

Chapter- 1

Language Interpretation

Language interpretation is the facilitating of oral or sign-language communication, either simultaneously or consecutively, between users of different languages. The process is described by both the words *interpreting* and *interpretation*.

In professional parlance, *interpreting* denotes the facilitating of communication from one language form into its equivalent, or approximate equivalent, in another language form; while *interpretation* denotes the actual product of this work, that is, the message thus rendered into speech, sign language, writing, non-manual signals, or other language form. This important distinction is observed in order to avoid confusion.

An *interpreter* is a person who converts a thought or expression in a source language into an expression with a comparable meaning in a target language in "real time". The interpreter's function is to convey every semantic element (tone and register) and every intention and feeling of the message that the source-language speaker is directing to target-language recipients.

Comparison to translation

Despite being used incorrectly as interchangeable, *interpretation* and *translation* are not synonymous. *Interpreting* takes a message from a source language and renders that message into a **different** target language (ex: English into French); In interpreting, the interpreter will take in a complex concept from one language, choose the most appropriate vocabulary in the target language to faithfully render the message in a linguistically, emotionally, tonally, and culturally equivalent message. *Translation* is the transference of meaning from *text to text* (written or recorded), with the translator having time and access to resources (dictionaries, glossaries, etc.) to produce an accurate document or verbal artifact. Lesser known is "transliteration," used within sign language interpreting, takes one form of a language and transfer those **same words** into another form (ex: spoken English into a signed form of English, Signed Exact English, not ASL).

A very common misconception of interpretation is that it is rendered *verbatim*, as a word-for-word syntactic translation of an utterance. A literal, verbatim interpretation of a source-language message would be unintelligible to the target-language recipient because of grammar differences, cultural and syntactical context. For example, the Spanish phrase: *Está de viaje*, rendered verbatim to English translates as: *Is of voyage* (senseless

in English). The intended meaning of the message is: "you are traversing" or "you are out of town". That is the overall meaning, tone, and style in the target language rather than a senseless word-for-word translation (note: the example's interpretation can also be singular, past or present tense, depending on context: another responsibility of an interpreter).

In court interpretation, it is not acceptable to omit anything from the source, no matter how fast the source speaks, since not only is accuracy a principal canon for interpreters, but mandatory. The alteration of even a single word in a material can totally mislead the triers of fact. The most important factor for this level of accuracy is the use of a team of two or more interpreters during a lengthy process, with one actively interpreting and the second monitoring for greater accuracy.

Translators have time to consider and revise each word and sentence before delivering their product to the client. While live interpretation's goal is to achieve total accuracy at all times, details of the original (source) speech can be missed and interpreters can ask for clarification from the speaker. In any language, including signed languages, when a word is used for which there is no exact match, expansion may be necessary in order to fully interpret the intended meaning of the word (ex: the English word "hospitable" may require several words or phrases to encompass its complex meaning). Another unique situation is when an interpreted message appears much shorter or longer than the original message. The message may appear shorter at times because of unique efficiencies within a certain language. English to Spanish is a prime example: Spanish uses gender specific nouns, not used in English, which convey information in a more condensed package thus requiring more words and time in an English interpretation to provide the same plethora of information. Because of situations like these, interpreting often requires a "lag" or "processing" time. This time allows the interpreter to take in subjects and verbs in order to rearrange grammar appropriately while picking accurate vocabulary before starting the message. While working with interpreters, it is important to remember lag time in order to avoid accidentally interrupting one another and to receive the entire message.

Modes

Simultaneous



Interpreter place at the European Court of Justice

In (extempore) simultaneous interpretation (SI), the interpreter renders the message in the target-language as quickly as he or she can formulate it from the source language, while the source-language speaker continuously speaks; a spoken language SI interpreter, sitting in a sound-proof booth, speaks into a microphone, while clearly seeing and hearing the source-language speaker via earphones. The simultaneous interpretation is rendered to the target-language listeners via their earphones. Moreover, SI is the common mode used by sign language interpreters, although the person using the source language, the interpreter and the target language recipient (since either the hearing person or the deaf person may be delivering the message) must necessarily be in close proximity. NOTE: Laymen often incorrectly describe SI and the SI interpreter as 'simultaneous translation' and as the 'simultaneous translator', ignoring the definite distinction between interpretation and translation.

