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Consecutive Notetaking and Interpreter Training

Edited by
Yasumasa Someya



Consecutive Notetaking and Interpreter Training

This book focuses on the theoretical foundation of notetaking (NT), an essential skill of consecutive interpreting. Explaining the “whys” pertaining to the cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical issues surrounding NT, this book addresses this neglected aspect of notetaking discourse and brings together most updated and different, if not opposing, theoretical perspectives by leading researchers and practitioners from both the West and the East: France, Germany, Taiwan, and Japan. The book, although primarily focused on the theoretical aspects of consecutive notetaking, also covers other issues pertaining to interpreter training and pedagogy in general, and provides instructors with useful guidelines and empirically tested pieces of advice for good pedagogical practices.

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Yasumasa Someya**

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Introduction

Yasumasa Someya

This book is an offspring of the International Colloquium on Interpreter Education held on September 9, 2015, at Kansai University, Osaka, Japan. The purpose of the colloquium was to bring together scholars, teachers, and practitioners working within the field of interpreting to exchange their views on interpreting education in general and the theory and pedagogy of consecutive notes and notetaking in particular.

Four speakers from around the world presented their papers at the colloquium, including Tatsuya Komatsu, Akita International University, Japan; Hiromi Ito, ESIT, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, France; Cheng-shu Yang, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan; and Annika Hansen, Heidelberg University, Germany, in addition to Yasumasa Someya, Kansai University, Japan, who organized this colloquium under the sponsorship of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Grants-in-aid for Scientific Research, No. 24320112).

Unfortunately, Annika Hansen, who conducted an excellent workshop on the Matyssek method of notetaking at the colloquium, got seriously sick soon after the colloquium and was unable to submit her paper for inclusion in this volume. Since the workshop was one of the main events of the colloquium and her paper should have constituted a major chapter of this book, we were very much disappointed at this unfortunate turn of events. Nevertheless, we all wish her a quick recovery and hope to have another opportunity of working together in the near future.

When one door shuts, another opens, however. Professor Michaela Albl-Mikasa of the ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland, who was unable to take part in the colloquium due to schedule conflict, kindly offered to submit her paper in place of Annika's. Her paper, which is based on her PhD thesis, covers both theoretical and practical aspects of consecutive notetaking, including a rather detailed account of the Matyssek method. Her contribution not only offset the missing link, but turned out to be the most appropriate piece of paper to be included in the current volume.

As the organizer of the colloquium and the sole editor of the book, I find myself fortunate to be able to put together different perspectives and approaches of some of the leading scholars from both the West and the East, on this important, yet rather neglected area of inquiry in the field of Interpreting Studies.

The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter, by Tatsuya Komatsu, begins with his personal story of how he became an interpreter and covers such pertinent topics as 1) the development of interpreting profession in Japan, 2) the emergence of “interpreting agencies” and the unique characteristics of interpreting market in Japan, 3) interpreter training and language learning, 4) the role of universities in interpreter education/training, and 5) future challenges. The paper presents an excellent overview of the history of interpreting profession and training in Japan since the 1960s by someone who was and still is deeply involved in the making of that history.

In Chapter 2, Hiromi Ito, a Paris-based conference interpreter and Assistant Professor at ESIT (Ecole Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs), the New Sorbonne University – Paris III, first describes the main tenets of the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT, aka the Theory of Sense) advocated by Danica Seleskovitch and her colleague Marianne Lederer. She then explains how the students at ESIT are trained under this theory in great detail, including consecutive notetaking. In section 2 of her chapter, Ito provides a comprehensive review of the recent findings and developments in cognitive psychology that are relevant to interpreting studies and consecutive notetaking in particular. Her objective in doing so is to update the ITT theory and convince the readers of its validity as a general theory of interpreting and translation. If Seleskovitch were alive today, she would have done the same thing – rewriting her theory within the theoretical frameworks and terminologies of modern-day sciences. Readers will find Ito did the job very well on behalf of Seleskovitch.

In Chapter 3, Michaela Albl-Mikasa first presents an overview of the traditional conceptions of notetaking and then reconstructs interpreter’s notes and notation as an *individualized language*, exploring the language dimension with regard to word meanings, word formation and inflection, semantic relations at sentence and text levels, as well as pragmatic functions – centering on, but not necessarily limited to, Matyssek’s pictographic notation system. (Michaela is a graduate of Heidelberg University, where she received intensive training in notetaking from Matyssek himself.)

