

The significance of training for translators and interpreters – a language services provider’s perspective

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It is quite obvious, from statistical and anecdotal evidence, that some sections of Australia’s society, because of their language/ethnic background, are not receiving all the equal rights that an English-speaking person takes for granted. One example on a regular basis is the significance of not having sufficiently trained and experienced interpreters available for police investigations and court hearings, in a country that expresses its pride in a sense of justice and equality for everyone.

In Victoria alone, a small but nonetheless important percentage of Magistrate’s Court hearings have been dismissed because a qualified and trained interpreter was not available. To use an age-old saying, justice needs to be seen to be done. Society is being short-changed and we as professionals should be concerned. Interpreters and translators must receive, and be required to receive, adequate professional training and qualifications, and continuous follow-up professional training and personal development. We personally, and our professional industry, have a responsibility to society in this regard, and I am by no means the first person to say this.

In 1997, Peter Day Consulting, in a paper on regulating the interpreting and translating profession, said: “The areas of work in which incompetent or inaccurate I/T services may have the greatest potential for substantial risks to persons are considered to be in the legal and health sectors. All other areas, however, presumably involve potential risks, including economic and material disadvantage, due to the inherent vulnerability of the LOTE person (or indeed English-speaking I/T consumers) when using interpreting and translating services”. The paper mentioned consumers being subjected to “incompetent, dishonest, unjust, and fraudulent I/T services”. Shame and embarrassment. In a multicultural society such as Australia, language should never be a barrier to accessing information and services. But it has been, and continues to be. It is a huge challenge the I/T profession must take on.

I hope in this presentation to persuade you that synergies can be created by the I/T profession stepping up its game– to forge a greater reputation and role for itself in providing society with what it obviously needs and wants. The significance of training for translators and interpreters is deep and widespread.

Silvana Pavlovska is the General Manager of International Interpreting Agency, a language service provider committed to the continuous development of the translation and interpreting profession in Australia and



overseas. Silvana is university trained in Translation and Interpreting in Macedonian, Serbian and Croatian with extensive experience and expertise in most domains including legal, health, court and immigration. Silvana is an educator and trainer in all aspects of interpreting /translation with a current Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment & Training. She has taught students of diverse backgrounds in both the Diploma and Advanced Diploma Programs at RMIT University. Her expertise is in Ethics and Professional Aspects of Interpreting and Translation, Contextual Studies and the Macedonian Language and culture. Silvana also boasts a strong and sound background in journalism and broadcasting having worked with SBS Radio in Melbourne. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism.

She is a Former Chair and member of the NAATI Regional Advisory Committee of Victoria. She is a Senior Practitioner with the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators-AUSIT. Silvana is a recipient of a NAATI award for

her contribution to the translation and interpreting profession in Australia.