The first introduction and employment of extempore simultaneous interpretation was the Nuremberg Trials, with four official working languages.

Consecutive

In consecutive interpreting (CI), the interpreter speaks after the source-language speaker has finished speaking. The speech is divided into segments, and the interpreter sits or stands beside the source-language speaker, listening and taking notes as the speaker progresses through the message. When the speaker pauses or finishes speaking, the interpreter then renders a portion of the message or the entire message in the target language.

Consecutive interpretation is rendered as "short CI" or "long CI". In short CI, the interpreter relies on memory, each message segment being brief enough to memorize. In long CI, the interpreter takes notes of the message to aid rendering long passages. These informal divisions are established with the client *before* the interpretation is effected, depending upon the subject, its complexity, and the purpose of the interpretation.

On occasion, document sight translation is required of the interpreter during consecutive interpretation work. Sight translation combines interpretation and translation; the interpreter must render the source-language document to the target-language as if it were written in the target language. Sight translation occurs usually, but not exclusively, in judicial and medical work.



The CI interpreter Patricia Stöcklin renders Klaus Bednarz's speech to Garry Kasparov



The CI interpreter Patricia Stöcklin takes notes Garry Kasparov's speech



The CI interpreter Patricia Stöcklin renders Garry Kasparov's speech to the audience

Consecutively-interpreted speeches, or segments of them, tend to be short. Fifty years ago, the CI interpreter would render speeches of 20 or 30 minutes; today, 10 or 15 minutes is considered too long, particularly since audiences usually prefer not to sit through 20 minutes of speech they cannot understand.

Often, if not previously advised, the source-language speaker is unaware that he or she may speak more than a single sentence before the CI interpretation is rendered and might stop after each sentence to await its target-language rendering. Sometimes, however, depending upon the setting or subject matter, and upon the interpreter's capacity to memorize, the interpreter may ask the speaker to pause after each sentence or after each clause. Sentence-by-sentence interpreting requires less memorization and therefore lower likelihood for omissions, yet its disadvantage is in the interpreter's not having heard the entire speech or its gist, and the overall message is sometimes harder to render both because of lack of context and because of interrupted delivery (for example, imagine a joke told in bits and pieces, with breaks for translation in between). This method is often used in rendering speeches, depositions, recorded statements, court witness testimony, and medical and job interviews, but it is usually best to complete a whole idea before it is interpreted.

Full (i.e., unbroken) consecutive interpreting of whole thoughts allows for the full meaning of the source-language message to be understood before the interpreter renders it in the target language. This affords a truer, more accurate, and more accessible interpretation than does simultaneous interpretation.

Whispered

In whispered interpreting (**chuchotage**, in French), the interpreter sits or stands next to the small target-language audience whilst whispering a simultaneous interpretation of the matter to hand; this method requires no equipment, but may be done via a microphone and headphones if the participants prefer. Chuchotage is used in circumstances where the majority of a group speaks the source language, and a minority (ideally no more than three people) do not speak it.

Relay

Relay interpreting is usually used when there are several target languages. A source-language interpreter interprets the text to a language common to every interpreter, who then render the message to their respective target languages. For example, a Japanese source message first is rendered to English to a group of interpreters, who listen to the English and render the message into Arabic, French, and Russian, the other target languages. In heavily multilingual meetings, there may be more than one "intermediate" language, i.e. a Greek source language could be interpreted into English and then from English to other languages, and, at the same time, it may also be directly interpreted into French, and from French into yet more languages. This solution is most often used in the multilingual meetings of the EU institutions.

Liaison

Liaison interpreting involves relaying what is spoken to one, between two, or among many people. This can be done after a short speech, or consecutively, sentence-by-

sentence, or as chuchotage (whispering); aside from notes taken at the time, no equipment is used.

Types

Conference

Conference interpreting is the interpretation of a conference, either simultaneously or consecutively, although the advent of multi-lingual meetings has consequently reduced the consecutive interpretation in the last 20 years.

Conference interpretation is divided between two markets: the institutional and private. International institutions (EU, UN, EPO, et cetera), holding multi-lingual meetings, often favour interpreting several foreign languages to the interpreters' mother tongues. Local private markets tend to bi-lingual meetings (the local language plus another) and the interpreters work both into and out of their mother tongues; the markets are not mutually exclusive. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) is the only worldwide association of conference interpreters. Founded in 1953, it assembles more than 2,800 professional conference interpreters in more than 90 countries.

