



UNIT 6

Element 1. Learning Outcome 2

TRANSCRIPT: REMEMBERING FULL SENTENCES WHILE LAGGING BEHIND



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1 Slide 1

LiveTextAccess. Training for real-time intralingual subtitles.

2 Slide 2

Unit 6. Velotype. Element 1. Psycho-cognitive skills.

3 Slide 3

Remembering full sentences while lagging behind. Created by SSML and Velotype.

4 Slide 4

On completion of this training sequence, you will be able to:

- 1) repeat or reformulate the source text while listening to it
- 2) remember full sentences while lagging behind
- 3) activate exit strategies while typing if you realize the speaker is challenging.

5 Slide 5

This is the agenda of this presentation. I will first recall the skills of the velotypist, to then concentrate on the memory system, which is at the basis of typing and simultaneous interpreting, a mental activity very close to real time subtitling. I will finally focus on the inferencing and memorizing strategies, that you will be requested to practice along the course to develop, reinforce, and finally maintain this skill in two different contexts: verbatim subtitling and sensatim subtitling.

6 Slide 6

Section 1 – The challenging speaker.

7 Slide 7

As you have seen a velotypist has to do many things at the same time. In Element1 LO1 we have dealt with Psycho-cognitive skills, meaning all those skills related to being able to listen and type at the same time, which is the first set of skills a velotypist has to possess. In particular, for a velotypist to be able and become a professional in the field, he or she has also to train a good short-term memory to be able and process as many concepts as possible, and to apply exit strategies, or solutions to any problem one may encounter in the subtitling process. While you can only develop these competences by the time and thanks to ad hoc exercises, you may be interested in knowing how memory and short-term memory work. That is what we are going to see in the next section.

8 Slide 8

In this Element, Element 2, we will deal with memory, and the memory system.

9 Slide 9

Section 2 – Memory.

10 Slide 10

As we know, in any multitasking process which involves doing two things at the same time, in velotyping, two main types of strategies are involved: understanding, aimed at comprehending the source text; and typing, aimed at making the most out of understanding under stressful conditions and with a reduced processing capacity than usual.

In this, Memory is crucial. But what is memory and how does its system work?

Memory is commonly described as a system for simultaneous storage and processing: several studies have attempted to investigate this aspect belonging to interpreter's and velotypist's ability.

While several different models of memory have been proposed, the stage model of memory is often used to explain the basic structure and function of memory. Initially proposed in 1968 by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin, this theory outlines three separate stages of memory: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.

- 1) Sensory memory is the earliest stage of memory. During this stage, sensory information from the environment is stored for a very brief period of time, generally for no longer than a half-second for visual information and 3 or 4 seconds for auditory information. We attend to only certain aspects of this sensory memory, allowing some of this information to pass into the next stage: short-term memory.
- 2) Short-term memory stores information for approximately 20-30 seconds. It is also known as Working Memory, which refers to the processes that are used to temporarily store, organize, and manipulate information. In the next slide we will focus on STM as a crucial system for the simultaneous interpreter and for the velotypist.
- 3) Long-term memory refers to the continuing storage of information. This information is largely outside of our awareness but can be called into working memory to be used when needed.

11 Slide 11

Working memory is key in interpreting and typing, due to the operation of several factors, including: the time interval between the moment the original speech is heard and the moment its processing for comprehension is finished; the time interval between the moment the message to be typed or interpreted is determined and the completion of its formulation; and tactical moves, which are used, for instance, if a speech segment is unclear to the interpreter/velotypist because of bad sound quality, a strong accent, unclear logic, or errors in the source text itself.

We'll now see how the working memory system is structured, and I will refer to the model put forward by Baddeley & Hitch, 1974.

Baddeley and Hitch (1974) initially conceptualized a system involving three main components of WM. This model included an attentional system known as the central executive, which is responsible for controlling and coordinating the flow of information from the two subordinate systems: the visuo-spatial scratch pad, which processes visual and spatial information, and the phonological loop, which manages verbal information. The phonological loop, in turn, consists of a phonological store where information is held for about 2 seconds before it begins to decay. The second component is a rehearsal process that refreshes information in the store via sub-vocal articulation. The central executive is considered as the most important aspect of WM; it is a regulatory mechanism that controls information flow in WM, information retrieval from other memory systems, and information storage and processing in WM. The model allows for both storage and manipulation of information.

