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To cite this article: O V Afanaseva and N S Gilmanova 2019 *IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng.* **483** 012037

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# Strategies applied by technical interpreters in Khanty-Mansiysk and Murmansk based industries

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**Abstract.** This article identifies and classifies some of the communication strategies used by technical interpreters in Khanty-Mansiysk and Murmansk based industries. In these regions interpreters are widely involved into the production process at either international enterprises co-founded by legal entities of different countries or at domestic enterprises having partners worldwide. The communication strategies most frequently applied by the local interpreters are viewed with account of such notions as production process, consecutive technical interpretation and interpreter competence.

## 1. Introduction

Oil has been the largest source of energy throughout the world for years regardless of the globalisation process, imposed quotas and sanctions, fall in oil prices or rising electricity consumption rate. Therefore international cooperation in oil and gas production and processing industries is highly welcome. Russian market capacity, abundant natural resources, skilled labour force attract foreign investment into the Russian economy.

Well-qualified technical interpreters are highly demanded in this country, in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug and the Murmansk Region in particular. Due to the business and industrial environment in these regions interpreters are often required to enable professional communication during oil and gas production and processing, ship surveys, shipyard maintenance, spent nuclear fuel management and within many other industry-wise activities. The International hydraulic fracturing company the Calfrac which operates in Canada, the United States, Argentina and Russia has a subsidiary, the CWS (Calfrac Well Services) International LLC, in Ugra, the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug. The largest independent natural gas producer Novatek is currently realising its grand Arctic project in the Murmansk Region.

## 2. Production process characteristics to comply with

To characterise a production process, researchers single out 13 different principles, including proportionality, differentiation, combination etc. [1]. Although all of them effect interpreters' work and are to be taken into account, the most vitally important principle to be ensured by interpreters is the production process continuity, i.e. preventing interruptions in the production process.

Other principles are also to be supported by high-quality interpretation. These are the principles of differentiation, combination, standardization, streamlined, etc. However, it is the principle of continuity that is the most relevant for the implementation.

The principle of production continuity is provided mostly by the atmosphere of trust. It stands to reason that interpreters with an interpreted text or a discourse they generate play a leading role in creating such atmosphere.

## 3. Competencies of Interpreters



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For obvious reasons, the above-mentioned companies frequently employ local residents. Furthermore, it is strictly required to select personnel from the local population in the CWS International LLC, the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug.

The interpreter in such a company is not a production employee of oil and gas industry and does not have the authority of one. However, they are familiar with both the specifics of the production process of well treatment and maintenance, repair of equipment, as well as peculiarities of national characters of both local and foreign colleagues.

The competencies of the interpreter are identified as follows:

- highly developed memory and skills for its development;
- ability to work with terminology, readiness to constantly perceive new terms, evaluate their valency, applicability, ability to work with them in context [2];
- ability to quickly acquire missing experience in working with terminology, in particular, deduction and induction methods: clarification on practical experience, deduction of meaning from a common understanding;
- the so called “falsification” skill, i.e. translation of terminology without qualification in oil and gas field. It can be said that often a technical interpreter has to “imitate” work experience, studying topics, compiling glossaries, reading special literature, linguistically guessing, as well as the psychological element, which is communicative competence. The interpreter necessarily and at the beginning of his career frequently addresses both Russian and English-speaking production employees to verify directly generated oral discourse;
- high motivation and life-long learning. The interpreter is given a very short time for adaptation in a stressful situation of misunderstanding that is constantly present at the beginning of work;
- highly developed psychological mobility. Being involved into production might impose much stress, as it implies fly in/fly out work on rotational basis, urgent phone calls, frequently at night.

#### **4. Characteristic of interpreting during the production process**

Researchers of interpreting and translation [3-9]. note that there are a great many definitions of translation/interpretation, due to a high and long-standing demand for this activity.

The production process in international industries implies consecutive interpreting in up to 70% of interpreters' work. It is usually required when the number of participants is relatively small, since consecutive interpretation is effective for the “mobile” communication, which is typical of the production process. This kind of communication is carried out when working at industrial facilities, negotiations, performing repairs directly on oil bushes, etc. The author of generated discourse specifically makes periodic pauses in speech and these pauses are usually very short. A professional interpreter usually generates the text while the speech is being heard and pronounces it during the pause. Consecutive interpretation requires good operational memory.

Obviously, the type of interpreting demanded in the industries can be defined as a technical one. Technical interpretation can be defined as one used for the exchange of special scientific and technical information between people speaking different languages. This is a formal logical (collective) style, characterised by accuracy, non-emotionality and impersonality. It is also the use of a variety of terms, often of Latin or Greek origin. Researchers comprehensively describe its specific grammar with special norms and rules to be used. These rules are as follows: 1) the syntax structures are indefinitely personal and impersonal; 2) passive structures are widely used; 3) verbs are most often used in non-personal forms; 4) inversion in the sentences of technical texts serves as a way to implement a certain logical selection.

