

# Note-Taking for Consecutive Interpreting

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- Katharine Allen (51<sup>st</sup> ATA Conference, Denver)
  - Importance of developing note-taking skills in community interpreting
    - so that we're not interrupting speakers all the time for short consecutive interpretation.
  - Community interpreting training programs are teaching would-be interpreters to interrupt people all the time
    - Sometimes the medical provider is giving a long explanation to the patient about his/her condition and their plans for patient recovery.
      - If interrupted they might lose track of what they're saying, etc.

## Importance of note-taking

- In court,
  - Many interpreters are now using digital recorders in the long consecutive mode
    - Then providing simultaneous interpretation
- However, recorders sometimes fail (technical problems, etc)

**Importance of note-taking**

- But, long consecutive interpreting with note-taking may not be the best model all the time
  - the distance between the original speech and the interpreted rendition is too long
    - paralinguistic elements (nonverbal communication, intonation, emotional outbursts, etc) are lost.
  - Maybe in these emotionally charged settings, the simultaneous mode would be the best format? Thoughts?

**Note-taking?**

- 7 principles

- Noting the idea, not the word
- Abbreviation
  - Unless a word is short (4-5 letters), interpreters should use an unambiguous abbreviated form
- Links
- Negation
  - OK = agree;
  - then “disagree” = ~~OK~~
- Emphasis
- Verticality
- Shift

**Jean-François Rozan (1956)**

54, prices ↗

but \_\_\_\_\_ no = income

so \_\_\_\_\_ pop<sup>on</sup> ↗

“Over the course of 1954, prices rose, although not to the same extent as income, thus the population’s net income increased.”

**Notes**

- Macro
  - Looking at the bigger picture
  - Structure, framework, the way the speech is built up
- Micro-level
  - Words, expressions
- Note-taking for consecutive interpreting
  - Skeleton structure of the speech.
  - Visual representation of your analysis of the source speech.

**Andrew Gillies (2005)**

- Different tasks
  - Phase 1: listening and analysis, note-taking, short-term memory operations, coordination of these tasks
  - Phase 2: note-reading, remembering, production
- Difficulties:
  - If you're thinking too much about how to note something, you will listen less well.
  - If your notes are unclear or illegible your production will suffer because you'll put too much effort into reading them.

## Note-taking



- Dissecting the speech
  - Analyzing its structure, progression
  - Analyzing the communicative function of different parts of the speech
  - Recognizing the main ideas and secondary ones
  - Spotting the links between them

**Note-taking**

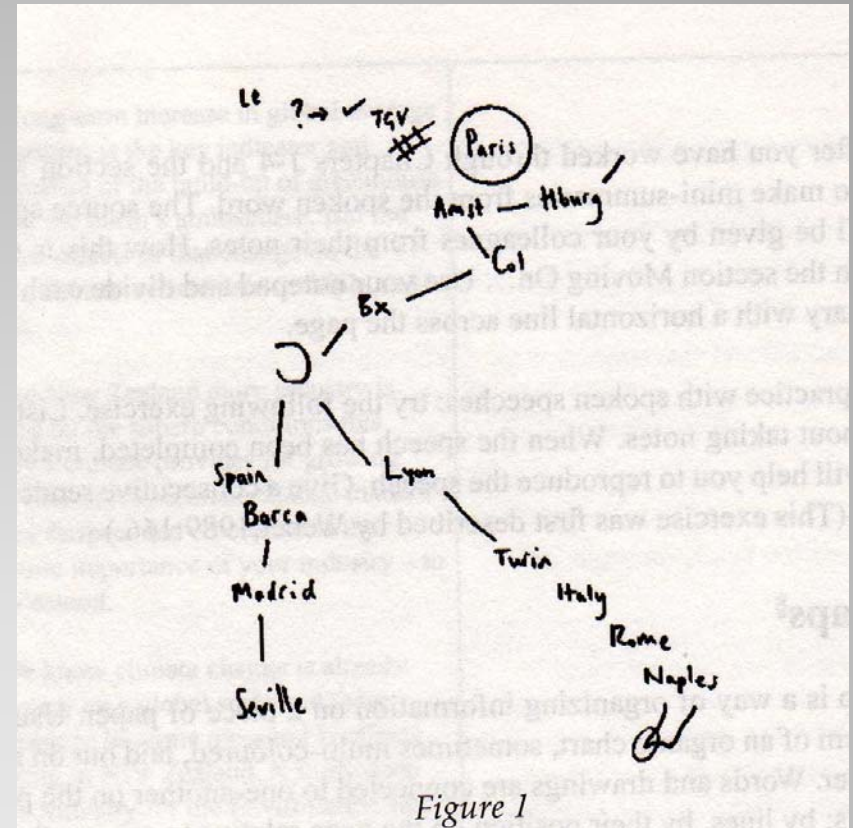
- To summarize:
  - Function and structure of the speech's parts.
  - **Not the content!**

