

# Original Research

## Teaching simultaneous interpreting: The early stage

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*The article deals with the initial stage of training simultaneous interpreters and developing their professional skills. The authors single out and analyse a number of abilities and skills that learners are expected to develop in order to successfully obtain the qualification of simultaneous interpreters and offer a system of exercises and tasks that is intended to assist their acquisition. The article tackles the following issues typically arising at the early stages of student training: inability of unprepared students to concentrate and keep a lasting focus on the meaning and the structure of the source speech utterance, inability to control their short-term memory, the unfamiliar situation where the student is required to listen and speak at one and the same time, a lack of control over intonation and structure of his or her own speech during the interpreting process. In terms of language, particular attention is paid to the crucial role of collocations and fixed expressions in teaching simultaneous interpreting, as well as processing information that requires precision. The study is based on a textbook on political, economic, and legal translation which has been successfully used during several years at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation at Lomonosov Moscow State University as a key training input. The methods of the current research include contextual and comparative analysis, information synthesis as well as experimental student training. The latter showed that learners' performance substantially improved, both immediately after some of the preparatory exercises (particularly those aimed at short-term memory and anticipation skills development) and in the long run. The authors believe that exercises described here can form a sound basis for developing skills necessary for simultaneous interpreters.*

**KEYWORDS:** simultaneous interpreting, collocation, working memory, short-term memory, interpreting skills development, attention focus



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Since interpreting continues to play an increasingly important role in international communication, the need for highly-qualified interpreters is pressing. However, in the course of preparation for

simultaneous interpreting, the main attention should be paid not only to the development of skills required for oral and written translation in general, but also to the features specific to this particular type of activity. A lot has been theoretically

said about the skills a professional interpreter needs (Chernov, 2015; Duplensky, 2012; Gile, 2009; Jones 2002; Schweitzer, 1988), but few articles cover this issue from the practical perspective.

Therefore, this article proves its relevance by offering certain specific techniques and exercises that help to develop the skills necessary for simultaneous interpreters. At the same time, although the development of interpreting skills in general is impossible without fluency in both source and target languages, the article does not consider the issues of language learning. The authors assume that the course participants are proficient enough in their foreign language to cope with the assigned tasks. Grammatical and lexical difficulties are not the main focus of the exercises described herein.

The article suggests a strategy allowing the participants to overcome some of the most common difficulties arising at the first stage of a simultaneous interpreting course. Moreover, this strategy involves both developing new skills and activating certain cognitive mechanisms allowing students to perform the assigned tasks.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study is based on a textbook on political, economic and legal translation used for several years at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation at Lomonosov Moscow State University as a key training input (Anisimova & Pavlyuk, 2019). The methods of the current research include contextual and comparative analysis, information synthesis as well as experimental student training, which allowed the authors to obtain the results described and single out several key exercises, which, if done on a regular basis, contribute to effective work with sample texts for simultaneous interpreting. The training lasted over 10 years and involved over 80 Russian-speaking learners specialising in translation studies. The exercises in question were used at the preparatory stage of the interpreting course and were followed by tasks simulating conference interpreting assessed by a number of parameters, such as fidelity of the translation, use of interpretation strategies, target language accuracy and fluency, coherence, delivery,

etc. The exercises underwent ongoing practical evaluation and evolved to serve their purpose as effectively as possible.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Since the issue of simultaneous interpreting remains highly topical in view of rapidly developing international relations, numerous scholars have dedicated their efforts to conducting research in this area. It is a generally recognised fact that the work of a simultaneous interpreter has certain specific features which may turn out to be a stumbling block for students and novice interpreters. The theoretical base analysed in the current article allowed the authors to single out such problems. These include cognitive and psychological barriers varying from excessive shyness to inability to listen and speak simultaneously (Matyushin, 2017; Chmiel, 2018), necessity to develop linguistic forecasting skills (Zimnyaya & Chernov, 1973; Chmiel, 2020), difficulties posed by clichés and collocations (Duplensky, 2012; Chmiel et al., 2020), etc. These problems have been described in detail as well as certain theoretical approaches and advice on how to solve them, including shadowing technique (Sabatini, 2000), listening comprehension (Herrero, 2017) and others. Still, for such a serious problem little has been said about purely practical means of overcoming the obstacles arising. This article makes an attempt to put theory into practice and offers certain exercises which would help students on their interpreting path.

The experience of working with students has helped to single out several key focus areas aimed at enhancing the efficiency of working with training texts for simultaneous interpreting. The next section considers them in detail.

