

# Strategies for Effective Collaborations with Interpreters

## SHBC Webinar

**Angela Sasso, MA**  
 Founder & Director  
 Shifting Pictures & The Interpreter's Lab



**February 28, 2025**




1

# Strategies for Effective Collaborations with Interpreters - **Agenda**

- What is an Interpreter?**
  - Role and Responsibilities
  - Competences and Ethical Guidelines
- Working with Interpreters**
  - Best Practices for Effectively Utilizing Interpreting Protocols
- Effective Collaborations**
  - Working with Interpreters in SLP and Audiology
- Addressing Concerns and Strategic Actions**
  - Q&A
- Closing**

2

*Setting some common ground*

## Interpreting | Translation | Access |

### Interpreting

Spoken or signed conversion of meaning and message from one language to another

### Translation

Written [digital or hardcopy] conversion of meaning and message from one language to another

### Quality Language **ACCESS**

A deliberate practice that respects all parties: the service, it's clients and the language professional

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025: All rights reserved.

 THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education 3

3

## Interpreting | Happens in Many Places

- Business Meetings
- Diplomatic Delegations
- Courts and Administrative Tribunals
- Law Enforcement
- Conferences

#### Community interpreting/ Public service interpreting

Interpreting that enables people to access services available to society as a whole, and which they would otherwise be unable to access owing to a barrier to communication resulting from the use of different languages

(Source: iso 13611:2024)

### Community/Public Sector Settings

- Social Services
- Police
- Healthcare
- Mental Health
- Probation
- Education

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025: All rights reserved.

 THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education 4

4

What is an interpreter?



THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Center for Language Training & Education

5

### Some Definitions on the Role

“Interpreters render spoken or signed communication across languages. Interpreting differs from translation, which is the rendering of written content into another written language.” **ISO 18841:2018 International Standards Organization (ISO), Switzerland**

“An **interpreter's role** is to facilitate communication between two or more people who use different languages, being either spoken or signed. ... The **interpreter** is not responsible for what is said by either party but is responsible for ensuring that everything that is said is communicated accurately in the other language.” **National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), Australia**



Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.

6

# The Interpreter

## SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE



- Is **fluent and proficient** in 2 or more languages
- Trained in **Interpreting Competences and Professional Skills**
- **Screened** and vetted
- **Tested** or assessed
- Trained in the **subject matter**
- Competent in all **interpreting modes**

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025: All rights reserved.

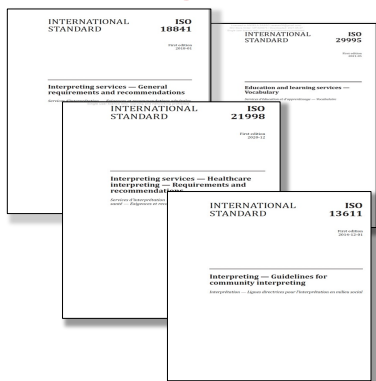
THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education

7

7

# The Interpreter

## ETHICS & STANDARDS



- Uphold **confidentiality** & privacy
- Remains impartial/**neutral**
- Faithfully and **accurately** interprets for all parties
- Interpret **EVERYTHING & ANYTHING**
- Observes a **code of conduct**
- Is **accountable** to a professional network and/or an agency contract
- Maintains **professional competences**
- Follows set professional **protocols**

THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education

8

8

## The Components of Interpreter Training



### Interpreter Competences

1. Linguistic Competence
2. Interpreting Competence
3. Technical Competence
4. Information Acquisition Competence
5. Intercultural and Interpersonal Competence

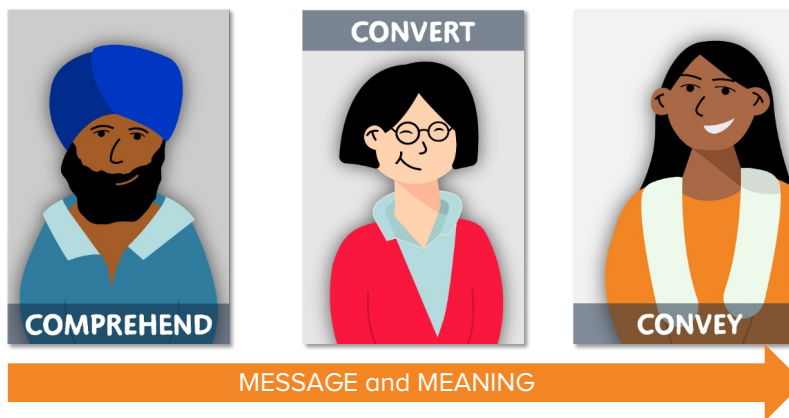
(Source: ISO 13611:2024)

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.



