



Investigación

Recibido: 10/01/2022 --- Aceptado: 12/04/2022 --- Publicado: 08/06/2022

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTER  
OF INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION IN  
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN PERU DURING  
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC / LA  
IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE LA CENTRAL DE  
INTERPRETACIÓN Y TRADUCCIÓN EN  
LENGUAS INDÍGENAS U ORIGINARIAS EN EL  
PERÚ DURANTE LA PANDEMIA POR LA  
COVID-19

   **Claudia E. Sánchez Tafur**  
*University of Alcalá, Spain*  
[claudiasancheztafur@gmail.com](mailto:claudiasancheztafur@gmail.com)

  **Gerardo M. García Chinchay**  
*Cesar Vallejo University, Peru*  
[gerardomanuelunfv@gmail.com](mailto:gerardomanuelunfv@gmail.com)

**How to cite this article? / ¿Cómo citar este artículo?**

Sánchez Tafur, C., García Chinchay, G. (2022). The implementation of the center of interpreting and translation in indigenous languages in Peru during the COVID-19 pandemic *FITISPos International Journal*, 9(1), 209-233. <https://doi.org/10.37536/FITISPos-IJ.2023.1.9.328>

**ABSTRACT:** The COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled the importance of proper communication for public health, especially in multilingual contexts where speakers of minority languages have not had proper access to information in their languages, like indigenous peoples. Different approaches have been taken at national, regional, and local levels in this regard. In Peru, the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the need for a government-driven provision of translation and interpreting in indigenous languages, especially in health care services. To that end, the Peruvian Government created a Centre of Interpreting and Translation in Indigenous Languages, a leading experience in the region. This paper aims at providing an overview of its implementation process through the analysis of the regulations behind it and the provided assistance a year after being launched to try to identify the possible implications of such implementation on how public service interpreting and translation in indigenous languages can move towards an articulated model of government-driven language services.

**KEY WORDS:** Public Service Translation and Interpreting; Indigenous Languages; Language Policies; COVID -19

**RESUMEN:** La pandemia por la covid -19 ha revelado la importancia de una comunicación apropiada para la salud pública, en especial en contextos multilingües en los que los hablantes de lenguas minoritarias no han tenido acceso a la información en sus lenguas, como en el caso de los pueblos indígenas. Diferentes enfoques se han tomado a nivel nacional, regional y local en este sentido. En Perú, la pandemia por la COVID-19 realzó la necesidad de la provisión gubernamental de servicios de traducción e interpretación en lenguas indígenas, en especial en los servicios de salud. Para ello, el gobierno peruano creó una Central de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias, una experiencia pionera en la región. Este trabajo busca brindar un repaso de su implementación a través del análisis de las regulaciones detrás y las atenciones brindadas a un año de su lanzamiento para intentar identificar las posibles implicaciones de dicha implementación en el avance de la traducción e interpretación en los servicios públicos en lenguas indígenas hacia un modelo articulado de servicios lingüísticos liderados por el estado.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Traducción e interpretación en los servicios públicos; lenguas indígenas; políticas lingüísticas; COVID-19.

**Information on author contribution:** Claudia E. Sanchez Tafur is the lead author in charge of conducting the research, compiling the theoretical framework and main data, and drafting the paper; Gerardo M. García Chinchay has contributed to the development of the work with insights related to linguistic public policies, legal frameworks, and additional normative sources, as well as with the drafting of the analysis and the revision of contents.

**We would like to acknowledge the Directorate of Indigenous Languages of the Ministry of Culture of Peru for providing the authors access to information about the Center of Interpreting and Translation in Indigenous Languages.**

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a health, social, and yet disproportionated threat to humankind as vulnerable populations, among which the indigenous peoples are, have been alarmingly more stricken. The United Nations identified COVID-19 as “a new threat to the health and survival of indigenous peoples” due to factors that go from mal or undernutrition to lack of access to sanitation, clean water, and healthcare services, as well as discrimination and stigma in the said and other public settings (Lane and Cerda, 2020, p. 1).

By May 2020, even though there was not enough healthcare data recorded by ethnicity, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) referred to many news reports that showed that the coronavirus infection rate of indigenous people was much higher than the non-indigenous population (Lane and Cerda, 2020). In this scenario, many UN mechanisms urged States to fulfill their human rights obligations and ensure the well-being and protection of indigenous peoples, emphasizing the need to provide information in indigenous languages, and to take measures according to the socio-cultural background of indigenous peoples through prior consent and joint work, as far as possible, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2020), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the United Nations (2020), or the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020). In Latin America, different approaches were taken, with diverse degrees of articulation (García et al, 2020). And, in the Peruvian case, actions were taken and coordinated mainly through the Ministry of Culture. One vital step was the creation of the *Central de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias – CIT* [Center of Interpreting and Translation in Indigenous Languages (CIT, by its Spanish acronym)] so that these services were provided to healthcare institutions and other public services responsible for the indigenous peoples’ well-being.

The CIT was officially created on September 4th, 2020 through *Supreme Decree n° 012-2020-MC*, as it was appointed as the center in charge of the implementation of telephone interpreting, on-site interpreting, and translation services within the Ministry of Culture (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020b). A year after its official creation and implementation, it has provided services in 40 indigenous languages and their variants (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021b), such coverage in public services sets an unprecedented experience in the provision of translation and interpreting services in indigenous languages led by a government in Latin America (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021b).

Therefore, this paper aims at providing an overview of the CIT’s implementation process through the analysis of the regulations behind it and the provided assistance to date to try to identify the possible implications of such implementation on how Public Service Interpreting and Translation in indigenous languages can move towards an articulated model of government-driven language services.

