



Active Listening in MTI Interpreting Introductory Course for Chinese Students

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Abstract

MTI students who are native Chinese, though already acquired a reasonable level of English, were not able to adequately interpret the English speech into Chinese at the beginning of the course, mostly probably because of their inadequate comprehension. In order to be able to develop interpreting skills, students should be able to acquire the ability of active listening. The purpose of this study is to try to figure out indicators of active listening at the beginning stage of the interpreting course for the teachers to refer to in the identification of this stage of students’ development and form teaching strategies accordingly. The study is based upon the observation and analysis of the corpus of the national finals of the 3rd CTPC Cup All China Interpreting Contest, whose contestants were at the stage of active listening, and yet to be further developed to be professionals. It was found out that there are six indicators showing the ability of active listening and four types of practices can be formed based upon the six indicators. The research limitation is that it is yet to be further studied on how long the teaching of active listening should last in the interpreting course. In the interpreting courses, it is possible for the teachers to refer to the six indicators and the four types of exercises to help the students get through this stage of development and lay a good foundation for their further development in interpreting.

Key words: MTI; Interpreting courses; Active listening

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INTRODUCTION

Basic Interpreting Skills, a main and introductory course for students with the program of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) at North China Electric Power University, is designed to develop the interpreting ability of the students, who will potentially work as translators and interpreters upon graduation. In this process of the training of MTI students with Chinese as their native language, it was found out that though students already acquired a reasonable level of the English language, demonstrated by the TEM-8 and BAND-6¹ English examination that they passed, they were not able to adequately interpret the English speech into Chinese at the beginning of the course. Based upon careful observation, it is likely that the main problem at this stage is comprehension. Although Chinese is the mother tongue of the students, similar problems of comprehension-related issues can be observed in Chinese to English interpretation at this stage of interpreter development.

From learning foreign languages to interpreters’ training, there are several transformations in listening comprehension which might help to explain the gap

¹ TEM 8 is officially the highest level examination of English proficiency for English major students in China. And Band 6 is officially the highest level examination of English proficiency for non-English major students in China.

between the two stages. (a) As for the form of operation, listening comprehension involves listening only, while interpreting requires the students to produce what was understood into another language immediately on the spot. (b) As for the evaluation methods, listening comprehension is marked by multiple choices, summary, etc., while interpreting is featured with the judgment based upon the oral production of the students comparing against the source text, also considering delivery, fluency, etc..

Because the form, the purpose of study and the evaluation methods are different, is it possible that a hypothesis can be formed that there is a turning point or a turning stage for the students to be fully prepared to be an interpreter? If this point or stage can be judged appropriately, it will be beneficial for the teachers to optimize the curriculum design in order to realize a better effect in teaching. It is also noticeable that because of individual differences, some students who join the interpreters' training program have already transcended the previous stage or completed the transformation between the two stages, and are directly in the stage that is suitable for the development of the interpreters. If it is possible to make judgment of the interpreting development stage of the students using specific indicators, it is likely to make the teaching more targeted. It is also possible to form certain theories of interpreter training based on the indicators.

Based on the observation and preliminary analysis, it is believed that the turning point or turning stage is the students listening comprehension changed from passive listening to active listening. Active listening is a kind of listening process that the students do not just passively receive what the speaker has to say, but actively analyze the message of the speech and make reasonable predictions of the development of the speech based upon the existing sections of the speech to minimize the possibility of being constrained by the form of language, being active in the effort of understanding the message and the intention of the speaker.

Active listening is in line with the working mechanism of the professional interpreters, therefore, the conversion from passive listening to active listening can be seen as an important turning point of the training of MTI students. A professional interpreter does not mechanically convert the speech word for word. Instead, s/he comprehensively understands the speaker before s/he is able to appropriately translate the segment of the speech.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to concept of action listening, studies relevant to the practice of active listening can be found in the following categories: (a) research relevant to the teaching of active listening of Chinese students; (b) theoretical

foundation for active listening; and (c) practice theories of active listening.

