



Multi-Languages Newsletter

Serving the communications needs of Canada's international community



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What do you need to know when buying translations?

In order to keep the process of buying translations a trouble-free and pleasing experience, we put together a few suggestions for those who are not familiar with the translation industry:

Plan ahead. Include translation as an element of your project and not at the end of production.

- * Have a final version of the document before you submit it for translation.
- * Establish a contact person to answer the translator's questions. An inquisitive translator is an asset to the project.
- * Provide detailed information that may be useful to the translator for consistency in style and terminology, this may include previous translations, glossaries, published information about the product or service, the organization's website address, etc.

We also need to know:

- * Intended use for the translation:
- * For information (for internal use) or for publication (Brochures, manuals, websites)
- * Required method of presentation:
- * File format, delivery requirements, special formatting

Source Document

Write with the translation in mind, a good source text (well written, legible) is the first step for a good translation. Avoid jargon and keep the technical terminology consistent. For abbreviations, always include the meaning.

Conference 2006, we need your input.....

It is time again to start planning our annual conference for November. As in previous years we need to know your needs and ideas.

- * What subjects would you like to hear about?
- * Would you prefer theory or practice?
- * What type of resources / materials would you be interested in?

More information to come by email and in our September newsletter

Target Document

Remember that the text may expand in translation, you need to take this into account when writing and doing the layout. In some cases you may need up to 40% more space in the target language. If the document already exists, be prepared to adapt it and change the format to fit the new text.

Target Audience

Inform the translation provider about the target audience and what is the intention of the text. Do not assume the target readership for your translation will be similar to the original (level of education, cultural background, income, etc)

Deadlines

Create realistic deadlines. How much time did you spend creating the original text? A translator may need the same amount of time to translate it.

A translator can produce, between 1500-2500 words per day, this varies according to length, complexity, and familiarity with the source text however a translation process that includes quality assurance measures, goes beyond the "number of words" calculation.

Revision

If you need to revise the translated text in-house, please remember to appoint only qualified reviewers to work with our translation team. Please read our "Revision Guidelines" for additional information.

Full version of this document on our website

Coming soon... New web site!!

By mid-May our new website will be up and running. Among the new sections are:

- * Interactive country and language information
- * Protocols for interpreters and translators
- * Working with interpreters
- * Booking Procedures
- * Translation workflow
- * Charitable organizations working with multicultural communities
- * Links and references
- * Guide for buying translations

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Changes to our voice mail system:

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2	Written translations
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0	Immediate assistance
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Language classification for conference interpretation

Language A:

Native language or equivalent to native, used as source and target

Language B:

Other than native, perfect command, used as source and in some cases as a target.

Languages A and B are known as **Active** languages

Language C:

Complete understanding but only use as source

Languages C is known as **Passive** language

Language classification for translation

Source Language:

Language from which translation is coming from (Languages A, B or C)

Target Language:

Language into which translation is carried out (Language A and in some cases language B)

Code of Ethics for interpreters and translators:

- * Accuracy and Completeness
- * Confidentiality
- * Impartiality and Conflict of interest
- * Limitation of practice
- * Accountability
- * Professional Development
- * Respect for all parties

Visit our website for full Code of Ethics

Interpreting in a mental health setting

By Gordana Muratovic - Croatian and Serbian interpreter and translator

1. According to North American statistics, some 56% of patients admitted to the Emergency Dept. "After Hours" have mental disorders compared to 20% during daytime.
2. The ED (Emergency Dept.) is often the entry point of the health care system.
3. According to statistics, 32% EDs have at least one verbal threat per day; 18% EDs have at least one threat with a weapon each month; 25% of EDs report at least one restraint per day.
4. Jails and prisons contain a high proportion of individuals with undiagnosed mental disorders.
5. Substance abuse is not uncommon in individuals who suffer from mental disorders in which self medicating becomes a problem – Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, amphetamines, heroin, narcotics, certain painkillers, opiates, LSD, Crack...
6. Different cultures perceive mental illness differently.
7. Thus, if you are a healthcare interpreter dealing with this type of encounter, be sure to follow these guidelines as they may apply to you:

CONDUCT AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Think safety **FIRST**. Never try to restrain the patient, even when asked by the provider to do so, and if you think you are in jeopardy or harm, remove yourself from the situation.
- Maintain your distance at all times for self-protection and general health precautions, and so as not to further antagonize the patient.
- Ask for a security guard if needed or if you would like the added security to feel safe.
- Frequently language barriers become a hindrance in getting the vital medical history of the patient. Eliminate barriers by avoiding getting hooked into the call or the drama of the encounter, interpret meaning for meaning without giving any kind of advice or opinion to the provider, even if they ask for it, as this is outside the domain of your professional skills. Always remain in the role of an interpreter, and keep calm.
- Prepare yourself by knowing typical vocabulary used in encounters of this type:
- Never enter into any discussion or comments with the patient.