## 2. An overview of indigenous languages and linguistic rights in Peru

As González (2013) describes, the last decades have seen changes that seek to grant greater rights to minorities, including linguistic rights. Countries have adjusted or implemented language policies and different forces have come to play: social, political, economic, and legal. With the evolution of the concept of minorities and linguistic rights, translation –term within the author includes interpreting– to minority languages has also drawn attention (pp. 405-406).

Indigenous peoples' rights are collected in the *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* of the International Labor Organization, enacted in 1989, also known as the ILO 169 Convention, and currently under force. This Convention constitutes the major international instrument that deals with the rights of indigenous peoples (González, 2013, p. 414). Also, it is considered a precedent for the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the United Nations* proclaimed in 2007, the *UNDRIP*. These two declarations, *the ILO 169 Convention and the UNDRIP*, recognize the right of indigenous peoples to preserve and develop their languages (Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe [FILAC], 2020).

On the other hand, linguistic rights took longer to be globally addressed and it was not until 1996 that the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* was proclaimed. This declaration addresses the collective rights of linguistic communities and groups, as well as the individual rights of their members in private and public environments (Follow-up Committee of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, 1998). González points out that translation would be derived from these rights; however, he also remarks that linguistic rights pertinent to translation must be realized through state policy (2013, p. 407).

Both indigenous peoples' and linguistic rights have been differently and unevenly ratified and addressed at continental, national, and regional levels. In Peru, where 48 indigenous languages are spoken and whose speakers represent 16% of the population over 3 years old –that is 4 million 477 people– according to the *2017 National Census on Population and Housing* (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021c, p. 8), the issue of indigenous languages was partially addressed far back in 1975, when Quechua, just like Spanish, was declared an official language by *Decree-Law 21156*. Although it was not fully enforced, it is considered the first legal norm in Latin America to declare the officiality of an indigenous language (Zajíková, 2017; FILAC, 2020).

Therefore, it was not until the current Constitution of 1993 that Quechua, Aimara, and other indigenous languages were declared official in the regions where they are predominant, as article 48 states (Zajíková, 2017). The Peruvian Constitution also addresses the prohibition of discrimination due to language –among other reasons like origin, race, sex, religion, opinion, or economic condition–, and the right to speak one's mother tongue and to be provided with an interpreter before any public authority, in sections 2 and 19 of article 2. Additionally, the *ILO 169 Convention* has been ratified by Peru in 2011 through *Law*

29785. Despite these provisions, however, other normative measures needed to be taken so that they would be fully enforced.

Thus, the enactment of *Law 29735*, which *regulates the use, preservation, development, recovery, promotion, and dissemination of indigenous languages*, set the precedents in 2011 for a decade of major steps in the implementation of specific policies, like the *National Policy on Indigenous Languages, Oral Tradition and Interculturality* (PNLOTI, by its Spanish acronym), which was first issued in 2017 and has been recently updated in 2021. This policy identifies and addresses the public problem of the “limited exercise of linguistic rights of speakers of indigenous languages” (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021c, p. 11) by establishing specific services to be provided by the government, among which translation and interpreting are included.

As a result, the Peruvian government, through the Ministry of Culture, has trained indigenous translators and interpreters since 2012, with 14<sup>1</sup> training programs developed to date; additionally, it has implemented a national registry of them in 2015, also known as ReNITLI, by its Spanish acronym. To date, 427 translators and interpreters in 37 out of the 48 Peruvian indigenous languages <sup>2</sup>have been incorporated into the ReNITLI (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021c, p. 56).

### 2.1. *The COVID-19 pandemic and the assurance of linguistic rights*

Even if normative tools related to indigenous and linguistic rights mentioned earlier were already leading to specific measures and advances, the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the need for the Peruvian government to communicate with indigenous peoples in their languages, as the regulations by the UN and the Inter-American Court on Human Rights for the protection of minority populations referred, in which governments, private sector bodies, and NGOs were called to facilitate access to information and improving health responses for indigenous peoples (García et al, 2020).

Different approaches were taken in the Latin American region; and, in Peru, measures at central, regional, and local levels were established by the *Legislative Decree N° 1489*, which was issued on May 10th, 2020, and aimed at protecting indigenous people from COVID-19 to meet their basic needs, provide information, implement systems of early warning as well as specific means of protection for indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of the PNLOTI, the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of training program has taken place. This information was provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages of the Ministry of Culture of Peru, division in charge of organizing the said training programs.

<sup>2</sup> Since the publication of the PNLOTI, 81 indigenous translators and interpreters have been incorporated to the ReNITLI, resulting in a total of 508. This information was provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages of the Ministry of Culture of Peru, division in charge of running the said registry.

Since the publication of the PNLOTI, 81 indigenous translators and interpreters have been incorporated to the ReNITLI, resulting in a total of 508. This information was provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages of the Ministry of Culture of Peru, division in charge of running the said registry.

Regarding assurance of linguistic rights and provision of information and assistance in indigenous languages, *Legislative Decree N° 1489* also sought to protect such rights at the individual and collective levels and to provide public services in indigenous languages (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020a). To meet those ends and others, translation and interpreting were identified as key services to be implemented, as we will explore furtherly in section 4.

### **3. Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT) as a government-driven service: provision and management**

Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT), also referred to as *community or social interpreting and translation*, has been defined in many ways by different authors in the last decades, due to its recent development as an area within translation studies. One comprehensive definition is the one provided by Valero and Gauthier (2010), based on Valero and Mancho's work: "communication with a specific audience that forms part of a cultural and linguistic minority group and whose unfamiliarity extends beyond mere language, to the host society's system of values, practices, and representations" (p. 3).

PSIT has not been developed or practiced equally around the world. As Pöchhacker (2004) points out when defining community interpreting –remarks that we deem can be extended to translation in public services as well– unlike other areas, PSIT has developed in an "uneven and dispersed" way due to "the great diversity of institutional settings, demographic and political circumstances, and regulatory environments in different countries" (p. 30).