1.1 Research Relevant to the Teaching of Active Listening of the Chinese Students

Researchers mostly focused on the study of listening strategies of Chinese students because they found out that listening comprehension was a daunting problem to their students when they started to take the course of interpreting, while at the same time, listening comprehension is the foundation, perhaps the most important aspect, for interpreting (Xu, 2010; Yu, 2010; Yang, 2012). Though different researchers gave different names to what is active listening in their papers, such as "attentive listening" (Xu, 2010) or "listening and information receiving" (Yu, 2010; Yang, 2012; Dai, 2014), the essence was the same to active listening. The purpose of it is to "interpret and explain with the help of the cognitive and thematic knowledge". And "actually it is to work on logical reasoning and analysis, which are far more than the simple identification of the language, but the message represented in the language" (Liu, 2005, p.19).

According to a survey based on questionnaire, students believed that there were five problems in listening and analysis: (a) comprehension not realized while listening, therefore unable to understand the source text; (b) attention span being too short, unable to get focused for a long time; (c) the habit of listening word for word made them unable to grasp the key words or the sense of the speech; (d) the comprehension of long sentences being challenging; (e) the difficulty level, speed of delivery and familiarity of the content directly affected their comprehension (Yang, 2012, p.79).

It seems that one of the main reasons for Chinese students unable to practice active listening is that they focus too much on individual words and some grammatical structures based on words. Some students would be unable to get focused when they came across one or two unknown words so that they gave up on the listening process and missed a lot of important message that followed (Xu, 2010, p.45; Gong, 2011, p.76). Perhaps because "exercises of listening comprehension emphasize on the dimension of language, with many interests in vocabulary and grammar." (Yang, 2012, p.80) While believing that vocabulary is very important, it is believed that logic is a more prominent issue for students acquiring the basic skill of interpreting (Wang, 2015, p.14). However, researchers on this issue, who was mostly experienced teachers in interpreting, believed that active listening is generally not able to be achieved by the students without adequate training or guidance. And one of the major proposals to help the students to achieve this is to try to focus on the logic from the perspective of the whole text as the bigger picture instead of focussing only on the words and expression, particularly unknown ones.

As for text linguistics, Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p.4; Hu, 2012, p.30) indicated, concept and relations are the components of texts.

CONCEPT is definable as a configuration of knowledge (cognitive content) which can be recovered or activated with more or less unity and consistency in the mind (cf. V. 4ff.). RELATIONS are the LINKS between concepts which appear together in a textual world: each link would bear a designation of the concept it connects to. (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p.4)

Individual words and expressions could be seen as corresponding to the concept and logical relationship to relations. And the comprehension of both constitutes the understanding in listening. And it also seems that logical relationship represented a bigger problem in a research of error analysis of consecutive interpreting of Chinese students (Wang, 2015, p.14).

Researchers believed that there are two approaches to listening comprehension, one being bottom-up and the other top-down. Brown and Yule believed that “bottom-up” discourse analysis indicates that one tries to understand the sense of every word and grammatical structure in order to construct the meaning of the whole sentence. Whereas top-down approach is to try to predict the possible sense of the next sentence based upon the context and previous sentences (Brown & Yule, 2000, p.234; Gong, 2011, p.76).

Cook believed that native speakers of English are able to understand the text in a “top-down” manner, making guesses on the text that follows and constantly revising the guesses. With this approach, it is possible to grasp the message and understand the intention of the speaker by taking advantage of the context and making reasonable guesses on the new words (Cook, 1989, p.82; Xu, 2010, p.45). According to Miller (1951, p.103) and Chernov (2004, p.98), “a large degree of interdependence among the successive units of a language means that parts of the message can be lost or distorted without causing a disruption of communication.” And it “may well be perfectly possible to understand a speaker’s meaning without actually understanding every single word and expression they use, and without having to reproduce all of those terms in the interpretation.” (Jones, 2008, p.11)

Researchers believed that listening comprehension in interpreting is not just about language ability, one should also consciously make use of extra-linguistic knowledge, including world knowledge, thematic knowledge and situational knowledge, etc. And the five “W”s can help you with comprehension of interpreting. Who is the speaker? What is the subject? What is the occasion? Who is the audience? What type of speech is it? (Informative? Persuasive? Commemorative?) (Wang, 2006, p.87)

Similar approaches were proposed by Xu (2010, p.44). He believed that different sections of the training should include: (a) from making a summary to complete retelling; (b) visualization of message; (c) emphasizing on logical relationship, and grasping the main message; (d) focusing

on connection and coherence; (e) grasping specific content and key words; (f) differentiating primary and secondary information; (g) accelerating message analysis; (h) interfering psychological quality; and (i) background knowledge.

