

# CONDUCTING MULTILINGUAL INTERVIEWS FOR WIKINEWS

Sometimes, as a Wikinews reporter, you may get the opportunity to interview someone in person who does not speak the same language you do. This guide is a suggested best practice for this type of reporting based on experiences of other reporters.

1. When considering interviewing someone who speaks another language, determine who you can use in person to translate. There are generally two options: A translator you provide or a translator the person being interviewed provides. In most cases, the answer will be a person you provide.
2. Consider finding a transcriber who speaks the interviewer and interviewee's language. Do this before hand as it will impact on the spot translation.
3. If you are providing the translator, make sure you know how well they speak both languages in advance.
4. Give your translator a sense of the type of questions you will be asking in advance. If possible, consider giving them copies of questions in advance.
5. Consider asking the translator to refresh their knowledge of both languages in areas where there may be technical jargon like medical terms, biology terms, political terms, business terms, etc.
6. Get equipment to record the interview in audio format, even if the subject does not agree to have the audio published.
7. Before the interview, talk to your translator about how they translate. People have different levels of experience translating, and your translator may not have much experience. If your translator will also do the transcription, it is less important for them to provide complete on the spot translations for you. If you have to transcribe based only on the language you speak, ask for a more complete translation into your language.
8. Ask your translator to wait until you ask the question to translate the question. Ask them to wait until the person finishes answering to translate the answer. This is very important because it can impact the flow of the interview.
9. Kindly ask your translator not to answer questions for the subject even if they know the answer.
10. Remind the translator it is okay to ask you to repeat the question as many times as required to correctly convey meaning. As the interviewer, do not reformulate the question when trying to clarify it for the translator unless the translator asks you to.
11. When interviewing someone with a translator, talk to the person, not the translator.
12. Do not forget to thank the translator for their assistance.
13. When posting journalist notes on Wikinews, explain any issues with on the spot translations that may be apparent in the audio. This will assist reviewers in checking text to make sure they match.

## INTERVIEW ADVICE



Who will be translating?

Who will transcribe?

Record the interview.

Talk to the translator in advance about the interview and how to do on the spot translations.

Talk to the person you are interviewing.

Thank your translator.

Text by Laura Hale  
@purplepopple on Twitter  
laura.hale@wikinewsie.org