## 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

### 4.1. Activating short-term memory

At first glance, in comparison with consecutive interpreting, a simultaneous interpreter has to retain a certain fragment of speech in his or her memory for a shorter period of time, and since the utterance itself is shorter as well, its volume can be controlled. However, to produce a coherent and

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logical utterance in the target language, the simultaneous interpreter often has to let the speaker go, grasp the essence of the message, and only then begin interpreting it (Chernov, 2015). In addition, effective memorisation is impossible without focusing on the meaning of the utterance (Orlando & Hlavac, 2020), and the exercises aimed at developing short-term memory, which are described in this article, also help the students to focus their attention on the interpreting process to a greater extent. These exercises are not only useful at the initial stage, while students familiarise themselves with the required skills, but they can serve as a kind of warm-up for senior students or even professional interpreters before their work.

During the lesson we suggest doing these exercises at a fast pace, thus ensuring the constant involvement and readiness of students. In terms of order, it is better to start from simple tasks, gradually complicating them. At the same time, it is important to choose the right mode of presenting the information to be memorised. At the initial stage, students can be requested to recall printed words, phrases and sentences, but as tasks become more and more complicated, the reading time is reduced and students gradually move on to the oral form. Memorisation from hearing with a single repetition requires the greatest concentration. However, this activity is the closest equivalent to

actual interpreting (Jones, 2002). Sample tasks for activating short-term memory are given below in ascending order of difficulty.

Repetition of individual lexical units of varying complexity; the easiest ones to memorise are concrete nouns.

*Look at the list of nouns for 10 seconds, then close the text and recall as many words as you can: 1) room, fog, tree, star, net, needle, square, flower, box, screen; 2) juice, salt, tomato, knife, meat, tea, spice, cup, fish, shrimp; 3) bat, cat, rat, mat, fat, hat.*

At the same time, the researchers state that memorisation is much more effective if either the meanings of the enlisted words are connected, or these words have a similar pronunciation (see lists 2 and 3 above). If phonetic similarity is unlikely to help in the situation of real-life interpreting, the ability to see the unity and connection between the meanings should be developed as actively as possible. This issue will be discussed a little further.

Having completed this exercise, the students can move on to the categories which are a little more difficult to memorise, e.g. abstract nouns, such as *patience, calculation, destruction, analysis, determination, responsibility, movement, precision, vulnerability, reference*. In this case, as well as in the abovementioned examples, semantic grouping contributes to better memorisation. To simplify the task, semantically close nouns can be adduced, however, tasks implying that the students do such work on their own (divide the enlisted words into several semantic groups) activate better memorisation and bring training closer to real situations that require memorising.

The most difficult category for perception and memorising is precise information, both verbal (proper names, job titles, positions, names of organisations) and numerical (dates, amounts, indicators, etc.). At the same time, it is extremely important to render it in a correct and accurate way, since the interpreter's errors in many cases are not only obvious to the participants in the international communication but can lead to serious consequences.

Numerical data range from one- or two-digit numbers to complex combinations of figures and measurement units:

*Memorise and recall these numbers:*

*3; 15; 17; 38; 430; 3 593;*

*19 678; 504 598;*

*22 May 2017; 12 September 1996;*

*Thursday, 14 Jan 2021;*

*35%; USD 230 000;*

*Flight A3 881; +7-495-939-3277.*

Proper names are often accompanied by positions and titles, as is often the case in actual interpreting context:

*Memorise and recall these names and posts:*

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer;*

*The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres;*

*Prof. Petersen and Dr. Rossi*

As the most complicated task directly contributing to the development of simultaneous interpreting skills, students can practise consecutive interpreting of individual phrases and short sentences at a fast pace.

*Give English/Russian equivalents:*

*– разбивать надежды, тесное сотрудничество;*

*– разрешение конфликта, to draw up the constitution;*

*– to wrangle over smth, действовать незамедлительно;*

*– отказать от своих прав, economic convergence;*

*– a political concept, a single model of integration;*

*– to surrender sovereignty, a major step forward, долгосрочная цель;*

*– to map out a way forward, не прибегая к силе, to sign a treaty;*

*– проводить политику, вести переговоры о..., вступить в силу;*

*– Министры иностранных дел США и Великобритании запланировали очередную встречу в конце сентября;*

*– В середине октября в Москву с официальным визитом прибывает министр обороны Швеции;*

*– Yesterday a French trade-union delegation returned to Athens from a tour of Greece.*

The tasks in the above exercise range from comparatively brief phrases to full-fledged sentences. Although a prompt switch from one language to the other is not frequent in real-life interpreting, it proves to be an efficient warm-up exercise.