Technical interpreting during the production process implies special communicative strategies.

#### **5. Linguistic studies of communication strategies**

As any social action is always accompanied by a communication strategy produced or reproduced by this action, supporting the old or creating a new way of communication, "which can then be consolidated as a meaningful basis of culture in general. In this sense, we are not talking about communication, but about a communication strategy, thereby introducing the content of the choice, the content of the perspective into this tool, and pointing to the need for constant efforts to maintain this choice and that perspective" [10].

Study of communication strategies and tactics originates from T. A. Van Dyke, who was one of the first to explore speech tactics and communication strategies. He says that the choice and use of these tactics depend on a variety of factors, such as purpose of communication, knowledge, cultural background, situation and sphere of communication, as well as text genre.

N. Papina notes that utterance is characterised as holistic, consistent and coherent. This is achieved by observing certain norms of a formal and semantic organization of the text. The organization of discourse directly depends on a communicative situation, an author's attitude, as well as on the attitude of a person receiving the utterance. In general, communication is defined as an interaction of two active parties, the speaker and the listener. The first implements the communicative intention, while the latter decrypts it. The most active position belongs to the sender of the message, i.e. the speaker. In the act of translation this is the sender of the original message. An interpreter translates a speaker's communicative attitude or intention [11].

Researchers study both a speaker and a listener. Communicative functions are highlighted for both. Communicative functions of a speaker are as follows: 1) messaging, nominative, denotative, reference; 2) cognitive, gnostic; 3) appeal (impact, "imposing" his own picture of the world); 4) expressive (expressive form of the mental state of a speaker); 5) emotive (creation of certain feelings in the recipient); 6) poetic (installation of the author on the sign itself, appeal to aesthetic feeling of the addressee); 7) contact-setting (to prepare for perception). Communicative functions of a listener are as follows: 1) communication (this is readiness for perception, understanding and communication); 2) perception (understanding of speech, social, language situations, decoding of semantic, lexical, phraseological, grammatical signs and symbols); 3) actual contact, with the maintenance of verbal communication, attention to the message); 4) aesthetic (textual satisfaction of needs of the recipient, his tastes, adequate perception, commonality of "pictures of the world").

L. Vvedenskaya suggests that there are various ways of communicating ideas, as well as different communication codes and systems [12].

In her work E. Dyakova highlights that communication of people is carried out for the purpose of rapprochement or distancing. Hence, rapprochement and distancing can be understood as global communication strategies or, according to the author's terminology, macrostrategies. Communicative macrostrategy includes the following concepts : 1) strategy - a set of theoretical speaker's moves aimed at achieving a communicative goal; 2) intention - a certain principle according to which the above moves are combined into a certain strategy; 3) purpose - an idea of the result of a certain communicative act; 4) tactics - direct practical moves that the speaker realises in speech; 5) intention - a move, a part of tactics, that is, something like a unit of the communication process; 6) experience - a set of conclusions speaking about those tactics, moves and intentions that were implemented earlier and marked as successful / unsuccessful. Based on all the selected units, the speaker implements a certain communicative strategy based on experience and engaging communicative competence [13].

O. Issers analysing the concept of communication strategy notes that the strategy is based on interpretation, which, to a certain extent, makes the concept of speech strategy similar to the concept of translation. It is basis of speech influence. Interpretation is made on the knowledge of a partner: their value categories, emotions and will. Communication strategies are actions that are precisely aimed at interpretation. Strategy always presupposes a motive: the interpretation of desire, the will of

the subject, these are typical motives of human behaviour — to preserve good, to achieve better. Situations in which a message does not presuppose a subject (notifications, informational messages) are not purely speech strategies, in which the strategy may exist as some element of the situation. Issers gives a typology of communication strategies as specific ways of speech behaviour, carried out at the control of a “global intention” [10].

Communication strategy is a semantic, stylistic and pragmatic choice of a speaker. According to speech acts classification by J. Searle, A. Wezhbicka and others, strategies can be general and private. From the functional point of view, the main (semantic, cognitive) and auxiliary strategies are distinguished, which, in turn, are subdivided into pragmatic, interactive, rhetorical strategies, depending on the goals of communication.

