COMMUNICATING MORE FOR LESS

Language Access
Teleconference/Webinar VIII

January 25, 2011
Independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit, think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide

MPI Program Areas:

- U.S. Immigration Policy
- The National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy
- Borders, Security and Migration
- Migration & Development
- Transatlantic Task Force on Immigration and Integration
Language Portal:
A Translation and Interpretation Digital Library

Practitioners' Corner: Advice and Insight from the Field

Tips for Testing and Certifying Multilingual Employees
By Jason Reed

An effective language access program consists of language services that are: 1) available and timely; 2) clearly and accurately provided by someone who has demonstrated proficiency in two or more languages; and 3) cost effective. In Washington State, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has determined that the best way to achieve timely, accurate, and cost-effective language services is through the use of multilingual employees.
Click here to read full article.

Practitioners' Corner Archive:
- Tips for Ensuring Translation Quality
- A Guide to the Language Portal

What Are Language Access Services?
Logistics for Call

• Problem with webinar interface? Please email ldixon@migrationpolicy.org

• Call will be recorded

• Documents sent out prior to call

• Powerpoint presentations and audio will be available to participants after the call

• Conversation will be continued on MPI’s Immigrant Integration Network on NING. Please email ldixon@migrationpolicy.org to request an invitation to join the group.
Language Access

Organizations and initiatives that provide translation and interpretation services that allow Limited English Proficient individuals to gain access to programs and services.

Members: 19
Latest Activity: 19 hours ago
• Introduction to the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy’s work on language access

• Presentation by Jessica Sperling

• Question and Answer period.
  • Chat questions accepted throughout presentation. Only moderator will see chat questions.
Jessica Sperling is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the Graduate Center - City University of New York (CUNY), where she works on issues of immigration and comparative integration processes. She holds a B.A. with honors in anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis and an M.A. in sociology from Queens College, CUNY. Jessica has worked on language access implementation issues for the New York City Department of Education as well as the City’s public hospital system, and she has served as a consultant on language access issues for the NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Migration Policy Institute.
Communicating More for Less: Choosing Translation and Interpretation Technology

By Jessica Sperling
for the Migration Policy Institute
January, 2011
Overview

• Goal of Report:
  – Provide information on types of translation and interpretation technologies; a catalogue for potential users

• Webinar Outline:
  – Language Access Technologies: The Basics
  – Interpretation Technologies
    – Interpreter-based
    – Automated
  – Translation Technologies
    – Translator-based
    – Automated
Language Access Technologies: The Basics

• What are “language access technologies”?  
  – Technologies that facilitate translation and interpretation  
  – In most cases, an interpreter/translator is still required. These technologies help interpreters/translator work more efficiently.

• Why use them?  
  – Improved efficiency in translation/interpretation; can lead to reduced expenditure on translation/interpretation  
  – Need to think long-term regarding expenditures/savings.
Interpreting Technologies

• Interpreter-based:
  – Remote Consecutive
  – Remote Audiovisual (Consecutive)
  – Remote Simultaneous
  – Multiple Listener
Interpreting Technologies: Remote Consecutive

- **What it does**
  - Permits consecutive interpreting while the interpreter is located in a different place than the LEP individual and employee.

- **How it works**
  - Uses a regular telephone line to allow an LEP individual and employee to speak with an interpreter. There are different standard types of equipment that permit this connection without requiring the LEP individual and employee to share one telephone handset (e.g., speakerphone, handset splitters, dual handset phones).

- **Benefits**
  - Relatively inexpensive
  - Requires little specialized training.
  - Can be used with telephonic interpreting vendors.

- **Drawbacks**
  - Requires phone lines at the interpreter’s location and the location in which the interpreting is needed.

- **Context appropriate for use**
  - Well-suited for many kinds of verbal exchanges or conversations.
Interpreting Technologies:
Audiovisual Remote (Consecutive)

• What it does.
  – Permits consecutive interpreting while the interpreter is located in a different place than the LEP individual and employee. It also includes a video screen, which allows the LEP individual/employee and the interpreter to both hear and see each other.

• How it works.
  – This is used much in the same way as remote consecutive interpreting, except the LEP individual and employee have both audio and video connections.

