

INTERPRETING AS A STRESSFUL ACTIVITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL MEASURES OF STRESS IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

Simultaneous interpretation is a challenging task that requires interpreters to process and convey information in real-time. As a result, psychological and emotional issues can arise during the interpreting process, which can affect the performance and well-being of interpreters. Some of the issues that interpreters may face include high levels of stress, fatigue, anxiety, and burnout. Interpreters who work in high-pressure environments, like conferences or courtrooms, may be particularly susceptible to these issues. This paper deals with some of the above issues in detail.

Keywords: simultaneous interpretation, psychological issues, emotional issues, fatigue, burnout, interpreters of the UN.

ANNOTATSIYA

Sinxron tarjima - tarjimonlardan ayni vaqtda ma'lumotlarni qayta ishlash va yetkazishni talab qiladigan qiyin vazifa. Natijada, tarjima jarayonida bir necha psixologik va hissiy muammolar paydo bo'lishi mumkin, bu tarjimonlarning ish sifatiga salbiy ta'sir qiladi. Tarjimonlar duch kelishi mumkin bo'lgan ba'zi muammolarga yuqori darajadagi stress, charchoq va tashvish kiradi. Konferensiyalar yoki sud zallari kabi yuqori bosimli muhitda ishlaydigan tarjimonlar ushbu muammolarga, ayniqsa, tez-tez duch keladilar. Ushbu maqolada yuqoridagi masalalardan ayrimlari batafsil ko'rib chiqiladi.

Psychologists generally believe that conference interpreters work in stressful conditions due to objective stress factors such as the need to constantly process information, work under time constraints, maintain intense concentration, deal with fatigue, and work in confined spaces like interpreting booths. Several studies have confirmed that simultaneous interpreting is a job with high levels of stress.

In a study conducted by Peter Moser in 1995, 26% of the users of interpreting services mentioned high concentration and constant stress as the most challenging aspects of the interpreting profession, while 18% compared the job of interpreters to that of a pilot or air traffic controller. Additionally, experienced conference interpreters may encounter stressful situations that require extra effort. In 1998, Riccardi, Marinuzzi, and Zecchin hypothesized that remote interpreting, where interpreters cannot see the speakers directly, may cause more strain than regular conference interpreting. Their assumptions were later confirmed by two remote interpreting experiments conducted by the United Nations.

One of the most significant challenges that interpreters face is the high level of stress that comes with the job. Interpreters must maintain intense concentration for extended periods while quickly processing and conveying information in real-time. This can be mentally and physically exhausting, which can lead to burnout, anxiety, and other psychological issues.

Additionally, interpreters may experience emotional difficulties when interpreting sensitive or emotionally charged content. For example, interpreters working in legal or medical settings may be exposed to traumatic or distressing information, which can have a significant impact on their mental well-being.

Moreover, interpreters may also struggle with language barriers and cultural differences, which can create additional stress and anxiety. Interpreters who work in high-pressure environments may feel isolated and disconnected from their colleagues, which can compound their psychological and emotional challenges.

In 1999, interpreters who took part in a remote interpreting experiment conducted by the United Nations reported that they were only able to maintain acceptable performance levels at a higher psychological and physiological cost. This finding was supported by the interpreters who participated in a second experiment in **2001**, who reported that remote interpreting required more physical effort and caused more psychological stress than regular on-site work. The Workload Study also found that 73% of respondents who had experience with videoconferencing perceived it to have a negative impact on performance (Mertens-Hofmann 2001).

Although some working conditions can be stressful for most people, how someone perceives stress is subjective and can be influenced by personality factors like self-confidence or perspective. These factors largely determine whether a situation is perceived as stressful or not. Psychological testing under stress, known as ergopsychometric studies, has shown that some individuals perform consistently well under pressure, while others may struggle even if they perform well in less stressful situations. This

phenomenon was confirmed by the Guttman and Etlinger study in 1991.

In 1997, Kurz conducted a study on conference interpreters' anxiety levels using the State and Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The results of the study indicated that conference interpreters are able to control their anxiety in a situation-dependent way and view their anxiety in a positive light. This suggests that they are 'consistent' performers who can maintain a steady level of performance even under stressful conditions.

In 2001, Jiménez and Pinazo used the STAI to investigate the relationship between anxiety and interpreting performance in students. They noted that the ability to manage stress has been a traditional prerequisite for interpreting. However, the Cooper Study conducted in 1982, which focused on mental and emotional stress in conference interpreters, found that 45% of the participants reported that more than 40% of their stress was related to work.

According to Kurz (2002), interpreting for live TV broadcasts is more stressful than ordinary conference interpreting because the interpreter is aware that they are interpreting for a large audience of potentially hundreds of thousands or even millions of viewers. This awareness of the potential for failure can increase the interpreter's fear and anxiety.

Overall, it is essential for interpreters to be aware of the psychological and emotional challenges that come with their job and to take steps to manage these issues effectively. By doing so, interpreters can maintain their well-being and perform their duties at a high level.

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