

### *Note 3*

#### *Chapter 1 Speaking*

Public speaking is an important part of training to become an interpreter for several reasons. *First, many people studious enough to have acquired a thorough grasp of two or more working languages tend to be of a somewhat shy and retiring disposition and, when faced with an audience, may freeze up and develop mental blocks. Second, interpretation assignments – especially the better ones – often require interpreters to perform before large audiences of important people, which can be rather intimidating even for those of us who are not especially shy. But stage fright can be overcome by the same method that student actors use: rehearsal. Third, an interpreter, like an actor, a talk-show host or a news announcer, must learn how to use his or her voice.*

In order to understand the kind of language used by public speakers and at international conferences, interpreters should appreciate how it differs from everyday speech.

We use language in our daily lives primarily to communicate information and express feelings. But the main function of language as used by public speakers such as diplomats, officials, and corporate executives, who are usually acting as spokesmen for groups, is advocacy. *A campaign speech by a candidate for office is designed to win the listeners' votes. A speaker praising a public figure is seeking to persuade listeners of that person's merits. An official making a public explanation or apology for an error or embarrassment is trying to persuade the public to forgive and forget. A diplomat making a lengthy policy statement is trying to persuade other diplomats to support her positions by striving to portray her country and its policies in a favorable light.* Even a speaker using expository language to relate facts or report information is often doing so in order to support a particular viewpoint, thesis, or proposal.

Public speakers have usually acquired some proficiency in the art of persuasion, and interpreters must be able to mirror that skill. So, interpreters should strive to be good public speakers. *An important step in becoming an effective public speaker is to learn not only to use one's skill at expository and descriptive speech but also to draw on one's own powers of persuasion.* Enhancing this skill will also help the interpreter to acquire greater confidence and thus overcome stage fright.

#### Exercises

1 Write an imaginary letter to a public official urging that a law be passed to remedy what you consider to be a serious social problem. What arguments would you use? Read the letter aloud as a speech, record it, listen to it at a later

time, and consider what you could have said to make it more convincing.

2 Think of someone you know who would disagree with you about an important question. What arguments could you use to change that person's mind? Suit your arguments to what you know about that person's psychology.

3 (a) Choose a significant event from a newspaper and write a 200- word speech commenting on it. Read out the speech into your tape recorder, then listen to it. Was it convincing? Could the speech be improved by changing your delivery, intonation, organization, or diction (choice of words)? If your speech were a broadcast editorial, would listeners pay attention?

(b) Listen to the speech again. This time, cast yourself in the role of the opponent or "devil's advocate", and write a brief rebuttal speech arguing against what you have just heard.

4 Write a short speech in praise of a public figure whom you admire. Read it out into your tape recorder and listen to it. Would it be convincing to a listener who did not know that public figure?

5 The following statements of opinion on various issues are calculated to be controversial and to spark debate. Choose one of the positions presented and defend that point of view to an imaginary audience of skeptical listeners, first in your mother tongue and then in your other working languages. Then, repeat the exercise, taking the opposite point of view.

6 Use the topics in (5) above for a session of classroom debates, choosing a "pro" and "con" speaker for each topic by random drawing. Conduct at least one debate in each language. Ask students from the audience to summarize the "pro" and "con" statements of each debate in a different language.

7 Choose any one of the propositions offered below and prepare a three-minute speech, to be given in class, arguing either for or against the proposition you have selected. You may use outlines or notes, but your speech should not be written out and read verbatim to the class. Use both logic and emotion to make your points. Maintain eye contact with your audience. After your speech, another student will be called on at random to briefly recapitulate what you have said; another will be called on at random to briefly critique your delivery; then, the rest of the class will be invited to ask you questions about any points in your speech that did not seem clear; finally, anyone in class who wishes to offer a brief rebuttal of your speech will be invited to do so.

(a) The Global Biodiversity Assessment, based on the work of 1500 scientific experts from all over the world, indicates that almost three times as many species became extinct from 1810 to the present (112 species) as between 1600 and 1810 (38 species). But protecting endangered species can hamper economic growth, and a 1995 Harris opinion poll of 1007 adults indicated that only 42% believed that government had struck the right balance between protecting the

- environment and protecting jobs. Once a species is gone, it is gone for good. So, preserving biological diversity is more important than promoting industrial progress and creating jobs, and endangered species should be protected by law against the spread of industry and pollution even if jobs are lost in the process.
- (b) Economic prosperity cannot be sustained unless everyone in the population has access to health care. If private insurance coverage does not provide such access, health care should be made a public service funded by public revenues.
  - (c) Free trade fosters prosperity and understanding by promoting the flow of goods, people, and ideas across borders. Therefore, exerting political pressure on countries by a trade embargo is counterproductive. Economic sanctions should be used only to punish serious violations of international law.
  - (d) Computers are useful tools, but the widespread use of automated word processing programs in schools will eventually make people illiterate, as students will no longer feel any need to learn rules of spelling or grammar.
  - (e) Exploring the far reaches of outer space is a waste of precious resources which could be put to better use alleviating poverty or promoting economic development here on Earth.
  - (f) The city of Portland, Oregon is considering an “anti-panhandling” municipal ordinance which would make it illegal for people to sit on sidewalks, but not to sit at a sidewalk café. This proposal unfairly discriminates against the poor.
  - (g) In order to keep the French language alive, Quebec was right to declare it the official language of the province and to require its use in public spaces and on storefront signs, even if that restricts the rights of those who speak English or other languages.
  - (h) Companies should not be allowed indefinitely to keep off the market any useful invention they have patented, such as a breakthrough drug. If they do not promptly manufacture the invention and make it available for use by the public, the patent should be revoked and awarded to a different company.
  - (i) When armed conflicts cause severe suffering among civilians, the international community should intervene to help even without the consent of the belligerent forces or the governments involved in the conflict.
  - (j) The practice of “warehousing” (keeping dwellings off the market until real-estate prices and rents go up) is anti-competitive. It should be prohibited when housing is in short supply and many are homeless. Landlords who engage in this practice should be fined or required to rent vacant properties at a fair market price.

8 Translate the topics in (7) above into Spanish, French, or your other working languages, and repeat the exercise.

9 In the international fora where interpreters generally work, the fundamental tension is that between international cooperation and national sovereignty. It is important to understand this overarching (often implicit) debate, because it sheds light on speakers’ intent and often renders intelligible positions and

statements that may otherwise not be clear. The following are brief presentations of the arguments for and against “neutrality” or “isolationism”. Prepare a brief speech (two or three minutes) to be given in class, based on one of these two positions. Use any additional arguments or facts you wish. When all class members have spoken, decide by a show of hands which side was more convincingly argued.

The “Unilateralist” Argument A great nation should stand on its own record and assert its own identity in international affairs. More is to be gained by leadership, hard-earned prestige, statesmanship and independent judgment than by alliances. Multilateral diplomacy is a treacherous minefield into which wise leaders should not venture lightly. National security demands that we keep our options open and avoid “entangling alliances”. Many nations, such as Switzerland, have prospered for centuries by maintaining scrupulous neutrality and staying aloof from the world’s quarrels. Why should that prudent attitude be labeled “isolationism” when it is practiced, for example, by the United States?

The “Multilateralist” Argument One of our time’s great poets, the Syrian-born Adonis, has found a simple way of describing the United States and its present foreign policy: “What strikes me about the States is the richness of American society on the one hand and, on the other, the smallness of its foreign policy.”

The struggle in the UN Security Council, when America opposed the International Criminal Court, evoked George Orwell’s novel “Animal Farm,” in which some of the farm’s inhabitants claim that “we are all equal but some are more equal than others.” The compromise reached in the Security Council was based on the fact that an overwhelming majority of the UN member states saw the ICC (International Criminal Court) as a new and vital centerpiece of international law, worth fighting for. How does a superpower wield its power in an interdependent world? Democratic power needs legitimacy. “For us or against us” is not the best way to attract allies and friends. “If you elect the wrong leader” – Salvador Allende in Chile or Yasser Arafat in Palestine – “it will have consequences” is another disturbing line. That kind of gunboat diplomacy leads to bananarepublic democracy. History teaches that cooperation and integration are more successful in achieving positive results than confrontation and unilateralism. Postwar Germany chose to become Gulliverized within European networks and structures. It has even given up the mighty Deutschmark for the sake of the euro and Europe. PostCommunist Russia renounced the ambition of trying to become a superpower. Instead it has chosen integration and cooperation, even with former archenemies within NATO. The United States possesses powers and riches never seen before in the world. But to tackle the global challenges of the 21st century and its new security threats, you need a global strategy and a global network. And only the United Nations can provide the necessary legitimacy and sustainability for worldwide common action.

