

# Tips for Interpretation at Conferences



**SIMULTANEOUS  
INTERPRETATION**

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## **An Introduction**

Interpreting is a very difficult profession. It deals with the widest variety of themes and subject matters, and it completely depends on the human brain. All professional interpreters have made mistakes at one time or another, and we will make some more before our careers are over. Fortunately, good interpreters know how to recognize a mistake, and have the professional honesty needed to own their mistakes and correct them. We all know how to correct a blooper from the booth, with a physician, or on the record in court cases. This is enough in most cases, and we have professional liability insurance for those bigger errors we can make while practicing our profession. Most goof-ups do not go beyond a correction, an apology, and a good dose of embarrassment. Unfortunately, every once in a while an interpreter makes a mistake that can literally impact the entire world. I know that there are many more examples of these catastrophic interpreting mistakes, and I am even aware of many more than the ones I have included in this post.

## **An Introduction**

The level of pressure at the moment of performing an interpretation in a conference is quite high, since it is easier to make mistakes when working with an oral speech simultaneously, than translating documents that must be delivered one or several days after they are received.

In a conference the interpreters not only translate the discourse of the interlocutors, but they transmit the ideas of concrete and direct form, respecting the message but contributing some elements so that the sense of the same in the target language is understood.

If you feel enthusiastic about developing yourself in the area of interpretations, here are some important tips.

## **Know the types of interpretation well**

There are several types of interpretation: the consecutive one, where the professional listens and takes notes to express those ideas in another language; the simultaneous, in which the message is transmitted in real time while the interpreter is in a booth; the bilateral, which occurs in conversations or negotiations and in which the interpreter must transfer the language between two speakers; and the whispered one, which is also given in real time, but to a limited number of participants since, as the name indicates, the interpreter whispers the message.

When interpreting at conferences, the most common is simultaneous interpretation in which short-term memory is used most.

## **Preparation**

This step not only applies to the days before a conference, but for any day in the life of an interpreter, because if you have the goal of playing as an interpreter it is important to know that preparation is the most essential.

Some of the methods that interpreting professionals use to prepare themselves include linguistic immersion residing in a foreign country and of course being aware of the latest developments at the national and international level.

Constant reading is also essential to increase knowledge in various areas that at a certain moment you might have to interpret in a conference. However, depending on whether you want to specialize in a particular area you can focus on specific topics, for example: engineering, medicine, law, among others.

## **Voice care**

In the work of conference interpretation, voice is our main work tool, which is why it is essential to use it in the best possible way so that it is not affected during the day.

It is recommended to rest very well the night before the conference because the vocal cords are muscles that relax during sleep, you should drink enough water and not force the voice when speaking, since that is why you have microphones.

I also advise you to do exercises every day, read aloud and record and then listen if you have pronounced all the words well. Remember that your interpretation should be clear with an open articulation and a good vocalization and of course be projected with sufficient volume.

As a last tip with respect to the voice, at the time of the conference it will benefit you to maintain an adequate posture, since a bad position will not allow you to take the necessary amount of air to speak well. Regardless of whether we have a bad or uncomfortable chair, a correct posture must be maintained.

## **Teamwork**

Conferences usually last more than an hour and interpretations that exceed an hour and a half require the work of two interpreters, and from the moment of preparation for the day of the event, you must learn to work as a team .

A professional interpretation requires that the interpreter prepare, investigate and have glossaries, of course if there are two people studying, it can be much more encompassed since the workload is shared.

The same happens at the time of the conference, while one interprets the other writes or looks for terms to support his partner or if someone needs to rest, the other person is responsible for continuing with the interpretation.

And the last advice I can give you is that you never stop practicing, we know that interpretation requires certain skills that are innate in some people, however practice makes perfect and if you really intend to work as an interpreter at conferences you can achieve it with perseverance, a lot of preparation and above all practice.

Thank

you

