



Master Universitario  
Comunicación Intercultural,  
Interpretación y Traducción  
en los Servicios Públicos

# Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT)

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Dialogoserasmus



Dialogos.uah @dialogoserasmus

# COMMUNICATION

It derives from the Latin *comunicare* (to share).

The process of transmitting and exchanging messages between a sender and a receiver.

In these messages, ideas, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and information are shared.



It is inconceivable to have a society in which members are NOT able to communicate in some way.

# COMMUNICATION

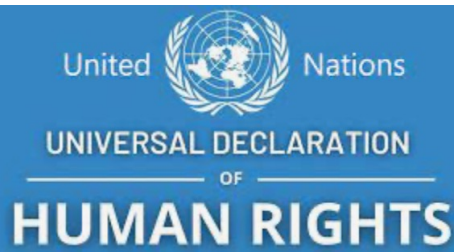
**VERBAL**, in which you listen to a person to understand their meaning

**WRITTEN**, in which you read their meaning

**NON VERBAL**, in which you observe a person and infer meaning

**Language is a communication tool used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information and arguments to others.**

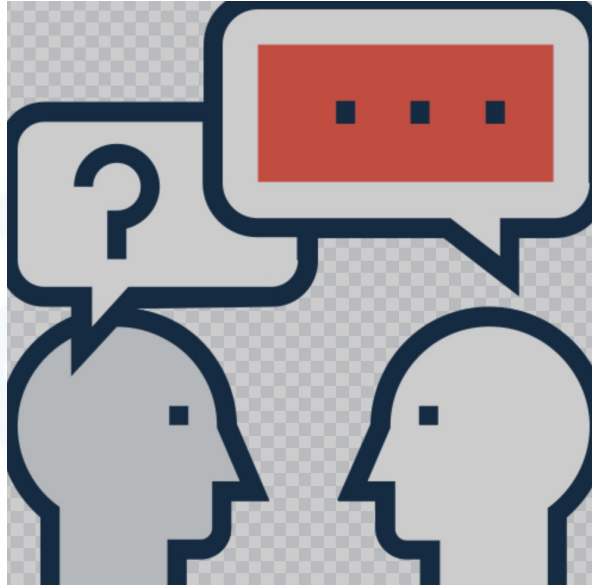




# ARTICLE 19

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."  
- *Article 19; Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

If the same language is not shared



What might cause a communication problem in these contexts?





# Society and culture

Different societies



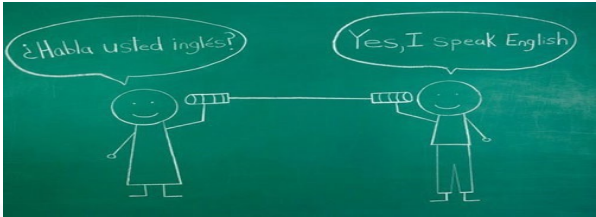
Different communication codes  
(values, traditions, habits, etc.)





