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Language Services protocol for law enforcement bodies

AUTOR: KATRINA MAYFIELD

UK

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Introduction

This briefing note provides advice on securing interpreting, translation and transcription services and achieving effective communication with victims, witnesses and suspects during an investigation.

Legal framework

For the purposes of this note, interpreting is meant as referring to the spoken word, translation refers to the written word.

Victims and witnesses have the right to communicate effectively throughout criminal proceedings and to have interpreting and translation services supplied if needed. In particular under the Ministry of Justice (2015) Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, a victim or witness is entitled to request interpreting and/or translation services in a language they understand, eg, when reporting a crime, being interviewed or giving evidence. In addition the police must, under the Equality Act 2010, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination. This would include providing access to British Sign Language interpretation services for those people who are deaf or have a hearing loss.

The suspect has the right to have access to interpretation and translation services, under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and PACE Code C and Code H for Terrorism matters.

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Human Rights Act 1998, Article 6(3) also guarantees the right to have the free assistance of an interpreter if the accused cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

Language professionals

This term is used in this document to include qualified professionals, preferably specialising in law related work, who provide interpreting, translation or transcription services. They are skilled, professionally trained and qualified professionals whose role is to assist communication by conveying verbally or in writing the meaning of a spoken or written exchange between parties.

Sign Language interpreters are included in this category, however their role is to aid communication where one party communicates verbally and the other uses a sign language, typically British Sign Language (BSL) in the UK. Spoken and sign language interpretation have many aspects in common, there are, however, specific differences. This protocol covers spoken languages.

When should an interpreter be used?

An interpreter will be needed where a victim, witness or suspect has difficulty in speaking or understanding English.

An investigation, interaction with the police or other law enforcement agencies and any subsequent criminal justice proceedings can be stressful. The language and technical terminology used during criminal justice process can be difficult to understand even for a native English speaker.

How to identify language?

Do not make assumptions about an individual's preferred language. The native or preferred language should be identified promptly. This includes the native language, as well as any additional languages that might be suitable for communication. Once the languages have been identified these should be recorded for future reference.

Language is not a nationality

A native or preferred language may not be indicated by nationality or geographic parameters such as place of birth or the last country of residence. Population migration means that ethnic groups reside in many countries, and their language will not always be the same as the national language. In some countries, ethnic groups may be persecuted or discriminated because of their ethnic grouping or origin, this may result in a reluctance to communicate in that country's official language even if they are capable of doing so.

Language identification tactics

Ask the individual about their native and any additional languages. The most direct way to do this is to ask: "Do you speak English?"

If they understand the question, use the language identification chart [[Appendix](#)] allowing the interviewee to point to their preferred language.

If unsuccessful ask your [telephone interpreting service](#) provider to assist.

Where a rare language is identified, care needs to be taken to record the preferred language. It can, however, be difficult to find a qualified interpreter who speaks a rare language. In such cases, it is acceptable to establish whether the individual's additional language is sufficient for effective communication. The individual's consent to communicate in their additional language should be recorded before proceeding with interpreter-assisted communication.

Bilingualism/multilingualism

While some people are bilingual or even multilingual, the level of fluency in each language can vary. Knowledge of a second or third language can be limited and even with good or some understanding the level of fluency may be insufficient for active dialogue.

Language and dialect

Some languages are spoken by communities in different countries and even on different continents. Although these may be grouped under the same language label, communities often develop their own grammar, vocabulary, syntax and expressions forming dialects which are not necessarily mutually intelligible. Arabic, for example, is currently in high demand in the public sector, and while there are numerous Arabic interpreters, speakers of Arabic may use very different dialects that are not necessarily compatible with the interpreter's. It is essential to ensure that the interpreter and the speaker share the same dialect, or can agree to use a standard version e.g. standard Arabic.

Language compatibility

Once the language and/or dialect have been identified it is important to check language compatibility between the individual and the interpreter. This must be done prior to any formal police procedure, such as an interview, preferably prior to booking an interpreter and also face-to-face on arrival. This will help to avoid misunderstandings and loss of time.

