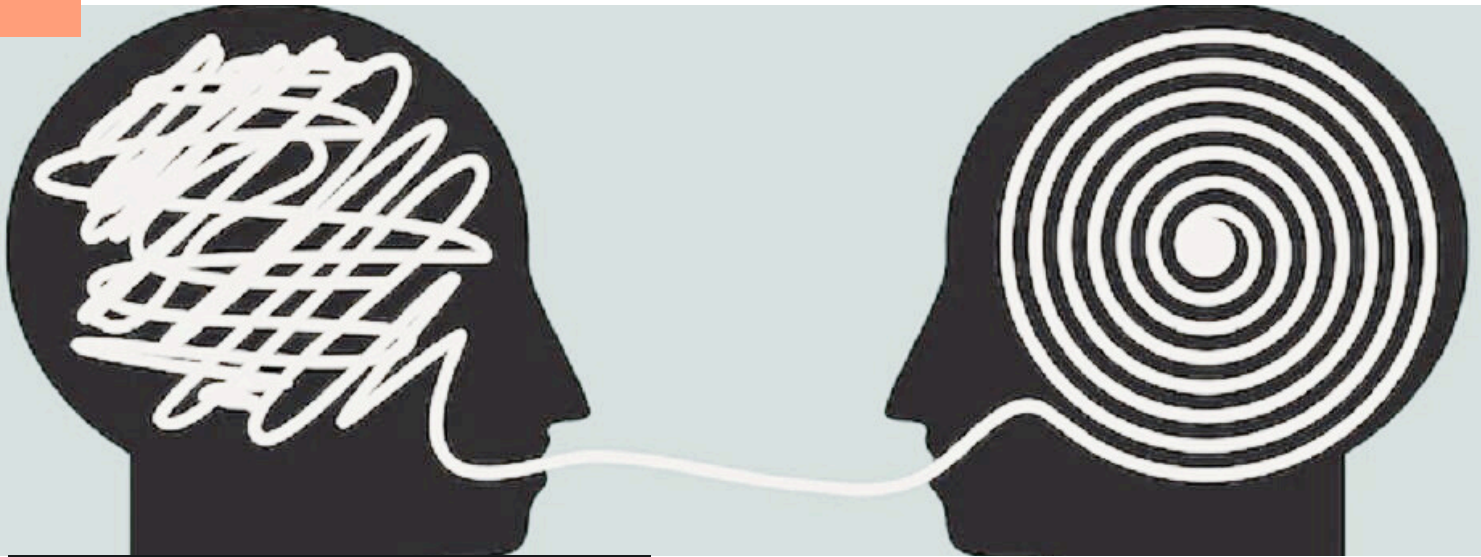




# THE MULTILINGUAL VOICE



## What's Inside ?

### EXTRA! EXTRA!

Breaking News! The Orange County Department of Education's Language Services Team has been recognized as a 2024 Golden Bell Award winner by the California School Boards Association (CSBA). Learn more inside this issue!

### GROWING UP INTERPRETING

Were you a child interpreter? Did you know it then? Most bilingual individuals today share a familiar story. However, most didn't grow up wanting to become interpreters or pursue a career in that field... If you want to expand your interpreting skills, read ahead and find different opportunities for interpreters.

### A YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 in review.

### TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Featuring Jorge Ibarra!

## WELCOME TO THE MULTILINGUAL VOICE

ALL YOUR LANGUAGE NEWS IN ONE PLACE

Happy New Year!

2025 has already started with a celebration of Language Services receiving the 2024 CSBA Golden Bell Award, an accomplishment for all who have helped this program grow and succeed. This award represents all of you, who work with purpose to provide language access to the community. We know that this recognition is because of our stakeholders, and we want to take this space to say THANK YOU.

We look forward to continuing this partnership in ensuring language access throughout the communities we serve!



## **OCDE Language Services Nominated for Prestigious Golden Bell Award**

The Orange County Department of Education's (OCDE) Language Services program has earned a nomination for the Golden Bell Award, a distinguished honor presented by the California School Boards Association (CSBA).

The Golden Bell Awards celebrate excellence in education by recognizing outstanding programs and governance practices across California. CSBA, a nonprofit organization representing nearly 1,000 educational agencies statewide, advocates for policies that support the well-being and education of over 6 million students. These awards highlight the innovative programs and governance decisions that meet the evolving needs of students.

