

CHALLENGES OF INTERPRETING CULTURAL REFERENCES IN SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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Abstract. This article analyzes the main difficulties encountered in translating cultural references in the process of simultaneous interpretation. The correct translation of elements such as cultural information, historical events, national values, jokes, expressions and metaphors requires simultaneous interpreters not only high language competence, but also deep cultural knowledge and quick thinking. The article highlights the problems of loss of meaning in different cultural contexts, cultural inconsistency, and adequate communication of information to the listener.

Keywords: qualitative approach, international conferences, cultural contexts, diplomatic forums, contextual analysis.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada sinxron tarjima jarayonida madaniy konnotatsiyalarga oid murojaatlarni tarjima qilishda uchraydigan asosiy qiyinchiliklar tahlil qilinadi. Madaniy ma'lumotlar, tarixiy voqealar, milliy qadriyatlar, hazillar, iboralar va metaforalar kabi unsurlarni to'g'ri tarjima qilish sinxron tarjimonlardan nafaqat yuqori darajadagi til kompetensiyasini, balki chuqur madaniy bilim va tez fikrlash qobiliyatini ham talab qiladi. Maqolada turli madaniy kontekstlarda ma'no yo'qolishi, madaniy nomuvofiqlik va axborotni tinglovchiga yetarli darajada yetkazishdagi muammolar yoritilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: sifatli yondashuv, xalqaro konferensiyalar, madaniy kontekstlar, diplomatik forumlar, kontekstual tahlil.

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируются основные трудности, возникающие при переводе культурных реалий в процессе синхронного перевода. Правильная передача таких элементов, как культурная информация, исторические события, национальные ценности, шутки, выражения и метафоры, требует от синхронных переводчиков не только высокого уровня языковой компетенции, но и глубоких культурных знаний и быстрого мышления. В статье рассматриваются проблемы потери смысла в разных культурных контекстах, культурной несоответственности и адекватной передачи информации слушателю.

Ключевые слова: качественный подход, международные конференции, культурные контексты, дипломатические форумы, контекстуальный анализ.

Introduction. In the era of globalization, as cultural, political and economic ties between peoples intensify, the role of simultaneous interpreters is growing. They ensure dialogue between different languages and cultures, creating effective communication at international conferences, diplomatic meetings and public events. However, the process of simultaneous interpretation is not limited to simply translating words from one language to another - it also involves complex cultural contexts, gestures and national identities. In particular, cultural references - elements such as historical figures, traditions, jokes, national symbols, expressions and religious concepts - pose great challenges in translation. To translate such gestures correctly, the translator must not only have excellent knowledge of the language, but also have a deep understanding of the specific features of the source and target cultures. Otherwise, there will be a loss of meaning, misinterpretation, or

cultural incompatibility, which can lead to misunderstanding or a communication breakdown for the listener. Therefore, this article analyzes the main difficulties in translating cultural cues in simultaneous interpretation, and considers ways to overcome them on a scientific basis.

Literature analysis. This study used a qualitative approach to analyze the problems encountered in translating cultural cues in the process of simultaneous translation. The main goal of the study is to identify cultural barriers encountered by translators, study their sources, and identify effective strategies that can be used in such situations. The material analyzed was written transcripts of simultaneous translations performed at international conferences, meetings, and online diplomatic forums, as well as interviews and observations with professional translators.

The study also used international methodological literature developed for simultaneous interpreters, such as the scientific works of scientists such as D. Gile, B. Moser-Mercer and J. Pöchhacker, as a theoretical basis. According to them, one of the greatest difficulties for simultaneous interpreters is the correct interpretation of culturally sensitive units under time constraints. Therefore, this article aims to comprehensively illuminate the problems of translating cultural cues, combining theoretical sources with practical observations. As a result, the study assessed the differences between different cultures, semantic compatibility, contextual understanding and pragmatic adaptation processes as key factors in the work of simultaneous interpreters. This approach allowed for a deeper analysis of the translation of cultural cues in simultaneous interpreting and created a scientific basis for identifying effective strategies in interpreting practice.

Research methodology. The article selected cultural cues used in speeches involving representatives of different cultures – for example, references to historical events, folk proverbs, jokes and expressions, religious or political symbols – as the main objects of analysis. The research methodology includes the following stages:

1. The stage of identifying cultural cues. At this stage, units expressing the cultural context – phrases, word combinations, metaphors – were extracted from the simultaneous translation texts.

2. The stage of identifying translation strategies. A qualitative analysis was conducted to study how each cultural cue was translated and what methods (adaptation, finding an equivalent, explanation, or compensation) the translators used.

