

Second Lecture..

Main Challenges

Simultaneous interpretation is known for its high levels of **cognitive effort**. Interpreters need to deal with challenges such as:

- **Time Pressure:** Simultaneous interpreting is the most time-sensitive type of interpretation. The 'gap' between what the speaker says and the translation into the target language (better known as *décalage*) must be kept short, typically around 2 seconds – that's the only way the interpreter can render the text without losing track of what's being said. This is also where the term '*simultaneous*' comes from: the translation is pretty much immediate.
- **Speed of Delivery:** Different speakers will speak differently. Some speak slowly and clearly, while others talk as if they were sprinting. Interpreters have to deal with that all the time.
- **Terminology:** Being such an immediate activity, looking for technical terminology on a dictionary or online is out of question. There are several techniques professional interpreters apply to handle challenging terminology, but nothing beats preparation. The speech may sometimes be given to the interpreter in advance, but that's not always the case.
- **Accents:** Interpreters also need to deal with different accents, which sometimes proves to be a challenge.
- **Untranslatable Terms and Expressions:** Some things are difficult enough to translate even when you have the time to think and do some research, let alone if you've only got a couple

of seconds to do it. Some of the most infamous ‘interpretation nightmares’ include proverbs, puns and jokes.

- **Lack of Clarification:** Unlike consecutive (as we’ll see), simultaneous interpretation does not allow interpreters to ask for a clarification if they haven’t understood something.

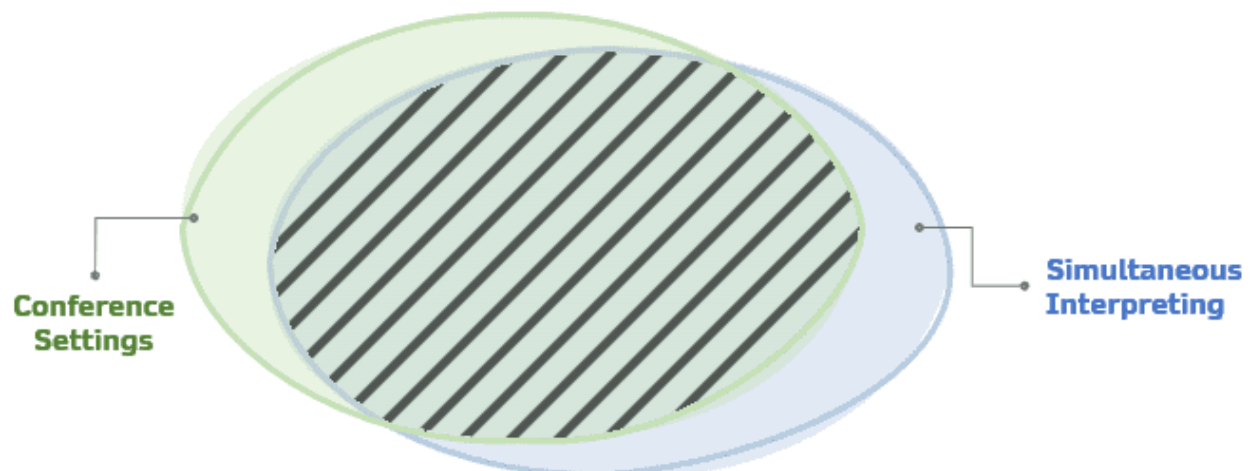
Simultaneous interpreters learn how to handle all these challenges with lots of practice and experience. It’s an activity the human brain is not designed to do, hence why training is so important to achieve success.

Is ‘Simultaneous Interpreting’ the Same as ‘Conference Interpreting’?

No, not quite.

Because simultaneous interpretation became the predominant mode in modern conferences, both terms are often used interchangeably. That’s not accurate, though!

It’s true that most conferences these days tick all the above boxes, but there are plenty of events outside the conference sphere in which the simultaneous mode is also used.



Equally, even though that's increasingly rare, a conference may also be mediated by a consecutive interpreter.

That normally happens due to budgetary reasons. SI tends to be far more costly, for it requires two interpreters instead of just one, and there's a lot of expensive **equipment** to be rented, installed and operated throughout the event.

So, to conclude, although nowadays most conferences involve SI, '*simultaneous interpreting*' and '*conference interpreting*' are not necessarily one and the same thing.