Both Wang and Xu’s approaches are aimed at changing the habit of “bottom-up” comprehension habit of the students that has been formed for a long time.

1.2 Theoretical Foundation for Active Listening

1.2.1 De-Verbalization

Seleskovitch believed that “what we get from the discourse of the speakers is sense, which has little relationship with the form of discourse. And we can express that in any other language without any change” (Seleskovitch, 2007, p.308). The reason for it is that the though sense is expressed through language form, the form and sense are separable (Ibid., p.309). And except for technical terms, proper nouns, numbers, etc., which do not transform into units of sense to be parts of sense in a larger scope, other components are able to be de-verbalized.

The practice of active listening requires the students to be able to de-verbalize, comprehending the message in the speech in spite of any language form.

1.2.2 Cumulative Dynamic Analysis

It should be understood by the students that the completeness of the discourse is only “relative” and the message of each utterance is closely linked with the preceding and subsequent ideas, forming a complete one together (Chernov, 2004, p.96).

There are several reasons why cumulative dynamic analysis is possible (Ibid.). (a) Utterances in the same discourse are within the same framework of topic, and therefore, are co-referential. (b) There is the unity of deictic universe in the discourse. (c) The value judgments of the text are uniform. (d) There is a single pragmatic framework. (e) There is uniform fact and linguistic modality to the same referents.

This provides semantic basis for the students to adopt a top-down approach in active listening, considering the same framework of the discourse.

1.3 Practice Theories of Active Listening

1.3.1 Types of the Texts

There are five text types in Werlich’s typology (1976) and Trosborg (1997, pp.15-16), i.e. description, narration, exposition, argumentation and instruction. Hatim and Mason (1990), and Trosborg (1997, p.15) adapted those into two subclasses considering the translation purposes: (a) instruction with option, such as advertisements, manuals, receipts, etc.; and (b) instruction without option, such as legal texts. Trosborg (1997, pp.15-16) believed that this is based on cognitive properties of text types. For instance, description is based upon differentiation

and interrelation of perceptions in space, narration in time, exposition based on analysis and/or synthesis, argumentation based upon evaluation of relations between and among concepts through the extraction of similarities, contrasts and transformations, and instruction based on planning of future behaviour.

1.3.2 Type of Speech

If you wish to re-express someone else's ideas without having the possibility of repeating them word for word—which is the case of the interpreter—then you must make a clear, structured analysis of them. ...you have to understand the individual ideas that are the basic building blocks of a speaker's line of reasoning. (Jones, 2008, p.11)

Being able to distinguish the type of speech is very important because only by doing so is one able to understand the speaker's line of reasoning.

According to Jones (2008, pp.14-21), there are several speech types and their respective sub-types. (a) reasoned logical argument: (i) reasoned arguments that present both points of view on a question, which in turn drawing a synthetic conclusion based upon the analysis of the different views; (ii) arguments that are a sequence of logical deductions leading to the only conclusion, according to the speaker. (b) Narrative speeches in chronological sequence, such as describing a scene, an event or a detailed statistical presentation. (c) Persuasive speeches, where convincing the audience are paramount to the speaker despite of anything. (d) rhetorical speeches, where elegant style and cultural references are more important to the speaker in order to be impressive. Or a speaker may hint their points in the speeches, trying not to make it explicit.

If the students are able to identify the type of the text or the speech as the speech is unfolded, it is in itself one dimension of the practice of active listening. And it may also be helpful to them to make reasonable predication of the speech.

1.3.3 Cognitive Complement

According to Seleskovitch (2007, p.308), semantic knowledge, general knowledge, thematic knowledge and the understanding of the situation, audience and the speaker are the so-called "cognitive complement", which spontaneously integrated into the comprehension process, helping people to comprehend the elapsing utterance.

Gile (2009) believed that apart from linguistic information in the speech, there is also culturally induced information and personal information that could also be used as input to interpreter. In his sequential model of translation for training purposes (Gile 2009, p.94), extra-linguistic knowledge base and ad hoc knowledge acquisition are important parts.

Chernov (2004, p.98) believed that the interpreter could use background or world knowledge to make cognitive inferences or from linguistic semantic content of the text.