Fortress Europe, Fortress USA? That is not only an outdated model, it is also hopelessly counterproductive.

The United States is neither a Goliath nor a benign Gulliver, but the essential partner that we want to see, and that we need, in our common quest for global peace, development and democracy. So the United States should think again and let the International Criminal Court prove its worth. It was designed to constrain, prevent, deter and punish the actions of would-be criminals, not of peacekeepers. (Pierre Schori, "What We Need is a Cooperative America", *The International Herald Tribune*, 6 August 2002, p. 6 (excerpt))

10 (a) Read the following argument advocating greater "isolationism" or "unilateralism" by France vis-à-vis Algeria. Evaluate the strength of the argument in light of the conclusions you have reached on this issue in the previous exercise. Does the author use any additional or new arguments that you find persuasive?

Algeria: At Arm's Length "Algeria is France." That was the byword forever repeated by French political leaders – including François Mitterrand, and excepting General de Gaulle – until 1957. Today, in 1995, 38 years later, Algeria is no longer France. And yet, despite independence, despite the massive, and now complete, departure of the French from Algeria, public opinion is still galvanized by Algeria's turmoil: hostage-taking incidents, murders of foreigners on Algerian soil, terrorist attacks in France, acrimonious exchanges and canceled meetings between leaders – all conveying the feeling that Algeria will never find its way out of the tunnel. That deep concern is due to an attitude that has unreasonably outlived its usefulness among certain political and media circles, an attitude which amounts to conferring a unique quality on relations between France and Algeria, making them somehow different from those which normally exist between independent states:

a "special relationship", and a posture of "non-interference". It is mighty Deutschmark for the sake of the euro and Europe. Post Communist Russia renounced the ambition of trying to become a superpower. Instead it has chosen integration and cooperation, even with former archenemies within NATO. The United States possesses powers and riches never seen before in the world. But to tackle the global challenges of the 21st century and its new security threats, you need a global strategy and a global network. And only the United Nations can provide the necessary legitimacy and sustainability for worldwide common action. Fortress Europe, Fortress USA? That is not only an outdated model, it is also hopelessly counterproductive. The United States is neither a Goliath nor a benign Gulliver, but the essential partner that we want to see, and that we need, in our common quest for global peace, development and democracy. So the United States should think again and let the International Criminal Court prove its worth. It was designed to constrain, prevent, deter and punish the actions of

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a “special relationship”, and a posture of “non-interference”. It is the result of keeping permanently alive a climate of political postcolonialism.

There is no other way out of this bind than to look the facts squarely in the eye: Algeria is not France. Algeria and France are two independent countries, different in their history and culture, two countries which have no common borders and no imperialistic designs on each other. When I went to Algiers in 1957, as the first French President to visit an independent Algeria, I was trying to consolidate that normalization, that release from post-colonial feelings of regret and remorse in the wake of the war of independence. The words were followed by events, and our relations did become normal, that is to say good when we were in agreement, as when we launched the North–South dialogue together, and bad when we disagreed, as when the problem of the former Spanish Sahara arose. That is how international affairs are ordinarily conducted, with each acting according to his obligations and interests, without trying to make other people’s decisions for them. . . . Algeria has been governed by the same group of people for 38 years. . . . That group has shown itself incapable of responding to the fundamental needs of Algerians: the desire for a recognized national identity, a halt to runaway population growth, and the need for economic development to stem unemployment, which, by official figures, has

reached 25 per cent! And yet, Algeria did have assets on which to capitalize: good infrastructure, efficient agriculture, and profits flowing in from the two oil shocks. Hence the profound frustration felt by the Algerian people at a government that has failed them. . . . Keeping Algeria's problems at arm's length will not dispel the risk of terrorist incidents, but it will give us a solid basis for fighting them. The unanimity across the political spectrum about fighting terrorism requires a political foundation: France will not intervene in other countries' choices; it is ready, with its European Union partners, to support genuinely democratic developments. And it will steadfastly protect the safety of its citizens at home against any acts conceived abroad. That is the only way to keep the maelstrom from sweeping up two large communities, one French and one foreign, here in France: the French Moslems who came from Algeria, and the Algerians residing in France. (Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *L'Express*, 2 November 1995 (excerpts); translation by James Nolan)

(b) Pretend that you are President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and that you have been asked to record the above opinion piece for the radio.

Read the article aloud and record your reading on your tape recorder. Give your delivery as much conviction as possible, giving the tone and inflections of your voice the proper force and emphasis. Relax and take your time. Think through each sentence before you speak. Do not declaim or use an "artificial voice"; rather, make the most of the positive natural qualities of your own voice. Speak clearly and distinctly, but do not use more volume than necessary. Use the voice you use when you are speaking on the telephone and saying something important to the other party. Play back your recording and listen to it carefully and critically. What could you do with the natural range of your voice that would make it more interesting, more clear, or more pleasant to listen to? Are there any points where your pronunciation is indistinct? Was the pace of your delivery too fast to be clear, or too slow to be interesting?

(c) Make a recording of a news program by your favorite news commentator or announcer on television. Compare it with the recording of your reading of the above article. What does the announcer do with his or her voice that you did not do with yours? Repeat the exercise until you feel the two performances are comparable. There is a temptation, in speaking publicly, to declaim, to speak too loudly, and to "playact". That temptation must be resisted, for using your natural voice is very important. By reducing strain, it will increase your endurance as an interpreter. It will sound more genuine and persuasive. Remember that a simultaneous interpreter works in a soundproof booth, where he or she has no way to reproduce the speaker's gestures or body-language other than with the range and emphasis of his voice, and the only way to do this is by learning how to modulate the natural timber, pitch, and volume of your own voice. Listen to yourself through one ear as you are interpreting. Also remember that by

speaking fairly close to the microphone you can speak much more softly and be heard just as clearly (modern microphones are extremely sensitive). Consider the following description of Gandhi's soft-spoken yet powerful oratorical style by his contemporary, Nehru: this voice was somehow different from all the others. It was quiet and low, and yet it could be heard above the shouting of the multitude; it was soft and gentle, and yet there seemed to be steel hidden away somewhere in it; it was courteous and full of appeal, and yet there was something grim and frightening in it; every word was full of meaning and seemed to carry a deadly earnestness. Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power and the quivering shadow of action.

11 Using the topics in (5) and (7) above drawn by lot, or other timely topics, assign each student in class to give a brief speech extemporaneously and without notes.

## **Chapter 2**

### ***Preparation/Anticipating the Speaker***

*Consistently good performance in conference interpreting depends on sustained mental alertness. An interpreter must maintain attention and concentration through many hours of meetings and absorb the contents of lengthy discussions on many subjects. This means keeping fit, notably by getting enough sleep and following good habits of nutrition and exercise. An interpreter must also adopt an attitude of intellectual modesty and willingness to learn, keeping up with changes in his or her languages as well current events and the related jargon. Interpreters must be able to understand and clearly state a wide range of possible ideas and arguments representing different sides of any issue, even arguments which may seem implausible, or with which they may strongly disagree.*

Gaining familiarity with the subject matter to be discussed at an upcoming assignment is important, and attending a meeting in advance will be especially helpful to get a grasp of procedural rules and terms. Careful observation of speakers' gestures as well as the reactions of listeners, will provide additional clues to the intent behind the words. Knowing the specific themes of a conference in advance and obtaining a copy of the agenda, background documents, list of speakers, and any prepared speeches available can also be very helpful. Many speakers prepare their speeches well in advance of delivery and will gladly give or send a copy to an interpreter who takes the trouble to ask for it. Copies of formal speeches and policy statements by public officials can often be readily obtained from their offices or looked up on their Internet web sites. Sometimes a translation of the speech to be delivered will also be made



available by the speaker or his institution (known among interpreters as “a Van Doren”) and can be read out by the interpreter if the translation is of good quality.

