

A study of English-Chinese Simultaneous Interpreting in Conference on Women Rights Under Chernov's Compression Theory

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Abstract

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) means the conveying of information of speakers by interpreters fluently and simultaneously with no long pauses. According to Gile's theory (1995), interpreters have to possess three abilities, including listening and analysis, production and memory. Given the extreme situation of SI, interpreters must have a nice command of processing strategies to ensure a good delivery. And one of the most important strategies is compression proposed by Chernov (2004). To Chernov's mind, compression is divided into syllabic compression, lexical compression, semantic compression, syntactic compression and situational compression. The paper mainly discusses the application of compression strategy in E-C discourse under different circumstances.

Key words: Simultaneous interpreting; Compression strategy; English-Chinese interpreting

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INTRODUCTION

People usually take several factors into evaluating of Simultaneous interpreting (SI), like accuracy and fluency

(Jieun, 2008). In order to ensure a good delivery of interpreting, the relevant techniques are needed. Therefore, many scholars put forward relevant skills to deal with the large amount of information. Wu Yinyin and Posen (2018) proposed four techniques, like problem-solving and massage-enhancing, etc. Among all the techniques, one of the most frequently used method is called omission.

Barik (1974) holds that omission is the result of interpreters' limited ability and it mainly refers to what they have missed during interpreting. And he mainly focuses on the unconscious omission of interpreters and puts forward four types of omission, namely skipping omission, comprehension omission, delay omission and compounding omission.

Jones (1998) thinks that due to the quick delivery, professional speeches or unfamiliar linguistic habit of speakers, interpreters have to omit certain expressions to retain more important information.

Andrew K.P. (2012) says that Omission may not be necessarily mistakes but regarded as a technique to filter useless information and summarize the original complicated information into succinct one.

However, fundamentally speaking, compression proposed by Chernov sees more precise when it comes to the conveying of condensed information. Compression strategy is mainly divided in accordance with relevant linguistic units such as syllabic compression, lexical compression, syntactic compression, semantic compression and situational compression. Chinese scholar Wang Yongqiu (2010) once discussed the compression strategy in Chinese to English translation, whereas the article mainly focuses on E-C translation and its application in practice.

The material of the paper mainly comes from the simulated simultaneous interpreting of a conference named "Empowering Ultra-Poor Women: Learning from Graduation Approaches", which is about the discussion of status of women, held by Center for Global Development and Women for Women International. During the process of

interpreting, much redundant information was compressed to ensure a more precise delivery of interpreting.

1. COMPRESSION STRATEGY

Compression strategy is mainly made to improve the efficiency of interpreters under the constraints of both time and their memory. The core value of compression is to use as more condensed expression as interpreters can to decrease redundancy originating from both language itself and the discourse by speakers, thereby promoting the high-quality conveying of information to audience.

Based on Chernov's theory, Compression strategy includes syllabic compression, lexical compression, syntactic compression, semantic compression and situational compression (Chernov, 2004), which can also be divided into different branches in line with different situations. The original compression strategy proposed only provides a general framework for compression, but the paper further details every strategy into several small techniques combined with the distinct characteristics of both English and Chinese.

2. COMPRESSION STRATEGY IN THE CONFERENCE ON WOMEN RIGHTS

2.1 Syllabic Compression

Syllabic Compression, in the view of Chernov, means the decrease of the number of syllables in the TL compared with the SL. In E-C interpreting, it mainly includes two parts, namely the compression of long terms and compression of phrases.

2.1.1 Compression of Long Terms

In many cases, the names of organizations as well as full names of public institutions and countries are too long to be expressed and they are likely to be mentioned for many times. Therefore, they can be replaced by abbreviations to condense the length of information.

Example A:

And we will definitely want to include you in the conversation. So be thinking of your questions. But first I want to turn to Eva, noble senior research officer at Women for Women International, who started who will start us off with a presentation.

Interpreter: 我们想要邀请你加入对话中来。请想好你的问题。首先从伊娃开始, 她是WFW的高级调查员。

Translation: 我们确实想要邀请你参与讨论。所以请思考你的问题。但首先我想邀请伊娃开始展示她的观点, 她是国际妇女互助会的高级调查员。

Example B:

As part of diffidence what works to prevent violence against women and girls, we are measuring our programs

effects on intimate partner violence and gender norms in Afghanistan, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Interpreter: 因为自卑也会让女性远离暴力, 我们在评估项目对亲密伴侣暴力以及性别规范的影响, 包括阿富汗和刚果(金)。

Translation: 因为部分自卑也会防止对女性和女孩的暴力, 我们正在评估项目对在阿富汗和刚果民主共和国范围内亲密伴侣暴力和性别规范的影响。

In Example A, WFW is the name of an organization, also one of the sponsor of the conference, which will inevitably be mentioned for several times. Therefore, the efficient way to express it is by using abbreviation. In the example B, the name of the country is too long to waste time and people tend to use abbreviation for the full name countries by less than four characters in Chinese.

