# ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND CENSORSHIP PRACTICES
# IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

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# ЭТИЧЕСКИЕ ПРИНЦИПЫ И ПРАКТИКИ ЦЕНЗУРИРОВАНИЯ
# В СИНХРОННОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ

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*Abstract.* The article examines the ethical principles and censorship practices in simultaneous interpretation, emphasizing that this process is an integral part of a translator's professional activity. It analyzes the need to maintain a balance between translation accuracy and adherence to the cultural and social norms of the audience. The article explores theoretical approaches to censorship, including neutrality, harm minimization, and respect for cultural differences, as well as practical methods such as omission, soft reformulation, adaptation, and paraphrasing. Practical examples are analyzed where censorship of texts helps to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. It is emphasized that effective censorship requires not only the translator's professional knowledge and skills but also the ability to promptly adapt the text depending on the context and cultural characteristics of the audience.

*Аннотация.* Рассматриваются этические принципы и практики цензурирования в синхронном переводе, подчеркивается, что этот процесс является неотъемлемой частью профессиональной деятельности переводчиков. Анализируется необходимость соблюдения баланса между точностью перевода и следованием культурным и социальным нормам аудитории. В статье исследуются теоретические подходы к цензурированию, включая нейтральность, минимизацию вреда и уважение к культурным различиям, а также практические методы, такие как опущение, смягчение, адаптация и перефразирование. Анализируются практические примеры, где цензурирование текстов помогает избежать конфликтов и недоразумений. Подчеркивается, что эффективное цензурирование требует не только профессиональных знаний и навыков переводчика, но и способности оперативно адаптировать текст в зависимости от контекста и культурных особенностей аудитории.

*Keywords:* censorship, simultaneous interpretation, ethical principles, translator, cultural adaptation, censorship principles.

*Ключевые слова:* цензурирование, синхронный перевод, этические принципы, переводчик, культурная адаптация, принципы цензурирования.

Ethical considerations in simultaneous interpretation are becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization, intercultural interaction, and the growing role of interpreters in conveying meaning. One of the key challenges in this field is the issue of censorship, where interpreters face the need to adapt or modify the source text to avoid potential negative

consequences for the audience. This is very typical in international diplomatic communications, in business negotiations, and even in some forms of media broadcasting that use words of high impact influence in shaping perspectives and evoking cultural or social responsiveness. More important, such censorship process incites several controversial issues on its ethics, taking into consideration translation accuracy vs. the concern to protect particular cultural norms together with the responsible stance of an interpreter toward their audience.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the ethical principles that lay the foundation of censorship in simultaneous interpretation and examine its impact on professional activities of the interpreters. In this respect, the theoretical approach to censorship has been studied in addition to practical methods implemented to minimize conflicts of ethics.

*Main part. Theoretical aspects of censorship in simultaneous interpretation*

Censorship in simultaneous interpretation is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon situated at the crossroads of linguistic, cultural, and ethical dimensions. Generally speaking, censorship may be defined as a conscious interference in the process of translation for adaptation or exclusion of certain elements of the source text, which could be offensive or provocative for the audience, or might have some kind of potential harm [1]. This practice requires from the interpreter a high level of linguistic competence as well as instantaneous decision-making skills under time constraints, making simultaneous interpretation one of the most stressful areas of translation work. The ethical dimension of censorship is directly tied to the professional role of the interpreter as a mediator between cultures.

One of the central principles of translation theory is that the interpreter should maintain neutrality in their work, which emphases transferring the source text as accurately as possible. However, when literal translation can lead to cultural misunderstanding, emotional reaction, or even conflicts, interpreters are often compelled to give way to strict neutrality in favor of modifying the message according to context and audience. In this regard, the application of professional ethical principles, such as respect for cultural differences, accountability to the audience, and adherence to professional standards, becomes essential. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the process of censorship in simultaneous interpretation involves the rapid processing of information and the selection of an appropriate form of expression that aligns with the social and cultural expectations of the audience. Interpreters should consider not only the linguistic specificity of the source text but also the cognitive characteristics of how the audience perceives speech, including the level of emotional impact and possible associations.

