

## **Sight translation: A visual and cognitive perception for hybrid communicative purposes.**

**Traduction à vue: Une perception visuelle et cognitive pour des fins communicatives hybrides**

**Dr/ Nawel Medjahd<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Translation Institute, University of Oran1, [medjahdinawel@yahoo.fr](mailto:medjahdinawel@yahoo.fr)

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**Abstract:** Sight translation is communicative mixture between translation and interpreting, it aims to reconstitute a written meaning into an oral form in the target language. This act is a result of a long chain of cerebral and cognitive instantaneous operations especially visual perception considered as a substantial element for the success of the following mental operation which is silent reading that aims to capture source text meaning, its reformulation and its delivery in the target language.

**Keywords:** Sight translation- Visual perception- Silent reading – reader /Interpreter – Hybrid communication.

**Résumé :**La traduction à vue est un mélange communicatif entre la traduction et l'interprétation, visant à restituer un sens écrit à autre sous une forme orale dans une langue cible .cet acte se produit suite une longue chaine d'opérations cérébrales et cognitives instantanées dont la perception visuelle considérée comme élément substantiel pour la réussite d'une autre opération mentale qui est la lecture silencieuse accompagnée de plusieurs techniques ayant comme seule finalité l'assimilation du sens du texte source, sa reformulation et sa délivrance en langue cible .

**Mots clés :** Traduction à vue- perception visuelle –lecture silencieuse – lecteur / interprète - communication hybride.

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*Corresponding author : Medjahdi Nawel*

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

It is agreed among interpreting and translation community that sight translation is an important hybrid mode and a beneficial pedagogical tool for languages learners and interpreters and translation trainees.

Considering its intermediate place between interpreting and written translation, its dual mode has generated a large number of names or terms to define the same concept we cite as example: Sight translation, tempore translation, translation insight, simultaneous interpreting with text, sight interpretation ...etc. Its specific characteristics show its particularity mainly its reception conditions, attention shared between visual input and oral output, considerable time delay between source language production and oral product of a written material without any allowance for time preparation.

Thereby, we focus in the present article on the following initial problematic question that constitutes the essence of sight translation practice by exposing its particular features as well as the main translation strategies adopted by the interpreter to overcome linguistic, cognitive and communicative obstacles to fulfill a successful sight translation. This fact requires high linguistic, cultural and thematic competences in the source and target languages that help the interpreter to ensure the transfer of an hybrid message by adopting several cerebral processes which are in need of a high capacity of concentration, attention and coordination between visual information and its mental rewording using long and short memory additionally to discursive, textual, linguistic, strategic and communicative competences.

## **2. Sight translation technique as a particular communicative mode**

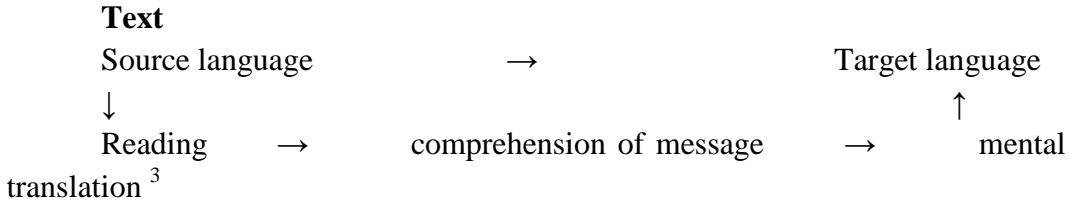
### **2.1 Sight translation process**

Sight translation is a technique which relays on the written text transfer to an oral speech considering the conditions of the two different communicative situations. It is situated in the borders that separate the written translation and interpreting. It:” involves the transposition of a text written in one language into a text delivered orally in other language, since both oral and visual information processes are required; sight translation could be defined as a specific type of written translation as well as a variant of oral interpretation”.<sup>1</sup>

The immediacy operation reveals a meeting point between the interpreter reception of the source text and its delivery in the target language in accordance with the writing rules as well as the conditions of oral speech that constitute a

challenge , for it requires a double effort by the interpreter , that represents a thesis defended by “Giles “<sup>2</sup>who proposes his effort model in 1995 based on reading and analysis effort + effort of speech production , he also emphasizes on the memorization effort which is quite different from the effort reserved to the simultaneous interpreting .

