpret units of measurement. For example, we have “li” (1/2kilometers), “mu” (1/6 acre), “jin” (1/2 kilogram) in Chinese, which have to be converted into the metric systems on formal occasions to facilitate understanding. Therefore, it is important to take shorthand.

For E-C interpretation, I write figures in English from the right to the left, with a comma every three digits, and each comma stands for thousand, million and billion respectively. Then I draw a vertical line from the right to the left every four digits, and each vertical line stands for “万”, “亿” respectively. Now I will give you an example to better illustrate my shorthand. When I hear a sentence “it covers a total of six hundred fifty-four million eight hundred thirty-five thousand seven hundred and seventy-four square meters”, I may come up with the following notes: “6|54,83|5,774”. For C-E interpretation, I write down the figures and draw vertical lines first, then use commas every three digits from the right to the left, in this way it is more easier to retell figures in English.

Although feeling difficult in figure interpreting, S2 found her learning strategy of both C-E and E-C figure interpretation which she took step by step. She first emphasized the speedy and accurate rendering of figures involving “万” and “亿”, then combined them with various “units of measurement”, after which she practiced shorthand. She provided the following quotes to show how she employed this learning strategy.

In the case of C-E and E-C interpretation, figures do require a sufficient amount of training. I put emphasis on the speedy and accurate rendering of figures involving “万” and “亿” as the first step. I practiced the rapid reading of 5-digit numbers and 8-digit numbers in both English and Chinese, and then combined them with various “units of measurement”. Sometimes I used car numbers and telephone numbers as practicing materials, too. All these were done orally. Then I practiced taking notes. I started with large integers. For example, I usually used comma representing one group of 3 naught: “forty thousand”, represented by “40,”, meaning “四万”; “six million”, represented by “60,,”, meaning “六百万”. Coming across complicated numbers, there is a convenient way of taking notes. When doing C-E interpreting, hearing “亿”, draw a slash(/), and hearing “万”, draw another slash and fill the numbers at the right place. Then draw a comma every three digits from right to left, which is directly the English way of doing numbers. When doing E-C interpreting, hearing “billion”, “million”, and “thousand”, draw a comma, then from right to left draw a slash every four digits, thus we could read the number in Chinese.

S3’s learning strategy is the same as what S1 and S2 employed, that is, repeatedly practicing shorthand of figures with signs.

2. Learning strategies for culturally-loaded-expressions interpreting

They employed recitation strategy, literal-interpretation strategy, liberal-interpretation strategy, omission strategy and amplification strategy for culturally-loaded-expressions interpreting.

a. Recitation strategy

They all supposed that learning culturally-loaded aiming to bridge the gap of cultural discrepancy between two language worlds' expressions was of great help for interpretation, and they recited some common and equivalent ones both in Chinese and English while reading newspapers. The following quotes exemplify this learning strategy.

S1: Whenever I came across some expressions that contain cultural connotations, I wrote them down in my notebook and recited them afterwards repeatedly. I found that the differences between Chinese and western culturally-loaded expressions were very interesting and learning them help me better understand the western cultures, which is really important for interpretation.

S2: Both our mother tongue, the Chinese language and English are rich in cultural connotations which are usually forcible and vivid, and are always difficult to interpret due to the pressing, limited time of interpretation and lack of cultural and cross-cultural knowledge. I suppose that reciting some common and equivalent ones both in Chinese and English is the best way to learn culturally-loaded-expressions interpreting.

S3: I enjoy reading western cultures and learn that they have a different emotional tendency towards animals and colors. For example, dog is a humble animal in Chinese culture and most of the expressions concerning dogs have derogatory sense, such as “狗胆包天”, “狗仗人势”, “狗腿子”. While in some western cultures, dog is one of their favorite animals, they will say “a lucky dog” for someone who is really fortunate, and “be top dog” for being in a high position. Therefore, learning western cultures and reciting some culturally loaded expressions are of great help in interpretation.

b. Literal-interpretation strategy

When there are no equivalents for certain culturally loaded expressions, they interpreted literally if it will not cause misunderstanding. The following quotes illustrate how they employed this learning strategy.

