



## WHEN TRANSLATIONS GO AWRY: WHAT CAN WE LEARN WHEN PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSLATION GOOF-UPS MAKE THE NEWS?

By Joana Ramos

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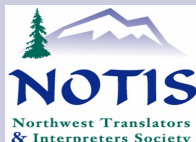
During a single week in July 2013, translation topics made headlines in Puget Sound for the kind of negative reasons that still remain too common. The first report came from [Seattle Globalist](#) (1) highlighting a problem with Spanish text in the timetables of King County's transit agency. The bus schedules released in June contained, for the first time ever, segments written in Spanish. The inclusion of the translations is part of a comprehensive [Language Access Plan \(LAP\)](#) (2) developed by Metro in 2012, to help the agency better serve the transit-using public. Drawing from extensive research into the King County demographics, Metro had identified a need to offer multilingual user materials, starting with Spanish versions, the language for which there is the highest need.

There were, however, significant problems with the roll-out of rider information in Spanish, which was presented in a bilingual format in specific sections of the text on each printed bus schedule. For routes which operate 7 days a week, the schedules stated in English that service on public holidays would follow the Sunday schedule, while the message in Spanish stated that there would be no service at all on holidays or weekends. After riders and a bus driver called attention to the mistakes, Metro posted an alert notice on buses apologizing for any mix-ups that may have occurred over the 4th of July holiday, but

made no mention of the erroneous weekend information. According to Metro's public affairs representative, and as subsequently reported by Seattle general and Spanish-language [TV news outlets](#), (3) the error occurred due to lack of sufficient proof-reading after pre-translated Spanish sentences were inserted into the original English document. The agency, which prints some 2 million bus schedules each trimester, decided not to reprint them but instead to ensure that an accurate version is published in the next round, scheduled for September. The timetables issued for service changes that started on September 28, reflect the corrections.

The very same week that the Metro issue came to light, another agency shared the spotlight for translation blunders. This time it was the Washington Health Benefit Exchange (HBE), the operating body for the then-forthcoming WA Healthplanfinder program which will offer insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), that had a problem. In June, the HBE had proudly announced that multilingual consumer fact sheets in the 8 threshold languages of [WA's Medicaid program](#): (4) were available on its website, and in July, highlighted them on its [Facebook page](#) (5). [Advocates](#), who had long been actively working to ensure language access be part of the HBE's core services, were heartened by this development. It wasn't

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A Chapter of the American Translators Association

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE NOTIS PRESIDENT

By Kathryn German

As my first year as president draws to a close, I want to offer special thanks to all of you who have helped make our events a success! We have had more at-large members participating in our committees and they are such a positive influence on all of us. They are our future, and they bring creative ideas and energy that will ultimately and hopefully lead them to positions of leadership in the future. Renata Akalin has been instrumental at recruiting student members and volunteers at Bellevue College, and we appreciate her efforts.

In the coming year my hope is that NOTIS will greatly increase the number and variety of workshops and trainings we offer and make them more affordable. In addition, we would like to expand our sites to other areas of the Pacific Northwest and we have found a few representatives for those areas, but we are struggling to find more. Our special interest group, MedSIG, headed by Cindy Roat, is full of plans for next year. This year we have encountered obstacles in all our efforts, and the main one has always been the lack of volunteers—too few people doing way too many things. As a result, we have decided to try again to merge our two local organizations: NOTIS and WITS. For years we have put on events together, created a publication together, supported one another. This cooperation has been wonderful, but at times, we have been duplicating efforts and it's hard not to imagine what we could accomplish if we were just one organization: more board members, more ideas, more advocacy for translators and interpreters, and the ability to turn many dreams into reality.

This merger was tried before, but under different circumstances and a more complicated structure. This time the merger has been designed in the simplest way possible, with WITS simply becoming part of NOTIS. Their board will join our board, and a new division/committee will be formed to meet the needs and interests of court interpreters and legal translators. The structure of our Program Committee will change to assure that we meet the needs of all our members and offer workshops in: Translations and Technology, Legal Interpreting, Medical Interpreting, Ethics, and other training. In October the NOTIS board members voted



to support this merger, but the decision is now yours. The WITS membership voted in favor of the merger last month; now your vote will be cast on November 23rd. If you are out of the area, we are offering you the opportunity to phone in and join the merger discussion and vote. This momentous decision is in your hands and we want to hear your wish for the future.

At the annual meeting, we are also very excited to have Dimitri Azadi speak to us about American Sign Language interpreting. This is a profession closely linked to ours, with similarities and differences that we are not all aware of, and this is our chance to learn more. Dimitri holds national certification—a Certificate of Interpretation and Certificate of Transliteration—through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. He has been interpreting for over 20 years and has been signing since he was eight years old. He is also the Assistant Director and Deaf Services Manager at Bellevue College.

