

“Speaking My Language”- Providing Government Information Services in Multiple Languages – Transcript of audio

Welcome back. Now I would like to introduce Amy Quinn for speakers of multiple languages who are they and how do we serve them?

Hello, everybody. Welcome to this session of counsel. This is brought to you by the unique populations and underserved communities and federal depository libraries working group. I share this program with Alan Wang. And from our working group meetings and reports, one of the things we learned during our past year is how little we know about speakers of other languages and how we serve them as depository librarians. One of the things we did is we conducted a survey of depository coordinators, many of you completed that survey. We reached out to coordinators as well as other librarians who could help us understand more. So we invited some of these speakers to come and talk to us to tell us how do they reach their communities and how do they handle non-native English speakers. We have four wonderful speakers. Alex and others will share their thoughts and insights with us. I will not speak too long as I want you to hear from them but I want to share the nuggets we have learned in our working group report and you can read these and I want to go through a couple of things we have learned. I want to reassure you that some of the things and we will explore these and further detail over next year. GPO does not have the authority to go and tell other agencies that they must publish in other languages, as much as we would like to get other publications from GPO in multiple languages, we can only do that by asking the other agencies themselves to do that and that's where we used the power we have as depository coordinators. I have frequently called agencies and said, will you please get me this, for example here in Yuma, I need things in Spanish. Other places I have worked in Washington state I frequently needed them in Korean or Chinese or in Russian or something like that. We also, for information Ed Barry larger Number of levels especially for children and to find things, I for example need right now textbooks written in Spanish about the history of Yuma, Arizona, from the perspective of both the Mexicans as well as the native populations that founded Yuma. That would be helpful. Sure each of us have stories like that. So this is what this program will help us understand. With that we came up with three questions we asked the speakers today to consider and each will address these in a different way these are the three questions we've asked them to look at in their presentations. I am not going to read them to you. But just to have these in your mind as you think about it and think about in your own libraries how you might want to serve your non-native speakers if you have those in your communities. But you might also have them virtually in our communities without even realizing it. And now I'm going to turn it over to our first speaker who I just don't remember now who is Alex. Let me turn it over to Alex. I apologize for going back. Alex?

All right. Hello. Hello, everybody. Thanks for coming to see us today. My name is Alex Osterberg and I'm a reference librarian here at the national public library in Nashville, New Hampshire. I've been the depository coordinator for about four years here. The second largest behind Manchester and we've been public since 1971. Nashua Public is one of the more diverse communities in the state. So we recognize this fact and we have made a lot of effort to reflect this in our programming and how we do outreach and all of the services we provide. In our most strategic plan we had a big emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion and really, it all comes back for us doing more outreach and understanding what the different communities that are underserved in our community need from us.

Next slide. Thank you. So when I pondered the questions from Amy and the survey, some of the things I thought about, how does our library meet the needs of non-english speakers. First we recognize there was a gap so I think that is kind of the first thing that needs to happen release for us. We recognize that there was this gap serving the underserved communities I think the outreach into these communities is

probably the way for us to discover what we can do better in some of the things we have here in the library we have different world languages. We have probably one of the larger Spanish selections in our state and recently we have upgraded the staff iPads to have translation software that we can use on the floor when we are talking to customers who have a language barrier with us it has worked really well at least for me. I had a customer and she just wanted to know that some Alex, we lost your audio.

Sorry. I leaned on the button. So we are just trying to bring more outreach to the underserved communities. We have iPads for translation apps for staff to use with library patrons. Our citizenship material, we kind of put that in a prominent area with our displays. And you know that it's kind of an important thing we try to promote as an important material and resource that we have here. We have different language conversation groups at different times over the course of the year. The more popular one is coffee and conversation where we have members from underserved communities that can come in and practice English with other people who are interested in practicing English. There are different conversation groups that we have had that are specifically are those other languages other than English. Alex, it really quickly could you back up just a bit. When your audio cut out we did not hear the story you are telling about the patient who needed translation help. Could you recap that?

