



The Interpreters Voice

The Newsletter of the Interpreters Division of the American Translators Association

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Summer 2014

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EDITORIAL

Esteemed Readers,

We are thankful for all the newsletter contributors, the support and collaborative effort rendered by all the dedicated members who volunteered and helped to ensure the publication of informative features as well as educational articles, with the purpose of addressing important issues, and disseminating important information related to the profession.

This issue focuses on recent important developments to include the Telephone Interpreting Program (TIP) and the Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service (TCRIS) which ensures that state and federal court proceedings initiated by the United States receive quality interpreting services from certified and highly qualified interpreters. A timely viewpoint/comparison article contribution highlights particular differences and similarities between the two certification exams for medical/healthcare interpreters, which are administered by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI), and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI). The article reiterates that "Effectively achieving a healthcare/medical interpreting certification credential and striving to meet the highest expectations is a great achievement and a step forward towards the professionalization of medical interpreters."

In addition, two members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) who are actively involved in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Working Group on Interpreting discuss new international standards in the works. A chart effectively summarizing some of the differences in skill sets and habitual activities undertaken by translators and interpreters is a must read and indeed a call for self-reflection, as we continue to encourage professional development for the continued advancement of the profession. And we have added a new feature that showcases "Professionals At-A-Glance", and colleagues are sharing experiences, challenges, perspectives and advices as they pursue professional careers in the language industry. Legislative updates, professional development opportunities, and tips on how to prepare for the United Nations (UN) interpreter exam will keep our readers informed. In concluding, the notes in review about the ATA Annual Conference, serves as a reminder that this annual event "is an extremely valuable event for language professionals", as we look forward to the upcoming 55th Annual ATA Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

Once again, we are profoundly grateful for all the contributions to this issue and remind our readers that we are always in need of articles for publication. We invite and welcome your submissions to The Interpreters Voice Newsletter!

Editorial staff | The Interpreters Voice Newsletter | theinterpretersvoice.ata@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Articles must be written in English and preferred file format is Microsoft Word. Suggested maximum lengths: articles: 1,500 words, Reviews: 1,000 words, letters to the editor: 300 words. Include the author's name, email address, title of article, headshot is optional, biographical sketch (100 words or less), appropriate copyright notes, citations and other observations. ATA certified translators will earn two (2) points of continuing education (CE) per authored article related to interpreting and/or translation. A maximum of eight points (8) allowed per reporting period. Send submissions to: theinterpretersvoice.ata@gmail.com

E-voice, the Interpreters Voice Listserv

Have a topic of interest you would like to discuss with fellow interpreters? Or an interpreting experience you want to share? E-voice is the online Interpreters forum that facilitates online discussions relevant to the profession. If you want to become a member, please e-mail us to: e-voice4ata-id-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You will get a notification and further instructions in your inbox. You may contact the moderators at: e-voice4ATA-ID-owner@yahoogroups.com

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the Interpreters Division or the American Translators Association. The Interpreters Division (ID) is a division of the American Translators Association (ATA) | 225 Reinekers Lane, Alexandria, VA. 22314 | Telephone: 703-673-6100 | Fax: 703-683-6122 | Website: www.atanet.org

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING ADMINISTRATORS

Dear Members,

We would like to thank each and every one of you for your continuing involvement and support to our Division. We are now over 4000 members! We encourage you to continue to take advantage of the technology and social media available to keep in touch with your fellow interpreters and to develop the profession. Each of you have an inspirational story, an experience, a best practice to share, and we would all benefit from the exchange of these. Our commitment with the division is not only to serve as a means of information, we want to facilitate the communication, as good interpreters that we are, among all the members of our division.

We are proud of the accomplishments of 2013 and we want to share our excitement with you. The ATA 54th Annual Conference in San Antonio was a great success: 1400 attendees from the US and abroad; fifteen (15) interpreting sessions to include all the dimensions and specialties within the realm of interpreting. We also participated in the amazing Welcome Reception, an informative membership meeting, the Division Open House gathering and the social event hosted jointly with the Medical Division, welcoming and networking with participants while enjoying flavorful food and camaraderie. We were honored with the presence of Mr. Siegfried Ramler, our Distinguished Speaker who shared with us his remarkable experience at the Nuremberg Trials and his contribution to the interpreting profession.

None of our accomplishments would have been possible without the help of our Leadership Council, our Listserve moderators, and our Nominating committee. Milena Calderari-Waldron, Thelma Ferry, Marsel de Souza, Gloria Rivera, Lucia Gonzalez, Erika Reyes, Giovanna Lester, Teresa Roman, Caroline Kim, Sybil Cayir and Lisette Odfalk have volunteered their time to plan and execute the ideas that connect all the members of our Division whether that is in the form of a newsletter, a webpage or a networking event. They have also made sure that our division has the necessary stability and continuance plan. Their contribution is invaluable and we hope they continue to be active members of our division!

Moving forward, our administration is committed to continue strengthening membership relationships and engaging a broader range of language professionals by enhancing the Division website (<http://www.atanet.me/ID>) maintaining the ID social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the Listserv. This year we want to focus on engagement. We want to hear from you, your ideas and experiences. We want YOU to help us grow and develop! Please submit your ideas, comments experiences etc. by e-mail: interpretersdivisionata@gmail.com

Our administration is committed to the exchange of information related to events, issues such as training, research, continuous professional development activities, and joining other collaborative efforts while promoting recognition of the professional status of interpreters, as we look forward to a successful and outstanding 2014!

Sincerely,



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ID Acting Administrator



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ID Acting Assistant Administrator



TRANSLATORS and INTERPRETERS: CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH?

By Judith Kenigson Kristy

This chart, prepared for a presentation at an ACTFL conference, summarizes some of the differences in skill sets and habitual activities undertaken by translators and interpreters.

| TRANSLATORS | INTERPRETERS |
|--|--|
| Translators must have excellent knowledge of at least two languages but they often work in only one direction, that is, they often translate only from their acquired language into their native language, but not the other way around. Some translators are sufficiently skilled in both languages to translate in both directions, but most don't. | Interpreters must have excellent knowledge of at least two languages and usually must be able to work in both directions. Court, medical and community interpreters work in both directions; some conference and all United Nations (UN) interpreters work only in one direction. The UN rule is that interpreters work only into their mother tongue. Conference and UN interpreters often must have 3 working languages. |
| Translators must be able to understand complex texts in the source language (usually the foreign language). Written texts can vary greatly in style, content and intended audience. They usually have all the fluff taken out, leaving only finely honed language. The structure and content of written texts can be clear or convoluted. | Interpreters must be able to grasp a speaker's message and intent, whatever the language or level of discourse, immediately but usually a spoken message is less complex than a written text. Exception: When speakers read a text (especially a previously prepared technical speech or legal document) it is a challenge for the interpreter since speakers read more quickly than they would speak off the cuff, and because written language is structurally and cognitively more complex than spoken. |
| Translators must be excellent writers in their chosen target language. They must have a good command of grammar and style and be able to express themselves in any register required by the text or target audience. Translators keep abreast of material in two languages related to the fields they translate, in order to see what experts in that field discuss and how they express themselves. | Interpreters must know correct grammar and have an extensive vocabulary, including a command of all registers used by speakers of the source language. Court and conference interpreters must be able to interpret simultaneously, consecutively and also perform sight translation. Medical and community interpreters usually need only to master consecutive interpreting skills. |
| Translators must often be able to adapt the text to the target readership at the client's request (i.e. change register or level of vocabulary). For example, a client may request that a moderately technical document be translated so as to be understood by readers with only a limited education. | Interpreters, for the most part, have an ethical duty to be faithful to the speaker's mode of expression (i.e. reproduce not only the message but also the speaker's register, style, etc.). This is especially important for court interpreters who must render their interpretation without additions, omissions or modifications of any kind. |
| Translators must possess excellent editing skills to be able to analyze and refine their own work product. It is not unusual for translators to go over a finished translation a dozen or so times to check content and structure, and to assure themselves that they have chosen the most suitable style and terminology for the translation. | Simultaneous interpreters must have excellent deconstruction skills to be able to decode large chunks of meaning and re-code or re-speak them in the most concise form possible. They must be experts in synonyms so they can find the right words with the fewest syllables to be able to physically keep up with the speaker's pace. Some languages, such as Spanish, need as much as 30% more words to express a given concept spoken in English. |
| Translators translating into their acquired language must employ an editor to check for errors in grammar and usage. Many overconfident practitioners omit this step but to do so is risky since errors and omissions may lead to lawsuits. | Interpreter must self-monitor their performance. In lengthy or complex interpreting assignments, they benefit from the presence of a team partner who can help with terminology and correction of any errors. Some states and T&I associations are trying to promote mentoring programs so that new interpreters can have some useful feedback on performance from a more experienced colleague. |