Judicial

Judicial, Legal, or Court Interpreting, occurs in courts of justice, administrative tribunals, and wherever a legal proceeding is held (i.e. a police station for an interrogation, a conference room for a deposition or the locale for taking a sworn statement). Legal interpreting can be the consecutive interpretation of witnesses' testimony for example, or the simultaneous interpretation of entire proceedings, by electronic means, for one person, or all of the people attending.

The right to a competent interpreter for anyone who does not understand the language of the court (especially for the accused in a criminal trial) is usually considered a fundamental rule of justice. Therefore, this right is often guaranteed in national constitutions, declarations of rights, fundamental laws establishing the justice system or by precedents set by the highest courts. However, this is not a constitutionally required procedure (in the United States) that a certified interpreter be present at police Interrogation.

Depending upon the regulations and standards adhered to per state and venue, court interpreters usually work alone when interpreting consecutively, or as a team, when interpreting simultaneously. In addition to practical mastery of the source and target languages, thorough knowledge of law and legal and court procedures is required of court interpreters. They often are required to have formal authorisation from the State to work in the Courts — and then are called certified court interpreters. In many jurisdictions, the interpretation is considered an essential part of the evidence. Incompetent interpretation, or simply failure to swear in the interpreter, can lead to a mistrial.

Escort

In escort interpreting, an interpreter accompanies a person or a delegation on a tour, on a visit, or to a meeting or interview. An interpreter in this role is called an *escort interpreter* or an *escorting interpreter*. This is liaison interpreting.

Public sector

Also known as community interpreting, is the type of interpreting occurring in fields such as legal, health, and local government, social, housing, environmental health, education, and welfare services. In community interpreting, factors exist which determine and affect language and communication production, such as speech's emotional content, hostile or polarized social surroundings, its created stress, the power relationships among participants, and the interpreter's degree of responsibility — in many cases more than extreme; in some cases, even the life of the other person depends upon the interpreter's work.

Medical

Medical interpreting is a subset of public service interpreting, consisting of communication, among medical personnel and the patient and his or her family, facilitated by an interpreter, usually formally educated and qualified to provide such interpretation services. There is no Federal Medical Interpreter certification in US right now. However, there two non-government non-profit entities which offer certification tests, Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. In some situations medical employees who are multilingual may participate part-time as members of internal language banks. The medical interpreter must have a strong knowledge of medicine, common medical procedures, the patient interview, the medical examination processes, ethics, and the daily workings of the hospital or clinic where he or she works, in order to effectively serve both the patient and the medical personnel. Moreover, and very important, medical interpreters often are cultural liaisons for people (regardless of language) who are unfamiliar with or uncomfortable in hospital, clinical, or medical settings. There several Medical or Healthcare Interpreter associations in US. The two largest are International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) and California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA). IMIA is professional association and CHIA is public charity dedicated to improving the quality and availability of language services in the delivery of healthcare.

Sign language



Two Sign Language interpreters working for a school

When a hearing person speaks, an interpreter will render the speaker's meaning into the sign language used by the deaf party. When a deaf person signs, an interpreter will render the meaning expressed in the signs into the spoken language for the hearing party, which is sometimes referred to as voice interpreting or *voicing*. This may be performed either as simultaneous or consecutive interpreting. Skilled sign language interpreters will position themselves in a room or space that allows them both to be seen by deaf participants and heard by hearing participants clearly and to see and hear participants clearly. In some circumstances, an interpreter may interpret from one sign language into an alternate sign language.

Deaf people also work as interpreters. They team with hearing counterparts to provide interpretation for deaf individuals who may not share the standard sign language used in that country, who have minimal language skills, are developmentally delayed or have other mental and/or physical disabilities which make communication a unique challenge. In other cases the hearing interpreter may interpret in one language then the Deaf interpreter might interpret it into another form of that language (pidgins). They also relay information from one medium of language into another — for example, when a person is signing visually, the deaf interpreter could be hired to copy those signs into a deaf-blind person's hand and add visual information.

In the United States, Sign Language Interpreters have National and State level associations. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), a non-profit national certifying body. In addition to training requirements and stringent certification testing, the RID members must abide by a Code of Professional Conduct, Grievance Process and Continuing Education Requirement.

