

## On Similarities and Differences between Translation and Interpretation

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### Abstract

**With an increasing amount of intercultural communication coming out since the reform and open policy was implemented in China, a soaring market demand for proficient translators and interpreters has emerged as the time requires. Translation and interpretation, as the two crucial ways of rendering the meaning of the source language to the target one, are worth elaborate study and research. In this essay the similarities and differences of translation and interpretation are explored so that a better understanding and learning methods of them could be acquired by the readers.**

### Keywords

**Translation, Interpretation, Process, Features.**

As an elementary way of switching one language into another, translation has varied kinds of definitions as followed: a replacement of the original text with another text (Zhang Peiji,1983); Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of source language message, first in terms of learning and secondly in terms of style.(Eugene A. Nida,1984);an act, process, or instance of translating : a rendering from one language into another; even a change into a different substance, form, or appearance; conversation.(Webster's Dictionary,1961). From the definitions mentioned above, one can know that translation, as an art of transforming one language to another, requires the equivalence and coherence of the two languages both in meaning and in style.

When doing translation, the translator first analyzes the content the source language through reading or resorting to dictionaries, reference books, or consulting the experts in the related field. With no strict limitation of time, he can not only make the preparation work but the rendering work adequately: revising and restructuring the organization of the text, polishing the choice of words, expressions, correcting the grammatical mistakes etc. Before the translation is presented, he can give it to the person who represents the intended audience for test. In all, the translator has sufficient time to make adjustment to the work to achieve a satisfactory effect.

As oral way of transfer from the source language to the target language, interpretation is also defined in different ways. Derived from the Latin "Interpretari", "interpret" means explain; "interpre", which is the noun form of it, has the meaning of a negotiator (Liu Biqing,2003 ). Seleskovitch defined interpretation as" the transfer of meaning from one language to another for the purpose of oral communication among people who do not share the same language." Being regarded as not only a linguistic undertaking, interpretation is viewed as "a kind of communicative action transmitting one language to another language accurately and quickly through the oral form in order to exchange information, which is a kind of communicative tool on which man depends in the course of cross-cultural activities among all kinds of nationals.(Mei Deming,2000) Serving as a bridge between the two languages, interpretation is the tool to render the meaning by the integrated tasks such as listening ,speaking, reading ,writing, digesting and synthesizing and the information. Interpreter plays the role of negotiator or coordinator in the communication act to achieve mutual understanding. Thus task of the interpreter includes not only transfer between the two languages but the removal the cultural differences and obstacles for a more efficient and satisfactory communication.

Interpretation can be divided into five categories according to the different professional level and technical grades.(Yang Chengshu,2005): 1.Conference interpreting: to interpret for meetings of different scales, “which enables participants in a multinational meeting to communicate with each other in a seamless fashion, making the language barrier almost imperceptible”(GSTI,1998)

2. Court interpretation: Known as legal, judiciary, forensic interpreting, refers to interpreting services provided in courts of law and in legal cases of any sort.(Yang Chengshu,2005) 3.In-house interpreting: Interpreting for the sake of business promotion, for instance, technical negotiation, business communication ,products exhibition.4.Escort interpreting: interpreting for the people who are conducting on-site visits, such as company executives and officials etc.5.Broadcast interpreting: interpreting for films, videos, radio or television programs.( GSTI,1998) According to the different degree of occupational levels, the first two categories of interpretation require high demand for the interpreters.

Generally speaking, the process of interpretation involves the three stages: listening comprehension, deverbilization, and delivery. When receiving the source language message, the interpreter should concentrate on the information, make an evaluation of the text, memorize the message by taking notes or just brain memory, understand the connotations of the information by analyzing the meaning and visualizing it nonverbally and then reformulate it into the target language. Different stages of the process are interrelated and interactive to contribute to the integrated and coordinated whole interpreting process.

With great similarities as well as differences, translation and interpretation are worth exploring with elaboration. Firstly, they both are the ways of transfer from one language to another, involving the translator's or interpreter's reproduction, reconstitution, reorganization of the source language on the basis of the accurate understanding of the meanings of the original information. Secondly, they both set certain demands for the professional level for the translator or interpreter, such as application of the vocabulary, dictation of language, ability to cope with the grammatical readjustment and syntactic processing. Moreover, the purpose of both translation and interpretation is to convey the underlying connotations instead of transcoding the language material in word-to-word pattern. In addition, they both require good comprehension and expression level of the two languages as well as the profound and comprehensive cross-cultural background concerned so that the in-depth meaning of the original text could be extracted and delivered in a logical way.

The differences between translation and interpretation are also worth being analyzed. Just as B.I.Evans put it,” like any other language, the main element of spoken language are sounds, which speak to the ears, while those of written English are written types or figures, which speak to the eyes. They almost constitute two different languages”. Though a little exaggerating in his view, B.I.Evans clearly indicates that striking differences between translation and interpretation exist.

Firstly, time allotment is different. With no time limitation in translation, translators can not only resort to the reference books and consult the related experts for further information but also have adequate time for appropriate wording. Translators can have a profound understanding of the source language and render it into equivalent target one both in meaning and in style. Thus he has sufficient time to synthesize the theme, context, syntactic relations, and non-linguistic knowledge to deal with the transfer of the two languages. Complex sentences, compound sentences, some rhetorical devices such as parallelism and metaphors are often employed to beautify and perfect the language. While interpretation is always completed in a very short period of time, interpreters is facing the task of rendering the source language into the target one quickly even simultaneously, often choosing the first word springs to the mind and making the interpreted text simple and easy to understand. Moreover, the interpreter doesn't have the chance to hear the fleeting information for a second time so he has to be proficient in listening comprehension to grasp the meaning accurately and completely, nor can he consult the experts or dictionaries due to the limitation of time.

Secondly, the working places are different. Translators can choose place of working arbitrarily, such as a private room, library, resource center where they can work in a relaxing surrounding to comprehend, reread, and analyze the written text attentively. Always working in a venue or booth, interpreters have to face a number of audience. Therefore a good psychological quality of keeping calm and overcoming the stage fright is demanded for the interpreters who are supposed to accomplish different tasks including listening, comprehending, analyzing, memorizing and re-expressing within the limited time. Just as every stick has two ends, the interpreters have closer contact with the audience than the translators, so that they can make correspondent adjustment in speaking speed, tones, intonations, choice of words promptly to meet the demands of the listeners, which is hardly attainable in translation.

Last but not least, the criteria for the professional level and quality of translators and interpreters are different. The source language of translation is in written form which is static and immutable, and the written language is often with distinguished literary features, thus the translators are supposed to be equipped with brilliant writing talent and skilled in using different techniques to enhance the beauty of the transferred language. Contrary to the situation of translators, interpreters have the great pressure of facing the audience directly and interpret the material promptly or even simultaneously, which requires them to have proficient ability in listening, comprehension, analyzing and expressing. A stable state of mind and good psychological quality are also required so that the interpreters can convey the equivalent meaning in fluent oral language with a minimum of delay without the disturbance of nervousness and confusion caused by erratic mental state.

In conclusion, translation and interpretation are both ways of rendering of the source language to target language, bearing some similarities and differences. Through the resemblances and disparities of them analyzed above, we have a more profound of understanding of the two language-transferring forms and thus can enhance the techniques and skills of both so that we can achieve a more satisfying translating and interpreting effect to live up to the market expectation of cross-cultural communication.

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