

To sum up, all these factors may, to some extent, impede or hinder one's understanding of an utterance; however, the students can learn much better provided that they gather what they can from the information they can readily decode. At the same time, they should use their common sense, background knowledge, and the discourse skills they carry over from their own native language. All in all, these may provide the best means to help students concentrate on perceiving and exploiting all available clues to the meaning which is the final and most important stage in an oral translation class because what we want our students to be able to do as the end result of their learning is translation.

On the basis of previously discussed difficulties, teachers might use different methods and techniques. However, here are some hints on how these difficulties might be eliminated.

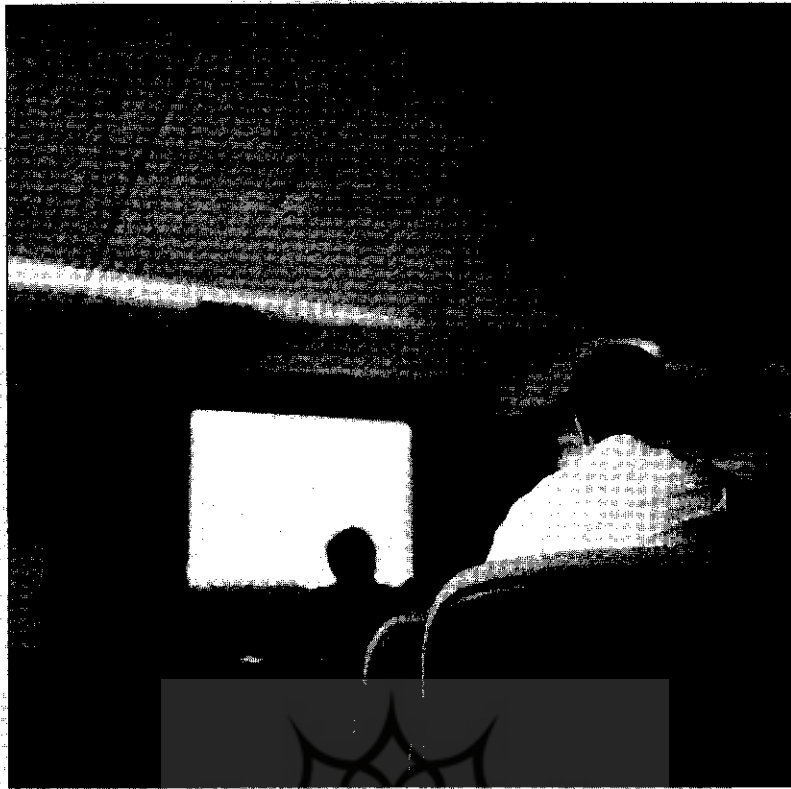
1. To eliminate the problems of incomprehensible words and expressions, teachers should encourage the students to work hard on words and expressions in relevant classes and try to persuade them to expatiate their knowledge of vocabulary. They should also be encouraged to use these words and expressions wherever and whenever possible. At the same time, it is important that they be told not to look for a word-for-word translation at all times rather, as Seleskovitch argues, try to uncover a meaning and makes it explicit for others (1978:9).
2. The problem of diversity of accents can probably be solved by familiarizing the students with accent variations. One way is to encourage them to listen to different radio and TV stations. In this way, they can get used to different accents

and in the long run overcome this difficulty.

3. Regarding colloquial style, teachers should notify the students that they would be better off if they learn colloquial style as well as formal style. They should also be encouraged to use colloquial style in their conversations in class or elsewhere.
4. In order for the students to overcome the structural difficulties, they should work hard on different language structures in their relevant classes. However, in oral translation classes, it is the teacher's role to explain the matter at hand, as briefly as possible, and try to disentangle and virtually unravel these complexities.

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such as -ing or -ed form (Frank, 1993:349), most probably they cannot translate them appropriately. These kinds of structures are most commonly used in the news as well as in films and cartoons.

### **Other Difficulties**

In addition to aforesaid difficulties, there are other difficulties, usually observed by the teachers. One of these is redundant utterances. Penny Ur argues, "... redundant utterances may take the form of repetitions, false-starts, rephrasings, self-corrections, tautologies, and meaningless additions like "you know, I mean, etc." However, she maintains that these provide the listener with extra information and time to think (1991:7).

The speech rate of utterances is another difficulty. Usually as the speech rate increases, comprehension decreases. If the speech rate is too fast, comprehension stops, in other words, fast speech rate hinders comprehension. Moreover, the way some words are pronounced by native

speakers can be a source of difficulty because, frankly speaking, the students have often been exposed to these words inappropriately at schools or elsewhere.

The list of these problems can be extended if we add the matter of noise as opposed to redundancy (extra information). According to Ur, "... information is not received... because of interference. 'Noise', as I am using the term here, may be caused not only by some out-side disturbance, but also by a temporary lack of attention on the part of the listener..." (1991:7).

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Considering all these difficulties, the teacher should inform the students that, as Miremadi argues, "...not being able to remember all portions of the speech delivered... or to make pace with the speaker..." (1997:226) is not something uncommon even among experienced interpreters who do consecutive interpretation.

better than British English and another might be able to understand British English better. This, of course, depends mostly upon the background knowledge and experience of each individual student and how much she or he has already been exposed to one or the other; therefore, the students should be informed that the use of English sound system varies from place to place and from speaker to speaker. Consequently, the students' listening comprehension concerning accent variations can be improved by exposing them to these different accents.