**Mini Summaries**

- Way of organizing information on a piece of paper
- Organic chart
- Words and drawings are connected to one-another on the page in various ways
  - Lines
  - Position on the page relative to one another
- How the mind associates and recalls information

## Mind Maps

- In the long term the idea is to develop a European high-speed railway network with Paris at its centre. A line to the north will reach Brussels, where it can branch out to the east to Cologne, or continue further north to Amsterdam and later even Hamburg. To the south-east the line through Lyon will enter Italy through Turin and reach through Rome and Naples right down to the toe of Italy. In the south-west a link up with Spain via Barcelona and then to Madrid will make it possible to extend the network down to Seville.



## Mind Maps

- *“Who did what to whom?”*
- The sentence
  - Basic unit of communication
    - Subject
    - Verb
    - Object

SOV

- *“Who does what to whom (or to what)?”*

S

V

O

O

We...

...took stock of...

relations...

...and the situation

For the purposes of note-taking in consecutive  
interpreting an idea is....



**SVO**

**SVO**

S   V   O

In the areas for which I have some responsibility, **there were** also, as the Prime Minister has mentioned, some important **developments** at Feira.

S   V   O   O

**We took stock of** the European Union's **relations** with Russia and **the situation** there, including in Chechnya, in the light of the recent EU-Russia Summit, which I think was regarded as fairly successful.

S   V   O

**It is too early** to judge President Putin's economic programme;

S   V   O

however, our basic **message is** that **a sound programme will be vital to boost investor confidence.**

S   V   O

On Chechnya, **there have**, it is true, **been** some recent moderately positive **developments** in response to international and European Union pressure:

S   V   O

for example the recent **ECHO mission was able to take place**

S   V   O

and western humanitarian **agencies have greater access** to the area.

S   V

**The conflict nevertheless continues**

S   V   O

and **we still have** considerable **concerns.**

S   V   O

In particular, **we want to see** much **greater access** for humanitarian aid agencies.

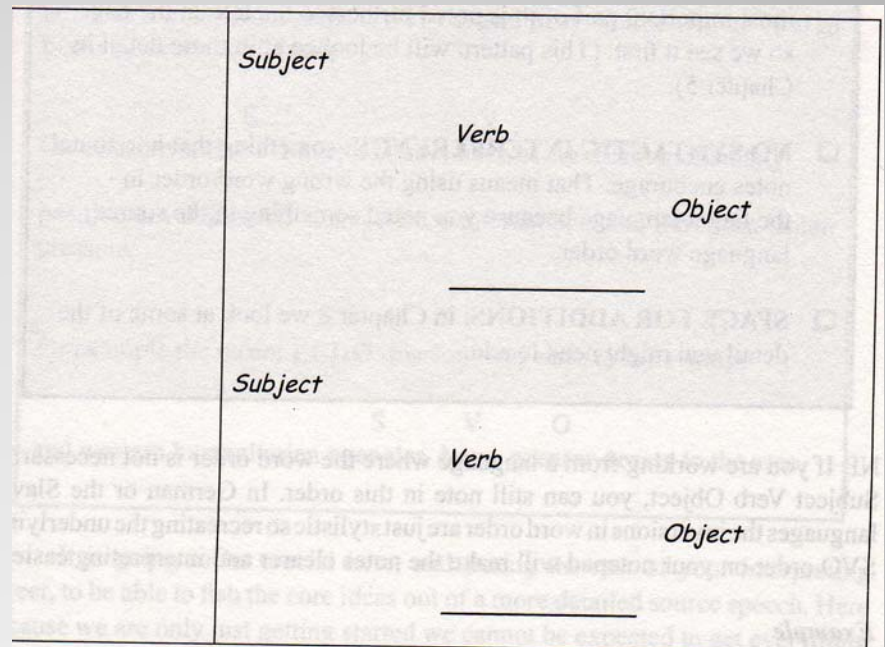
S   V   O

**We want to see** genuinely independent **investigation** into reports of human rights abuses,

S   V   O

and **we want to see** a real **dialogue** between the Russian government and the Chechens.

