

ASCO International gives you some definitions to help organisers of international conferences with conference interpreting.



Active language	Mobile Boot
Confidentiality	Passive language
Consecutive interpretation	Pivot
Interpreting team composition	Relay
Interpreter co-ordinator	Simultaneous Interpreting
Portable translation facility	Whispered interpretation
Linguistic combinations	

■ **Active language**

For an interpreter, the active language(s) is/are the language(s) into which he or she provides interpretation. In a meeting the active language(s) (or booth language) is/are the language(s) into which the interpretation is conducted.

■ **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is one of the fundamental principles of the interpreting professional in general, and of those who work on behalf of ASCO in particular. ASCO interpreters observe the strictest rules of confidentiality and do not disclose any information to which they may be party.

■ **Consecutive interpretation**

With this method, the interpreter, seated with the delegates or with the speaker, interprets the speech into the target language at the appropriate moment (which is variable).

■ **Interpreting team composition (manning strength)**

In its widest sense, this term designates the manner in which a team is composed as a function of the active and passive languages of the meeting participants. In a more restricted sense, and when referred to as manning strength, it refers to the interpreter table, that is the number of interpreters required for a given team as a function of the languages, the linguistic combination of the interpreters and the requirement for working in relay. Thus a professional must establish the interpreting teams.

■ **Interpreter co-ordinator**

The team leader is responsible for co-ordinating the interpreters, in conjunction with the conference organiser, for finding solutions to any problems that may arise, contact with the speakers (in order to obtain information and to raise awareness of the interpreters' difficulties etc.). He or she acts as a vector for the different parties' wishes and requirements, thus facilitating smooth interpretation of the meeting.

■ **Portable translation facility**

This is a mobile facility that enables simultaneous interpreting to be carried out without having to install a full interpreting booth. The interpreter works in the meeting room using a microphone and, sometimes, a headset. The advantage of this system is that it provides flexibility (the interpreter can move around with the listeners, for example for site visits). The drawback is, however, that it provides no sound isolation. It is this recommended for use only with a small number of participants and / or in a room with the appropriate acoustics and / or when the working conditions so dictate (short meeting or when consecutive interpreting would not be appropriate). Use of this system does not entail a reduction in the number of persons in the interpreting team.

■ **Linguistic combinations**

An interpreter's linguistic combination indicates his or her A (mother tongue), B (active language) or C (passive language). It is this combination that is the determining factor for recruitment of the conference interpreters.

■ **Mobile booth**

Mobile booths as opposed to permanent booths, are those booths that can be assembled and disassembled, that are fitted in meeting rooms for a particular event. They must be compliant with ISO 4043. The installation of one or several booths is accompanied by implementation of relatively complex technical equipment. The equipment is preferably installed the day before the first day of the conference.

■ **Passive language**

For an interpreter, the passive language(s) (or conference language) is/are the language(s) from which professional interpretation is conducted. In a meeting, a passive language refers to the language(s) from which interpretation is provided into the active language(s). Thus there may be more passive languages than active languages in a meeting. For example, if interpretation is required into English from French, German and Arabic, English is considered to be the active language and French, German and Arabic would be the passive languages for the said meeting. Conversely, there may also more active than passive languages if an English speaking orator has to be translated into French, German and Arabic.

■ **Pivot**

When the relay technique is used, the pivot is the interpreter who works not only for the delegates who listen to the target language, but also for the other interpreters who interpret from the pivot interpreter's words. The role of the pivot interpreter is thus more difficult than that of a 'normal' interpreter, as he or she knows that the quality of the other interpreters' work depends on his or her performance.

■ **Relay**

The relay system is when the final language as heard by the delegates is the result of a dual interpretation process. The speaker's words are first of all translated into one language, which is in turn translated into other languages. Use of this method is normally not recommended because of the errors that may occur when the number of parties involved increases. Nevertheless this method is sometimes inevitable for certain languages and for certain language combinations.

■ **Simultaneous interpreting**

With this method, the interpreter, seated with the delegates or with the speaker, interprets the speech into the target language at the appropriate moment (which is variable).

■ **Whispered interpreting**

A method of working whereby the interpreter is seated next to one or two meeting participants and whispers to them a translation of what the speaker is saying. This method is normally chosen when the number of listeners requiring interpretation is extremely limited. It is not recommended when there are more than two persons in the meeting requiring interpreting or when several interpreters are required to work at the same time in the same room (leading to a noise level that disturbs the participants as much as the interpreters). This technique requires a team of a minimum of two interpreters. It is wearing on the vocal cords and is only appropriate for meetings of short duration.