### **Colloquial Style**

The third problem is colloquial style, as opposed to formal style, that is frequently used in films and cartoons and is usually a feature of daily conversation. The students are used to listening to formal style, which is often spoken to them rather slowly in different classes. Therefore, whenever they face utterances spoken by native speakers such as /dno/(I don't know), /wej'thinkeenbee/ (where do you think he can be), or /ain'tj gonna go/ (aren't you going to go), they get confused and consequently cannot get the meaning of the

utterance across. This, of course, is due to the fact that spoken language, especially if colloquial, does not consist of neat, correct, and distinct utterances; it consists of idea units, which is a short piece of spoken language. However, colloquial style usually has simpler grammar, which contains many pauses and hesitations. There are fillers, too, meaningless words and phrases such as "um, uh, well now, let me see, etc." that give the speaker the thinking time and the listener as well to figure out the meaning.

### **Grammatical Difficulties**

Another obstacle in the way of the students while listening to an utterance is its structure; that is, they may know the meaning of words and expressions in certain utterances, but they are unable to translate them because of the complexities or ambiguities of the structure. For example, if the students are not familiar with the abridgment within complex structures as in adverbial or adjectival clauses, or as in absolute constructions containing a subject that is unchanged from the form it has in a full sentence but in the predicate the verb has participial suffixes



At the same time, the author touches upon the ways that might help eliminate and, to some extent, overcome these difficulties at the end of this article.

**Key Words:** oral translation, words, diversity of accents, colloquial style, structural difficulties

Students of English Translation or EFL learners in oral translation classes are expected to watch films or listen to the news and try to translate them into their native language. However, they frequently complain about their lack of understanding the entire or parts of an utterance. Consequently, they are often impotent to do proper consecutive translation which is the main goal of these classes. When asked to explain the sources of their difficulties, they usually mention different factors such as: incomprehensible words and expressions, diversity of accents, speech pace, complexity of structures, and to some extent pronunciation. Of course, other factors such as false starts, self-corrections, rephrasings, elaborations, tautologies, and noise - as opposed to redundancy- are equally important.

The list of difficulties can be extended, as Willis puts it, if we add some other factors such as recognizing discourse markers, cohesive devices, intonation patterns, and understanding inferred information e.g. speakers' attitude or intention (1991: 134). Of course, Roland (1982) argues that in oral interpretation, the interpreter has the advantage of benefiting from the speaker's gestures over the translator because nonverbal factors show happiness, anger, hatred, etc. It is worth mentioning that these difficulties are presented in terms of their frequencies expressed by the students with some hints on how they might be eliminated.

### **Incomprehensible Words and Expressions**

The most important factor the students

frequently refer to is the matter of incomprehensible words and expressions. This factor usually encompasses different categories such as words, expressions, and to some extent slang words. This, of course, is due to the fact that spoken language is more dynamic and up to date. There are also swear words, new expressions, humor, and sometimes figures of speech. On the other hand, most students admitted into universities have very little knowledge concerning words and expressions; therefore, almost always, particularly in oral translation classes where they are expected to do consecutive interpretation, they run into numerous difficulties. That is, they are unable to translate an utterance simply because they do not know the meaning of a certain word or expression. However, in oral translation, according to Seleskovitch, the pioneer in the development of interpretation theory, verbal conveying of messages between two languages has never been and can never be a word-for-word translation (1979:19).

Moreover, it is essential that we be aware of this very fact that in speech a lot of things are not actually stated, and speakers often use their tone of voice or stress and intonation to exchange important information. For example, emotions such as pleasure or anger, attitudes such as disbelief or sarcasm are often not clearly stated in words.

Unfamiliarity with accent variations is not uncommon among EFL learners. For example, one might be able to understand American English much

### چکیده

در این مقاله، نگارنده با استفاده از تجربیات خویش در کلاس‌های درس ترجمه‌ی شفاهی، سعی دارد منبع اصلی مشکلاتی را که دانشجویان درس ترجمه‌ی شفاهی، هنگام گوش کردن به نوارهای شنیداری و دیداری یا گزارشات خبری و فیلم‌های سینمایی به‌طور مکرر با آن‌ها روبه‌رو می‌شوند و در بیشتر موارد، قادر به درک مطالب نیستند و در نتیجه نمی‌توانند این مطالب را به فارسی برگردانند، توضیح دهد. از آن‌جا که توانایی برگرداندن مطالب در کلاس‌های مورد نظر از اهداف اصلی است و با توجه به تنوع موضوعات ارائه شده، بروز مشکلات عدیده‌ی آموزشی در این کلاس‌ها امری تقریباً اجتناب‌ناپذیر است. در پایان مقاله، با نگاهی هرچند گذرا، چگونگی برطرف کردن این مشکلات به‌ایجاز بیان شده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: ترجمه‌ی شفاهی، واژگان، تنوع لهجه‌ها، سبک گفتاری، مشکلات ساختاری

### Abstract

In this article, the writer, according to his experience in oral translation classes, tries to explain the principle sources of difficulties the students frequently run into as they try to translate audio-visual materials such as films, radio or TV news, interviews, reports, etc. Since the ability to translate the orally presented materials in these classes is the main purpose and due to the diversity of the materials presented, the manifestation of different kinds of problems is virtually inevitable.

# Difficulties in Oral Translation Classes: An Experience

Kazem Tabibi, M.A., Islamic Azad  
University, Tehran Central Branch  
Language Department