This cognitive complement is also a very important part of active listening. However, it can be a challenge for students who have formed the habit of word for word comprehension in listening to speeches made in a foreign language.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE INDICATORS OF THE TRANSITION FROM PASSIVE LISTENING TO ACTIVE LISTENING

It is likely that active listening is a major turning point for students going through a qualitative change from non-interpreters to interpreters. Identifying the indicators of this stage can potentially be beneficial for the teachers to optimize the curriculum design in order to realize a better effect in teaching. If it is possible to make judgment of the interpreting development stage of the students using specific indicators, it is likely to make the teaching more targeted. It is also possible to form certain theories of interpreter training based on the indicators.

In this paper, the corpus of the national finals of the 3rd CTPC Cup All China Interpreting Contest is used for the purpose of the analysis for several reasons. The contestants in the national finals represented a reasonably high level English ability of all students of similar age and grade. Of the 14 contestants of the finals, 9 were master students of translation or interpreting, with one master of English, born between 1987 and 1990. And 4 were undergraduate students at the time of the contest, born around 1992. Therefore, it can be assumed that they acquired an adequate level of competence in English speaking. Based upon close observation of the corpus, it was found out that though they had acquired some basic skill of interpreting, they were yet to be developed to professional interpreters, which represented an optimal choice for the observation of active listening.

Based upon close observation of the corpus, it is possible that there are six indicators to decide that the students have outgrown the stage of passive listening and entered the stage of active listening. Six indicators of active listening are (a) being able to make inference based upon the given information; (b) being able to understand the general message despite of unknown word(s); (c) being able to make summary without distortion of the message; (d) being able to sort out the implicit logic; (e) being able to make explanatory translation; and (f) being able to add introductory or conclusion sentences.

However, the cases below somehow showed that students at this stage are yet to further develop their ability of interpreting judged from their inaccurate production. Because the focus here is the turning point of active listening, and accurate interpretation may be the priority for the next stage of development after the students acquiring the ability of active listening.

2.1 Being Able to Make Inference Based Upon the Given Information

Case 1

这个影响全球近一个世纪的建筑风格是以一个校舍的建立为成熟标志的。	And actually, people cannot imagine that the architect style in that time can influence the next one century. And it is, it has taken the shape in the small building in German.
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In this case, the student added “small” in her interpretation, which is not something that existed in the source text. However, judged from the semantics of the source text, it appears that “a style that influenced almost a century” is in contrast to “the building of a school”. And therefore, it implicitly hinted that the building was small.

However, from the point of view of interpreting accuracy, it seems that it is inappropriate for an interpreter to add something that is not in the source text, though it is clear that the student entered in the stage of active listening, being able to make inference based upon the given information.

Case 2

在今年的全国人代会上, 总理呢在报告中提出的像向贫困宣战一样, 向污染宣战。	In this year’s NPC, the premier wrote in his government work report that just like we launched the war against poverty, China will want again, launched the war against the smog weather and air pollution.
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In this case, “the smog weather” does not exist in the source text. It is possible that the student, upon hearing “air pollution”, unconsciously mobilized his world knowledge of the smog issue in China. Although the interpretation is not very accurate, it shows that the students have already acquired the basic skill of active listening.

2.2 Being Able to Understand the General Message Despite of Unknown Word(s)

Case 3

What struck me was that I.Q. was not the only difference between my best and my worst students. Some of my strongest performers did not have stratospheric I.Q. scores. Some of my smartest kids weren’t doing so well.	我突然意识到, 其实我最好和最坏的学生和表现最差的这些学生当中, 他们最大的区别并不是他们的智商的高低, 我发现那些最聪明的学生并不一定是在学业上表现的最好的学生。
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In this case, “stratospheric” is an unknown word for the student. However, she avoided the literal translation of this word by considering the overall meaning the speaker would like to express. Although the interpretation strategy here is explanatory translation and cannot be seen as accurate, it is obvious that the student has achieved active listening.

Case 4

Now, any of those stats should convince each of us to get off our duff more, but if you’re anything like me, it won’t.	可是明白了这些道理, 知道了这些数据, 并不能够促使我们真正的动起来, 至少对于我个人来说是这样的。
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This case is similar to the previous one. It is likely that the student did not know the word “duff”, however, she was able to acquire a general understanding using active listening, successfully avoiding direct translation of that particular word.