This memory model was revised by Baddeley in 2000 to include an 'episodic buffer', a multidimensional storage and processing component assumed to provide a temporary store of limited capacity that is capable of integrating information from the subsidiary systems with that of LTM. It is assumed to be important for the chunking of information in STM. Baddeley proposes that the buffer is a mechanism for recalling the gist of a message rather than verbatim information.

Now, we have said that memory is a system for simultaneous storage and processing of the discourse. To help the velotypist/interpreter in his/her understanding and accurately convey the message, it is the working memory that is crucial in carrying out all the processes during the velotyping/interpreting task, as the velotypist/interpreter retains what he/she has just heard, in order to convey the message to the audience. About this, the following slide explains how spoken language is understood, based on the strategic model of discourse comprehension.

12 Slide 12

The strategic model of discourse comprehension developed by van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) explains how spoken language is understood. By adapting it, it is possible to claim that a velotypist understands the ST by adopting the following strategies: form strategies, Content strategies, textual strategies, procedural strategies and general knowledge strategies. Form strategies are related to understanding the words and grammar of the source text from sounds and grammar elements. Content strategies capitalise on form strategies to understand the meaning of a text. Textual strategies contextualise this content; Procedural strategies relate the ongoing comprehension of the source text to other texts similar to the one which is heard, and finally general knowledge strategies allow more easily understand how the source text related to the rest of the world.

13 Slide 13

After having strategically understood the ST, the velotypist adopts production strategies to come to the TT. By adapting the model proposed by Kohn e Kalina (1996) for simultaneous interpreting, it has been said that in velotyping contexts, professionals follow some strategies, as highlighted in Element 1, LO1.

Within the production strategies an interpreter/velotypist has to master, the following are strongly supported by the memory:

- Inferencing, whereby the velotypist anticipates linguistic elements; this means that the interpreter needs to attentively follow the text if he /she wants to anticipate some element in order to close the sentence in the shortest time possible.
 - Memorising, whereby the velotypist postpones linguistic material; this means, to retrieve full sentences while lagging behind because of several reasons.
 - Then, as we have explained in Element 1 LO1, among the production strategies are also:
 - Editing strategies either before going on air, or while being on air either avoiding possible mistakes thru synonymy or paraphrase or by correcting mistakes before they are aired.
 - And finally, exit strategies, or 3 Gs, are those strategies which are adopted in extreme conditions to compensate for information loss. This can be done through generalisation strategies, whereby the velotypist uses more general synonyms or repeats previously mentioned content; another exit strategy is the gordian knot strategy, also called «cut and knit strategy», whereby the velotypist omits bits of a sentence but manages to produce a grammatically correct and coherent sentence; the last exit strategy, Garwood strategy, is named after a simultaneous interpreting teacher who used to repeating this all the time.

14 Slide 14

Section 3 – Memory Strategies.

15 Slide 15

In order to deal with the complex process of typing as a whole, a professional has to implement strategic moves realtime, and memory is paramount while working as a supportive system. While you can only develop this competence by the time and thanks to ad hoc exercises, you may be interested in understanding the rationale behind it, through some examples of strategies, as a way to develop it. In particular, we will focus on omissions, compression or condensation and expansion or addition.

16 Slide 16

An aspect which can lead the velotypist to omit a section or a sentence of the source text depends on how fast the speaker is. Here is an example taken from the press conference on the appointment of the city of London for the Olympic Games. The pace of the speech is very fast. When one of the members, Dame Tanni Grey Thompson takes the floor, he starts speaking much too fast, by saying: I feel very proud to be a British athlete and a Paralympian.