9

## The Tasks of the Interpreter



LISTEN / **COMPREHEND**

Analyze Meaning

**CONVERT MEANING**

Find Equivalents

**CONVEY MESSAGE**

Natural Form

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.



10

# Interpreting Modes

## Primary Modes

### Simultaneous Mode

Overlapping voices

### Consecutive Mode

Pauses in between speakers

## Hybrid Modes

### Sight Translation

From written to oral or signed

### Chuchotage (whispered)

Whispered simultaneous mode

11

## Critical Role and Distinctions of Professional Interpreters

### Ethical Issues

- Address inequity and access that may result from language barriers

### Legal Issues

- Negligence and liability due to poor communication / miscommunication
- Negligence in mitigating potential errors

### Economic Issues

- Short term costs
- Avoids unnecessary interventions and tests



12

## Using Interpreters in Clinical Settings



### Trained / Assessed Interpreters Should be Preferred Choice

- Ensure objectivity and accuracy in communication

### Family & Friends as Interpreters

(CAUTION: only when necessary)

- Not ideal but may be the only option in some cases
- Should be guided to interpret accurately without adding or omitting information

13

## SLPs & Audiologists: Conduct Assessment, Treatment and/or Consultation

- Evaluate communication and hearing disorders
- Gather data to:
  - Diagnose and create treatment plans
  - Develop treatment strategies

**Interpreter**

- Integrate linguistic and cultural insights within boundaries
- Ensure accurate data is shared

Language  
Culture

14

## Good to Know and Note

### ACCURACY

The role of the interpreter is to maintain the same **meaning, tone, and register** as the original message with **nothing omitted** nor **added**.

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

If other members of the family are present, ensure that they are fully **aware and respectful** of the interpreter's role and they do not interrupt

### EXPLICIT LANGUAGE

Should anyone **swear** or use **explicit language** during the appointment – the interpreter should also interpret this directly. If an equivalent meaning is not available, the interpreter should intervene and explain the meaning.

### SEATING / POSITIONING

The interpreter may sit **behind** the patient, in a **triangle** formation or **beside** the SLP.

### INTERPRETING MODE

In community-based settings, Interpreters will use **Consecutive Mode** (speaker pauses). But may also use **Simultaneous Mode** (overlapping voices) if needed.

### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Interpreters are trained to convey meaning from all forms of communication. However, in SLP/Audiology settings, they should minimize reliance on non-verbal cues whenever possible to support accuracy in treatment.

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.

 THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education

15

15

# BEST PRACTICES



Working  
with  
Interpreters

**Before**

**During**

**After**

 THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™  
Centre for Interpreter Training & Education

16

16

## BEST PRACTICES: SLP/Audiology Before you start Pre-session

Share:

- Information about roles / multidisciplinary team members (if necessary)
- Necessary terminology
- A basic profile of the patient and what you anticipate to see/hear
- An overview of the structure of the assessment or treatment plan
- Review any questionnaires/ documentation that may be used

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.

17

17

## Preparation is Key

“The therapist talked about the audiogram, which is a chart for hearing. If they don’t provide me with anything in advance, it can be harder to understand because it includes frequency and volume charts. I prepare for assignments in advance – if I know a hearing test will be discussed, I research it beforehand. I even printed out an audiogram to familiarize myself with the numbers and what they mean.

As interpreters, **we can’t know everything**, so if speech therapists or audiologists share technical information ahead of time, it really helps us prepare and do our job better.”

**Suhua** – Mandarin Interpreter



18

## BEST PRACTICES: As you start General Guidelines

- Introduce yourself, your role, the client, the goals of the session, whether this is the first encounter between you and the client, and any other points that you believe will facilitate communication.
- Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to both you and the client, and to explain their role in the session. This will set the client at ease as well.

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.

19

19

## BEST PRACTICES: SLP/Audiology During the session

Always maintain responsibility for managing the session.

Provide introductions – if not already done so

Remind the interpreter to avoid repeating an instruction unless prompted by you

---

The Interpreter should explain, to all parties present that:

- Everything that is said – by any speaker - will be interpreted
- They may ask questions if unsure (about anything) or ask for clarification
- Will not answer any questions directly, nor provide clarification without direction of the SLP/Audiologist
- They will avoid side conversations with client/patient and/or the family

20

20

# Adaptive and Informed Practices

1. Provide Key Vocabulary in Advance
2. Prepare for Pronunciation Differences
3. Be Open to Adapting

“For example, with speech therapist and children, they will practice pronunciation with the kids. They will ask me, like for the Chinese – because the pronunciation between Chinese and English is different, right? English has a “shh” or “sch” sound – and some kids cannot pronounce it. So, the SLP will give them the words in English, but the child doesn't understand English, and if I translate the word into Chinese – it is totally different [*not the same sound*].