It is a pivotal year in terms of the proposed merger and also because twenty-five years have passed since a handful of translators and interpreters had the vision and energy to start NOTIS and WITS. They stressed ethics and professionalism and over time fundamentally changed the face of translation and interpretation in the Pacific Northwest (and ultimately in the entire United States). I know we are all eternally grateful for their efforts. They taught us that strength is in numbers and that by giving back to the profession as volunteers we ensure a quality future for our profession. Several of these founding members were my instructors many years ago, when I was single, trying to figure out a way to support six children on my own, and never daring to dream that I would be able to do so while following the path of something I loved. But... they inspired me...and I took the risk. It has not been easy, but it is rewarding every day. My hat is off to the WITS and NOTIS founders who were not afraid to start things without a pattern, and to lay out the road for all of us to follow.

I hope to see all of you at the annual meeting on November 23rd!

## A MESSAGE FROM THE WITS PRESIDENT

By Nancy Leveson

As many of you are already aware, this year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of WITS. As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, I am honored to be president of an organization with such a long and distinguished history. Those of you who attended the WITS annual meeting had the pleasure of hearing Susana Stettri Sawrey briefly recount some of the history of the founding of WITS and the ensuing years. That version, of course, barely scratched the surface of the full scope of what was involved.

Over the past couple of years, I have spoken with several founding members about those early days, and that has given me a small glimpse into that bigger picture. What stands out to me is how hard they worked to make things happen and how much they accomplished. They created an organization from scratch and made their voices heard in support of court interpreters and the profession in Washington State. As I contemplate this, I realize that there are many things that I have always taken for granted because they were well established by the time I entered the profession. This includes state certification of court interpreters, an active AOC Interpreter Commission, varied continuing education opportunities throughout the year, and respect for our work within the judicial system.

Things weren't always this way, however, and the changes didn't come about on their own. We owe a great debt of thanks to all those who spent many long hours establishing WITS, advocating for the profession, and keeping the organization thriving for the past twenty-five years. Those twenty-five years represent the efforts of many dedicated individuals, and I am grateful for their contributions.

Interestingly, our sister organization, NOTIS, is also celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. We have a long history of collaborating closely with NOTIS, and these collaborative efforts have increased in recent years.



This year's International Translation Day event involved hard work by volunteers from both organizations, and the power of everyone working together resulted in a very successful event with record attendance.

The power of this kind of collaboration and the fact that both organizations share common goals, missions, and members were driving factors in this year's decision by both boards to propose a merger of our two organizations. Both boards believe that there are important benefits to be gained by joining forces and working together more closely. This is a new stage in the evolution of our organizations and has the potential to give us added strength and sustainability, attributes that can help ensure another twenty-five years of active service to our professional community.

On September 30, the WITS membership voted to approve the proposed merger agreement, taking us one step closer to its final approval. The final step in the approval process is the vote by the NOTIS membership at the NOTIS annual meeting on November 23. I encourage all of you who are NOTIS members to attend and participate in this historic moment as we take these important steps to define the future of our professional organizations. If approved, the merger will become effective January 1, 2014.

We on the WITS board are enthusiastic about the future and the opportunities we see to build on the work of our predecessors, and we hope that you will join in us as we work to honor and continue the legacy of the past twenty-five years.

Celebrating Twenty-Five Years!

## WHEN TRANSLATIONS GO AWRY: (cont.)

By Joana Ramos

Long however, before serious problems were noted with the set of translations. Among the errors found were cases of:

- wrong language used: the title read Simplified Chinese but text was written in Traditional Chinese
- range of usability levels of translated texts, ranging from inappropriate street language in the Khmer (Cambodian language) version to overly erudite syntax in the Vietnamese version
- translation of proper names, which were then incorrectly translated, such as in the Spanish version which used “Intercambio” for “Exchange”

Generally, the language-proficient reviewers found that all of the translations tended to be literal, or word-for-word renditions, with all eight of the language versions being difficult to understand. In addition, the English originals seemed to lack certain vital program information, and were written in too high a register to be useful as consumer materials, despite [Washington State’s Plain Talk mandate](#) (7). After the topic was addressed at public meetings of HBE, including by its [Health Equity Technical Advisory Committee](#) (8) and its [Board](#) (9), translation problems in both the Washington and Oregon Health Benefits Marketplaces were the focus of a [report](#) (10) by the Northwest News Network of National Public Radio. Shortly thereafter, all of the translations were taken down from the HBE website, and replaced by a [notice that they were “Coming Soon.”](#) (11) At the September 27 meeting of the [Health Equity Technical Advisory Committee](#), (12) the HBE Outreach Manager informed the group that the text of the English version had been revised for readability and that the HBE was using the State translation contract to procure new translations from different vendors. (the originals had been procured under the same contract). Quality assurance measures, such as a translation protocol, were not mentioned. The [Spanish version](#) (13) of Healthplanfinder went live on October 1, but as of October 7, translated fact sheets are not yet available on the Healthplanfinder or HBE websites.