Whereas “Pratt “suggests his model described as follows:



These basis including visual perception, message comprehension, mental translation and oral production set rigorously up the text trajectory, object of sight translation. it is a particular technique that requires an ability to translate a text in an allotted time, to produce fluent speech without hesitation, to render a coherent text and to speak, react in public using different postures and voice changes in order to perform the communicative mission, its:” apparent easiness compared with simultaneous or consecutive interpreting is insupportable ... the visual anchorage is rather a hindrance than a facilitating factor.”<sup>4</sup> This achievement demands a high performance, a double effort and special competences to juggle between the written text and the oral speech, a push-pull imposed by written information tide mentally reformulated and orally delivered:” as the interpreter is uttering the TL version of one segment of SL document, she is also reading ahead in the document, analysing the contents and preparing what she will say next. The mind is working on two channels at once and this requires a great deal of agility and flexibility”.<sup>5</sup>The fulfillment of such finality undoubtedly follows a cerebral and cognitive circuit producing an oral message.

Based on these notions , we describe one of the fundamental tenets of the sight translation particularity which is silent reading that represents the first step towards the source text meaning , it is ruled by a process of analysis , criticism , assimilation , perception and an objective and faithful reconstruction of considerable cognitive and mental competences such as the brain function and its activity in view of a complex and simultaneous hybridity .

Thereby, the interpreter is a particular reader who chooses his strategies to positively achieve the proposed meaning in the source text. Such intervention

requires considerable cognitive baggage, high intelligence and continuous and permanent mental activity in order to fill the gap and assimilate the unsaid through anticipation, expectation : "... reasoning , analysis , indices collection and experiences availability ." <sup>6</sup> All these elements bring explicitly out the importance and the efficiency of the silent reading plus other mental operations that are present throughout the sight translation act.

Out of the silent reading concept, we can assess the visual perception and its impact on the success or the failure of meaning capture.

All advanced works and their findings on cognitive sciences , experimental psychology and neurological psychology illustrates the entanglement of silent reading process considering that the responsible zone of this operation is the brain; they concluded that the examining of the superior part of the circuit using magnetic resonance imaging ( RMI) reveals the existence of well-defined zones which are Broca and Wernicke areas in the frontal cortex that are responsible of letters and words identification as well as the storage and memorization in form of meaning unities .

This ingenuity reflects a group of work, exchange and interaction between different cerebral zones. At first, word reading starts in the primary visual zone then it is sent to angular circumvolution after a fusion process of temporal lobe and parietal lobe in order to be identified and transferred to Wernicke zone to assure the word harmonization in its auditive form , then it takes its syntactic structure to be ready to be conceived in the Broca zone, which proves the rigorous and meticulous work of the biggest hemisphere considered as the orchestra leader of a delicate operations chain that does not support any flaws or inattention :” The right hemisphere plays a role in language processing focused on its high-level role in processing pragmatic information ... it has been heavily implicated in vocal identity processing whereas the left hemisphere deepens the word recognition and helps the left one to be more rigorous .” <sup>7</sup>

It is obvious to emphasis on the mental zone activity which is responsible of reading as well as the crucial role, often overlooked, of sight area that is the eye qualified as a permanent camera that captures images and sends them to the brain in order to carry on its long path described above.

In fact , this process implies the visual perception concept which is : “ an implicit learning result , of all visual experiences storage since our first sight ... it is a neuronal activities interpretation of our visual system and an interpretation of our environment .”<sup>8</sup>

In other words , the visual perception is an interpretation that permits the reader to pose a sense on each word or image towards a past visual conception experiences , as consequence the eye has an undeniable importance regarding the complexity of the conception participants , it is the first organ that assures the outbreak of fused steps series to capture any message in the form of a light reflection or a ray from the cornea to retina which is defined as : “ a sensorial tissue transforming the light flux into a neural influx .”<sup>9</sup>

This transformation illustrates the effort made by the interpreter during his/her mission especially the sight translation that represents a process of various cerebral and cognitive mechanism which are linked during the silent reading act , this later causes a polarity of behaviors and movements exerted by the reader / Interpreter who multiplies tugs , saccades , regressions and pauses which have an important impact on his / her mission success .

## **2.2 visual conception and eye movement:**

The first obstacle that encounters the reader / Interpreter lies on her/ his visual conception that determines his / her eye movements that displace , systematically , along the text from the left to the right and vice versa depending on the source text, this visual activity determines his / her rapidity or his slowness towards a fixation points that represent the movements where the eye position remains relatively immovable from one hand , it can be measured by an electro oscillo-graphic that reveals each fixation point fixation can be between  $1/4S$  and  $1/40 S$  which explains the reader incapacity to read at the same time all the text lines , then he / she proceeds to these captured lines fragmentation by retina and transmits them towards the visual nerve to the brain which , in its turn , determines its significance : these movements are called saccades .