So, some of the therapists, they're very good. They ask me “Oh, does such and such word have a any Chinese equal?” If I say yes, then the word is translated. If I say, no, then the therapist will ask me to pick a word that has the pronunciation they are looking for - because they just want to watch/hear the sound the child makes.”

21

### Working with Children on the Autism Spectrum

Let the interpreter know if a certain approach or 'tone' is necessary.

If it is likely that words will be said as the child is running around or working on some tasks and you need that simultaneously interpreted, alert the interpreter in advance.

### Working with Seniors in Audiology

Is it necessary to speak slowly, in a louder voice, on one side vs the other side of the senior?

All of these requirements should be clearly relayed to the interpreter to support a more seamless and accurate session.

“One has to be very gentle and slow, using a soft tone. Otherwise, they're very timid. They don't want to answer any questions, right?” Mandarin Interpreter

22

## BEST PRACTICES: During the session General Guidelines

- The interpreter will be speaking in 1st person. **Ensure** this is indeed happening.
- Any intervention is done in 3rd person – e.g.: “the interpreter would like ...”
- Structure the seating arrangement so that you and the client have primary contact
- Avoid a setting where the interpreter physically blocks your communication.
- Speak directly to the client and avoid looking at the interpreter when the conversation is directed at the client. Encourage the client to do the same.
- Should anything seem odd, check in with the interpreter.

23

## BEST PRACTICES: During the session General Guidelines

- Use a well-paced speaking style. The interpreter is working with memory, so allow a pause every 2-3 sentences.
- Interpreters may take notes to aid in maintaining accuracy with verbatim information. Notes are NOT for distribution and will be immediately destroyed.
- Should there be any paperwork required of the client, (admission forms, consent forms, etc.), recognize that there is a limit to how much form-filling an interpreter is made responsible for.
- Stay present to answer any questions that the client may have on any documentation you’ve asked the interpreter to read to them (sight translate) as it is not the interpreter’s responsibility to do so.

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025. All rights reserved.

24


## BEST PRACTICES: After the Session

- Thank the interpreter and ask if they need any forms signed themselves (to validate their attendance).
- Check in to see if the interpreter requires any follow up or has any questions (without breaking confidentiality, it is sometimes necessary to debrief after more complex or traumatic appointments).
- If you are pleased with the interpreter’s work, let them know. Better yet, let the LSP know by making comments on the form or letting the office know next time you call.
- Interpreters may not always be experts in cultural explanations, even if they share the client’s background. Avoid asking them for insights beyond factual details (e.g., religion, diet, intergenerational relationships).

25

## How to Ensure You are Working with an Interpreter

versus an untrained, self-proclaimed bilingual




**Ask for authentication.** This can be:

- Valid ID from an agency (MOSAIC, PLS, ITS, etc.)
- Confirmation of Certified Professional status with STIBC or other CTTIC Member Organization
- Certificate of Successful Completion from a reputable training organization (The Interpreter’s Lab, S.F.U., etc.)

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc.© 2025: All rights reserved.

26



26

## Concerns: Themes

---

1. Accuracy & Reliability of Interpreting
2. Interpreter Training & Qualifications
3. Logistics, Time Management & Technical Challenges

27

## The Interpreter's Lab What we do

---

- Interpreter training for bilingual and multilingual individuals
- Upgrading and new skills acquisition
- 4 courses:
  - Interpreting in Community Settings
  - Interpreting in Healthcare Settings
  - Interpreting in Mental Health Settings
  - Interpreting in Legal Settings
- Intensive, short-course training
- Monthly Professional Development Forums
- Training meets national and international standards



Training  
recognized by  
all the key  
interpreter  
service providers  
in BC and across  
Canada.

28

# Contact Information



**Founder and Director**  
Shifting Pictures Inc. & The Interpreter's Lab



THE INTERPRETER'S LAB™



**Convenor and Project Leader ISO TC 37/SC 5/  
WG4** - Interpreting and translation teaching and  
training programs

**Vice-Chair, Canadian Mirror Committee (SCC) - TC  
37/SC 5** - Translation, interpreting and related  
technologies



**President**  
Critical Link International  
*Linking the World for the Advancement of Community Interpreting*

**Angela Sasso**

[angela@shiftingpictures.com](mailto:angela@shiftingpictures.com)

[angela@interpreterslab.org](mailto:angela@interpreterslab.org)

604-219-0994

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/angelasasso/](https://linkedin.com/in/angelasasso/)

Images & Content Protected by Copyright Shifting Pictures Inc. © 2025: All rights reserved.



## Acknowledgements

---

With thanks and gratitude to our Members at The Interpreter's Lab, my colleagues in this work, and interpreters everywhere.