#### 4.2. Developing simultaneous listening and speaking skills

Although interpreting is a complex cognitive process, even isolated and relatively simple lexical units can pose a certain difficulty. At the initial stage novice interpreters are often confused when they have to focus on what is being said and speak simultaneously, even if they do not need to analyse the meaning and context and produce logically connected utterances in the target language. Since this skill is rarely used in other types of activity, the situation when students need to listen and speak at the same time is unusual and stressful for them, even if they do not have to analyse and interpret what they have heard.

In order to overcome this psychological barrier, one can use the so-called *shadowing* method which implies listening to the audio recordings and simultaneously repeating them aloud, as close to the original as possible (Matyushin, 2017). Initially, this method was used in foreign language teaching and implied imitating the speech of the native speaker. The effectiveness of shadowing in language teaching is outside the scope of this article, but this method can help novice interpreters to get used to the very process of simultaneous listening and speaking. However, shadowing is not about understanding the meaning, but rather allowing students to adjust to the mechanics of interpreting, learn to control their voice, and distribute attention between what is being said and what is being heard.

When the students have basically mastered this skill and started to feel more confident, the trainer can complicate the task by offering them modified versions of this method, e.g. to pronounce the text with a slight lag (thus, activating short-term memory), read the finished translation at the pace of the original, read the finished translation, noting errors



*‘One of the primary requirements for a simultaneous interpreter is confident, clear and sufficiently loud speech, where logical stress is intonationally emphasised, and pauses correspond to the norms of speech segmentation’*

and discrepancies with the recorded text and reacting to them in a timely manner, and retell the text in the source language without repeating it verbatim, etc.

#### **4.3. Developing speech technique, diction and intonation**

Training novice interpreters (and sometimes, unfortunately, observing their senior colleagues at work) has shown that one of their greatest psychological problems is control over their speech. While being in a stressful situation and not having direct visual contact with the audience, students can neither foresee the phrase development nor its ending, and since they do not hear their own voices, they are often unable to produce smooth and natural interpreting. At best, students try to copy the speaker’s intonation (which complicates the perception of a message due to inevitable phonetic inconsistencies between the source and target languages), and, at worst, they make sudden and unjustifiable pauses in the middle of the phrase, abuse filler words, do not indicate the end of the sentence intonationally, or speak unintelligibly, monotonously, too quickly or quietly (Gile, 2009). However, the audience unfamiliar with the specific nature of this work, judges the quality of interpreting primarily by speech fluency and the interpreter’s confidence. One of the primary requirements for a simultaneous interpreter is confident, clear and sufficiently loud speech, where logical stress is intonationally emphasised, and pauses correspond to the norms of speech segmentation (Nolan, 2005).

The whole variety of exercises designed to develop delivery skills can be divided into several groups aimed at improving a particular aspect or a

number of them. At the same time, students’ self-control is of primary importance. It is recommended the teacher use audio equipment in order to record the performance of all the exercises (above all, when students do tasks on their own), so that students can later evaluate the results of their efforts.

Exercises improving diction are in many ways similar to those that students face in their foreign language phonetics course. However, no less attention should be paid to practising native speaker styles. The strategy of alternating exercises allows students to quickly switch from one language to another without losing interpreting quality. It is necessary to start with individual sounds and sound combinations, which are traditionally difficult to pronounce: as a rule, these are either combinations of consonants, or sounds requiring rapid rearrangement of speech organs (*months, sixths, waves, rural*, etc.). Then one can move on to traditional tongue twisters, varying the pace and volume of their pronunciation (certain scholars recommend that novice translators speak loudly in order to overcome excessive shyness). Tongue twisters not only allow students to work out individual sound combinations but focus on intonation, pausing and even the meaning of speech. Practice shows that concentration on word meaning and the breakdown of complex sentences into phrases united in meaning allow students to perform the exercises much better.

Special attention should be paid to intonation. When Russian students are asked to speak spontaneously or read a text in English (either a familiar one, or one prepared beforehand by the same student), they tend to make several typical mistakes, e.g. rising-pitch intonation at the end of sentences leaving a feeling of incompleteness, understatement, doubt or even a question, and incorrect pausing, which is either due to inability to understand the syntactic structure of the sentence in the correct way (when reading) or find the right word in time.

In the first case, it is recommended they use standard phonetic exercises: listening to authentic recordings and repeating after the speaker (as has

been mentioned above, the effectiveness of such exercises increases when the student's voice can be recorded so that the result produced can be compared with the original); reading short excerpts on the spot, without preliminary listening; composing short messages, paying special attention to the delivery, including loudness, clarity and intonation.