*Yet, despite those elementary precautions, every speech still has its surprises. A speaker may change his or her mind at the last minute, discard or amend prepared remarks, and say something quite unexpected. (Be especially alert to this when the speech is marked “Check Against Delivery”.)* And even an experienced interpreter can be caught off guard by a novel idea, an unusual turn of phrase, a breakthrough in the debate, an eccentric speaker, a spur-of-the-moment argument, an impenetrable accent, a mispronounced key word, a halting delivery, poor sound quality, an obscure reference or acronym, or a deliberately ornate way of saying a perfectly simple thing.

*Overcoming problems of that kind involves a certain amount of intuition. Although an interpreter should avoid wild guesses, it is often possible, relying on the context, to “fill in the blanks” of a statement when an element of it is unclear or indistinctly heard. It can be helpful if one tries, by an effort of imagination, to anticipate what the speaker is likely to say, how he or she is likely to say it, and how it can be made comprehensible to the audience for which one is interpreting.*

## **Exercises**

1 The next time you plan to hear a public figure make a speech on television or radio, write out beforehand a rough outline of your “best guess” about what the speaker is likely to say, based on what you know about the person, the circumstances of the speech, the current issues, and the occasion. Then listen to the actual speech and compare it with your notes to see how close your guesses were.

2 Formulate each of the speeches suggested below in your mind. Then deliver it aloud, to a listener, or to a mirror. If you have trouble, try writing out your speech, or speaking from notes. Time yourself. Finally, record your speech, listen to it, and consider possible improvements in your arguments, diction, and speed and rhythm of delivery.

(a) You are the spokesperson of an environmental group. You have been allowed to address a legislative panel considering a law to ban all plastic beverage containers. You have ten minutes.

(b) Make the same speech as in (a) above, but to an audience of high school students at a symposium on environmental issues.

(c) You are the trade representative of a Central American country at an international conference to promote tourism. In as few words as possible, convince the Air Travel Committee (which is made up mostly of West Indian

delegates) that the whole Caribbean region should take a common stand against rising air fares.

(d) The World Association of Modern Art Museums plans to give a large endowment to the university which best promotes the teaching of fine arts. You have been asked by the Rector to address the association's annual meeting and win the endowment for your school. You have five minutes.

(e) Your country, Catatonia, stands accused of massive human rights violations. The Provisional Head of State of Catatonia, General Cornelius Crunch, has named you Ambassador to the World Assembly. If you do not convince the Assembly to lift economic sanctions against Catatonia this year, General Crunch will be disappointed with you. Persons with whom General Crunch is disappointed have been known to vanish without a trace. You have five minutes to convince an audience of seasoned diplomats from 190 countries that all of the prisoners in Catatonia's jails are common criminals, vagrants, or dangerous subversives. Your voice should not betray nervousness.

(f) Your non-governmental organization, the World League for Animal Rights, has finally gotten its one and only chance to speak to the International Commission on Ocean Resources to argue for a ban on drift-net fishing in order to protect an endangered species of dolphin. A UN Food and Agriculture Organization study indicates that 70% of the world's fish stocks are fully exploited, overexploited, depleted, or slowly recovering. Moreover, you have solid scientific evidence that dolphins have an IQ comparable to that of humans. Unfortunately, half the members of the commission come from countries that are dependent on fishing, who argue that dolphin safe netting practices are sufficient, and the other half come from land-locked countries where dolphins are unfamiliar creatures. The chairman of the Commission is Ambassador Hook from Catatonia, whose navy is using dolphins experimentally to develop new sonar for its nuclear submarine fleet. Without antagonizing your audience, convince them that dolphins are sentient beings and an essential part of the world's biological and genetic heritage. You have five minutes.

(g) After a prolonged constitutional crisis, a separatist movement in southern Catatonia is threatening to declare independence and nationalize all mineral resources in the south. You, Ambassador Hook, have been asked by General Crunch to convince the Global Bank Committee on Resource Development Credits that the situation will soon return to normal and that any suspension of credits to Catatonia would only make things worse. Today's telex from Catatonia reads: "Our diplomats are soldiers in the service of the Nation. Failure is no excuse! Crunch." You have five minutes in which to convince the Committee.

(h) You are the foreign trade minister of Begonia, a small tropical island country that earns all of its foreign exchange by exporting flowers to major cities in the industrialized countries. To reach florists while still fresh, flowers must be shipped by air. The international air-freight cartel is about to adopt a decision doubling air-freight rates. This will bankrupt your country. The only way to prevent it is to convince the assembly of the Global Air Transport Organization that air-freight rates affecting mono-crop-developing island states must be subject to international regulation. But the cartel argues that only deregulation of air-freight rates can save beleaguered airlines from bankruptcy. You have ten minutes in which to refute the cartel’s argument and save Begonia from a recession.

(i) The year is 2070. The Global Standardization Organization has finally decided to promulgate a worldwide standard for electric plugs. If the worldwide standard specifies American-type flat prongs, all of the European manufacturers will have to re-tool. If the worldwide standard specifies European-type round prongs, all of the American manufacturers will have to re-tool. In either case, all manufacturers of electric plug adapters will go out of business.

(i) You are the spokesman for the American manufacturers. In five minutes, convince the GSO assembly that flat prongs are best.

(ii) You are the spokesman for the European manufacturers. In five minutes, convince the GSO assembly that round prongs are best.

(iii) You are the spokesman for the adapter manufacturers. In five minutes, convince the GSO assembly that there is no need to standardize electric plugs.

3 There are times when “words fail”. But an interpreter does not have the luxury to pause, catch her breath, and grope for another word. At such times, one way out is to convey the main thrust of the intended message not through words but through intonation. To sharpen your sense of how your own voice carries different feelings, read out the following “neutral” sentences into your tape recorder, coloring the statement with each of the feelings listed beside it; take a short break, then listen to your performance and consider how well the feeling was conveyed. Keep repeating the exercise until the feeling comes across convincingly.

The cat is on the windowsill.”	angry / satisfied / frustrated /puzzled / skeptical
“The bus is at the corner.”	relieved / annoyed / pleased /despairing
“I have bought the newspaper.”	apologetic / amused / solemn /cheery/ weary
“The bed has been made.”	overjoyed / admonitory / irate /defensive
“The phone is out of order.”	overawed / despondent / emphatic / uncertain

4 Pretend that you are interpreting the following excerpt of a speech and that a number of words have been obscured by bad pronunciation, conference-room noise, or poor sound quality. Read out the speech into your tape recorder and, relying on the context, fill in the gaps in a way that does not distort the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Try your best to complete every sentence. When you have finished your recording, check your performance against the full text of the speech, given in Chapter 11 (pp. 192–212). Were your guesses close enough to the original?

**Mr Ouellet:** It is a great \_\_\_\_\_ to represent Canada here today as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations during this general debate.

**M. Ouellet:** Alors que nous célébrons le cinquantième anniversaire des Nations Unies durant ce débat général, c'est un insigne \_\_\_\_\_ pour moi de représenter le Canada aujourd'hui dans cette enceinte.

Canada has always been among the strongest supporters of the United Nations, not only in word but also in \_\_\_\_\_. In 1945 we were, through Canadian \_\_\_\_\_ Minister Mackenzie King, an original signatory of the United Nations Charter. Ambassador John Humphreys helped \_\_\_\_\_ the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Successive Canadian Ambassadors to the United Nations have distinguished themselves in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Organization, as have countless Canadian negotiators in \_\_\_\_\_ ranging from disarmament to trade to development. In addition, Lester B. Pearson won a \_\_\_\_\_ Peace Prize for his contribution to the success of the United Nations in establishing the first peace-\_\_\_\_\_ operation, in 1956.