She then builds up her argument by laying the cognitive theoretical foundations against the backdrop of the social constructivist paradigm and presents an empirical study on the discourse dimension of the use of linguistic notational means in notation texts. In doing so, she outlines the added value of the methodological tools provided by Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995) to analyze the balance between explicit and implicit information in notation texts. In conclusion, the author addresses didactic implications of her arguments and conclusions.

This chapter is based on her PhD thesis entitled “*Notationssprache und Notizen-text. Ein kognitiv-linguistisches Modell für das Konsekutivdolmetschen*” (Notation language and notation text. A cognitive-linguistic model of consecutive interpreting). This thesis is considered a major scholarly advance in the area of consecutive notes and notetaking, but unfortunately was not accessible to non-German speaking readers around the world. Although a concise version, this chapter essentially

covers all the major thrusts of her PhD thesis. Readers will find this chapter particularly interesting in light of the arguments put forth in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 4, Cheng-shu Yang, director of the Graduate Institute of Cross Cultural Studies at Fu-Jen Catholic University, Taiwan, and one of the most active and eminent Chinese scholars and educators in the area of interpreting, presents her in-depth exploration into notetaking symbols in consecutive interpreting, focusing particularly on Chinese and Japanese ideograms and ideographic symbology. Her analysis is based on samples taken from a corpus of consecutive notes she compiled on her own. Although the number of samples are rather limited, her major concern is to elucidate the general rules of correspondence between *symbols* and *information*, with the main focus placed on the relations between the *inner logic* and the *outer forms* of notetaking symbols.

The language pairs covered in her chapter are Chinese-Japanese, English-Chinese, and English-Japanese (in the order of ST-TT). Readers who speak neither Chinese nor Japanese may find it somewhat difficult to follow her arguments in minor details, but she added English explanations where necessary to help those readers to comprehend the meanings of otherwise meaningless Chinese and Japanese ideograms presented in their full or reduced forms.

In Chapter 5, Yasumsa Someya presents an outline of his theory of consecutive notes and notetaking. Interpreter's notes, the author claims, are a reflection of his/her understanding of the target text. As such, their notes as a whole – however random they seem on the surface – must have a certain systematicity with some underlying structure. This structure may or may not be overt in the forms of linguistic and/or ideographic cues, but is nevertheless considered to exist beneath the surface if, and only if, the notes are based on the interpreter's sound understanding of the target text.

The main purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to identify this "structure" in cognitive-linguistic terms in an attempt to construct a theory of interpreter's notes and notetaking. First, the author examines the notion of "mental representation" of a given text to define what exactly is meant when we say we *understand* a text, be it written or spoken. He then introduces the Predicate-Argument Schema proposed by Kintsch (1998) as a most promising model of text comprehension. Based on this model and other relevant research findings and theoretical frameworks, the author proposes what he calls the Propositional Representation Theory of Consecutive Notes and Notetaking (aka the PRT) and shows how useful this theory is in analyzing interpreter's notes as an externalized approximation of the mental representation of his/her understanding of the target text.

Chapter 6 reports on a small-scale experiment on consecutive notetaking, which was conducted by the author of Chapter 5 to test the validity of the PRT. A group of professional interpreters and graduate students were invited to participate in the experiment. In the present paper, however, the author uses only the data with the former group of subjects in view of the ecological validity of the experiment.

The main hypotheses to be tested in this experiment include the following:

- 1) "text-based" information processing is the norm in consecutive interpreting,
- 2) the basic unit of consecutive notes is the proposition, and an interpreter's notes

are taken on this basis, 3) an interpreter's notes generally follow the Thematic P-A Scheme proposed in Someya (2005, revised and included as Chapter 5, this volume), and 4) "deverbalization" (Seleskovitch, 1975; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1995) is not a norm; it occurs *only when* it is necessary and for good reason.

The experiment generally confirmed these hypotheses predicted by the PRT; however, the author cautions that his conclusions are still tentative, as the number of subjects participated in the experiment is too small. The author also made clear on the basis of his experimental data that textual, stylistic, and self-corrective *editing* is part of the interpreting process, although the exact nature of which is yet to be explored in greater detail in future research (Cf. Albl-Mikasa, Chapter 3, this volume).