S1: Sometimes I encounter some culturally loaded expressions, and I don't know their equivalents in English, I will interpret literally if it is understandable. For example, I interpret “纸老虎” as “paper tiger” and “趁热打铁” as “to strike while the iron is hot”.

S2: Some cultures are shared by Chinese and western countries, such as in the expression “time is money”, “time” and “money” are considered precious both in Chinese and western cultures. In this case, I will interpret literally.

S3: Since it is impossible to memorize all the equivalent culturally loaded expressions in mind, I still find some ways to interpret. Literal interpretation which means interpreting the idioms word for word is my first choice. It is not applied universally but only to those in which the image can be easily understood by the speakers of the target language. For example:

Good medicine is bitter in the mouth, but good for the disease. 良药苦口利于病, 忠言逆耳利于行。

Even the cleverest housewife cannot make a meal without rice. 巧妇难为无米之炊。

c. Liberal-interpretation strategy

When encountering some culturally loaded expressions that would cause misunderstanding if interpreting literally, they employed liberal-interpretation strategy. The following quotes show how they employed this strategy.

S1: when I first learned interpretation, I tended to interpret literally in all cases, but it is really awkward for interpretation of such culturally loaded expressions. For example, when we hear “Cupid lives”, we can not interpret literally as “丘比特存在” and nobody knows what you are talking about. We all know that Cupid is a god that represents love, and thus this expression could be interpret as “真爱永存”. What I am trying to say is that when encountering culturally loaded expressions that have not equivalents in target language, try to get the meaning of the source language and interpret liberally in your own words.

S2: Interpretation is a process of meaning transmission, and we should give priority to content or meaning rather than form or language. For culturally loaded expressions, we should explore the connotations from the surface meaning. For example, in this expression “a thief is a thief”, we cannot interpret as “一个贼就是一个贼”. We could imagine the situation of this expression: a thief was caught in prison, and was let out after the due sentence. When he came out, he found it hard to earn money by his own hands, and he became a thief again. Then we could come up with a Chinese saying that has the same connotation, i.e. “江山易改, 本性难移”.

S3: Some expressions with strong cultural characteristics can never be interpreted literally, because it would cause misunderstanding or could not be easily accepted by native speakers of target language. In this case, it is necessary to resort to liberal interpretation. For example: we can interpret “打开窗户说亮话” into “frankly speaking” or “Let's speak frankly.”

In a word, provided we manage to get an accurate comprehension of the meaning or implication of the culturally loaded expressions and put across the idea or meaning properly in the light of the context, we could interpret the expressions without any problems. But it's easier said than done. You need to practice a lot to achieve the effect.

d. Omission strategy

They believe that due to the differences of Chinese and western cultures, some of the information would cause misunderstanding and there is no need to interpret. So they employ omission strategy for this reason.

S1: Some of the Chinese expressions contain many cultural connotations, especially in literary works and introductions to tourist destinations. For example, I usually interpret “豫园建于明代嘉靖三十八年” into “Yu Garden is built in Ming Dynasty” and omit “嘉靖三十八年” which is not so important information and will cause misunderstanding if interpret it.

S2 and S3 agreed with S1 that there are some expressions with Chinese characteristics that foreign audiences can not trace its meaning if interpret literally, and there is no need to take a long time to explain it. Therefore, they employ omission strategy especially for those expressions with Chinese characteristics.

e. Amplification strategy

To better interpret some culturally loaded words and expressions in source text, they employ amplification strategy to amplify some references and explanations. The following quotes show how they employ this strategy.

S1: I have learned in class that we used amplification to supply necessary words in our interpretation on the basis of accurate comprehension of the original. Precisely, it is for the purpose of faithful representation of the thought of the original text that we often resort to amplification. This is because English and Chinese are two entirely different languages and each has its own historical and cultural background. Besides, many ideas, idiomatic expressions and shortened words, etc. that are well understood by the natives can hardly make sense to overseas people.

S2: Some culturally loaded expressions interpretation which have no equivalents in target language are the key information of the source language and have to be interpreted. In this case, I employ amplification strategy. For example, with “这是乾隆年间出土的文物”, I interpret as “this is the cultural relic that excavated in Qianlong period, a period of Tang Dynasty in ancient times”. “乾隆” is a unique word in Chinese, which is hard to be understood by western audiences, thus I amplified it with “a period of Tang Dynasty in ancient times” to make it clear.