Identifying a suitable interpreter

It is recommended that an interpreter used in formal evidential procedures should be a qualified and accredited professional, registered with a [recognised professional body](#), security cleared (NPCC's current guidance is that interpreters are provided with the Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 3).

It is also important to respect an individual's request for an interpreter of a particular gender. This may be due to cultural or religious reasons or the nature of the offence, for example sexual offence. Additionally someone from the individual's local community may inhibit effective communication.

Professional bodies

Forces will have in place a local contract or agreement for the provision of services.

Preferred sources of qualified interpreters:

- For spoken languages the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) www.nrpsi.org.uk

- For non-spoken languages the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) www.nrcpd.org.uk

Other recommended sources:

- The Association of Police and Court Interpreters (APCI), www.apciinterpreters.org.uk
- Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), www.iti.org.uk
- Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL), www.ciol.org.uk
- Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI), www.asli.org.uk
- Visual language professionals (VLP), www.vlp.org.uk

In case of rare languages the search may be extended to commercial agencies, a related country's embassy, local universities and appeals to language professionals through social media.

Booking an interpreter

It is important that the following information is provided to the language professional when making a booking;

- name(s) of the individual for whom the service is required. This will allow the interpreter to declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest;
- name and collar/shoulders/warrant/service number of the person making the booking, as well as the contact details of the police contact person with their collar/shoulders/warrant/service to allow communication in the event of any unforeseen changes or issues;
- the nature of the assignment, police procedure and offence being investigated to help the language professional prepare both linguistically and emotionally, or to decline the assignment if they do not think they could cope with the nature of the offending under investigation;
- The location of the assignment, including the full address and post code and any entry requirements;
- advice on directions, public transport and available car park facilities near the location.

The booking should be confirmed by email with all the relevant details well in advance or as early as possible.

Interpreters

The role of an interpreter in a police interview

An interpreter is a qualified, professionally trained and highly skilled professional whose role is to assist in communication by conveying verbally the meaning of the spoken messages exchanged by the parties.

An interpreter is an impartial professional. They are **not** part of the investigation team. Their role is strictly limited to the direct interpreting of the verbal exchange between the police and the individual. An interpreter will interpret **everything** that is said during the assignment.

An interpreter is **not** an interviewer, witness statement taker, investigator, solicitor, advocate, representative, appropriate adult, confidante, social worker, co-ordinator, chaperone or friend.

An investigator may **not** delegate any part of the communication with the individual to the interpreter **or** leave an interpreter unsupervised with the individual at any time.

Interpreting word for word?

Interpreters operate messages, not the words. Even when speaking the same language it is common for people to miscommunicate or misinterpret what has been said. The risk of miscommunication is greater when the language and culture are not shared.

Verbal communication

In verbal communication people use words to construct 'units of meaning'. Interpreters are trained to operate with 'units of meaning'. They decipher and internalise and then verbalise the units of meaning into the other language. A 'word-for-word' interpreting style can be a sign of a poorly trained or untrained interpreter. The message between two different languages and/or cultures can only be conveyed by its meaning and interpreters do this to the best of their skill and ability.

Clarification

Interpreters may need to clarify the messages before interpreting them. For example, clarifying time when using 12/24 hour clock, or the time an event occurred when the time is described as evening/night/morning/afternoon, or lunch/tea/dinner/supper, etc and these can be featured and understood differently depending on the language. Some words can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context. An interpreter should be able to

interpret messages by meaning and advise on the complexity of the issues and any relevant cultural peculiarities that affect the communication.

Cultural differences

While interpreters may need to intervene and explain any potential miscommunications due to cultural differences, it should not be assumed that an interpreter automatically shares the same culture and values with the individual they are interpreting for. For example, ethnic Roma in Europe often speak the official language of the state that they originate from, eg, Romanian for Roma who originate from Romania, or Czech for Roma who originate from the Czech Republic. This means that communication via a Romanian or respectively Czech interpreter will be appropriate in most cases. However, it cannot be assumed that every Romanian or Czech interpreter is also an expert in Roma culture or can adequately comment on Roma culture in ways that avoid reinforcing common stereotypes or prejudices.