CERTIFICATION OR CREDENTIALS, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| TRANSLATORS | INTERPRETERS |
|---|--|
| Available Translator Credentials: The most sought-after credential is certification by the American Translators Association (ATA), available in many language combinations. There are also "Translation Certificates" offered by educational institutions after candidates have completed study programs and exams. Translation degree programs are available at some universities (see below). It is important for translators to have some kind of credential since users of translation services often know little about how to choose an appropriate translator – a certification or degree provides some assurance of competence. An advantage of ATA certification is that candidates don't have to take and pay for a given course (as with the college certificates), but ATA certified translators must maintain their membership in ATA or lose the credential. Certification in other countries: The Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC) has a certification similar to ATA's (see http://www.cttic.org); and many other foreign countries have their own certification systems. | Available Interpreter Credentials: Court interpreters: federal court certification, previously available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Navajo is currently offered only in Spanish. http://www.ncsc.org/fcice . NAJIT Certification www.najit.org although no longer offered, is accepted by some states as an alternative credential. State court certification in a variety of languages is offered in states that have developed their own certification exams or participate in the National Center for State Courts' consortium for state court interpreter certification http://www.ncsc.org/Education-and-Careers/State-Interpreter-Certification.aspx . Conference interpreters: Credentials or degrees in conference interpreting are offered by some universities and foreign T&I organizations. See website for international conference interpreters: http://www.aiic.net/schools/ . Medical Interpreters: Oregon and Washington state have their own certification programs. Recently, nationally-recognized credentials have become available through the National Board of Certification for Healthcare Interpreters |

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| | <p>http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) http://www.cchicertification.org</p> <p>Community and telephone interpreting: No certification exists. Certificates sometimes offered by T&I and community agencies; these are not "Certifications" but may show some degree of training.</p> |
| <p>Translators are certified separately in each direction of their language combination. For example, there are separate exams and certifications for translating from language A to B, and from B to A.</p> | <p>Interpreters are certified in both directions at the same time. Most certification exams consist of two separate exams, one written and one oral. Written exams may test proficiency only in English (as in state court exams) or in both languages (as for Federal, NAJIT and conference interpreting exams). Oral exams test interpreting skills into and out of both languages.</p> |
| <p>Certification is desirable but not required by all clients in order to practice the profession of translating. However, a valid and nationally recognized credential gives the professional an edge in the marketplace, and helps with potential clients who don't know how to evaluate a translator's skills. T&I associations often have directories where potential clients can look up a person's credentials and obtain contact information when they are seeking a translator.</p> | <p>Certification is required by law or local rules in order to provide interpreting services in some state courts and in all federal courts. It is not required by law for conference, medical and community interpreting (Oregon and Washington state excepted). Nevertheless, having a valid credential is a sign of competence and being on a roster of certified interpreters can provide a more stable source of work in other interpreting settings. In addition, liability concerns are creating an awareness of the need for the quality control offered by certification in the medical field.</p> |
| <p>Translation degrees and coursework are offered at a few universities. The ATA has prepared a publication listing university-level study programs and other training sources- see the ATA website (http://www.atanet.org). Some information and links are also available on the NCSC and NAJIT websites (see next column).</p> | <p>Interpreter training is offered at very few universities. Consult the NAJIT website http://www.najit.org and the NCSC web site http://www.ncsc.org/Education-and-Careers/~media/Files/PDF/Education%20and%20Careers/State%20Interpreter%20Certification%202/Interpreter_Colleges_Universities.ashx for links. See also websites of local and state T&I associations (some appear on the NAJIT "links" page www.najit.org/links.html.)</p> |
| <p>Translators can benefit from university training in a foreign language but general language knowledge is not enough to ensure that a person knows how to <u>translate</u>.</p> <p>The ideal training program includes an apprenticeship or mentoring situation with a translator or a translation bureau that is willing to provide corrections and style editing.</p> | <p>Interpreters have limited training opportunities available through university programs or the private sector. Some materials are available for self-training. Interpreting skills are developed and refined through practice and memorization of terminology. Interpreters need to practice skills daily and constantly refine comprehension by exposure to language in all its forms. It is useful to have lived in the country or community where the other language is spoken, since verbal communication uses many expressions that can only be understood by exposure to the culture as a whole.</p> |
| <p>Translators can increasingly take advantage of distance learning courses from universities, with professional evaluation of their work. Translators can also find related professional development courses, and conferences through ATA at http://www.atanet.org, also TISAC at http://www.tisac.org/programs and other T&I groups and educational institutions.</p> | <p>Interpreters must be physically present at their training courses, so they cannot generally use distance learning methods. They can find professional development courses and conferences through NAJIT, ATA, SSTI, local T&I groups, continuing education programs, private training companies, and local healthcare groups or community services groups. Other translation and interpreting programs inventory database at TISAC at http://www.tisac.org/programs and ATA at http://www.atanet.org</p> |

PHYSICAL AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

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| <p>Translators must be able to spend long periods reading and typing. Translators mostly work at their computers. Accommodations for visual, auditory and physical handicaps are generally available in this setting. They need adequate rest and recreation periods. Translation is mentally taxing and most translators set a maximum number of pages or words they can process per day.</p> | <p>Interpreters must have excellent hearing, voice control, memory retention, multitasking ability and stamina. Simultaneous interpreting requires the ability to listen and speak at the same time. Consecutive interpreting requires superior short-term memory. Interpreting is a performing art, like music or athletics. Interpreters generally do not work for extended periods without relief. Loss of hearing or vision can seriously affect an interpreter's ability to earn a living.</p> |
| <p>Translators must enjoy working alone and have confidence in their work, even when they don't receive any feedback from their clients. Once the product is delivered to the client, a translator may not hear anything more about it, good or bad. Translators sometimes agonize about the perfect translation. People who have a great need for praise or frequent input from others will not thrive in this profession.</p> | <p>Interpreters have to be able to withstand the pressure of being in the public eye. They must enjoy performing and be able to justify or amend their linguistic decisions when challenged. They must become thick-skinned about unfounded criticism (from people who claim to "know the language") but remain flexible about learning from others and accepting correction when warranted.</p> |
| <p>Translators must be able to accurately evaluate their limitations and refuse jobs that are beyond their abilities or time constraints. Translators can generally review material beforehand in order to decide whether they can accomplish the task competently in the time allotted.</p> | <p>Interpreters must refuse assignments they know are beyond their skills, but they do not always have sufficient prior information to assess the level of difficulty. While working, they must actively report impediments to their performance (fatigue, lack of adequate preparation or skills, bad conditions) and they must be willing to admit mistakes and correct themselves, out loud, in public.</p> |