Notre pays a toujours été l'un des plus ardents défenseurs de l'ONU, en paroles comme en \_\_\_\_\_. En 1945, le Canada, en la personne du \_\_\_\_\_ Ministre canadien, Mackenzie King, a été l'un des premiers pays signataires de la Charte des Nations Unies. L'Ambassadeur John Humphreys a participé à la \_\_\_\_\_ de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme de l'ONU, en 1948. Les ambassadeurs successifs du Canada auprès de cette organisation se sont distingués dans leur travail au \_\_\_\_\_ de l'Organisation, tout comme l'ont fait d'innombrables négociateurs canadiens dans des \_\_\_\_\_ allant du désarmement au commerce et au développement.

M. Lester B. Pearson, quant à lui, s'est vu décerner le prix \_\_\_\_\_ de la paix pour avoir contribué au succès de la première opération de maintien \_\_\_\_\_ montée par l'ONU en 1956. All these Canadians had a unifying purpose: to promote progress in \_\_\_\_\_ the United Nations Charter, which enshrines the commitment of the people of the United Nations to the \_\_\_\_\_ of humanity. Tous ces Canadiens avaient un objectif commun: promouvoir le progrès en

\_\_\_\_\_ la Charte des Nations Unies, laquelle exprime la volonté des peuples des Nations Unies à s'employer à favoriser \_\_\_\_\_ de l'humanité.

Of course, there have been criticisms of the Organization; many are legitimate and require \_\_\_\_\_. It is clear, however, that the international \_\_\_\_\_ remains committed to the goals of the Charter and to the United Nations as the primary instrument for global problem \_\_\_\_\_.

Bien sûr, l'Organisation a fait l'objet de critiques. Un grand nombre d'entre elles sont fondées et méritent qu'on leur \_\_\_\_\_. Il est clair cependant que la \_\_\_\_\_ internationale demeure résolue à atteindre les buts de la Charte et voit dans l'ONU un excellent instrument pour \_\_\_\_\_ les problèmes mondiaux.

The United Nations deserves our continued support. If we look at the \_\_\_\_\_ of just the last few years, the United Nations has conducted \_\_\_\_\_ peace-keeping operations in Cambodia, Mozambique and Haiti. Thanks to the United Nations, in this decade alone 5 million children will grow up normally, children who would \_\_\_\_\_ have been paralysed by polio. This year the United Nations is \_\_\_\_\_, as it does every year, to ensure a better life for the almost 23 million refugees in the world.

Les Nations Unies méritent que nous continuions de leur accorder notre soutien. Si l'on fait seulement le \_\_\_\_\_ des dernières années, on constate que l'Organisation a mené des opérations de maintien de la paix \_\_\_\_\_ au Cambodge, au Mozambique et en Haïti. Dans cette seule décennie, cinq millions d'enfants grandiront normalement, alors que \_\_\_\_\_ ils auraient été paralysés par la polio. En 1995, l'ONU \_\_\_\_\_ pour offrir à près de 23 millions de réfugiés dans le monde une meilleure vie. (Statement by the Honourable André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, UN General Assembly, Official Records, A/50/PV7)

5 Repeat the above exercise with other speeches (e.g. those presented in Chapter 10, pp. 173–190), as follows. Make a photocopy of the speech. With a black marker, blot out key words in each paragraph of the photocopy. Lay the speech aside overnight. Then, do a sight-translation of the photocopy of the speech trying to “fill in the blanks”, and record your performance. Check yourself against the original.

6 Repeat the exercise again with a new photocopy. This time, blot out the final words of key sentences in each paragraph. When you do the sight-translation, try to finish the sentences in a way that makes sense without altering the main thrust of the sentence. Check yourself against the original. In those cases where you were not able to reconstruct the original meaning intended, consider whether it

would have been better to take an educated guess or to drop the entire sentence rather than risk getting it wrong. This depends on your judgment and on the context in which the sentence appears.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Complex Syntax/Compression**

*When speakers use short, declarative sentences and speak at moderate speed, the interpreter's task is made easier. More complex sentences can also be interpreted without too much difficulty if spoken at moderate speed. However, when speakers use long, complex structures and deliver them at high speed, the interpreter's task is greatly complicated. A lag of a single sentence or phrase can lead to an omission and inability to catch up. This chapter presents several strategies interpreters use to help cope with the combined difficulty of complexity and speed.*

#### Exercises

1 *Complex syntax* In interpreting a speech, especially a fast speech, it is usually a good strategy to “simplify the syntax as you go along”, breaking up any long and convoluted sentences into shorter ones, identifying whole ideas or units of meaning, clarifying the relationship between the sentences (for yourself as well as for the audience), deleting superfluous and/or ambivalent conjunctions, and organizing lists of items by means of parallel constructions. This is particularly true when interpreting into English, because clarity, concision, and parallelism are positive stylistic values in English. There is nothing “elegant” about a complicated run-on sentence in English, especially if the meaning gets muddled because the speaker or the interpreter has lost track of the syntax. It is better to get the meaning – or at least most of it – across even if some “elegant flourishes” are lost in the process.

For example, this sentence appeared in a speech given by a Latin American speaker: (Spanish original): La intensa y permanente actividad desarrollada por el Embajador X durante el ejercicio de su mandato, ha reflejado la importancia del grupo de los 77 como ente coordinador de las posiciones de los países en desarrollo, en la vasta complejidad de temas económicos, sociales, ambientales, **de la** cooperación y asistencia para el desarrollo, así como en el proceso de reforma de las Naciones Unidas en el campo económico y social, que por **su** índole global **son** centro de interés y prioridad de la comunidad mundial y, consecuentemente, objeto de examen permanente en los esfuerzos para mejorar las relaciones económicas de los estados orientándolos hacia el establecimiento de un nuevo orden económico internacional.

(French version): L'activité intense déployée par l'Ambassadeur X pendant la durée de son mandat, reflète l'importance du Groupe des 77 en tant qu'entité coordinatrice des positions des pays en voie de développement, dans le vaste ensemble de questions économiques, sociales, écologiques, de la coopération et de l'assistance au développement, ainsi que dans le processus de réforme des Nations Unies dans le domaine économique et social, qui par sa nature globale constitue le centre d'intérêt et de priorité de la communauté mondiale et, par conséquent, l'objet d'examen constant dans les efforts visant à améliorer les relations économiques des états en les dirigeant vers l'établissement d'un nouvel ordre économique international.

The main problem in interpreting this passage is that some of the key syntactic words (marked in bold) are ambiguous. For example, does the word “son” refer back to “las Naciones Unidas” or to “cooperación y asistencia”? The answer is not clear even when one reads the passage at leisure, much less when one hears it at high speed. Consequently, if we try to interpret this into English as a single sentence, tracking the structure of the original, we are liable to get lost halfway through the sentence and become tongue-tied, end up with a hopelessly confused run-on sentence, or miss whatever comes next while we are struggling to sort out this sentence. On the other hand, if we tackle this long sentence piece by piece, taking each complete unit of meaning as it comes, we are more likely to get at least some of it right. Notice that, although the sentence as a whole is very complex, each of the different ideas it contains is fairly simple and the connections are fairly obvious. In other words, those troublesome ambiguous links are not essential and need not necessarily be translated. If each idea is stated in a separate sentence one at a time, it is fairly clear how they all fit together. (It may also be clear to listeners familiar with the subject even if it is unclear to the interpreter.) Moreover, once you have gotten one idea out of the way, your mind is then free to focus the next idea.

Reduced to its bare essentials, the sentence above contains the following ideas:

- (a) Ambassador X has been very busy.
- (b) He has been very busy co-ordinating the work of the G-77.
- (c) The Group of 77 plays an important role.
- (d) The Group of 77 has positions on many issues.
- (e) Those issues are very important to the international community.
- (f) Those issues are being continuously discussed as part of an effort to establish a new international economic order.
- (g) Those issues include: economic, social, environmental, aid, development, and institutional reform issues.

If, due to the speaker's speed, you managed to interpret all of these ideas except (c), that would be a minor omission, because (c) so obviously flows from the rest that it is almost a superfluous statement of the obvious.