Lack of direct equivalence

Sometimes an interpreter may need to use a full sentence to transfer just one single word across language and culture, especially if a direct equivalent for a word or concept does not exist in the other language. An interpreter may intervene to clarify what was said.

Lack of cooperation

On occasion the communication between the police and an individual may fail through no fault of the interpreter if the individual does not want to, or is unable to communicate and/or cooperate with the investigation or indeed if they do not make sense when they communicate.

Empowerment

Within the remit an interpreter needs to be empowered and encouraged by the investigator to identify and help to overcome any language or cultural barriers with the aim of achieving effective communication and understanding between the officials and the individual. Any such intervention needs to be transparent and explained in both languages.

Logistics

It's important to meet the interpreter on arrival, and familiarise them with the facilities.

- Introduce yourself and check the interpreter's ID to verify they are qualified, security cleared and that the interpreter is the right one for the case. If in doubt cross check with the relevant professional body.

- Establish a good rapport with your interpreter before introducing them to the individual. A positive working relationship with the interpreter will make conducting the interview easier.
- If the interview concludes late, make sure the interpreter can get home safely.

Seating arrangements

An interpreter must be able to see and hear all parties present equally well. The best seating arrangement for interpreter assisted interview will be a triangular formation. This allows the officer to make eye contact and speak directly to the interviewee and indicates the interpreter's status as a neutral professional.

Large scale policing operations

In some cases, it may be necessary to use one or more interpreters to support a coordinated policing operation, eg, a raid on premises where there are known foreign nationals.

Interpreter(s) will need to receive a full and detailed briefing on arrival explaining the nature of the operation and their specific role. Any risks should be highlighted and they should be provided with a single point of contact in case of any queries or to request any practical or case specific advice.

Where attendance at a crime scene or operational location is required, appropriate equipment, eg, a high visibility tabard or stab proof vest should be provided.

Health, safety and welfare

Interpreting is a mentally intensive activity that can lead to cognitive overload and fatigue. This may lead to undetected inaccuracies in the interpretation.

- A 10-15 minute break every 40-60 minutes during an interview should be facilitated whenever possible.
- A team of two or more interpreters should be considered for multiple or lengthy interviews during a complex investigation involving several interviewees.
- In an event of any waiting time an interpreter should be allowed to wait in a separate quiet room.

The welfare of the interpreter is ultimately the responsibility of the officer in the case (OIC).

The OIC should:

- Carry out a risk assessment for the interpreter's attendance, considering whether, for example, the interpreter should be met at an alternative location,

such as a police station, before proceeding to the scene in the company of a police officer;

- Making the interpreter aware of any potential health risks, for example if a suspect has a confirmed medical diagnosis of a contagious infection;
- Making sure that the interpreter is not left in a room or cell with a victim, witness or suspect, without a police officer, member of police staff or legal advisor present;
- Ensuring interpreter's safety at all times, for example, if necessary providing an escort to the interpreter's car or public transport at the end of the assignment;
- Making arrangements to ensure sufficient breaks, are included during lengthy operations or investigations;
- Debrief and signpost welfare support following a potentially traumatic assignment;
- Do not provide the interpreter's personal contact details to the victim, witness or suspect;
- Do not ask interpreters to use their personal telephone making phone calls to a suspect, victim or witness.

Briefing an interpreter

Accurate interpreting is the result of good preparation. Your interpreter needs to be briefed prior to the interview. The interpreter needs to know what is likely to be discussed, what terminology is likely to be used and in what context. They also need to be briefed about the individual for whom they will interpret.

The briefing should be conducted in a room separate to where the suspect or their solicitor are to avoid the risk of unwanted pre-interview disclosure.