WORKING CONDITIONS

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| <p>Freelance translators can set their own schedules. As long as the deadline is met, they can work nights or weekends or whenever they choose.</p> | <p>Freelance interpreters must be available when client needs service, usually during regular business hours. They can accept or refuse work, but when they make a commitment, they have to appear as scheduled or find an acceptable replacement.</p> |
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|---|--|
| <p>Freelance translators can work wherever they choose and don't have to ever leave home if they don't want to. Most have home offices and can create a personalized working environment. No commuting necessary, unless to meet with client personally. Because increasingly translation work is sent and received by fax and email, a translator can work pretty much anywhere he or she has a computer, fax line and internet access.</p> | <p>Freelance interpreters must travel to the work site, often out of town and sometimes for long periods. Working conditions onsite are often less than ideal. Court and conference interpreters may have to commit to many days working in a distant city. Community and medical interpreters usually work locally but may have several assignments in one day in different locations. Some courts and business locations present challenges because of bad acoustic conditions. Conference interpreters usually work in soundproof booths with audio feeds, an ideal environment.</p> |
| <p>Translators may be invisible – investing in professional attire is their choice. They can do a perfectly good translation in their pajamas if they choose, unless they are working outside their home/office environment.</p> | <p>Interpreters are on display when working. Professional demeanor includes professional attire and refraining from displaying emotion or expressing opinions about what is heard and seen.</p> |
| <p>Translators can be loners or hermits. Except for infrequent communications with clients (usually by telephone or email) they have little cause to mingle with other people – a shy or retiring personality is not a problem and may be an advantage.</p> | <p>Interpreters need to be more outgoing and use social skills to collaborate with colleagues. Since interpreters often work in tandem with one or more other interpreters, they have to learn how to collaborate effectively with team members and share resources and knowledge.</p> |
| <p>Translators have time to perfect their product. Translators can look up words in a variety of dictionaries, do research while they are working, cogitate over the best formulation of a concept and change their work many times before settling on a finished product. They may use computer software, translation memory programs or other term management tools to assist their efforts.</p> | <p>Interpreters have to produce a good product immediately. They must be able to grasp concepts in the source language instantaneously and formulate them quickly in the target language. They must have a vast vocabulary and do research and/or glossary building before the assignment. They prepare for each assignment by requesting details in advance and by being familiar with each type of context they work in.</p> |
| <p>The marketability of translators may be affected by demographics, depending on technical difficulty, and language combination of the translation. Clients often may not know how to gauge technical difficulty, so translators must know their market and learn how to negotiate the rendering of services effectively. Unfortunately (and this is true for both translators and interpreters), many people think that translating and interpreting is easily done by any bilingual individual. T&I professionals have to constantly educate their clients.</p> | <p>Interpreters are often in high demand and services rendered may vary widely and can be determined depending on language combination, technical difficulty and length as well as complexity of the assignments. Lengthy assignments may require at least two interpreters because of the fatigue factor (see relevant article published at http://www.najit.org/proteous/back_issues/vidal2.htm), but many customers do not know this so they must be educated accordingly.</p> |
| <p>Translators must have knowledge of the work market (within what the market will bear), and they undertake work that varies in style, subject matter, and length. Based on their linguistic competence, translators often do research while working. It is advisable to join professional associations and benefit from others' experience.</p> | <p>Interpreters must be continually aware of the market reality and trends whenever providing language interpretation services while engaging in state, governmental agencies and any other private sector agreements, as it relates to the expectations of clients. As always, it is advisable that the interpreter conduct all corresponding market research to stay informed and updated.</p> |
| <p>Translators may have to compete with native speakers of their chosen language in other countries (there is cheaper labor in economically challenged countries where U.S. dollars are prized).</p> | <p>Interpreters usually compete only with other locally available interpreters. Some who work nationally or abroad (conference and federal court interpreters) may compete on a national level or with foreign colleagues. Even with a limited pool of candidates, interpreter competition can be intense.</p> |
| <p>Translators must have office equipment, including computer(s), fax and email, copy machine, file cabinets, an extensive library of specialized dictionaries, computer-aided translation or terminology software, and so on. Since translators work with written documents they need a suitable, quiet office space in which to work, do their research and store their library of reference works and previous projects. Many clients also require that they use certain translation/terminology software so that the product meets certain compatibility specifications.</p> | <p>Interpreters need to possess mobile communication and scheduling devices (cellphone, PDA), as well as easy-to-carry research materials (specialized dictionaries, preferably installed on a laptop or tablet and/or, ideally, fast internet access to online dictionaries and word search sites); they may also need to have their own simultaneous interpreting equipment (FM or infrared). Interpreters market their availability, so they must keep track of scheduled jobs and have a way for clients to contact them even while away on other assignments. Where simultaneous interpreting is required, it can be an advantage for an interpreter to have his own equipment in order to be able to interpret for several people at the same time.</p> |

This chart was originally published in Proteus, the newsletter of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) <http://www.najit.org>. Author-approved updated version. Judith Kenigson Kristy, © 2014. Reproduction permitted with permission of author for educational purposes.



Judith Kenigson Kristy is a federally certified and state-certified Spanish < > English court interpreter with over 20 years of experience in legal translation and interpreting. She has worked as a freelance translator, consultant and instructor for 40 years. Her experience includes transcribing and translating forensic recordings and numerous appearances in court as expert witness. She is an ATA member, has served on the board of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), and is Co-Founder of the Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators (TAPIT). She chairs NAJIT's Transcription / Translation Committee, and is the editor and co-author of NAJIT's position paper entitled "General Guidelines and Minimum Requirements for Transcript Translations in Any Legal Setting."
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



Legislators support House Bill 2325 to increase number of medical interpreters | San Francisco, CA | 2/31/2014

State Assembly Speaker John Perez joined San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee and other state legislators at a North Beach community health center in support of House Bill 2325 that proposes increasing the number of medical interpreters for residents with limited English skills. As part of the bill introduced by Perez, the state Department of Health Care Services would establish a program to provide and reimburse medical interpreter services for those enrolled in the state's health care program, MediCal. Read complete article at:

<http://www.sfappeal.com/2014/02/mayor-lee-joins-legislators-in-support-of-bill-to-increase-number-of-medical-intrepeters>

According to Perez "proper patient care depends on understanding medical professionals. Miscommunication and poor understanding of difficult medical and technical terms can leave English language learners misdiagnosed or undergoing unnecessary testing." The bill will increase access to trained medical interpreters and was championed by AFSCME's Interpreting for California campaign.

Learn more at: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_2301-2350/ab_2325_bill_20140221_introduced.html

Article retrieved from Bay City News (February 26, 2014):

<http://www.sfappeal.com/2014/02/mayor-lee-joins-legislators-in-support-of-bill-to-increase-number-of-medical-intrepeters>



Supreme Court of Ohio Adopts Court Interpreter Services Improvements | 3/31/2014

The Supreme Court of Ohio has approved rule changes that will provide better access to the state's judicial system for people who need language interpretation. The court's action comes after a public comment period on a proposal to amend Rules 80-88 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio that govern foreign and sign language interpretation in Ohio's courts.

The Supreme Court has been addressing the increasing demands for language interpretation in Ohio's court system through its Language Services Program, including testing and certifying court interpreters. More information is available at: <http://sc.ohio.gov/JCS/interpreterSvc>

Article published by Court News of Ohio (March 31, 2014): http://www.courtnewsOhio.gov/happening/2014/ruleAmendIS_033114.asp#U4uyoWcU-B0



Language Access in Public Schools | Washington State House Bill 1709 passed the House | 4/14/2014

Washington State House Bill 1709 was the only interpreter bill out of four to survive the 2014 legislative session. The bill was signed into law by the Governor on April 4, 2014 and \$35,000 were allocated to this bill in the supplemental budget for the Office of the Education Ombudsman (OEO) to conduct a feasibility study for the development of a state foreign language interpreter training program designed to create a pool of trained interpreters for public schools. Submission of the study must be sent by February 1, 2015 to the legislative education committees by the Office of Education Ombudsman <http://www.governor.wa.gov/oEO>

Throughout the entire legislative session, representatives of Interpreters United/Local 1671 AFSCME Council 28

<http://interpretersunited.wfse.org> and the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS) <http://www.notisnet.org>, an ATA chapter, have been in contact with OEO supporting the provision of interpreter services to foster communications between parents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Learn more at: http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/?zone=unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=273022&page=Take20Action

Article published by Interpreters United (April 14, 2014): **Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE):** http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/?zone=unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=273022&page=Take20Action



OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

DAVID SLAYTON
Administrative Director

Free Spanish Court Interpretation Service Expanding

For Immediate Release
January 23, 2014

AUSTIN –Responding to the need for language interpreters in the state, this month the Office of Court Administration (OCA) announced the expansion of its remote interpreter services. Known as TCRIS (Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service), the program is based in Austin but open to judges in every county for just the cost of a phone call or video-conference.

Texas has only 455 licensed court interpreters in the state residing in just 59 of the 254 Texas counties. This forces many of Texas' courts to expend significant tax dollars bringing required interpreters in from other parts of the state, sometimes for just a short hearing.

"We are excited to bring this service to courtrooms across the state," said David Slayton, Administrative Director for the Texas Office of Court Administration. "Having licensed and experienced interpreters increases access to justice and makes the court process more efficient and effective."

Attorneys with Spanish-speaking clients who have limited English proficiency who need interpretation services in the courtroom should notify the judge or court staff in advance of a hearing. If the judge permits remote interpretation, court staff can contact TCRIS by e-mail (interpreter@txcourts.gov) or phone (512-463-5656) to make the arrangements. Depending on call volume, the service is also available on-demand when unexpected needs arise for courtroom interpretation.

TCRIS interpreters are licensed by the state and experienced in Texas law. Appropriate hearings for remote interpretation are those which would normally last half an hour or less and involve no complex evidence, such as:

- Plea hearings
- Bail hearings
- Arraignments
- Pre-trial motions
- Prove-ups of uncontested divorces
- Some hearings for evictions and protective orders.

For trials and other longer, more complex hearings, courts are still referred to on-site licensed interpreters.

The goal of this program is to increase access to justice for Spanish-speakers with limited English proficiency in the court system. Already in its first few weeks, the service has been used frequently and with success. "The simplicity, reliability and quality of OCA's telephone interpretation is truly amazing and we intend to use them often in the future," said Rob Hoffman, District Court Judge for the 452nd Judicial District.

OCA has offered limited remote interpretation in the past for domestic violence, child protection and child support hearings through a federal grant, but with new funding from the Texas Legislature, interpretation has now expanded to include short hearings in all courts and all case types.

For more information see: <http://www.txcourts.gov/oca/TCRIS>

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Telephone Interpreting Program: Access to Justice for All Administrative Office of the United States Courts

February 25, 2014

In a federal courtroom, a witness, who only speaks Foochow, provides testimony in a case where no one in the room speaks that language. In a preliminary hearing, a Spanish-speaking defendant responds to questions from the judge. In both instances, an interpreter bridging the language gap for the participants is miles away at the other end of a telephone.