The same applies to idea (d). On the other hand, if the entire sentence and *all* of the ideas got lost or garbled because you were struggling to make sense of the ambiguous syntactic links, that would be a more serious error.

Try to translate the above sentence as a single unit. Next, try to translate it using the "piece by piece" strategy. Then, compare the two translations and ask yourself: (a) Which approach yielded the better result? (b) Which took longer? (c) Which is more complete? (d) Which is more accurate? (e) Which is stylistically superior?

2 In order to improve your skill at using the "piece by piece" strategy with complex structures, try to decide which syntactic cues in the original statement are *logically necessary* and which are not. For example, in "I fell down the stairs and **therefore** have a broken leg" is the word **therefore** logically necessary? Isn't the causal link just as obvious if I say "I fell down the stairs and have a broken leg"? When the logical links between the parts of a complex structure are self-evident from the meaning of the parts, you are only slowing yourself down and running the risk of muddling the message if you try to translate all of them. In this regard, it is important to remember what assumptions you can safely make about the knowledge of your audience and what actually needs to be spelled out for them. If I am interpreting a speech to an audience of professional physicists and I hear "the theory of relativity, **which was formulated by** Einstein", do I need to treat the words **which was formulated by** as a logically necessary syntactic cue? "Einstein's theory of relativity" will do just as well, will save time, and will actually sound less patronizing. On the other hand, I might want to spell it out if the audience consisted of schoolchildren.

Once you have mastered the "piece by piece" strategy, you will sometimes find it easier to interpret complex structures all in one piece, because you will be more accustomed to deciphering the parts of the whole puzzle and how they are supposed to fit together, and better able to supply the necessary syntactic cues in the target language.

3 The following sentences appeared in a statement by a Latin-American speaker. Identify the main idea and the secondary or qualifying ideas in each sentence; then, try to translate them by forming one sentence containing the main idea and separate, short sentences containing the secondary, supporting, or qualifying ideas:

Las restricciones unilaterales y arbitrarias impuestas recientemente a mi país por distintos Estados industrializados, sobre sus exportaciones de banano, flores y productos del mar, son clara muestra de que los esfuerzos nacionales que llevan



adelante los países en desarrollo por diversificar sus exportaciones y fortalecer los sectores más competitivos de sus economías, son insuficientes si se mantiene el actual entorno económico internacional, en especial si no se llevan acciones en favor de un reordenamiento de los mercados internacionales.

Un reordenamiento de la acción de los organismos de Bretton Woods en la provisión de recursos adicionales y estables para los proyectos de desarrollo llevados adelante por los Estados y las agencias especializadas, sobre la base de directrices y políticas acordadas por la comunidad internacional en el ECOSOC, tras las consultas del caso, es una iniciativa que permitiría hacer frente a las exigencias de la magnitud que el momento requiere.

4 (a) The following sentence appeared in a statement by an African delegate: Si, en ce qui concerne le premier aspect des engagements pris dans le cadre de cet important accord, la responsabilité du gouvernement est quasi-exclusive, il n'en va pas de même en ce qui concerne le deuxième aspect.

First, translate the sentence following the original order of phrases. Then, divide it into two sentences, the first beginning with “En ce qui concerne . . .” and the second beginning with “Il n'en va pas de même . . .” Which version is clearer? Was it necessary to translate the word “Si . . .”?

(b) The following sentence is from the same speech:

La situation au Libéria vient de connaître, après une série d'initiatives ayant abouti à la mise en place du nouveau conseil d'état, une évolution positive réelle.

First, translate the sentence following the original order of phrases. Then, translate it again starting with “Après une série . . .” (the longest phrase). Which version is clearer? Notice that, even if the syntactic link “après” is not translated at all, the causal relationship is still quite clear: “A series of initiatives has led to the creation of a new council of state. The situation in Liberia has really changed for the better.”

(c) The following sentence is from the same speech:

Mon pays, qui avait favorablement accueilli la pression militaire exercée sur les Serbes par notre organisation et l'OTAN au mois de Septembre dernier, salue chaleureusement les dernières initiatives de paix, conduites par les Etats Unis d'Amérique, qui tendent vers le retour de la paix dans cette région. First, translate the sentence following the original order of phrases.

Then, translate it again as follows: Delete “qui” (the third word); start a new sentence with “salue” by repeating the subject (“Le Niger” or “Nous”). Are the two translations the same in meaning? Which is clearer?

5 The following passage is from a statement by a Latin-American delegate: Reiteramos la necesidad de establecer al desarrollo alternativo como elemento

prioritario de cualquier enfoque. Dicha estrategia, orientada a prevenir y solucionar los problemas generados por los cultivos ilícitos, propone, no solo la sustitución de cultivos sino que, en esencia, busca la plena incorporación de los grupos sociales involucrados en esta actividad a una economía lícita, a través de planes y programas que pongan en marcha un sistema de desarrollo socio-económico de naturaleza integral, que tenga especialmente en cuenta a los actores centrales del problema, en un marco ambientalmente sustentable y con el apoyo de mercados mundiales, transparentes y menos restrictivos.

(English version): We reiterate the need to establish alternative development as a priority component of any approach. That strategy, geared to preventing and solving the problems created by illicit crops, comprises not only crop substitution but, essentially, pursues the full involvement of the social groups devoted to that activity into a legal economy, through plans and programs that set in motion a system of socio-economic development that is comprehensive in character, which especially takes into account the central actors in the problem, in an environmentally sustainable framework and with the support of transparent and less restrictive world markets.

- (a) In one sentence, state the central theme of the passage.
- (b) Isolate and list separately the distinct ideas in the passage, stating each as concisely as possible.
- (c) Break up the passage into as many simple sentences as possible, making a separate sentence out of any general adverbial clause that can stand alone. (See Chapter 5.)
- (d) Recombine those simple sentences which logically fit together.
- (e) Using the above structural approach, translate the passage into each of your languages.

6 Repeat the previous exercise with the following passages:

Han variado sustancialmente de naturaleza las condiciones que sostienen el difícil tejido de la seguridad internacional. En este escenario de grandes transformaciones es indispensable que la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, si quiere mantenerse fiel a los postulados y principios que le dieron vida, y, en consecuencia constituir un instrumento útil para la paz y el desarrollo armónico del planeta, y no una institución meramente figurativa, emprenda una renovación profunda de sus estructuras a fin de lograr la eficiencia que todos los países del mundo, obviamente, reclaman.

(English version): There has been a substantive change in the nature of the conditions that determine the complex fabric of international security. In this scenario of great changes, if the United Nations wishes to remain faithful to the purposes and principles that presided over its birth and thus constitute a useful instrument of peace and harmonious development for the planet, rather than a

merely symbolic institution, the Organization will undertake a profound renewal of its structures in order to achieve the efficiency that all countries of the world are clearly calling for. (Statement by the President of Peru; translation by James Nolan) Igualmente, y siendo consciente de la necesidad de que nuestros Gobiernos, y también nuestras opiniones públicas, dispongan de la necesaria información sobre los trabajos que se desarrollan en las Naciones Unidas, mi Delegación considera que tanto los servicios de archivo y biblioteca como los bancos de datos de la Organización deben poder ser consultados en todos los idiomas oficiales. (Statement by representative of Spain)

(English version): Also aware of the need for our governments as well as public opinion in our countries to have the necessary information about the work of the United Nations, my delegation believes that archive and library services as well as data banks in our Organization should be available for use in all official languages.

Pido respetuosamente a todas las estimables delegaciones que consideren esta iniciativa que compartimos varios estados miembros y que transmitan a sus respectivas capitales ese deseo de transformar el año 1996 en un año decisivo y trascendental en la lucha contra la pobreza extrema, dando un paso hacia adelante en el cumplimiento de este primer Compromiso de la Cumbre Social y estableciendo, a la vez, según los propios mecanismos de decisión interna, las bases operativas para avanzar, en forma integral y como expresión de un esfuerzo compartido por todas las fuerzas y sectores que integran las respectivas realidades nacionales, hacia el cumplimiento efectivo de los 10 Compromisos de la Cumbre Social.