In this case, the words identification cannot be carried out far from their fixation points, the information extraction is therefore based on anticipation and anterior treatment which facilitates, with success, eye movement orientation and sense

detection that evokes the perceptive chunking concept during the silent reading process as well as visual sampling producing frequent neural oscillations, proof of a particular cognitive performances well recommended, for the reader/Interpreter.

Likewise, it is important to evoke the perceptive span concept that extends from letters in the left of the fixation point to the fifteenth letter in the its right which elucidates narrowness and smallness of the reading zone. Therefore, all texts containing indices or visual codes as titles and layout as paragraphs that facilitate the reader work require more less visual acuity and perceptive effort that permit a high number of saccades avoiding a maximum number of regressions that slow –down his / her reading rhythm and distract him face to a permanent need to anticipate the text sense.

It is recommended to leave a small: “linguistic distance.”<sup>10</sup> Between the sense units in order to avoid temporal gaps as hesitations or long pauses creating a rapid movement representing a visual behavior of each reader / interpreter, this fact is manifested by horizontal saccades and others inclined ones to move to the next page. It is not advisable, during the sight translation, to make regressions and unnecessary fixations to capture the meaning or to try to remember previous sense units, this fact evokes the text difficulty degrees that implicitly manages the rapidity and the efficacy of each reader to use his /her general culture, previous knowledge activation, referential and linguistic baggage as well as his / her perceptive and conception maturity during the visual comprehension of text words and their mental treatment.

Thereby, we realize that the text form disposed in a form of paragraphs separated by blanks plays a determinant role during the reading process, its representation manner creates an ease and yearning feeling, so the reader / interpreter loses patience to find his text which provides to him an agility and a visual well-being that permit a rapid advancement and a good sense conception. Whereas, a text which is presented under an unique bloc covering the full page in black, can slow the reader / interpreter and will raise a fear and displeasure distancing him completely from the text or pushing him to give it definitively up, so :’he should master meaning unit identification, splitting attention, chunking, anticipation and segmentation.”<sup>11</sup>

From the foregoing, we underline that the success of the reading process depends essentially on his / her eye movement that enables him to go ahead through an hybrid and a complex process.

### **3. Sight translation strategy:**

#### **3.1 Silent reading skills for sight translation:**

On one hand , it appears from a very specialized and practical research that silent reading remains one of the principal pillars of sight translation , in which the interpreter seeks instantly to reformulate the text components by recuperating his linguistic knowledge stored in his memory that constitutes a detailed register of a treated information coordinated and classified according to their type The research of these elements represents an anticipation strategy that depends on his/her global awareness of the text subject , either by using the long term memory or the short one or the visual and cognitive one .This technicity helps him to recognize the read material without taking into account the word numbers or their form. Such reading qualified as singular and distinct act and reflects an individual effort and a high efficiency to adopt an effective strategy that enables the reader /interpreter adapt with the text and its different proposed meanings allowing him to fulfill his /her communicative finality.

On the other hand, the reader / Interpreter, uses during his/her quest of meaning multiple techniques such as scanning, a well recommended method well recommended, during the sight translation: the eye proceeds by horizontal scanning or vertical one or the both , simultaneously, depending on his rapidity and his manner to treat the text to attempt to identify the textual indices.

He starts by the first lines, then, he directly moves his eyes to the end of the text in order to compose the text general idea; he stores it to form a primary and temporal text meaning that will be mentally reformulated: “he may typically settle on the first words that occur to him “<sup>12</sup>before its oral delivery which is a concrete proof of his professionalism and the technique mastering.”

Furthermore , the reader/ interpreter rapidity towards a “ partial or selective reading “<sup>13</sup> permits the assimilation of the general meaning without dealing

with its details , he should be a smart reader , skilled , habile and very positive. His task is : “Analysing text rapidly, producing the meaning rather than a word by word interpretation, rapid conversion of information from one cultural setting (language)to another, public speaking techniques”,<sup>14</sup> In order to serve a receiver who is looking for a message that is a result of a sustainable strategy choice based on the scanning and selection between the essential and the less important , it is a mental presence , a strong concentration , a cognitive ,an effective and a high attention all significantly required during the silent reading process .