The Telephone Interpreting Program (TIP) provides remote interpretation for court proceedings where certified or highly qualified court interpreters are not reasonably available locally. From 2001-2013, fifty-six U.S. district courts in 102 locations used TIP for approximately 42,000 events, saving an estimated \$14 million for the Judiciary in travel and contract costs. Since 2009, the average number of events per year has been approximately 3,900, for an estimated yearly savings of over \$1.5 million.

In 1989, the Judicial Conference approved a pilot program to provide remote simultaneous and consecutive telephone interpreting in 1989, with initial funding in 1990. In 1994, the Conference approved the TIP program for short, pretrial proceedings, such as pretrial hearings, initial appearances, arraignments, and probation and pretrial services interviews.

TIP significantly increases the likelihood that the courts will use certified or highly qualified interpreters, improving the administration of justice. A staff court interpreter at one of the 11 district courts currently providing TIP services can be scheduled online.

“We’re not spending time calling around, trying to find people, to get referrals,” said Magistrate Judge David Bernthal in the Central District of Illinois. “It gives us great flexibility, while still protecting the individual who does not speak English.”

With a TIP interpreter only a telephone call away, courts save on travel costs. Staff court interpreters might interpret an event in Texas in the morning, and another one that afternoon in Maine. Money also is saved when courts can use TIP staff interpreters and don’t need to contract for interpreters outside of the area.

TIP works best for short proceedings where certified or otherwise qualified court interpreters are not locally available. The set-up is simple. A two-line telephone system and some specialized equipment is all that is needed for simultaneous telephone interpreting services.

TIP is proving cost-effective for the Judiciary, which is important when budgets are tight and cost-containment is essential. But it also ensures defendants in court proceedings initiated by the United States receive quality interpreting services from certified and highly qualified interpreters.

Article published by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts: <http://news.uscourts.gov/telephone-interpreting-program-access-justice-all>

Current TIP Provider Courts:

Central District of California
Southern District of California
District of Columbia
Southern District of Florida
Northern District of Illinois
District of New Jersey
District of New Mexico
Southern District of New York
District of Nebraska
District of Puerto Rico
District of Rhode Island.





The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) is the only global association of conference interpreters, and brings together over 3,000 professionals from every continent. For over 60 years, AIIC has promoted high standards of quality and ethics in the profession and represented the interests of its practitioners. AIIC activities and projects aim to help individual practitioners and the worldwide community of interpreters, meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

ISO STANDARDS ON INTERPRETING

By Luigi Luccarelli, Verónica Pérez Guarnieri, Klaus Ziegler

Two AIIC members active in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Working Group on Interpreting discuss new international standards in the works.

Klaus Ziegler (AIIC Germany) and Verónica Pérez Guarnieri (AIIC Argentina) were in Pretoria in June 2013 for the latest meeting of the ISO Working Group on Interpreting (in ISO parlance ISO/TC37/SC5/WG2). Verónica is Convener of the ISO Working Group and Klaus heads the AIIC Project on Standardization of Conference Interpreting Services. They agreed to talk about what been done so far and what is planned for the future.

LL: First of all, thanks for agreeing to this interview. Let's start with some general background information. How did the idea to write international standards on interpreting come about?

KZ: Actually, I was informed about the ongoing work on the Community Interpreting Standard at a quite late stage, when the project had already been going on some two or three years. At that time Standards on Interpreting were something very new to me.... and, to be honest, I thought it was something completely unnecessary. As far as I know, the experts on ISO level started with a project on Community Interpreting because they weren't able to agree on a Scope for a General Standard on Interpreting. As the need for Community Interpreting Services has been growing very fast and the area was completely unregulated, this was the first step towards standardization in the world of interpreting.

VPG: It was more or less the same in my case. The idea of a standard on interpreting had been going on in my mind for a long time and when I started to get involved in national standards I learned of this community interpreting project in the making. At first I did not see the use of it for Argentina, in particular because you know, we are a Spanish-speaking country surrounded by many other Spanish-speaking countries, except for Brazil, so I did not see at that time how this standard could be of use in the Argentine scene in particular. I did understand, however, how important this was for other countries like the US or Canada with huge numbers of people who do not speak the language of the majority. These linguistic minorities access services through community interpreters, be it at hospital, when having to discuss their children report cards with a teacher, etc. ISO DIS 13611 is a guidance document. It establishes the basic principles and practices necessary to ensure quality community interpreting services for all language communities, for end users as well as for requesters and service providers.

LL: When and how did each of you become involved in the process?

KZ: By that time the German Standard on Translation Services (which later on became a European and a worldwide standard) was about to be revised and the committee in charge on a national level was looking for additional members, I was asked if the German Region of AIIC wanted to participate. At the same time, we learned that the Working Draft of the Standard on Community Interpreting dealt with quite a lot of settings that we as conference interpreters would definitely see as conference interpreting settings. That was the moment when a colleague of mine and I myself began to see the necessity of AIIC participating actively in the work on standards both on a national and an international level. The Board of the German Region decided to get involved; I was appointed representative of AIIC in the national mirror committee and expert for the ISO working group, and that's when my "standards life" began. Although it is quite a lot of work and things proceed at a rather slow pace (something very difficult to accept for a conference interpreter), I appreciate the opportunity to work with colleagues from different parts of the world.

VPG: The community interpreting project was the only thing that there was in the field of interpreting standardization. And let me explain a little bit of procedure here. We are a network of national standards bodies and there are different categories depending on level of engagement and participation. These national standards bodies make up the ISO membership and they represent ISO in their countries. In turn, ISO work is conducted by Technical Committees (TCs) comprising large groups of experts from all over the world. These experts (coming from the relevant industry, consumer associations, academia, NGOs and government) negotiate all aspects of the standard, including its scope, key definitions and content. In turn a TC may decide that its scope is too broad and may then set up one or more subcommittees to focus on specific parts of the overall standards requirement. Further subgroups may then be established as working groups, to focus on specific tasks within the overall programme. The TC under which we work is called "Terminology and other Language and Content Resources". Our SC5 is "Translation and Interpreting" and WG2 is "Interpreting" so you see that work becomes more and more detailed as you go deeper into the ISO structure.

If you personally want to work on standardization, you have to become a member of your NSB on behalf of an institution or company (and be nominated as expert to work on a certain project). I approached the Argentine standardization body (IRAM) and expressed my interest to work on standardization in the field of interpreting. Had I said that my specialization was "car paint" or "electrical devices", they would have been more willing to accept my proposal. Anyway, I succeeded in convincing them that the work done at the ISO level would be of benefit to the country.

As NSBs should establish an appropriate process to develop national positions and comments on ISO work, as well as to determine the NSBs' representation at ISO meetings, it is recommended that national mirror committees (NMCs) be formed whenever possible. We therefore set up a NMC with other AIIC members and members of the national association of interpreters (ADICA), with myself

representing AIIC, to participate in the latest stages of the drafting of this standard with a view of writing a standard on conference interpreting down the line. And right we were, because we are starting to see a growing need in Argentina for community interpreting with the large inflows of immigrants coming from countries as distant as China, Korea and Taiwan, as well as the presence of indigenous populations that were always there but whose linguistic needs had been neglected.

We have already requested that IRAM include in its 2014 Business Plan the adoption of the ISO standard on CI so that as soon as it is published by ISO, Argentina will have the standard adopted and in force in no time thanks to the so-called "Fast-track procedure". This is possible when a document with a certain degree of maturity is available at the start of a standardization project, for example a standard developed by another organization. When a country adopts an ISO standard, it does so "as is". The only thing you can do is add an annex explaining some differences or similarities or references to the local setting. And we are happy with that because we have been involved in the drafting process and have been able to provide our input and comment on paragraphs that were not in line with Argentine legislation, for example.

That is why I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that experts participate in the ISO process through their NSBs. Experts provide their personal view and expertise but each one comes from a different country, and you cannot lose sight of what is going on in your country, its idiosyncrasies, what interpreters needs are, their education requirements, etc. All that will be fed into the new standard.