S3: I employ amplification strategy for some expressions that I cannot find their equivalents especially the names of some persons, places and times, such as, “紫禁城”, “三国时期”, etc. In most cases, I add explanations after them. For example, I interpret the above three expressions as “Forbidden City, a palace that the emperors used to live”, “the Three Kingdoms period, a period in ancient times with a situation of tripartite confrontation by three kingdoms of Wu, Shu, Wei”.

3. Learning strategies for technical terms interpreting

They employed technical-terms-accumulation strategy and substitution strategy for technical terms interpreting.

a. Technical-terms-accumulating strategy

All of the three students supposed that it was necessary to learn some key and common technical terms in their routine studies and they shared the same learning strategy of accumulating those terms at anytime and anywhere, no matter when reading journals, watching TV or listening to the news. The following quotes show specifically how they employed this learning strategy.

S1: It is always possible to come across some new words, especially some technical terms when you do interpretation in a certain field. It is really helpful to get well-prepared beforehand whenever you can. Usually when I listen to the news on politics, economy, culture and society, I would look up some new words which I suppose to be the key and common words of the given field and keep them in mind as many as possible to enlarge my vocabulary.

S2: I have a habit of reading news in Chinese and English, by which I know how some Chinese technical terms, should be interpreted in English, especially some political and economical terms, such as “宏观调控”, “稳定物价”, etc. Therefore, to interpret technical terms or jargons, the foremost is to read and listen to the news as much as possible because the news involves topics on almost every field and then memorize those common and frequently used terms as many as you can. By doing so, you may get familiar with those technical terms and won't be panic when doing interpretation.

S3: I pay much attention to the news interpretation, because news covers all kinds of fields, such as political, economical and social and it is a short cut to learn governmental affairs reports. After the annual session of the National People's Congress, I downloaded its English version and read it comparing with Chinese version. In this way, I accumulate and master many interpretation methods of technical terms.

b. Substitution strategy

When they encountered some technical terms of which they didn't know the exact meaning, they usually replaced them with some synonyms or hypernyms. The following quotes show how they employed this strategy.

S1: One cannot say that he is always prepared for some new terms which create some unexpected obstacles in his interpretation. Here are some of my methods to deal with them in case I'm confronted with them. First, in either C-E or E-C interpretation, I would use some synonyms or hypernyms to replace the new words based on the context I could infer what it is about but could not find the right equivalent in the target language. Interpretation is not as strict as translation because of pressing and limited time and it is acceptable as long as the original meaning of the speaker is conveyed. For instance, there is a sentence “Doctors also say eating less fat will reduce the amount of dangerous cholesterol in the blood.” If we don't know the word “cholesterol”, we at least know that it is a material in the blood. We could interpret the sentence into “医生认为少食用脂肪能够减少血液内一种危险物质的数量。” In some occasions, when I hear a totally unknown technical term which I failed to understand or express accurately, I would guess its possible meaning, the purpose or the function according to the context, then I could paraphrase or explain it.

For instance, for the Chinese term “脆性”, suppose that I don't know how to interpret in English, I could explain that its property is easy to be broken like a piece of a glass.

S2: I always meet some technical terms that are very rarely used in daily life and are unfamiliar to me, such as “漆皮” and “三夹板箱”, etc.. If it is not in a professional situation, I interpret with hyponyms like “leather”, “chair” and “case” for the above three expressions.

Drawn from the above results, to achieve the accuracy of interpretation, they put more emphasis on interpretation of figures, culturally loaded expressions and technical terms. For figures interpreting, they employed repeatedly-practicing-shorthand strategy; for culturally loaded expressions interpreting, they employed recitation strategy, literal-interpretation strategy, liberal-interpretation strategy, omission strategy and amplification strategy; and for technical terms interpreting, they employed technical-terms-accumulation strategy and substitution strategy. It indicates that the interpretation learning strategies for figures, culturally loaded expressions and technical terms contribute to the accuracy of interpretation.