Sure. Sorry about that, everybody. I had a nice interaction with the customer. She was having a very hard time communicating with us. She was just asking us if she could browse the books anywhere in the library. And we were not understanding what she was asking and she wasn't understanding what we cannot tell her. The software helped us communicate. It is pretty much the standard translation apps you can get on an iPad or one of the android devices. I was able to communicate with her and she was able to go and happily browse the stack and it was just a nice moment that I had with her. So, looking back, we also have language learning databases. Right now we have transparency language right now we are looking to switch into mango. That is an important thing to offer as well. And as depository coordinators you can encourage your material selectors to consider adding materials and other languages to our selection profile. I know for us and for our library the selectors are all over the building and it's just a matter of communicating what you find as depository coordinators what is available and that the people selecting the material know but they can add to our selection profile and that time of the year comes around. So my other question. Do I have any ideas of what services could be provided to assist on English speakers in my community? I think they are looking for access to forms, sometimes and just wanting to use the library, and you know tools to help them navigate their lives here and I think you will keep hearing this more throughout this presentation. The outreach is probably the most important thing to start off with and that will help you discover what they communities are needing and every community is probably going to have a different need and outreach is probably the biggest thing and it will and that my time on that.

[Captioners transitioning]

I'm not a depository librarian, my library has Sinclair is in that role. Today I'm going to speak to you about the Hawaiian Pacific collection, what we have done to support non-English speakers. I will also talk a little bit more about the language situation here in Hawaii. I will give you some context of the place I get to live in and work. The arrow points to my library and I work on the island of a Wahoo you can see where that is in relation to other islands in Hawaii. Okay. What they do to support non-English speakers, we have a near comprehensive collection on the subject of Hawaii and the Pacific. Where the most conference of collection in the world a Pacific Indigenous just. Many of these languages are endangered or semi-endangered from Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. In the mid-2010, my colleague, Eleanor Collette a project called making Pacific languages discoverable. If you search that on the web you will find some really great articles and information about that project. In this project it was designed to enhance the catalog record, more than 11,000 items in our collection with the language, linguistic code ISO 639-3. That allows patrons to search in our catalog for specific languages, specific