### **A Journey of Vision and Growth**

In 2014, The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) Language Services program began as a two-person team with Program Specialist Natalia Abarca and Administrative Assistant Angela Del Rosario. With little prior knowledge of the field, Natalia embraced a journey of learning and exploration. What started as a small effort to provide language services to county programs quickly expanded to support school districts as well. As demand grew, Natalia recognized the need for short-term interpreters and began building a vision for a robust Language Services program. By 2019, the need for additional support became clear, and the team welcomed Jorge Ibarra. Later, in 2022, Stephanie Rock joined, bringing new energy to the growing program.

### **Building a Community for Bilingual Professionals**

Natalia's passion and dedication were evident in every project she undertook, inspiring everyone she worked with and laying the foundation for a thriving program. Over the years, OCDE Language Services spearheaded initiatives such as the Multilingual Consortium, the Multilingual Voice Newsletter, and the Interpreters and Translators Conference. These platforms have provided bilingual staff in education with opportunities to connect, learn, and grow.

### **A Milestone of Recognition**

The nomination for the Golden Bell Award is a testament to the hard work, vision, and dedication of the Language Services team. It reflects not only their achievements but also the strong community they have built along the way.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 presented new challenges, but Natalia's determination to serve bilingual staff never wavered. By pivoting to virtual offerings, the program expanded its reach, gaining national recognition. Her efforts ensured continued access to language services, professional development, and networking opportunities during a time of uncertainty. Through Natalia's leadership and the team's efforts, countless bilingual staff have grown both personally and professionally. Today, OCDE Language Services is a shining example of the power of passion and perseverance.

### **Join Us in Celebrating!**

Please join us in congratulating the OCDE Language Services team on this incredible achievement. Their dedication to language access, education, and community-building continues to inspire and make a difference statewide and beyond.

# Milestones of 2024

News +++ Information +++ News +++ Information +++ News +++ Information +++ News

## A Year of Linguistic Innovation and Celebration

2024 has been an eventful year for language enthusiasts, professionals, and advocates, with notable milestones and gatherings showcasing the richness and evolving dynamics of human languages.

- 1. International Mother Language Day (February 21, 2024)** This global observance highlighted the urgency of preserving endangered languages. Key events included the Living Tongues Institute's workshops on language documentation and Dr. Gregory Anderson's presentation on the threats to rare languages in regions like Papua New Guinea and Southeast Asia. These events underscored the link between language diversity and cultural identity.
- 2. European Day of Languages (September 26, 2024)** Organized by the European Commission, this annual celebration promotes multilingualism and language learning across Europe. With a theme emphasizing the unifying role of languages in a diverse continent, the event included activities such as language challenges and educational resources shared in schools and communities.
- 3. International Translation Day (September 30, 2024)** This worldwide event is celebrated by all language service providers, linguists, and localization experts. OCDE was proud to host this event with over 100 attendees celebrating the work they do.
- 4. Language Technology and AI Discussions** The localization and translation industries saw a surge in discussions on artificial intelligence. Conferences like LocWorld51 in Dublin (June 5-7) focused on the integration of AI into localization processes, exploring both its potential and challenges. The Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) conference in Valencia (April 21-23) also examined AI's role in reshaping language services.
- 5. Language-Specific Advocacy and Innovation** The "No Voice Left Behind" campaign by Living Tongues Institute continued its work in documenting and creating digital resources for underrepresented languages, benefiting over 400 language communities globally.
- 6. Conferences for Language Professionals** The year was rich with events catering to translators and interpreters. The BP24 Translation Conference in Sevilla (April 22-24), the 2nd Annual AAITE EduCon in Washington, D.C., the 8th Annual Interpreters and Translators Conference in Orange County, and the American Translators Association (ATA) 65th Annual Conference in Oregon (October 30-November 2) offered valuable insights into industry trends, including ethical practices and business strategies.

In addition to these highlights, 2024 demonstrated growing public interest in linguistic diversity and its role in global connectivity, fostering collaborations between researchers, educators, and language practitioners. As we move forward, such initiatives continue to spotlight the profound impact of language on human society. Let's go 2025!

# Growing up Interpreting

Embracing Multilingualism: From Childhood Interpreter to Professional Career

By: Stephanie Rock

As the child of immigrants, speaking multiple languages was second nature to me. I grew up navigating a “home” language, a “school” language, and a “native” language. My “home” language was reserved for conversations with my parents and grandparents, who lived with us, but I also found myself using it in the community when they needed help understanding or communicating. In those moments, I became their “interpreter,” bridging the language gap without realizing the significance of what I was doing.