2.1.2 Compression of Phrases

In speakers' speeches, especially the impromptu ones, many same expressions or phrases will be repeated for several times even in two sentences in a roll and such information is redundant. Therefore, interpreters usually replace the second similar phrase by a pronoun, such as "this" (这) "it" (它).

Example C:

One puts the number of ultra poor at something like 400 million and that's as compared to the 770 million defined by the World Bank as the extreme poor. So a substantial fraction of the extreme poor.

Interpreter: 其中一个预测极端贫困人口的数量为4亿人, 而世界银行预测的则为7.7亿人。所以这存在巨大差异。

Translation: 其中一个预测极端贫困人口数为4亿人, 相比之下, 世界银行预测的极端贫困人口数为7.7亿人。所以就极端人口的数目间存在着巨大的差异。

In example C, "the extreme poor" occurs in the two consecutive sentences. When interpreting into Chinese, interpreters have to use a longer Chinese expression to show the same phrases, which is a waste of time. But in the context, a pronoun can better replace the three words for same meaning.

2.2 Lexical Compression

Lexical compression is mainly manifested by using fewer words for the same expression (Chernov, 2004). Many words are regarded as redundancy when English is rendered into Chinese since the logic of the latter is mainly bounded by its meaning instead of the grammatical forms. Therefore, many lexical units can be compressed, such as conjunctions, pronouns and some adverbs.

2.2.1 Compression of Conjunctions

Many conjunctions are grammatically applied in English to connect two words or sentences. In Chinese, however, most of them can be compressed since Chinese focuses on the inner logic of meaning instead of grammatical forms in English. As a result, a number of conjunctions are omitted by interpreters, like "and", "so", etc.

Example D:

This is one of the fundamental, and perhaps most urgent set of issues in development. But it's also among the most complex. And exactly because of this complexity, we need to share analysis and evidence. And we need to do so frequently and across a broad range of partners.

Interpreter: 这是最基础、也可能是最紧急的发展问题。但也是最复杂的问题。因为这种复杂性，我们需要共享分析和证据。我们需要频繁地这样做，也要在大范围的合作者间这样做。

Translation: 这是最基础、或许最紧急的一系列发展问题。但也是最复杂的问题。并且因为这种复杂性，我们需要分享分析成果和证据。同时我们也需要频繁地这样做，要与大量同伴合作。

Example E:

Let me say at the outset we are very proud to be hosting this event with women for women international which works with the most marginalized women in countries affected by war and conflict. So I think what I'll do is start with three basic questions.

Interpreter: 首先，我们非常激动能够与WFW合作主办此次会议，WFW主要为处于边缘的女性提供帮助，她们身处那些受战争和冲突影响国家。我觉得首先我要以三个基本问题开始。

Translation: 会议当头，我想说，我们非常骄傲能够与WFW共同主办此次会议，WFW主要为那些饱受战乱和冲突国家的边缘妇女提供帮助。因此我认为我先从三个基本问题开始。

Conjunctions in the two examples do not actually play a role in connecting the logical meaning in Chinese, like "and" and "so". The inner logic of Chinese is mainly manifested by the meaning itself and these useless conjunctions of course can be omitted.

2.2.2 Compression of Pronoun

The likes of "it", "that" are mainly to ensure the integrity of grammar in English. However, the meanings of them can be barely found in Chinese or it is not necessary to interpret them at all. Under this circumstance, many interpreters tend to compress the pronouns like "it" with no practical meaning when interpreting them into Chinese.

Example F:

Once we started to ask sensitive questions. so we need to come up with some new ways of advancing that.

Interpreter: 曾经我们问过一些敏感的问题，我们需要想出一些新的方式继续。

Translation: 曾经我们试着问过一些敏感的问题。所以我们需要想出一些新的方式进一步向前推进这些问题。

The pronoun "that" in example F actually do not have much practical meaning in Chinese since without that, the sentence is still full enough to show the entire meaning. Interpreters usually compress such useless pronouns, which have little to do with the information in these sentences.