If incorrect pausing is the consequence of misunderstanding the sentence's syntactic structure, it is necessary to check whether the student comprehends the meaning of the entire utterance. In complicated cases analysing the sentence structure with the whole group is recommended, identifying grammatical and logical connections in it, and reminding students of the conversion phenomenon common in English (due to which a certain word can be mistakenly taken by the interpreter for another part of speech), and of the specific features of constructing phrases, use of various forms, etc.

Still, it should be noted that during real-time interpreting such challenges do not arise so often, because if the interpreter follows the speaker's intonation, he or she will probably be able to render the meaning of the message, even if certain grammatical structures seem unfamiliar.

The only exception here is probably the situation when the interpreter, having received the text of the speech in advance and not having worked it through, focuses on it more than on what the speaker is saying.

A much more frequent reason for unwanted pauses is the students' confusion in any unforeseen situation (e.g. inability to find the necessary equivalent, difficulties with the perception of the speaker's speech, the habit of using filler words, etc.). As a result, the interpreting rhythm is ragged. After a pause, they either omit part of the message or try to catch up with the speaker, speeding up until their speech becomes almost unintelligible. In this case, it is necessary to develop the interpreting smoothness, sometimes to slow down intentionally, allowing the speaker to go a little ahead, and thus being able to understand the meaning of the whole utterance and translate it with logically justified intonation pauses.

#### **4.4. Attention focus**

It is a well-known fact that the ability to control one's attention is one of the most important factors directly affecting the understanding of the message's meaning. Unfortunately, according to neuroscience research, even in the absence of external distractions, a person can focus on one subject or activity only for a short time (Bradbury, 2016). But even this requires a conscious effort and the abandonment of other, parallel types of activity. The question of whether the phenomenon of multitasking exists remains highly controversial, and according to some studies (Rosen, 2008; Salvucci et al., 2009), it does not. Instead, when performing two or more tasks, our brain constantly switches between them, thus giving much less time to both.

In order to motivate the students to be constantly focused on their work in the classroom, the teacher not only should propose different tasks but do them at a fast and intense pace, frequently changing the respondents, and, preferably, asking them in a random order, so that each student is constantly ready to start work.

#### **4.5. Developing the ability to understand the message**

Working with students has demonstrated that they tend to interpret utterances word by word, without delving into their meaning. At the same time, only understanding of the message, not limited to rendering individual words or speech fragments, allows them to formulate a logically consistent and intonationally correct message in the target language. Moreover, when focusing on individual words, any incomprehensible or poorly heard lexical unit leads to the fact that the student is lost and cannot continue interpreting.

To overcome this problem, in addition to the interpreting practice itself, a number of tasks dealing with individual sentences and the whole text are proposed, e.g. semantic analysis of a sentence (students may be asked to define theme, rheme and relations between them), various types of retelling (students may be asked to retell the text in source/target language, find certain information in the text, prepare a presentation on a topic related

to the text, or produce short or detailed retelling). As well as with many other exercises, written texts significantly facilitate the students' task, but as their skills develop, and they learn new topics and vocabulary, students can be offered audio recordings. These recordings can vary from rhetorically verified speeches, where the speaker's idea is obvious and repeated several times, to spontaneous speech, involving a significant proportion of semantic repetitions and paraphrasing, and, finally, to the most complicated task – listening to texts originally intended to be presented in written form.

Making up sentences contributes not only to better memorisation and improvement of lexical material, but provides immersion in the topic of translation (Li, 2019), thus forcing students to think about the possible contexts where certain expressions can be used.

*Make up sentences using the following words and word-combinations:*

а) оказать поддержку, проводить жесткую экономическую политику, свободный обмен капиталами и услуг, всеевропейская экономическая конвергенция, четко определиться как политическое понятие, установить тесное сотрудничество в области...;

б) столкнуться с проблемой, никогда за время своего существования, избежать риска, подписать договор, мирное разрешение конфликта.

#### **4.6. Developing skills helping to prepare for interpreting**

When working with the textbook, students not only acquire new lexical material but get basic knowledge about the functioning and history of international organisations, fundamental documents, economic problems, etc. See sample text below.