### Teachable moments

Beyond prompting our own outrage and despair, there are important lessons that can be learned from these news stories which have highlighted entirely preventable prob-

lems. For the agencies involved, one hopes that the public attention to these embarrassing gaffes will serve as a catalyst for reflection and improvements. For the general public—taxpayers, consumers, policy makers, and elected officials alike—these kinds of stories are important not only because they illustrate community needs, but also for their educational value. The fact that the issues were considered newsworthy speaks to progress that has been made. For many observers, this may be their introduction to equity work and to the fact that translating is a skilled profession. And for the professional language community, these stories highlight the ongoing need for our own civic engagement and honing of advocacy skills.

### How can advocacy help?

In the cases cited, it appears that Metro needed to align internal systems to implement the translation protocol of its commendable Language Access Plan (LAP) already in place, and media attention helped smooth the way. For Washington Healthplanfinder, in addition to spurring action to re-do its translated fact sheets, the spotlight highlighted the value of ongoing community engagement to ensure maximum participation in the new program. It appears that more work is still needed to activate the HBE’s draft LAP, and to make sure that it is easy for consumers to know that language services are available, at no cost, and how to get them across all program interfaces

Many times “ordinary people” feel intimidated about speaking up, or think they lack the know-how to be a spokesperson for a cause. But just as with translating or interpreting, advocacy is a learned skill. We are fortunate here in Washington State to have a strong advocacy community, with many dedicated people committed to sharing their expertise, and offering many excellent learning resources. To give one example likely familiar to readers, this is why the [Washington State Coalition for Language Access](#) (14) was established: to work for the elimination of language barriers in all areas of public life in Washington, through education and collaborative efforts. Among its activities, WASCLA has been involved in ongoing efforts to ensure meaningful

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## WHEN TRANSLATIONS GO AWRY: (cont.)

By Joana Ramos

language access services for the HBE. There are many ways to get involved, in any and all aspects of improving language access and services, and I welcome all those interested to contact me directly to learn more. The words of Margaret Mead are still valid for us today: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

**Joana Ramos**, MSW, is an independent health policy consultant specializing in improving access to care for underserved populations, and is also a Portuguese medical interpreter and member of NOTIS. Joana was one of the founding members of the Washington State Coalition for Language Access, and currently serves on the WASCLA Board of Directors and is Chair of the Healthcare Committee. She may be contacted at [jdramos98@gmail.com](mailto:jdramos98@gmail.com). To contact WASCLA, please send a message to [wascla.lep@gmail.com](mailto:wascla.lep@gmail.com).

### Referenced Links

- 1 <http://www.seattleglobalist.com/2013/07/29/metros-new-language-plan-off-to-bumpy-start/15048>
- 2 <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/2012/metro-limited-english-plan-2012.pdf>
- 3 <http://www.komonews.com/news/local/Metro-mistake-causing-problems-for-Spanish-speakers-217851231.html>
- 4 <http://wahealthbenefitexchange.create.send.com>
- 5 <https://www.facebook.com/WAHealthplanfinderhttps://www.facebook.com/WAHealthplanfinder>
- 6 <http://www.wascla.org/search/item.456370>
- 7 [http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/execorders/eoarchive/eo\\_05-03.pdfmandate](http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/execorders/eoarchive/eo_05-03.pdfmandate)
- 8 <http://wahbexchange.org/committee-activities/health-equity-tac/>
- 9 <http://wahbexchange.org/news-resources/calendar/board-meeting20/>
- 10 <http://nwnewsnetwork.org/post/health-exchange-foreign-language-fact-sheets-get-poor-marks>
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## TIPS TO ENSURE GOOD TRANSLATIONS

### by Julie Wilchins

Sometimes you might find yourself in the fortunate position of being able to educate a translation client about how the translation process works and about best practices to maximize the probability of obtaining good-quality translations. Below are some tips that we have found effective to offer clients.

#### **Produce a good-quality original document: write clearly and with your audience in mind**

Consider the background and literacy level of your document's audience, and adjust your vocabulary and sentence structure accordingly. Microsoft Word offers a "Show Readability Statistics" function under Spelling and Grammar to check a document's grade reading level. For an audience of laypeople with diverse literacy levels, experts recommend writing at a sixth to eighth grade reading level.