LL: Talk a bit about how the Guidelines on Community Interpreting evolved and where that stands today

KZ: As said before, the work on the Guidelines on Community Interpreting started some years ago (without AIIC's participation) and as a result of the experts not even being able to agree on the Scope of Guidelines for Interpreting as a whole, which would have been the more logical approach instead of starting with an individual setting or specialization. But there was certainly a need for regulating an area where a lot of services were (and still are) rendered by unqualified people. Just think about children having to interpret for their parents in hospitals and the traumatic implications this implies. Of course, I can only comment on the evolution of the document from the moment I started participating actively. What I found at that time was a document that more or less described the unsatisfactory situation, but without really giving advice on good practice for service providers and end users. In addition, community interpreting as a setting wasn't specified clearly enough. Therefore, the project was already about to be set back to zero, which would have meant having to restart the whole procedure. As community interpreting urgently needs to be professionalized and public awareness has to be strengthened, the working group finally made a big effort to reformulate many critical aspects, for example necessary evidence of qualifications, just to name one of the major issues. A few months ago the reshaped document was accepted as a second Draft International Standard, which means that it can possibly be published in 2014. By the way, during discussions we became aware again of the importance of regulations and guidance for the interpreting profession in general, as it still seems to be quite unknown in all its complexity.

LL: So the idea for general guidelines on interpreting grew out of these prior discussions? What thinking lead to that?

KZ: Let's say that the discussions about community interpreting lead us back to the idea of general guidelines for interpreting, as this was the original starting point some years ago. Now, as more and more interest groups got involved and more expertise came into the working group, the experts rediscovered the necessity of having General Guidelines on Interpreting that could work as an umbrella for the individual Standards on Specializations.

Finally, two American colleagues came up with the new work proposal. Once it was accepted, the ISO working group in charge started its work based on the first draft document presented by the project leader, Marjory Bancroft from the US. During the first working session in Pretoria in June of this year, the experts agreed on changing the name and scope of this project from "Guidelines" to "Requirements" for Interpreting, thus aiming for a normative Standard instead of only guidelines. This was an important step and at the same time it lead to some substantial changes on the Draft International Standard on Community Interpreting. Without going too much into details, I can say that both projects now focus clearly on interpreting as a professional activity and the General Requirements project will set the bar as high as possible in order to achieve professionalization and regulation for all interpreting activities.

VPG: I am very excited about this new project. There is lots of work to be done, especially regarding the agreement on minimum qualifications requirements for interpreters, classification of languages (native, mother, second, etc.), working conditions, rest breaks, etc. Remember that every effort should be made to accommodate the needs and concerns of all participating countries. However, consensus does not mean that all parties will be in agreement with the final decision. For example, the Draft International Standard (DIS), which is an advanced step of the process, is approved if at least 2/3 of the countries vote in favor and no more than 1/4 disapprove.

LL: So this implies that the approach is now to draft one general document and then specific standards for various fields of interpreting.

KZ: Exactly, that's the point. This is meant to be the umbrella that shall cover further individual standards on other specializations, such as court interpreting and conference interpreting. These would then only focus on the specific aspects of each of them.

LL: How are final decisions made in ISO?

KZ: I guess you don't really want me to explain in detail the whole procedure from start to finish of a project on ISO level... It would take us some hours. Generally, you should know that only the official national standardization bodies can be members of the numerous ISO Technical Committees and they are the ones that jointly make decisions by a certain majority stipulated in the ISO Procedures. So in the end it all depends on who takes part in the respective technical committees of the national standardization bodies.

VPG: Let's just say that you have a group of countries (around 30 in our group) that meet once a year in a different country and several more times a year via Webex or other means to push forward a standard. There are several types of ISO publications but in the interest of time let us talk about the International Standard (IS), which can be either a Guidance Standard or a Requirements Standard. The former is only recommendations and the latter may lead into a certification program. The Community Interpreting Standard is a Guideline IS while the Interpreting-General Requirements falls under the second category.

LL: Tell us a bit about the AIIC standardization project.

KZ: Originally, we started the project in order to protect our profession against any negative impact from the publication of the Guidelines on Community Interpreting, as they were about to be decided at that time. As I said before, there were quite a lot of misleading formulations and a lack of delineation of conference interpreting and community interpreting. But from the very beginning I also saw an opportunity to develop something that might strengthen our own profession and our position when it comes to negotiating terms and conditions of conference interpreting services. The problems we encounter due to the fact that there are no official regulations and no kind of recognition of our profession are well known by us all, I would guess. Although Standards can never be compulsory, we could at least have some kind of “official” document. Many companies and public entities base their tenders and purchasing on standards and certification, so this might be an important approach.

Until now we managed to be present at ISO level with some experts being AIIC members, the convenership of the ISO Working Group in charge of Interpreting issues (Verónica Pérez Guarnieri) and hopefully the acceptance of AIIC as A-liaison partner of the relevant sub-committee of ISO TC 37.

We are about to start working on a Standard on Conference Interpreting in Germany and in some countries AIIC members have already joined national standards bodies. I think it is important to share experience and to coordinate our efforts. For that purpose we created a working platform that allows us to share documents, discuss important issues and coordinate the work within the national standards bodies and on an international level. And we should never forget to work as closely as possible with as many of the relevant market stakeholders as possible.

VPG: I find it fascinating to experience what occurs at a strictly human level in these meetings with experts from various cultural backgrounds. For negotiations to advance and work to progress it is important that everybody feels respected and that their contributions are of value. If that is possible, barriers to communication are torn down and people can easily come to an agreement. And that is what happened in our group. The result: a standard that will hopefully be published early in 2014 and another very important one in the making.

Please refer to the following links for more related information:

International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) <http://www.aiic.net>
International Organization for Standardization (ISO) <http://www.iso.org>
German National Association of Conference Interpreters (VKD BDÜ) <http://www.bdue.de>
Terminology and other Language and Content Resources http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO/TC_37
Argentine Standardization Body (IRAM) <http://www.iram.org.ar>
German Institute for Standardization www.din.de
The AIIC Blog <http://www.aiic.net/blog>

This article was originally published in The AIIC Blog <http://aiic.net/blog> in November of 2013. We thank the authors and the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) for granting permission to republish it here.



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Klaus Ziegler is Professor for Interpreting and Translation and course leader for the MA Conference Interpreting at Munich University of Applied Languages. He works as a free-lance conference and business interpreter since 1992, has interpreted in a wide range of settings specializing in technical domains, sports and interpreting for the media. He is director and owner of IConCom. He is member of AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) and VKD BDÜ (German National Association of Conference Interpreters). He works on the development of national and international standards for interpreting as member of technical committees in charge of translation and interpreting within the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and DIN (German Institute for Standardization). **Contact:** k.ziegler@aiic.net



Verónica Pérez Guarnieri was born in Argentina. Since 1990, she has worked as a free-lance interpreter and translator for government agencies, embassies and multinationals. She holds an MA in Translation and Interpretation from Universidad del Salvador, a postgraduate degree in English Translation from City University in London, an MA in Specialized Translation from Universidad de Córdoba, Spain, and is currently pursuing her doctoral studies. She is member of AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) and ADICA (Argentine Association of Conference Interpreters). She is involved in the development of standards on interpreting at home and abroad, as Convener of the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) group of experts working on the subject. **Contact:** veronica.perez@aiic.net



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INTERPRETERS JUNE

National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare (NCIHC) Membership Meeting | June 6-7, 2014 | Charleston, SC

The conference theme is "Engage, Empower, Evolve: Enhancing Partnerships to Advance Language Access". NCIHC promotes and enhances language access in health care in the United States, and the two day event consists of interactive and structured information sharing, networking, and brainstorming discussions as well as time for informal focused meetings throughout the event.

Visit NCIHC at: <http://www.ncihc.org/2014-membership-meeting>

Court Interpreter Training Institute & Medical Interpreter I Training Institute | June 9-20, 2014 | Tucson, Arizona

The Agnese Haury Institute for Interpretation at the National Center for Interpretation (NCI) presents the annual 3-Week Court Interpreter Training Institute (CITI) and the 2-Week Medical Interpreter Training Institute (MITI). Your practice and studies depends on your goals as a professional interpreter. Visit AHI at: <http://nci.arizona.edu/ahi>

The 25th Japanese-English Translation Conference | June 21-22, 2014 | Tokyo, Japan

The theme of IJET-25 is "Paving the Way Forward." We will discuss what we can do in the face of the changes affecting the industry to create a future that is bright not only for translators, interpreters, and clients, but for society as a whole.

Visit the Japan Association of Translators (JAT) at: <http://ijet.jat.org>

AUGUST

FIT XXth World Congress | Man vs. Machine ? The Future of Translators, Interpreters and Terminologists | Germany

The International Association of Translators (FIT) is organizing an international conference which brings together all those involved in the language sector: translators, interpreters and terminologists, students and teachers, newcomers and experienced professionals, product and service providers – all those for whom professional language services are a must. Mark your calendar for August 4 – 6, 2014.

Registration information at: <http://www.fit2014.org>

Call for Papers: 2015 International Medical Interpreters Association Conference | Submissions due: August 15, 2014

The 2015 IMIA Annual Conference theme is: "United We Are Stronger". Speaking at an IMIA Conference is a challenging and rewarding opportunity. This conference seeks to facilitate learning as an ongoing, dynamic and social process, and strives to offer engaging sessions in which diverse participants can form bonds, participate as learners and teachers, and feel integral to the learning process: Save the date: April 24-26, 2015

Washington, DC. Learn more about IMIA at: <http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2014callforpapers.asp> and submit proposals by August 15, 2014.