In Europe each country has their own national association of sign language interpreters. Some countries have more than one national association due to regional or language differences. The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsl) is the umbrella organization of sign language interpreters in Europe.

Sign Language Interpreters can be found in all types of interpreting situations. Most interpreters have had formal training, in an Interpreter Training Program (ITP). ITP lengths vary, being available as a two-year or four-year degree or certificate. There are graduate programs available as well.

Media

By its very nature, media interpreting has to be conducted in the simultaneous mode. It is provided particularly for live television coverages such as press conferences, live or taped interviews with political figures, musicians, artists, sportsmen or people from the business circle. In this type of interpreting, the interpreter has to sit in a sound-proof booth where ideally he/she can see the speakers on a monitor and the set. All equipment should be checked before recording begins. In particular, satellite connections have to be double-checked to ensure that the interpreter's voice is not sent back and the interpreter gets to hear only one channel at a time. In the case of interviews recorded outside the studio and some current affairs programme, the interpreter interprets what he or she hears on a TV monitor. Background noise can be a serious problem. The interpreter working for the media has to sound as slick and confident as a television presenter.

Media interpreting has gained more visibility and presence especially after the Gulf War. Television channels have begun to hire staff simultaneous interpreters. The interpreter renders the press conferences, telephone beepers, interviews and similar live coverage for the viewers. It is more stressful than other types of interpreting as the interpreter has to deal with a wide range of technical problems coupled with the control room's hassle and wrangling during live coverage.

Modalities

Interpreting services can be delivered in multiple modalities. The most common modality through which interpreting services are provided is on-site interpreting.

On-site

Also called "in-person interpreting," this delivery method requires the interpreter to be physically present in order for the interpretation to take place. In on-site interpreting

settings, all of the parties who wish to speak to one another are usually located in the same place. This is by far the most common modality used for most public and social service settings.

Telephone

Also referred to as "over-the-phone interpreting," "telephonic interpreting," and "tele-interpreting," telephone interpreting enables the interpreter to deliver interpretation via telephone. The interpreter is added to a conference call. Telephone interpreting may be used in place of on-site interpreting in some cases, especially when no on-site interpreter is readily available at the location where services are needed. However, telephone interpreting is more commonly used for situations in which all parties who wish to communicate are already speaking to one another via telephone (e.g. applications for insurance or credit cards that are taken over the phone, inquiries from consumers to businesses that take place via telephone, etc.)

Video



A Video Interpreter sign used at locations offering VRS or VRI services

Interpretation services via Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) or a Video Relay Service (VRS) are useful where one of the parties is deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired (mute). In such cases the interpretation flow is normally within the same principal language, such as French Sign Language (FSL) to spoken French, Spanish Sign Language (SSL) to spoken Spanish, British Sign Language (BSL) to spoken English, and American Sign Language (ASL) also to spoken English (since BSL and ASL are completely distinct), etc.... Multilingual sign language interpreters, who can also translate as well across principal languages (such as to and from SSL, to and from spoken English), are also available, albeit less frequently. Such activities involve considerable effort on the part of the translator, since sign languages are distinct natural languages with their own construction and syntax, different from the aural version of the same principal language.

With video interpreting, sign language interpreters work remotely with live video and audio feeds, so that the interpreter can see the deaf or mute party, converse with the hearing party and vice versa. Much like telephone interpreting, video interpreting can be used for situations in which no on-site interpreters are available. However, video interpreting cannot be used for situations in which all parties are speaking via telephone alone. VRI and VRS interpretation requires all parties to have the necessary equipment. Some advanced equipment enables interpreters to control the video camera, in order to zoom in and out, and to point the camera toward the party that is signing.

Venues

The majority of professional full-time conference interpreters work for phone interpreting agencies, health care institutions, courts, school systems and international organisations like the United Nations, the European Union, or the African Union.

The world's largest employer of interpreters is currently the European Commission, which employs hundreds of staff and freelance interpreters working into the official languages of the European Union. The European Union's other institutions (the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice) have smaller interpreting services.

The United Nations employs interpreters at almost all its sites throughout the world. Because it has only six official languages, however, it is a smaller employer than the European Union.

Interpreters may also work as freelance operators in their local, regional and national communities, or may take on contract work under an interpreting business or service. They would typically take on work as described above.

The U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan employ hundreds of interpreters to assist with its communications with the local population.