

Robyn Ashley Weddings

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

The Bilingual *Ceremony Script.*

Two languages, one ceremony that still comes in under twenty-five minutes: the four moments to speak in both, the words for each, and the order that keeps both families feeling like hosts.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

A ceremony in two languages, *not two* *ceremonies.*

A bilingual wedding does not mean saying every line twice. It means choosing the few moments that earn both languages out loud, and handing the rest to the program.

This is the version I read when the two families do not share a language. It is set in large type so whoever is officiating can read it at arm's length without losing the line. The four moments that carry both languages are written out in full, with the Spanish and the English side by side and the leading language marked.

The two moments the law actually requires are flagged. In the margins are the cues I have learned over 300+ ceremonies: where to pause for the laugh, which language to lead with so neither side is always second, and how to bridge a vow the other half of the room could not follow.

Read it once, out loud, in both voices. Swap Spanish and English for whichever two languages are yours. The ceremony is theirs and yours, not mine.



Speak four moments. *Print the rest.*

Saying every line in both languages roughly doubles your runtime. A clean twenty-minute ceremony becomes forty, and each guest tunes in only for the half in their language. You make it twice as long for the same payoff.

Speak these in both languages. The welcome, the declaration of intent and the I-do questions, the ring promises, and the pronouncement. Short, high-emotion, worth hearing in your own tongue.

Put these in the program, side by side. Your love story, the readings, the ritual explanations, the officiant's reflections. Longer, narrative, and they read as well as they listen.

ROBYN'S NOTE

Write the program first, then write the spoken script around the gaps. Every section you move to print is two or three minutes you did not spend repeating yourself.

Whoever speaks first *gets the gasp.*

The language you speak first gets the laugh, the tears, the live reaction. The second language always arrives as a translation of a moment that already happened.

If you always lead with the same one, you have quietly decided that one side experiences the wedding live and the other on a two-second delay for the whole ceremony.

So rotate it, section by section. In this script the welcome leads with Spanish, the declaration leads with English, the vows lead with Spanish again. The peaks spread evenly, and nobody spends the day feeling like the translated afterthought.

ROBYN'S NOTE

This is the one move I almost never see written down, and it is the difference between both families feeling like hosts and one side feeling like guests at their own kid's wedding.

Both sides, *at once.*

— *[Address the whole room as the processional settles. Warm, unhurried. Lead with the language whose side flew the farthest.]*

SPANISH FIRST

Bienvenidos. Hoy nos reunimos para celebrar el amor entre **[PARTNER A]** y **[PARTNER B]**, y para unir a dos familias y dos idiomas en una sola celebración.

THEN ENGLISH

Welcome, everyone. Today we gather to celebrate the love between **[PARTNER A]** and **[PARTNER B]**, and to join two families and two languages in one celebration.

— *[The welcome is the one place you say the same thing in both, in full. It tells the side not in their home language, the second things start, that they were thought of.]*

The first *required* line.

SAY THIS IN BOTH, CLOSE TO AS WRITTEN

One of the two moments the law needs to hear. Both partners must understand and answer clearly, so this one earns full translation every time.

ENGLISH FIRST

[PARTNER A], do you take [PARTNER B] to be your spouse, to love and to honor, from this day forward?

THEN SPANISH

[PARTNER A], ¿aceptas a [PARTNER B] como tu esposo o esposa, para amarle y honrarle, desde este día en adelante?

I do. / Sí, acepto.

— *[Repeat for the second partner, leading with English again so the rhythm matches. Wait for each answer. The pause is the moment.]*

One voice, *one bridge*.

[PARTNER A] and [PARTNER B], please face each other and take both hands.

— *[Personal vows are spoken in whichever language is the speaker's own. Do not translate them line by line. Give one short bridge so the other half of the room knows what just happened.]*

Whenever you are ready, [PARTNER A].

— *[Allow the vows in full. After each partner finishes, deliver the bridge below.]*

THE BRIDGE, BOTH WAYS

Han compartido sus promesas. / They have spoken their promises to each other.

ROBYN'S NOTE

A vow does not need translating, it needs a bridge. The bridge is one warm sentence that lets the side who could not follow it feel the weight of what they just watched.

A circle, *in both tongues.*

— *[Hold the rings up briefly so the room sees them. Hand each ring to the speaker before the line, not during it.]*

ENGLISH FIRST

[PARTNER A], place this ring on **[PARTNER B]**'s finger and repeat after me: I give you this ring as a symbol of my love.

THEN SPANISH

[PARTNER A], coloca este anillo en el dedo de **[PARTNER B]** y repite: Te doy este anillo como símbolo de mi amor.

— *[Pause for the line in each language. Wait for the ring to go on, then repeat for the second partner.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

The ring promise is short enough to speak twice without dragging, and it is the one couples most want their grandparents to hear in their own language. Keep it.

