



T&I DESCRIPTIONS

PREAMBLE

To support clarity in understanding the role of Translators, Interpreters, Transcriber-Translators and Terminologists, our associations endorse the following definitions:

TRANSLATOR

“Translators work with the written word, converting text from a source language into a target language. This is far more than replacing one word with another. The translator must also convey the style, tone, and intent of the text, while taking into account differences of culture and dialect. The finished document should read as if it had originally been written in the target language for the target audience.”¹

Translators must be familiar with the dialects, registers, and terminology needed for the type of translation project they are responsible for. When working in teams, translators may be responsible for editing, proofreading, summarizing, localizing, and transcreating².

Translation *“is a complex skill requiring several abilities. Consequently, extreme care must be exercised in hiring translators or assigning translation tasks to them. To do otherwise entails the risk that imprecise or even wrong information will be conveyed. Competence in two languages is necessary but not sufficient for any translation task. Though the translator must be able to (1) read and comprehend the source language and (2) write comprehensibly in the target language, the translator must also be able to (3) choose the equivalent expression in the target language that both fully conveys and best matches the meaning intended in the source language (referred to as congruity judgment).”³*

Certified translators can provide documentation indicating the certifying or assessment body, any subject area expertise, the proficiency level, the specific language combination(s) assessed by translation testing and the direction of translation permitted⁴. Certified translators maintain their certification through continuing education credits and are bound by a code of professional conduct. When translation certification exams are not available for a particular language pair, sample translations reviewed by highly-qualified third parties may provide an acceptable practical alternative.

INTERPRETER (Spoken Language)

“Interpreting is the process of fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken language.”⁵ Interpreters must be able to accurately convey the meaning from one language into another in a culturally appropriate manner, mindful of the setting in which they are rendering their services.

Spoken language interpreters facilitate communication between individuals who are not sufficiently proficient in the same spoken language.

¹ Translators do the writing, ATA, https://atanet.org/clients/translators_do_the_writing.php.

² For a full description of these responsibilities, see ASTM F2075-14 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation.

³ ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance, <http://govtilr.org/Skills/AdoptedILRTranslationGuidelines.htm>.

⁴ US Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Procurement Series Translation and Interpretation. What Does It Mean to Be a Certified Linguist? <http://www.lep.gov/resources/TRUST%20ME%20I'M%20CERTIFIED%20%203-19-14%20%20508.pdf>.

⁵ ASTM F2089-15 (3.1.1.), Standard Practice for Language Interpreting, ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA, 2015, www.astm.org.

Interpreting services can be rendered on-site or remotely via telephone or video. There are three modes of interpreting⁶ which are:

Simultaneous Interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's message into another language while the speaker continues to speak.

Consecutive Interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's message into another language when the speaker pauses to allow interpreting.

Sight Translation: the rendering of a written document directly into a spoken language, for immediate understanding, but not for purposes of producing a written translated document.

Certified interpreters can provide documentation indicating the certifying or assessment body, any subject area expertise, the proficiency level and specific language combination(s) assessed.⁷

Certified interpreters maintain their certification through continuing education credits and are bound by a code of professional conduct. When interpreting certification exams are not available for a particular language pair, verification of a high level of listening comprehension and speaking proficiency in both working languages may be used as an acceptable screening tool to predict interpreting performance. In fields of interpretation not covered by certification schemes, specialized tertiary training and peer endorsement can be applied as criteria to the same effect.

INTERPRETER (Signed Language)

*"Interpreting is the process of fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language."*⁸ Interpreters must be able to accurately convey the meaning from one language into another in a culturally appropriate manner, mindful of the setting in which they are rendering their services.

Signed language interpreters facilitate communication between diverse users of languages that are signed or spoken.

Deaf Interpreters are Deaf or hard of hearing and possess native or near-native fluency in American Sign Language, as well as extensive knowledge and understanding of deafness, the deaf community, and/or Deaf culture. They may be used as a part of an interpreting team that includes hearing interpreters.

Interpreting services can be rendered on-site or remotely via telephone or video. There are three modes of interpreting⁹ which are:

Simultaneous Interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's or signer's message into another language while the speaker or signer continues to speak or sign.

Consecutive Interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's or signer's message into another language when the speaker or signer pauses to allow interpreting.

Sight Translation: the rendering of a written document directly into a spoken or signed language, for immediate understanding, but not for purposes of producing a written translated document.

