

**SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION**

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**INTRODUCTION TO**

**SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING**

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**Simultaneous interpreting** is used when relating court proceedings to defendants. The interpreter gives an exact rendition of everything being said at virtually the same time it is being spoken. Thus, interpreters should speak in a soft voice for the benefit of the defendant only, and should neither summarize, simplify, nor explain the proceedings.

This interpretation relies on how well the interpreter understands a message. This requires *intellectual listening* – that is, *listening for ideas*. Therefore, the interpreter makes instantaneous decisions about which ideas are central and which are supporting or minor. It takes practice to develop the concentration, listening skills, analytical skills, and proficiency in dual tasking that simultaneous interpretation requires.

This session is designed to give you practice in simultaneous interpretation skills. Because immediate feedback will hone your skills, you should practice these as often as possible with others.

**EXERCISES**

***Simultaneous Interpretation***

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These paragraphs are intended to include homonyms, and words with multiple meanings. Pay attention – do not jump to conclusions about what will be said.

1. This hearing is called an arraignment. You are being charged with a crime. I am advising you of your rights. You have the right to a lawyer. You have the right to buy lotto tickets. If you win, you will not be entitled to a public defender. You will be entitled to a red convertible. You have the right to have a trial. At your trial, if you want to, you can testify and tell your side of things, but you might not want to spill your guts, so you can decide to just sit there and rest on your laurels, rest your case and cite the authorities for your position, even if it is untenable, or play tennis, or quote Tennyson.
2. Do you understand that if you plead guilty you are giving up your right to have a trial? You can be sentenced up to 10 years, but the standard range is 4 to 6 months. If you hear that she is here, we can go to the store and buy some potatoes. Then you can appeal to the court of last resort, and the resort is at Lake Chelan. The challenge to change the tone and meaning of this passage is one that can be seen by any literary critic writing for the Seattle Times, published in Volume 1, number 128.

**EXERCISES:**

***Practice Scripts***

**Directions:**  One partner reads this script, both the question and answer, and another partner repeats it simultaneously, exactly as it was read. You do not need to identify who is speaking, just pause briefly between speakers. Repeat, only this time, interpret the script into the target language.

Repeat with the next script, being sure to switch roles. Pay attention to accuracy, inflection and tone.

**Script #1 – Arraignment**

Judge: The first matter on the calendar today is State v. Garcia. Is Garcia your true and correct name?

Def: It is.

Judge: Mr. Garcia, you are being charged with the crime of a violation of the uniform controlled substance act. You are here today to receive copy of the Information and enter a plea. Do you understand the charge?

Def: Yes.

Judge: Do you understand the rights that were read to you earlier?

Def: Yes.

Judge: Will you be entering a plea of guilty or not guilty today?

Def: Guilty. I just want to get this over with.

Judge: Mr. Garcia, you are not represented by counsel at this arraignment. Is your waiver voluntary, competently made, and with knowledge of the consequences?

Def: What? Oh, yes.

Judge: Mr. Garcia, do you wish to hear the Information read?

Def: No.

Judge: How do you wish to plead?

Def: guilty.

Judge: Guilty it is.

**EXERCISES:**

***Practice Scripts***

**Script # 2 – Arraignment**

Pros: Your honor, James Trinh on behalf of the State, for the arraignment calendar today.

Def: Good morning, your Honor, Joanne Moore for the public defenders office.

Pros: Your Honor, the first matter on the calendar today is State v. Garcia.

Judge: Is Garcia your true and correct name?

Garcia: It is.

Judge: Mr. Garcia, you are being charged with the crime of a violation of the uniform controlled substance act. I am handing your attorney a copy of the Information and ask that she acknowledge receipt thereof, waive formal reading and enter a plea on your behalf.

Def: Your Honor, on behalf of Mr. Garcia, I acknowledge receipt of the Information, waive formal reading and ask the Court to enter a plea of not guilty.

Judge: A plea of not guilty is entered on behalf of the defendant.

Def: Your Honor, I also object to the date of arraignment and file written notice of that objection.

Judge: Objection noted, counsel.

**EXERCISES:**

***Practice Scripts***

**Script #2 - Arraignment – Continued**

Def: As to the matter of bail, your Honor, I would note that according to Court Services, Mr. Garcia’s residence and employment have been confirmed. He has resided in the City of Seattle for nine years and has several family members who live in the area. Although he does have a few prior misdemeanor convictions, he has only one FTA, or failure to appear. Mr. Garcia advises me that the FTA resulted from a driving while suspended charge where he had moved and failed to receive the notice to appear in court. He assures me and the Court that if he is released on this charge he will fulfill all of his court obligations. I ask that he be released on his personal recognizance.

Pros: Your Honor, the amount of drugs seized in this incident was fairly large and there is some suggestion that the defendant has a drug problem which could provide some incentive to flee and would affect his reliability. I would ask the Court to set a surety bond of $5,000.

Judge: I am concerned about the apparent drug problem. If Court Services will consider supervising him, I’ll P.R. him.

Def: Your Honor, Court Services is already overwhelmed. It could take days before they could interview him for supervised release. In that time he’ll lose his job. He does have a wife and two children for whom he is the sole support. They are in court if the Court would like to hear from them. They will vouch for his reliability. And as I mentioned, Court Services has already said they do not object to a P.R.

Judge: Well, counsel, I am inclined to release him unless there are other considerations.