Pacific languages by utilizing this code. Prior to this project Eleanor said I don't even know how many languages are represented in my collection because they do not have unique language codes on the record. That is a really wonderful project that she worked on. What we are doing now is digitizing an increasing awareness of materials published in more specific languages. There are more historic materials and a lot of them are being utilized by many scholars and students and educators. The Hawaiian community in particular to discover new things about Hawaii's history and reshape the historical narratives about Hawaii's past by incorporating more Hawaiian perspective. What we are doing our collection is trying to bring more awareness to the different kinds of materials written in Hawaiian language. For instance a lot of focus has been on newspapers in the Hawaiian language. We have one of the largest depositories in the world, we don't but in terms of Hawaii we have one of the largest depositories of Hawaiian language newspapers between 1884 and 1948. That is 1 to 2 million pages. There also government documents with letters and a whole bunch of other types of materials. We are also working on a project to add more place names to the catalog to increase the discoverability of materials and the Hawaiian collection. Patrons are looking for very specific places in Hawaii and often times our records are not adequately described to have the specific place names they are looking for. We are looking at each item and trying to identify the places, all the places that particular item covers and adding that into the records. There is still so much more to do to support non-English speakers. We can have our catalog in Hawaiian which is not right now. We can toggle back and forth. We can have more Hawaiian language subject headings which is not there. there is still so much to do and it's always a conversation of resources, a conversation of who is going to do the work, how we are going to get more people to do that work. That is what we do. Going to talk more about the language situation in Hawaii. Hawaii is unique in that we have two official languages. Hawaiian and English. That is because we have a unique history. In the 1800s and before Hawaiian was the language of the land in the kingdom and in 1893 the Hawaiian kingdom was forcibly and illegally overthrown by the United States. In 1896 Hawaiian was banned from public schools. The medium of instruction with English. In 1898 Hawaii was made and occupied U.S. territory under mass protest and no formal treaty. In the 1900s this began a shift of language in Hawaii and many generations of Hawaiians began growing up not knowing their mother tongue. Including my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents and myself. I grew up not knowing Hawaiian. That is why Hawaiian is an official image of the state because number one, it was feeling which of the land before this history and it's a language that needs to be spoken and revitalized for us today. In 1959 Hawaii became the 50th state and in 1970 the Hawaii State Constitution is amended adding Hawaiian and English as the official images of the state of Hawaii. Added this picture because it speaks to the dichotomy we have a feeling which. On one hand it's really beautiful that we have Hawaiian as an official language along with English but as you move closer towards urbanization and the hotels you can see the history is not as pretty, it's complicated. Is entangled with a lot of things. There is a lot of work to revitalize the Hawaiian language. In Hawaiian we have this proverb in language there is life, in language there is death. Meaning when you speak, your words have power and those words can bring life and bring death. And another interpretation of this, it speaks to the idea that if language is spoken there is life to it. It brings life, it brings culture, it carries people. When a language is not spoken it brings death to culture and death to people. We bring stuff to a language. There are a lot of efforts nowadays to revitalize the Hawaiian language. In 1986 the law banning Hawaiian language in public schools was reversed and in 1986 again the Hawaiian language immersion program was established. In 2016 out of about 1.2 million people in Hawaii, 18,000 spoke Hawaiian. 1.4%. That is a faraway number from the 1800s when 100% of people in Hawaii spoke Hawaiian. We have so much more to do to revitalize the language. 2023 Hawaiian still remains as a severely endangered language. Here is another Hawaii saying. Recognizing what is right, what is the right thing to do, what can we do? I have more questions than answers and I am a Hawaiian collection librarian, not a library coordinator or government documents librarian, I do have interest in Hawaiian government documents government

documents pertaining to Hawaii but I don't know the formalities and structures that you folks are working so I have some questions for us to think about. The first question is how can the GPO be more inclusive of severely ending good endangered languages like Hawaiian? I pulled that from the strategic plan because one of the values is to be more inclusive so how can we tap into that value? The next question, what can be done given the GPO's role and responsibility to support the revitalization efforts of indigenously bridges? I know the GPO cannot tell a particular agency to publish something in Hawaiian so given their role and responsibilities, what can be done? And then, how can supporting these needs help the GPO in its strategic goals to keep America informed? For this last question I think there is a unique opportunity that if the GPO is paying attention to the importance of the revitalization of foreign language, there are certain things they can do to stimulate interest in government documents and the work they do. Say for instance they made a catalog and toggle it to Hawaiian. That would make the news in Hawaii. GPO has a toggled catalog and Hawaiian, everybody needs to go look at the GPO catalog. Whenever big institutions are big corporations organizations embrace Hawaiian embrace the need to revitalize Hawaiian, and always makes the news. For instance when duo lingo said they would have Hawaiian as a language option, let me the news. When Disney opened their resort here said were only going to have bar where the staff speaks Hawaiian, that made the news. There are ways to remote the work you guys do by leveraging and supporting the need of revitalizing Hawaiian language. The less they don't talk about, I did not want to end without mentioning this, it's really important. This is a table of languages spoken at home 2016 to 2020. This is quite alarming to see that 11% of Hawaii's population speaks English less than very well. 1/10 of Hawaii's population cannot access government documents because they speak English less than very well. Out of that we have speakers of these particular languages were more than 40% of them know English less than very well. 40% of the speakers are not able to read English-language documents very well. That is quite alarming. You will see in Hawaii, we have a lot of Samoan, Hawaiian, Asian languages represented. We have a lot of diversity in the language needs here in Hawaii. In light of our population isn't able to access government documents because of feeling which barrier. That is all I have to share with you. With that going to turn it over to the next speaker that will be Jane. I don't know how to switch it for Jane.