- On each page
  - Two or three sections
    - Subject, verb and object
    - Diagonally across the page.
    - Don't squeeze more than this onto a page
      - Will be harder to read back



**SVO**



- Easier to read back
  - Less writing on a page, so ideas stand out
- Visible structure
  - Visible at a glance, which is not possible if we note horizontally as we write normally.
- Eyes move from left to right
  - Like a typewriter, always coming back to the left at the end of each idea
- The beginning of each idea
  - Is noted furthest to the left, so we see it first
- No syntactic interference
  - Something that horizontal notes encourage. That means using the wrong word order in the target language because you noted something in the source language order
- Space for additions

## SVO Diagonally

There

were

developments

we

took stock

relations  
+ situations

It

is

too early

**SVO Diagonally**

- Links
  - Signal the way the speaker wants to listener to relate what is about to be said to what has been said before
- Speech
  - Ideas
  - Links between them

**Links**

- *The economy is struggling. The Central Bank has left interest rates unchanged.*
- *The economy is struggling. However, the Central Bank has left interest rates unchanged.*
- *The economy is struggling. Consequently, the Central Bank has left interest rates unchanged.*
  - Different messages
    - Bring ideas into relations with one another
    - Provide more information about the situation

**Links**

//	Britain and Germany are among those countries pushing most for an ambitious new WTO round.
→	So, for both the UK and Germany, the failure of the trade talks in Cancun was a huge disappointment.
//	A successful trade round would be a massive prize.
<i>if</i>	<b>If</b> we could halve world tariffs,
<i>then</i>	<b>[then]</b> that would add as much as \$400 billion annually to world incomes, of which at least 150 billion will flow to developing countries.
//	That's more than 3 times what they currently get in aid.
<b>BUT</b>	<b>But</b> to achieve this we need to reform the CAP.

# Links

<i>B</i>	<i>but, however, nonetheless, on the other hand, in spite of this, all the same,</i>	limitation or contradiction following an idea
<i>THO</i>	<i>although, despite (the fact that), even though, while, whilst, notwithstanding,</i>	limitation or contradiction preceding both linked ideas
<i>COS</i>	<i>because, the main reason for this, what is causing this, what's behind this?</i>	effect → cause
<i>→</i>	<i>hence, this means that, the result of this is, the consequence of this is, so that, because of this, therefore, this is why, not surprisingly then,</i>	cause → effect
<i>TO</i>	<i>(in order) to, in such a way as to, so that, with the aim of, the purpose being to,</i>	purpose

# Links

- It's not uncommon for speakers to have the same subject doing many different things.
- By noting the verbs parallel to one another on the page
  - Clearly see they have the same subject

## Parallel Values



- First, any successful economy **needs to conform** to certain basics. It **should be** an open economy, willing to let capital and goods move freely. It **needs** financial and monetary discipline - the markets and investors swiftly punish the profligate. It **needs to encourage** business and enterprise - to create an enabling climate for entrepreneurs. A few years ago, people might have stopped there. But now we can add confidently: the successful economy also **must invest** heavily in human capital, technology and infrastructure. Education is a top economic as well as social priority. High levels of unemployment and social exclusion do not just disfigure society, they waste the national resource of human talent.

//	successful econ	
	must conform	certain basics
	should be	open
		(let capital + goods move)
	needs	financ monetary discipline
	encourage	business + enterprise
// Few years ago	would be	
	enough	
BUT	now we add	
	successful econ	
	must invest	human capital technology infrastructure

# Parallel Values



- Because the French government has cut customs duties.

COS	Fra
	cut
	duties

- Because the French, German and British governments have cut customs duties.