*Almost half a century of European integration has had a profound effect on the development of the continent and the attitudes of its inhabitants. It has also changed the balance of power. As the major player in Europe, the European Union has a great responsibility. From the very beginning there was a vision of a future pan-Europe: a Europe*

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*without borders that separate, a Europe where opinions, capital and services can be exchanged freely and a Europe where conflicts can be resolved peacefully, without resort to violence. Europe needs to provide what is in the shared interests of its States: economic prosperity, international competitiveness, peace, safety from the risk of new conflicts and the development of a pan-European Union in which Europeans can pursue their own fulfilment.*

*The Treaty on European Union, which entered into force on 1 November 1993, set the Member States an ambitious programme: monetary union by 1999, new common policies, European citizenship, a common foreign and security policy and internal security.*

However, in addition to classroom exercises including reading, retelling and finding logical connections between the statements, it is necessary to develop the habit of active self-preparation for interpreting. The task of comprehending a text is greatly simplified if an interpreter understands numerous aspects related to the information contained. One of the crucial factors is understanding the context (taking into account the speaker's personality, aims, the audience, the circumstances and history of their interaction, etc.) (Strelets & Rahit, 2020). Moreover, as has been mentioned above, it is extremely important to be careful with precise data, such as proper names, job titles (and their correspondence to the names of the main participants in the negotiations), and numbers (even if the exact numbers are not given in advance, the translator can get a general idea of their range so as to avoid the gross error of confusing them).

During the course, students get a chance to expand their background knowledge and learn new information.

*Translate the following geographical names into English (name their capitals and derived adjectives):*

а) *Австрия, Бельгия, Швейцария, Португалия, Греция, Венгрия, Германия, Дания, Нидерланды, Швеция, Финляндия, Чехия, Словения, Албания, Исландия, Люксембург.*

Besides, when preparing and translating the given texts, students can be asked to find the exact and generally accepted equivalents for the names of international organisations and important documents, as well as to clarify the pronunciation and translation methods of certain European (non-English) names into Russian (*the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Court of Auditors, the Maastricht treaty, the Schuman plan, Jean Monnet, etc.*).

Students can be asked to search for certain data and make short reports on the issues related to the topic of the lesson. This task is aimed at developing their ability to find linguistic, general and cultural information, as well as encouraging them to monitor the Russian and English press in order to update their knowledge and expand their horizons.

#### **4.7. Developing anticipation skills**

Anticipation skills development is considered one of the most important for simultaneous interpreters since it allows them not only to hear the speaker better and get the meaning of the message in case any technical problem occurs, but to construct a phrase in such a way so as to avoid incompleteness or gross syntactic errors. A system of training anticipation skills is understood as a special algorithm for the semantic and verbal design of an utterance developing in time in the original language and the anticipatory construct of a reproduced message in the target language (Zimnyaya & Chernov, 1973). Traditionally, scholars single out semantic and linguistic forecasting.

As Kosenko (2013) states, any translator or interpreter relies on three types of context: the narrow one (a phrase or sentence), the wide one (a paragraph, a chapter, or the entire work), and the extralinguistic (non-linguistic) one (historical period, situation, circumstances, place and time to which the statement refers). In the case of semantic forecasting, the interpreter relies on all three kinds of context, and considers possible situational development.

To a large extent, the interpreter's preparation discussed in the previous paragraph facilitates semantic forecasting. If the interpreter knows the topic of the report and has a general idea of the aims of the parties and the relationship between them, he or she will be able to understand and render the message even despite individual semantic gaps.

Kosenko (2013) argues that linguistic forecasting relies on both narrow and broad context, as well as on the structure of the sentence and the whole text. Analysis of the linguistic context gives information about the possible combinability of a particular word (since the appearance of each new word significantly limits the possibility of using others), about the tone, style and register of the text (through the analysis of the word's pragmatic meaning), about the grammatical function and the form of the omitted lexical unit. The broader context allows one to identify the verb tense, and therefore, based on the rules of its formation, to determine the form of both auxiliary and semantic verbs. It also allows the interpreter to establish the author's attitude towards the issue under discussion, and, consequently, to deduce the possible pragmatic meaning of the omitted linguistic unit. The narrow context allows the interpreter to establish the function of an omitted lexical unit in the sentence. To do it, it is necessary to determine the type of the simple sentence analysed (which can also be included in the structure of a complex one): what is the expressed attitude towards reality (affirmative / negative); what is the purpose (declarative / interrogative / imperative / exclamatory); and whether all the sentence members are present or partially absent (Kosenko, 2013).



*'Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions'*

Thus, the interpreter should be able to determine the syntactic function and (at least approximately) the part of speech of the missing word, and only then deduce its lexical meaning on the basis of the broader context, background knowledge and the speaker's general intention.

In order to rise to these challenges, the interpreter must understand the syntactic structure of the sentence and the functions of parts of speech in it. To practise these skills, the textbook offers several gapped texts, which students are invited to fill in with the words in their appropriate forms. The complexity of tasks varies depending on the number and frequency of omissions, the characteristics of the omitted words (whether these are major or auxiliary parts of speech), and the presence of options offering a word for substitution.