In reality, this process can be accompanied with an activation of representation of mental images linked to present or proposed ones in the text, object of sight translation. We can evoke, here, an interior, discrete and implicit dialogue between the reader /interpreter and his text, after a serial of questions / answers, facilitating the meaning comprehension and conception. His /her mission is to reveal the essential and to transfer it into the target language without provoking a short - circuit or a semantic interruption.

This strategy permits a good preparation before the translation start, for it concerns: “essentially the marking of difficult elements to be comprehended or restituted and the eventual handwritten indication of the contextual equivalents among the marking techniques, note the text segmentation by oblique lines permitting to the interpreter to delimit visually the treated units as well as numbering of linguistic structure elements that should be restituted in different order.”<sup>15</sup>

However, the text segmentation allows the concentration on the essential point’s identification by eliminating the additions in a form of explications that can be omitted without changing of the meaning of the original text.

It may be recalled that silent reading is a process of rectification, analysis criticism and reconstruction: its role is productive and aims to pass a message that is ignored, in its source language by the receiver of the target text since:” the translator should understand in order to make his readers understand.”<sup>16</sup> His intervention concerns, at first place, the meaning based on his/her cognitive baggage and his linguistic competences, he should aim accurately and know his



/her playing field and he should not be limited to what is ready and disposed. He is an active element who surpasses himself in each communicative experience.

### **3.2 Instant delivery as last and crucial step :**

From the above, Sight translation is deemed to be a very pertinent technique used by the interpreter without the use of assistance means such as dictionaries, internet ...etc. It is a semi- instantaneous process. Considering the material presence of the text, it becomes a specific exercise of written translation with a distinctive product stating communicative, cerebral and long mechanisms due to a lexical comprehension

Permitting words and linguistic codes recognition and their relation with the text context as well as a syntax comprehension aiming to a simultaneous reformulation into a target language and its delivery in a limpid , correct , fluent and convincing manner. All this reflects an elocution used by the interpreter to achieve his/her aim because the unique issue to carry out this purpose is when:” the interpret can control his/her rhythm of perception, smooth delivery is only possible when she/he starts reformulation while still reading”.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the delivery of such parole depends essentially on an adequate choice of equivalents seconding a pleasant communicative understanding serving different interveners:” should sound as smooth as if the interpreters were merely reading a document written in the target language”. So the delivery is considered as a success pillar of such communication especially sight translation which requires: «a degree of natural surety and flexibility of expression, a performance that surpasses the capacity of grammatically and lexically correct sentence construction.”<sup>18</sup>

This ease should overcome syntactic and lexical borders and focus on emotions control and self-mastery by going beyond any fear or disturbance or any other psychological state.

As a result, this kind of communication called visual one should gather several elements including: regards, facial expressions, signs and others physical movements indicating a high attention and strong concentration in addition to creating a certain coherence between different segments of discourse towards

enhanced discursive quality, which proves a certain:” an esthetic finer and an oratory talent higher than his orators in their respective languages.”<sup>19</sup> This esthetic sense removes the doubt and misunderstanding and concretizes the concept of talented and skilled interpreter who conceives all his/ her mission dimensions, an interpreter who is aware of all current events on different levels: political, economic, religious, scientific, national and international ones.

He is, at the same time, an intervener ,an emitter and a receiver, neutral and able to be adapted to all elements of communication circle in order to pinpoint the communicative need between individuals which concretizes , in fact , the interactive role played by sight translation towards a silent dialogue that links the interpreter to his text delivered explicitly and orally for the service of an hybrid communication almost unparalleled .

#### **4. Conclusion:**

We hope that the present article sheds light on one of most neglected oral technique in interpreting studies that is almost considered as a preparatory exercise to simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, it does not enjoy of an independent place although its constant practice in different domains and levels .

It is a practice that is commonly demanded in the interpreting market considering its low cost and technical advantages.

We aim to present a general conception of practical basis of sight translation illustrating a serial of closely linked cognitive and communicative operations that prove its real and effective role as an autonomous kind of interpreting.

We also emphasize on the need to further researchers on this translation technique in order to investigate how to make it a tool that leads to high performance and enhance the interpreter /trainee awareness as well as his / her strategies and skills acquisition.

We suggest the intensification of studies and researchers to establish rules and theoretical and practical basis of sight translation to clarify ambiguous concepts and to catch –up the delays and the slowness of such studies.

In conclusion , we propose, on didactical side of our reflexion, a methodological learning of sight translation that reflects a collective consciousness, will and efforts to integrate this hybrid technique in the university didactical programs by scheduling regular courses for students to improve their translation /interpreting skills and to help them to be efficient in translation work market .

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