SEPTEMBER

2nd IAPTI International Conference | September 20-21, 2014 | Athens, Greece

The International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI) is an advocate for ethical practices in translation and interpreting, uniting language professionals from 60 countries. Conference topics will include professional status, situation of the market, analysis of the social status that interpreters had and still have, based on tangible examples coming from professional experiences and more!

Learn more at IAPTI: <https://www.iapti.org>

2014 New Mexico Interpreters' Conference | September 27-28 | Albuquerque, NM

The conference will focus on cultural discovery. Participants will hear from consumers of interpreting services from different cultures and from different variety of settings; have opportunities to explore a range of cultures, and participate in skill building sessions.

More information about continuing education: <http://www.nmcourts.gov>

NOVEMBER

ATA 55th Annual Conference | November 5-8, 2014 | Chicago, Illinois

Connect with over 1,800 colleagues from around the world, share your interests and experiences, and build partnerships. Choose from over 175 sessions, learn practical skills and theory, be inspired by new ideas, and join the discussions that matter to you and your profession. Learn more:

<http://www.atanet.org/conf/2014/>

FLIPPING A COIN TO CHOOSE THE HEALTHCARE/MEDICAL INTERPRETER NATIONAL CERTIFICATION CREDENTIAL

By Lucy Kathan



Interpreting in healthcare settings is a vital aspect of providing adequate healthcare. Effective communication is fundamentally important to the safety and comfort of the patient during care, and professional interpreters bridge the communication gap between patients and their healthcare providers. Healthcare institutions are required to be in compliance with regulatory standards concerning patient-provider communication. Language access must be facilitated by competent individuals, and certification credentials define qualified, proficient healthcare interpreters.

Certification testing is available for aspiring medical/healthcare interpreters and the certification exams are administered by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI), and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI). Both organizations are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), created in 1977 by the Institute of Credentialing Excellence, to deliver a national certification program for medical/healthcare interpreters. The benefits of having two accredited organizations offering certification and certifying individuals ensures that the skills, knowledge and abilities of the candidates are adequately assessed, and that certified interpreters have met the objective standards required to render interpreting services.

When I first sat down to write this article, I had in mind writing something about how the process of becoming a certified medical interpreter was for me, the preparation for the exam, methodology of study, and step by step journey, however, I decided to write about the particular differences between the two certifying organizations.

The content of the written exam administered by CCHI tends to focus on how interpreters manage encounters throughout healthcare interpreting, and the NBCMI exam emphasizes mostly on specialized medical terminology in the respective language pairs. There is a noticeable difference in the oral performance tests between the two accredited organizations. The CCHI exam does include testing in the three modalities of simultaneous, consecutive, sight translation and translation as well, whereas the NBCMI also tests consecutive interpretation and sight translation into the target language but does not include testing in simultaneous interpretation or sight translation into English. On the other hand, it is known that extensive research was conducted by CCHI and NBCMI to determine the professional skills requirements related to interpreting in healthcare, in order to further adequately test and assess the necessary levels of competency.



Lucy Kathan was born and raised in Lima, Peru. She is a court-certified Spanish interpreter, a certified medical interpreter, specializing in legal, business and medical interpretation. She is a freelance translator and works as a staff medical interpreter at Kaiser Permanente – Language Resource Center. She holds a BS in Business Administration from Inca Garcilaso de la Vega University, is a member of the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) and the Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters (CAPI).
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One of the most frequently asked questions is: Which exam is better? The answer, in my humble opinion, is: Both nationally accredited certification exams are highly recommended. Whenever making a decision regarding testing preference, always remember that the value of earning a certification credential enhances professional development, and often leads to accomplishing higher level of responsibilities, boosting earning potential and furthering career advancement.

While my experience as a medical interpreter continues to further develop professionally whenever interpreting in healthcare, I also continue to face countless challenges throughout the multitude of technical medical specializations, deciphering numerous terminologies, discovering a variety of dialects, recognizing numerous accents, and understanding cultural sensitivities. To illustrate a few scenarios: a patient would often refer to their hand as: “mano” (literally hand), which for some Spanish speakers could be any part of the arm or hand (shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand, etc.), or their “pie” (literally foot) which could be any part of the leg below the hip. Another unexpected situation evolves whenever a patient’s symptoms may involve sensitive medical issues, such as sexually transmitted diseases. Often times, patients are asked to indicate the location of their medical discomfort, and they may feel deeply uncomfortable, resulting in a vague response such as: “down there.” This lack of specificity will create confusion between patients and healthcare providers, possibly adversely affecting future relationships and the rendering of an accurate diagnosis and further medical treatment. Therefore, bridging the barrier between patients and healthcare providers is even greater than language alone. Whenever providing medical interpreting services related to complex array of overwhelming medical problems to non-English speaking patients, our linguistic capability provides essential context throughout medical encounters, by constantly striving to bridge underlying cultural divides. Medical interpreters may influence healthcare decisions and are proven to be invaluable members of the healthcare team.

Acquiring specialized experience and related training is fundamentally important throughout the certification process, in preparation for the continuous challenges that interpreters will encounter in the medical interpreting profession. The profound implication of a possible misinterpretation, directly affecting someone’s health due to the use of unqualified interpreters, may result in adverse consequences. Interpreters are responsible to bridge the communication gap, assisting with the development of better understandings of cultural backgrounds, in order to effectively influence healthcare decisions. The interpreter is the “communication compass” that facilitates language access, and leads the way so that healthcare professionals can read the proper direction for treatment of the patient. Without that compass, the patient and the healthcare provider will find it very difficult to determine the direction for proper treatment. They’ll be lost in the dark.

In healthcare, credentials are important. The certification credential constitutes an important milestone for language professionals, and it provides the opportunity to incorporate the use of recognized industry standards. Certification contributes to further enhance professional development by strengthening acquired skills, knowledge and abilities in the areas in which improvement is needed to meet the standards required to render professional medical interpreting services.

Flipping a coin to decide whether to take the NBCMI medical interpreter certification exam or the CCHI healthcare certification exam is optional, however, acquiring the necessary specialized experience, and participating in related training is advisable. In preparation to initiate the journey to pursue certification, joining professional associations, attending workshops and seminars is also recommended. Effectively achieving a healthcare/medical interpreting certification credential and striving to meet the highest expectations is a great achievement and a step forward towards the professionalization of medical interpreters.

Related information about healthcare/medical interpreting certification:

Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) <http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org>
 National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI) <http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org>
 National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) <http://www.ncihc.org>
 The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/ncca>
 California Healthcare Interpreters Association (CHIA) <http://www.chiaonline.org>
 Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters (TAHIT) <http://www.tahit.us>

Healthcare Interpreter Certification: Comparison | By Elsa Boyer

| | National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters CMI - Certified Medical Interpreter (written and oral exam) QMI - Qualified Medical Interpreter (written exam and qualification exams) SMI - Screened Medical Interpreter (written exam and review of portfolio) | Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters CHI - Certified Healthcare Interpreter (written and oral exam) AHI – Associate Healthcare Interpreter (written exam only) |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Training – 40 hours | Successful completion of a registered and approved medical interpreter educational program (Only graduation from programs of a minimum 40 hours duration will be accepted). A registry of training programs is posted on the IMIA website at: http://www.imiaweb.org/education/trainingnotices.asp *This requirement will be waived until July 15, 2014 if the interpreter provides proof of working as a medical interpreter for at least one year. | CCHI accepts any combination of the following: Completing academic or non-academic training; Adding up hours from multiple courses related to healthcare interpreting; Completing Continuing education courses; Developing or teaching interpreter training courses; or On-the-job training (including formal training classes and shadowing or being shadowed by experienced interpreters) As an alternative, CCHI also accepts the following training: Attending interpreter conferences at which you participated in workshops that discussed issues related to the practice of interpreting – maximum of 5 hours allowed. Completing interpreter training courses not focused on healthcare (e.g. court, community, conference) or completing training in the health profession (e.g. nursing occupational therapy, social work) – maximum of 5 hours allowed. |
| Written Exam (In English) | Roles of the Medical Interpreter (8%) Medical Interpreter Ethics (15%) Cultural Competence (8%) Medical Terminology in Working Languages (38%) Medical Specialties in Working Languages ((23%) Interpreter Standards of Practice (IMIA, CHIA, NCIHC) (5%) Legislation and Regulations (HIPAA, CLAS) (3%) | Manage an Interpreter Encounter 30-35% Healthcare Terminology 22-25% Interact with Other Healthcare Professionals 20-24% Prepare for an Interpreting Encounter 16-20% Demonstrate Cultural Responsiveness 3-6% |
| Oral Performance Exam – | Mastery of Linguistic Knowledge of English 15% Mastery of Linguistic Knowledge of the other language 15% Interpreting knowledge and Skills 25% Cultural Competence 10% Medical Terminology in Working Languages 25% Medical Specialties in Working Languages 10% | Interpret Consecutively 75-80% Interpret Simultaneously 10-15% Sight Translate/Translate Healthcare Documents 10-15% |
| Languages | Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese | Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin |
| Cost | Application Fee: \$35 Written examination Fee: \$175 Oral examination Fee: \$275 TOTAL: \$485 | Application Fee: \$35 AHI Examination Fee: \$175 CHI Examination: \$275 TOTAL: \$485 |
| Recertification | Every 5 years No retesting required Proof of 3.0 Continuing Education Units (30 hours) before credential's expiration date | Every 4 years No retesting required Proof of 32 hours (16 hours must be completed in the first 2 years and sixteen (16) hours in the second 2 years. Document 40 hours of healthcare interpreting experience. This must include 20 hours in years 1 & 2 and 20 hours in years 3 & 4. |