*Replace the Russian words with their English equivalents in the necessary form.*

*Belarusian Delegation to Visit China*

*Official visit of the delegation, (1) Belarusian 'national assembly', (2) by the Chairman of the 'Republic's council' to China will take place on January 17-24. The (3) of their visit envisages (4) with the chairman of the (5) Committee of the Chinese Assembly of people's representatives Lee Pen, (6) chair Hu Tsintao, deputy premier of the (7) Council Tsyhan Tichen. The delegation members intend to visit the Khubay province, which (8) with the Brest region, and well as the towns Shantzen and Guanzhou.*

1) представлять; 2) возглавлять; 3) график, план; 4) переговоры; 5) постоянный; 6) заместитель; 7) государственный; 8) сотрудничать.

Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions. However, this does not mean that all words belonging to the same part of speech have the same grammatical compatibility (Kosenko, 2013).

The exercises below give an idea of how these skills can be trained.

*There is one word missing in each sentence. Insert the appropriate word from the following list: have, perspective, annual, coins, slowdown, under, recent, meticulous, faced, further.*

*The introduction of Euro notes and marked a decisive step in the history of European integration. Thanks to preparation and to the enthusiastic welcome given by a large majority of the public, the changeover to Euro notes and coins was an unprecedented success that marked the birth of a currency area comprising over 300 million people. Economic and monetary union rests on the undertaking to conduct sound macroeconomic policies, and these contributed to the emergence of a new culture of economic stability in Europe. It is this stability that has enabled the Union to cope with in the world economy. With this slowdown, the monetary authorities have cut interest rates, and budgetary policy has operated through the automatic stabilisers, which help to smooth out fluctuations in the growth of production. However, in the light of developments and in the absence of the recovery forecast in the spring, budget deficits have increased. These circumstances, the Commission has proposed improved coordination of economic policy and, in particular, of the Stability and Growth Pact. In order to strengthen and facilitate the coordination process even, it launched a new quarterly report on economic developments in the euro area. In the interests of consistency and efficiency, it also launched a process for streamlining the economic and employment policy coordination cycles. The Commission has thus reinforced the medium- and long-term for coordination in line*

*with the strategy embarked on at the Lisbon European Council and followed up at the Gothenburg European Council and has placed the emphasis on implementing the policy guidelines and achieving tangible results.*

The learner's task is, on the one hand, simplified by the availability of the words to choose from. However, practice shows that without clear understanding of the syntactic role and functions of the parts of speech, as well as some acquaintance with set phrases, the list is of little help. The text below, on the contrary, indicates the gaps, but leaves it up to the learner to select a suitable word and put it in the relevant grammatical form.

*Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space.*

*A powerful symbol of ..... new era of European integration, the Euro became part of everyday life for ..... people on 1 January 2002, with the introduction of ..... new notes and coins. The public's ..... to the new currency in the 12 Member States of the euro zone, with their total population of over 300 million, lived up ..... the expectations of all those at Community and national level who had worked so hard to prepare for the introduction of the single currency: by the beginning of February, payments in euro already accounted for 95% of cash payments, and the withdrawal of the national ..... from circulation in the Member States concerned was completed at the end of that month. The process received ..... extra impetus on 1 July when the regulation on the simplification of cross-border payments came into ..... . This regulation, which aims to create a single payment area in the euro zone, ..... enable European citizens to take ..... advantage of the benefits of ..... single currency, by harmonising charges for national and cross-border transactions (cash withdrawals and payments by bank card or credit card). Given the success of the physical introduction of the euro, economic and monetary union undoubtedly qualifies as one of the significant ..... in European integration, an example ..... the 'real solidarity' beloved of Jean Monnet, ranking alongside such earlier achievements as the customs union of 1968 and the single market of 1992.*

This article pays special attention to grammatical and lexical collocations since they significantly contribute to the efficiency and quality of interpreting. In this case, sometimes several options can be considered 'correct', but the learners should be able to justify their choices.

The task of forecasting in interpreting is to a certain extent facilitated by the redundancy of oral speech in comparison with the written one. This phenomenon has been described by many scholars. The speaker, realising that the main idea may not be heard due to various reasons (e.g. technical issues, interference, scattered attention of audience, etc.), says a little more than would be necessary if the message was presented in writing, changing the wording or even repeating important arguments. However, it should be noted that this is more relevant in the case of spontaneous speech or a rhetorically elaborate presentation. When it comes to an official report, these characteristics are less apparent, since the speaker tends to rely on an already prepared text that is not always suitable for oral presentation, and often speaks at a fast pace, without wasting time thinking. Therefore, a simultaneous interpreter must master the written register of speech as well.