Despite the uneven development of PSIT, however, Valero-Garcés (2019) states that it is a growing market, which faces specific difficulties due to asymmetrical communication contexts it faces. Ozolins (2000) points out that the "recent burgeoning" of this area is not an isolated phenomenon in countries of immigration, but in all countries where a need to communicate with a multilingual population arises through either increased immigration, asylum seeker flows, or a "rediscovery" of indigenous groups and languages; countries where translation and interpreting had been needed before in international contexts, but are now means to address internal communication needs (pp. 21–22). Over the last decades, in the Latin American scenario, the latter rediscovery case can be identified; as a consequence, the PSIT field has started to emerge, though it is still in a development stage, as Valero-Garcés (2019) points out. However, even if many Latin American countries are home to a considerable number of indigenous languages, not all of them address the rights of their speakers in the same way.

As cited earlier, many institutional, demographic, and political factors influence the provision of PSIT, this has resulted in different models and initiatives either led by academia, non-governmental organizations, or even public entities. The institutionalization of PSIT through government initiatives, then, depends on national priorities and attitudes towards multilingualism. When describing the evolution of the governmental provision of public service interpreting (PSI) –which we will extend to PSIT–, Ozolins (2000) distinguishes four stages

concerning meeting the need for internal multilingual communication: (i) when a country denies it; (ii) when a country relies on ad hoc services; (iii) when a country provides generic language services; and, (iv) when a country articulates a fully comprehensive response of training, service provision, and accreditation.

However, in a later work, Ozolins (2010) remarks that these stages, even if useful to track the degree of development of language services and their infrastructure, are still too linear and teleological, implying that it would be inevitable that governments move from stage iii to iv (p. 195). Therefore, he identifies four macro and five optional factors that may influence the development of PSI[T] to meet a country's multilingual communication needs and its government and public sector to develop effective language services.

The four macro factors go from government funding and budgets, increasing demands of languages to be covered by these services, the institutional basis of these services, and the cross-sectoral need for interpreting. As for the five additional Ozolins (2010) points out that they could help, even when macro factors may be similar, to identify different priorities that may arise from specific political, social, and administrative dispositions. These factors cover the political and social attitudes to multilingualism (either of immigrating communities, indigenous peoples, or the Deaf community), the articulation of governments authorities at central and local levels, the public policy models, the prioritization of legal interpreting over other fields, and whether PSI is compared to conference interpreting.

On the other hand, even if services are provided, proper management needs to be set so that systems work. On that matter, Corsellis (2008) stands out the importance of enabling others to succeed, and yet, she says, combining a formula of public policy and effective strategies for implementation is quite rare (p. 150). It can be difficult to articulate PSI[T] provision at national levels, even if local examples can be successful, due to fragmentation and high costs. Therefore, the degree of political will within a government will surely determine how challenges of multilingualism are confronted (p. 152).

She proposes three tasks to be undertaken but warns that in real life following a specific order is not always possible, as managing change is not a tidy job. Still, Corsellis (2008) assures that it "is possible to set in place developments on an incremental basis if there is clarity, transparency, and consensus over targets and processes" (p. 153). These tasks are the following: (i) compiling a comprehensive information database referring to languages and speakers: countries of precedence, educational and social backgrounds, demographic changes, etc.; (ii) identifying the skills needed (translators, interpreters, bilingual staff, staff trained to work with translators and interpreters, and so on), this refers to the human resources as to who, how many of, and where will they be needed; and, (iii) establishing structures and priority tasks once the two previous needs have been identified.

Furtherly, Corsellis (2008) stresses that factors, actors, or tasks are all interdependent and that implementation and management of PSI[T] requires collaboration and multidisciplinary

teams. This idea is also stressed by Ozolins (2010), who highlights the importance of cross-sectoral approaches in the provision of PSI[T].

### *3.1. Government-driven PSIT in indigenous languages in Peru: a brief and preliminary identification of stages and tasks already in place*

A deeper analysis would be required to accurately assess the stage and progress that the Peruvian government has made on the provision of PSIT in indigenous languages. Therefore, we aim to provide just a preliminary identification according to Ozolins' (2000) four stages and Corsellis' (2008) three tasks cited above, by referring to the normative framework and some measures already in place.

As to the four stages proposed by Ozolins (2000), we would say –on a preliminary basis– that due to the implementation of the CIT, which we will describe in the next section, Peru is somewhat between stages three and four regarding indigenous languages, as it has jumped from the provision of generic language services to the creation of a division focused on public services. However, even if there is currently a response of training (with 15 training programs to date), service provision (the recent implementation of the CIT, though restricted to emergency situations), and accreditation (in this case, a national registry after completion of the training program, the ReNITLI), the way each point works needs to be assessed individually to determine their degree of comprehensiveness, which has been far accelerated by the CIT but can also be subject to changes because of it.

Regarding the three tasks proposed by Corsellis (2008), just like the author mentions, they are not usually placed in order and managing change can be difficult. Nonetheless, even if not in an articulated manner, such three tasks have already taken place in Peru. For instance, information on indigenous speakers has been collected in the 2017 Census earlier referred; and, also, the Ethnolinguistic Map of Peru has been updated in 2021, to identify linguistic needs for public services at the district, provincial and regional levels as it registers the predominance of indigenous languages in the said levels (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021a).

As to task two, the PNLOTI has already identified 42 services to be provided by the government in which different actors are involved, including bilingual public servants; however, training personnel is still a task to embark upon. What is more, as to task three, the PNLOTI also sets specific instruments to monitor the implementation of these services. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that just like the preliminary diagnosis above, these tasks need to be assessed individually for a more accurate analysis, as these measures have been recently or are still to be fully implemented.

