

Translation Vs Interpretation

Is there a difference?



Adarve Translations

The Path to Open Communications

What an interesting question, isn't it? As a translations agency, we often receive phone calls of people asking for the services of an "on-site translator". When asked about the kind of "on-site translation" needed, the answer is invariably the need of a "translator" at a conference setting, or to verbally communicate with foreign clients coming to their facilities for a couple of days or weeks, or to help foreign language speaking patients communicate with their doctors and/or dentists.

In this case, the professional required for on-site, oral translations, is in fact an interpreter, instead of a translator.

Translation and interpretation are seemingly the same, though important differences actually exist between the two professions, and they each require different formation and set of abilities. At Adarve Translations we consider it important that our clients know these differences and requirements.

On the surface, the difference between interpreting and translation is only the difference in the medium: the interpreter translates orally, on-site or person-to-person, while a translator interprets written text. At the core, the differences are greater than the similarities.

Translators generally work into their native language only (though many translators with near-native language skills can translate into a language different from their native one), conveying the message of one written language into the other at any time after the original text was written, including the translation of texts into Braille, must have excellent writing and analytical ability, as well as good editing skills in order to render flawless translations, do not need to be part of a team and can work from home.

Interpreters often work into and from both languages, conveying the message, in real time, of one spoken language into another, or, in the case of sign-language interpreters, between spoken communication and sign language, possess strong research and analytical skills, mental dexterity, and an exceptional memory, and usually have to work with multiple people at the same time and on-site.



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Ultimately, the difference comes down to the written or verbal translation of a document, message or series of messages. The translator can scrupulously examine a text and convey the meaning or essence of each sentence into a foreign language so that the original message is transferred as if it had been written originally in the target language. The interpreter is required to verbally translate conversation in real time, often for more than 2 participants. Each acts as a relay and must not add his/her own feelings or thoughts to the communication. They must relay the message as originally delivered in order to protect the integrity and efficiency of the source communication.

Misconceptions about interpretation and translation

People in general have misconceptions about what translation or interpretation is and what translators and/or interpreters actually do. Sometimes these misconceptions are based in different ways of approaching new information, and other times they come from a lack of understanding of the reality of the translation and interpretation professions.

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Misconceptions about interpretation

- Interpreters don't produce anything

In fact, interpreters are, and have always been, extremely important in all kinds of domains because they provide a bridge between people who speak different languages and cannot communicate with one another, like at the doctor's or dentist's office.

- Interpretation is too unstructured

Interpreting is a skill developed through training and discipline, where the interpreter attends workshops and training sessions, develops memory skills, develops both consecutive and simultaneous modes of interpreting in order to be qualified for and prepared to perform his/her job truthfully and accurately.

- Interpretation is about acting a part or presenting a single point of view

Nothing farther from the truth. Style, tone of voice, inflection, and hesitations are non-verbal cues important to the intent of the speaker. Cultural differences, including value systems, patterns of behavior, and unique modes of thinking and expression, are essential to understanding the viewpoint of the speaker. Dialect and use of idioms can easily lead to confusion and misunderstanding between speakers.



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- Interpreters focus on face-to-face interaction with the public

This is not always the case, since there are several types of interpretation settings and modes, such as: Simultaneous, whispered, consecutive, liaison, phone, conference, legal/court, escort, public service, medical, sign language interpretation

- Interpretation doesn't have a defined role in our society

In today's multicultural, multilingual world, interpreters and translators facilitate the cross-cultural communication necessary in society by converting one language into another relaying concepts and ideas between languages.

- Interpretation isn't a "real" profession

Interpreters understand what is meant when referring to interpreting as a "profession": a field of work that requires specialized knowledge and training on the one hand, and the body of qualified practitioners on the other.

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Misconceptions about Translation

- Anyone who knows a foreign language can be a translator

As described on our May 2011 Newsletter, being able to read, speak and write a foreign language does not mean anyone is able to undertake translation work. Being a Translator requires skills that bilingual people, or people who are fluent in another language, do not necessarily possess.

- Translating is easy, so what's the fuss about?

Translation can actually be very intricate, complex and in-depth work. Having to simultaneously concentrate on two different texts, in two different languages, requires high mental skills, an excellent vocabulary and appreciation of the subtleties in language such as phrases, metaphors, tone and intention.

- Computers and modern translation tools can now do translations

No translation program can and will ever be able to take the place of human translators. Don't miss our July Newsletter for more information on computer translations.





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Let Your Friends, Family and Clients Know About Us:

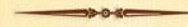
The best compliment we can receive is the honor to serve you on your translation needs. Consider giving the gift of knowledge and accurate, professional translations to anyone you know who is looking to present their business in communities or nations where they don't speak the language. Please forward this Newsletter or visit:

www.adarvetranslations.com, or you can call us at (828) 350-8369.



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- Translators simply translate words.

Wrong. Translation is never the "simple" exchange of words from one language to the next. A good, qualified translator expresses the contextual meaning of the source text in the target language as if it had never been translated.

- There's no difference between translation and interpretation

As explained above, there are not only basic, but important differences between both professions. Speaking is not writing, and oral fluency does not guarantee smooth stylish writing.

- Having a professional translation is not crucial

It may be true that professional translators might not always be necessary, especially if all you need is a translation of cousin Ernie's letter with the latest family news, however if the translation is to be accurate and professionally prepared and presented to your overseas clients, then an experienced translator is crucial. When you require surgery, do you put yourself in the hands of a qualified surgeon, or do you simply go to a surgical medical device salesman? In any case, he/she knows how the scalpel works, right?

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"Adriana is very professional in her work, dedicated, and with an extensive knowledge.

Her translations are high quality and always on time, it is a pleasure to have a professional like her for my business.

My website and most of my printed advertisement always go through her hands before getting to the public."

*– Sandra A. Giraldo
Innisfree Body Works
Historic Pawtuxet Village, RI*

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