• Benefits.
  – Can be used for sign language interpreting as well as spoken language interpreting.
  – Useful if the interpreter’s virtual presence might add to the LEP individual’s comfort.

• Drawbacks.
  – Generally more costly than consecutive audio equipment.

• Context appropriate for use.
  – Best suited for when a number of LEP individuals need to understand a speaker.
Interpreting Technologies: Remote Simultaneous

• What it does
  – Permits simultaneous interpreting while the interpreter is located in a different place than the LEP individual and employee.

• How it works
  – Uses voice software to connect LEP individuals and employees to a remote interpreter. With this technology, each party hears not the other person but rather the running interpreting.

• Benefits
  – Increases the length of the conversation only minimally.
  – Better mimics natural conversation.

• Drawbacks
  – More expensive equipment than consecutive interpreting technology.
  – Cannot be used with telephonic interpreting vendors.

• Context appropriate for use
  – Well-suited for many kinds of verbal exchanges or conversations where simultaneous interpreting is preferable to consecutive interpreting.
Interpreting Technologies: Multiple Listener

• What it does.
  – Allows numerous LEP individuals to hear simultaneous interpreting of a speaker without having to sit next to an interpreter.

• How it works.
  – All LEP individuals are given special receiver headsets. An on-site interpreter then interprets (generally simultaneously) into a transmitter, which is connected to receiver headsets via radio signal.

• Benefits.
  – Keeps the interpreting from disrupting the presentation for English-speaking individuals
  – Allows only one or two interpreters per language to serve many LEP individuals.
  – Relatively easy to use.

• Drawbacks.
  – Interpreters must be physically present.
  – Because this is a one-way technology (i.e., it can help one party understand what the other says, but it does not work in reverse), is not helpful for interpreting conversation.

• Context appropriate for use.
  – When a number of LEP individuals need to understand a speaker (e.g., public events and informational session).
Interpreting Technologies

• Automated:
  – One-Way
  – Limited Two-Way
  – Full Two-Way
Automated Interpreting Technologies: One-Way

- What it does.
  - Allows employees to relay basic information to LEP individuals by using multilingual pre-recorded phrases.

- How it works.
  - Uses devices with pre-recorded phrases in multiple languages. An employee can select, through a touch-screen or voice activation, certain pre-recorded phrases to be “spoken” by the device in a chosen language.

- Benefits.
  - Permits simple one-way communication without having to use a live interpreter.
  - In contrast to using actual interpreters, this technology does not increase in cost if demand for interpreting increases.
  - Can operate on mobile hardware.

- Drawbacks.
  - If the LEP individual responds in a non-English language, the technology cannot help the employee understand the response.

- Context appropriate for use.
  - Best suited for situations in which an employee must provide instructions or information that does not require or expect a response.
Automated Interpreting Technologies: Limited Two-Way

• What it does
  – Allows employees to communicate with LEP individuals by using multilingual pre-determined phrases and questions. To a limited degree, allows employees to understand LEP responses.

• How it works
  – Operates on computers. It is based upon a prepared library of directives, questions, and possible answers. Employee opens the program on the computer and chooses the appropriate question or directive. Computer “speaks” this question/directive in the needed non-English language. Response options are written on the screen in both English and the non-English language; LEP individual can then indicate answer.

• Benefits
  – Permits basic communication without having to use an interpreter
  – Does not increase in cost if demand for interpreting increases.

• Drawbacks.
  – Does not permit full, real-time conversation.
  – May not be available in all needed languages.
  – Pre-set questions are geared might not be geared towards all fields.
  – Can be complicated for untrained users.

• Context appropriate for use
  – Best suited for limited and routine verbal exchanges between an employee and an LEP individual – for instance, in intake situations.
Automated Interpreting Technologies: Full Two-Way

• What it does.
  – Permits interpreting without the assistance of a live interpreter.

• How it works.
  – One person speaks into a microphone and the technology’s software processes this source speech. It then “speaks” it in the target language.

• Benefits.
  – Allows employees to exchange information with LEP individuals without having to send for or remotely contact a live interpreter.
  – Does not increase in cost if demand for interpreting increases.
  – Can be used with lightweight and mobile hardware.