Useful mental health terminology:

Angry, Scared, Confused, Hopeless, Sad, Irritable, Anxious, Euphoria, Obsessive, Coping, Affect, Mood, Emotion, Perception, Judgment, Impulse, Attention, Memory, Depressive, Concentration, Suicidal, Abuse, Substance abuse, Lethargy, Disassociative, Identity crisis, Neglected, Mood swings, Nausea, Constricted, Persecuted, Revenge, Mistreat, Hyperventilate, Hallucinations, Vertigo.

Hopefully, these tips can help you in your daily work. As Health Care Professionals, your personal well-being is extremely important. Make sure that if you need to ventilate your personal feelings, you do so at the appropriate time and place. Realize that the crisis will go on with or without you, and to never take these situations personally. Your ability to maintain your professional role as an Interpreter is a reflection of your integrity as a professional as well as your ability to remain as detached and neutral throughout the encounter as possible.



Let me make a note of that: A short overview of note-taking for consecutive interpretation

By Nuray Cokgezen-Pekel - Turkish translator and interpreter

Consecutive interpreting, in short, is the technique where the interpreter provides the message in the target language after the speaker has finished talking in the source language. In order to reproduce the message accurately, this form of interpretation, gives the interpreter the freedom to interrupt the speaker for repetition or clarification. Note-taking is one of the ways to ensure the accuracy of the message transfer. This article will attempt to provide helpful tips for interpreters and show practical ways to note-taking in consecutive interpretation.

Main Purposes of Note-taking:

- * To help remember specific information (i.e., names, dates, numbers, lists, technical words)
- * To help note ideas (i.e. maintain the sequence of information)
- * To help focus your attention

Notes are mainly used for memory relief. One may understand the main ideas of a 5-6 minutes speech; however it is almost impossible to recall all the elements especially numbers, names and lists since such elements cannot be recalled on the basis of analysis and logic.

Practical Suggestions

- * Notes must be written on something convenient and easy to handle. A 15cm by 20cm stenographer's note-pad is recommended. Loose sheets should definitely be avoided.
- * Only one side of the sheets should be used, and if the pad is spiral bound at the top, they can be turned quickly and easily. The writing tool is a personal choice however a spare pen or pencil is always a good idea.
- * It is fundamental that the notes are taken quickly and they are easily read, otherwise they will become a distraction.

What to note

As the foundation of a speech, main ideas can be considered to be the central elements. Therefore they should be prioritized when taking notes.

It is also important to note the links between the different ideas as well as to clearly distinguish between them.

Verbs have a vital role within the sentence structure and it is essential to pay attention to verb tenses, conditionals and modals.

Other fundamental data are numbers, dates and proper names. Noting these elements will help assure their accuracy as well as relieve the stress on memory.

These are some of the basic needs in consecutive interpreting with regards to note-taking. Of course, interpreters have their own styles, and they could note down almost everything, or just the main elements. On the other hand, noting down everything, without paying the proper attention to active listening, must be avoided at all costs.

How to Note

Notes should reflect the structure of a speech clearly so as to help interpreters reproduce that structure in their interpretation.

Keeping the subject-verb-object structure could also help organize the notes and it is essential to always use the same page format in terms of positioning of the elements on the sheets. These positions will form a diagonal axis, from left to right and from top to bottom, following this scheme:

subject(s)		
	verb(s)	
		object(s)

Space left on the same sheet could be used to note the secondary elements of the speech.

Lists would be easier to note and to read if noted vertically.

Left-hand margin can be used for links, keeping in mind that ideas should be clearly linked and also clearly separated. It is very important to noticeably identify each different sentence from the next one.

Verticalization by drawing the line down the middle of a note pad, keeping the ideas of the message up and down and separating the main ideas by drawing a horizontal line as a separator are practices many interpreters prefer.

Indentation or diagonal note-taking allows the interpreter to relate the ideas without the help of connecting phrases.

Abbreviations and symbols

The obvious advantage of abbreviations and symbols is that they help save time in taking notes, making them more precise and complete. Moreover, the symbol represents an idea, and this will help interpreters think in terms of ideas, not words.