# Who makes interlinguistic and intercultural communication possible?

- Bilingual



- Interpreter /mediator



- Translator



# Being bilingual or knowing languages is not being an interpreter or translator.

**Bilingual**

**Translator/ Interpreter**



Thorough knowledge of languages and cultures

Specific training

??? Fluency

Fluency

??? Faithfulness

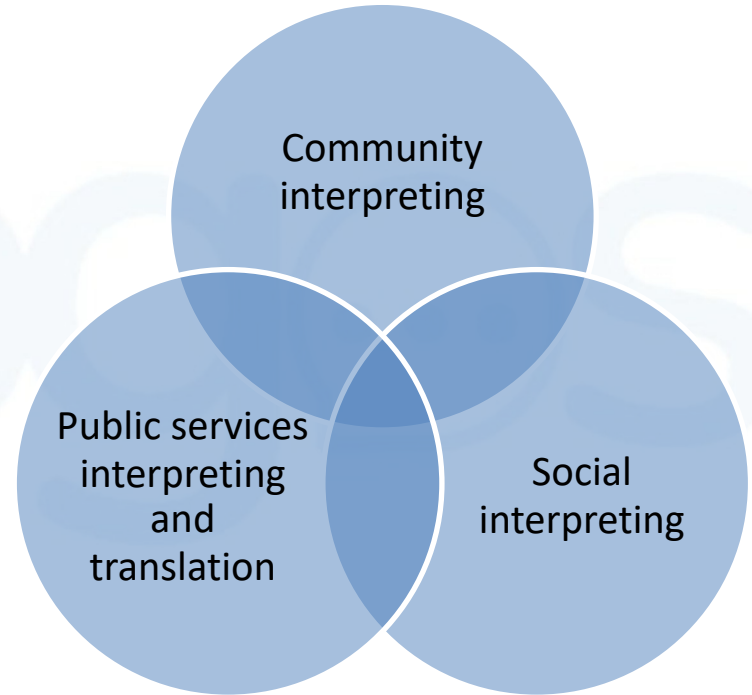
Faithfulness

Impartiality

Code of conduct

# PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION

A type of interpreting and translation which is carried out in the context of public services, where service users do not speak the majority language of the country.



# Context



- Rise in migration to Europe

- Multicultural societies

Need for PSIT

- Non-regulated profession that lacks uniform standards when it comes to quality, training, ethics, remuneration or a shared definition (community interpreting, dialogue interpreting, cultural mediation, ad hoc interpreting- often performed by a relative, which may entail the risk of bias).

- PSIT often do not have the necessary professional training or access to training that is commonly recognised.

- In Europe, it is a competence of member states.

# Characteristics

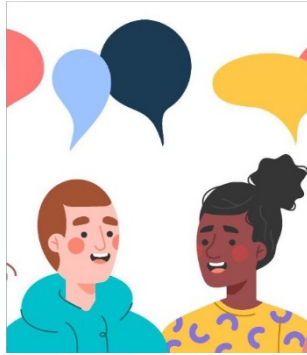
- Relatively new area (still poorly defined and little known).
- It is a subfield of Translation and Interpreting Studies.
- It is the result of a social need.
- It requires specialised training.
- It is much more than interlinguistic translation and interpreting.
- Intercultural mediation due to contexts.
- Users are frequently vulnerable.
- Power relationship between user and provider is not on the same level. The same with the relationship with PSIT.

# PSIT settings

Migrants

**COMMUNICATION**

Public services



## Fields:

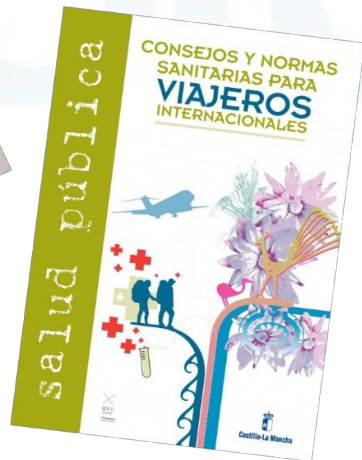
- Education: schools
- Health: health centres, hospitals, emergency services
- Administrative/legal area: police stations, courts, administrative services
- Social services