This chapter concludes with a series of remaining research questions which the author was not able to address in the current paper, including those related to notetaking pedagogy. One additional contribution of this chapter is that it offers a useful and easy-to-follow analytical framework for consecutive notes, which is theoretically motivated and applicable to any language combinations.

*

In summary, this book brings together the most recent theoretical perspectives on consecutive notes and notetaking of the preeminent researchers and educators from France, German, China, and Japan – each of them representing his/her own unique cultural background and professional tradition. We hope that this book will shed new light on this unduly neglected aspect of interpreting studies and spur further discussion among the colleagues worldwide.

1 A brief history of interpreting and interpreter training in Japan since the 1960s*

Tatsuya Komatsu

1 Introduction

The history of interpreting in Japan is long and colorful. The first recorded presence of an interpreter dates back to 607, when one accompanied the second Official Envoy to China. In each of 13 succeeding envoys, the last of which left Japan in 838, interpreters played an important role in Japan's efforts to learn and import religion, technology, and administrative and legal systems from the more advanced China. During the Edo Period (1603–1868), an era of self-imposed national isolation, the contact with foreign countries was restricted (other than China) only to the Netherlands, and officially appointed Dutch-Japanese interpreters played a crucial role not only in trade but in helping and promoting modernization of the Japanese society. The first official visit to Japan by Americans, led by Commodore Perry in 1853, was also facilitated by some of those Dutch-Japanese interpreters (through relay with English.)

The period after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 had again been characterized by continuous efforts on the part of Japan to introduce culture and technology from Europe and the United States, although they were seriously disrupted in the period just before and during World War II. The first occasion where the role of interpreters attracted attention after the war was the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, which was convened in Tokyo from May 1946 to April 1948. Thirty Japanese-English interpreters were engaged, but interpreting during this tribunal, unlike in Nuremberg Trials, was basically consecutive except occasional simultaneous reading of pre-translated documents such as the final verdict (Komatsu, 2003).

Active interchange with the outside world was resumed after the war, first with the United States, then gradually involving many other countries and regions. The landmark event in this connection was the holding of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, after which Japan has come to be recognized as a member of the international community.

The goal of this paper is to highlight the history of interpreting in post-World War II period, specifically after early 1960s, when more international meetings

* This paper is based on the keynote speech delivered by the author at the International Colloquium on Interpreter Education, held on September 6, 2014, at Kansai University, Osaka, Japan.

began to be held in this country and activities of interpreters became more widely recognized by the public. The emphasis will also be placed upon training and education aspects of interpreters. Another note: since the author is an interpreter between English and Japanese, and also since the interpreting between these two languages has consistently made up close to or more than 80% of the total interpreting market in this country, most of this paper deals with the development concerning interpreting between the two languages.

2 Rise of interpreting profession after the war

2.1 How I became an interpreter – a case study

Since the author is one of the post-World War II first-generation interpreters in Japan, and since he has unique background of having been a practicing interpreter, interpreter trainer, founder and CEO of a language services provider company and a professor of interpreting at universities, the first part of this section will take the form of a personal reflection by the author. Readers' indulgence, therefore, is appreciated, as the author will use the first-person style in this particular section.

I, the author, was born and raised in Japan and learned English for the first time at the junior-high school. The kind of English education I received was strictly traditional adhering to the grammar-translation method, and I never learned to speak English until university. I believe I developed speaking and listening skills during university days, mostly through club activities such as the English Speaking Society and a series of side jobs. One of such jobs was to work during summer vacations as a student interpreter for the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. It was a full-fledged international conference held annually with participants from more than ten countries. After a little coaching from senior interpreters, I did mostly consecutive interpreting for the conference for three consecutive summers. This is how I acquired the basic skills of interpreting. Although my English ability was admittedly quite limited, I was able to do the job mainly due to my strong interest in and knowledge about the cause of the conference, and partly because professional interpreting as such did not exist and was practically unknown in those days in Japan.