The Program for Readability in Science and Medicine (PRISM) offers valuable [readability recommendations](#) (1). PRISM recommends using lay language rather than jargon, active rather than passive voice, short sentences, and reader-friendly formatting. The [PRISM Readability Toolkit](#) (2) is also available online.

#### **Provide guidance to the translators you hire**

Translators will create the best product when you advise them of the intended audience for the translation and what tone you wish the translation to have. Translators also value being able to ask you questions regarding unclear terms.

#### **Hire competent translators**

If you plan to hire an independent translator, a good starting point can be the online translator registries for the [American Translators Association \(ATA\)](#) (3) and the [Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society \(NOTIS\)](#). To find the right translator for your project, consider the following:

#### **A. Translation experience and credentials**

Relevant experience for translators can vary. For example, for health care translations, relevant experience could include: substantial experience translating health care materials; coursework in health care terminology; or work experience in a field requiring health care communications, such as medicine or nursing.

There are also various credentials that translators may hold. (There is no single certification credential for translators in the United States.) Credentials may include degrees or certificates in translation, certification from the American Translators Association or equivalent foreign bodies (such as Britain's Chartered Institute of Linguists or provincial affiliates of Canada's Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council), or certification from Washington's Department of Social and Health Services. These credentials indicate that a translator has made a commitment to the profession through undergoing testing and/or coursework. However, they do not guarantee that a translator is competent in translating in your subject area.

#### **B. Language expertise**

In most circumstances, translators write the best-quality and most natural-sounding translations when they translate into their native tongue. The ideal translator is also a good writer.

When assessing translators, look for indicators of their level of knowledge of both of their languages: degrees or certificates, periods of residence and/or study in countries where the languages are spoken, and other credentials as discussed above.

If you are considering hiring an agency for your translations, ask them how they screen their translators. They should consider the experience and credentials detailed above, and verify them.

#### **The (usually) vital editing step**

Sometimes a client only requires a "quick and dirty" translation rather than a meticulously accurate one. In that case, s/he may wish to simply hire one translator to perform the translation. However, for translations that must be wholly accurate, such as legal documents, it is strongly recommended to have a second translator edit the translation for completeness and accuracy. Just as the original drafter of a document may make the occasional mistake, so may even the most expert translator occasionally omit or mistranslate a phrase. The second translator will proofread for errors and omissions, and make sure the translation is suitable for its intended audience.

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## MEET OUR MEMBERS: NICOLE Y. CHAE-LEE

by Edward Wung



*A  
lifetime  
lesson  
of never  
giving  
up on  
dreams  
and goals*

We found a quiet place near the district court where Nicole would be working that day for our appointment. I brought my camera with me as I always do to every interview because sometimes interpreters do not have a current picture that they would like us to use. When I suggested that I take the picture of her before our interview just in case we run out of time, she responded, “No, let’s do it afterward. I will time it.” I couldn’t help but thinking, “no wonder the Korean brand Samsung became so successful.”

When I first met Nicole at one of the courts some time ago, I asked her for an interview but she said “I will do the interview WHEN (not if) I become certified someday” with a smile. Nicole’s hard work and dedication finally paid off; she passed the test this year and is now one of the newly certified court interpreters in Korean and the third Korean to be court certified in the past 14 years.

Nicole immigrated to the United States with her family when she was 12. Nicole had to skip a grade, not because she was exceptionally smart, but because there was no English as a Second Language class offered except at the junior high school she ended up attending. Right off the bat, that was the first taste of disparity and culture shock she experienced in her new country. Just four years later though, and as a result of hours of dedicated hard work, she was featured in her high school newspaper, “Four Pointers Air Their Secrets” in an interview quite similar to this one and quoted as saying, “I try my best, and I feel like everything I’ve achieved was the result of EXCRUCIATING effort.” She did indeed work very hard and went on to study at University of Washington where she majored in business administration, thinking and wishing that it would provide her with supposedly a more secure, solid future.

And it did. She worked for several private business sectors and eventually landed a job with a McKesson, the largest pharmaceutical

distributing company in North America, where she stayed for five years. Then, when her company’s branch relocated, she was offered another amazing opportunity, the regional credit manager-to-be, tantamount to a promotion. The catch? She needed to move to California. To most people, this job opportunity would mean job security because the credit manager who had held the position for over twenty years was going to retire in a couple of years and Nicole was set to take over her job, except there was a “small problem.” She did not like the sedentary, number-crunching working environment, and felt that something was amiss. “But you must be pretty good at numbers, right? Otherwise, they wouldn’t have trusted you with such an important work,” I asked. “No, actually I am not very good with numbers. I guess I just worked very hard,” replied Nicole. At the end of that interview, she thanked the credit manager for offering her the opportunity but said “I am going to DARE to think that there is something else for me back in Washington” even though she really didn’t have anything lined up; she just held a shred of hope.