Interpreters and translators

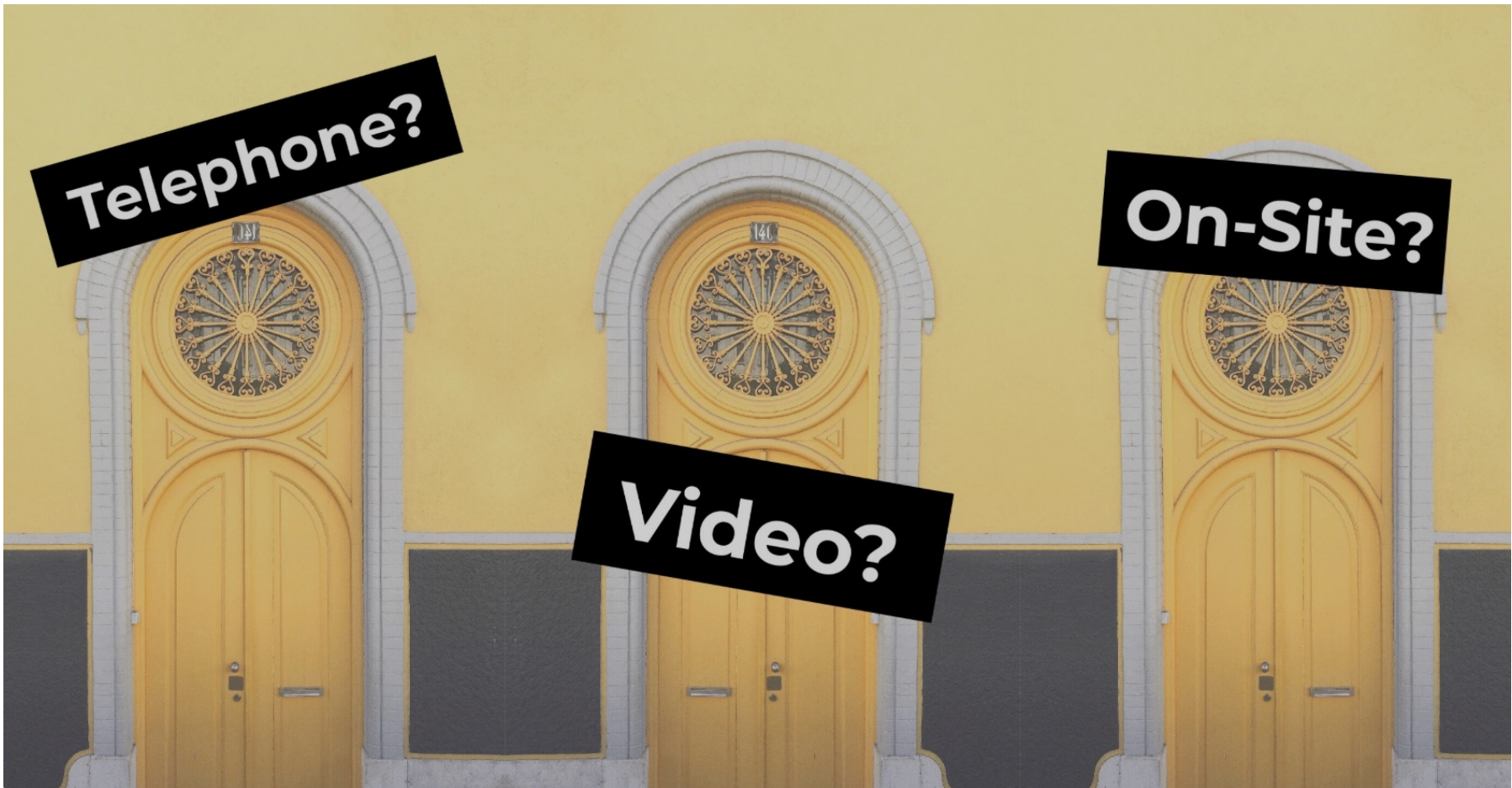
The work of translators/interpreters is even more important in situations involving the displacement of large numbers of people in a short period of time, such as in armed conflicts or humanitarian crisis.

## PSIT tasks

Translation involves working with written texts and interpreting focuses on oral speech, but PSIT often perform both tasks. They translate texts of all kinds that a user with another language might need to understand: information brochures, forms, consents, legal documents, etc. and they also interpret and mediate.







