

Miriam Hamidi
(Freelance interpreter)

Simultaneous consecutive: a new mode of interpreting?

For most of its history, interpreting did not require any technical tools, except for the consecutive interpreter's notepad and pen. Consecutive interpreting in conference settings has, however, long lost its predominance to the technology-assisted simultaneous mode. With the advent of digital recording devices, traditional consecutive with notes may yet face another fundamental challenge as the interpreter's memory and notes are replaced by an audio file replayed as the source for a simultaneous rendition after the original speech. This technology-based innovative mode of (consecutive) interpreting raises a number of questions regarding its feasibility and effectiveness. The paper describes a small-scale research project for the language-pair French-German conducted on the scale of a Master's thesis at the Centre for Translation Studies, University of Vienna, to determine whether technology-assisted consecutive is superior to the conventional technique. Based on the findings from tests carried out in 2001 by one of the pioneers of simultaneous consecutive, SCIC interpreter Michele Ferrari, the experimental study, performed with a digital voice recorder, compares the two modes from multiple perspectives. Besides the focus on completeness, accuracy and presentation, it foregrounds reception and audience response as well as feedback from professional conference interpreters participating in the trials.