Finally, it is also necessary to highlight that this brief diagnosis is restricted to PSIT and indigenous languages in Peru. When it comes to non-indigenous languages, stages and tasks are at different levels as PSI in Peruvian Sign Language regrettably remains a need to be addressed. Likewise, because there has not been massive immigration from non-Spanish speakers, PSIT in

foreign languages is addressed through ad hoc solutions when needed, especially in legal and imprisonment environments.

#### 4. Translation and interpreting during crises and the COVID-19 pandemic

Cadwell (2021) reviews the role of translation and interpreting in disaster situations, though the concept may be used interchangeably with others like *crisis or emergency*, as the author explains. Despite the differences, what they do have in common is their social impact, since they cause “overwhelming social disruptions” (p. 255). O’Brien and Federici (2019) offer a definition aimed at providing a broad perspective and define crisis translation as “a specific form of communication that overlaps with principles of risk communication as much as with principles of emergency planning and management” (p. 130). All in all, many authors agree that when dealing with any disaster or crisis, and particularly in those related to health, communication with the affected population plays a key role when in the success of any measure. Cadwell (2021) also highlights how research has shown the reduction of effectiveness of disaster operations when multilingual communication needs are not addressed.

On the other hand, the lack of access to information in one’s mother tongue affects human and language rights. However, such rights can also be breached when information may be provided in theory but not in practice. Therefore, another factor to consider is the cultural-appropriate content in the delivery of the information, as the provided information may be not be understood or may even be distorted due to cultural barriers. Also, culturally inappropriate content may not only undermine trust but endanger the population it addresses due to miscommunication, as O’Brien and Federici (2019) point out. Thus, Cadwell (2021) defends that culture should be included as a crucial characteristic of translation and interpreting in disaster situations.

In these scenarios, many responses have been implemented through bottom-up initiatives like ad hoc solutions and volunteers due to a lack of professional translators in some minority languages. While they have helped overcome barriers, Cadwell (2021) discusses that top-down initiatives need to be at the center of responses through proper public policies, as they reflect the prioritized needs of governments and how they plan to deal or not with them. The author also points out that if governments fail to recognize their internal multilingual communications needs, and with that, translation and interpreting as means to address them, plans cannot be actualized and funding will not be allocated. On that matter, O’Brien et al (2018) also emphasize the importance of policy development.

As mentioned before, health crises are a clear example of the importance of proper communication and how translation helps understand information related to them, as O’Brien and Cadwell (2017) describe. And in the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically brought this discussion, especially when it comes to PSIT. Runcieman (2020) points out that the COVID-19 pandemic has opened up the discussion for the re-evaluation of PSIT and an important shift in the way it is perceived publicly (p. 1).

## 5. Creation and implementation of the Center of Interpreting and Translation in Indigenous Languages (CIT) in Peru

As discussed before, the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the need for the Peruvian government to be able to provide information and assistance in indigenous languages to assure the compliance of individual and collective linguistic rights. While ad hoc solutions were provided during the first weeks, the magnitude of the pandemic enhanced the need to coordinate translation and interpreting in indigenous languages from a more articulated division.

Such need was addressed by *Legislative Decree 1489*, introduced earlier, issued on May 9th, which established provisions about implementing a strategic line of elaboration and translation of informative material in indigenous languages to be disseminated at all levels (article 5.4) and providing coordination for the translation of priority information from different public institutions through the Ministry of Culture to assure its socio-cultural contextualization and comprehension (article 8).

Additionally, it modified article 15 of *Law 29735* so that the Ministry of Culture would be responsible for the provision of translation and interpreting services during emergency situations and for the implementation of a *Center of Interpreting and Translation in Indigenous Languages*, which included the responsibility to “supervise its proper utilization by issuing actions and recommendations deemed pertinent” (our translation) (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020a, p. 20).

### *5.1 Normative and administrative framework of the CIT: an insight into the way it works*

In compliance with the provisions of *Legislative Decree N° 1489*, *Supreme Decree n° 012-2020-MC* was enacted on September 4th, 2021. This Decree created the CIT and established the three services that it would provide: on-site interpreting, remote interpreting, and translation into indigenous languages (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020b). Also, such services were to be free of payment, circumscribed, however, to emergency situations. Likewise, it stated that other complementary norms for the implementation of the Center needed to be approved by the Ministry of Culture within thirty days after the enactment of the Decree (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020b).

On that account, two normative tools in the Ministry of Culture were approved for the implementation of the CIT: the first one was *Ministerial Resolution 000258-2020-DM/MC*, which approved the guidelines for the implementation of the CIT’s three services on October 9th, 2020 (Diario Oficial El Peruano, 2020c). The guidelines appoint the Directorate of Indigenous Languages (DLI) as the division within the Ministry in charge of the CIT and establish general dispositions (technological considerations, human resources, working languages, ruling

principles of professional conduct, etc.) as well as specific dispositions for the provision of each service (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2020a).

Regarding the working languages of the CIT, the guidelines establish that six indigenous languages are to be prioritized during the implementation: Aimara, Ashaninka, Awajun, Shipibo-konibo, Ticuna, and Quechua in three of its most-spoken variants (Quechua Áncash, Quechua Chanka, and Quechua Cusco-Collao). This means that these languages will be permanently provided in all services; therefore, ad hoc assistance through external interpreters and translators will be provided, when necessary, in the remaining the indigenous languages. The prioritization of the said languages and variants responds to demographic criteria, as they cover 98% of indigenous speakers (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2020c). The guidelines also state that other indigenous languages are to be gradually incorporated to be provided permanently.

The services must be requested by public servants or institutions through a telephone line (+5116189383), which will provide them with 3 options (1-remote interpreting; 2-translation; and, 3-orientation). In the case when public servants are not able to identify the indigenous language they require, they can choose the third option and a ‘facilitator’ will help them identify, through geographical criteria, the language they need. Also, public servants can choose the third option should they wish to ask questions about the CIT or its services.