Shortly afterwards, she found a short stint as a bilingual survey assistant at International Community Health Services (ICHS) and subsequently was offered a contract job to be the Korean Community Diabetes Educator/Community Outreach Advocate which helped “the somewhat introverted and sheltered Nicole” to really get out of her comfort zone and learn to network with community leaders and health professionals. Furthermore, she was able to bridge the gap between two languages and cultures, something which meant a lot to Nicole. It is also during this period that she was introduced to and intrigued by the field of medical interpreting.

Although Nicole was a typical child interpreter for her family, doing it professionally was

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## MEET OUR MEMBERS: NICOLE Y. CHAE-LEE (cont.)

quite challenging as her advanced level vocabulary was actually mostly in English, and soon she found herself becoming best friends with her dictionaries. Nevertheless, such challenges only reinforced Nicole's desire to excel in this new profession as a DSHS Certified Medical and Social Services Korean Interpreter and DSHS Certified English>Korean Translator. In this new career, Nicole realized how much she enjoyed helping people who were in need of her service.

After a few years working in these fields, Nicole felt that it was time to move on to a more challenging field of interpreting, the courts; hence her next goal of becoming court-certified. "The process of becoming court-certified was one of the most difficult things I have ever gone through, even more difficult than childbirth" said Nicole. After years of frustration and a bucketful of tears, thanks to Katrin Johnson, the former Sr. Court Program Analyst at AOC who launched a pilot program called TCITI (Targeted Court Interpreter Training Initiative), Nicole was selected for admission into the program. After six months of intense training, she acquired the necessary skills to help her pass the exam and become certified in 2013. For that, Nicole wants to acknowledge Katrin and Professor Ine van Dam as well as Mr. Kwang Chough, Ms. Vania Haam, and her mother, for their guidance and support through the years.

Even though Nicole always seeks challenges and opportunities to constantly improve herself, for now, her highest priority is focusing on being a good mother to her two beautiful little girls, Justice (three and a half years old) and Hope (21 months old). Her daughter's names are a reflection of Nicole's passion for her career. "Justice" was named after her favorite legalese term and "Hope" was named after her lifetime motto, "always be hopeful" and as in "hope" to become certified one day. Most importantly, Nicole wanted to set a good example for the girls: "If Mom can do it, you can do it" and teach them a life-time lesson of never giving up on their dreams and goals.

It is evident throughout this interview that Nicole does not give up easily and that she is quite daring towards life. "Giving up is the easiest thing to do...however, there is always hope as long as you don't give up." For that, she gave me another example, her husband, Nick, for whom she is especially grateful. Although it took her a while to find her Mr. Right, she always stayed hopeful that "he" was out there. She finally met the love of her life and after about a year of courtship, she "dared" Nick to marry her by making the following statement: "I am getting married a year from now, with or without you." That is just another good example of her setting a goal and achieving it, which is Nicole's style, nothing like "Gangnam Style." Nicole is especially thankful for Nick's unwavering encouragement and loving support and they just celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary. When she is not working, Nicole enjoys gardening, spending time with her little girls, taking photos, and traveling with her family.

## NOTIS/WITS HOLIDAY PARTY

The NOTIS/WITS Holiday party is soon approaching.

This will be a **White Elephant Event** again, so be prepared for lots of fun and games!

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 7, 2013 1:00-4:00 PM

**WHERE:** UW Waterfront Activities Center  
Montlake Blvd. NE and Pacific Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98195

**BRING:** A potluck dish to share. Drinks will be provided

## TIPS TO ENSURE GOOD TRANSLATIONS (cont.)

If you are working with an independent translator, s/he may be able to recommend an editing partner to review the translation. If you hire an agency, be sure to clarify whether their quote includes proofreading/editing by a second translator.