**Telephone?**

**Video?**

**On-Site?**

When interpreting, there are **different types of on-site translation and interpreting**, depending on the **task**:

- **Sight translation:** we translate aloud while reading a document, such as a prescription for medicine.
- **Simultaneous interpreting:** we interpret while one of the participants speaks.
- **Consecutive interpreting:** when one of the participants finishes, we interpret the speech. We can take notes in a notebook to help us retain the information.
- **Liaison interpreting:** when one of the participants finishes, we interpret the speech. Notes are not taken but it is normally done for short interventions.
- **Summary interpretation:** this is a summary of another participant's interpretation.



# Non presential types of PSIT (remote)

Telephone  
interpreting



Video  
interpreting



# Differences with other types of T&I

- Direct contact with people with different linguistic and, specially, cultural backgrounds
- Mostly work with vulnerable population (especially migrants)
- Mainly hired in the non-profit sector
- Often appear as companions at appointments with the authorities, or in medical or social institutions
- Personal matters (emotions) and very frequently, vulnerable situations

**Mediaton**

## The difference between interpreting and mediation

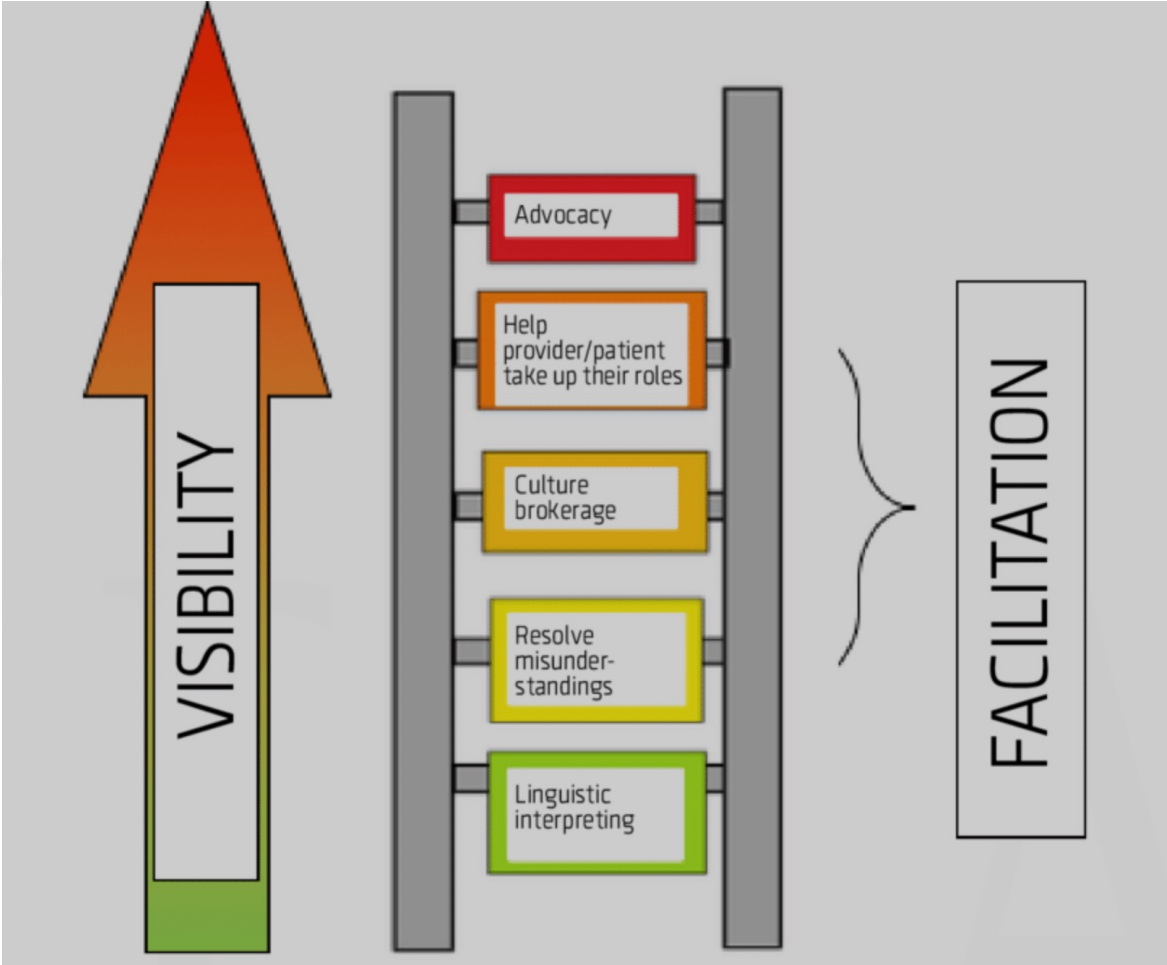
- Mediation involves much more than conveying a message, as mediation is used to detect, avoid and solve different cultural conflicts.
- The role of a language professional will depend on the situation and the problems that arise in a multicultural context.