In the following table, a description of how each service works is provided, based on the said guidelines:

Service modality	Description
<p>1. <i>Interpretación presencial</i> [on-site interpreting]</p>	<p>This service consists of interpreting face-to-face, and it is provided in the working languages of the CIT, but it is also possible to request additional indigenous languages. This service, because of the pandemic and restrictions, is only provided in exceptional cases when it is not possible to provide remote interpreting, therefore it is not being fully implemented nor prioritized. Like all three services, it must be requested by a public institution.</p>
<p>2. <i>Interpretación remota</i> [remote interpreting]</p>	<p>This service consists of remote telephone interpreting, and it is provided in the working languages of the CIT, but it is also possible to request additional indigenous languages. This is a prioritized service, unlike on-site interpreting, which means that is being fully implemented.</p>

	<p>To use the service, public servants need to contact the telephone line (+5116189383), and choose the first option (1) which will provide them with a list of the 8 indigenous languages and variants prioritized mentioned earlier; after choosing the extension, the call be will be immediately directed to the interpreter. The extensions are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quechua Chanka</li> <li>2. Quechua Cusco-Collao</li> <li>3. Quechua Ancash</li> <li>4. Aimara</li> <li>5. Ashaninka</li> <li>6. Awajun</li> <li>7. Shipibo-konibo</li> <li>8. Ticuna</li> <li>9. Another indigenous language.</li> </ol> <p>If public servants contacting the line require an indigenous language that is not mentioned, they can choose option 9 where they can be provided with assistance and the ‘facilitator’ will contact an external interpreter who can take over the assistance.</p>
<p>3. <i>Traducción</i> [translation]</p>	<p>This service not only consists of the translation of written material but also of audiovisual material as long as it is deemed prioritized information during emergency situations; for instance, material aim at explaining preventive measures for COVID-19 or related topics.</p> <p>This is a prioritized service, like remote interpreting, which means that is being fully implemented. This service is also provided in the working languages of the CIT, but like the interpreting services, it is also possible to request additional indigenous languages. To use the service, public servants need to contact the telephone line (+5116189383) and choose the second option (2).</p>

Table 1. The three service modalities of the CIT.

These three services require, as the guidelines establish, specific personnel which includes: internal interpreters and translators in the six working languages –including the three

Quechua variants–, who are hired on a full-time basis; a ‘facilitator’, also hired on a full-time basis; an administrative assistant; and, a general coordinator. Additionally, external interpreters and translators are hired for ad hoc needs in other indigenous languages<sup>3</sup>. All of these roles are also defined in the guidelines.

Likewise, interpreters and translators of the CIT (either internal or external) must abide, as the guidelines provide, by nine ethical principles: *confidentiality and non-divulgence, impartiality, accuracy and completeness, cultural pertinence, quality, respect for people’s roles, respect for the CIT member teams, acknowledgment of conflicts of interest, professionalism, and professional development*. As it can be observed, culturally appropriate content is distinguished as good practice, crucial in crisis translation as the works cited above by Cadwell (2021) or O’Brien and Federici defend.

However, other specific considerations in the delivery of services are provided by specific documents like protocols, reporting forms, and databases for interpreters, translators, and other parties like facilitators or coordinators. These management tools were approved by a second normative, *Viceministerial Resolution 000228-2020VMI/MC*, on October 15th, 2020 (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2020b).

A brief insight into the purpose and contents of the management tools is presented in the following table, based on the contents of the said Resolution:

Service	Management tool	Targeted personnel	Purpose and main contents
1. On-site interpreting	<i>Protocolo de actuación de intérpretes para la modalidad 1 del servicio (interpretación presencial)</i> [Conduct protocol of interpreters for service type 1 (on-site interpreting)]	Internal and external interpreters	It aims at providing general and specific guidelines as to what to do before, during, and after the interpretation has taken place. It also establishes how the assistance provided is going to be reported to the administrative assistant and general coordinator.
	<i>Ficha de atención del/la intérprete</i> [Interpreter’s reporting form]	Internal and external interpreters	It collects information regarding the language combination, time, place, public entity, users, and any incidences that may occur during each interpretation, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Although it is not provided in the guidelines, external interpreters and translators in the working languages and variants as well as others have been hired as ‘validators’ in charge of proofreading translations as it is described in Table 2. This information has been provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages.

	<i>Instrumento de control de atenciones de la modalidad 1 del servicio (interpretación presencial)</i> [Monitoring tool of assistances of service type 1 (on-site interpreting)]	Administrative assistant	It systematizes all interpreters' forms and codifies all assistance provided. The database keeps records of the time each assistance has been taken.
2. Remote interpreting	<i>Protocolo de actuación de intérpretes para la modalidad 2 del servicio (interpretación remota)</i> [Conduct protocol of interpreters for service type 2 (remote interpreting)]	Internal and external interpreters	It aims at providing general and specific guidelines as to what to do before, during, and after the interpretation has taken place; and, at some points, certain guiding scripts are included. In this service, all calls are recorded and the protocol instructs interpreters in this procedure. It also establishes how the assistance provided is going to be reported to the administrative assistant and general coordinator.
	<i>Ficha de atención para intérpretes</i> [Interpreter's reporting form]	Internal and external interpreters	It collects information regarding the language combination, time, place, public entity, users, and any incidences that may occur during each interpretation, etc.
	<i>Protocolo de actuación de/la facilitador(a)</i> [Facilitator's conduct protocol]	Facilitator	It aims at providing general and specific guidelines as to what to do before, during, and after helping public servants either to identify the language required or contact an external interpreter. It also establishes how to monitor external interpreters and how the assistance provided is going to be reported to the administrative assistant and general coordinator.
	<i>Ficha de atención de/la facilitador(a)</i> [Facilitator's reporting form]	Facilitator	It collects information regarding the language combination, time, place, public entity, users, contacted interpreters, and any incidences that may occur during each assistance, etc.
	<i>Instrumento de control de atenciones de la modalidad 2 del servicio (interpretación remota)</i> [Monitoring tool of assistances of service	Administrative assistant	It systematizes all interpreters' forms and codifies all assistance provided. The database keeps records of the time each assistance has been provided and the recordings made.