2.2.3 Compression of Adverb

The function of adverbs is to modify verbs or adjectives

for having little to do with practical meanings and the whole meaning of the sentences will not change when such adverbs are deleted. As a strategy in SI, interpreters usually compress adverbs with no practical meanings in E-C translation.

Example G:

We have a superb panel of practitioners and researchers which I'll introduce in a moment. And we will definitely want to include you in the conversation.

Interpreter: 我们有个非常优秀的团队，包括从业者和调研员，我一会儿会介绍。我们想要邀请你加入讨论中来。

Translation: 我们有个优秀的座谈小组，它由执行人和调查员组成，我待会儿会介绍。我们非常想要邀请你加入讨论。

Adverbs are mainly used to modify the verbs in a sentence like "want" in the example G. In other words, the true information that speakers want to convey is "what they did" instead of "to what extent" they did. Interpreters usually omit these non-important adverbs.

2.3 Syntactic Compression

Syntactic compression refers to the use of shorter sentences or expressions to condense the information conveyed by speakers in order to enable the audience to be more focused on more important information (Chernov, 2004).

2.3.1 Compression of multiple simple phrases

Many short sentences in the speech, especially impromptu speech, short and simple sentences mainly come from the breakpoints in speakers' mind, which means that they need to think while saying. The long and integrated information is to cut into several short sentences. Interpreters tend to reprocess such sentences and transform several sentences into a long one to make the information more concise and focused.

Example H:

Look! You know we want to do it. but it's costly. It's complex. It takes a lot of capacity.

Interpreter: 看！我们想要这么做，但成本太高、太复杂，很费力。

Translation: 看！你也知道，我们想这么做下去，但这样做成本太高，事情本身也很复杂，它会花费我们很多精力。

Example I:

So back to this bundled approach, I've seen the women we invest in becoming citizens. They become advocates. they become you know productive members of the community.

Interpreter: 回到这个组合策略中来，我们看到曾经帮助过的人成为了市民、提倡者和社区优秀的成员。

Translation: 回到这个组合方法中来，我看了我们救助的那些人成为了公民，他们成了拥护者，他们也成为了社区的优秀成员。

Several simple sentences are constantly appearing in the both example H and example I. This can be seen as scattered information and these simple sentences should be replaced by a longer one to condense information and make it more efficient for audience to understand the speaker.

2.3.2 Compression of Appositive

Appositives are mainly used to further explain or supplement the information said before. Yet, in the following cases, appositives are mostly to ensure the grammatical structure of a sentence, such as that in an attributive clause. Interpreters will compress such appositives in E-C translation without changing the meaning of sentences.

Example J:

I don't think we have arrived at a situation where anybody has a good measure, yet the measures that didn't show any movement in the study.

Interpreter: 我不认为我们已经人人都想出了好的办法, 然而现在研究中的办法并没有体现任何进展。

Translation: 我认为我们现在已经到达了一种状态, 即人人没有一个好的解决方案, 然而这些方案根本就不能推动研究向前发展。

Example K:

The whole thing about the whole purpose of women's economic empowerment is to get her to the point where she can make her own choices.

Interpreter: 女性经济赋权指的就是让她们自己可以做出选择。

Translation: 女性经济赋权的全部目的在于, 让她们能够实现这样一种状态, 即人人可以自主做决定。

The expressions like “arrive a situation where” or “get to a point where” in example J and example K are mainly to achieve the grammatical integrity in English. Whereas in Chinese, such expressions do not exist and the information is enough even when interpreters omit them.

2.3.3 Compression of Coordinated Structures

Parallel structures form the beauty in rhyme which usually start with the same expressions. Yet in simultaneous interpreting, time and accuracy are prior to beauty. Such parallel structures are likely to be compressed by highlighting the information itself.

Example L:

They're often food and housing insecure. They have few or no assets. They lack skills and education. They're often vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change. They're often disconnected from government services and from markets as well and they can be in poor help.

Interpreter: 她们经常面临食品和房屋短缺的问题, 几乎没有资产, 缺乏技术和教育, 没办法应对自然灾害和气候变化, 远离政府服务和市场, 急需帮助。

Translation: 她们经常在食品和住房方面缺乏安全感。她们有少量或者没有资产。她们缺乏技能和教育。她们经常无力应对自然灾害和气候变化。她们经常享受不到政府服务和市场机遇, 她们急需救助。

The parallel structures like “they're often” in example L have occurred for several times. However, it is a good way to compress such structures since Chinese the main information has already been mentioned, and audience will not find it hard to understand even when it is omitted.