2.3 Being Able to Make Summary Without Distortion of the Message

Case 5

When I was 27 years old, I left a very demanding job in management consulting for a job that was even more demanding: teaching.	今天呢, 我要讲的主题呢主要是跟教学相关的。
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It seems that the student in this case do not completely grasp all the details of the segment of the speech. However, with the top-down approach of active listening, she was able to make a summary of the speech segment. Though the details were missed, the summary was not distortion of the message.

2.4 Being Able to Figure Out the Implicit Logic

Case 6

而且这个问题如果解决不好啊, 可能会关系到成为一个巨大的社会问题, 甚至会成为一个政治问题, 也正是这个问题提出以后啊, 下一步啊也给我们基层的政府指明了方向, 我们将会采取更大的措施, 投入更大的人力, 物力, 财力来治理这个雾霾。	Otherwise I believe this would further accelerate into the social and even political problem. So the next move, has also been for the local government to double their effort to put more human resources, material and financial resources to mitigate this smog air pollution and to solve the issue of smog weather.
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In this case, the source text does not have the cohesive device marking the causal relationship, though it is actually so in sense. The students figured out the implicit logical relationship and made that explicit in the target text using “so” and omitted the repetitive part in the source text. This demonstrates that the student has acquired the ability of active listening, though it seems that her English ability should be further improved.

2.5 Being Able to Make Explanatory Translation

Case 7

And because everyone else is doing it, it doesn’t even occur to us that it’s not okay. In that way, sitting has become the smoking of our generation.	因为身边的人都是这样子的, 所以根本就没有想到, 其实这并不是一个正常的事情, 这样做根本就不对, 所以对今天的世界来说, 久坐已经成为了本世纪的吸烟问题。
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As for the part of “not okay”, it seems that the student overemphasized on it in her interpretation. It is likely that the student understood that there is a contrast between what everyone else was doing with that it was not okay, and, therefore, she decided to emphasize on it by her own explanation. This case shows the ability of active listening.

Case 8

这到底是怎么回事呢？	And Why this culture relic is was, being treasured in the Capital Museum?
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This case is a typical one in explanatory translation. The student tried to make the question more explicit building on the previous segments of the speech. It demonstrates the ability of active listening.

2.6 Being Able to Add Introductory or Conclusion Sentences

Case 9

在今天的首都博物馆里，就收藏了一件儿修地铁修出来的文物。	This is a story happened in Beijing. And this is a culture relic treasured in the national museum.
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“This is a story happened in Beijing.” is not a sentence existing in the source text. The students were able to add it because she has got an overall understanding of the speech, demonstrating the ability of active listening.

Case 10

We have come together, as father and son, to lend our voices to the growing global effort to combat the illegal wildlife trade.	我们今天的话题是关于终结关于野生动物的贸易。进而，他们以一种前所未有的方式改变了野生动物的生活。
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This case is similar to the previous one, where the student added a summary sentence.

2.7 Findings and Discussions

Based on the analysis of the corpus of the 3rd CTPC Cup All China Interpreting Contest, it was found out that (a) The students in the above cases have acquired the basic ability of active listening. (b) The ability of active listening can be demonstrated by the six indicators discussed above. (c) These indicators demonstrate the basic ability of active listening, but do not guarantee good target text of interpretation. Therefore, the indicators can only be used to make judgment of the students with an adequate level of English ability accessing the first stage of the interpreter’s development-active listening. (d) Active listening is only the first step towards being a professional interpreter. And the next possible step could be on more accurate production of the target text in interpretation and the continuous improvement of foreign language ability, perhaps mother

tongue as well. (e) It remains a question to be further studied that how long should the focus remain on active listening in the training and when is the best time for the teacher start to guide the students to focus on the accuracy of the interpretation.

3. POSSIBLE STRATEGIES OF TRAINING TO ACHIEVE AND STRENGTHEN ACTIVE LISTENING

The six indicators of students being able to conduct active listening found out in this research are: (a) being able to make inference based upon the given information; (b) being able to understand the general message despite of unknown word(s); (c) being able to make summary without distortion of the message; (d) being able to figure out the implicit logic; (e) being able to make explanatory translation; (f) being able to add introductory or conclusion sentences. Based on the six indicators, it appears that four types of practices can be used to develop the skills relevant to the indicators: (i) the practice of awareness of background information and world knowledge; (ii)summary practices; (iii) paraphrase practices; (iv) the practice of identification of logic and making inferences based on logic.