Pros: Would the Court consider an appearance bond of $5,000. I’m simply reluctant to allow the man out with no conditions.

Judge: I’m going to P.R. Mr. Garcia on the condition that he maintain his current address and employment, stay in contact with his attorney and submit weekly UAs, urinalysis at TASC.

Def: Thank you, your Honor.

**EXERCISES:**

***Practice Scripts***

**Dialog Preceding Closing Statement**

Court: Anything further with respect to evidence?

DA: Just a few more questions on cross, Your Honor.

 Officer Delmonico, you used a term in your explanation, in your testimony, “high narcotics area.” What did you mean by that?

Officer: There’s a lot of traffic that goes down to purchase narcotics from street dealers in that area.

DA: But you haven’t personally observed that area, isn’t that right?

Officer: Well, yes, I’ve been on a foot beat down there for, at that point, about a year.

DA: Is it usual for you and your partner to exit the car and draw your weapons?

Pros: Objection, your Honor. It’s irrelevant whether or not it’s usual.

Court: I’ll sustain that objection. Anything more?

DA: No, your Honor. I’m finished with this witness.

Court: If not, we’ll proceed with the prosecutor’s closing statement.

**EXERCISES:**

***Practice Scripts***

**Closing Statement**

Defense counsel has come before you and tried to cast doubt on a certain piece of evidence. But, the defendant himself told you that he did not know any one of these people. And yet, you will have with you in the jury room five different photo

montages where witnesses chose the defendant’s photograph. And you have the identifications that were made in court. If these people don’t know the defendant, how come they recognize him? Why do they recognize him if he’s never been in their businesses?

Because he was there on the night of these robberies and when you think about those things, you can honestly say deep down inside that you don’t believe that the defendant committed these crimes? Further, the defendant can be tied by circumstantial evidence to these separate counts, and to the sunglasses. Can you honestly say that when you consider the circumstantial evidence, plus the identifications made, that this guy didn’t commit these crimes?

**SUGGESTED SKILL – ENHANCING EXERCISES:**

*Simultaneous Interpretation*

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It is essential that you enhance your listening and concentration capabilities. Therefore, before taking the Court Interpreter Exam, you must:

* practice your ability to listen to information through earphones (or by other audio devices) and interpret at the same time, and
* learn to concentrate on what is being communicated to the person for whom you are interpreting. You should concentrate on the actual communication without being distracted by external factors, such as physical appearance, gestures, emotional outbursts, etc.

The exercises outlined below will help you develop skills in simultaneous interpretation. They build on each other, so start slowly, step by step. Practice them **daily**, for a half hour. Start with just the source language, and then interpret the source language into the target language.

1. Use television and radio broadcasts as interpreting materials. Interpret them aloud simultaneously.
2. Attend as many different kinds of court proceedings as possible. While you listen, render them silently to yourself simultaneously with the speaker. Alternatively, make your own recordings, reading from some legal texts. Start with texts that are not too technical.
3. **Shadowing:** This exercise familiarizes the interpreter with performing two basic tasks – listening and speaking – simultaneously.
	1. Have someone record several paragraph-length passages in English, or record a television talk show. Choose texts in a variety of areas, but nothing too technical for now.
	2. Listen to each passage without taking notes.
	3. Play them again and repeat everything you hear, staying as close to the speaker’s words and pacing as possible (shadowing).
	4. Pay attention to key words and phrases that hint at what comes next (e.g., On the other hand…, once upon a time…, there was opportunity and motive…, etc.)
4. **Dual-Tasking:** Once you feel comfortable talking and listening at the same time, and are not leaving out too much, begin performing other tasks.
	1. Listen to the above passages again, interpreting simultaneously, AND, while focused on this activity, write the numbers 1 – 100.
	2. Repeat this exercise AND write the numbers 100 – 1 (backwards).
	3. Repeat the exercise, only this time, write the numbers 1 – 100 by 5’s. Then write them by 3’s. (Note what happens whenever numbers are mentioned in the text that you are shadowing!)
	4. When you are able to do this exercise with very few errors, move on to writing your address and phone number and your friends’ addresses and phone numbers, while simultaneously shadowing the recorded texts.
	5. Repeat the exercise while copying a short poem (have it written out in front of you – do not write it from memory).
	6. Finally, repeat the exercise while simultaneously writing out the Pledge of Allegiance from memory.
5. **Analytical Listening:**  Interpreters must listen to a message and instantly decide which ideas are relevant, and which are less important or distracting.
	1. Have someone record a variety of short passages from newspapers or magazines (essays or op-eds work well).
	2. Listen to each passage, without taking notes. Turn off the recorder after each passage, and then write down the main idea of the passage.
	3. Listen to each passage again, turning off the recorder after each one, and write down any additional specific information that supports the main idea.
	4. Continue this procedure until you have written a complete summary of each passage.
	5. Pay attention to key words or phrases that can lead you astray, such as nonessential embedded clauses (e.g., My uncle*, who is sixty years old*, called me) and dangling participles (e.g., *While walking home,* a tree fell in front of me – the tree was NOT walking home). Learn to skip over those distractions to get to the main idea.
6. When you are comfortable shadowing and dual-tasking, try exercises 3, 4 and 5 but interpret the passages from the source language into the target language. You may want to record texts from law books or record actual court proceedings.

Again, this type of interpreting takes a lot of time and practice to become proficient. Practicing with a partner to get immediate feedback is *strongly* recommended.