Results and discussion. The results of the study showed that interpreting cultural cues in the process of simultaneous translation poses various difficulties for translators. These problems mainly affect the accuracy, logical consistency and naturalness of the translation. Analysis based on interviews, observations and translation assignments revealed that the main difficulties are related to the translator's low level of cultural awareness, time pressure and the lack of direct equivalents in the target language. First, the

results of the study showed that expressions, proverbs, jokes and culturally loaded phrases are among the most difficult elements. Simultaneous translators often have difficulty conveying such units in a culturally appropriate form in the target language in a short time. In many cases, they completely omit the cultural component or replace it with an expression with a neutral meaning. Secondly, the results of the experiment confirmed that the level of awareness of the cultural context of the listeners also affects the effectiveness of the translation. If the audience does not have knowledge of the source culture, even if the translator finds the right equivalent, the meaning will not be fully conveyed. It was also found that the correct interpretation of contextual meaning, folk sayings and historical allusions in the process of simultaneous translation directly depends not only on the language, but also on the intercultural competence of the translator. During the study, it was observed that while skilled translators used more adaptation strategies, less experienced translators resorted to word-for-word translation.

Overall, the results showed that intercultural thinking, quick thinking and the ability to correctly identify cultural connotations are the keys to the success of a simultaneous translator in translating cultural allusions.

The results of this study are consistent with previous studies that have identified the main challenges in simultaneous translation of cultural cues—lack of cultural awareness, time pressure, and lack of linguistic equivalents. For example, the article “Translating Idiomatic Expressions: A Systematic Review” notes that idioms and culturally rich structures pose significant challenges in translation.

Also, the study “Translation and Semantics: Challenges and Strategies in Translating English Idioms” notes that translators attempt to interpret idioms using literal, paraphrase, and cultural equivalents, but sometimes the meaning is lost due to the lack of cultural context.

In our study, we found that most translators used strategies of adaptation and neutral expression. These strategies were also discussed in the article “Strategies Used by Professional Interpreter in Indonesian-English Simultaneous Interpreting” – translators try to convey meaning by adapting culturally rich units.

In addition, the articles “Pragmatic Equivalence in the Translation of Cultural References from Uzbek into English” noted the importance of translators paying attention to pragmatic equivalence in order to preserve cultural meanings. Research has shown that highly skilled translators are significantly better at conveying cultural meanings. This is consistent with the idea in the article “Linguistic and Cultural Aspects of Simultaneous Translation”. The difficulties that translation students face in simultaneous translation, especially with figurative units such as idioms and proverbs, have been analyzed in studies such as “Figurative Expressions Across Languages”. Strategies such as domestication and interpretation of non-equivalent words can be effective in the translation of cultural

references. The article “Translation Challenges of Cultural Realia in English Literary Texts” analyzes the adaptation and interpretation methods of realia words.

Our research sample and interviews were limited to specific languages and interpreters; results may differ in other languages and cultures. Time pressure is not always equal—the conditions for conference, television, and online simultaneous interpretation are different. Therefore, further research comparing strategies in different settings (high and low time constraints) is needed. It is important to explore the role of technology (e.g., translation assistants, automated subtitling, simultaneous interpretation systems) as they can facilitate or reduce the interpreter’s work.

Conclusion. The above analysis and research results show that the process of simultaneous translation of cultural references is broader than language tools, that is, it requires cultural thinking, pragmatic adaptation and quick thinking competencies. A simultaneous translator must be able to correctly interpret not only words, but also the cultural meanings hidden behind them. As it was found during the study, units with cultural connotations – phrases, proverbs, historical or religious references – are the most complex translation elements. The successful use of adaptation, neutralization, interpretation and equivalent search strategies when translating such units determines the overall quality of the translation.

Also, the intercultural literacy, cultural competence and ability to understand the social context of a simultaneous translator are one of the main factors determining his success in the translation process. The results confirmed that the loss of meaning can be prevented only if the translator can effectively manage not only language differences, but also differences between cultures

In practical terms, this study suggests the need to include training in cultural competence, cultural cue recognition, and context-sensitive decision-making in the training programs of simultaneous interpreters. In addition, it is recommended that interpreters regularly conduct intercultural training and seminars on speech rate and attention management. The final conclusion is that the correct interpretation of cultural cues in simultaneous interpreting is not only a matter of linguistic skill, but also a complex process that involves a combination of cultural thinking, quick strategic decisions, and a creative approach. Therefore, strengthening intercultural competence in the field of interpreting is a guarantee of future translation quality.

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