- If specific procedures are to be used, eg, special warnings, these must be explained if required and any terminology or abbreviations clarified prior to the interview.
- An interpreter may need to consult a dictionary and glossaries to aid preparation, as well as during the interview. Many professional interpreters work on their own glossaries throughout their career and update relevant topics after each assignment.
- It is important that an interpreter has time to prepare emotionally for the assignment, especially if the topic is particularly challenging or traumatic. An interpreter may need to withdraw from an assignment if they do not feel emotionally prepared. For example, a pregnant interpreter may find it difficult or impossible to assist in some child abuse case interviews.

Briefing the interviewee before interpreter-assisted interview

The person for whom the interpreting service is required, will also need to be briefed via the interpreter, to explain how an interpreter-assisted interview will be conducted. The interviewer should conduct this briefing, inviting the interpreter to add any points of clarification. If the interpreter conducts the briefing they will do so in both languages. If the interview is to be video or audio recorded, the briefing should also be recorded.

A standard briefing should cover the following points:

- “we will speak to one another via an interpreter”;
- “the interpreter is impartial and subject to their professional code of conduct”;
- “the interpreter will keep everything that is said during the interview confidential”
- “please **do not** try to have any separate conversation with the interpreter, they are not allowed to engage”;
- “the interpreter **will** interpret **everything** we say”;
- “if you have any questions please ask me or your solicitor: the interpreter is not allowed to give advice”;
- “we will speak directly to one another as if we share the same language; the interpreter will interpret what we say, speaking in the first person”;
- “we will pause after each sentence to allow the interpreter to do their job”;
- “if one of us speaks for too long the interpreter might stop us, with a gesture like this” (at this point the interpreter should show how they are going to stop the interview, the gesture may vary in different cultures);
- “we must speak at a normal pace; if we speak too fast the interpreter might have to stop us asking us to slow down”
- “the interpreter is **not** an investigator and they will not ask questions, they will only interpret what we say”;
- “you may understand English, but please listen to the interpreting before answering the question; please answer in the language you share with the interpreter”;
- “the interpreter may interact to clarify what either of us has said to ensure the most accurate interpreting.”

Conducting an interpreter-assisted interview

- Allow twice the normal amount of time for an interpreter-assisted interview;

- Background noise should be avoided or minimised as it can cause an unnecessary distraction for the interpreter and interviewee;
- Talk to the interviewee as if you share the same language, make eye contact in order to note any non-verbal communication;
- Only one person should speak at any time during a recorded interview: any overlap of speech can lead to inaudible fragments in the interview transcript;
- Stop speaking after one or two sentences to allow the interpreter time to interpret;
- Speak in short and unambiguous sentences to avoid confusion and unnecessary clarifications, eg, when referring to times or events;
- Reformulate questions as many times as needed to check that you understand the reply;
- If you need information or clarification about mannerisms, perceptions or cultural norms, ask the interviewee first, if still unsure clarify with the interpreter;
- Check your understanding of voluntary or involuntary actions; the choice of a verb in other languages can vary depending whether an action was voluntary or involuntary.

Interpreters' notes

Interpreters are trained to take notes to aid their memory when interpreting consecutively. They can use pen and paper or electronic devices such as, for example, an iPad. These are used by the interpreter there and then to provide accurate interpreting. Each interpreter through training and practice develops their own way of taking notes and no two interpreters would take the same notes in the course of an interpreting assignment.

While interpreter's notes can hardly help to re-store the communication and therefore have no value after the communication event, it is recommended that if possible interpreter's notes are retained and disclosed as 'unused material'. (If made electronically you may need to remind the interpreter to retain any notes made as [third party material](#).) These notes were made to serve as an aid to memory at the time of the interview and they are also can be useful for the interpreter for their terminology list/glossary. Interpreters are allowed to note and retain any terminology used in course of the assignment in their professional glossary.