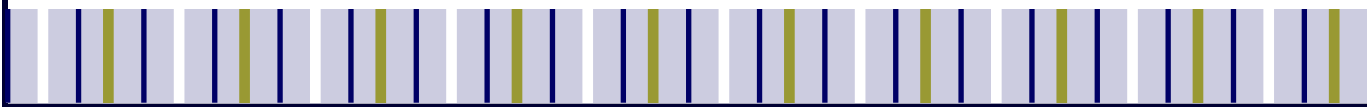
### More information

For further information on obtaining high-quality translations, please see the following references on the American Translators Association website: “How to Choose a Translator Vendor: 9 Tips to a Successful Experience,” (5) and “Translation: Getting it Right.” (6)

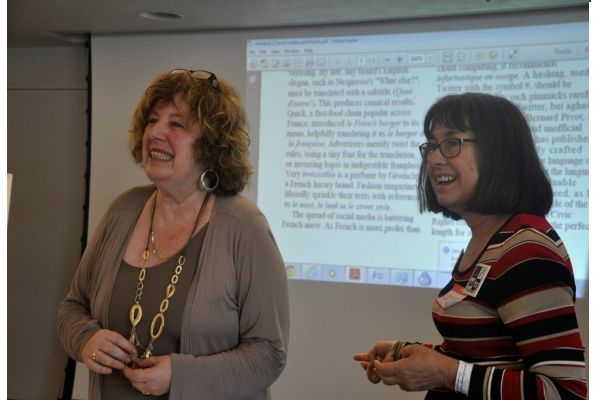
### REFERENCE LINKS

- 1 [http://www.grouphealthresearch.org/capabilities/readability/readability\\_home.html](http://www.grouphealthresearch.org/capabilities/readability/readability_home.html)
- 2 [http://www.grouphealthresearch.org/capabilities/readability/ghchs\\_readability\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.grouphealthresearch.org/capabilities/readability/ghchs_readability_toolkit.pdf).
- 3 <http://atanet.org/onlinedirectories/individuals.php#translators>)
- 4 [http://notisnet.org/translator\\_interpreter.php?pgid=3](http://notisnet.org/translator_interpreter.php?pgid=3)
- 5 <http://theatacompass.org/2013/05/22/how-to-choose-a-translation-vendor-9-tips-to-a-successful-experience/>
- 6 [http://www.atanet.org/publications/getting\\_it\\_right\\_trans.php](http://www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right_trans.php)

## INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY 2013



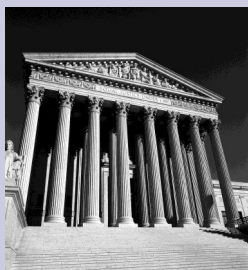
# INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY 2013



## THE ETHICS CORNER

By Susana Stettri Sawrey

*If a situation seems to be dangerously close to unethical—or or frankly so—what should the interpreter do?*



### Is There a Way Out for the Interpreter?

The setting is a meeting between an attorney and a litigant in an informal encounter, i.e., not in court nor in a court-sponsored program, but with a bona-fide attorney and interpreter.

The litigant wants to process divorce papers, and has come to ask the attorney to check his largely completed papers to make sure everything has been filled out completely and accurately.

The attorney glances at the papers and proceeds to ask many questions about the family's assets, income, debts, responsibilities for children, and the like.

As he is answering the questions, it becomes clear to the litigant that many of these issues had not been considered at the time of filling out the papers, and he admits that these issues had not been explained to him. In particular, there is the joint ownership of some real estate in another country acquired during the marriage. The attorney suggests that the litigant is its half-owner and is, therefore, entitled to half the revenue once the property is sold.

This comes as a big revelation to the litigant and he wants the paperwork to reflect his interest in that revenue.

The attorney draws up some new language to the effect, on the existing paperwork, crossing out what had been written in before.

The attorney then turns to the last page, where all the parties are supposed to affix their signatures, and discovers—to his great consternation—that the other party had already signed the form as it had been prepared previously, i. e., without the new provisos.

Disturbed as he is by this turn of events, the attorney admonishes the litigant that this could spell trouble if the litigant or his attorney or the judge questions the validity of the amendments after the respondent had reviewed it and signed it in its original form.

The paperwork cannot be restored to its original form, since it has been worked on in ink. "There is a risk," not only of botching the divorce proceedings, but also of further and subsidiary legal action against the petitioner, explains the attorney.

Cut to the interpreter's position... It is not the interpreter's responsibility to judge anybody's ethical behavior, be it personal or professional. However, if a situation seems to be dangerously close to unethical -or frankly so- what should the interpreter do? Continue interpreting and be part of a possible deceit? Tell the parties that they are doing something wrong? Leave?

One of the tenets of the Court Interpreter's Code of Ethics states that the interpreter should not participate in anything unethical or illegal, and goes as far as suggesting that the interpreter can let authorities know if any such thing is happening. Another tenet states that if there is any obstacle of any kind that prevents the best interpretation possible, the interpreter should withdraw. Being distracted by any possible legal consequence in this case is certainly a distraction and, as such, an obstacle.

