GENERAL FEATURES OF SIGN AND SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING

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Abstract. *Interpreting is an essential component of multilingual communication in modern society. In an increasingly globalized world, individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact in various contexts such as international conferences, diplomatic negotiations, educational environments, and public services. In these situations, interpreters play a crucial role in facilitating communication and ensuring mutual understanding between participants who do not share a common language. Among the various interpreting modes, simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting are particularly significant due to their wide application in international and community communication.*

Simultaneous interpreting is commonly used in international conferences, global organizations, and diplomatic meetings. In this mode, interpreters listen to the source speech and render the message into the target language almost simultaneously. Sign language interpreting, on the other hand, involves translating spoken language into sign language used by Deaf communities. This form of interpreting ensures accessibility and communication for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in various social and institutional settings.

Although simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting differ in modality - one being auditory-verbal and the other visual-gestural - they share several fundamental characteristics. Both involve real-time language processing, complex cognitive operations, advanced bilingual competence, and discourse comprehension. Interpreters working in these fields

must analyze incoming information, understand the speaker's intended meaning, and reproduce the message in another language with minimal delay.

This paper examines the general features of simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting from linguistic, cognitive, and communicative perspectives. The study also highlights the similarities and differences between these interpreting modes and discusses the professional competencies required for interpreters. The findings demonstrate that interpreting is a complex communicative activity that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also cognitive flexibility and cultural awareness.

Keywords: *interpreting studies, simultaneous interpreting, sign language interpreting, discourse processing, interpreter competence, multilingual communication.*

Introduction. Communication across languages and cultures has become increasingly important in the modern world. The rapid development of international cooperation in fields such as politics, economics, science, education, and technology has created a growing demand for interpreting services. Interpreting enables individuals who speak different languages to interact effectively and share information in real time.

Interpreting can be defined as the oral or signed translation of a spoken message from a source language into a target language. Unlike written translation, interpreting occurs instantly and requires the interpreter to process information and deliver the translation without significant delay. This makes interpreting one of the most cognitively demanding forms of linguistic activity.

Among the different types of interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting occupy important positions. Simultaneous interpreting is widely used in multilingual conferences and international organizations. In this mode, interpreters listen to the speaker and deliver the interpretation almost at the same time as the original speech. This allows

communication to proceed without interruption and ensures that all participants receive the message in their respective languages.

Sign language interpreting is essential for communication between hearing individuals and members of the Deaf community. Sign languages are natural languages that use visual-gestural forms of communication, including hand movements, facial expressions, and body posture. Sign language interpreters therefore act as mediators between spoken languages and sign languages.

Although these two interpreting modes differ significantly in their modality and working environment, they share several common features. Both require interpreters to process complex discourse structures, manage cognitive load, and reproduce meaning accurately in another language.

The aim of this study is to analyze the general characteristics of simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting. By examining the linguistic, cognitive, and communicative aspects of these interpreting modes, the research contributes to a better understanding of interpreting as a professional and academic discipline.

Theoretical Background. The field of interpreting studies has developed significantly over the past few decades. Researchers have proposed various theoretical models to explain how interpreters process information and transfer meaning between languages.

One of the most influential theoretical models is the **Effort Model** proposed by **Daniel Gile**. According to this model, simultaneous interpreting involves several cognitive efforts that occur simultaneously. These efforts include listening and analysis of the source speech, memory operations, production of the target language speech, and coordination of these processes. Because interpreters have limited cognitive resources, they must carefully manage their attention and memory in order to avoid overload.

Another important theoretical approach is the **Interpretive Theory of Translation** developed by **Danica Seleskovitch** and **Marianne Lederer**. This theory emphasizes that interpreting is primarily the transfer of meaning rather than the transfer of individual words. Interpreters must first understand the speaker's message, separate the meaning from the linguistic form of the source language, and then reformulate it in the target language.

Research in discourse analysis has also contributed to interpreting studies. Scholars such as **Teun A. van Dijk** argue that language should be analyzed at the level of discourse rather than isolated sentences. Interpreters must therefore understand the structure and context of a speech in order to convey its meaning effectively.

These theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding both simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting as complex cognitive and communicative processes.

Characteristics of simultaneous interpreting. Simultaneous interpreting is widely considered one of the most demanding forms of interpreting. It requires interpreters to listen to a speech in one language and produce the translation in another language at the same time. This process involves rapid information processing and high levels of concentration.

One of the most distinctive features of simultaneous interpreting is the **ear-voice span**, which refers to the short delay between hearing the original speech and delivering the interpretation. During this time, interpreters must analyze the speaker's message and prepare the equivalent expression in the target language.

Another important feature of simultaneous interpreting is **cognitive load**. Interpreters must perform multiple tasks simultaneously, including listening, analyzing, remembering, and speaking. These tasks require strong memory capacity and the ability to manage attention effectively.

Simultaneous interpreters often use specific strategies to manage the complexity of the task. These strategies include segmentation of long sentences, reformulation of complex expressions, and summarization of redundant information. Such strategies help interpreters maintain accuracy and fluency while coping with time pressure.

In professional settings, simultaneous interpreters usually work in soundproof booths with specialized equipment such as microphones and headphones. They often work in teams and take turns interpreting to avoid fatigue and maintain high levels of performance.

Characteristics of sign language interpreting. Sign language interpreting differs from spoken language interpreting in several ways. The most significant difference lies in the modality of communication. Sign languages are visual-gestural languages that rely on hand movements, facial expressions, and body posture to convey meaning.

One of the main features of sign language interpreting is the use of **visual communication**. Interpreters must express linguistic information through signs, facial expressions, and spatial organization. These visual elements are essential for representing grammatical relationships and discourse structures.

Another important aspect is **spatial grammar**. Sign languages use physical space to represent relationships between people, objects, and actions. Interpreters must therefore organize information spatially while maintaining clarity and coherence.

Sign language interpreting also requires **cultural competence**. Deaf communities have their own cultural norms, communication styles, and social values. Interpreters must be familiar with these cultural aspects in order to facilitate effective interaction between Deaf and hearing participants.

Unlike conference interpreters who work in booths, sign language interpreters must remain visible to Deaf participants. They typically stand or sit in positions where their signs and facial expressions can be clearly seen.

Similarities between sign and simultaneous interpreting. Despite differences in modality, sign language interpreting and simultaneous interpreting share several important similarities.

First, both modes involve **real-time language processing**. Interpreters must process incoming information and produce the translation almost immediately.

Second, both require **high levels of bilingual competence**. Interpreters must have advanced proficiency in both the source and target languages.

Third, both interpreting modes involve **complex cognitive processes**, including attention management, memory retention, and rapid decision-making.

Another similarity is the importance of **discourse comprehension**. Interpreters must understand the overall message and context rather than translating individual words.

6. Differences Between Sign and Simultaneous Interpreting

The most obvious difference between these two interpreting modes is **modality**. Simultaneous interpreting relies on spoken languages, whereas sign language interpreting uses visual-gestural languages.

Another difference lies in the **working environment**. Simultaneous interpreters typically work in conference settings, while sign language interpreters often work in community environments such as schools, hospitals, courts, and public events.

In addition, sign language interpreting requires **visual-spatial processing skills**, while simultaneous interpreting relies more heavily on auditory processing and verbal production.

Professional interpreters must possess several essential competencies.

First, interpreters must have strong **linguistic competence**, including vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and discourse awareness.

Second, they must develop **cognitive skills**, such as concentration, memory capacity, and information processing speed.

Third, interpreters must demonstrate **cultural competence** in order to understand the cultural context of communication.

Finally, interpreters must adhere to **professional ethics**, including confidentiality, neutrality, and accuracy.

Conclusion. Interpreting plays a vital role in facilitating communication in multilingual societies. Simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting are two important modes of language mediation that enable interaction between speakers who do not share a common language.

Although these interpreting modes differ in modality and working environment, they share several fundamental characteristics such as real-time processing, bilingual competence, and discourse comprehension.

Understanding these features contributes to the development of effective interpreter training programs and helps improve the quality of interpreting services in international and community settings.

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