I've got to. Can everyone hear me?

The volume is a little low but yes.

I will turn it up. Switch to my headphones so you will miss the background noise. Today I have a couple groups of students enjoying themselves so I switched to headphones so you will be spared the background noise. Let me switch to my first slide. You gave me the perfect lead-in to the first thing I would like to talk about which is what the Census Bureau knows and publishes about speakers of other languages in the United States. I think this is important because without the knowledge of what languages are being spoken, where they are being spoken, for not the work of the other population committees it would be much more difficult. The Census Bureau publishes a document called languages other than English spoken in the United States. The latest version of that was from data in 2019, I have the links to that publication in an abridged version in the slide. Overall, people who speak a language other than English at home have tripled from 1980 to 2019. Currently about one in five residents of the United States speak a language other than English at home. I'm going to use my personal experience to illustrate that a little bit.

My husband and I arrived in Puerto Rico 43 years ago. That makes me past retirement age. When we retired early arrived here there were two of us and the only language we spoke was English. We now have two children, daughter in law's and six grandchildren. That means the language spoken in our home is both English and Spanish. I suspect we are not unique in that and obviously the increase of those who speak the language at home as defined by the Census Bureau illustrates that. If you other interesting facts from the Census Bureau publication, Chinese, Vietnamese, tagalong and Arabic speakers are more likely to be naturalized U.S. citizens the not U.S. citizens. Spanish speakers are the

least likely to be naturalized U.S. citizens than not U.S. citizens. In 2000 19.51% of those who speak Tagalog and 54% who speak Chinese hold a bachelor's degree compared to 17% of those who speak Spanish. I think this illustrates the diversity in terms of language speakers, highlights the need for multiple language materials at a number of different levels. I think what Alex said about the population also adds to that. This table from the Census Bureau highlights the five most frequently spoken languages other than English in the United States. I freely admit I was surprised when I saw this. I expected Spanish to be on the top of the list. I expected Chinese to have a significant number of speakers. I did not expect the Tagalog, Vietnamese and Arabic to be the other three languages of the five most frequently spoken languages other than English. I would like to spend a little time now, I'm going to absolutely add to what was said in terms of my experiences from the field in the last 16 years of dealing with government documents. It is difficult sometimes to communicate with speakers of other languages. My experience I believe in Puerto Rico is probably unique. I can safely say that 100% my users with two exceptions and 16 years have been native speakers of Spanish. I speak Spanish fluently but it is still my second language. One of the things I found that I have had to do is build personal trust with my users. That includes students, community members, faculty members because we are an academic institution and by building personal trust I helped to overcome the distrust of governments that many of my users have. A long history in talking about Hawaii's experience, the long history of being a territory of United States has contributed to a significant amount of mistrust of government information. Building personal trust in a personal relationship with my users helps to overcome that. Learning about the culture in the area of your library and very obviously I would say that any library in the system has and serves unique cultures, only about those is useful. If you can at least know some basic words and phrases in the languages that are spoken by the people who use your library, try to hire some staff members. That speak those languages or community members who know those languages, you can reach out to them and I will give what seems like but seems like for a Spanish speaking country, a strange use of those other people, on one occasion, we have had exchange students from China and one of those students needed government information and I could not speak to him in Chinese. His English and Spanish were both limited so I reached out to the owner of the Chinese restaurant that we frequent and asked if he could possibly come in and help me translate to talk to the student. He did so and it worked well. That is a bit strange that I had that happen in Chinese in an area that speaks Spanish but it is an example of how you can look for someone who speak the language and have them help you. Media outreach is vital. I cannot emphasize that enough. Outreach into your community, in my case I do it with schools, faculty members, with students on campus, I also have contacts within the municipal government to give me information about craft fairs, cooking and nursing homes, car shows, church events and I use those opportunities to take brochures and to take along my computer and demonstrate websites which do offer information particularly in my case Spanish. That get the word out. There is some information that exists and there is a willing person to help with government documents. Other possible things to do, after a disaster, served as a center. Allow people come in and help them fill out the report to FEMA. That gave me community as horrible as hurricane Maria was a gave me outreach into the community that I might not have had I have had nursing students to community service and frequently that takes place in nursing homes, hospitals and I have sent them out with health information for the population they are serving. Those are just some concrete examples of outreach. Again, with Alex I cannot emphasize enough the community outreach is vital. With that, I will see if I can pass the ball to Deborah. Okay.

