At Kent State University, our Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies wants to help guide your path and open doors to becoming a part of the growing language industry. Learning about the difference between "interpreting" and "translating" as industry terms is the first step into jumpstarting your educational career path.

Translation and interpreting are needed to enable communication between cultures and across languages. In a world where communication is key, it is necessary to use the help of interpreters and translators to effectively communicate.

Although interpreters and translators have similarities, interpreting and translation involve different skill sets. Interpreters mediate languages orally while translators work with written material. When it comes to language skills, translators need to have solid reading comprehension, transfer, and target language production skills. Interpreters need to optimize their working memory in rendering content much more quickly and with no extensive access to external resources for support.

Learning the Difference Between Translation and Interpretation

Often, the difference between translation and interpretation is confused. So, what is the real difference between the two? To directly compare translation vs. interpretation, we need to evaluate some key aspects. On a general level, the difference between interpretation and translation is that interpretation deals with spoken language in real-time while translation focuses on written content. Another difference is that translation happens over a period of time with extensive access to external resources, compared to interpretation which occurs on the spot during a live scenario. Below, we will dive deeper into translation vs. Interpretation.

Translation

When working within the translation field, one is working to successfully decipher the meaning of written content from a source language into the language that is targeted. One of the biggest differences between translation vs. interpretation is that translators often use a wider range of computer-assisted tools when working.

Translators are able to use software, such as a translation memory and a termbase, that facilitates the translation process and quickly fills in the missing gaps. They are able to go through text and refer to other written materials such as parallel texts to ensure an accurate translation. Translators focus on working with written materials like print or websites, which is one main difference between translation and interpretation.

Interpretation

Interpretation focuses more on paraphrasing the content that the speaker is trying to convey. An interpreter, someone who repeats the message but in a different language, deals with live conversation, which can include translating meetings, conferences, appointments, live TV, and more. Since interpretation is in real-time, it requires someone who is able to work under pressure with excellent communication skills.

Does the Process for Getting into the Profession Vary Between Translation and Interpretation?

To become a professional translator or interpreter, you will want to follow a set process in order to get the most out of the experience. The process of becoming a professional in each career is similar, with a few exceptions connected to specifics like the degree you earn and the organizations you join.

Without further ado, here is a general process to follow:

Strengthen your language skills – Gain a deep understanding of your native and target languages by using them daily and accompanying them with relevant resources.

Earn your degree – Pursuing a formal education enhances your qualifications, shows your passion for the subject, and allows you to select a specialization that aligns with your passions.

Practice your craft – There are many ways to deepen your knowledge, including through attending workshops and seminars, practicing with other speakers, and more.

Join associations – When examining interpretation versus translation, you might look into organizations that you can join which offer benefits like an expanded network or informal seminars.

Get involved – Network with professionals to gain new insights about the field and find new opportunities for jobs.

Can a person be both a translator and an interpreter?

Typically, translators and interpreters focus on a single discipline. Though the two have a lot of overlapping concepts, there are distinct skill sets and modes of training required in each specialization.

What are the similarities between interpreters and translators?

While we have spent some time looking at the differences between translation vs. interpretation, there are also some key similarities between the two. For example, they both face challenges like maintaining accuracy or dealing with complex technical terminology. Additionally, both translators and interpreters need to stay up to date with cultural shifts and evolution in language.

When looking at translation vs. interpretation, which path has more career opportunities?

There are a variety of industries that require the help of both translators and interpreters. While there are various differences between translation and interpretation careers, you will see a lot of opportunities in both paths.

Translator careers – Translators work on a variety of materials, ranging from technical manuals and court documents to literary texts and beyond. Common roles in the field include work as language consultants, localization specialists, commercial translators, technical translators, freelance translators, phone translators, and more.

Interpretation careers – In the profession of interpretation, you may work in a variety of settings including diplomacy, healthcare, legal proceedings, and more. You might also find yourself with a job label like an escort interpreter, court interpreter, and medical interpreter.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1.What is indispensable in a world where communication plays a crucial role?
A. Mastering multiple languages
B. The assistance of translators and interpreters
C. Utilizing modern technology
D. Visiting other countries

2. According to the passage, what is the primary function of translators and interpreters?
A. To simplify traveling
B. To enhance international trade
C. To ensure effective communication
D. To entertain diverse culture

3. What skills do translators need, according to the passage?
A. The ability to think quickly and rephrase ideas
B. Strong reading comprehension, ability to transfer meaning, and language production skills
C. Paraphasing and translating speeches live
D. Real-time memory skills and verbal communication

4. What does the term "target language" refer to in translation and interpretation?

A. The languge from the text or speech is translated

B. The language spoken by the original speaker

C. The language into which the text or speech is translated

D. The language used during live events

5. What is the key distinction between translation and interpretation in general?

A. Interpretation makes use of more resources than translation

B. Translation concerns written text, whereas in focuses on spoken languge in real time

C. Translation is done orally, while interpretation is written

D. Translation occurs in live situations while interpretation is done at slower pace.

6. What type of activities does an interpreter handle?

A. Translating written documents and websites

B. Live conversations: meetings, conferences, tv broadcast

C. Translating printed materials for accuracy

D. Hosting press conference

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. What is a shared skill required for both translation and interpretation?

A. The ability to understand and adapt to cutural shifts

B. Proficiency in a single language

C. Focus solely on legal language

D. The ability to write in multiple writing style

8. Why's networking important for being a professional translator interpreter?

A. It helps you practice languge skills

B. It allows you to gather valuable insights and discover new job prospects

C. It guarantees admission to degree program

D. It provides formal education in the field

Answer:

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.

LIVEWORKSHEETS