In this connection, censorship can be an instrument to avoid negative effects of translation, especially when cultural differences between the speaker and the audience are considerable. Various theoretical approaches justify the practice of censorship in translation (Table 1).

Table 1

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO JUSTIFYING CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATION [2]

| Approach | Core principles | Examples of application |
|---|---|---|
| Deontological | The translator is obliged to adhere to moral norms, protect the audience from potential harm, and avoid offensive content. | Diplomatic translations, international relations, and religious contexts where preventing conflict is essential. |
| Utilitarian | Focuses on making decisions that bring the greatest benefit or minimize harm for the majority. | Media, mass communication, broadcasts where the interests of a broad audience must be considered. |
| Contextual | Adapts the translation to the specific situation, translation purpose, and cultural or social expectations of the audience. | Intercultural negotiations, advertising, marketing where audiences with different cultural backgrounds are involved. |

| Approach | Core principles | Examples of application |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive | Analyzes the influence of translation on audience perception and emotional reaction; considers psycholinguistic factors. | Public speeches, media contexts where avoiding strong emotional reactions or shock among listeners is important. |
| Normative | Based on adherence to professional ethical standards, including codes of conduct and established norms. | Institutional settings (e.g., UN, EU) where standardized translation processes are required. |
| Cultural | Considers cultural differences, aims to minimize intercultural barriers and conflicts. | Literary translations, films where the cultural nuances need to be preserved. |

Thus, censorship in simultaneous interpretation is an organic constituent of professional activity that requires interpreters to combine linguistic accuracy, cultural competence, and ethical responsibility. Although theoretical models exist, every situation requires an individual approach, which makes this topic very relevant for further research and elaboration of practical recommendations.

*Ethical principles of censorship*

Approaches to censorship in simultaneous interpretation are based on adherence to a set of professional and moral standards that enable interpreters to adapt the text with minimal distortion. These principles aim to achieve a balance between the accurate transmission of information, respect for the audience, and the professional responsibility of the interpreter. In the time-constrained environment of simultaneous interpretation, ethical prescriptions are of utmost importance in making decisions on the need and degree of censorship. Ethical principles define when and how censorship should be applied to minimize distortion of the original message while preserving its meaning (Table 2).

Table 2

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATION [3, 4]

| Principle | Description | Examples of application |
|---|---|---|
| Principle of translator neutrality | The translator strives for objectivity and accurate transmission of content. Neutrality does not always mean literal translation, especially if the text may cause harm. | Replacing aggressive language in political speeches with more neutral wording. |
| Principle of harm minimization | The translator should protect the audience from potential harm caused by excessive emotional reactions or cultural conflict. | Avoiding provocative phrases in diplomatic negotiations or social broadcasts. |
| Principle of respect for cultural differences | Considers the cultural norms and values of the audience. Certain topics may be taboo in one culture while considered normal in another. | Excluding taboo topics when translating for audiences with different cultural perceptions. |
| Principle of professional responsibility | The translator is responsible for the consequences of their decisions. This requires analyzing the situation, understanding the audience, and making quick decisions. | Assessing the impact of text adaptation on audience perception under time constraints. |
| Principle of freedom of speech and meaning preservation | It is important to avoid excessive interference to prevent distortion of the original message. Balance between accuracy and adaptation is essential. | Preserving the semantic integrity of the text while modifying wording to reduce the risk of misunderstanding. |

The ethical criteria of censorship in translation are not only a guiding professional line but also the ground for decision-making in real situations, where the price of mistakes is very high. These principles demand that translators not only be knowledgeable and experienced but also highly emotionally intelligent in order to feel all the subtle contextual overtones and predict the reaction of the audience. For example, in most cases, effective censorship also involves speculative assumptions in potential interpretations of the text, based on the culture and social traits of a given audience. This makes censorship a flexible tool since it helps the translator maintain effective communication while avoiding direct conflicts or misunderstandings, particularly in highly complex or sensitive situations.