	type 2 (remote interpreting)]		
3. Translation	<i>Protocolo de actuación de traductores(as)</i> [Conduct protocol of translators]	Internal and external translators	It aims at providing general and specific guidelines as to what to do before, during, and after the translation project, including the 'validation' or 'socialization' of translations to verify their readability and comprehensibility.
	<i>Ficha de traducción</i> [Translation form]	Internal and external translators	It collects information regarding the language combination, time, place, public entity, author of the text, type of text, number of words, type of service (written or audiovisual translation), target audience of the text, etc. Likewise, it contains both the source and target text divided into segments and presented in parallel columns. It also includes some guidelines as to how to deliver both the translation and validation forms.
	Validation form	Internal and external translators	It collects information (source and target segments, remarks, and names of validators or speakers), of the 'validation' or 'socialization' processes of each translation project, that is whether the text has been proofread by other translators (validation) or by speakers (socialization) to verify their readability and comprehensibility. This form must be annexed to the translation form.
	<i>Instrumento de control de atenciones de la modalidad 3 del servicio (traducción)</i> [Monitoring tool of assistances of service type 3 (translation)]	Administrative assistant	It systematizes all translation and validation forms and codifies all assistance provided. The database keeps records of the number of words translated, among other quantifiable data.

Table 2. Contents of the management tools for the provision of the three services of the CIT.

As it can be observed, there are specific legal and normative frameworks behind the implementation and functioning of the CIT, this is because it is a service provided by the government and, therefore, its implementation needs to be closely monitored. These frameworks, through the guidelines and management tools, however, can help identify on a

preliminary basis some of the above-mentioned macro and optional factors proposed by Ozolins (2010) when assessing the provision of PSIT.

For instance, we can see that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, funding has been specifically allocated to the implementation of the CIT. The fact that the service is covered by the government, makes it accessible to public entities which may not even consider including PSIT services in their budgets. Even if the CIT is providing for emergency situations, like the COVID-19 pandemic, this initial funding could lead to a potential permanent provision of PSIT.

What is more, such frameworks allow identifying the institutional basis of PSIT provision in indigenous languages and how cross-portfolio policy making is required for a successful provision. Likewise, the implementation of the CIT has led to strengthening and shaping public policy models in PSIT provision, making it a need to be addressed at the national level, which has contributed to the shifting of political and social attitudes to multilingualism towards revalorization seen in recent years.

### *5.2 Dissemination of the CIT*

The CIT has been providing services for over a year; however, public entities still need to be informed about the Center and how the services can help them provide appropriate assistance to indigenous peoples. To that end, the CIT was officially launched on December 17th, 2020 in a ceremony broadcast live ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH8o\\_opLwgo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH8o_opLwgo)).

Additionally, different informative material has been shared through the social media of the Ministry of Culture of Peru (Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter) aimed at explaining how the services work and how to request them. Some of the material has been also translated into the working languages of the CIT. The slogan adopted is “We interpret to save lives” (Interpretamos para salvar vidas), as can be seen in the official promotional video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEHMSOVSObE&t=3s>). Likewise, other printed material has been disseminated and different workshops with public entities, especially in health care, have taken place in 19 Peruvian regions during 2021.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding publications, the CIT has worked on a glossary on COVID-19 related terms in nine indigenous languages, which has been made available for public servants and the general population. The Glossary can be downloaded from the Ministry of Culture of Peru’s Intercultural Resources Center (CRI) at <https://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/>.

Therefore, it is possible to observe that cross-sectoral communication and joint work are also being addressed, even if at initial levels, because, as Ozolins (2010) describes among the macro factors he proposes, there is an inevitable cross-sectoral need in PSIT.

---

<sup>4</sup> Information provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages.

### *5.3 Provided assistance during the first year of the CIT*

As described before, two services have been prioritized by the CIT: remote interpreting and translation; while on-site interpreting is only provided in exceptional cases. During its first year, the CIT has supplied these services to a total of 45 public institutions, mainly health care services, but also regional and local governments, the National Police Force, the Judiciary, other Ministries, and even the Presidential Office, resulting in almost 3000 assistances in 40 indigenous languages and their variants (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2021b). However, a considerable number of requests have to meet internal ministerial needs, as the Ministry of Culture has taken over the task of supervising that information during the COVID-19 pandemic is socio-culturally contextualized<sup>5</sup>.

Likewise, the services have been provided in 21 out of the 24 regions of Peru, which means that the CIT has covered services in almost 90% of them. Regarding each service, translation has been the most requested one, including related services like recording oral messages and videos in indigenous languages, ‘validation’ and proofreading of translations and texts, transcriptions, and so on. The next most requested service has been orientation, as no less than 30 public institutions have contacted the CIT to find out more about its services and how to request them. Finally, over 25 requests for remote interpreting have been provided with assistance<sup>6</sup>.

As for personnel, as was mentioned earlier, eight interpreters and translators are hired permanently to the six indigenous languages and three Quechua variants prioritized are covered; therefore, ad hoc needs have been covered by over 30 external interpreters and translators.