2.4 Semantic Compression

Semantic compression is the reduction of repeated semantic units in the speech (Cherno, 2004). It includes the compression of structures bearing similar meanings and compression of non-important information.

2.4.1 Compression of Similar Expressions

Some iterative expressions bearing similar meanings occurs frequently in discourses and interpreters usually cut one for simplicity.

Example M:

The first wave was really the proof point that even extreme poor, even ultra poor households through the women in the households could make significant gains in income assets and resilience.

Interpreter: 第一个波浪形状证明了即便是极端贫困家庭, 他们也可以通过家里的女性获得经济收入、增强韧性。

Translation: 第一个波形有力地证实, 即便是极端贫困, 甚至赤贫家庭, 通过家里的女性他们也可以获得大量收入资产, 提高应对风险的能力。

Example N:

So the evidence base that we have from those original, the first wave of studies is consistent and strong.

Interpreter: 我们获得的证据来自于第一个波形研究, 它前后统一并且很有说服力。

Translation: 我们从原始的第一个波形收获的证据基础, 具有连续性和说服力。

The two examples have something in common, which lies in that what the speaker said were mentioned twice in the following sentence and differences only exist in the change of words, like “extreme poor” and “ultra poor” in example M and “the original” and “the first” in example N. To remove the redundancy, the expression bearing similar meaning can be mentioned only once.

2.4.2 Compression of Irrelevant Expressions

Some information given by speakers tends to be irrelevant to the main theme of his speech or non-important. Therefore, interpreters usually compress it to save time.

Example O:

The training delivered to groups of 25 women includes modules on life skills, numeracy, businesses. And I think my alarm clock is going off. Can you hand that to my partner right behind? Excellent. Thank you. That's really embarrassing. So our program includes training to 25 women we have modules on life skills and numeracy business practices, a vocational training in a tract.

Interpreter: 训练分为由25位女性组成的团队, 包括生活技能、计算能力和经商能力。所以这些就是一些实用性训练技巧。

Translation: 训练将25位女性组成一个团队, 培训她们的生活技巧、算数能力以及商业能力。我觉得我闹钟响了。你能把手机给我后面的朋友吗? 很好。谢谢。有点尴尬。所以我们的项目包括训练这25位女性的生活技能、算数能力以及商业能力等, 这是个职业训练。

The underlined expressions in example O have little to do with what the speaker said before and the whole speaking context. They are actually accidental events in the speech. And they can be considered as irrelevant information or redundancy.

2.5 Situational Compression

Situational compression is mainly determined by the speaking context and it is more flexibly used by interpreter (Chernov, 2004). What's more, it is rare in relatively formal or official conferences.

2.5.1 Compression of Known Information

Part of messages are something known since the audience must have relevant background knowledge about the conference. As a result, many information that is in line with the audience's background knowledge will be compressed by interpreter.

Example P:

As I was trying to change my previous organizations to restructure the incentives and the financing mechanisms, it was really difficult and actually a baroness in the UK, I was working in the UK, said you need to go check out women for women international and they do what you're trying to get us to do.

Interpreter: 我试图改变我此前的组织, 重构动机即资助方案, 这样做很难, 一位英国的男爵说, 你得了解一下WFW, 他们的工作内容与你的相符。

Translation: 我试着对此前的组织做些改变, 想要重塑我们的动机和筹资机制, 这真的很难, 实际上, 当时我在英国工作, 那里的一位男爵对我说, 你需要调查一下WFW这个组织, 他们的工作内容正是你努力的方向。

Example Q:

Women for women is 25 years old, and it was founded by a woman in her 20s, an Iraqi survivor of violence and war...To this day, 25 years later, and you know that my most recent visit to Rwanda, the women was running this massive beekeeping cooperative.

Interpreter: WFW已经成立25年了, 它由一位20多岁的女性创立, 她是伊拉克战争和暴力的幸存者。到今天, 我最近一次到访卢旺达, 那里的女性正在经营着大规模的养蜂合作社。

Translation: WFW已经成立25周年了, 它的创始人当时是一位20多岁的女性, 她是伊拉克暴力和战争的幸存者……到今天, 25年后, 我最近一次访问卢旺达, 那里的女性正在经营这个大型的养蜂合作社。

"I was working in the UK" and "25 years later" are expressed in the certain context to the certain audience with certain background information. Therefore, such information can be regarded as redundancy.

2.5.2 Compression of Introductory Expression

Introductory Structures, to some extent, are mainly used to bring in a topic instead of acting as the major information. Interpreters thereafter are responsible to compress them sometimes.