Taking advantage of common abbreviations such as OK and ASAP and making use of terminological knowledge of different fields such as physics, mathematics or geometry might also be a good idea.

Every interpreter creates his/her own list of symbols and abbreviations. One should remember to keep these lists short and meaningful. Improvisation of first time symbols should be avoided during an assignment.

Especially for European languages abbreviations should not involve affixes such as "pre-" or "-tion". Focusing on the consonants could be a more efficient way to create an abbreviation.

Which language to use while taking notes

In their notes, interpreters do not have to use a particular language.

They could prefer to take the notes in their mother tongue or in the source language or in the target language. They might use a system of symbols, abbreviations, numbers, signs and words in one or more languages, thereby creating a cryptic and highly personalized language.

Final note

All notes should be destroyed before leaving the assignment location.

It is highly essential to keep in mind that one must refrain from giving in to the temptation of excessive note-taking to the point of pushing the active listening to a secondary activity level. Taking notes must be the instrument not the objective.

Dealing With Those Darn PDFs

By Jost Zetzsche German translator and writer

If you look through the archives of discussion lists for translators, these are the two questions that are most often asked: First, what are the differences between the different computer-assisted translation tools? Second, do any of them support PDF files, and if not, what's the best way to translate those files?

I've written a lot about the first question, but I've always shied away from answering the second because there is just no real good answer.

First of all, no CAT tool really supports PDF files. Wordfast (see www.wordfast.net) does list this as one of its supported formats, but it adds a lot of disclaimers in its manual about the effectiveness of its method (through MS Word).

Second, no CAT tool ever WILL support PDF files (I would love to be proven wrong on this one!). One of the major reasons for the existence of PDFs is content protection (yes, PDF stands for "Portable Document Format," but in my opinion it could just as well stand for "Protected Document Format"), and this gives you some idea of why it's so hard to get text out of PDFs. It is possible in newer editions of Adobe Acrobat to save a PDF to an RTF, text, or XML file, but these formats have the same set of problems that you also encounter when simply copying and pasting content out of a PDF file: text that used to be a field (page numbers or cross-references) is now plain text, non-visible fields (such as the index) are gone, no styles are preserved, the formatting is gone, graphics are ignored, and, worst of all, every line break is replaced with a paragraph mark (making it essentially unusable for CAT tools). And if you're really out of luck, all the text will be garbled if your system does not support the fonts that were used in the PDFs.

So, not much light on the horizon for PDF translation, except.

All PDF files were originally created in a format other than PDF. Many clients send translators the PDF because they're simply too lazy to look for the original files. After all, the translator's headaches are not their headaches -- until you make them their headaches. One easy way of doing this is to charge a hefty surcharge! I have found it quite revealing that suddenly many of the "lost" source files were discovered.

Obviously, there are cases where this does not work. Either the source file truly cannot be found (or accessed), or the source format is some kind of format that you could not support anyway (the file may have been created in Quark, InDesign, or one of the other expensive DTP programs that many translators don't have), or there are legal limitations that prevent the client from simply giving you the source files. Whatever the reason, at that point you will have to find a better solution.

There are a great many conversion programs on the market that convert PDFs to RTF or HTML files (see for instance <http://www.pdfstore.com/category.asp?CtgID=7>), and over the years I have worked unhappily with a decent number of them. Most of them do not solve the problem of the paragraph mark at the end of each line. Even if they do, they add another layer of complication to the formatting by placing everything in text boxes. And any graphic content is treated as graphics and cannot be directly translated.

The one solution that I like and use in a very productive manner is an optical character recognition (OCR) program for scanning, such as OmniPage (see www.omnipage.com/omnipage) or ABBYY FineReader (see www.abbyy.com/finereader). Newer versions of these programs can now convert PDF files into Word documents without actually scanning them (they scan them internally). If the typeface of the originating PDF was clearly visible the results are great, particularly because even text in graphics is transformed into translatable text! The unnecessary and annoying paragraph markers are eliminated, and the only thing that doesn't work is the re-conversion of former fields into actual fields. This means that there may be some work for you to do once you have your PDF converted, but it's significantly less than with other solutions.

Both OmniPage and ABBYY have realized that this has become an increasingly popular feature of their OCR system (which in itself is pretty expensive), so they have now created much less expensive stand-alone programs that are specifically geared toward that process: PDF Converter (www.omnipage.com/pdfconverter) and PDF Transformer (www.abbyy.com/pdftransformer), with the former even supporting PDF creation in some versions.

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