

WHY CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION SHOULD STILL BE TAUGHT IN INTERPRETER TRAINING COURSES

Despite the decline in the use of Consecutive Interpretation (CI) in Western Europe and in international organisations over the past few decades since the introduction of Simultaneous Interpretation, there are still valid reasons for CI to be used and, therefore, to be taught:

- CI is ideal for small meetings using a maximum of 2 or 3 languages
- CI is less expensive and cumbersome than SI: no booths or equipment are needed
- Fewer interpreters are needed
- CI provides greater flexibility re time, space...and location
- CI is useful and still very much in use in other regions and countries of the world
- CI is still in use and may even be on the increase in EU institutions, especially the Commission.

Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation are similar because:

- Both are based on the skill of communicating orally between two or more languages
- Both are highly complex and demanding
- Both rely on the development and use of several sub-skills and concurrent processes
- Both involve 3 main stages: (1) Listening and Analysis, (2) Memorisation/Retention, (3) Transfer/Transposition and Delivery.

Main differences between Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation:

- CI requires the development of a good note-taking technique
- In CI, the transition from one stage to the next is more clearly defined than in SI and is, possibly, slower
- SI requires the ability to listen to and analyse the message in the source language while delivering an earlier segment of the speech in the target language in an on-going intellectual loop.

Consecutive Interpretation should be taught before Simultaneous Interpretation because:

- With the clearer and slower transition between each stage in CI than in SI, the trainer can have the time and opportunity to introduce and rehearse the sub-skills relevant to each stage with the student
- In the first stage, the trainer can teach the importance of 'deverbalisation', i.e. focussing on analysing the message and retaining ideas rather than words, thereby avoiding the tendency later, in SI, to give 'word-for-word' translations and cutting down on the risk of linguistic interference
- In this first stage, the student can also be guided towards identifying the sequence of ideas and their links, essential to a proper understanding of the original and a logical structuring of the output in the target language
- The third stage of the CI process can provide the trainer with more time and the opportunity to monitor the level of comprehension and the quality of expression in the target language output of individual students.