Following the interview

Once the interview has been concluded, the interviewer or investigation team should consider the following:

- double-checking that the interviewee's names are spelled and recorded correctly;
- checking the welfare of the interpreter;

- addressing any concerns directly with the interpreter to maintain an open and honest working relationship and encourage two-way communication;
- reflecting on the interview process, encourage feedback from the interpreter, which is particularly important for improving interviewing skills in the context of the interpreter-assisted communication.

Do not ask the interpreter for their personal thoughts and comments on the investigation or the interviewee. Interpreters are obliged to stay impartial and abide by their code of conduct.

Witness statements following an interpreter-assisted interview

Taking a written witness statement and completing an MG11 following an interpreter assisted interview is generally the same procedure as taking a statement from an English speaking victim or witness. See [MOJ \(2011\) Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures](#).

The investigator must speak directly to the interviewee throughout the process, allowing the interpreter time to interpret what is said. It is the investigator's job to explain the procedure, communicate questions and gather evidence, not the interpreter's. The investigator must **never** delegate the task of gathering evidence, taking a statement, or formulating questions to the interpreter. The techniques and approaches in interpreter-assisted interviews are generally the same whether the interviewee is a victim, witness or a suspect.

Products produced from an interpreter assisted witness interview:

- a Witness statement on MG11 form in the foreign language signed by the victim or witness;
- an English language statement that accurately matches the foreign language version, appropriately labelled as an exhibit;
- the interpreter or translator's statement confirming their involvement in the process, their qualification, statement taking method used and affirmation that the English language version is an accurate account matching the foreign language version.

Methods for taking a witness statement via an interpreter

There are three main models for taking a statement following an interpreter assisted interview. All three models assume that an investigator conducts the interview and takes their notes as normal. The methods only vary in the last part of the interaction, i.e. the technicalities of writing the statement.

Method 1

1. At the point of writing a statement, the investigator dictates the statement to the interpreter, and the interpreter writes it down sentence by sentence in the language of the interviewee. The interpreter speaks out the sentences in both languages to involve the interviewee.
2. At the end of the interview the interpreter reads the statement back to the interviewee in the interviewee's own language or the interviewee reads the statement him/herself.
3. For the benefit of the interviewer, the interpreter can sight translate the statement into English if required.
4. The interviewee signs the foreign language version of the MG11 statement.
5. The interpreter translates the statement into English, either at the police premises or later, ideally submitting the English language version within 48 hours.
6. The English language version is produced as the interpreter's exhibit.
7. The interpreter provides a statement to confirm their accreditation and their role in the statement-taking process.

Advantages:

- a) The translator can work on an English language version at a later date achieving the best quality.
- b) This method is suitable for short interviews and less complicated cases.

Disadvantages:

- a) The English language version of the statement is not produced during the interview and is not available to the investigation team until later.
- b) The investigator/interviewer may easily lose control of the statement taking process as no English language version is available during the statement writing process.
- c) Some of the points to prove or clarify may not be obvious until the English language version is received.

Method 2

1. At the point of writing a statement, the investigator writes the statement in English (his/her exhibit).
2. *While writing the statement* in English the investigator dictates the statement to the interpreter sentence by sentence, and the interpreter writes it out in the language of the interviewee.

3. The interpreter reads out the statement sentence by sentence in the interviewee's language as they write it, to involve the interviewee. The investigator ensures that the Foreign and English language versions match in all aspects.
4. At the end of the interview the interpreter reads the statement back to the interviewee in the interviewee's own language or the interviewee reads the statement themselves.
5. The interviewee signs the foreign language version of the MG11 statement.
6. The interpreter provides a statement to confirm their accreditation, their role in the statement-taking process and that the English language version of the statement, the investigator's exhibit, is an accurate account.

Advantages:

- a) The investigator is in control of the statement taking process at all times.
- b) The interviewee is in the room while English version is being produced and able to clarify any points.
- c) The English language version is available immediately after the interview.

Disadvantage

- a) This method requires effective coordination between the interviewer and the interpreter at the stage of writing.
- b) It can be more time consuming when conducting triangular communication with the interviewee.

