

# *Cultural Linguistic Services*

**Fostering a diverse and productive workforce.  
Expanding communication opportunities across varied languages and cultures.**

---

*Viviane Diamitani, Language Consultant, [viviane-diamitani@uiowa.edu](mailto:viviane-diamitani@uiowa.edu)*

*Jane Gressang, Language and Culture Specialist, 335-5822, [jane-gressang@uiowa.edu](mailto:jane-gressang@uiowa.edu)*

*Yousun Shin, Language Consultant, [yousun-shin@uiowa.edu](mailto:yousun-shin@uiowa.edu)*

---

## *Report for FY07*

 *Department of Human Resources*  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

---

Be remarkable

# ***The Mission of Cultural Linguistic Services***

*Cultural Linguistic Services strives to strengthen the linguistic and cultural competencies of staff at The University of Iowa. We work in support of the University's increasingly diverse and inclusive campus community, and we support the University's core value of Community, by encouraging an environment in which cooperation, communication, and respect can flourish among persons from a variety of backgrounds.*

## ***Our Goals and Services***

*Our main goal is to help UI employees achieve effective communication with individuals from other language or cultural backgrounds. As part of this, we assist English Language Learning (ELL) employees and those they work with at all stages of employment. Examples of the services we may provide are:*

### ***Job Recruitment & Hiring***

*Attending meetings of community groups and minority organizations. Assisting at job fairs. Translating job announcements. Assisting ELLs with employment applications. Practicing job interviews with ELL employees. Evaluating language ability.*

### ***Work Orientation***

*Creating ELL friendly work orientation and safety training. Translating training and safety documents. Explaining injury reporting and employee assistance programs to ELLs.*

### ***Professional Development***

*Teaching workplace specific English classes for ELL employees. Providing workplace Spanish instruction for co-workers of ELLs. Orienting employees to the management styles of different cultures. Assisting ELLs with access to further training with interpretation or translation.*

### ***Communication in the Workplace***

*Delivering cross-cultural communication training specific to work group needs. Facilitating supervisor and employee communication in departments with multi-lingual or multi-cultural staff.*

# *Clients*

---

## **SECTION 1**

---

# *Summary of the UI Departments Served*

*Cultural Linguistic Services has provided training, interpretation, and translation for units across The University of Iowa campus. Below is the department that initially requested service.*

<u><i>Unit/ Department</i></u>	<u><i># Requesting Service</i></u>
UIHC Food and Nutrition	6
UIHC (other)	4
Administrative Services (HR)	4
Anesthesia	3
College of Med., Student Affairs	3
Facilities Management	2
Pediatrics	2
Dual Career Network	2
UI Benefits (HR)	2
Employment Services (HR)	2
VP for Research	2
UIHC Environmental and Guest Svcs	1
Laundry	1
Office of the Ombudsperson	1
Immigration Services (HR)	1
OISS	1
Labor Center	1
Public Safety	1
Central Sterilizing	1
Admissions	1
Computer Science	1
Organizational Effectiveness (HR)	1
Center for Disabilities and Development	1
Upward Bound	1
Belin & Blank Center	1
Obstetrics & Gynecology	1
<b><i>Total # requests:</i></b>	<b><i>47</i></b>

## ***Summary of Primary Languages Spoken by Clients***

*The immigrant population in Iowa City originates from many different countries. It is important to note that the same language may be spoken in many places, and that language names are tied to politics. For example, Czech and Slovak are mutually intelligible, but many communication forms all called "Swahili" or "Arabic" are not. So, one interpreter may not be able to serve all the clients from a particular language background. This information was collected to try to determine approximately the languages for which there may be the greatest need for interpretation or translation. It is also important to note that the majority of the English Language Learning employees at The University of Iowa speak more than one language natively, and some may speak up to four or five languages other than English. For each client, the primary language was chosen to be the language first spoken, spoken most often, or which the client said she or he identified most closely with culturally.*

<b><i>Language</i></b>	<b><i># of Clients Speaking it</i></b>	<b><i>Was written translation given?*</i></b>	<b><i>Was spoken interpretation given?*</i></b>	<b><i>Was training or were other services given?</i></b>
Spanish	14	Yes	Yes	Yes
Korean	5	Yes	No	Yes
English	3	No	No	Yes
Mandarin	3	No	No	Yes
French	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgian	2	No	No	Yes
Arabic	2	No	No	Yes
Danish	1	No	No	Yes
Hindi	1	No	No	Yes
Berber	1	No	No	Yes
Cantonese	1	No	No	Yes
Tagalog	1	No	No	Yes
Oromo	1	No	No	Yes

*\*Translation is the term used when a document is re-written in another language. Interpretation is the term for re-saying someone's spoken message in another language. These tasks require different skills; furthermore, written translations are more likely to serve a higher number of clients.*

## ***Summary of the Country of Origin of Clients and Employees***

*The immigrant population in Iowa City appears to be very heterogeneous. This information was collected to verify this and also to try to determine the largest community to focus future resources effectively. The clients from the United States mainly represent employees who work with non-native speakers of English and immigrants. They were seeking cultural training. The country of origin was not known for all of the French-speaking West Africans, so that category that does not align with a single country. It is also important to note that translations tend to serve more than one employee, but here they are listed as serving one individual. Therefore, some of the counts of the number of employees from French, Spanish, or Korean speaking countries most likely are low.*

