

## LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Overview: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language\\_interpretation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_interpretation)

See handout: Language Interpretation Guidelines\_Mathewson\_2006.pdf

Moving to another land or language community, you will quickly adapt to listening to interpreters, and you will eventually be asked to provide interpretation.

Interpreters learn to speak their own language more carefully while becoming more fluent in a second language.

### Interpretation

- Listening to what one language speaker says, and immediately telling the *perceived* meaning in another language.
- Interpretation is not translation which carefully transforms vocabulary, grammar, discourse and style in another language without loss or distortion of *intended* meaning.

### Interpreters

- Listen to one language speaker and tell the meaning in another language.
- Do not have time to make a careful translation.
- Seek to tell meaning accurately, even though not eloquently.
- Do not interject their own thoughts or opinions.
- Sometimes ask a speaker about what s/he means.
- May have to “correct” an earlier interpretation.

### If there is time beforehand

- Learn the purpose and expected outcome of the conversation or presentation.
- Solicit any special terms that you may have to think about or look up before you start.
- Read about the subject in both languages.
- Listen to other interpreters to learn how translate common speech patterns.

### Before you start

- Explain to speakers that you will try to express their meaning but cannot convey their feelings or humor.
- Remind speakers to keep their sentences short and to speak distinctly.
- Remind speakers to stop after every sentence, so that you will not forget part of their words.

### Train yourself to interpret

- Repeat mentally or quietly to yourself how masterful interpreters express common phrases and grammatical structures.
- Interpret mentally or quietly to yourself when listening to careful speakers.
- Find ways to say “untranslatable” phrases in both languages.
- Master standard ways in which to express basic languages structures: statements, queries, commands, purpose, result, cause, reason, sequence, inclusion, exclusion...
- Listen to how children use those structures.