Can I grab it?

See if you have it.

I do. There we go. Okay. I am Deborah and the data service librarian at the University of North Texas. My version of the presentation today will be a little different than the others. Maybe not so much off-track as I feared it would be having heard them now. I'm really appreciative of the perspectives that

each before me have given. When I was asked about interest in participating in this to be totally frank and upfront about it, I responded by saying are you sure you meant me because I don't have a lot of experience with presenting and helping patrons with non-English materials. The story of how they came to me for this was when I will get to in a minute. Me tell you about the University of North Texas first. We are in Denton, Texas which is north of Dallas. Denton has a population of 140,000 and UNT serves a little over 44,000 students. I forgot to put the citation. The breakdown is that this is from 2021, in Denton about 14% of children, 20% of adults at home speak language which is other than English. At unity which is a Hispanic serving institution about 25% of the student population is Latin X. There is not a lot of information on the unity website and among the people I reached out to about what non-English services we offer. When the others reached out to me about this said let me see if I can find somebody better suited to do this and would maybe be available and no one was interested. I will try to look into it and find out what I can. What I found out was that unity in the library doesn't have a whole lot that we offer. A lot of that is because it doesn't appear to be a great need for it. For those of you who haven't read the working groups report which I do recommend, there were a lot of commonalities between the answers that were given by respondents with what we were finding it you and T. We don't specifically have services for non-English speakers. We do have translators at the desk and there are pocket translators that patrons can check out. Most of our services have to do with our international office and for collection development. They only collect research and language as you and he has a program apart from a small collection of other materials. As far as government documents go, there are not often a lot of requests for information in non-English speakers or any kind of English capacity. Like many of the respondents of the report, or if you I should say, it was difficult to tell if it's because there's not a need for it here at the University or if it's because they simply don't know the services are available to ask for. One respondent in the survey mentioned specifically people don't know that these are things that they can go to. I found that to be the case in my experience broadly. Let me talk about myself. I am half Korean, we came to the U.S. when I was about five. My mother was a stay-at-home parent so even though I had another parent who was English-speaking and who did take care of lot of things I do have a great deal of the same experience as that a lot of immigrant children do is that we are often the person on the phone translating adult stuff, things about bills in the IRS and how do you fill out this part of the census. A lot of that my father was able to take care of when he was alive but now that he has passed on I continue as an adult to serve in that capacity for my mom doing a translation and trying to explain what these things are and what the news she is hearing is, what does this law translate to, what is this specific term in Korean and what does it mean to her. I have a lot of perspective in that regard to bring to the table. The other thing I want to mention or two other things, for three years as a diversity respite after graduating I did a lot of work in the EDI library and in that time I worked with the project where we worked on the national form grant trying to survey government information. I mention all that to say that although I do not have a lot of perspective to bring in the way that Jane or Alex or Kapena does working directly with patrons who are non-English speaking, I do have a lot of perspective on being someone on the other end of that in a lot of ways. Looking up citizenship information for my mother's citizenship test, trying to help her study before the Internet and government websites are not what they are today. I have experience with the creators of the survey who are trying to reach out to users of government information, librarians or end-users or faculty or students, patrons, people in the community who may hear the words government information and not clock that it is something that they are using and that they do have experience in being interested in. Apart mentioned about some Indigenous folks who participated in a workshop I believe, the national archives. [lost audio]