## THE ETHICS CORNER (Cont.)

By Susana Stettri Sawrey

If the interpreter feels that something in the situation is not right, he or she may leave. Not much explanation is needed, other than “The interpreter feels a conflict of interest has developed, and feels the need to recuse him/herself.” Or, “The interpreter is not able to continue with the interpretation at this time.”

Uncomfortable, yes, but it makes for a more peaceful night's sleep.

Please contribute to “The Ethics Corner” by sending in your baffling or irksome scenarios, or by sending us your questions about how to react and what to say in certain situations in the legal and medical interpreting environments, as well as in the translation field.

We would like to make this an ongoing dialogue with the NOTIS and WITS membership.

Send your questions and comments to The Northwest Linguist editor at: [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net)

The next deadline for submission is January 7, 2014.

Thank you!

## WHY JOIN THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION?



**WANTED YOU!**

*ata*  
American Translators Association

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Marriott Rivercenter November 6-9, 2013

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- ▶ Designate your chapter to receive a dues rebate
- ▶ ... for more information and to join, see <http://www.atanet.org>



## The Northwest Linguist is a quarterly publication published jointly by NOTIS and WITS.

The Northwest Linguist is published in February, May, August, and November. **We want to hear from you!** Have you written an article, a review, a poem, or a letter that you would like to share with the Translation and Interpretation community of the Pacific Northwest? Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited.

**Articles are limited to 1,000 words.**

Please send submissions to Kathryn German, Editor, at: [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net) Please note that all submissions become the property of *The Northwest Linguist* and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed in advance. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Societies, or their Boards.

The Northwest Linguist also accepts advertising. Detailed advertising rates are available at: [www.notisnet.org/nwl\\_Northwest\\_Linguist\\_Advertising\\_Rates.pdf](http://www.notisnet.org/nwl_Northwest_Linguist_Advertising_Rates.pdf)

Deadline for Winter Issue of The Northwest Linguist:  
**January 7, 2014**

Submissions to: **Kathryn German, Editor**, [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net)

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Northwest Linguist accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation, interpretation, and issues related to these professions. These may include:

- Approaches to Translation
- Interpretation Skills
- Legal Issues for Translators and Interpreters
- The Business of Translation and Interpretation
- Dictionary Reviews
- Computer Assisted Translation Tools
- Book Reviews related to Translation and Interpretation
- Ethical Issues in Translation and Interpretation

### SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks again to all of our International Translation Day Sponsors:

Gold: **Dynamic Language**

Silver: **MindLink Resources, LLC**

Bronze: **Foundation for International Services**

Their generous support helped us create a special celebration. We encourage all of you to check out their websites!

## NOTIS AND WITS EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
November 5, 2013 December 17, 2013	WebBuzz.2 –American Pie	<a href="http://www.courts.wa.gov">www.courts.wa.gov</a>	Webinar
November 3, 2013 December 10 2013	WebRX.2—American Pie	<a href="http://www.courts.wa.gov">www.courts.wa.gov</a>	Webinar
November 6-9, 2013	ATA Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org">www.atanet.org</a>	San Antonio, Texas
November 7-9, 2013	First International LARIM Conference: Interpreter-mediated interactions: Methodologies and Models	<a href="http://larim.uni.eu/en/category/attivita/conferences/i-convengo-larim/">http://larim.uni.eu/en/category/attivita/conferences/i-convengo-larim/</a>	Rome, Italy
November 11, 2013	Corso de lingua e cultura italiana per interpreti di conferenza	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Milano, Italy
November 11, 2013	Local 1671 Meeting Statewide	<a href="http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index">http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index</a>	Olympia, WA
November 13, 2013	Oregon Court Interpreter Ethics Webinar	<a href="http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/InterpreterServices/pages/calendarofevents.aspx">http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/InterpreterServices/pages/calendarofevents.aspx</a>	Webinar
November 15, 2013	U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship Program Deadline	<a href="http://www.clscholarship.org">http://www.clscholarship.org</a>	Scholarship
November 16, 2013	Interpreters United—Training Workshop Making Smarter Business Decisions and Local 1671 Meeting	<a href="http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/form_page.cfm&amp;formID=38488">http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/form_page.cfm&amp;formID=38488</a>	Olympia, Washington
November 22-24, 2013	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention And World Languages Expo	<a href="http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo/2013-actfl-convention-world-languages-expo">http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo/2013-actfl-convention-world-languages-expo</a>	Orlando, Florida
December 3, 2013	WebEthics.2—American Pie WebRx.1—American Pie	<a href="http://www.courts.wa.gov">www.courts.wa.gov</a>	Webinar
December 5, 2013	WFSE/AFSCME District 1a Meeting	<a href="http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/calendar.cfm">http://interpretersunited.wfse.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/calendar.cfm</a>	Vancouver, WA
December 7, 2013	WITS/NOTIS Holiday Party 1-4 pm	<a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a> <a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	University of Washington Waterfront Activities Center