Example 1: In sub-Saharan Africa, blood is attributed a mystical role. This means that a patient may refuse to undergo a blood test, and an interpreter may have to intervene to resolve a possible conflict.

Example 2: In traditional Chinese medicine, the temperature of food plays an important role in health. Someone may refuse to drink cold water thinking that it will be bad for their health.







However, the difference between mediation and interpreting is not always so clear.  
There are different models :

### Impartiality model

- The interpreter conveys everything s/he hears
- Does not intervene in the conversation

### Interlinguistic and intercultural mediation

- It is a 'middle ground'
- The interpreter mediates adding information or asking further questions
- Health contexts usually require more mediation than legal settings

### Advocacy model

- The interpreter supports the user
- The interpreter participates with her/his own voice
- It is risky! There is a risk of no longer being impartial or of altering the information



When we communicate, we use different tools:

→ Language



→ Body language and gestures



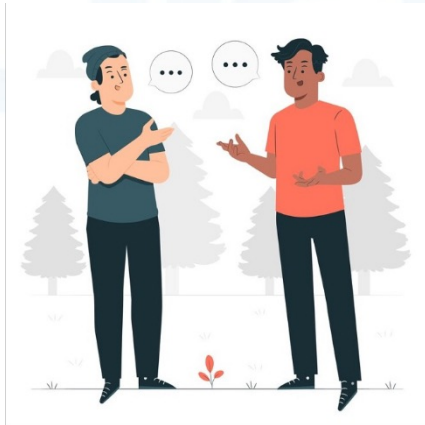
→ Attitudes, perceptions and ways of thinking influenced by our culture



# Culture

## Conscious culture:

- Way of dressing, way of eating...
- Festivities, conception of work and trade...
- Beliefs, world view...



## Unconscious culture:

- Ways of speaking
- Ways of interacting and relating to others

# The importance of avoiding stereotypes/bias

A **stereotype** is a preconception (positive or negative) held about a particular social or cultural group and applied to all its members without distinction.

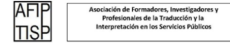


What stereotypes are often applied to your culture?  
How do you think they can influence other people to communicate with you?

# Ethical codes

A set of ethical rules governing a professional activity, which establishes a series of minimum quality criteria.

In PSIT, this code is of particular importance, due to the ethical conflicts and dilemmas which the interpreter may encounter.



## Guía de buenas prácticas para la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos (TISP)

Los principios que se recogen a continuación son generales al campo de la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos (TISP), aunque en su aplicación debe tenerse en cuenta el ámbito específico del que se trate (sanitario, servicios sociales, jurídico-judicial, etc.).