B. Interpretation Learning Strategies Employed by Successful Learners to Achieve the Fluency of Interpretation

This section illustrates how the three students achieve the fluency of their interpretation with the following strategies-----immediate-recall strategy, keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy and learning-formulaic-language strategy.

1. Immediate-recall strategy

According to the three students, immediate recall is a learning strategy that helps you memorize and speak out what the speaker just said in a very short time, usually less than one minute, which will further expand the capacity of short-term memory and train the response speed to improve the fluency of interpretation. To make it simple, it is to retell what you just heard in a very short time in your own words.

S1 has a good habit of listening to the news everyday for at least one hour. On doing immediate recall, she used CNN STUDENT NEWS as listening materials and she gave a detailed description about how she did immediate recall. S2 exemplified that it was better to recall in one's own words, which is of great help when encountering some complicated and difficult words and expressions. S3 suggested the starters to do immediate recall in mother tongue, for both listening and recalling. Their learning strategies can be seen in the following quotes respectively.

S1: Usually I take CNN STUDENT NEWS as my listening materials to do immediate recall for the reason that there is not too much information in one piece of news and it is easier to understand and retell than BBC and VOA news. The whole text of listening material was heard twice: once without interruption and once with immediate recall. Each text was divided into small sections of 30 to 50 words and after each section I did immediate recall. First I would listen to the news uninterrupted and tried to get the main idea of what the news was about. This process is very much like summarization. For the second time, I would pause after every section of 30 to 50 words of complete sentences and do immediate recall. What is important is that try to get the meaning of the news and retell it in your own words rather than repeating what is said word by word.

S2: When you state the main idea of a text, you can make yourself understood much better if you use your own words. Suppose, for instance, that a speaker says:

“Despite certain similarities, patterns of work for agricultural workers vary considerably for one part of the world to another.”

We could rephrase this as: “Farm work is different in different countries.”

Doing immediate recall in your own words enables you to express the same meaning in different ways, which is of great help when encountering some complicated and difficult words and expressions.

S3: I suppose that as a starter, it is better to do immediate recall in mother tongue at first. I used to directly do it in English, but I failed many times due to my not-so-proficient English listening skills. The news carried large amount of information which was so unfamiliar to me and I couldn't get the whole meaning of it. When I was familiar with the abundant information of the news and got used to the high delivered speed, I turned to English listening materials and at this time, I did a better job.

2. Keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy

The three students have a common view that they pursue a steady rather than high speed in interpretation. Their ideas are shown in the following quotes.

S1: Most students consider that it seems quite qualified to speak fast in interpretation. While I think it's better to speak steadily than fast for that it helps gain more time for thinking and organizing, especially when I try to figure out how to interpret.

S2: I pursue an interpretation at a regular speed, not too fast or too slow, which buys me more time to organize my target language. More than this, the audience can sense my confidence and proficiency from my regular and steady interpretation speed.

S3: it is really tough for me to keep a steady speed in interpretation. Sometimes I spoke slowly or even paused when encountering some new words or unfamiliar expressions; sometimes I spoke too fast seeming to manifest that I am confident and qualified for doing this. So I usually use a MP3 to record my interpretation when practice, then check my speed and adjust it. At the beginning, I chose relatively easy and understandable listening materials to make sure that I

could keep my interpretation at a steady rather than fast speed in the premise of no new words interference. I didn't use materials of normal difficulty until I could interpret at steady speed.

3. Learning-formulaic-language strategy

This strategy is employed by S3 only who supposed that it was helpful to overcome mother tongue interference and improve the fluency of the output under pressure. For accumulation, he memorized many common and frequently used formulaic languages on various types of topics and practiced putting them into use. His learning strategy can be reflected in the following quotes.

S3: There is an old Chinese saying goes as: After reading up three hundred Tang poems, you can at least intone poems even you can't write them. It refers to the composition of poems, while it also implies that memorization is an important way to learn interpretation. Formulaic language will do much help to overcome mother tongue interference and improve the fluency of the output under pressure.