My “school” language differed from my “native” language because I attended an all-American elementary school in a Central American country. English was the standard on campus, even during recess and lunch, enforced by strict rules that I now deeply appreciate. Thanks to this immersion, my English skills—like those of many peers in similar environments—are nearly indistinguishable from those of a native speaker. My “native” language, however, was acquired organically through exposure, community interactions, and the remarkable ability children have to absorb languages.

Being trilingual was simply part of who I was, and many with similar upbringings can relate. We became our families’ “interpreters” without fully understanding what that entailed. We conveyed messages back and forth until we were no longer needed, simply fulfilling a role that seemed natural. This was before professional interpreters became essential in fields like medicine, law, and, more recently, education.

Interestingly, interpreting was never part of my career aspirations. As a child, I dreamed of a desk job. In college, I leaned toward teaching and eventually worked as an instructional assistant to get a feel for the educational field. Fast forward 15 years, and I am doing what I love—without it ever being part of my original plan.

Discovering the professional world of interpretation and translation was a revelation. It opened doors to incredible opportunities and introduced me to talented, admirable individuals in the field. Thankfully, today’s children are no longer relied upon as interpreters as often as previous generations were. The professionalization of interpreting has empowered families to advocate for their language needs. Laws now prioritize language access in public and community services, and advances in localization ensure that language access services are more accurate than ever. If my story resonates with you, consider exploring opportunities in interpretation. Whether in legal, medical, or educational settings, the field offers a chance to turn a skill you’ve likely been honing since childhood into a fulfilling career. After all, if you’ve been interpreting for free for years, why not turn it into a profession?

<https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/pilot-program-address-court-interpreters-shortage>

<https://www.wric.com/hispanic-heritage-month/freedom-future-court-interpreter-explains-critical-role-in-ensuring-justice-for-all/>

<https://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org/>

<https://www.aaite.org>

# Language Services Team SPOTLIGHT

## Jorge Ibarra, Project Assistant

EXCLUSIVE

INTERVIEW



Jorge Ibarra was born in Orange, CA. His family is from Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico. He went to Mexico when he was 1 year old and lived there until he came back to Orange at age 16, where he has lived since. All his siblings were born in Mexico, where they still reside, along with his parents. He is married and the proud father of three teenage daughters. He has worked in education since he was 20 years old. He worked for Santa Ana Unified School District for 19 years before coming to OCDE.

### **What sparked your interest in working in the language services field?**

Jorge: My friends who worked as interpreters encouraged me to pursue this career. I went to school, and I enjoyed interpreting and translating. And I still enjoy doing it.

### **What languages or cultures have had the most significant influence on your career?**

Jorge: Spanish and Vietnamese

### **What does a typical day look like in your role?**

Jorge: crazy! Scheduling requests, dealing with requesters and interpreters, reviewing translations, and, of course, reports!

### **What's your favorite part of your work?**

Jorge: there is always something new, and you are always learning new things.

### **What's a professional achievement you're most proud of?**

Jorge: this work has helped me to grow in my emotional intelligence.

### **Are there any memorable challenges you've faced, and how did you overcome them?**

Jorge: Communicate clearly with others. However, I have improved a lot this year.

### **What's one fun fact about yourself that might surprise your coworkers?**

Jorge: I have been collecting music since I was a kid—music from various genres and languages. I have over 200,000 songs collected!

### **If you could instantly learn any language, which would it be and why?**

Jorge: French. I love the language.

### **What advice would you give someone just starting in the language services field?**

Jorge: Think about it for a while longer. No, just kidding! It is fun, and although it requires effort, the benefits are great.

### **What motivates you to do your best every day?**

Jorge: my wife and three daughters and our Yorkshire puppy, Kira.

### **What is your favorite book or movie?**

Jorge: right now? My favorite book is The Switch by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.

### **Coffee or tea?**

Jorge: tea.

### **Morning person or night owl?**

Jorge: Morning.

# MANAGER'S CORNER

What a Year!

2024 has been nothing short of extraordinary! From being nominated for the **Golden Bell Award** to celebrating its win, this year has been packed with incredible milestones. Highlights included our unforgettable **International Translation Day celebration** and the success of our **8th Annual Interpreters and Translators Conference**—each moment a testament to the dedication and passion of our community.

We owe it all to you, our valued stakeholders. Your support and trust are the driving forces behind our success and inspire us to continue striving for excellence in everything we do.

Want to relive the excitement? Visit *the CSBA website* to learn more about the Golden Bell Awards Ceremony  
Thank you for being a part of our journey!

## 5 Questions in 5 minutes

### What is your name and what do you do?

My name is Cesar Vargas and I'm the Language Specialist for the Santa Ana Unified School District.