I think that perspective which was included in the report but for the working group discussions like this and conversations would also be incredibly helpful because I suspect and have heard from some other people when I rephrase Mike query that what's happening is a lot of people here, government

documents, that's not me, I don't deal with it even though they very much do deal with helping the public with things like taxes, IRS, census, all kinds of government information because of the language and the ways we categorize people and categorize librarians in their job roles. That might be excluding people, that would be very important to provide additional feedback. I have some other suggestions, it's going to be really important in this thing to get the perspective of library members who are in the communities they serve. So many of us aren't. There are a precious few people of color, people who are immigrants and have the immigrant experience who speak languages other than English who then become library workers and are able to work with members of the community that they represent. That is a specific perspective that I think the working group, as they continue going forward would really benefit from. As to how to get that perspective, I think you have to step out of the typical working group, it will be a lot of extra legwork. Also of course I mentioned several times, the process for becoming a librarian, first the non-library workers who would maybe not be CDs emails or the surveys will be queried. For helping in non-English speaking capacities. They are very much the front-line workers and their perspective should be included. That is me, I have questions and to reiterate the question, my question is this working group more about specifically depository libraries M GPO has the ability to make recommendations and focused only on depository librarians who work directly with GPO in this capacity or is the purpose to inform broader information about government non-English information and patrons in general. I will turn over.

Turn it to me for a minute. This is Aimee , I want to first thank you all Deborah, Alex, Kapena and Jane, you all brought up X amazing issues, that's why we brought you to this working group. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Deborah, yes, exactly what we hoped you would bring, including the questions you and Kapena brought us both the questions we need to be talking about. I wish you could've seen me through your presentations with a huge grin on my face. You are exactly right. You are the kind of person we need to hear from and we recognize this. We were saying we need to get out there and we wanted to work with people outside, we are confined by our charge to work within the FLP. We are hoping we can work with people outside of focus groups with non-FDL P but users and hear from users. All of us wear hats that go beyond. This is her question and answer time and I'm going to turn it over. Cindy and Rob are tracking the chat, I will turn it over.

I am watching it as well.

Quickly I wanted to respond. You alluded to the same he but we are confined and we started with the library's, as we started looking at this question we realized it would grow larger. I hope is we can do a deeper dive into some focus groups get information related to a. That can be something to inform libraries that are not part of the depository. The whole idea is that it will ultimately reach other libraries. Are starting with these libraries because that is our charge.

That's great to know, thank you.

I'm not sure if Cindy and Rob are reading the questions.

This is Cindy. There was a question in the chat from Tom who was responding to Deborah talking about how wonderful the UMT depository is but his question is what sort of pocket translators do you have?

I don't know if you can see further down, pocket talk translator is the brand. I will put a link in the chat momentarily.

I see suggestions about going to a form of a LL together information.

Let me expand on that a little bit. We have had people go to different conferences and some of those are reported on in the report, we will be at ALA and AALL. There are a lot of different programs and opportunities to meet with different sections and divisions of those organizations where we can glean some more information. We have reached out to different organizations in the course of our investigative work so far. That is not to say we are done with it. It's always a continuing effort. Thank you.

I see a question from Sarah, the Pueblo website, part of GPO and they have a lot of consumer information guides for people in Spanish.

The Pueblo site is excellent. Any individual agency on the agency site, if you look for your publications list, you will find there are publications in Spanish. As well as one's with Pueblo.

There is also an appendix in the working group's report. Appealing to the report in the chat a little bit earlier. Jane put together a nice list of some of those websites. Major ones that have a lot of different language options for users.

It looks like Kelly is telling us we are out of time. Do we keep going or are we done?

My apologies. We have to wrap up because our next presenter group is about to come in. Thank you all for presenting into the attendees, thank you for your time as well. We will be back at 3:30 Eastern time in 15 minutes. Thank you.

Thank you everyone, great presentation.

Kelly Willie chat be saved?

Yes. Thank you.

I will go through it also to make sure we answered all of the questions, those we did not answer we will do that and make those answers available.