A year after finishing university, I took the test conducted in Tokyo by the State Department of the United States to recruit interpreters who would stay in Washington, D.C. to provide interpreting for the visiting groups of Japanese business and labor leaders. This was an extensive program, known as the "Productivity Program" (organized on the Japanese side by the Japan Productivity Center, a private organization affiliated with the Ministry of International Trade and Industry). The program started in 1956 and lasted for about ten years. During this period, about 6,600 people in 660 groups visited and toured the U.S. for about a month to learn business and industrial practices. Contribution that this program had made to the reconstruction of Japanese economy was substantial, and it is often compared to the epochal Envoys to China in earlier centuries. Close to 50 interpreters were

recruited from Japan to serve the visiting groups throughout the period. I was one of them and stayed in Washington from the late 1960 to 1966.

A typical group of industrial leaders in the program visited a plant (auto, steel, etc.) and observed the production process in the morning, for example, where we interpreters provided consecutive interpreting. In the afternoon, the group sat in the office and received a lecture from a manager of the plant (say, on quality control) for two to three hours. During those afternoon sessions, we interpreters provided simultaneous interpreting to the members of the group using wired and vacuum-tube powered equipment. Since we had some knowledge about the subject through observation during the morning plant tours, simultaneous interpreting in the afternoon sessions was not really very difficult. It was indeed an extension of consecutive interpreting (Seleskovitch, 1968). This process was repeated almost every day for a month before the group left back to Japan. The themes for the visiting groups ranged from individual industries, business and financial practices, industrial relations and farming.

This was a very valuable experience for me, and this is how I, and many colleagues in the productivity interpreter group, acquired the skill of simultaneous interpreting. Simultaneous interpreting between Japanese and English, two languages widely disparate in structure and lexis, was once considered nearly impossible. Through repeated experience of a good number of interpreters stationed in the U.S. in this period, simultaneous interpreting between the two languages proved to be possible. During the early 60s, official conferences were also held in the U.S. with simultaneous interpreting, such as the U.S.-Japan Meetings of Economic Ministers, the North-Pacific Fishery Conferences and the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural Exchange, and it was mostly interpreters like us stationed in the U.S. who provided interpreting. The productivity program (a part of the U.S. economic assistance to Japan) having come to a close, many of the interpreters stationed in Washington started to return to Japan. Thus the situation was ripe for the birth and vigorous development of the interpreting profession in this country.

2.2 Setting up of language services agencies

Many of the interpreters who had returned from the U.S. in the early and mid-60s went back to their previous job, but some of them who remained free were often asked to work as interpreters for international meetings. After the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, an increasing number of international meetings began to be held in Japan. Most of them were with the United States, but dialogues with international organizations such as OECD were also included, and they needed reliable interpreters. There were very few people who had credible experience in interpreting in those days, so former productivity interpreters were the natural candidates, and they found themselves quite busy responding to the requests from various sectors including governmental agencies.

Anticipating increasing demand for interpreters, Muramatsu and Kunihiro who were stationed in Washington in the late 50s and early 60s as members of the group of productivity program interpreters and four other colleagues, including the

author, decided to start a company to provide interpreting services. It was incorporated in 1965 and named Simul International, Inc. The name “Simul,” of course, was taken from “simultaneous.” It was not the first language services company in this country. ISS, Inc. had been founded a little earlier. It started as an agency with offices placed in major hotels in Tokyo to provide business interpreting and tourist assistance and expanded into broader language service areas including translation.

Simul International was successful as a business venture from the start because the agency knew what was needed for reliable interpreting and most of the interpreters they dispatched had enough experience. It accepted requests from clients not as individual interpreters but as an organization which then selected interpreters and dispatched them. Clients liked this mode of business because it meant more reliable transaction and simpler financial settlements. This has become the accepted norm in interpreting and translation business in this country since then. You could say it fit the business culture of Japan, which had been traditionally group-oriented. Now, more than 80% of transactions involving interpreters go through agencies like Simul International. Most of professional interpreters are registered with agencies and dispatched by them to meetings organized by clients.

Some of the unique practices that have been the norm in the interpreting market in Japan since then originated during this period. Simul set the interpreting fee at 30,000 yen a day. They took it from the then-going rate in the United States (exchange rate at the time was 360 yen to a dollar). This rate surprised the general public but was generally accepted by the market, which needed reliable interpreting for increasing number of international meetings. But when the rate was applied to young, inexperienced interpreters, very often recent university graduates, the market found it hard to go along with. So Simul proposed a reduced rate for interpreters with less experience at two-thirds of the full daily rate. This was against the rule set by AIIC at that time, but seemed to be more acceptable for clients here. This opened the way for the classification system for interpreters, another norm in the Japanese interpreting market. Those young, less-experienced interpreters were ranked Class B and remunerated accordingly. Later, Class C was added below B, with the daily rate two-thirds of that applied to Class B. Class C interpreters are generally considered to be still under training.