There is not another country in the world with so much attention to Paralympian athletes as the UK both in terms of financial support, and of media coverage. His way of speaking is too fast and this is confusing for the velotypist who cannot retain the whole sentence on his memory, thus deciding to omit some portions of the source text. However, the reader of the subtitles has the impressions something is being omitted, but the logics behind the whole sentence is still maintained.

Important to say is also the fact that the question of omission intimately concerns the question of quality, as well as context. If an omission is considered unquestionably valid then this is surely because “high quality” is not the same thing as rendering everything in the source text. In fact, false starts, hesitations and unnecessary repetitions are routinely omitted, basically since such improvements in the quality of discourse are seen as part of the velotypist’s service function.

17 Slide 17

This strategy can be divided into two different kind: semantic omission occurs when losing some words which are important for the whole understanding of the discourse, and that the audience cannot get from the rest of the context. The non semantic omission occurs when the velotypist automatically deletes some parts of the spoken text (you see, it’s, it’s it’s very interesting...) and redundant words. These cases mainly happen when the velotypist has to cut something in the speech, so not to overcharge his/her working-memory. In these cases, omissions go to the benefit both of the memory load of the velotypist, and to the benefit of the cognitive load of the audience.

Here are some examples. In example 1 the source text says: Thank you, James, for... and the target text says: Thank you for... In example 2, the source text says: we determine, as a council, three priorities. The target text says: we determined three priorities.

18 Slide 18

Compression is a strategy that overlaps with omission in a certain way. In fact, compression and omission have something in common.

Compression happens when the original meaning is rendered by the interpreter in a more general and concise way, deleting what is repetitive or redundant. Omission is used when the velotypist omits incomprehensible input, unnecessarily repetitive, redundant, un-important, or unacceptable utterances. Therefore, the application of one of them may entail the employment of the other.

In particular, condensation strategy facilitates working under time pressure, while conveying complete information. It consists in formulating concise and synthetic utterances, and deleting superfluous words.

In the example the source text reads: the setup program results in an update of the registry. The target text says: the setup program updates the registry. In the target text a strong verb is used, 'to update' instead of its nominalized variant in the source text, that is 'the update of the registry'. This way of facilitating the sentence helps the velotypist retain the right information by relieving the cognitive load on the working memory.

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Expansion represents a strategy in which the velotypist has to trust his/her memory system in terms of retention of information. The velotypist adds information or expands the source discourse, so as to better convey or clarify the message and avoid unclear information in the target discourse.

As we have already examined in the previous example, velotypists tend to stick to the source text as much as possible, and to omit something only in cases of false starts, hesitations, unnecessary repetitions or prolix and redundant ritual wording. Also, a velotypist can omit something when in trouble with the fast pace of the speaker. In this framework, one could think that there is no much room for expansions in the typing process, intended as addition of information or clarification of particularly difficult concepts. However, expansions sometimes are necessary in order to retrieve previous information or to clarify not very clear concepts. Here, in an example of expansion at a sentence level. The source text says: Gunmen have settled a ferocious battle with police. The target text says: Reports say that people have started to fight with the police. In this case, not only the velotypist introduces a hedging which is not present in the original text, but he also simplifies the lexis of the source text, without weakening the language at the level of the sentence.

20 Slide 20

The summary.

21 Slide 21

In this LO we have introduced the main competence of the velotypist, the psycho-cognitive skill of memory. In particular we have dealt with two important aspects, a theoretical one that is the memory divided into sensory memory, long-term memory, and short-term memory or working memory, and a more practical one, on the inferencing and memorising strategies used by the velotypist. In the case of inferencing strategies, the velotypist recovers lost or incomprehensible information on the basis of the speech context and his or her general knowledge, or he anticipates lexico-grammar or conceptual elements. In the case of memorising strategies, the velotypist postpones lexico-grammar or conceptual elements. One way to go for that is trying to semi-automatise these actions. To do so, memorising is the exercise to start with. In the homework session, we will see how to do this in practice.

22 Slide 22

Exercises.

23 Slide 23

The exercises for this video lecture are in the Trainer's Guide and the PowerPoint file.

24 Voiceover

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