By the power vested *in me.*

THE SECOND REQUIRED LINE

The marriage is not official until you say a version of this out loud. Speak both languages back to back, with no pause between, so the whole room cheers as one.

SPANISH FIRST

Por el poder que se me ha conferido, los declaro casados. Pueden besarse.

THEN ENGLISH

By the power vested in me, I now pronounce you married. You may kiss.

— *[Build through both lines without stopping. Step back. Let the kiss happen and the applause come from both sides at once.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

Run the two pronouncement lines together on purpose. A pause here splits the cheer in two; keeping them tight lets both families react in the same breath. Check your state's requirements before the day.

If it gets *away from you.*

If you reach for a word and it is gone. Say it in the language you have, then add, "perdón, ese se me fue," or in English, "forgive me, that one slipped." The room loves an officiant who is human in both tongues.

If you lead with the wrong language. Keep going and finish in both. Nobody in the seats has the script, and the order you planned lives only in your head.

If a partner answers in the other language. Let it stand. A "yes" and a "sí" are the same vow. Smile, nod, and move on.

Keep *moving*.

If your accent wobbles. Let it. A grandmother would rather hear her language spoken with love and a flaw than not spoken at all. Say the line, mean it, carry on.

If a translation runs long and you feel the room drift. Trim on the fly. The welcome and the legal lines stay full; everything else can lose a clause without losing its meaning.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The difference between a first-timer and a pro is not a perfect accent. It is having a warm line ready for the stumble, saying it in whichever language is closest to hand, and never stopping the ceremony to apologize.

Three ways to *split it*.

One bilingual officiant. The cleanest option. One fluent person flows between languages with no handoff and makes the rotation feel effortless. For most couples this plus a printed program is the whole solution.

Two co-officiants, one per language. Celebratory, and a lovely way to honor two sides. The one rule: agree in advance on exactly who owns which sections. Scripted, it is beautiful; improvised, it drags into dead air.

A whisper interpreter. A fluent friend sits beside the relatives who speak only one language and translates quietly. Good for a small cluster of three to five; past that it gets disruptive.

Protect the *two lines*.

For a Deaf guest or family. Sign language is the one exception to the no-repeat rule. It happens at the same time as the spoken words, so it adds inclusion without adding a single minute. Run it in parallel, never in sequence.

For a cultural ritual in a third tradition. Place it between the vows and the rings, framed once, and keep it out of the declaration and the pronouncement. Those two lines stay clean in both languages.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The rule for two languages is short: speak the four moments in both, print the rest, rotate which language leads, and keep the whole ceremony under about twenty-five minutes.

Three things *before you read it aloud.*

This is one bilingual ceremony, marked the way I would mark my own. Swap in your two languages, treat it as a working draft, and it starts sounding like you.

i

Build the program first, then the spoken script.

Put your love story, readings, and ritual explanations into side-by-side columns. Whatever is left, the welcome, declaration, vows, rings, pronouncement, is your live script, short enough to deliver in both languages.

ii

Have a native speaker check every translated line.

Read each [BRACKET] filled in, out loud, to someone fluent in that language. Names, honorifics, and the words for spouse all carry weight. Fix them a week out, not on the day.

iii

Mark which language leads each section.

Highlight the leading language at the top of every spoken moment in a second color. Under pressure, the rotation is the first thing the eye loses, so make it impossible to miss.

"His family speaks Spanish, mine speaks English, and I was terrified the ceremony would feel like a translation exercise. The kit gave us a script we could split into our program in an afternoon. Both grandmothers cried."

ELENA · MARRIED IN QUEENS, 2025

IF THIS SCRIPT IS DOING ITS JOB

The whole ceremony, *built for two languages.*

This is the spoken half. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is the rest: a full ceremony script you can adapt line by line, a clean order of service you can split straight into your two-language program, and the ritual scripts (unity, lasso, ring blessings) already written, so you are not building from a blank page in two languages at once.

\$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

ONE-TIME PAYMENT · LIFETIME ACCESS · 48-HOUR MONEY-BACK

Where this *came from*.

PULLED FROM

The bilingual ceremonies I have read across NYC, where about half the city speaks a language other than English at home. The structure is field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

ON THE SPANISH

Written in plain, warm Spanish that reads well aloud. Swap in any two languages and the structure holds. Always have a native speaker check your final lines.

WHAT IS IN THE KIT

The full adaptable ceremony script, the order of service you can split into a two-language program, and the ritual scripts. All of it in *the Couple's Ceremony Kit*.

USE THIS FREELY

Print it, mark it up, read it at the rehearsal, hand a copy to whoever is standing up front. Email me if you officiate one.

hello@robynashleyweddings.com.

*Marked from working bilingual ceremonies, with the cues
I read from at the front of the aisle.*

*About this
script, and the
weddings it
came from.*