Example R:

So as you can see, we have some of the seminal and key players in this space.

Interpreter: 我们现在有一些有创造力的关键人员, 他们工作在这一领域。

Translation: 正如你所见, 在该领域, 我们拥有一批有重大影响的核心人员。

In example R, the attributive clauses started by "as" are introductory sentences, the main function of which is to shorten the gap between the speaker and audience. But the main information lies in the latter sentences and such introductory sentences can be regarded as unimportant expressions.

2.5.3 Compression of Linguistic Habits of Speakers

Different people may have different pet phrases when they are about to deliver a public speech. At this time, interpreters usually cut such expressions to make the speech more brief.

Example S:

But I actually do see it as a response. but, you know, if you're introducing cash etc, you have to make sure that you're also providing safeguards.

Interpreter: 但我实际上将其视为一种反应。但如果你引入现金救济的话, 你就得确保你提供保障。

Translation: 但我实际上确实将其视为一种反应, 但你也知道, 如果你要打算实行现金救助的话, 你必须确保你同时也会提供保障。

In oral English, people tend to have various pet phrases, like "you know" or "kind of". Such expression are invalid words and do not bear any literal meaning. Therefore, interpreters usually compress the likes of "you know" and "kind of".

2.5.4 Compression of Mistakes or Useless Explanation

Speakers may make mistakes or give repetitive explanations on what he said, and interpreters should compress such non-important information to make it more efficient.

Example T:

So we did a baseline survey and then we did at the end of the program, 2-year program right at the end of the program and we went back a full year after the program had completed.

Interpreter: 我们做了一个基线调查, 然后在项目结尾, 我们在项目完成一年后又重新回到了那里。

Translation: 我们做了一个基线调查, 然后在项目结尾, 在这个为期两年的项目结尾, 我们又在一年后返回到了那里。

In example T, he made a useless explanation about what he said before. And when interpreters listen to their speeches, they know such expressions are the results

of speakers' mistakes and they can directly delete such expressions.

2.5.5 Compression of Formulae in Asking Questions

At the end of keynote speeches, the Q-A session is essential, during which the audience usually starts with the formulae like "I want to ask you" or "My question is". Yet even one doesn't say that, others can also know there is going to be some questions.

Example U:

So my question is there was a really interesting example you provided about West Africa and this company. What is it that donors who are actually providing money into these FCV (fragile, conflict and violent) countries or into these countries where the status of women in general is not secured?

Interpreter: 你提到了一个很有趣的例子，它是关于西非和这个公司的。谁实际上给这些处在冲突暴力的脆弱国家提供金钱救济的？这些国家的女性地位通常很低。

Translation: 所以我的问题是，你刚刚提到了一个有关西非和这家公司的有趣例子，究竟是谁提供给那些处于冲突暴力的贫弱国家提供金钱的？这些国家的女性地位通常来说都很低。

Example V:

My question is we do think that it's key to work with many but we haven't been able to be able to get the funding. Or since we are just starting in the process we really don't know how because this is something that is shifting norm. so if you have many ideas of pathways about how to start addressing this with men?

Interpreter: 我们认为与很多伙伴一起工作很关键，但我们不能获得救济。自从我们开始这一流程开始，我们真的不清楚怎么回事，因为其中就涉及到了转换观念的问题。你是否有什么想法开始解决男性在其中的作用问题？

Translation: 我的问题是，我们确实认为与多方合作至关重要，但我们并不能得到资金。或者说自从我们开启这个流程开始，我们真不知道如何开展，因为其中涉及到了观念转换的问题。所以如果你有任何想法解决这个男性参与的问题吗？

"My questions is" is more of a polite expression to introduce one's questions instead of the true information speakers imply. And when so many questions are put forward, the frequent use of such expression is a waste of time.

CONCLUSION

As discussed earlier, SI is a demanding job for interpreters both due to time limits and memory load. Now we can draw the following conclusion:

a. compression can be used as a useful strategy to save both time and energy for interpreters and now it has already been widely used in practice;

b. due to the differences between English and Chinese, the compression strategy can be further divided into several branches in accordance to the practical situations;

c. however there is no one-size-fits-all measures to SI and compression strategy is not applicable in all circumstances;

d. compression theory also has its own limits and needs to be better improved; e. to some extent, some addition or explanation is essential and it can't be simply omitted or neglected. Therefore, the application of compression needs to be under good control. Otherwise, necessary information will be lost.

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