Method 3: Exceptional cases only

1. At the point of writing a statement, the investigator writes the statement based on their notes.
2. The interpreter translates the statement into the foreign language in their own time.
3. The investigator and the interpreter meet with the witness again at a later date. The interpreter reads the statement back to the witness in the witness' own language or the witness reads the statement themselves.
4. The witness signs the foreign language version of the MG11 statement.
5. The interpreter provides a statement to confirm their accreditations and their role in the statement-taking process.

Advantages:

- a) Witnesses can have a break after a lengthy and potentially tiring interview.
- b) Investigators can formulate the evidence obtained into the statement with minimum distractions.

- c) The interpreter can translate the statement remotely in their own time achieving a good standard.
- d) It is suitable for long interviews during complex investigations.

Disadvantages:

- a) a second appointment with the witness and the interpreter will be required.
- b) it can be costlier and time consuming.
- c) this method is unsuitable if a witness is not local and/or intends to leave the area or country shortly after the interview.

Statement taking by a linguistically skilled investigator who shares the interviewee's native language

Where the interviewing officer with the appropriate level of interviewing skill, shares the same language as the interviewee (other than English) and can write in the language of the interviewee, the investigator may take a written statement in that language, without the assistance of an interpreter.

Once completed, the foreign language statement must be translated into English by a qualified interpreter or translator.

Live video-link remote interpreting

Revisions to Code C enable interpretation services for persons who are suspected of a criminal offence to be provided by interpreters who are not physically present in the suspect's location, by way of a live video-link electronic communication system.

If live video-link is used the conversation must be recorded. The same qualification and registration plus additional training requirements apply to an interpreter. The interpreter must also have experience of video interpreting, ideally trained in conference interpreting.

To use live video-link you must have a PC, laptop or tablet with

- high speed access to the Internet
- a webcam
- microphone and speakers.

Telephone Interpreting

This is used for brief, straightforward communication in non-evidential situations. Members of the public will be provided with telephone interpreting service when making 999/112 or 101 calls to report crime.

Telephone interpreting is **not** appropriate for a formal interview of a victim, witness or suspect.

Where a matter is time-critical, such as conducting procedures under the Road Traffic Act 1988 in relation to drink or drug driving offences, and it is not possible to secure the

attendance of a face-to face interpreter within a reasonable amount of time, telephone interpreting services are acceptable. To prevent challenge at a later date, it is advisable audio and/or video record of the interaction.

It is recommended that NRPSI registered interpreters should be used for telephone interpreting services. This will, however, be defined by local contracts.

Bilingual transcription

A transcript is a written record of a communication, this may be a police interview, body worn camera footage, or material obtained through overt or covert monitoring. It can be monolingual, if the communication was carried out in a single language, or bilingual if the interpreter-assisted communication was carried out in two languages.

Current practice in England and Wales is to produce a monolingual transcript of any bilingual interpreter-assisted interviews in English, which is deemed sufficient in most cases.

A bilingual transcript for an interpreter assisted interview may be advisable for the following reasons:

- quality control of the interpretation from the Foreign language into English and vice versa allowing the identification of any misunderstanding and misinterpretation;
- equality in access to justice whereby the original words of the interviewee and those of the interpreter are available for confirmation of facts;
- proactive review of the evidence obtained in the course of the interview before finalising the facts. Best practice in obtaining a full bilingual transcript.

Full bilingual transcripts should contain all communication as it occurred during the interview, ie, the interviewer's question in English, the interpreter's rendition of the question in the foreign language, the interviewee's answer in the foreign language, then the interpreter's rendition of the interviewee's answer into English. Include any verbalised hesitation, such as, 'err' or 'um'.

Producing a transcript

For interviews it is suggested that a second interpreter/translator is used to provide a transcript. This will ensure the transcript is impartial.

For all transcripts the person who produces it should be encouraged to provide additional notes and comments regarding possible alternative translations for words or phrases with more than one meaning, or to highlight discrepancies or ambiguities. The transcriber's notes should be included as a preamble of the report.