References: www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org

www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org

Revised 4/16/2014



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PROFESSIONALS AT-A-GLANCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELENA ALCALDE



Elena Alcalde is a professional interpreter and translator. She is a PhD Candidate, Research Fellow, assigned to the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain, where she is completing her doctoral thesis on the professional and academic reality of financial translation in Spain. A graduate in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, she also completed a master's program in the same field of studies. She holds two European Bachelor Degrees in Modern Languages from the Northumbria University, United Kingdom and the Université Aix-Marseille, France. She has authored and co-authored several papers on financial translation and translation pedagogy. Her educational and career accomplishments include completed research and teaching stays in the Ivory Coast, the United States and Panama, to include guest presenter at APTI First International Translation and Interpreting Annual Conference.
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1. What inspired you to pursue a career in translation and interpretation? What continues to inspire you today?

My father was an English teacher and at my early age of fourteen, he inspired me with his passion to learn languages. I took a step forward to learn English by spending a year in an Irish school. Since then, my passion for languages just grew stronger and stronger and I decided to enrol in the School of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada. I was not really familiar back then with the profession of the translator and interpreter, and one of the main reasons that motivated me to apply was the fact that the School has a program in Applied European Languages. This program not only offers a background in languages, law and economics but it has also allowed me to expand my knowledge of language, and gain educational achievements while spending two years abroad in France and England during my four-year undergraduate studies

2. What are some of your challenges as a practicing interpreter/translator and what do you mostly enjoy about studying abroad?

I really enjoy working as an interpreter, interacting with people and acquiring learning invaluable lessons and insightful experiences. Researching and preparing for designated cases also provides me with the unique opportunity to extensively learn about the field of law, specialized terminology, range of different forms of slangs, idioms and the complexities of the language. I love every single aspect of studying and working abroad while thoroughly enjoying my career path while pursuing the PhD Candidate in the School of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain <http://www.ugr.es/en>. Meeting extraordinary people is making a noticeable difference throughout my academic and career journey. I recently completed a research stay at Kent State University, Ohio <http://www.kent.edu>, and the master's and PhD students along with the teaching staff from the Translation program really contributed to my professional development and they shared many learning and unforgettable experiences. As I continue bridging linguist barriers and cross cultural boundaries, language continues to enrich me in many ways.

3. What advice would you provide to anyone interested in pursuing a professional career in interpretation and/or translation?

A career in interpretation or translation requires an in-depth knowledge of one or more foreign languages and other qualifications such as knowledge, skills and abilities that may be acquired through education, practice, experience, and/or related training. Educational opportunities are available by many institutions such as universities that offer advanced degrees, postgraduate programs, teaching or studying at an undergraduate level, and undertaking research activities. Considering other paths such as seeking professional certifications and membership to professional associations is also recommended. It is also very important to participate in events related to the profession such as conferences, workshops, and seminars in order to enhance our professional development. I recently attended the Panamanian Association of Translators and Interpreters International Conference <http://www.aptipanama.org>, and the American Translators Association (ATA) Annual Conference <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2013>, and the educational sessions really helped me learn more about the profession, allowed networking opportunities, meeting new colleagues and potential employers while providing a professionally rewarding experience.

4. What are your immediate and future goals as you advance your academic studies, while sharpening and enhancing your professional career?

I intend to defend my doctoral thesis on the academic and professional reality of financial translation at the end of this academic year. I am currently very focused on the teaching aspect of my studies, since I am in charge of an undergraduate course on Desktop Publishing for Translators at the School of Translation and Interpretation. Academia does take most of my time at the moment, and I continue to enjoy working as a translator/interpreter.

5. As language professionals continue to bridge language barriers, helping the world communicate, and increasing a global presence, what are your perspectives regarding the new technological challenges in the language industry?

Globalization and technology has considerably impacted our profession. I am able to combine my academic and professional career utilizing emerging technological advances, ranging from email communication, using word processing software for translation projects to interpreting assignments. Whether starting a translation in Spain and finishing it miles away from home or conducting a research for an upcoming interpretation assignment, it is important to remain competitive in our respective professional fields. Considering the constant development of global markets, industries and commerce functions on an international scale, as language professionals we must face the latest changes in our chosen working languages, and because languages are in a continuous process of change, I recommend taking full advantage of modern technology.

THE FREEWHEELING FREELANCER INTERPRETER

“Taking my life and work wherever my bicycle takes me”

By Jonathan T. Hine Jr.

The author is a freelance writer, translator, interpreter, reviser, and editor. He has reconfigured his office to fit in the rear pannier of his bicycle and has tested it on ever-longer distance rides.

The phone rings. It's from Chicago. I move my tumbler out of the way and go to the corner, where I won't disturb the other customers, but I can still see my bike outside.

“Jonathan Hine, may I help you?”

“Jonathan, this is Rachel Morris at Dunn, Dunn and Dunn, we would like to use you for another deposition on the case you worked with us last year.”

“Thanks for remembering me, Rachel. I assume this is interpreting, or is it more like the ‘language consulting’ that last year’s hearing turned into.” I hear her laugh, which makes me smile.

“That was awesome, Jonathan, which is why the partner on the case wants you again. The deposition is here in our main office, not in Alexandria like last time. You’re in Charlottesville, Virginia, right?”

“Well, no. I’m actually closer to you now, if you’re in Chicago.”...

Responding to such requests is a little more complicated than it used to be. I can't just go to the closet for a suitcase and some clothes, and throw them in the trunk of the car. Those who know me and those who follow my blog know that I live and work on my bicycle now. I left Charlottesville on 25 September 2013, and my income has more than covered my travels, including attending the 54th American Translators Association (ATA) Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

It's easy enough to take in and deliver translations by email. But what about interpreting?

The interpreter colleagues that I have visited are on the road a lot. Making a living as an interpreter is by no means restricted to those living in large metropolitan areas. State Department escort interpreters accompany their International Visitors all over the country, often for days or weeks at a time, a common aspect of the job. Conference interpreters have long been free from the bonds of geography. They must be where the conferences are, and simultaneous interpreting is still not a common skill. A distant hospital requiring interpretation services for a rare language or a delicate medical subject may need an on-site interpreter. There are still situations where telephone or video interpreting won't do the job.

I am not a conference interpreter (although I do a lot of chouchoutage), so my clients are not jetting me to Vail or New Orleans. When I do get a call (like the fictional vignette above), the cases are always unusual and the situations justify the expense of paying my travel. Even before I started living on the road, there were travel expenses to leave Charlottesville.

Today, I am able to take in requests for non-translation services (including interpreting) wherever I am. I include the travel expense of going to the job in the estimate. It may involve searching a few schedules and time to buy tickets, but I can still prepare an estimate. I may need a few days to catch up with my bounce box with the “street clothes” at the next mail drop. The cost-benefit of using my services depends on where I am when the call comes in. For example, a client in Virginia is willing to wait until I ride past their location to perform some document triage. Another client wanting revision training nearby is also waiting. But when the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF) in Miami needed a replacement presenter for a workshop, I happened to be in town, so there were no travel expenses.

This business model won't work for a court interpreter who arguably must be where the trials (and court certification) are. But translators who only interpret occasionally and interpreters whose business already has them traveling to most assignments have no need to sit at home waiting for the phone to ring. To be sure, the business must be up and running before venturing out to travel full-time, so that the work is already coming in and going out. At that point, it makes no difference to the clients where you are, as long as you can respond to their need.

There may be personal reasons for taking to the road on a near-permanent basis. For example, having an empty nest, or wanting to visit far-flung friends and relatives more often (or maybe for the last time). Some modes of travel are cheaper than staying home, but other business models are more effective from one location. Careful analysis and planning can reveal the feasibility of going nomadic or confirm one's satisfaction in staying put.