### How long have you been working in this field?

I've been working at SAUSD since 1995, so almost three decades!

### What is your favorite thing about what you do?

I love rendering the precise words to the audience/readers so the message gets across in a smooth and effective way. Sometimes those words come out the first time; other times, the polishing and revision process yields the most gratifying results.

### What advice can you give those who are starting in this field?

Become curious about everything. Curiosity DIDN'T kill the cat; curiosity makes the best translators/interpreters. Be curious about language, about where that word came from, about why people say certain words or phrases, about how to say something more succinctly or more eloquently. Be curious about life and people, and see the magic that lies beneath this elucidating profession.

### Do you have any tips for success?

Sure. Focus on **SUCCESS**:

**S** - Sharpen Your Skills Continuously: The translation and interpretation field evolves with new terminology, cultural nuances, and technological advancements. Stay ahead by attending workshops and our annual Conference, obtaining certifications, and practicing your craft regularly.

**U** - Understand Cultural Contexts: Language is deeply tied to culture. To be effective, immerse yourself in the cultural nuances of the languages you work with, as this helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures accurate communication.

**C** - Cultivate Professional Networks: Join professional organizations such as the American Translators Association (ATA) or the American Association for Interpreters and Translators in Education (AAITE). Networking can lead to mentorship opportunities, job referrals, and collaboration with peers.

**C** - Commit to Specialization: Specializing in a niche—legal, medical, educational, or literary translation—sets you apart. Expertise in a specific field enhances your credibility and enables you to charge premium rates.

**E** - Embrace Technology: Master tools like CAT software (e.g., SDL Trados, MemoQ), machine translation post-editing, and AI. Staying tech-savvy boosts efficiency and keeps you competitive in a tech-driven market.

**S** - Stay Organized and Professional: Manage your time effectively, meet deadlines, and maintain clear communication with clients/coworkers. Use tools like Trello, Google Calendar, or project management software to stay on top of assignments.

**S** - Seek Feedback and Improve: Constructive feedback is a goldmine for growth. Review your work critically, seek input from colleagues, and implement improvements. Growth-minded professionals excel over time.

# TRENDING WORDS TO TRANSLATE

- **BFR:** An acronym commonly used on social media to mean “be serious” or “be for real”
- **Delulu:** A term that originated in the K-pop community and is short for "delusional"
- **Boujee:** An American slang word that means rich, luxurious, special, or fancy
- **Bussin':** An American slang word that means amazing or really good
- **Drip:** An American slang word that means stylish or sophisticated clothes or appearance
- **Salty:** An American slang word that means to overreact

---

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Oxford Word of the Year 2024 is...

**Brain rot (n.)** Supposed deterioration of a person’s mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as a result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging. Also: something characterized as likely to lead to such deterioration.

### Why ‘brain rot’?

After over 37,000 votes, worldwide public discussion, and analysis of our language data, we have named ‘brain rot’ as our Word of the Year for 2024.

Our experts noticed that ‘brain rot’ gained new prominence this year as a term used to capture concerns about the impact of consuming excessive amounts of low-quality online content, especially on social media. The term increased in usage frequency by 230% between 2023 and 2024.

The first recorded use of ‘brain rot’ was found in 1854 in Henry David Thoreau’s book *Walden*, but has taken on new significance as an expression in the digital age.

Source: [Oxford University Press](#)

---

## FUN FACTS

- The most commonly used letter in the English alphabet is E
- Dreamt is the only word in the English language that ends in mt
- The first letters of the months July through November spell JASON
- There are only 4 words in the English language which end in ‘dous’: hazardous, horrendous, stupendous, and tremendous
- The oldest word in the English language is ‘town’
- The dot on top of the letter ‘i’ is called a tittle
- The first English dictionary was written in 1755



## The Language Services Team

**Natalia Abarca, Program Specialist**

nabarca@ocde.us

714-966-4437

**Jorge Ibarra, Project Assistant**

jibarra@ocde.us

714-966-4394

**Stephanie Rock, Project Assistant**

srock@ocde.us

714-966-4429

**Angela Del Rosario, Administrative Assistant III**

adelrosario@ocde.us

714-708-5899



arigato

Terima Kasih

spasibo

Grazie

谢谢

ขอบคุณ

kiitos

감사합니다



THANK YOU!

salamat

saum arkun

Gracias



شكراً

شكراً

obrigado

ARIGATOU  
ありがとう

धन्यवाद



DANKE



Mahalo