(English version): I respectfully request distinguished delegations to consider this initiative that several member states share and transmit to their capitals this wish to make 1996 a banner year in the fight against extreme poverty, taking a step forward in the fulfillment of this first Commitment of the Social Summit and, at the same time, in keeping with internal decision-making mechanisms, establishing the operational foundations needed to move ahead, in an integrated fashion and through the joint efforts of all forces and sectors making up the reality of our respective nations, toward the effective fulfillment of the 10 Commitments of the Social Summit.

*7 Ambivalent conjunctions* Ambivalent conjunctions placed at the beginning of a sentence can create problems in interpretation. If the interpreter ascribes the wrong meaning to the conjunction, the interpretation of the rest of the sentence will turn out wrong, and there will usually be no way to correct it because there will not be time.

For example, the word “since” may mean (a) from the time when, or

(b) due to the fact that. How is a Spanish interpreter to know whether to begin his sentence with “Desde que . . .” or “Puesto que . . .”? Rather than take a 50% chance of being wrong, it is better to delete the initial conjunction and insert the needed concept at a later point in the sentence:

- **Since** my government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago, we will not stop supporting it now. = Mi gobierno comenzó a contribuir a este programa hace 20 años; **por consiguiente**, no cesaremos de hacerlo hoy.

- **Since** my government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago, it has scored many successes. = Mi gobierno comenzó a contribuir a este programa hace 20 años; **desde entonces** el programa ha registrado muchos logros.

(a) Translate the following sentences without translating the initial “since”, and dividing them into more than one sentence if it seems desirable for ease or clarity:

- **Since** the Middle East peace process was set in motion by the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, the Republic of Korea has consistently held the view that peace cannot be whole without reconciliation between Israel and Syria, and between Israel and Lebanon.

- **Since** the Thai Government has long supported the Middle East peace process, the termination of the state of war between Jordan and Israel, announced in Washington in July this year, following last year’s historic agreement between Israel and the PLO, gives all of us reason to rejoice.

- **Since** the success of this first meeting, the ASEAN Regional Forum has become a viable forum for the promotion of trust as well as political and security cooperation within the AsiaPacific region.

(b) In the example given above (“Since my government began making contributions . . .”), is the word “since” a *logically necessary* syntactic cue? Would the meaning be sufficiently clear if the ambivalent conjunction were omitted altogether, or replaced by a simple “and”? Consider the following:

- My government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago. We will not stop supporting it now.
- My government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago, and we will not stop supporting it now.

- My government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago. It has scored many successes.

- My government began making contributions to this program 20 years ago, and it has scored many successes.

(c) Is the “since” in the three sentences given in (a) above logically necessary in each case? (d) The French word “si”, which can mean either “if” or “although”, presents a similar problem, which can be tackled by the same strategy.

What other ambivalent conjunctions can you think of in each of your working languages?

8 *Enumerations* A structure that can pose problems in both translation and interpretation is the “shopping list”. The problem arises because the speaker may or may not use parallel construction in rattling off a long list of items, or because not all of the items may be translatable in the same parallel grammatical form, e.g. with verbs, nouns, or gerunds, in the target language. The interpreter struggling to maintain the grammatical parallelism of an enumeration delivered at high speed can easily be thrown off.

It is important to recall that parallelism is only a stylistic requirement and does not necessarily affect meaning. But the fact remains that, at least in English, failure to observe parallelism produces a very awkward sounding result. An item in a list that is not grammatically parallel to the others “sticks out like a sore thumb”, for example:

Our agricultural plan includes several new projects:

- building dams
- increasing arable land area
- to build more grain storage silos
- producing more irrigation equipment.

There are several ways to handle shopping lists. Although the main concern is to make sure you translate all of the items, the translator or interpreter should, ideally, try to preserve parallelism in the target language even if it is missing from the original. This can often be done, especially when the speaker announces in advance that he is about to give a list of items, e.g. “In the next five years my company will shoot for the following seven goals” or “During the Decade to Combat Desertification, my government will introduce the following five programs.” The introductory sentence or “chapeau” should make it clear that what follows is a list of items. Then, the interpreter will have some freedom to maneuver, and can, if possible, maintain parallelism, or, if it is not possible, rephrase the list as necessary. If the parallelism breaks down half-way through the list, the interpreter can (if time permits) repeat the introductory construction or resort to using a new sentence or phrase for each item.

In the following example, notice that there is no dramatic difference in meaning between the various ways of handling a list, so that any of these ways which permits you to keep up with the speaker and cover all of the items mentioned would be acceptable:

Mi gobierno tiene planificadas varias iniciativas para lograr nuestras metas en la esfera de la educación: la formación de más efectivos docentes, la construcción de más escuelas, el suministro de becas adicionales, la ayuda a familias de zonas rurales que carecen de escuelas, la edición de libros escolares económicos, y el mejoramiento de la programación educativa en los canales de televisión.

- My government’s plans for education include: training more teachers, building more schools, providing more scholarships, helping families in rural areas lacking schools, publishing affordable textbooks, and improving educational television programs.
- To improve education, my government plans: to train more teachers, to build more schools, to provide more scholarships, to help families in rural areas lacking schools, to publish affordable textbooks, and to improve educational programs.
- My government’s plans for education include training of more teachers, building of more schools, provision of more scholarships, help to families in rural areas lacking schools, publication of affordable textbooks, and improvement of educational television programs.
- To improve education my government will train more teachers, build more schools, provide more scholarships, help families in rural areas lacking schools, publish affordable textbooks, and improve educational television programs.
- My government’s education plans include more teacher training, more schools construction, more scholarships, helping rural families far from schools, publication of affordable textbooks, and educational television improvement.
- More teacher training, more school construction, more scholarships, help to rural families far from schools, publication of affordable textbooks, better educational television: these are some goals.
- My government’s educational goals include more teacher training, school construction and scholarships, as well as help to rural families far from schools, publication of affordable textbooks, and better educational TV programs.

(a) From the options suggested above, choose the one which most fully respects parallelism. Choose the one which is clearest. Choose the one which is shortest. Which one would you use if the speaker’s delivery was very slow? Which one would you use if his delivery was extremely fast?

(b) Consider the following paragraph, which contains a “surprise”(un-announced) shopping-list of seven items:

En base a esos principios todos los países seremos sujetos activos de la comunidad mundial, capaces de hacer posible el desarrollo sustentable; capitalizar y crear empresas para responder a los desafíos de nuestra época; erradicar el consumo y el tráfico de sustancias nocivas; liberar la humanidad del armamentismo y el peligro atómico; consolidar la estabilidad política y la democracia participativa; respetar la pluralidad cultural y étnica; y crear condiciones reales para que los hombres y las mujeres, ancianos, jóvenes y niños, vivan mejor en un mundo verdaderamente solidario. (Statement by representative of Bolivia)

The English interpreter, who was asked to translate this speech in advance, rendered the shopping list as follows: Based upon those principles all countries will be active members of the world community, capable of making sustainable development possible, of capitalizing and creating enterprises to respond to the challenges of the day, of eradicating consumption and trafficking of harmful substances, of releasing mankind from the arms spiral and nuclear peril, of consolidating political stability and participatory democracy, of respecting cultural and ethnic diversity, and of creating real conditions for all men and women, the elderly, youth, and children, to live in a better world of true solidarity.

However, the list could also be handled by repeating the phrase “we can” for each item, or by starting with “we will be able to . . .” and then repeating the word “to . . .” for each item.

(c) Translate the above passage in each of these two ways, and then compare the result, for clarity and brevity, with the translation above.

