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Interpreting services — General requirements and recommendations

Services d'interprétation — Exigences et recommandations générales

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology and other language and content resources*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

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Introduction

This document responds to the need to provide general service requirements for the provision of quality interpreting services. It provides requirements and recommendations for the delivery of spoken and signed communication across languages and societal contexts and throughout interpreting specializations. This document may be used in conjunction with other interpreting specialization standards.

Interpreters render spoken or signed communication across languages. Interpreting differs from translation, which is the rendering of written content into another written language.

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Interpreting services — General requirements and recommendations

1 Scope

This document specifies basic requirements for the provision of interpreting services. Additionally, it provides recommendations of good practice.

NOTE Interpreting specializations/specialized interpreting services can be covered in other International Standards (e.g. ISO 20228, Legal interpreting).

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at http://www.iso.org/obp

3.1 Terms related to people involved in interpreting and to modes of interpreting

3.1.1
interpret
render spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.4.4) to a *target language* (3.4.6) in oral or signed form, conveying both the register and meaning of the *source language content* (3.4.5)

3.1.2
interpreting
interpretation
rendering spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.4.4) to a *target language* (3.4.6) in oral or signed form, conveying both the register and meaning of the *source language content* (3.4.5)

3.1.3
interpreter
person who *interprets* (3.1.1)

3.1.4
interpreting service provider
ISP
interpreter (3.1.3) or organization providing *interpreting* (3.1.2) services

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3.1.5
client
customer
person, or organization, who enters into a formal agreement for the provision of an *interpreting* (3.1.2) service

Note 1 to entry: The formal agreement can, for example, take the form of a contract or of an interdepartmental service agreement between units of an organization.

Note 2 to entry: The client can be the *end user* (3.1.6), but this does not have to be the case.

3.1.6
end user
person or group of persons that ultimately uses the *interpreting* (3.1.2) service delivered

3.1.7
speaker
person addressing others, using either spoken language or *sign language* (3.4.2)

3.1.8
spoken language interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) between two spoken languages

3.1.9
sign language interpreting
signed language interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) between two *sign languages* (3.4.2) or between a sign language and a spoken language

3.1.10
distance interpreting
remote interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) of a *speaker* (3.1.7) in a different location from that of the *interpreter* (3.1.3), enabled by information and communications technology

3.1.11
mode
established method for the delivery of *spoken language interpreting* (3.1.8) or *sign language interpreting* (3.1.9)

3.1.12
consecutive interpreting
mode (3.1.11) of *interpreting* (3.1.2) performed after the *speaker* (3.1.7) pauses

Note 1 to entry: *Interpreters* (3.1.3) can use special *note-taking* (3.1.15) techniques to help in rendering lengthy passages.

3.1.13
simultaneous interpreting
mode (3.1.11) of *interpreting* (3.1.2) performed while a *speaker* (3.1.7) is still speaking or signing

3.1.14
sight translation
rendering written *source language content* (3.4.5) to the *target language content* (3.4.7) in the form of spoken language or *sign language* (3.4.2)

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3.1.15
note-taking
technique in *consecutive interpreting* (3.1.12) used by *interpreters* (3.1.3) for remembering, conceptualizing and summarizing information

Note 1 to entry: Note-taking is highly individual and can involve a mixture of symbols, abbreviations, words and diagrams.

3.1.16
chuchotage
whispered interpreting
simultaneous interpreting (3.1.13) where the *interpreter* (3.1.3) speaks very quietly, sits or stands in close proximity to the listeners and uses no interpreting equipment

Note 1 to entry: Chuchotage is used for interpreting to a very small number of listeners, ideally one or two.

3.1.17
protocol
rule, official procedure or common practice that guides the conduct of members of a profession

EXAMPLE Taking an oath in court to perform accurate *interpreting* (3.1.2), using direct speech when interpreting, or adhering to the code of ethics of a professional association.

3.2 Terms related to translation as distinct from interpreting

3.2.1
translate
render *source language content* (3.4.5) into *target language content* (3.4.7) in written form

3.2.2
translation
rendering *source language content* (3.4.5) into *target language content* (3.4.7) in written form

3.3 Terms related to interpreting settings and specializations

3.3.1
communicative setting
environment where an interaction between interlocutors takes place

3.3.2
community interpreting
public service interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) that enables people to access services available to society as a whole, and which they would otherwise be unable to access owing to a language barrier

EXAMPLE Social services, tourist services, disaster victim support services.