- 1) **Exactitud, fidelidad e integridad del discurso:** El intérprete tiene la obligación legal, moral y ética de transmitir la totalidad del mensaje con precisión, reproduciendo, en la medida de lo posible, el tono, el registro y el estilo de cada una de las partes intervinientes. Para ello, puede, en aras a la precisión y en caso de necesidad, pedir que se aclare, se parafrasee o se repita la información.
- 2) **Confidencialidad:** El intérprete, en su intervención, maneja datos personales de terceros, por ello está obligado legalmente a mantener la confidencialidad de toda la información a la que haya tenido acceso, directa o indirectamente, durante su ejercicio profesional. Solo podrá revelar esta información si tiene el consentimiento de todas las partes o por mandato legal.
- 3) **Imparcialidad:** El intérprete debe abstenerse de posicionarse a favor o en contra de cualquiera de las partes o inducir a ello para transmitir la información con exactitud y equidad. Asimismo, el intérprete debe declarar cualquier situación en la que un conflicto de intereses pueda afectar este principio de imparcialidad.
- 4) **Respeto:** El intérprete debe ser sensible a las diferencias culturales y manifestarse respetuoso con cada una de las partes, promoviendo su autonomía y evitando influir en la toma de decisiones personales. Asimismo, el intérprete debe conocer sus límites profesionales, evitando involucrarse personalmente y velando por su propia privacidad y bienestar, así como la del resto de las partes.
- 5) **Responsabilidad:** El intérprete es independiente y responsable de sus actuaciones, y por ello es el único autor del resultado de su intervención interpretativa y de sus implicaciones y consecuencias sobre terceros. Por tanto, debe asumir la responsabilidad de la calidad de los servicios que ofrece. Nunca debe aceptar encargos que requieran competencias que no posee. Si una vez aceptado el encargo se da cuenta de que no puede llevarlo a cabo satisfactoriamente, deberá informar a las partes implicadas. El intérprete tampoco debe aceptar encargos en los que, por la

# Ethical codes



- ★ **Confidentiality:** interpreters will maintain the privacy of both parties and will not distribute personal information of either party involved in an interaction.
- ★ **Impartiality:** the interpreter will not take sides.
- ★ **Accuracy or precision:** the interpreter shall ensure that the message is conveyed adequately, in line with the original, and that it is appropriate in the new context. cultural.
- ★ **Integrity:** the interpreter will refuse assignments for which he/she is not prepared.

An example of a code of ethics can be found here:  
<https://www.afiptisp.org/index.php/codigo-deontologico-tisp/>.

# What would you do?

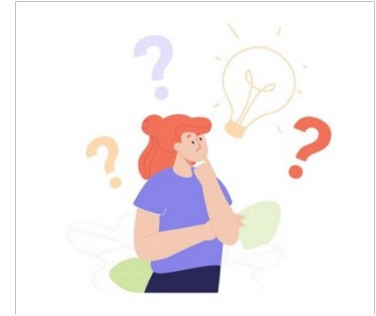
Following these ethical principles, how would you deal with such situations?

Imagine that you have to interpret at a medical consultation. Before the consultation begins, the patient tells you that he doesn't care about anything the doctor says, as he simply wants the doctor to certify that he is not fit to return to work in order to remain on sick leave.



In this same consultation, the doctor wants to discharge the patient so that he can return to work. The patient gets angry and starts shouting and swearing at the doctor.

## Reflect on what we have been commenting



- "The translator or interpreter only has to convey a message. He or she does not need to negotiate cultural elements or coordinate the interaction".

Do you agree with this statement?





Máster en Comunicación Intercultural,  
Interpretación y Traducción en los Servicios Públicos

## European (EMT) Master's Degree in Public Services Intercultural Communication, Interpreting and Translation

Research and professional practice to become a Public Services translator and interpreter (PSIT).

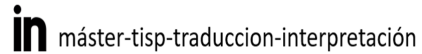
Training in translation (written) and interpreting (oral) that consists of facilitating access to public services for users who are limited by a linguistic and/or cultural barrier by mediating between these users and public administration professionals. Contexts: health and legal.

C1 in working languages: Arabic/Chinese/French/English/Russian-Spanish

<https://uahmastercitisp.es>

# THANK YOU!

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