



Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide identifies the components of quality language interpretation services and establishes criteria for each component. These criteria define the minimum standard of quality services in the language interpretation industry with reference to distinctive characteristics of specific settings. The needs analysis identifies a procedure for making an informed choice of interpretation services. In the language industry, translation refers to the translation of a written text, whereas interpretation refers to the translation of spoken or signed communication.

2. Professional Judgment Caveat

2.1 *This guide offers an organized collection of information and does not recommend a specific course of action. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this guide may be applicable in all circumstances. This ASTM standard is not intended to represent or replace the standard of care by which the adequacy of a given professional service shall be judged, nor should this document be applied without consideration of a project's unique aspects. The word "Standard" in the title of this document means only that the document has been approved through the ASTM consensus process.*

3. Definitions of Interpretation

3.1 *interpretation*—the process of understanding and analyzing a spoken or signed message and re-expressing that message faithfully, accurately and objectively in another language, taking the cultural and social context into account.

3.2 *simultaneous interpretation*—a highly complex cognitive activity that requires the interpreter to listen, analyze, comprehend, convert, edit, and reproduce in real time a speaker or signer's message while the speaker or signer continues to speak or sign, in a specific social context.

3.3 *consecutive interpretation*—a highly complex cognitive activity that requires the interpreter to listen, analyze, comprehend, convert, edit, and reproduce the original message after the speaker or signer pauses, in a specific social context. Consecutive interpretation is likely to take longer than simultaneous, because the interpreter does not interpret while the

speaker or signer is speaking or signing.

4. Referenced Documents

4.1 ASTM Standards:

F 1562 Standard Guide for Use-Oriented Foreign Language Instruction²

4.2 ISO/IEC Standards:³

IEC 60914:1998 Conference Systems: Electrical and Audio Requirements Conference Systems: Electrical and Audio Requirements

ISO 2603:1998 Booths for Simultaneous Interpretation—General Characteristics and Equipment Booths for Simultaneous Interpretation—General Characteristics and Equipment

ISO 4043:1998 Mobile Booths for Simultaneous Interpretation—General Characteristics and Equipment Mobile Booths for Simultaneous Interpretation—General Characteristics and Equipment

4.3 Other Documents:

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary or Artistic Works

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Executive Order 13166, August 11, 2000

Guidance Memorandum; Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination—Persons with Limited English Proficiency, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, August 2000

Patient's Bill of Rights, American Hospital Association, 1978

Universal Convention on Copyright

U.S. Department of Justice: Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency, "LEP Guidance," August 11, 2000

28 U.S.C. § 1827 Federal Court Interpreters Act (1978 Court Interpreters Act and 1988 Amendment)

5. Terminology

5.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

5.1.1 *active language*—a working language into which an interpreter interprets.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F15 on Consumer Products and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F15.34 on Language Interpreting.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 15.07.

³ Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10036.