Undoubtedly, many factors need to be assessed; however, in these preliminary numbers, like in the previous sections, some factors mentioned by Ozolins (2010) also arise: even if the service is provided in six prioritized languages and three Quechua variants, the use of external interpreters and translators for ad hoc needs in that many languages and variants, show an increasing diversity and demands in the provision of services. Also, in this new scenario, unlike the predominant legalistic detour that Ozolins (2010) refers to, we can see that health care scenarios are privileged and many other public domains are also being demanded.

## **6. Concluding remarks**

This paper aimed at revising the normative aspects behind the implementation of the CIT. Such a review offers a theoretical approach to this process, and other studies need to be conducted to assess the practical impact of the CIT. Nonetheless, it would be premature to try to provide a conclusive assessment of the impact of the CIT on the provision of PSIT in indigenous languages just a year after its implementation: from this review, we can only try to foresee what is to come and how it might shape the way internal multilingual communication needs, ignored for too long,

---

<sup>5</sup> Information provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages.

<sup>6</sup> Information provided by the Directorate of Indigenous Languages.

are addressed, by being now at the heart of public policies on indigenous peoples and languages. Other studies could explore the perspectives of those involved in the initiative, from policy-makers and public service providers to the parties involved: speakers of indigenous languages, public servants, and, of course, interpreters and translators.

Like most processes of PSIT provision all over the world, it has responded to unforeseen or unique scenarios, only in this case, rather than immigration waves or legalistic detours, it has been to a pandemic that has spotlighted the importance for public health that communication and access to information have, especially in minority and minorized languages. And, with that, how translation and interpreting contribute to communication in multilingual and asymmetrical contexts.

On the other hand, even if the initiative described here contributes to the strengthening of top-down approaches to PSIT provision, several aspects of the provision of PSIT in indigenous languages in Peru still need to be discussed as quality assurance, given the disparity of resources and terminology between Spanish and Peruvian indigenous languages, for instance; also, it is important to analyze if or how specific training for both interpreters, translators and public servants who use these services is being provided.

Undoubtedly, the implementation of the CIT can lead to positive changes in the employment of interpreters and translators already trained by the Ministry of Culture, as new spaces are being gained; this adds an economic value to activities that only a few decades ago may have been embarked upon by relatives, untrained personnel or language activists. With the positioning of translation and interpreting in indigenous languages, new disciplines can also come into play, as there is a need to work on terminology, neology, and linguistic related fields that need to be led by trained speakers of indigenous languages.

The provision of PSIT in indigenous languages as a government-driven service is restricted to emergency situations, as mentioned before; however, good practices can emerge from this initiative which can lead to an improved attitude towards interpreting and translation: not only as mere compliance in legal settings, but also in key services like health care, education, and others. Thus, the repercussions of the services provided by the CIT are still to be observed, whether they may lead to a permanent provision rather than just one aimed at dealing with emergency situations.

Additionally, because new areas are constantly being covered by the CIT, this can reshape the way training is provided, as to longer, more specific, and permanent programs, a key issue when it comes to translation and interpreting. With strengthened areas of training, accreditation, and provision of specific services, a shift towards comprehensible government-driven PSIT services in indigenous languages can take place; and, with that, there may be national models that could be extended to Peruvian Sign Language or foreign languages, currently being unattended or provided on an ad hoc basis.

Like Ozolins (2010), Corsellis (2008), and Valero-Garcés (2019) state, political will and funding play key roles in such shifting: even if national policies are being implemented, PSIT provision will inevitably need to rely on cross-sectoral approaches. Nonetheless, the positioning of a model like the CIT can open space for cross-sectoral cooperation and set important precedents.

As we have said, this ongoing process is still at a very early stage and it will need to be assessed in different stages, especially after the Peruvian government does not longer deem there is an emergency situation, to see if the CIT can be permanently provided and not just wait for the next emergency. Be that as it may –though we hope for the best–, we would dare join the discussion of authors who suggest that PSIT may have entered a new stage because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as public health cannot be achieved without proper communication and information in peoples' languages and, therefore, through translation and interpreting.

## References

- Cadwell, P. (2021). *Translation and interpreting in disaster situations*. In Susam- Saraeva, S. and Spišiaková, E. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Translation*, 253-268. Routledge.
- Corsellis, A. (2008). *Public Service Interpreting: The First Steps*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Decreto Legislativo N° 1489 [Presidencia de la República del Perú]. (2020a). Que establece acciones para la protección de los pueblos indígenas u originarios en el marco de la emergencia sanitaria declarada por el covid-19. May 9th, 2020a. Diario Oficial El Peruano N° 15413.  
[https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/download/full/7TmJ9dXjqnMA1GFPUSdUR\\_](https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/download/full/7TmJ9dXjqnMA1GFPUSdUR_)
- Decreto Supremo N° 012-2020-MC [Ministerio de Cultura del Perú]. Que crea el “Servicio de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias para situaciones de emergencia”. September 4th, 2020b. Diario Oficial El Peruano N° 15620.  
[https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/download/full/DsRciVFN42H8ujXpMRyo\\_5](https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/download/full/DsRciVFN42H8ujXpMRyo_5)
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations. (2020). *Indigenous Peoples & the Covid-19 Pandemic: Considerations*.  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/04/DESA-COVID-19-Considerations.pdf>
- Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the United Nations. (April 6th, 2020). *Covid-19 yet Another Challenge for Indigenous Peoples* [Press Release].  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/04/EMPRIP-English.pdf>
- Follow-up Committee of the UDLR. (1998). *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*. Inresa.

[https://culturalrights.net/descargas/drets\\_culturals389.pdf](https://culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals389.pdf)

Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe. (2020). Informe Regional: *Revitalización de Lenguas Indígenas. Pueblos e idiomas indígenas en América Latina y El Caribe: situación actual y perspectivas*. FILAC.

<https://www.ordpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Informe-Regional-Lenguas-Indigenas-Derechos-Intercult-2.pdf>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (March 27th, 2020). *Indigenous peoples' health and safety are at risk due to Coronavirus (covid-19)* [Press Release].