Transcript template

The following template may assist the transcriber produce and control translator to produce a consistent transcription.

Time line	Index [who is speaking*]	Original ENG/Foreign language (FL) as said	Translator's version [for any FL]	Translator's notes

*eg, PO1 for Interviewing Police Officer 1
PO2 for Interviewing Police Officer 2
SUS for suspect
SOL for solicitor
INT for Interpreter

The index clearly indicates who is speaking, with a new line for each speaker. Any abbreviations should be explained in the footnotes so that the reader can clearly see who said what during the interview. The integrated time line helps to find corresponding video/audio fragment if required.

Similar format of a transcript with translation can be used for any audio/video communication in foreign language that police considers as evidence.

Translation

Introduction

Translation is the rendering of the written word into another language. This could be from English into a foreign language or vice versa.

Investigative materials

Investigative materials, for example, documents in foreign languages, telephone downloads, on-line communication may need to be translated into English as part of the investigative process. Translation can be expensive and time consuming. Before deciding whether to translate it is important to decide whether the material is evidential or non-evidential. Material will also need to be sorted according to protective marking classification. Materials that will potentially be presented in court will be classed as evidential.

Linguistically skilled staff with the relevant language skills or a police interpreter, can help to assess what material, if any, has evidential value in the context of the investigation.

Each translation assignment should be undertaken by a qualified translator. The assignment needs to be accompanied by a detailed brief which sets out the purpose and target audience for the translation. Any additional requirements should also be specified.

Evidential material

Any evidential material must be translated by a qualified translator, preferably one specialising in legal translation and registered with the professional body. It is acceptable that evidential translation is completed by a qualified police interpreter.

Incoming messages

Incoming written messages (eg, emails) of unknown value can be initially assessed with the help of an on-line translation program or with the help of police officers or staff with relevant language skills. If assessed as evidential it should be translated by a qualified translator/police interpreter.

Press communications

Press communications or appeals, although generally classed as non-evidential should also be translated into the required foreign language by a qualified translator preferably familiar with localization strategies. Poor translation may lead to embarrassment or miscommunication.

Technical translation

In addition to evidential/non-evidential, all translation materials are classed as technical or non-technical. Technical translation is usually more complex, contains technical terminology and professional jargon and therefore more highly paid. A police officer or staff with relevant language skills may be able to provide an initial assessment of the material, prior to confirming with a translator whether the text is technical or non-technical when they assess/accept the assignment.

Protective marking

Where material is classified under the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS), appropriate arrangements should be made to for the translator to view and translate the material according to the security classification. Law enforcement agencies should ensure that translators are security cleared to the NPPV3, and have access a secure CJSM email account or other means of uploading documents securely.

Police officers and staff with additional language skills

Linguistically skilled police officers and staff are encouraged to use their language skills for the benefit of effective communication in day to day policing activity. Those who speak English as an additional language (EAL staff) are not likely to need an interpreter to communicate effectively with people sharing their native language.

A linguistically skilled member of staff **must not** act as an interpreter in a formal investigative interview unless they have a formal qualification equal to the NRPSI/NRCPD registration criteria. Those formally qualified may act as an interpreter in any police procedures, **excluding assisting a suspect to obtain legal advice**. See [PACE Code C para 13.9 \(NB\)](#). Note – this links to the 2014 version and needs updating upon any future PACE revisions).

Care should be taken when using police officers and staff who are linguistically skilled. The level of fluency in an additional language can often be insufficient for a full understanding and effective communication. In some cases skills may be overstated, or there may be a reluctance to admit limitations. It is the responsibility of the investigation officer (IO) to ensure that colleagues with an additional language skills are used appropriately and not put under undue pressure.

It is suggested that police forces establish a directory of police officers and police staff with additional language skills who can provide assistance when appropriate, advise on cultural aspects and help with the visits abroad as part of an investigation.

Appendix

Language identification chart

NB please refer to the original PDF file version as Word file documents sometimes can miscode foreign scripts.