3.3.3
conference interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) used for multilingual communication at technical, political, scientific and other meetings

3.3.4
legal interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) at *communicative settings* (3.3.1) related to the law

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3.3.5
healthcare interpreting
medical interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) that occurs when individuals are accessing services that deal with the prevention and treatment of illnesses and where patients or their families have difficulty communicating with treatment providers or administrators

3.4 Terms related to language and competences

3.4.1
language
systematic use of sounds, characters, symbols or signs by which to communicate

3.4.2
sign language
signed language
language (3.4.1) which uses a combination of hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions

Note 1 to entry: Sign language can be a regional, national or international language with or without legal status, or an informal sign language with any number of users.

3.4.3
content
information in any form

EXAMPLE Text, audio, video, etc.

3.4.4
source language
language (3.4.1) from which *content* (3.4.3) is *interpreted* (3.1.1) or *translated* (3.2.1)

3.4.5
source language content
content (3.4.3) to be *interpreted* (3.1.1) or *translated* (3.2.1)

3.4.6
target language
language (3.4.1) into which *content* (3.4.3) is *interpreted* (3.1.1) or *translated* (3.2.1)

3.4.7
target language content
content (3.4.3) that has been *interpreted* (3.1.1) or *translated* (3.2.1) from a *source language* (3.4.4)

3.4.8
'A' language
primary *language* (3.4.1) or its strict equivalent of which the *interpreter* (3.1.3) has complete command and into which the *interpreter* (3.1.3) *interprets* (3.1.1) from all his/her other 'A' languages, *'B' languages* (3.4.9.) or *'C' languages* (3.4.10)

3.4.9
'B' language
language (3.4.1) in which the *interpreter* (3.1.3) is proficient but which is not his/her primary language or its strict equivalent

Note 1 to entry: An *interpreter* (3.1.3) works into this language from one or more other languages.

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3.4.10
'C' language
language (3.4.1) from which the *interpreter* (3.1.3) *interprets* (3.1.1) into his/her *'A' languages* (3.4.8) or *'B' languages* (3.4.9)

Note 1 to entry: An interpreter can have more than one 'A', 'B' or 'C' language.

4 Basic principles of interpreting

4.1 General

Interpreting shall aim to facilitate non-written communication by rendering a message faithfully between at least two parties who do not share the same language (either a spoken language or a sign language).

NOTE In this context, "faithfully" means to convey/render the information without additions, alterations or omissions affecting its content, style, intent and purpose.

4.2 Interpreting protocols and codes of conduct

4.2.1 Protocols

The interpreter shall adhere to accepted professional practices and protocols; they can vary by interpreting specialization and setting, and by country or region.

A non-exhaustive list of specializations and settings is set out in Annex A.

4.2.2 Codes of conduct

Codes of ethics, codes of conduct and standards of practice exist in many countries. Such documents can be developed by governments, judicial bodies, interpreters' associations, organizations that promote interpreting, and other entities. The interpreter shall adhere to the applicable professional codes of ethics and standards of practice.

4.3 Modes

The interpreter shall discuss with the client the mode of interpreting which is appropriate for the setting (see Annex A for examples). The modes used are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 — Modes

Type of mode	Interpreting takes place	Mode is widely considered appropriate in settings that involve
Consecutive interpreting	each time there is a suitable pause in the speech	Dialogues, question-and-answer sessions, speeches, press conferences
Simultaneous interpreting[a]	at the same time that the speaker is speaking or signing	Conferences using simultaneous interpreting equipment
NOTE Sight translation involves the oral rendering of a written text. It is a common task of interpreters, not translators. The interpreter first reads a document in silence to analyse it, and he/she then renders it orally from the source language into the target language. Sight translation does not constitute a mode of interpreting as such, but can be included as a mode of interpreting in an interpreting assignment.		
[a] Chuchotage, or whispered interpreting, is a form of simultaneous interpreting. When it is used, care has to be taken to ensure that it does not disturb the participants, including the speaker, since the interpreter, although whispering, can be heard by everybody. For that reason, chuchotage should only be provided for a very small group of people, ideally one or two.		

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