3.1 The Practice of Awareness of Background Information and World Knowledge

As for the first indicator—being able to make inference based upon the given information, the key is that the students should be able to consciously or unconsciously make use of the background knowledge and world knowledge. It seems that some students are naturally good at making a connection of things in the mind while others not.

In the training, teachers may (a) remind the students of the theme before the class; (b) ask the students to search the background knowledge as much as possible; (c) ask the students to make presentations based on the theme in class or work on group discussion based on the theme before the class; (d) make comments on the particular segment of the speeches that need a connection to the thematic and background information after the interpretation practice in class.

In this way, the student may form a habit of paying attention to the background knowledge and may try to mobilize their background knowledge in their interpretation.

3.2 Summary Practices

As for the third indicator—being able to make summary without distortion of the message and the sixth indicator—being able to add introductory or conclusion sentences, they are about the ability to summarize segments of the speech.

Teachers may (a) play the video or audio in full and ask the students to make a summary of the whole speech in order to raise the students' awareness of the general idea of the speech; (b) play a segment of the speech and pause to ask the students to make a summary of the part in order to improve the students' awareness of the top-down approach of active listening and to improve their ability accordingly.

3.3 Paraphrase Practices

As for the fifth indicator—being able to make explanatory translation, it is about being able to say it “in other words”. Therefore, before the students being formally introduced to the standard of production that interpreting should achieve, teachers may ask them to do some paraphrase practices on segments of the speech, which not only helps to develop the ability of top-down approach of listening, but also making analysis of the speech segments.

3.4 The Practice of Identification of Logic and Making Inferences Based on Logic

As for the second indicator—being able to understand the general message despite of unknown word(s) and the fourth indicator—being able to figure out the implicit logic, they are about the logic, which concerns more details than summary and explanatory interpretation.

This is particularly important as this can lead to the development of the ability which is the priority the next stage—accurate interpretation. As logic seems to be a more prominent problem for the Chinese students in interpretation, it is necessary to have practices focusing on the development of logic.

There are two dimensions of logic, one being the logic of the text and another being the local logic of the sentence.

As for the textual logic, the students may pay attention to the “discourse markers” to identify important clues, such as (a) clues to topic introduction; (b) clues to organization; (c) clues to conclusion; (d) clues to repetition; (e) clues to exemplification; and (f) clues to tangential information (Lebauber, 2006, pp.8-12). Although there are not a lot of discourse makers, their frequency in the texts is high and is important in marking the connections. They indicate the relationship such as transition, sequence, causal relationship and hypothesis. Examples are “however”, “therefore”, “in case of”, “on account of”, etc. (Yang, 2005, p.44; Xu, 2010, p.46).

As for the logic in the sentences, especially the logic in the long and complex sentences, It boils down to subject-verb-object analysis, i.e. “who did what?” and “who said what?” (Jones, 2008, p.23) This is especially relevant to Chinese students in English interpretation, as Chinese sentences normally are shorter, with no complex structures, making students find it challenging to comprehend long and complex English sentences.

There is yet another type of logic that may cause challenges to students in interpreting, i.e., logic in the local region. For instance, “北二环南路”, literally translated as “South Road of the North Second Ring”. Depending on the importance of the message in the context, the teachers may choose whether to ask the students practice it at this stage or the next stage of interpreting training.

3.5 Comments on the Four Types of Practices

These practices may help the students to develop the ability of active listening, which is the prerequisite of their development of an interpreter. However, these four practices are not in themselves interpretation practices, and should be properly understood as such by the students. Students should also fully aware of the significance of active listening and get through this stage as fully as they possibly can.

CONCLUSION

The transitional stage is particularly important. Most students of the class, if not all, should be able to make an adequate transition before going to the next stage of interpreting courses. Otherwise, the students may find it difficult to proceed with the following parts of the interpreting courses. And the questions they would always ask would just be reduced to “how can I comprehend the speech”. If so, the effect of training the interpreting skill cannot be fully realized in the course. Therefore, the six indicators of active listening in the interpreting courses may be important references for the teachers in identification of the students' development stage. And the four types of practices proposed may be helpful for the students to realise active listening.

One question remains to be solved in future studies is how long should the focus remain on active listening in the training and when is the best time for the teacher start to guide the students to focus on the accuracy of the interpretation.

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