#### **4.8. Developing interpreting consistency**

##### **4.8.1. General requirements**

After the students have mastered anticipation skills, it is necessary to teach them how to ensure the consistency and completeness of their interpreting. One of the requirements for simultaneous interpreting states, that no matter what and how the speaker says, every interpreted phrase must be logically connected with the next and the previous one. It is imperative to finish the utterance you have begun to interpret (Duplensky, 2012).

To meet these requirements, the interpreter must be ready, if necessary, to generalise the utterance as much as possible in order to fill in the missing information. Understanding the general meaning of the utterance, it becomes possible to use rather neutral phrases instead of the precise ones, as in *according to experts, certain features, considerable growth, several hundreds of*, etc.

*'Besides, when working with a recorded text, linguistic forecasting requires taking into account the grammatical compatibility of words, i.e. their ability to collocate with other lexical units. The compatibility of words is determined by their part of speech and ability to perform certain syntactic functions'*

Even if the speaker has not finished the sentence or has unjustifiably changed its syntactic structure (and also in case the interpreter was unable to hear a piece of it), the simultaneous interpreter should have a number of neutral phrases at hand to complete the utterance. The textbook suggests certain exercises, where students are asked to complete the sentence in the most neutral or contextually appropriate manner.

#### **4.8.2. Developing and mastering the skill of translating clichés and collocations**

It is highly important for the interpreter to react quickly and not hesitate to find correct equivalents for oratorical clichés, phrases of politeness, introductory and closing phrases, etc. Moreover, even if the speaker decides to use a vivid figure of speech of his own invention, it is possible and even recommended to remove and/or replace metaphors and figurative expressions with equivalent fixed phrases (Duplensky, 2012). This skill can be mastered by practising the use of fixed and widely used expressions in the target language.

Moreover, students need to actively expand their knowledge of the lexical and grammatical compatibility of the most common words and terms in the area of social and political interpreting. This process is most effective when students work on their own. On the one hand, searching, learning and reproducing phrases involves certain cognitive efforts, owing to which information is repeated several times and thus memorised. On the other hand, the pre-composed lists of phrases do not always give an exhaustive idea of the compati-

bility of a particular word at the moment of use, since language is constantly evolving. Therefore, the most relevant information can only be obtained by using numerous sources: explanatory and collocation dictionaries, text corpora, periodicals and recorded speeches of public figures available on the Internet. To ensure this, the textbook suggests tasks requiring serious individual work and further discussion of the obtained results.

*Give as many collocations as possible with the following words and translate them into Russian.*

*A. Give attributes for the following nouns: step forward, impetus, goal, programme, risk, market, cooperation, policy, support, conflict, integration, threat, dispute, treaty.*

*B. Give nouns to go with the following adjectives: comprehensive, economic, mutual, major, long-term, political, troublesome, common, single, ambitious, free, profound, pure, creative, European, original, peaceful, robust.*

*C. Give direct objects for the following verbs: to allow, to extend, to sign, to establish, to fulfil, to receive, to pursue, to join, to share, to represent, to transfer, to plan, to attract, to launch, to exchange, to provide, to perceive, to remove, to stabilise, to promote, to expand.*

Teaching simultaneous interpreting is impossible without tackling synonyms and antonyms, allowing the activation of the students' passive vocabulary, thus giving them an opportunity to go beyond the use of standard formulae and more accurately and flexibly render the meaning of the utterance. At the same time, it is desirable to work not only with synonymous series of individual words, but with synonymous phrases and word combinations as well.

*Give as many equivalents as possible of the following collocations: to establish a Committee; to lend one's support to smb (somebody); to wrangle over smth (something); to draw up a constitution; to suspend the convertibility of the dollar; to pursue a policy; to resolve a conflict; to come into force; to decide to do smth; an ambitious programme; economic prosperity; to stabilise the exchange rates; economic convergence; the outcome of the negotiations; under the leadership of;*

*'It is highly important for the interpreter to react quickly and not hesitate to find correct equivalents for oratorical clichés, phrases of politeness, introductory and closing phrases, etc. Moreover, even if the speaker decides to use a vivid figure of speech of his own invention, it is possible and even recommended to remove and/or replace metaphors and figurative expressions with equivalent fixed phrases. This skill can be mastered by practising the use of fixed and widely used expressions in the target language'*

*to resist totalitarianism; matters regarding defence; to conclude a treaty; a troublesome and protracted process; to have a profound effect on smth.*

On the one hand, such exercises allow students to revise collocations and thus to memorise them. On the other hand, they also provide an opportunity to see and understand the possibility of syntactic transformations, when the grammatical structure of a particular phrase has changed but the meaning has not. For example, the meaning of the expression *to have a profound effect* can be rendered by means of *verb + adverb* pattern: *to influence smth deeply*, a word combination *to lend one's support*, or a verb *to assist*.

