

Types of Interpreting

Conference Interpreting

International conferences and official meetings such as intergovernmental (simultaneous or whispering)

The toughest job for an interpreter is a formal occasion such as a conference speech or a high-level governmental meeting, where a highly polished paper, full of information, is read out non-stop and the interpreter is not allowed to interact with the speaker. Simultaneous interpreting using a full booth is often employed, but if the target language audience is small, whispering using a wireless communication device makes economic sense. Another method is consecutive interpreting, in which the interpreter is at the podium alongside the speaker. For highly sophisticated occasions, two interpreters are assigned even for consecutive interpreting. → A&E arranges interpreting booths and wireless devices.

Technical Interpreting

Technically sophisticated meetings (joint R&D, ISO/IEC working groups)
(consecutive or whispering)

Interpreters are often called for in meetings of experts of a specific field such as medicine, IT, or mechanical engineering. Japanese tends to have more specialized terminology than English, and that is why for interpreters a solid background in science and technology is more important in Japanese than in English. Any materials provided prior to the meeting will be appreciated. If you hear a rendition in the target language that is not quite on the mark, please advise the interpreter of the correct expression. A good interpreter will master it on the spot and use the proper term from then on.

Business Interpreting

Business negotiations, management meetings (consecutive and whispering)

In any situation, interpreters are required to have a broad knowledge base in addition to mastery of the languages they work in. This is especially true for business situations.

Interpreters must be equipped with a good understanding of the economy and business practices as well as cross-cultural communication in order to be successful facilitators of business. Interpreters are generally evaluated on their accuracy, speed and delivery. In addition, the interpersonal skills of interpreters play a major role in business meetings, since interpreters are directly involved in the proceedings. Consecutive interpretation is normally employed in this context, but whispering can be a very good option if the meeting is small.

Court Interpreting

Trials, discoveries, witness preparation at law firms (consecutive)

Accuracy and completeness are the most important attributes for interpreters working with law. Training and experience are crucial, since court procedures are formal and the language is specialized. In the case of British Columbia, generally speaking, only those interpreters who are certified by STIBC for court or who have obtained a court interpreting certificate from Vancouver Community College can work in court. In a trial, any evidence is interpreted consecutively, but debates between attorneys and judge's instructions are to be conveyed to the witness by either whispering verbatim or summarizing.

Community Interpreting

No technical expertise is required, and the interpreter is welcome to have free interactions to facilitate communication (consecutive or whispering)

Community interpreting includes a variety of situations, such as personal interpreting for visits to a family doctor or dentist, driver exam's tests, meeting with immigration officers, etc.

Modes of Interpretation

Consecutive

The speaker pauses from time to time to allow the interpreter to speak. Some interpreters of European languages prefer to go phrase by phrase. For Japanese and English, a sentence is the minimum unit, and the most effective is paragraph by paragraph. The speaker does not

have to talk slowly, as normal speed is better for comprehension. The important thing is not to speak for too long before pausing: interpreters can only retain so much if they are to render it accurately. Consecutive interpreting is recommended if accuracy is of paramount importance.

Whispering

The speaker keeps speaking while the interpreter follows it in a whispering voice. Because the interpreter simultaneously hears both his/her own voice and the speaker, accuracy tends to suffer, especially when the acoustics are poor. This is a great mode of interpreting natural speech (not reading from speech notes) when the atmosphere is relaxed and accuracy of numbers and facts is of less importance. The listener receives a more immediate feel of what is going on. However, whispering may interfere with the listening of other people in the same room, and for this reason the use of a wireless device is recommended. Whispering requires a team of at least two interpreters.

Simultaneous

The interpreters are housed in a soundproof booth with a direct feed from the speaker's microphone. They wear headphones to prevent their own voices from interfering with their comprehension. They process what they hear and speak into the microphone in the booth with a time lag of approximately one phrase. It is now the norm to have a team of three interpreters for full-day assignments. Since interpreters are only human, speech notes and slides must be provided to them ahead of time in order to secure high-quality performance. With simultaneous interpreting, speakers are cautioned to speak at normal speed (if you are a fast talker, slow down, please) with many breathing pauses. Please remember that interpreters can do their job only after they hear. You need to give them a chance to catch up from time to time. Emphasize proper nouns and numbers by either slowing down or repeating. Pause briefly after using an unusual word.