COS	Fra
	Ger
	UK
	cut
	duties

**Parallel Values**

- *Because the French, German and British governments have cut customs duties, visa fees and administrative charges.*

<i>COS</i>	<i>Fra</i> <i>Ger</i> <i>UK</i>	<i>cut</i>  <i>duties</i> <i>visa fees</i> <i>admin charges</i>
------------	---------------------------------------	---

**Parallel Values**

- By positioning an element vertically below another
  - In brackets
  - Clearly identify
    - One belongs to the other
    - Is subordinate to it within the clause or SVO group
  - We can adjust our intonation appropriately

**Brackets**

- And today? The changes, even since 1973, when Britain entered the European Economic Community, are remarkable:

	changes	
	(since 1973 UK enter EEC)	
	are	
		remarkable

**Brackets**

- First thing students interpreters ask about
- Knowing a reasonable number of useful symbols can make our lives easier
  - But unimportant when compared to all of what we have read before
  - If you don't have a consistent and meaningful note-taking system
    - No symbol is going to help you

# Symbols

- Not only a picture
  - Short word
  - Pair of letters
  - Single letter
    - The important thing is what it represents
      - Concepts not words
  - Concepts not words
    - They're not one-to-one translations so they help us avoid source language interference when we interpret

# Symbols

- Clear and unambiguous
- Quick and simple to draw
  - More than 3 strokes of the pen is probably too slow.
- Prepared in advance
  - DON'T IMPROVISE MID SPEECH
- Consistent
  - If **E** is *energy*, make sure it stays *energy* always and find yourself another symbol for *environment* and *economy*.
- Organic
  - Starting point for many other symbols
- Must mean something to you
  - Don't blindly copy symbols you see if they don't create associations for you

# Symbols

- The symbol of the square commonly denotes “country, nation, land, state”

□ <i>al</i>	national (adjective)
□ <i>ally</i>	nationally
□ <i>ze</i>	to nationalize
□ <i>tn</i>	nationalization
□ <i>o</i>	national (noun), citizen

**Symbols - Organic**



←

Return, come back, reverse, regress

↗

Rise, increase, grow, climb, etc

↘

Fall, decline, slide, slip, drop, shrink

↔

Exchange, relations

→

Lead to, consequence of, therefore

# Symbols – The Arrow



pleased.  
(You don't need to, and shouldn't, draw the eyes in the circle...  
this type face however insists.)



annoyed, unhappy, unimpressed, etc.



very unhappy, disgusted, etc



to think



to know, (for me, the straight line denotes certainty, in  
comparison to the squiggly line for "to think".)

# Symbols - People

↗

rise (etc.)

↗

rise sharply, jump, soar,

↗

rise dramatically, leap, skyrocket etc

↗  
---

faltering rise, etc

say

assert,

poor

very poor

poor

grinding, crushing poverty, destitution,

poor  
---

fairly poor, more or less badly off,

## Symbols - Underlining

- Math = + > < % /
- Science E μ t
- Music #
- Text messages L8R R U OK? 2 etc.
- Keyboard % & @ ¶ ™
- Punctuation marks ? ! ( ) " :
- Vehicle registrations D DA UK CH F
- Short words in other languages:  
so hi ta ok /  
deja / ergo etc / pero
- Currencies \$ ¥ £ €
- Periodic table Fe Na Po Ag CO<sub>2</sub> CO NO<sub>2</sub> H<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>

# Where to find symbols?

- Skills
  - Fluency
  - Natural intonation
  - Engaging your audience
  - Using your notes correctly
- “Read” might be misleading
  - Interpreters do not read their notes in the usual sense of the word.
  - You’re constantly reading ahead of your notes

**Reproduction/ Delivery**

- Good speakers vary
  - Volume
  - Speed
  - Tone of delivery
- Interpreters will want to do the same
  - Based on
    - What the speaker said
    - Memory
    - Notes taken

**Reproduction/ Delivery**

- Rozan, Jean-François. *Note-taking in Consecutive Interpreting*. Trans. Andrew Gillies. Tertium. Poland, 2004.
- Gillies, Andrew. *Note-Taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*. St. Jerome. 2005
- <http://interpreters.free.fr/>

## References