# Third Lecture..

Consecutive Interpreting

In **consecutive interpreting (CI)** the linguist renders the original speech (or part of thereof) into the target language <u>after</u> the speaker has completed it.

Typically – especially in formal settings – the sections (or '*chunks of speech*') to interpret may last from <u>5 to 10 minutes</u>, though in some cases it may be even longer.

The main element that makes it very demanding is the fact it normally involves **note-taking**.

This mode is widely used in settings such as press conferences, business meetings and summits.

It may also be used in certain types of conference where budgetary issues make it impossible to mediate the event via simultaneous interpreting.
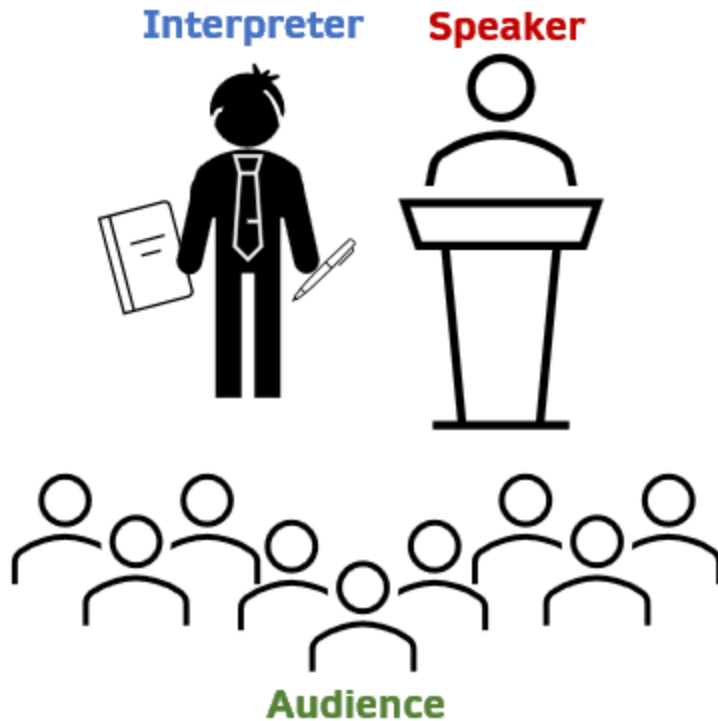
Example of a Consecutive Interpreting setting

In the vast majority of cases, under optimal circumstances, it is characterised by the following elements:

- Each language combination is normally served by **one** single interpreter.

- The speaker presents his or her speech, or part of thereof, for around **5 to 10 minutes**. While this happens, the interpreter is on the sideline **taking notes**.

- When the speaker is done, the interpreter renders what has been said (that's where the term *consecutive* comes from on). This is largely done with the help from the **notes** and complemented by a proficient process of **active listening** and **memory retention**.

Consecutive used to be the dominant type of interpretation even for conferences and large events. Simultaneous only became the standard in those settings around the mid-20th century, once new technological advances made it possible.

Main Challenges

Some of the challenges that apply to SI also apply to CI. Speed of delivery, terminology, accents and untranslatable terms and expressions are shared by both modes.

The main differences between the two in terms of challenges are:

- **Time Pressure:** Consecutive is less time-sensitive than simultaneous in the sense the interpreter is not talking at the same time as the speaker.

- **Exposure:** CI in far more challenging than SI in terms of exposure. In simultaneous, the interpreters are normally inside a soundproof booth somewhere in the building, or even in a completely separate location miles away from the venue – they're out of sight, the crowd can't see them. In consecutive, the interpreter shows his face and renders the speech right in front of the attendance.

- **Room for Clarification:** If the interpreter hasn't understood something he or she senses it's vital information, it may be okay to quickly ask for a clarification. This, of course, must only be used to a limited degree and depending on the exact setting (for instances, doing this in a high profile summit between two political leaders is probably not advisable.)

- **Note-Taking:** This is the most vital aspect of CI and the most challenging too. It's absolutely impossible to write at the same speed people talk, so developing a highly efficient note-taking

system is a must. Doing that correctly requires a thorough training program and lots of experience and practice.

As you can see, even though both interpreting modes share many elements, the main underlying hard skills are quite distinct.

Nowadays, university programs are likely to offer training in both, but many interpreters may end up specializing in one type over the other.