## NOTIS AND WITS EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
December 9-15, 2013	National Center for Interpretation (NCI) Kentucky Court of Justice & the University of Louisville: One Week Court Interpreting Institute	<a href="http://najit.org/calendar">http://najit.org/calendar</a>	Louisville, Kentucky
December 13-15, 2013	Interpreting Quality: A Look Around and Ahead	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Call for Papers
December 14, 2013	Région France: Célébration du 60ème anniversaire de l'AIIC	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Paris, France
December 14-16, 2013	AIIC Training of Trainers	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Lima, Peru
December 18-20, 2013	Professional Development Seminar: Interpreting Spanish into Non-Native English	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Santiago, Chile
January 7-11, 2014	CRIC: XII corso di aggiornamento di lingua italiana	<a href="http://aiic.net/events/">http://aiic.net/events/</a>	Rome, Italy
January 16-19, 2014	IMIA International Medical Interpreters Conference	<a href="http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2014conference.asp">www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2014conference.asp</a>	Houston, Texas
February 6-8, 2014	ALC UNConference 14	<a href="http://alvus.org/education/conference.cfm">http://alvus.org/education/conference.cfm</a>	West Palm Beach, Florida
February 10-12, 2014	Israel Translators Association (ITA) 2014 International Conference	<a href="http://www.ita.org.il/index.php?lang=english">www.ita.org.il/index.php?lang=english</a>	Herzliya, Israel
March 8, 2014	WA State Court Interpreters Written Exam	<a href="http://www.courts.wa.gov">www.courts.wa.gov</a>	Bellevue College and Big Bend Community College
April 3-5, 2014	American Translation & Interpreting Studies Assn. (ATISA) 7th Biennial Conference: Where Theory and Practice Meet	<a href="http://www.atisa.org">www.atisa.org</a>	New York, New York
May 16-18, 2014	National Association of Judiciary Translators and Interpreters (NAJIT) 35th Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.najit.org">www.najit.org</a>	Las Vegas, Nevada
November 5-8, 2014	American Translators Association Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org">www.atanet.org</a>	Chicago, Illinois

## NOTIS AND WITS BOARD MEETINGS

	DATE	EVENTS	DETAILS	LOCATION
	November 23, 2013	<b>NOTIS Annual Meeting</b>	ASL Speaker, Annual Summary, Board Candidates, Merger Vote 11:45 Registration, - 4:30  <a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a>	Fremont Library 731 N. 35th St. Seattle, WA 98103
	December 6, 2013	<b>WITS Board Meeting</b>	6:00 p.m. <a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	Home of Christina Woelz
	December 12, 2013	<b>NOTIS Board Meeting</b>	7:00 p.m. <a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a>	Online

NOTIS ANNUAL MEETING 2013 &  
PRESENTATION BY DIMITRI AZADI**November 23 (Saturday), 2013****11:45 PM – 4:30 PM****Fremont Library****Seattle, Washington****Phone-In for Merger Vote (2:45 start time) (details****below)****Lunch included for those who RSVP**

- I. Door open: Registration of in-person attendees
- II. Presentation: American Sign Language: Dimitri Azadi
- III. Luncheon (Free lunch only for those who RSVP)
- IV. Call to Order Annual Meeting  
Annual Reports and Presentation of Candidates
- V. Merger Vote – (Phone in opens 2:45) 3:00
  1. Discussion
  2. Oral Vote
- VI. Remaining Business
- VII. Adjournment

RSVP to your email invitation. For questions contact:  
[info@notisnet.org](mailto:info@notisnet.org)

You may call in to the meeting starting at: 2:45. Your name  
must be recorded in order for you to vote.

Call-in number: **(Toll Free) (888) 531-0349**

Pin: **15853**

The Fremont Library is on the south side of North 35<sup>th</sup> Street between Fremont Avenue North and the Aurora Bridge: **731 N. 35<sup>th</sup> St., Seattle, WA 98103** Please allow extra time for parking.

**OUR SPEAKER**

Dimitri Azadi holds national certification (Certificate of Interpretation and Certificate of Transliteration) through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and has completed his B.A. in Leadership and Diversity Studies through Antioch University. He also worked as a nurse before becoming a sign language interpreter. Dimitri has been interpreting for over 20 years and has been signing since he was eight years old. He is the Assistant Director and Deaf Services Manager at Bellevue College and is now pursuing his masters in Organizational Development to continue his work in change management and disability advocacy. Dimitri is passionate about social justice and education and loves helping to remove barriers to students reaching their goals.