Language Identification Chart_nc

I speak.....

Unë flas shqip.	Albanian	
አማርኛ እናገራለሁኝ::	Amharic	
Ես Հայերէն կը խօսիմ	Armenian	
أنا أتكلم اللغة العربية	Arabic	
Мән азәрбајан дилиндә данышырам	Azeri	
আমি বাংলা বলি।	Bengali	
Govorim bosanski	Bosnian	
	British Sign Language	
Аз говоря български	Bulgarian	
ကျွန်ုပ် မြန်မာလိုတတ်ပါသည်။	Burmese	
Parlo català	Catalan	
我講廣東話	Chinese	Cantonese
我講客家話		Hakka
我說國語 / 華語		Mandarin
我說普通話		Mandarin
Govorim hrvatski	Croatian	
Mluvím česky	Czech	
Jeg taler dansk.	Danish	
من درى صحبت مي كنم	Dari	
Ik spreek Nederlands	Dutch	
Ik spreek Vlaams	Dutch /Flemish	
Ma räägin Eesti keelt	Estonian	
Medoa Ewegbe	Éwé	
من فارسی صحبت مي كنم	Farsi	
Minä puhun suomea	Finnish	
Je parle français	French	
მე ვლაპარაკობ ქართულად	Georgian	
Ich spreche Deutsch	German	
Μιλώ τα ελληνικά	Greek	

હું " ગુજરાતી" ભાષા બોલું છું.	Gujarati
Na yia Hausa	Hausa
אני מדבר עברית	Hebrew
मैं हिन्दी बोलता हूँ	Hindi
Beszélek magyarul.	Hungarian
Saya bicara bahasa Indonesia	Indonesian
Anam asu igbo	Igbo
Ti sarc ket llocano	Ilacano
Parlo italiano	Italian
私は日本語を話す	Japanese
Мен казахша билемин	Kazakh
Nvuga ikinyarwanda	Kinyarwanda
나는 한국어를 말한다	Korean
من به زمانی کوردی سورانی قسه دهکهم	Kurdish Sorani
Es runāju latviski	Latvian
Ngai nalobaka Lingala	Lingala
Aš kalbu lietuviškai.	Lithuanian
Jas zboruvam makedonski	Macedonian
Saya Bicara Bahasa Malay	Malay
मी मराठी बोलतो	Marathi
Mo koze créole	Mauritian Creole
Eu vorbesc Moldovenește	Moldovan
Би Монгол хэлээр ярьдаг	Mongolian
म नेपाली बोल्दछु ।	Nepalese
Jeg snakker norsk	Norwegian
Say salitac et Pangasinan	Pangasinan
Mówię po polsku	Polish
Eu falo português	Portuguese
زه پښتو خبرې کولای شم	Pushto
ہیں پنجابی بولکر ہوں	Punjabi
ਮੈਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦਾ ਹਾਂ	Punjabi
Eu vorbesc limba Română	Romanian
Я говорю по-русски	Russian
Говорим српски.	Serbian
මම සිංහල භාෂාව කතාකරමි	Sinhalese
Ndino taura Shona	Shona
Hovorím po slovensky.	Slovak
Govorim slovenski	Slovenian
Wahan ku hadlaa Soommali	Somali
Hablo español	Spanish
Ninasema Kiswahili	Swahili
Jag talar svenska	Swedish
Tagalog arg aking salita	Tagalog

தான் உயிரிழந்த மொழி	Tamil
ฉันพูดภาษาไทย	Thai
ትግርኛ ቋንቋ።	Tigrigna
Ndi ngakula Tshiluba	Tshiluba
Ben Türkçe konuşuyorum	Turkish
Mekan Twi	Twi
Я розмовляю українською мовою	Ukrainian
Мен ўзбекча гапираман	Uzbek
میں اردو لکھتا ہوں	Urdu
Tôi nói tiếng Việt	Vietnamese
Me le so Yoruba	Yoruba