Another feature of the Japanese interpreting market that is now considered standard is a half-day rate. It was set at two-thirds of the full-day rate, and it was also introduced by Simul in response to the clients’ request. This was also against the rule of AIIC., i.e., “any fraction of a day counts as a day,” but seemed more appropriate in this country.

Other language services companies sprung up after ISS and Simul. Inter-Osaka (now renamed Inter-Group Corp.) and Japan Convention Services, Inc. (JCS) in the late 60s, and Congres Corp. and many others in the 70s and later. Many of them, as the name JCS suggests, are also in the business of providing organizing services for congresses, conventions and exhibitions.

Inter-Group, ISS, and Simul also run interpreter training institutions. Simul, just after it started, enlisted students and recent graduates of International

Christian University (more in Section 3) to supplement the pool of veteran interpreters, but found it difficult to meet increasing demand from the market. So it established Simul Academy in 1972 by transforming internal training sessions into a formal, school-like organization to develop and strengthen its own interpreter resources. The situation with Inter-Group and ISS was more or less the same. Since their training programs were closely linked to the market, they turned out to be effective vehicles to produce interpreters. Section 4 will discuss this in greater detail.

2.3 *First generation interpreters – talented L2 speakers*

In Section 2.1, the author looked back on how he learned English and became an interpreter and in that process referred to his experience of working as an interpreter for the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. That was his first experience as a conference interpreter, and he received practically no training before working for the Anti-Atom Conference. He simply applied to the work of interpreting the linguistic ability which he acquired through formal school education, and then acquired basic interpreting skills by practicing it and by observing and imitating his colleagues at work in the meetings. This is more or less the same with other interpreters who worked for the said conference, like H. Fukui, T. Asano and M. Mitsunobu. They were all university students at the time and had no previous experience of living abroad for any extended period of time.

All of the three people mentioned above later became university professors, but Asano and Mitsunobu worked frequently as interpreters on the side. They worked for many important international meetings in the 60s through the 80s. These people, including the author, belong to the so-called “Anti-Atom Group,” among the first-generation interpreters in this country. One notable thing is that Fukui and Asano wrote the first book on interpreting in Japan. It is *Eigo Tsuyaku no Jissai* (An English Interpreters’ Manual) published by Kenkyu-sha in 1961. In that book, they emphasized the importance of knowledge in understanding and stressed the need for anticipation. They also pointed out the differences in linguistic structure between Japanese and English and proposed the notion of “re-structuring” so that we could produce natural English in our interpreting.

The second group among the first-generation interpreters is so-called “Productivity Group,” those who worked in the U.S. under the productivity program, as mentioned in 2.1. It includes people like Muramatsu, Kunihiro, Yanagi, and Tsuboi and others, including the author. They had varied backgrounds before working as interpreters. Some had worked for the GHQ (General Headquarters for Occupying Forces) or the U.S. Embassy. What is common among them was that they also acquired English through formal school education and self-study. In other words, they were speakers of English as a foreign language. This makes a good contrast with interpreters who worked for the Far East Military Tribunal. They, like Shimanouchi, Oka and Taji, were raised and educated in an English-speaking country and spoke English as a native language.

Another characteristic with the productivity group people was that they had not received interpreter training to speak of either. Kunihiro, who was one of the outstanding interpreters in the post-war period, called himself “a self-trained carpenter.” What made it possible for them to become conference interpreters in spite of the unconventional (contrary to traditionally accepted view about needed background for professional interpreters) background as mentioned above? We could say, for one, that they had aptitude; many of them were talented people not just in language but in general intelligence. Another factor would be that all of them were keenly interested in other cultures. They also had a lot of opportunities to practice interpreting on the job. Practice makes perfect, as they say. Experience on the job might be the most important ingredient of interpreter training, particularly when candidates had reasonably good aptitude. The experiences of these first-generation interpreters who succeeded in becoming remarkable conference interpreters without receiving any interpreter training to speak of is the subject that should be further explored and studied.