We know that formulaic language is a kind of conventional expression which has fixed language patterns or frameworks and could be learned and memorized as a whole. In interpretation, it will save a lot of time as long as having these formulaic languages in hand. For accumulation, I found many articles on the Internet concerning various types of topics especially news scripts with both English and Chinese versions to analyze and learn their well-done translations and write them down for further memorization. For example, I memorized some common and frequently used phrasal interpretations, just name a few: declare the closing of (宣布...结束), observe/witness the grand opening of (隆重举行), it is a great pleasure/honor for me to (我很荣幸/高兴...), which respectively are functions of choice, memory and comparison.

There is no better way than hard work and constant practice in this respect. Much interpretation practice is needed to examine the extent to which you have mastered the language patterns and the ability to put them into use without hesitation and difficulty. (Translated)

It is drawn from the above that, to achieve the fluency of interpretation, they employed immediate-recall strategy, keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy and learning-formulaic-language strategy. They have a common view that in terms of immediate recall, using one's own words in mother tongue is preferred, especially for starters, which is also consistent with Hermeneutics' theory that focusing on meaning of the target language, and a steady rather than high speed buys them more time to think and organize target language. Formulaic language interpreting learning strategy is a unique one that helps overcome mother tongue interference and improve the fluency of the output under pressure. Among the three, the first two learning strategies are shared by the three subjects while the last one is employed by S3 individually. It shows that keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy is not in line with Ren's idea of interpretation (2009).

C. Model of Interpretation Learning Strategies

Combined with the previous study of the researcher on interpretation learning strategies to achieve completeness of interpretation, the interpretation learning strategies employed by the three successful learners to achieve the completeness, accuracy and fluency of interpretation formulate a model, which is shown in the following figure.

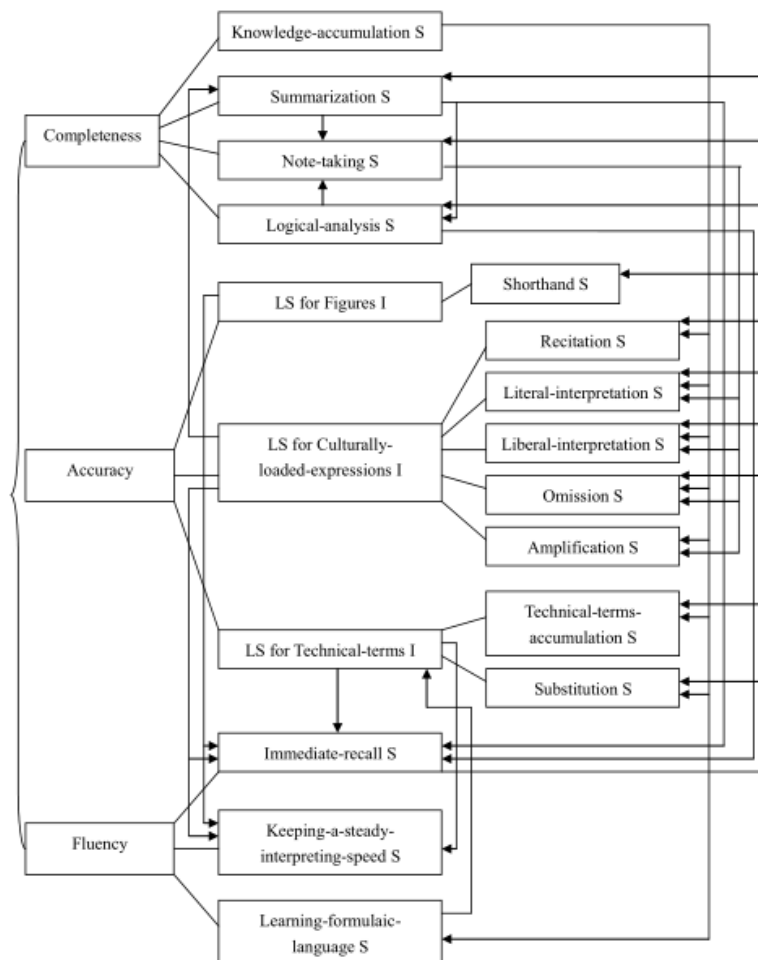


Figure: Model of Interpretation Learning Strategies
 Note: S-Strategy LS-Learning Strategies I-interpretation

From the above figure, it can be seen that all the interpretation learning strategies are considered to be a system, whose components are independent, interrelated and synergetic. By “independent”, it means that every strategy itself in the system exists distinguished from other strategies, like logical-analysis strategy. By “interrelated”, it means that every strategy is related to other strategies, like logical-analysis strategy facilitates note-taking strategy and immediate-recall strategy and is facilitated by immediate-recall strategy and summarization strategy. By “synergetic”, it means that synergies among the learning strategies create a whole that is more than the sum of its parts, like knowledge-accumulation strategy, summarization strategy, note-taking strategy and logical-analysis strategy together contribute to the completeness of interpretation.