Jonathan T. Hine Jr. is a full-time freelance translator (Italian/French >English) and interpreter (Italian >English), and has interpreted for the State Department, the US Navy, direct clients, and language companies. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (BS), the University of Oklahoma (MPA), and the University of Virginia (PhD). He conducts workshops on business organization for language mediation professionals. Blog: <http://freewheelingfreelancer.wordpress> | **Contact:** translations@scriptorservices.com



HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS INTERPRETER EXAM

By Michelle Hof

As many readers will already be aware, the United Nations (UN) regularly schedules competitive examinations to recruit interpreters for its various duty stations around the world. I have never actually applied to take the UN's accreditation test, but have to confess I was curious to see what sort of information and resources are available to help candidates prepare for the big day. So I started digging, and here's what I found.

Oddly enough, a quick Google query did not lead me straight to the official UN careers website, which is where you would expect to find this type of guidance, but to this article instead: How to Pass the United Nations Interpreter Examination. I found the article informative enough, and it includes a few useful links at the bottom. However, it was nothing compared to what I discovered next...

On the Interpreter Training Resources website, my site of choice for all things interpreting-related, I found a link sporting the innocent title of "UN accreditation test tips". Well, what did I find when I clicked on it but a direct link to the United Nations' own official guidance document on how to prepare for their interpreter exams!

The full title of this little gem is A Guide to Preparing for the Competitive Examination for the Recruitment of United Nations Interpreters and I'm happy to say it delivers exactly what the title promises. It offers detailed, step-by-step suggestions of how to prepare for the exams using material found on the various UN websites. There are enough ideas there to keep even the eagerest of beavers busy until test day! Even better, the guide includes a link to audio files of sample exams at the end so aspiring interpreters can see what it is they're up against.



The only downside to the resource that I could find were the statistics they gave in the right-hand column (UN hopefuls, please avert your eyes now): there were 38,231 applicants to the 55 examinations held between 2005 and 2009, and only 10.6 successful candidates were placed on the roster after each exam.

For those readers who would like to read more about working as a language professional for the United Nations, I recommend you explore the UN's Language Outreach portal, which is where the above exam preparation guide can be found, not to mention many other interesting resources and guidance documents. The UN careers website also has a wealth of useful information for UN hopefuls, including a long list of FAQs specifically directed at those wishing to find out more about the language competitive examinations. The full list of the exams scheduled for 2014 is available.

So, there you have it. Time for you aspiring UN interpreters to get practicing so you can beat the odds... and time for me to get back to my real job!

For more information please visit the following links.

UN language outreach portal: <http://www.unlanguage.org>
UN guide to preparing for examinations: <http://www.unlanguage.org/LE/Tips/Interpreters>
UN language competitive examinations: <http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/ets.shtml>
UN vocabulary and glossary list: <http://un-interpreters.org/glossarylist.html>
Interpreter Training Resources: <http://interpreters.free.fr>
UN film and video archives: <http://www.un.org/av/tv/archives.htm>

This is an updated version of an author-approved article that originally appeared on The Interpreter Diaries on February 4th, 2013.



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DISCOVERING THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION (ATA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Marsel de Souza

The ATA Annual Conference is an extremely valuable event for language professionals. I attended my first ATA Annual Conference in 2004, a year after becoming a member and earning the English>Portuguese certification. ATA had just established the Continuing Education Program and I have to admit that earning the continuing education points (CEPs) was the primary reason I crossed the continent to attend the 45th ATA Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada. Over the years, the ATA continuing education program has been proven to be an important aspect of a certified member's career. I will never forget those four days in Toronto when I felt overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information available throughout the event. I had attended a few conferences in Brazil before, but nothing of such width and breadth. With the only exception of missing the ATA 48th Annual Conference, which was held in San Francisco, California in 2007, I am quite happy to have consistently exceeded the required number of continuing education points to maintain my certification credential. For the 51st Annual Conference that took place in Denver, Colorado, in 2010, I was invited to participate in a discussion panel on specialization organized by the ATA Portuguese Language Division. I have also presented one educational session at the ATA 52nd Annual Conference, in Boston Massachusetts, and continue to be inspired and challenged to consider new ideas to share useful resources, and educational opportunities for professional development, as we continue seeking the professionalization and recognition of our profession.

The language business and the ATA Annual Conference

Back in 2004, I clearly had a focus on translation and business aspects. Most of the sessions I attended in my early days as an ATA member were on the business of freelancing, and this undoubtedly had a profound impact on my approach to doing business as a linguist. The Job Marketplace featured at the event also played a key role in my career since this was a great opportunity to expand business and meet many important clients. One of the most popular conference offerings is the Exhibit Hall where sponsors showcase their products, while displaying the latest technology, software, and equipment among other services. Being a member of the organization, attending the sessions, connecting with other colleagues, exchanging information with them, and building partnerships has been a very rewarding experience.

Over the years, I have slowly shifted my focus from the business – oriented sessions to a variety of other presentations, which are offered in concurrent tracks, featuring a variety of languages and specializations. I particularly enjoy the sessions organized by the Portuguese Language Division – and very happy to see how active those guys are! This is partly what inspired me to become a presenter at the annual conference in Boston. I had attended approximately four or five conferences, and I still had a strong focus on my career as a translator.

Reorienting my career

A few years ago, however, I made an important decision – and decided to focus more time and energy on my career as a conference interpreter. Once again, the annual conference played an important role, and the interpreting-related sessions started occupying a major part of my conference planning schedule. Back in the beginning, if I were interested in an interpreting presentation scheduled at the same time as a business session, I would attend the business session without thinking twice. Today, the interpreting sessions take priority in my decision making, so that I can take full advantage of learning practical skills and theory. This does not mean that I overlook the other sessions – I continue to attend the diverse panel discussions, subject matter expert presentations, training workshops and both general and language-specific sessions. One brilliant aspect about the organization of the annual conference is that anyone can acquire the ATA eConference DVD-ROM which features selected recorded sessions in electronic form. This is very useful for a variety of reasons – you may be interested in concurrent sessions, you may want to listen to a session after the conference or maybe you were simply unable to attend the event. In addition, the ATA eConference is approved for continuing education points (CEPs) to certified ATA members. This is a premier professional development learning opportunity, and is a very valuable technological virtual multimedia experience.

A rewarding experience – helping a first time attendee

At the most recent ATA Annual Conference held in San Antonio, Texas, I had a very rewarding experience that served as a reminder of how career – changing the ATA Conference can be. I had a long conversation with a first – time conference attendee during a preconference seminar and shared some impressions as an ATA member and conference attendee. He told me he ran a portal for freelance translators marketing their services and was attending the conference to gain insights into the profession and the market in order to enhance his portal. Having realized how confused he was with the number and variety of sessions, I advised him to focus on the business sessions, which are geared towards both freelancers and business owners. Upon meeting him again on Sunday while checking out of the hotel, he thanked me for the tip provided to him a few days back. He was very happy that he had followed my advice and was already looking forward to attending the upcoming ATA 55th Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

I appreciate the importance of being a member of ATA and intend to continue attending the annual conference. Whether you are an interpreter, a translator, a student or an entrepreneur, this annual event has something for you. And if you are planning a career change, it can be helpful, too. The ATA Annual Conference is committed to providing the most relevant education by bringing together leaders of the language industry, delivering professional development workshops, while offering unique opportunities to network with colleagues from around the world.

For more information on the topics discussed in this article, see:

ATA's certification program: <http://www.atanet.org/certification>
ATA eConference DVD-ROM: <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2013/econ.htm>
Next ATA Annual Conference: <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2014>



Marsel de Souza is a full-time interpreter and translator in Brasilia, Brazil. He is an ATA-certified English>Portuguese translator. He works primarily with the diplomatic and international organization community in Brasilia, and his interpreting assignments have taken him to Angola, France, Guinea-Bissau, the United States, and to various locations in Brazil. He has a BA in English>Portuguese Translation from the University of Brasilia and a certificate in Advanced French Studies from Alliance Française. He is a member of the American Translators Association (ATA), the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and serves on the Leadership Council of the ATA Interpreters Division.
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The Interpreters

Voice



The Newsletter of the Interpreters Division of the American Translators Association

Summer 2014



Photos by Jeff Sanfacon, Jeff@atanet.org



ATA 55TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 5-8, 2014
Chicago, Illinois



The American Translators Association (ATA), the voice of Interpreters and Translators invites you to connect with over 1,800 colleagues from around the world, share your interests and experiences, build partnerships, choose from over 175 sessions, learn practical skills and theory, and join the discussions that matter to you and your profession. The event provides a comprehensive selection of educational opportunities for professional development specific to your needs and presented by speakers from all over the world. Learn more at: <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2014/events.htm>



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