

BORDERLESS DEFINED

Newsletter of Borderless Interpreting & Translation, LLC



So, What Happens Without Documents?

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Recently, I had an interesting experience of interpreting a meeting with no documents provided ahead of time.

After it was all said and done, I decided to analyze the outcome as objectively as possible and determine whether documents would have helped alleviate some of the struggles I faced.

Observations

(1) Throughout, I felt that my interpreting resources were heavily swayed toward listening, leaving few behind for memory or production.

(2) In addition to (1) above, conversion and production was also labor-intensive and time-consuming, which further affected my resource distribution (as it is a continuous cycle).

(3) I became laser-focused on word-level details (i.e., not being able to see the forest for the trees), which is obviously a risky position to be in as an interpreter. This affected my ability to infer the speaker's intent.

Analysis

(1) Based on the fact that as even of a resource distribution as possible is critical for the simultaneous mode (as demonstrated by Daniel Gile's Effort Model), I devoted too many resources to listening and comprehension to be successful in this case.

-Would documents have either helped or completely solved this issue?

I am inclined to say "yes" to them being at least helpful to a certain degree. Capturing terminology and basic understanding of the topic would have greatly reduced the burden associated with listening and comprehension.

(2) Not having "pushed" the right language to my working memory likely contributed to the added strain that I felt with conversion and production. So yes, having documents would have helped in this sense as well.

(3) I am aware that I tend to resort to a micro-level approach when I am not familiar with the terminology and subject matter. This puts me at a risk of not fully delivering the speaker's intent. Without documents, I am largely lacking the big picture, which in turn can mean that I am not aware of where all the pieces fit in as the conversation unfolds.

Again, documents would have helped avoid this approach in the

first place.

Although there are factors other than documents that are also crucial for successful interpreting, I think it is safe to say that they can have a powerful influence on the outcome.

The next Borderless Defined will be in your inbox in the week of February 14th. Thanks for reading!

Take care,

Noriko Rogers
Borderless Interpreting & Translation, LLC

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