To learn the material and master the skill of using collocations and word combinations, the textbook suggests different types of exercises for practising active vocabulary, including interpreting individual expressions and sentences with them.

*Give Russian/English equivalents for the following words and word combinations: an urgent meeting, высшее военное командование, спровоцировать переворот, to downplay the coup rumours, смягчить обвинение, под эгидой, to prompt a decision, подкупить кого-либо.*

Such exercises are done at a fast pace, thus enabling students to quickly switch from one language to another.

*Translate the following sentences into English:*

1) *Высшее военное командование вылетело в Бейрут для проведения внеочередной встречи по вопросу урегулирования конфликта.*

2) *Слухи о готовящемся государственном перевороте взбудоражили население страны.*

3) *Президент страны в своем заявлении попытался отвлечь внимание от слухов о готовящемся перевороте.*

#### **4.8.3. Compression and expansion**

According to Schweitzer (1988), compression is achieved by omitting redundant elements of the utterance, elements that can either be deduced from an extra-linguistic situation and communicative context or can be substituted with more compact expression forms. The mastery of compression and expansion strategies develops and improves mainly at the later stages of simultaneous interpreting teaching, but the earlier the students get to know them, the more effectively they can cope with other tasks.

When interpreting or translating, special attention should be paid to searching for options that contribute to the most appropriate rendering of individual phrases and sentences. Compression occurs at different levels: syllabic, syntactic, lexical-semantic, situational. The tasks students are faced with here often overlap with those described above in this article. For example, in order to ensure the coherence of the text and its compliance with the norms of the target language, sometimes the student has to change the syntactic structure of a sentence significantly without changing its meaning. This has already been discussed in the paragraph dealing with the rendering of clichés and collocations. Here we will restrict ourselves to the cases when the interpreter's goal is to find the most appropriate equivalent.

At the same time, interpreters should not forget that sometimes they need to amplify the target language (more often Russian) sentence in order to render the whole meaning of the utterance without violating linguistic norms. In the early stages, expansion during interpreting mainly implies combining individual words and ensuring the consis-



tency of the target language utterances. Still, a separate problem is the need to clarify certain concepts or provide the necessary background information when the interpreter considers it relevant and necessary for the target audience. This task, being more creative and depending on the subjective view of the interpreter, can be given to students who have already mastered basic interpreting skills.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study have allowed us to identify the key problems students and novice interpreters are typically faced with and to suggest general advice on how to overcome them. Continuous use of a variety of exercises in experimental student training served to single out the most efficient activities yielding the best results in building conference interpreting skills.

The importance of the research lies in the fact that its nature is purely practical – sample exercises and tasks presented in the article can be used in the classroom to develop basic skills at the initial stage of the interpreting course. Moreover, these exercises are aimed at developing a variety of skills. Thus, the teacher can choose options that he or she regards as most useful and relevant. In addition, such tasks can serve as a kind of warm-up for experienced and professional interpreters, helping to activate memory and prepare for the working process.

Despite the contribution of the current research, several questions require future consideration. Thus, the article deals with developing interpreting skills at the early stage. However, the process of transition from being a novice interpreter into becoming a professional one is open for discussion.

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Thus, it would be interesting to review and analyse skills which distinguish the professional interpreter from the novice and to see how these skills can be mastered and what is to be done to maintain them.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The article reviewed the following challenges arising in the early stages of training: the inability of students to concentrate and keep a lasting focus on the meaning and the structure of the source utterance, inability to control their short-term memory, the unfamiliar situation where the interpreter is required to listen and speak simultaneously, lack of control over intonation and structure of speech during interpreting, and others. Several methods have been suggested to solve these difficulties, including activating short-term memory by memorisation and repetition of single words and word combinations; listening comprehension and the shadowing technique with varying loudness, pace and intonation; semantic analysis of a sentence, which helps to develop a deeper understanding of its meaning; various types of retelling; work with gapped texts, learning new vocabulary, primarily collocations, and active acquisition of background knowledge connected with the topic of the translated texts. Introducing these activities in actual teaching carried out by the authors for over ten years has shown that they improve interpreting performance both immediately after the preparatory exercises (particularly those aimed at short-term memory and anticipation skills development) and in the long run.

The authors believe that if done on a regular basis these strategies will allow students to cope with interpreting tasks in a much better way and develop their cognitive skills.

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