<https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/news-article/en/c/1268353/>

García, G., Haboud, M., Howard, R., Manresa, A. and Zurita, J. (2020). Miscommunication in the covid-19 Era. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 39(S1), 39-46.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/blar.13179>

González, G. (2013). Translating to Communicate with Linguistic Minorities: State Obligations under International Law. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 20(3), 405-441.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-02003004>

Lane, R. and Cerda, J. (2020). The Impact of covid-19 on Indigenous Peoples. Policy Brief of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (70).

[https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB\\_70.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_70.pdf)

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (2020a). Anexo de la Resolución N° 000258-2020-DM-MC.

<https://transparencia.cultura.gob.pe/sites/default/files/transparencia/2020/10/resoluciones-ministeriales/rm258-2020-dm-mc-anexo.pdf>

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (October 15th, 2020b). Resolución Viceministerial N° 028-2020-VMI-MC que aprueba los protocolos, las fichas e instrumentos de control para el adecuado funcionamiento de las tres modalidades del “Servicio de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias para situaciones de emergencia”, brindado por la Central de Interpretación y Traducción de Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias - CIT.

<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/cultura/normas-legales/1282645-028-2020-vmi-mc>

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (December 17th, 2020c). Ministerio de Cultura inaugura la Central de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias [Press Release].

<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/cultura/noticias/321208-ministerio-de-cultura-inaugura-la-central-de-interpretacion-y-traducccion-en-lenguas-indigenas-u-originarias>

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (April 21st, 2021a). Ministerio de Cultura: Actualización del Mapa Etnolingüístico permitirá que entidades implementen servicios públicos en lenguas indígenas [Press Release].

<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/cultura/noticias/483526-ministerio-de-cultura-actualizacion-del-mapa-etnolingustico-permitira-que-entidades-implementen-servicios-publicos-en-lenguas-indigenas>

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (November 24th, 2021b). Central de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias del Ministerio de Cultura ha brindado casi 3,000 atenciones [Press Release].

<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/cultura/noticias/563312-central-de-interpretacion-y-traducccion-en-lenguas-indigenas-u-originarias-del-ministerio-de-cultura-ha-brindado-casi-3-000-atenciones>

Ministerio de Cultura del Perú. (2021c). Política Nacional de Lenguas Originarias, Tradición Oral e Interculturalidad.

[https://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/sites/default/files/rb/pdf/PNLOTI%20al%202040\\_o.pdf](https://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/sites/default/files/rb/pdf/PNLOTI%20al%202040_o.pdf)

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2020). *Covid-19 Guidance: covid-19 and Indigenous Peoples Rights*.

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/OHCHRGuidance\\_COVID19\\_IndigenousPeoplesRights.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/OHCHRGuidance_COVID19_IndigenousPeoplesRights.pdf)

O'Brien, S. and Federici, F. (2019). Crisis translation: considering language needs in multilingual disaster settings. *Emerald Insight* 2(29), 129-143.

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/DPM-11-2018-0373/full/html>

O'Brien, S., Federici, F., Cadwell, P., Marlowe, J., and Gerber, B. (2018). *Language Translation During Disaster: A Comparative Analysis of Five National Approaches*. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction [unedited manuscript].

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2018.07.006>

O'Brien, S. and Cadwell, P. (2017). Translation facilitates comprehension of health-related crisis information: Kenya as an example. *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 28(2017), 23-51.

[https://jostrans.org/issue28/art\\_obrien.php](https://jostrans.org/issue28/art_obrien.php)

Ozolins, U. (2000). *Communication Needs and Interpreting in Multilingual Settings: The International Spectrum of Response*. In Roberts, R., Carr, S., Abraham, D. and Dufour, A. (Eds.). *The Critical Link 2. Interpreters in the Community* (1st Ed., pp. 21-33). John Benjamins.

Ozolins, U. (2010). Factors that determine the provision of Public Service Interpreting: comparative perspectives on government motivation and language service implementation. *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 14(2010), 194-215.

[https://www.jostrans.org/issue14/art\\_ozolins.pdf](https://www.jostrans.org/issue14/art_ozolins.pdf)

Pöchhacker, F. (2004). *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. Routledge.

Resolución Ministerial N° 000258-2020-DM-MC [Ministerio de Cultura del Perú]. Que aprueba la implementación de la Central de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias – CIT, y los Lineamientos para la prestación del “Servicio de Interpretación y Traducción en Lenguas Indígenas u Originarias para situaciones de emergencia”. October 9th, 2020c. Diario Oficial El Peruano N° 15672.

<https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/download/full/36GjeMoQa--BDoUzheqRRV>

Runcieman, A. (2020). Community interpreting and the Covid-19 crisis: Present relevancy and future directions. *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies* 242, 1-21.

[https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/sites/default/files/download/TPCS\\_242-Runcieman.pdf](https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/sites/default/files/download/TPCS_242-Runcieman.pdf)

Valero-Garcés, C. (2019). *Intercultural communication: public service interpreting and translation*. In Valdeón, R., and Vidal, A. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Translation*, 211-226. Routledge.

Valero, C. and Gauthier, L. (2010). *Bourdieu and Public Service Interpreting and Translation. Towards a Social Theory in PST* (Translated version from Spanish). *MonTI 2 trans* (2010), 1-13.

<https://www.e-revistas.uji.es/index.php/monti/article/view/1625/1377>

Zajícová, L. (2017). Lenguas indígenas en la legislación de los países hispanoamericanos / Indigenous languages in the Legislation of Hispano-American nations. Onomázein, special issue. *Las lenguas amerindias en Iberoamérica: retos para el siglo XXI*, 171-203.

<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/6476577.pdf>