Certified interpreters can provide documentation indicating the certifying or assessment body, any subject area expertise, the proficiency level and specific language combination(s) assessed.¹⁰

⁶ ASTM F2089-15(3.1.2), Standard Practice for Language Interpreting, ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA, 2015, www.astm.org.

⁷ US Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Procurement Series Translation and Interpretation. What Does It Mean to Be a Certified Linguist? <http://www.lep.gov/resources/TRUST%20ME%20I'M%20CERTIFIED%20%203-19-14%20%20508.pdf>.

⁸ ASTM F2089-15 (3.1.1.), Standard Practice for Language Interpreting, ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA, 2015, www.astm.org.

⁹ ASTM F2089-15 (3.1.2), Standard Practice for Language Interpreting, ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA, 2015, www.astm.org.

¹⁰ US Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Procurement Series Translation and Interpretation. What Does It Mean to Be a Certified Linguist? <http://www.lep.gov/resources/TRUST%20ME%20I'M%20CERTIFIED%20%203-19-14%20%20508.pdf>.

Certified interpreters maintain their certification through continuing education credits and are bound by a code of professional conduct. When interpreting certification exams are not available for a particular language pair, verification of a high level of receptive comprehension and expressive proficiency in both working languages may be used as an acceptable screening tool to predict interpreting performance.

TRANSCRIBER-TRANSLATOR¹¹

A Transcriber-Translator is a language specialist, proficient in two languages, who produces a document that comprises both a source-language transcription and a target-language translation of an audio- and/or video-recorded communication. This document is called a Transcription/Translation or “TT”. The best practice is to first transcribe all verbal or visual communication in the recording as faithfully as possible and then translate the resulting transcript into the desired target language.

To preserve the integrity of the recorded message, the best practice is for the separate tasks of transcription and translation to be performed by the same professional or by a team whose leader then approves all aspects of the final document.

For videos in which ASL is the source language, the process may vary based on the proficiencies and preferences of the interpreter. In some cases, the TT specialist skips the transcription step and produces a direct translation¹².

A Transcriber-Translator performs what might be described as a “hybrid” task involving the Interpreter’s acute receptive and decoding skills with the Translator’s ability to convey in writing the content and meaning of the source language. When a credential is available for the required language pair, credentials in both interpreting and translation are an indicator of capability. (See *Interpreter* and *Translator* descriptions.)

TERMINOLOGIST

Terminologists specialize in identifying the terms that are used by subject field experts when writing documents and for oral communication within individual disciplines. They create and disseminate terminological resources by recording terms or using specialized software to “extract” them from texts. They document terms and related concepts by crafting definitions, locating meaningful contexts, and providing guidance for usage. Frequently, terminologists play a role in naming new concepts or new products. They are also experts in using a variety of terminology management software solutions.

Terminologists may work in monolingual environments or they may create terminology resources that provide translation equivalents in two or more languages. Terminologists are often responsible for supporting or enforcing the use of standardized terms in an organization or publication environment. Today, terminologists are at work in foreign language services (translation and interpreting), in technical writing, in standardization, patent, and legal services, in information and documentation, in product planning and marketing, in research and development, in language planning and language maintenance, and in publishing houses (especially for dictionaries).

Many translators and interpreters are trained in the procedures for documenting multilingual terminology, but many terminologists also have training as technical writers, lexicographers, information scientists, and other subject field experts. In addition to courses in terminology management that are offered in translator training and technical writing programs, relevant courses include information management and semiotics, a branch of philosophy. National and international professional organizations conduct special training seminars and workshops, offer certification programs, and some universities offer graduate degree programs in terminology studies.

¹¹ General Guidelines and Minimum Requirements for Transcript Translation in Any Legal Setting. NAJIT 2003. Revised 2009. <http://www.najit.org/documents/Guidelines%20for%20Transcript%20Translation.pdf>.

¹² Referred to as audio translation in the ILR (http://govtilr.org/Skills/Audio_trans.htm).

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Association Websites

Association internationale des interprètes de
conférence (AIIC)
<http://aiic.net/>

National Council on Interpreting in Health Care
(NCIHC)
<http://www.ncihc.org/>

Mano a Mano
<http://www.manoamano-unidos.org/>

Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters
(OSTI)
<http://ostiweb.org/>

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters
and Translators (NAJIT)
<http://najit.org/>

Additional Resources

American Translators Association. *ATA Paper on Language Interpretation and Language Translation Services*, Nov 13, 2014.

http://atanet.org/pressroom/homeland_security_response.pdf.

American Translators Association. *Translators do the writing*, 2016.

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<http://dttev.org/edition.html>.