

UNA MIRADA HACIA ADENTRO:
EL ROL DE LOS TRADUCTORES E INTÉRPRETES EN UNA SOCIEDAD
CONTEMPORÁNEA

By

JACQUELINE ELIZABETH DEVITT

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the Hispanic population has grown to become the largest minority population in the United States, resulting in a high demand for Spanish translators and interpreters. Therefore, businesses and public service providers are looking for professional cross-cultural communicators. The Translation and Interpretation program at the University of Arizona provides bilingual students with the applied translation and interpretation skills necessary to become qualified translators and interpreters, helping to bridge the gap in our plural, multilingual society. As part of a thesis project, the following written statement discusses in detail the procedures and strategies employed in the creation of the multimedia website for the Translation and Interpretation program. This website gives prospective and current students access to bilingual resources, practicums and internships, and a guide to potential career opportunities. The ultimate goal of this website is to encourage student enrollment in the program, as bilingual students who become cross-cultural facilitators will provide equal access to millions of limited English proficient individuals.

http://w3.coh.arizona.edu/spanish/trans_interp/translation.cfm (here you will find the honors thesis

Translation and Interpretation multimedia website)

The United States has always stood as a symbol for freedom and independence for all citizens as well as a diverse blend of cultures. In today's society, the flow of immigrants into the United States has increased at an alarming rate. The largest and fastest-growing minority population in the United States today is the Hispanic population. As the Hispanic population continues to grow, the need for specialized resources increases, as many Spanish-speaking immigrants do not have the necessary resources to learn English and obtain an education. As a result of this language barrier, they are denied access to public services. Thus, it is essential for our nation to implement specialized Translation and Interpretation services to guarantee equal access for individuals with limited English proficiency at all levels of the public sector.

According to the U.S. census, 35.72% of the Tucson population was made of up Hispanics in 2000 (census.gov). In addition, the Pew Hispanic Center noted that the Hispanic growth rate would rise to 22% from 2008-2018 (pewhispanic.org). With the growth of the Hispanic population nationwide and the increase in bilingual individuals in the Tucson community, the implementation of a Translation and Interpretation program is critical for integrated communication among individuals who speak the Spanish language.

Due to the complex and specialized tasks of this profession, it is important that these Translation and Interpretation studies are taken on at the university level for bilingual students to prepare for the responsibility in becoming translators and interpreters. The University of Arizona is one of the few schools in the nation that have taken on this endeavor by jointly offering the Translation and Interpretation program through the Spanish and Portuguese Department and Mexican American Raza Studies Department.

I had declared my Spanish Translation and Interpretation major as a freshman in 2006 when the program was just beginning to take off. I had heard about the program through word of mouth, as there were no resources available about what the program had to offer. Over the course of my time here at the University of Arizona, I knew that the presence of this program needed to be made as the advanced translation and interpretation studies have a profound impact on the lives of limited English proficient individuals. We as bilingual students possess valuable linguistic and cultural abilities that are necessary for facilitating equal access to public services to these individuals as well as health care and constitutional rights within the justice system. Therefore, under the advising of the Director of the Translation Interpretation program, Jaime Fatás, I have created a multimedia website made available through the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to prospective students who are interested in joining the program.

This multimedia website provides students with essential information about the program's mission, objectives, and class descriptions. It also provides online resources such as mono and bilingual dictionaries, interpretation recording materials, and legal and medical terminology. The website offers professional options with additional resources for students who wish to pursue a career in Translation and Interpretation. The site also links perspective Translation and Interpretation students to practicums and internships offered through the program and answers frequently asked questions about the program and the profession.

My goal for this thesis project design was to create something that would be applicable to prospective and current Translation and Interpretation students. In general, there is little information available about the program as well as the career itself. As one of the few universities in the nation that offers a Bachelor's Degree in this field, it was important for me to provide students with the opportunity to not only utilize their bilingual skills, but for them to

enter a profession which would provide equal access to limited English individuals. Therefore, much research and thought was put into the creation of this website. I spent many hours researching universities with similar programs as well as the profession. Today, there is still not enough information out there about the Translation and Interpretation field so I conducted many interviews with my professors, federally certified court interpreters, and other translators and interpreters who had experience in the field. I also surveyed current Translation and Interpretation students to see what content they would find useful about the program. Overall, the website is a culmination of all the research, interviews, and surveys that I have conducted over the past year.

At this point, the project's success is hard to measure as it has just been posted live on the web; however, I believe that this website will have a great impact on the Translation and Interpretation program. When the program began in Fall 2006, there were only 38 students enrolled. Last spring, 130 students enrolled in the program (Fatás, Jaime, Personal Interview). Now, these prospective and current students have access to a plethora of information and resources about the program and profession. They have opportunities to work with the Tucson community as well through internships and practicums. Students also have the necessary tools to prepare for the higher-level courses in the program, which are very demanding and require high proficiency in both languages. The implementation of this multimedia website will spark more interest in the Translation and Interpretation program, resulting in an increase in student enrollment.

Overall, the creation of this multimedia website will not only promote and provide crucial information about the Translation Interpretation program and the profession itself, but encourage

students to pursue potential career opportunities in specific areas of this field; thus fulfilling their role as cross-cultural communicators within our multicultural society.

References

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