*Practical implementation of censorship in translation*

In this regard, it should be noted that the mechanisms of censorship in simultaneous interpretation involve not only a high level of linguistic competence but also strategies designed to adjust the text without its mutilation. These approaches are shaped by cultural, linguistic, and social factors, enabling the interpreter to interact effectively with the audience while avoiding conflicts and misunderstandings (Figure).
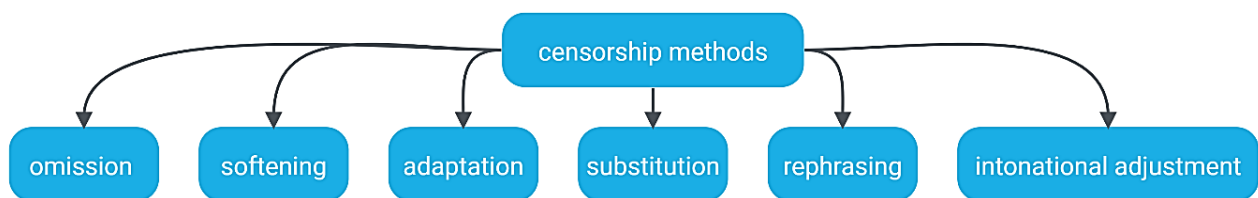
Figure. Censorship methods

One method is content omission, where elements that could provoke a negative reaction or be culturally inappropriate are removed. This strategy is more common and usual when one intends to avoid scandal scenarios or emotional storms, for example excluding from the diplomatic speeches certain unvarnished and harsh formulations that may stir up the negotiation process [5]. However, it is essential to remember that excessive removal of information can distort the overall meaning of the message.

The other way is to apply the method of soft reformulation: changing some sharp or biting utterances for more restrained and neutral expressions. Due to such a method, the impact will be softened, while the substance of such texts-which is essential in public speech and situations involving diplomacy-can be preserved accordingly.

In translation into other languages, intended for international audiences, cultural adaptation is often used, considering a variety of cultural and social shades that ought not to yield a meaning opposite to what the speaker intends. For instance, jokes or locally meaningful idioms need to be replaced with their universal equivalents if they are to be understandable cross-culturally [6].

Where direct reproduction of the text is impossible or undesirable, semantic substitution is used. This approach presupposes the selection of such equivalents that retain the main idea of the message but take into consideration the peculiarities of the target audience. For example, the names of some controversial events can be substituted by neutral terms in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Contextual paraphrasing is utilized when the construction of the text is complex or ambiguous in meaning. In this type, the translator puts in a little explanation or elucidation so that the audience understands the content clearly. This is where metaphors and allegories are pretty unclear.

In simultaneous interpretation, intonational adjustment also plays a great role. The interpreter may use changes in intonation, speech pace, or emphasis in order to soften the emotional impact of the text, especially in cases of harsh statements, where a soft delivery helps to minimize their effect.

Technological solutions, including artificial intelligence (AI) systems, are becoming vital tools for supporting ethical censorship in simultaneous interpretation [7]. Modern technologies can analyze text and identify potentially sensitive or controversial elements, enabling interpreters to anticipate and prevent possible negative audience reactions. AI can use algorithms that automatically detect offensive expressions, culturally specific terms, or taboo topics and provide options for interpreters that are considered ethical. For example, machine learning (ML) systems can be programmed to identify racist, sexist, or other forms of discriminatory speech and to offer interpreters an option to quickly suggest a more neutral or inclusive translation alternative.

Moreover, AI improves the quality and speed of censorship, which is a very important aspect, especially in synchronous interpretation, where literally every second counts [8]. This means that AI-based systems could not only suggest possible replacements or modifications but also give options to interpreters for text adaptation, taking into consideration cultural and social peculiarities of the target audience.