It should also be noted that many of these first-generation interpreters, like Asano, Mitsunobu, Muramatsu and Kunihiro, were quite skillful in interpreting into English, which was the second language for them. They did not hesitate to go into L2 even in simultaneous mode. This may have been because of their knowledge of the subjects dealt with in the meetings and their excellent analytical skills. Lack of proficiency inherent in L2 speakers did not seem to hamper them much. This is again contrary to the traditional view generally held in Europe that interpreters should interpret into their L1 or A Language in AIIC classification, particularly in simultaneous interpreting (Herbert, 1952; Seleskovitch, 1968; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1989). In spite of substantial differences in structure and vocabulary that exist between English and Japanese, these first-generation interpreters were able to overcome this handicap. This area should also be further explored.

3 Second generation – International Christian University

3.1 Interpreting class at ICU

The second-generation interpreters in Japan are also unconventional group of people. They are the graduates of International Christian University (ICU), a relatively new private university in Tokyo. ICU is one of the first universities here to have an interpreter-related program in its curriculum. It was set up in 1964 and led by Dr. Mitsuko Saito, a specialist of cross-cultural communication. It was a once a week class and attracted a good number of students because of newly aroused interest among young people in interpreting as a result of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

The program was composed of shadowing (then known as “repeat,” a novel exercise in those days), vocabulary-building exercise using English newspapers and limited simultaneous practice with the material used in shadowing. There was little consecutive interpreting practice, which should have been the basic interpreter training method in any program. Dr. Saito, an outstanding scholar, teacher and pioneer in interpreter training in this country, had little experience

in interpreting. It was a rather primitive and limited program even at the undergraduate level. Out of this program, however, came out a fairly large number of professional interpreters, many of whom have been playing a leading role in the interpreting scene in this country from the 70s up to now.

3.2 *Why the success?*

The author could identify three factors behind it; the charismatic leader, talented students and favorable environment. Dr. Saito was an eager and dedicated teacher. She demanded loyalty from the students and occasionally dispensed favor to the faithful and the hard-working. She and her students formed a close-knit group, and she emphasized an importance of teamwork. This encouraged her students to try harder, if only to please their teacher.

One of the contributions she made to interpreting was the introduction of so-called “*futari* (two-person) system,” or the pair method. According to this method, two interpreters working in an interpreter’s booth should actively help each other. One who is not interpreting at the moment should help the other by writing down numbers and names, technical terms or any expression that her partner would find difficulty with, so that the working one could pick them up in her interpreting. For this system to work smoothly, two in the same booth should work with one mind. Quality of performance coming out of the booth would be regarded the joint product of the two. This approach was not much appreciated by the colleagues in Europe and the U.S. They said it would undermine the concentration of the working interpreter and give little rest to the non-working partner. But there are quite a few who support it in Japan. The author for one encourages participants in his class in Simul Academy to practice it in the booth because it is no doubt difficult to pick up numbers and names in simultaneous interpreting, and the pair system would help alleviate the difficulty.

The second factor is the quality of the students. ICU was established by Presbyterians in 1953 in accordance with the liberal arts tradition of the United States. It had emphasis upon international education, and most of the classes in the first two years were conducted in English. Students in general were talented and had relatively high English proficiency. It was those students who enrolled in Dr. Saito’s interpreting program. The author had many opportunities of working in the same meetings with students and recent graduates of Dr. Saito’s class, and found them smart and dedicated. People like Nagai, Ejiri, Yonekura and Morita (and the late Yokota, who often worked for important government meetings) studied interpreting in this ICU program and have played a leading role since 1970s. They are still very active in the interpreting scene in this country. Kondo, a long-serving conference interpreter and one of the founding members of JAITS (the Japan Association for Interpreting and Translation Studies), is also a graduate of ICU.

Atmosphere surrounding them was also favorable. The Tokyo Olympics held in 1964 was a historic event, and its success catapulted Japan onto the international stage and into the era of rapid economic growth. Many of the students in the ICU’s interpreting program worked in the Olympics as escorts and junior interpreters.

They saw in interpreting a promising and exciting career opportunity which, in other areas such as business, was not available to women in those days. In the opinion polls taken among college students in the early 70s, interpreting often was voted number 1 or 2 (particularly among female students) as an attractive career choice. Members of the first-generation interpreters were all men. Government agencies and major companies in those days often refused to take female interpreters saying their meetings were too important for women to work in. Now, they more than welcome female interpreters.