V. CONCLUSION

This chapter reports the major findings of this study and provides implications.

A. Major Findings

The major findings yielded from the study are summarized as follows:

First, to achieve the accuracy of interpretation, they put more emphasis on interpretation of figures, culturally loaded expressions and technical terms. For figures interpreting, they employed repeatedly-practicing-shorthand strategy; for culturally-loaded-expressions interpreting, they employed recitation strategy, literal-interpretation strategy, liberal-interpretation strategy, omission strategy and amplification strategy; and for technical terms interpreting, they employed technical-terms-and-jargons-accumulation strategy and substitution strategy.

Second, to achieve the fluency of interpretation, they employed immediate-recall strategy, keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy and learning-formulaic-language strategy. The first two learning strategies were shared by the three subjects while the last one was employed by S3 individually. It shows that keeping-a-steady-interpreting-speed strategy is not in line with Ren’s idea of interpretation (2009).

Third, combined with the previous study on interpretation learning strategies to achieve completeness of interpretation, all the interpretation learning strategies employed by the three successful learners to achieve the completeness, accuracy and fluency of interpretation formulate a model, which can be considered as a system, where its

components are independent, interrelated and synergetic. By “independent”, it means that every strategy itself in the system exists distinguished from other strategies. By “interrelated”, it means that every strategy is related to other strategies. By “synergetic”, it means that synergies among the learning strategies create a whole that is more than the sum of its parts.

B. Implications

The present study aims at exploring interpretation learning strategies employed by successful interpretation learners in the hope that the analysis and findings here could bring forward either systematic or somewhat new strategies and at the same time shed some lights on interpretation learning.

First, learners should give priority to language proficiency in interpretation learning without which interpretation will have nowhere to exist. Listening, speaking, reading and writing will, to a great extent, help better understand both the source and target language and avoid linguistic mistakes in interpretation.

Second, learners should develop a habit of accumulation, including general knowledge, frequently used culturally loaded expressions and technical terms especially in economic and political field, in one's routine study, which will ease the burden and facilitate the process of interpretation learning.

Third, although some learning strategies shared by all the three subjects, they may be employed in different ways, such as note-taking and repeatedly-practicing-shorthand strategy for figure interpretation. Thus, with the reference of successful interpretation experience, learners should find the ways that suit themselves to achieve the goal.

APPENDIX

访谈提纲

如何提高口译准确性？

1. 平时需要多背些单词吗？是随机选择一本单词书来背？还是有计划的选择一些针对性强的书？哪类单词是记忆的重点？
2. 口译中遇到听不懂的生词你怎么处理？平时怎么练习呢？
3. 口译中经常会有一些平时基本遇不到的专有名词或行业术语，你会怎么处理？平时有针对性练习吗？如何练习？
4. 数字是口译中比较难记的一项，你是怎么保证准确性的？平时如何练习？有没有什么技巧？
5. 你如何理解口译的准确性？你认为口译与笔译在准确性层面有没有异同？相同在哪里？不同在哪里？
6. 口译中涉及到原语的文化社会信息，你怎么处理？

如何提高口译通畅性？

1. 你认为口语水平对口译表达有影响吗？如何针对性的提高口译的口语表达？
2. 你在口译练习过程中有没有卡壳的时候？一般在什么情况下会出现卡壳的现象？你又是如何克服的呢？
3. 你觉得口译时语言表达的速度是越快越好吗？语速要控制在什么程度？
4. 如果口译段落较长，你如何使得语言表达比较有条理，语义层次分明？
5. 你有没有什么方法能使语言表达更通畅？

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