• Drawbacks.
  – Cannot necessarily process nuanced or very complex information accurately, and there is no clear way to discern when interpreting is inaccurate.
  – This technology has been developed primarily for military use. This means: a) in its current form it may not have specialized vocabulary for other fields, and b) it is more developed in languages of interest to the military (e.g., Iraqi Arabic, Farsi, Dari (the Afghan dialect of Farsi), Pashto).
  – Expensive

• Context appropriate for use.
  – Best suited for situations where communication is relatively straightforward.

*Note: No respondents consulted reported using this technology. It is nevertheless included in this report, for it is a technology that could over time prove increasingly relevant in language access provision.
Translation Technologies

• Translator Based:
  – Translation Memory (TM) Software

• Automated:
  – Machine Translation
Translation Technology: Translation Memory (TM) Software

• **What it does.**
  – Uses a stored memory system to reuse pre-translated phrases in subsequent translations.

• **How it works.**
  – Allows translators to match source language phrases (e.g., English phrases) to corresponding target language phrases (e.g., Spanish/Korean/etc. phrases) when translating a document. If these phrases appear again in future material, the TM software will automatically draw upon memory from previous documents, and it will allow translators to insert the already-translated version of that phrase.

• **Benefits.**
  – Allows for more efficient use of translators’ time by precluding the need to re-translate material.
  – Helps ensure consistency when translating multiple documents with specific terminology or program names.

• **Drawbacks.**
  – Can be costly if an organization has many staff interpreters.
  – Memory is built based on input from an organization’s translators; therefore, it will have no stored memory when the equipment is first purchased. It will take some time (and the translation of many documents) to build a useful amount of memory before an organization can reap the benefits of the technology.

• **Context appropriate for use.**
  – Best suited for an organization that has staff translators and translates documents at a reasonably high volume.
Translation Technology: Machine Translation (MT)

• What it does.
  – Internet-based technology that automatically translates written material without the involvement of a translator.

• How it works.
  – Uses a store of pre-set translations to automatically convert text from one language to another. To use this technology, user opens the webpage for the translation tool and enters the text into the designated space. User then selects the language of the source text, the desired language of translation, and pushes a button on the webpage instructing it to translate the text. Translated text then appears on the screen.

• Benefits
  – Free on the internet
  – Translation is instantaneous

• Drawbacks.
  – Unreliable quality, because there is no certified or trained translator overseeing each translation. For instance, in the Babelfish MT program, a round-trip translation from English to Chinese changes the phrase “Please fill out the top part of this form,” to “Please fill in this form the crown.”

• Context appropriate for use.
  – Best used to get a general idea of non-English written material.

*Note: No respondents consulted reported using this technology. It is nevertheless included in this report, for it is a technology that could over time prove increasingly relevant in language access provision.
Other Information in Full Report:

- More thorough explanation of technologies
- Using databases to track translation/interpretation
- Interpretation and translation vendors
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION ONLINE

- For the next week, MPI invites language access service managers to join an online conversation about translation and interpretation technologies.
- This conversation will take place on the Ning site of MPI’s US Immigrant Integration Network.
- Integration practitioners in government agencies and community organizations who would like to gain access to the Ning community and on-line conversation should email ldixon@migrationpolicy.org.

HELP US IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

- Survey on descriptions of additional language access technologies
- If you have knowledge relating to possible vendors or are a vendor of language access technology, we invite you to take the survey https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WRJWBVJ
To ask a question, please type it in the chat box.

Only the moderator will see chat questions.
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION ONLINE

– For the next week, MPI invites language access service managers to join an online conversation about translation and interpretation technologies.

– This conversation will take place on the Ning site of MPI’s US Immigrant Integration Network.

– Integration practitioners in government agencies and community organizations who would like to gain access to the Ning community and on-line conversation should email ldixon@migrationpolicy.org.

HELP US IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

– Survey on descriptions of additional language access technologies

– If you have knowledge relating to possible vendors or are a vendor of language access technology, we invite you to take the survey https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WRJWBVJ
If you have questions or comments about today’s call or ideas for future topics, please contact:

Margie McHugh
Co-Director
National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy

(202) 266-1921
mmchugh@migrationpolicy.org
www.migrationpolicy.org