<b><i>Country of Origin</i></b>	<b><i>Sum of # Clients</i></b>
US	16
Mexico	5
Korea	5
China	4
Honduras	2
Georgia	2
West Africa	2
Ethiopia	1
Congo	1
Puerto Rico	1
Philippines	1
Algeria	1
India	1
Denmark	1
Sudan	1
Iran	1
Argentina	1
Colombia	1
<b><i>Total # clients:</i></b>	<b><i>47</i></b>

# *Successes*

---

## **SECTION 2**

---

## *Success Stories and Comments from Clients*

*This section consists of comments received from clients and employees that have worked with Cultural Linguistic Services' staff. Also noted are cases in which clients achieved their goals.*

***Department:*** Admissions

***Comment after translation of a promotional document.***

"Thank you very much for your help in creating this in Spanish. It was most appreciated!"

***Department:*** Anesthesiology

***Supervisor response after some American English pronunciation training with an Anesthesiologist.***

"Thank you so very much for working with [this doctor] in April and May. I received your report and was happy to see that you rate his language skills to be good to excellent. To be frank, I was surprised that he was rated so highly but, naturally, I'm happy for him. Only time will tell how his time and training with you will affect how he works and communicates with others. It is likely to take a several months to begin to have any real idea. I'll keep my antennae up. ... Perhaps [this doctor's] positive experience will encourage others to contact you. Once again, time will tell."

The supervisor went on to mention a potential research project about communication in stressful situations, which would involve the simulation training team in Anesthesiology and Cultural Linguistic Services. Furthermore, he stated that training on how to understand a wide variety of pronunciation styles (either in a flyer or a presentation) would be appreciated in the department.

***Departments:*** Computer Science, Statistics, and Math

***Comments after a cultural training to help administrative staff work more effectively with English Language Learning international students.***

***From one organizer:***

The organizer said that she found the information useful, and asked if follow-up presentations would be possible.

***From attendees:***

Many commented that the resources brought were very helpful, and that they would like copies for each office. Two attendees copied the titles of two books and expressed interest in purchasing them, or requesting they be purchased for use by department staff.

***Department:*** Dual Career Network

***Results after interview practice, resume assistance, and some help with internet searches.***

One UI employee's English Language Learning spouse, who was helped by CLS, now has a temporary job at Pearson, which will help retain her husband in the Iowa City area. About her employment, the spouse stated:

"Yes, I am working ... in Pearson. I started working in the call center for Puerto Rico call. After few month The Puerto Rico Proyect Team talked to me to offer to be part of the team in the position of Product Line Aide. Now I am working every day to improve my vocabulary and be better employee. Thank you for take time to write this lines and thank you for help me when more I needed."

Another accompanying spouse found and applied to volunteer jobs relevant to her work experience with help from CLS. She is now volunteering at the Iowa United Nations Association, where her supervisor has taken an interest in helping her continue to improve her English skills. Helping her will increase the chances of the University retaining her husband.

**Department:** *Facilities Management*

**Results of helping with interpretation of safety training materials and supervisor comments.**

Two supervisors intervened and worked with a custodian through an interpreter when she became embroiled in a conflict with one of her co-workers. If CLS had not been on hand helping translate some safety training materials, the supervisors never would have heard this employee's side of the story. In addition, some miscommunications on upcoming job changes might have resulted in the employee quitting (she thought that she might be fired). At the time of the problem with the co-worker, the concern was that this very good, hard-working employee would choose to leave the job rather than deal with her co-worker. If she had not been able to communicate effectively with her supervisors, she may have quit.

**Department:** *Food and Nutrition*

**Results or Comments after ESL training was provided to several employees.**

**From employees:**

"I miss your class and I miss you too. To bad that [our supervisor] don't want us to take this class during our work hour."

"Thank you, For all things you do for us, it was help full but that was a short time for me we were espane together other than things every things great. Thank you again"

A co-worker of one of the English Language Learning employees said that the employee was talking much more at work as a result of the training.

One of the employees called CLS later after the first training had ended to receive more help with written grammar, and with a cultural question about a work-related issue.

Another employee, upon following up with her over email after the conclusion of the initial service, stated: "Im kind of busy right now, but im thinking to enroll in your class next year." [The class is a pronunciation class for staff.]

Two employees who were part-time temporary staff were hired on permanently and given increased hours after their work with CLS began.

About 90% of the English language for the workplace training has been attended by employees on their free time. They choose to try to improve their work skills outside of work, even though many have two jobs and very little time outside work.

**From managers:**

"I think that [one employee] took this class more seriously than [the other], and I feel that she will take the time to apply what she has learned."

"I heard nothing but good comments from both [employees] about the class. They really enjoyed it!"

"I feel that both [employees] have made strides in this class. Both are difficult to understand, however both have been given practical skills that have had an immediate impact in the work area."