3.3 *Close ties with Simul International*

Simul in its early period depended for interpreting resources on people who belonged to the first-generation interpreters as mentioned previously. It soon found themselves short-handed and sought tie with ICU and Dr. Saito. As a result, some of better students in her class and recent graduates were given opportunities to work as practicing interpreters in international meetings. They were taken in as junior members in the same team with much more experienced interpreters like Muramatsu, Kunihiro, Asano and the author often in the same booth. This must have given them valuable opportunities to learn interpreting skills.

Simul from its beginning put emphasis upon training of young interpreting and tried its best to obtain understanding of the clients (though this has become more difficult in recent years). Young interpreters fresh out of ICU were thus able to gain needed skills and experience on the job while directly learning from senior interpreters, and develop themselves even in their 20s or early 30s into independent and full-fledged professionals.

It is true that this was only possible because interpreting profession as well as its market were in its inception in those days. More recently, when competition is fiercer and the profession is rather well established, those who aspire to be interpreters have to get training for a few years at least and spend several years working as trainee interpreters (Class C, see Section 2.2) before being recognized as full-fledged professionals. Yet personal potentials (most of ICU graduates were also L2 speakers of English) and gaining practical on-the-job experience in their early career are once again proved important contributing factors. The author is more than fully aware of the importance of interpreting theories and training for producing better interpreters and for the further development of the profession. The experience of the second-generation interpreters, however, gives us some thought about how interpreters could be fostered and trained.

4 Interpreter training by agencies

4.1 *Agencies as service providers and training institutions*

Working through the agencies that provided such services as interpreting and translation has been an accepted way of doing business in language services market since the time of its inception. Government agencies, major business organizations

such as *Keidanren* (the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations) and the Chambers of Commerce, which made up the core clients in the early period, preferred working through agencies rather than directly with individual interpreters. Delivery of services was guaranteed by agencies, and responsibility for the quality of services was primarily assumed by agencies. This meant that it was much easier and simpler for clients to work through them.

Simul International, established in 1965 as one of the first interpreting agencies in this country, was founded by a group of interpreters, and its top management had been themselves interpreters up until the late 1990s. This is why the company enjoyed the support of the clients from the start. The management knew well about interpreting and has consistently put emphasis upon the quality of services and training of young interpreters. Another agency run essentially by interpreters was Lingua Bank. It was founded in the mid-70s by a group of interpreters who left the umbrella of Simul. Most of them were ICU graduates. Founders constituted the main workforce for the company, and although much smaller in size than Simul, it was also able to receive the support of many clients.

Other agencies were founded by businesspeople and essentially run with business-based orientation. ISS, founded a little ahead of Simul, started its business by providing escort, interpreting and translation services for the clients staying in major hotels in Tokyo. JCS, founded in 1967 had put emphasis upon conference organizing while continuing to provide interpreting and translation services. Inter-Group was the leading agency in the Kansai area, or Western Japan, founded in 1966 after the model of Simul International. Another major conference organizing agency is Congres, founded in Osaka in 1990 by a former top management member of JCS. On top of these, there have been several small-sized language-services and/or congress organizing agencies. It was relatively easy to start one.

Simul had so-called "study sessions" from its early days where senior interpreters led a discussion on how to improve skills since the time when Simul was a mixed body of experienced middle-aged interpreters and young people fresh out of college. It began to face shortage of interpreting resources as it expanded its business, and eventually converted its study sessions to a division, a school-like institution to foster and train interpreters under the name of Simul Academy in 1972. On top of interpreting program, it also had classes to teach English to reinforce English proficiency. French and Chinese interpreter training as well as language programs were added in the mid- to the late 70s.

Other agencies mentioned above, except JCS, also have had interpreter training divisions. ISS was the first one that started it in 1966. Inter-Group's Inter School was also founded in 1966 in Osaka. It has had Chinese, French, Spanish and Korean programs in addition to English, with a dual objective of interpreter training and acquisition and development of language competence. Inter-Group put considerable emphasis on this division connecting it to its active personnel dispatching services. To these should be added the International Training Center affiliated with NHK Global Media Services, Inc. NHK is a gigantic national broadcasting corporation, like BBC in the U.K. It broadcasts a wide range of

programs taken from those produced by foreign TV networks by interpreting and translating their contents into Japanese. The International Training Center started as a body to train interpreters for NHK’s program, but it has also functioned as training program for interpreters and translators in general competing with other agencies.