The theory of translation defines the term “strategy” as follows. This is the operational activity of the interpreter, a set of actions and techniques used by the interpreter to achieve the goal. In studies of Russian scientists engaged in translation studies, a single approach to the definition of a “translation strategy” has not been developed. That is the very reason for a great variety of definitions of the given concept. The “strategy of the interpreter”, “translation thinking” are also worth mentioning here. N. Georgieva suggests the following definitions. Translation strategy is consciously developed by an interpreter in the course of expert communicative activity aloof of his actions aimed at creating the project - a text of the translation, with the obligatory account of the professional ethics of the interpreter. The translation strategy in the framework of the translation process is a general plan of action of the interpreter aimed at translating a specific text (in our case, statements), determined by a specific purpose of the translation taking into account the linguistic and extralinguistic characteristics of a specific translation situation, relevant at a particular time period [5].

All the above provisions lead us to the conclusion that they are components of the translation situation in which a technical interpreter has to act.

According to Barkhudarov the translation situation is 1) a communication situation, that is, an environment in which a communicative act takes place; 2) the subject of a message, that is, the setting (set of facts) described in a text/discourse; 3) participants of communication, that is, the speaker (the writer) and the listener (the reader).

## **6. Communication strategies used by the local technical interpreters**

### *6.1 Types of the interpreting/translation situations*

Technical interpreters of the regions find themselves in the following interpreting/translation situations:

- interpreting communication between Russian and English-speaking experts during the maintenance and repair of well servicing equipment in the workshop;
- interpreting of communication between Russian and English-speaking experts during service maintenance and repair of well servicing equipment directly at the well;
- opening and closing work orders, entering information into the database;
- translation of correspondence for managers and supervisors.

Interpreting/translation situations are characterized, firstly, by a number of extralinguistic components, such as the above mentioned production process principles, an interpreter’s competences, etc.; secondly, by linguistic components, such as technical discourse; various terms, including unknown ones.

### *6.2 Strategies applied by the local technical interpreters*

The following strategies have been identified.

## 1) Preserving production process continuity.

An interpreter chooses the most accurate and concise equivalent, ignoring any extra or irrelevant information.

**Table 1.** Examples of preserving production process continuity

English discourse	Russian Interpretation
We ordered CV-joints and axle shafts. Expecting them in.	ШРУСы и валы моста заказаны, скоро будут.
Driving is the most dangerous thing you will do on the job, or off the job.	Вождение - самый опасный вид деятельности как в рабочее, так и в свободное время.

## 2) Filling in the gaps.

Paraphrasing unknown words, word combinations in case of unawareness of details.

**Table 2.** Examples of filling in the gaps.

English discourse	Russian Interpretation
crossover	передача вахты

## 3) Politeness, keeping the contact, ignoring excessively emotional elements of discourse that do not influence the meaning.

**Table 3.** Examples of keeping the contact.

English discourse	Russian Interpretation
I would like to ask you a question which is a task in itself.	Я бы хотел задать вам вопрос, который, возможно, трансформируется в просьбу.

## 4) Control over the topic, i.e. use of applicable combinations and equivalents within given interpreting situation.

**Table 4.** Examples of controlling the topic.

English discourse	Russian Interpretation
This is not to be repaired, drive shaft spline part is broken, do not try to...Drive shaft is to be replaced, it is beyond repairs.	Кардан неисправен, сломана шлицевая часть, требуется замена.

## 5) Explanation.

When Russian production employees do not understand the term or concept, the interpreter provides an interpretation similar to the translator's note; the transformation caused by the prepositional attributive noun, while in Russian it requires the genitive case.

**Table 5.** Examples of explanation.

English Discourse	Russian Interpretation
points	контакты прерывателя
grease gun	смазывающий инструмент
forklift mast load roller	ролик мачты вилочного погрузчика

- 6) Localization, which means depending on the production site and workshop.

**Table 6.** Examples of localization.

English Discourse	Russian Interpretation
bulbs	автолампы
coupling	переходник
spine	шлицевая часть кардана

- 7) Transference.

The text of the target language, or, more precisely, parts of the target language, will have to have the meanings established in the source language, in other words, have the meanings of the source language. The transfer can occur at all language levels, starting with the morphological one, and the elements of the target language at the same time acquire formal and contextual meaning from the systems and structures of the source language [8].

**Table 7.** Examples of transference.

English Discourse	Russian Interpretation
shutdown box	блок шатдауна

## 7. Conclusion

The discourse analysis of specific components of interpreting/translation situations for over 700 oral Russian statements generated by technical interpreters makes it possible to identify the following communication strategies used in the industries: preserving the continuity of the process, politeness, keeping contact, controlling the topic and others. The list of the strategies is not complete and can be continued. The communication strategies applied by the local interpreters are identified with account of such notions as production process, consecutive technical interpretation, and interpreter's competence.

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