One English Language Learning employee was given more hours at work in April: She went up to being consistently employed from half-time to full-time in number of hours.

In order to maximize their employees' use of Cultural Linguistic Services, two managers have altered the schedules of employees so that they can more consistently attend the English language training either during their free time or during work hours.

One supervisor called CLS on June 20th to say that he and another supervisor had just met to do performance appraisals for two of the employees with whom CLS had been working. He said that last year the 2 employees had gotten very low marks in regards to their communication skills, but that this year they were rated much higher. The supervisor continued and said that he and the other supervisor are both very impressed with how much progress these employees have made since beginning to work with CLS. Some of the language-related comments in the reviews state that the English language training these two employees received has: caused them to pick up speed when performing tasks, eliminated the need for assistance from co-workers to complete job assignments, improved the staff members' ability to take oral or written direction from supervisors, enhanced teamwork and collaboration in the work area, instigated learning of new procedures, and allowed the employees to be assigned to more tasks.

**Department:** *Office of International Students and Scholars*

**Offer of a training opportunity after discussion of common goals and interests.**

CLS was invited to co-facilitate a presentation for the Building Our Global Community training series. The upcoming 2-hour training (to be held 4/9/08) will be about internationals in the workplace.

**Department:** *Organizational Effectiveness, the Office of the Ombudsperson, Others*  
**Comments after preparing materials on Mitchell Hammer's intercultural conflict model.**

**From Organizational Effectiveness:**

The staff member thanked me for the work, and commented that Mitchell Hammer's model was great. In addition, she shared it with a colleague in the Ombuds Office in the hopes that it could be used as a training tool or else assist with some facilitated discussions.

**From the Office of the Ombudsperson:**

"The Intercultural Conflict Style PowerPoint is excellent—thanks so much. This will help me think about some of the conflicts I deal with, plus I need to figure out how to incorporate this into my workshops."

**From others:**

At the "Community Conversations" Informational Workshop in Cedar Rapids on June 30<sup>th</sup>, many people were most interested in the "Intercultural Conflict Style" information sheet that CLS was handing out. A leader of a historically African American fraternity at UI expressed how useful he found the information, and asked if there might be an opportunity for some collaboration on training. A TA for a College of Education course on Diversity also asked about the Intercultural Conflict model and asked about CLS visiting her class. Other community leaders in attendance, such as a woman working with young parents and one who helps resolve conflicts between neighborhood girls, also expressed their interest in the information. At least two others agreed to stay in contact about working on getting employment at Iowa.

**Department:** *Pediatrics*  
**Comments after assistance with English pronunciation of scientific terms.**

The employee commented that although she had already taken a pronunciation class, she felt working with CLS was better because the material was work related and more individualized to her problems. She was also having trouble with her boss, and rating her English helped give her the confidence to not see the problem as simply hers, or as purely related to her English proficiency. Culturally, she did not feel comfortable discussing her perspective with her HR Representative because she thought it would be a problem if she chose to look for another position at Iowa that suited her better. However, CLS explained part of her perspective to the Senior HR Representative involved.

After these experiences, the employee wrote:

"I got a new job. It's much better. I really appreciate your help and encourages. I still want to work with you on my English. Thanks again!"

**Department:** *VP for Research*  
**Comment from an attendee after a presentation on understanding and communicating with English Language Learners.**

"I wanted to let you know I thought your presentation at the OPR Administrative Staff meeting yesterday was very good. You gave great examples – I thought incorporating "Taboo" was a great idea to demonstrate how difficult it is to try to explain something without having the "best" words to do so. I think it would be great if you could present this to local schoolchildren – like junior high to high school age. It might help some kids think differently, and thus treat people with more kindness and empathy. I also wondered if you have any "cultural information sheets" on India and Lithuania. I have grad students in our area from both of these, and would like to have a better understanding of their cultures."

**Department:** *College of Medicine Student Counseling Center*

**Results or comments in response to two presentations on language and reading skills.**

***From one organizer:***

"Your presentation has received rave reviews from the medical students. As a matter of fact, you are the talk of the town and we can't keep your DVD in stock (I'm not kidding). Since the counseling center is in the business of keeping the students happy and healthy, we would very much like to continue our relationship with you and your office. We were hoping that you (or a colleague) would be open to giving a series of presentation over the next school year. We were thinking of starting out the year with a presentation similar to that which you gave our students and then have a few follow-up sessions (throughout the year) that provide for additional hands on work. If you are interested or know of a colleague that would be interested, we are more than happy to write lovely formal letters that we can send to your director or future job prospects. In addition, the medical school has a summer program that they offer to pre-first year medical students to help them acclimate to the rigors that are soon to be in their future. We would love to have you present during the summer program, but we understand it is the summer and you may have other plans.

Please let me know if you are interested in doing any or all of the above. We'd love to have you back."

***From an attendee:***

The student said that she had found the information useful, and that she heard from other students that they found the presentation to be interesting and helpful. She requested copies of the information used in the presentation.

***Other:***

Cultural Linguistic Services was asked by the College of Medicine's Student Affairs Office to complete another presentation on the same material at a summer program for new medical students. In addition, three more hour long presentations are planned for students in the Fall.