(d) Translate the following passage into English or French, or another working language, preserving parallelism, first by means of gerunds, then by means of infinitives:

La acción del estado supone esfuerzos simultáneos en varios frentes a fin de consolidar la nueva imagen social de la mujer, revirtiendo prejuicios subsistentes; incorporandola en la toma de decisiones y promoviendo su participación en los espacios de poder; propiciando la igualdad; brindándoles mayores oportunidades para una mejor calificación educativa destinada a una adecuada y justa inserción en el mercado laboral; eliminando todas las formas de violencia y discriminación contra la mujer; e incorporando los temas que condicionan la situación de la mujer en las políticas públicas a fin de superar su postergación. (Statement by representative of Peru)

(e) Translate the following passage into Spanish or French, or other working languages, preserving parallelism, first by means of gerunds, then by means of infinitives:

The activities of the state imply making efforts on several fronts in order to consolidate the new social image of women, rolling back the remaining prejudices; involving women in decision making and promoting their participation in positions of power; supporting equality; offering greater opportunities for improved educational training designed for an appropriate and just entry to the labor market; eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women; and encompassing topics affecting the status of women under public policies with a view to overcoming their disadvantaged position.

(f) Translate the following shopping list into English or French, or other working languages, by starting with a general statement and then making each and every item into an independent sentence with its own verb:

Los diferentes seguros sociales pueden diferir en algún punto, pero sus elementos principales son:

- financiación mediante cotizaciones, por lo común tanto de los trabajadores como de los empleadores, y a menudo con participación del Estado;
  - afiliación obligatoria;
  - ingreso de cotizaciones en cajas especiales con cargo a las cuales se satisfacen las prestaciones;
  - inversión de los excedentes para obtener mayores ingresos;
  - garantía de las prestaciones sobre la base del historial contributivo personal, independientemente de los recursos económicos (por ejemplo, los ingresos y el patrimonio);
  - cotizaciones y prestaciones muy a menudo proporcionales a los ingresos del afiliado;
  - en general, la financiación de las prestaciones de accidentes del trabajo y enfermedades laborales suele estar únicamente a cargo de los empleadores.
- (ILO, *Seguridad Social*, ILO, Geneva, 1995)

(g) Translate the following passage into English, Spanish, or other working languages, preserving parallelism to the extent possible:

Notification du transit de missiles à portée intermédiaire ou à plus courte portée ou de lanceurs de tels missiles, ou du déplacement de missiles d'entraînement ou de lanceurs d'entraînement pour missiles à portée intermédiaire ou à plus courte portée, au plus tard 48 heures après son achèvement, notamment:

- (i) Le nombre de missiles ou de lanceurs;
- (ii) Le point, la date et l'heure de départ et d'arrivée;
- (iii) Le mode de transport utilisé;
- (iv) L'emplacement et l'heure à cet emplacement au moins une fois tous les quatre jours durant la période de transit. (Treaty on intermediate-range missiles between the US and the USSR of 8 December 1987, *Désarmement*, Vol XI, No. 1, Winter 1987–1988, p. 209 (excerpt))

(h) Translate the following passage into French, Spanish, or other working languages, preserving parallelism to the extent possible:

The ozone layer, a fragile shield which protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun (namely, excess solar UV-B radiations) is being damaged by man-made chemicals released on Earth. The main danger from the weakening of this shield is that it could lead to a rising intensity of the ground level UV-B radiation. This in turn could lead to increased rates of skin cancer and eye cataracts, to stunted agricultural production, and to the possible



disappearance of phytoplankton – organisms which form the base of the marine food chain. The main chemicals involved are CFCs (used in refrigeration, aerosols and as cleaners in many industries), halons (used in fire extinguishers), methyl bromide (used mainly for soil fumigation in agriculture) and some industrial solvents. Because CFCs and other chemicals remain in the atmosphere for decades, the ozone layer will be at its most vulnerable over the next decade. The most important and effective measure included in the Montreal Protocol is the commitment to limit the use of, and to gradually phase out, all of these man-made chemicals (known as ozone depleting substances, or ODSs) . . . Activities expected to take place in countries all over the world as part of the celebration of the second International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer include:

- Honouring industries which are phasing out ODSs, and sharing their experience with others;
- Honouring individual scientists, technologists, media persons and administrators who are assisting in the phase-out of ODSs;
- Broadcasting television and radio programmes related to the protection of the ozone layers;
- Publication of articles on the International Ozone Day in the printed media;
- Organization of scientific and technological conferences, meetings and workshops to discuss the ozone layer . . .;
- Organization of competitions for schools on the awareness of the ozone problem; and
- Involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in these activities. (UNEP News Release 1996/49 (excerpt))

*9 De-verbalization* The first *step in good interpreting is to “get beyond the words”*. *The words are nothing more than a container for the ideas. The interpreter must pour those ideas into a new container: the target language.* A useful term coined by Spanish interpreters to refer to this mental process is *desverbalización*, which might be translated as “deverbalizing” or “de-wording” the speech. Another way of describing this mental process is to say that interpreting a speech involves two translations: first, the words of the original are translated into a mental image; then, the mental image is translated into the words of the target language. So, the accuracy of the translation depends on how accurate a mental image one can form from the original meaning. As Boileau observed:

Ce que l’on conçoit bien s’énonce clairement, Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.

The second step in this three-step process is, in a sense, non-verbal. One way to practice de-verbalizing is to practice going from a verbal mode of communication to a non-verbal mode, or vice versa.

- (a) Close your eyes and form a mental image of what you did this morning. Write out a few brief sentences describing what you did. Then, translate each sentence into a rough sketch on a separate sheet of paper. Then, translate each picture back into the sentence that inspired it, but in a different language.
- (b) From a photo album choose some photos that portray group gatherings or interaction. Try to remember what the people actually did and said to each other on that occasion. Write out a brief narrative, with dialogue, for each photo, on a separate sheet of paper. Then, repeat the exercise, but in a different language.
- (c) Watch a television program in which you know the characters. Wait for a dialogue. Turn off the sound during the dialogue, and try to preserve the image of the situation in your mind's eye. Finish the dialogue in your mind as you think the characters would have finished it.
- (d) The next time you overhear a group of people talking in a public place, try to remember the scene and the dialogue you heard. Later on, write out a narrative of the scene and the dialogue in a different language.
- (e) Choose an interesting news story from a newspaper. Read it carefully and form a mental picture of the people and events reported. Without referring to the original story, recreate a report of your own from your mental picture, in another language, trying to preserve as many details as possible. Later, check your story's completeness and accuracy against the original.

10 *Compression* Human speech can attain speeds of 200 or 300 words per minute and remains comprehensible even at 500 words per minute. Generally, only excited sportscasters or auctioneers reach such a rate of delivery, but many normal speakers do tend to speak very fast in certain situations, e.g. when they have several important points to make and are up against a strict time-limit. At these inordinate speeds, it is important for an interpreter to do everything possible to reduce the number of words and syllables the vocal apparatus must produce. Otherwise, one will fall prey not only to errors of language and meaning but also to errors of articulation or enunciation e.g. confusing two similarly pronounced words, such as “statesmen” and “statements”. When high speed of delivery makes it necessary for an interpreter to resort to short cuts or to “edit” the speech in order to get across the essential elements of the message, certain non-essential items can be deleted, abridged, or treated by short references to what has already been said at full length.

The most obvious candidates for “compression” are the redundant and the obvious. If a speaker repeats the same point several times in the same passage of his speech, the redundant repetitions can be deleted or abridged once the point has been made clear. (However, a **final** repetition at the conclusion of the speech should not be deleted, since it is meant to “round out” or “wrap up” the speech.) Redundant adjectives can also sometimes be compressed with no loss of

meaning, e.g. “justo y equitativo” = just. Similarly, an item in a statement which is a matter of common knowledge or which the interpreter knows is already familiar to the audience may sometimes be sacrificed when the speaker’s speed is such that “something has to go” and there are other ideas in the statement which are more important or relevant.

Second, resorting to abbreviations or acronyms can reduce the number of syllables one has to pronounce at high speed. For example, “The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development” can be reduced to “OECD” (four syllables instead of 20) once the organization has been identified in the speech. In a speech to physicians about the work of General Practitioners, it would be acceptable, once that theme has been made clear, to reduce subsequent references to “doctors” (two syllables instead of seven). Or, in a presentation to an audience of specialists in Obstetrics and Gynecology, once that nine-syllable theme has been mentioned, shortening subsequent references to “Ob-Gyn” (two syllables) would be acceptable. One should make an effort to be familiar with common abbreviations that are widely recognized and save syllables, e.g. SUV (three syllables) for Sports Utility Vehicle (eight syllables).

