

Translation and Interpreting differ like night and day.



Many people use the terms “translation” and “interpreting” interchangeably even though translation deals with **written text** and interpreting involves **spoken words**.

Translation is a more complex process to coordinate than interpreting, and has a very different educational infrastructure. The knowledge and skills required in these professions are different enough that it is common for linguists to specialize in one role, particularly in high-demand languages.

There are also differences within each profession that affect educational requirements, earning potential, attrition and ability to prepare for assignments. It is important to understand the basic differences as they impact resource selection, the linguist’s rate of pay and skills required for the job.

Hopefully, this knowledge will help you appreciate why language service providers will charge higher or lower rates to retain the right person for the job.

COMPARISON OF PROFESSIONS

Criterion	Translator	Conference Interpreter	Community Interpreter
Professional Qualification/Accreditation in their field*	University, EU, UN, FIT, CTTIC, ATA, ATIO, OTTIAQ	University, EU, UN, AIIC, Translation Bureau	University (recent), MAG, IRB, OCCI, ATIO
Percentage of Linguists with above*	Mid-to-High	High	Low
Preparation Process	Performs research concurrently	Researches and reads briefing materials in advance	Researches in advance based on context of job
Cost Structure	Per-Word Rate	Daily Rate	Hourly Rate
Attrition (people who leave the industry)	Low	Low	High

*This is based on our experience and industry understanding. Other realities apply based on geographic location of linguists.

- Translators work primarily with written text, and are among the most highly paid language professionals in Canada.
- Conference interpreters deliver seamless multilingual communication, most often simultaneously, and are well-paid.
- Community interpreters interpret mostly consecutively during life-altering meetings such as legal, medical and social service settings, and are, surprisingly, the lowest paid language professionals.

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING COURSES PROVIDED BY COMPANIES NOT INSTITUTIONS



Most language service providers leave training and certification to well-respected learning institutions, and focus on putting interpreters on the right track to professionalization. But some companies develop their own programs and issue their own certificates to community interpreters. This lowers the bar for entry and allows a larger number of interpreters to enter the market. Costs come down and jobs are created, but it also causes attrition and undercuts officially recognized accreditations by clouding the perception of what it means to be a “professional interpreter.”

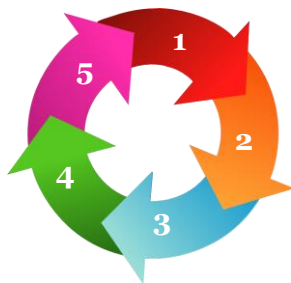
Community Interpreting process is more immediate

Once an interpreting assignment has been completed, the process is over. The interpreting process requires the interpreter to listen to a speaker in one language, immediately understand what is being said, and then communicate that understanding to a listener in a different language. The interpreter must be able to relay conversations in both directions, on the spot without delay, using their language skills, prior knowledge and, at times, a dictionary and notepad.



The interpreter works independently and in real time, without access to databases or computers. The interpreter is completely on their own, which makes the job quite challenging.

Translation process is more continuous



1. The source text is reviewed, and the translator produces the translation and checks his/her work
2. A sentence-by-sentence database (Translation Memory) of source and target texts is created
3. A second linguist performs the Quality Assurance process
4. The translation is delivered to the client who may also provide Client Side Review feedback
5. The Translation Memory is updated with the approved translation.

Translation clients benefit from centralization

The translation process is cyclical and constantly builds the clients' translation assets. This leads to higher consistency between jobs, lower costs and faster turnarounds. This is why companies with educated purchasers often rely on a single translation services vendor to meet all their ongoing needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSLATION OR INTERPRETING:
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