This is even more important for intercultural communication in which the subtleties in the perception of certain topics or expressions may be very different.

*Examples of censorship in simultaneous interpretation*

Unlike other forms of translation, simultaneous interpretation requires not only speed but also the decision-making skill on time, particularly about censorship. As was mentioned above, some phrases and sentences of the source text are potentially unseemly or unacceptable for the specific audience and hence require an adaptation in order to avoid any misunderstandings or conflict. Some examples are presented below, where censorship is necessary.

Example 1: political speech (from English to Arabic)

In diplomatic and political contexts, simultaneous interpretation requires caution, as the use of overly harsh formulations can create tension.

Original text: «The government's actions were totally unacceptable, and they should be held accountable for their crimes».

Adapted translation (into Arabic): الإجراءات التي اتخذتها الحكومة كانت غير مقبولة، وينبغي مراجعتها لضمان الالتزام بالمعايير.

In this case, the original phrase containing the words «totally unacceptable» and «crimes» could lead to serious diplomatic consequences, particularly in the context of international relations. The interpreter replaces aggressive expressions with more neutral ones, maintaining a professional tone and preventing the escalation of the situation.

Example 2: advertising and marketing (from Arabic to English)

In advertising and marketing, it is also crucial to take cultural differences into account. Let's consider a marketing slogan that could be perceived differently in various countries.

Original text (in Arabic): أنت تستحق كل شيء رائع في الحياة. دعنا نساعدك على تحقيق ذلك من خلال هذا المنتج.

Censored translation (in English): «You deserve the best that life has to offer. Let us help you achieve your goals with this product».

In the Arab world, the phrase كل شيء رائع («everything amazing») may be perceived as overly confident or arrogant if not supported by factual evidence, particularly in the context of religious and cultural values. The translator shifts the emphasis from «everything amazing» to the more moderate expression «the best that life has to offer», highlighting quality and success without excessive overt confidence.

Example 3: multicultural aspects in speech (from English to Arabic)

In the context of intercultural negotiations or meetings, it is important to note that certain topics may be taboo or perceived as inappropriate in some cultures.

Original text (in English): «We are so proud of our success in overcoming the racial issues that plague our society».

Censored translation (in Arabic): نحن فخورون بجهودنا نحو تعزيز الوحدة والمساواة في المجتمع.

The phrase «overcoming the racial issues» might be too direct for an Arabic audience, which may consider references to racial issues a sensitive topic, particularly when linked to specific countries or regions. The translation emphasizes positive societal efforts without mentioning specific, potentially controversial problems.

Examples of censorship in simultaneous interpretation bring into focus the importance that both linguistic and cultural aspects should be born in mind while translating a certain text. The mere change in phrasing may make a sharp difference in the perception of a message and help avoid any potential misunderstanding. Finally, it should be noted that although sometimes censorship is inevitable, interpreters are supposed to safeguard the substantial content of the message and ensure its accuracy without excessive distortion of the text.

*Conclusion*

In that respect, censorship ethics in simultaneous interpretation plays a huge role in terms of appropriateness which will have the right impact on the perception of translated material by the audience. The interpreter is forced to strike a balance between transmission accuracy of source text and modification needs as prescribed by cultural, social, and political settings in their interpreting process. It is important to realize that, while censorship is necessary, interpreters should not distort the text too much and at least retain the gist of the message. Professional responsibility and neutrality are crucial in translation.

Application of different methods of censorship, including omission, softening, adaptation, and paraphrasing, allows interpreters to effectively manage cultural and emotional risks arising during translation. Not less important is the support of technologies, such as AI systems that help interpreters in real time by signaling sensitive elements of the text and giving them neutral options. These solutions are instruments of great value, complementing human intuition and professionalism while allowing a bigger degree of ethics in the dissemination of information.

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