With a plethora of interpreter training bodies run by agencies including a subsidiary of NHK as mentioned above, fostering and training interpreters in this country has been solidly in the hands of private agencies. The history of interpreter training in Japan is just as old as the agencies themselves, and it has been closely linked with the provision of interpreting services by them. And that has been the strength of their programs. Since the agencies know the market and its need well, they have been able to have it reflected in their programs. Participants in the programs could also get information about what is happening in the market, and those who show good potential could expect to start as interpreters with a mediation by the agencies. This provides great motivation for students. Most of the teaching staff have been selected out of working interpreters. Often they work as interpreters in the international meetings during the day and teach in the class in the evening. These are the factors that similar programs in the universities (Section 5) find it hard to emulate and yet are essential for the success of such programs.

The author conducted a survey in 2004 on the background of working interpreters registered with Simul (N=242, Class A and B only). The main areas explored were: (1) institutions where they received training before becoming conference interpreters and (2) the experience of living in English speaking countries. The results are shown in Table 1.1 below.

A more recent survey conducted in 2014 focused only on training background also showed a similar trend: Out of the total of 354 from among those registered with Simul, 291 (82%) received training in agency-run institutions. It should be noted that interpreting-related programs became popular in Japanese universities particularly after late 1990s, and as of 2005, there were at least 105 universities that offered interpreting courses as part of their English language curriculum (Someya et al., 2005).

Table 1.1 Background survey of working interpreters at Simul

Total number of subjects	242
Received training in institutions run by agency	205 (85%)
Received training in universities	33 ¹
No training	4
Returnees ²	68
No experience of living abroad	75

1 Of which 24 are at ICU and five at Sophia. Many of those who received training at ICU were graduates of the year 1970 or before.

2 Defined as those who spent more than three consecutive years before the age of 15 in English-speaking countries

4.2 Interpreter training at Simul Academy

4.2.1 Experienced interpreters served as trainers

Both Muramatsu, then the president of Simul, and the author, a senior management member, were deeply involved in the planning and the establishment of Simul Academy. They also served as instructors, the latter as its principal instructor from the beginning up to now. They took it for granted that interpreter trainers should be experienced interpreters and invited as regular instructors such well-known interpreters as Nishiyama, Matsuo, Tominaga and Yokota. They were working interpreters, very much active, and not English teachers. They taught based upon their own experience as interpreters, and that was the main attraction of the program at the Academy.

4.2.2 Pragmatic and job-oriented curriculum

It naturally followed from the above that the curriculum adopted at Simul Academy was very pragmatic and job-oriented. No theory on interpreting existed or at least was known in those days. Jean Herbert was invited to Tokyo in 1967 by the Convention Promotion Bureau affiliated with the Ministry of Transport to teach how to train interpreters. His lectures were quite inspiring and effective, but his approach was very pragmatic. What he taught was a method to divide a text, a page and a half or two pages long, into so many sections according to the main points and logical development of the source text and then to make summary of each section. This was a valuable lesson and gave us a very good hint about how to approach interpreter training. The role Herbert played at the early period of interpreter training in this country has been well recognized and appreciated.

The basic approach followed at Simul Academy was also a practical one, essentially “sink or swim.” We played sections from a recorded speeches taken from actual international meetings and symposiums and let students interpret them (either E into J, or J into E). The instructor corrected or improved on the students’ output. Opinions and suggestions were sought from among the students. Then the instructor showed his/her own version, though not necessarily an exemplary one. This would serve as a good model for students to follow. Let the students do it, correct and show them how – that has been the essential approach.

Consecutive interpreting has always been the core of the curriculum. In contrast to the situation in Europe, consecutive interpreting makes up close to 50% of the entire interpreting assignments in this country. This reflects the fact that most of the meetings that require interpreting in Japan are bilingual (Japanese and another language, mainly English) and that multilingual meetings comprise less than 10% of the market. Thence arise the need and the importance of consecutive interpreting. Simultaneous training was provided at the class at the most advanced level after making sure that the students had acquired basic skills of consecutive and were considered ready to go into simultaneous mode.

Particular attention is paid to notetaking in the training of consecutive at Simul Academy. Trainees are told to apply full concentration during the process of notetaking