



THE CONCEPT OF STRESS IN INTERPRETING: LINGUISTIC AND
COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Oral translation, also known as interpreting, is a complex cognitive activity that requires quick thinking, strong concentration, and the ability to process information rapidly. During this process, interpreters often experience psychological pressure and stress because they must listen, understand, and reproduce speech almost simultaneously. Stress in interpreting can influence the interpreter's performance, accuracy, and overall communication quality.

This article explores the concept of stress in oral translation from psycholinguistic and cognitive perspectives. It analyzes how stress affects the interpreter's mental processes such as perception, memory, and attention. The study also discusses factors that may increase or decrease stress during interpreting. Understanding these mechanisms can help improve interpreter training and develop strategies to manage stress more effectively.

Keywords: *interpreting, stress, psycholinguistics, cognitive processes, oral translation, attention, memory, interpreter training.*

Introduction

Oral translation plays an important role in international communication, diplomacy, education, and business. Unlike written translation, interpreting requires the translator to process information instantly and deliver the message without significant delay. Because of this time pressure, interpreters often experience a high level of mental stress.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, interpreting involves several complex mental processes. These include listening to the source language, understanding the meaning, storing information in short-term memory, and producing the equivalent message in another language.¹¹² Each of these stages requires strong cognitive effort. If the interpreter experiences stress or cognitive overload, the quality of interpretation may decrease.

¹¹² Najmiddinova, M.N. (2025, October). NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRANSLATION METHOD IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING. In CONFERENCE OF MODERN SCIENCE & PEDAGOGY (Vol. 1, No. 7, pp. 112-116). <https://tjst.org/index.php/USA/article/view/1090>





Researchers in linguistics and cognitive science emphasize that stress is a natural part of interpreting activity. However, understanding how stress affects mental processes can help interpreters develop strategies to manage pressure and maintain high performance.¹¹³

Methods

The study uses a qualitative analytical approach in order to investigate how stress influences interpreting processes. The research is based on theoretical works in psycholinguistics, translation studies, and cognitive linguistics. Academic articles, books, and research papers related to interpreting and cognitive load were analyzed.

Special attention was given to the mental processes involved in interpreting, including perception, attention, and working memory. These processes were examined to understand how stress may interfere with them during interpreting tasks.

Results

The analysis shows that stress in interpreting is closely related to cognitive load. Interpreters must perform several mental tasks at the same time: listening to the speaker, understanding the message, remembering important information, and translating it into another language. This multitasking process creates significant pressure on the interpreter's working memory.

When interpreters experience excessive stress, their attention may become less stable, which can lead to omissions or mistakes in translation. Fast speech, unfamiliar terminology, and limited preparation time are some of the factors that increase interpreter stress.

Discussion

The results suggest that stress is an unavoidable element of interpreting, but it can be managed through proper training and preparation. Psycholinguistic research indicates that interpreters who have strong working memory and attention control are better able to cope with stressful interpreting situations.¹¹⁴

Interpreter training programs should therefore focus not only on language proficiency but also on cognitive development, including exercises that improve memory, concentration, and rapid decision-making.

Conclusion

Stress is an important factor that influences oral translation performance. Interpreting requires complex cognitive operations that place pressure on memory and attention. When this pressure becomes too high, translation quality may decrease.¹¹⁵

However, appropriate training, preparation, and experience can help interpreters manage stress and perform effectively even in demanding communication situations.

¹¹³ Gile, D. (2009). *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

¹¹⁴ Najmiddinova, M. (2025). Linguopragmatic analysis of phraseological units and idioms relating to the concept of hospitality in English and Uzbek. *Scientific journal of the Fergana State University*, (4), 94-94. https://doi.org/10.56292/SJFSU/vol31_iss4/a94 , <https://journal.fdu.uz/>

¹¹⁵ Najmiddinova, M. (2026). NATIONAL MENTALITY IN PROVERBS TRANSLATION: A LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK HOSPITALITY AND FAMILY PROVERBS. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18298257>



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