

Differences and similarities between telephone and videoconference interpreting: foundations for training

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Remote interpreting (RI) is a technology-mediated type of interpreting commonly used in public services where some or all of the participants (the interpreter and at least two users) are in different locations and communicate to each other mainly through a telephone (telephone interpreting, TI) or a videoconference system (videoconference interpreting, VCI). Due to its cost-effectiveness, RI is increasingly used in different public settings such as courts, police stations, hospitals, schools, to name but a few. Training in both TI and VCI needs to take into account the specificities of technology-mediated interpreting. TI's main feature is the absence of visual information, which hinders the interpreter's work to the extent that it needs to be counterbalanced by developing and applying a set of specific skills and readapting on-site bilateral interpreting skills. The same can be said of VCI, which does provide the interpreter with visual access to the encounter, although it usually lacks peripheral vision, therefore not offering a comprehensive view of the participants in conversation nor of the location where communication takes place. Under these circumstances, both types of remote interpreters often end up relying on verbal or auditory cues to understand the meaning of utterances, contextualize the encounter, and manage conversation, namely turn-taking. In this study we will analyze these common features between TI and VCI, such as the aforementioned limited visual information or the need for interpreters to manage technology effectively. These features could form the foundation for a common training for telephone and videoconference interpreters, which would offer trainees a deep insight of remote interpreting and the specific skills and strategies that are required to tackle the effects of the interpreter's absence from the setting where communication takes place.

Key words: Remote interpreting training, videoconference interpreting, telephone interpreting, lack of visual access, technology.