Where French is concerned, it should be remembered that French tends to use more nouns than English (e.g. “voyageurs à **destination** de Paris” = “travelers to Paris”) and that such recurring “noms d’être” which add nothing to the meaning in English should usually be deleted if they prevent you from keeping up with the speaker.

*Elegant variations* “Elegant variations” and over-abundant illustrations can also be dealt with briefly. When an idea has once been made clear, subsequent (and often wordier) renamings of that idea that are done purely for the sake of variety need not be translated literally, as the style may be sacrificed for the meaning if one or the other must go.

For example, once a speaker’s reference to “los próceres fundadores de la República” has been translated, any subsequent repetitions of “the founding fathers of the republic” could be dealt with as “the founders” (three syllables instead of 14). Similarly, when a speaker, out of mere wordiness, gives a lengthy list of items that are purely illustrative of his main point, some of those items can be safely deleted without distorting his meaning. For example, the phrase “farm livestock, such as cows, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, and so forth . . .” could be safely boiled down to fewer items.

*Anaphoric markers* Anaphoric markers (expressions that point back to what has been said) are another concise way of avoiding repetition.

The two most common anaphoric markers to keep in mind in English are (a) **that** and (b) **the foregoing**, for example: (a) “Depletion of the ozone layer is permitting unusually high levels of ultraviolet light to overheat the atmosphere, melting the icecaps and raising the sea-level. **That** is why small-island states are calling this conference. **That** is why urgent measures are needed. **That** is what I would like to talk about today.” (The anaphoric marker **that** sums up the content of the entire previous sentence and could do so in several subsequent sentences.)

(b) “Failure of the import-substitution strategy to spark industrial growth is leading developing countries to lower barriers to foreign direct investment especially in infrastructure. But that alternative strategy could, over the longer term, lead to a problematic loss of control over national resources. **The foregoing** is at the core of the current debate in Mexico. **The foregoing** is also our main concern at this conference.” (The anaphoric marker **the foregoing** can sum up the contents of several previous sentences, and can be used to do so in several subsequent sentences.) Can you think of other words and expressions, in English or in your other languages, which can serve to sum up or recapitulate what has been said? Are the French words “Ainsi, . . .”, “Donc, . . .”, and “Or, . . .” anaphoric markers? Are the Spanish expressions “Ahora bien, . . .”, “Así pues, . . .”, and “Por ello, . . .” anaphoric markers? These and others are often translatable into English by the word **Accordingly**, . . . How many others can you think of, in each of your working languages?

*Personification* Finally, when interpreting into English, personification of documents or gatherings is another helpful device to save precious syllables and seconds. For example, once the speaker has made it clear that he or she is quoting from or referring to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, wordy phrases such as “Il est prévu dans le Pacte sur les Droits Civils et Politiques que . . .” can be shortened to “The Covenant provides that . . .”; “Le rapport fait figurer dans son annexe . . .” can be shortened to “The report annexes . . .”. Obviously, it is not the document itself that “provides” or “annexes” but this is a natural and often-used form of personification in everyday spoken English (e.g. “today’s paper said that . . .”, “the record shows that . . .” etc.) which rarely causes any confusion. (Personification can also be used with inanimate objects and with meetings or organizations, e.g. “The hospital triage desk stopped each arriving stretcher to check the patient’s identity”; “The chamber of commerce cleaned the streets during the city’s budget crisis.”) Note that another form of personification, “changing the subject”, is also a useful device for interpreting into English the abstract passive constructions that are so often used in French and Spanish. For example, “Queda prohibido en las leyes de mi país, México, enajenar propiedades conteniendo yacimientos de hidrocarburos sin efectuar previamente las solicitudes del caso ante la autoridad competente” can be more easily and quickly interpreted if the

passive construction is turned into an active construction, and one way of doing this is to change the subject (without changing the meaning): “We in Mexico prohibit assignment of lands containing hydrocarbon deposits without first obtaining the required authorizations.”

(a) In each of the following sentences you will find a phrase in brackets containing two highlighted words. Without changing the meaning of the sentences, translate them into English by eliminating one of the two words. Example: A la fin de l'élection, (le **décompte** des **voix**) se fera en séance publique. = At the end of the election, the **tally** will take place at a public meeting

- (El último **año transcurrido**) ha sido crucial para el futuro del Oriente Medio.
- (La **celebración** de las **elecciones**) palestinas deberá conducir al establecimiento de un gobierno democrático.
- La Unión Europea quisiera rendir tributo a (los **esfuerzos emprendidos**) por las partes.
- El Presidente del Consejo de la Unión (**realizó** una **gira**) por la región.
- Acogimos con satisfacción (la **reanudación** de negociaciones) entre Israel y Siria.
- Para que el proceso de paz (**se salde** con **éxito**), es imprescindible que la negociación política esté acompañada de progreso económico.
- Le programme doit être réalisé (dans un **délai** d'une **année**).
- Tout (**projet envisagé**) sera discuté en détail.
- Le monde reconnaît les (**sacrifices consentis**) par ces soldats courageux.
- Le groupe de travail se fera un devoir (d'**effectuer** immédiatement le **démarrage**) de ce programme d'études.
- Tôt ou tard, ce processus (**aboutira** à une **conclusion heureuse**).

• Nous vous prions, Monsieur le Président, de faire connaître à l'assemblée la (**conclusion** à laquelle nous sommes **arrivés**).

(b) Translate the following sentences into English. Where a document is mentioned, attribute the statement to the document itself, e.g. “The Declaration says . . .”.

- Il est prévu dans la constitution de mon pays que l'égalité entre les sexes doit être respectée dans la fonction publique.
- Dans la déclaration que nous avons adoptée l'an dernier, nous avons annoncé le début de la décennie de l'enfance.
- Les peines prévues au code pénal pour ce genre de délit ne sont pas très sévères.
- Queda constancia en las actas de la conferencia que no hubo acuerdo alguno sobre esta cuestión.
- Se ha previsto en la ley laboral que todo trabajador industrial tendrá por lo menos un día de descanso semanal.

- En los libros de historia se ha dicho mil veces que los actos de agresión siempre se castigan.

*Parenthetical phrases* Like general *adverbial clauses* (see Chapter 5), *parenthetical phrases or clauses can usually be moved to another position in the sentence and can often stand on their own. It is therefore* important for an interpreter to be alert to them, since the ability to move part of a sentence to a later position in the sentence helps the interpreter to cope with complexity and speed. In the following example, notice that there are two ways to simplify the syntax of the sentence: first, by deleting a superfluous noun; second, by rephrasing and/or moving the parenthetical phrase in bold type.

We welcome this conference, **the convening of which has long been called for by developing countries**, as a sign of hope for the future.

- *Drop superfluous noun:* We welcome this conference, which has long been called for by developing countries, as a sign of hope for the future.

- *Reword parenthetical phrase:* We welcome this conference (the developing countries have long called for it) as a sign of hope for the future. / We welcome this conference as a sign of hope for the future. The developing countries have long called for it.

(c) Reformulate the following sentences using this approach:

- We cannot tell our farmers, whose hard work on their crops has been destroyed by the drought, that the irrigation project must now be canceled.
- The operation, whose modest beginnings did not foreshadow such success, has achieved all of its goals in record time.
- Les quelques soldats restants, qui croyaient les conflits de la crise surmontés, furent surpris de voir les forces opposantes ouvrir le feu encore une fois.
- L'économie nationale, dont les vicissitudes avaient longuement inquiété la Banque Mondiale, a commencé à donner quelques signes de vie.
- La especie marina estudiada, que parecía estar en mayor peligro de desaparecer, ha recuperado paulatinamente y repoblado las aguas costeras.
- Al llegar a la montaña, desde cuya cumbre se pueden ver todos los campos de nuestros agricultores, el equipo debe evaluar las perspectivas de expansión de este cultivo.

(d) Using the same approach, translate the sentences into another working language.