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HUMAN RIGHTS: WHERE DO INTERPRETERS FIT IN?
ISTANBUL, TURKEY
22-25 JULY 2015

2015 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Edited by Isabelle Heyerick and Suzanne Ehrlich



WASLI

World Association of
Sign Language Interpreters

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Foreword

Debra Russell – WASLI president

It is an honour and privilege to introduce the Conference Proceedings of our fourth WASLI conference. From our founding conference in Worcester, South Africa in 2005, to our 2007 conference in Segovia, Spain, followed by our return to South Africa in 2011 where we met in Durban, and finally to our exciting event held in Istanbul, Turkey in 2015, we have enjoyed tremendous conference presentations that represent the diversity that is our global interpreting community. Each conference offers its own energy, and the following papers represent some of the talented people who shared their energy, time, and talent in order to enrich our conference participants.

Our sincere thanks to Suzanne Ehrlich and Isabelle Heyerick for chairing the scientific committee, and bringing us such a rich and varied conference program that was enjoyed by over 298 attendees from 53 countries. We also appreciate their editorial work that has resulted in this interesting volume.

To each of the contributors, thank you for sharing your paper so that those of you who did not have the opportunity to attend the conference, or your presentation can benefit from your knowledge.

I hope you enjoy reading each of the papers, beginning with the work of Cheryl Ringel and Mallerie Shirley, who draw our attention to interpreting for Muslim events, and the importance of ensuring deaf Muslims can access their religion. We move from religion to exploring designated interpreter practice. Katherine Vance and Lindsay Nickels share their research conducted with Deaf professionals and the expectations they have of designated interpreters.

Our conference theme addressed human rights and the ways interpreters can support Deaf people. Jefwa Mweri asks important questions about how ready interpreters are to deal with human right violations that Deaf people experience.

Campbell McDermid, Lisanne Houkes, Kathleen Holcombe, and Cynthia Collward introduce us to the impact of Groupthink within interpreter education cohorts, heightening our awareness of this phenomena and the influence it can have on interpreters and the communities that we serve.

Our conference brought us research and the program also included presentations based on the current realities that interpreters experience. An example of this is found in the paper by Erin Trine and Dareen Khlifat, who offer us valuable insights into the experiences of Arabic/Jordanian Sign Language Interpreters.

Increasingly, International Sign (IS) Interpreters are working at international conferences and high-level meetings. Maya de Wit, the first accredited sign language interpreter with the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), and Irma Sluis share their insights about the pre-requisites needed for IS interpreters in European-contexts, offering a career path for those interested in that work. Their paper leads nicely to an informative paper from Maya and Elisabet Tiselius, who describe the AIIC Sign Language Network and ways in which it supports signed language interpreters performing high-level conference work.

Finally, WASLI Conferences are an opportunity to learn about the ways in which interpreting is developing in countries that may be unfamiliar to those outside of that region. Leonida Kaula describes very interesting legislation in Kenya that is shaping the development of the sign language interpreting profession in that country.

May these papers inspire conversations among your local community of interpreters, and within our international network of practitioners, consumers, and educators. And, maybe, just maybe, they will also be a motivating factor in your planning to attend a WASLI conference.

With warm regards,

Debra Russell WASLI President

February 2017

Editors' Note

Isabelle Heyerick & Suzanne Ehrlich

It is our pleasure to present you the 2015 WASLI Conference Proceedings. This collection of papers originated from presentations at the 2015 WASLI Conference, held in Istanbul, Turkey on July 22nd – 25th, 2015.

As chairs of the Scientific Committee we had the honor and privilege to be involved in the full process of presentations selections, development of the conference program, witnessing the exceptional presentations in Istanbul and lastly, compiling and producing this publication. Even in the face of occasional challenges, it has been an incredibly rewarding journey. Let it be noted this is a task we could not have done without the support of our colleagues to whom we wish to extend our gratitude and thanks.

First, thank you to the WASLI Executive Board and the WASLI Conference Chair for your trust in our abilities as chairs of the Scientific Committee and editors of the proceedings. Your patience and support is greatly appreciated.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the reviewers, who selected the presentations, reviewed the papers and advised us along the way. They include:

- Onno Crasborn, NL
- Trudie Theunissen, SA
- Adam Schembri, UK
- Heidi Salaets, BE
- Sujit Sahasrabudhe, IN
- Joseph Hill, USA
- Lorraine Leeson, IRL
- Elisa Marroney, USA
- Robert Adam, UK
- Rachel McKee, NZ

- Thierry Haesenne, BE
- Tessa Padden, UK
- Michelle Ashley, AUS

Our gratitude and appreciation is extended to the conference contributors for their time and effort.

The Conference Proceedings will reveal to our dedicated readers what a WASLI conference represents: *global diversity, valuable research, community voice* and *enhanced practice* and above all a strong sense of collaboration across varied nations, backgrounds and communities.

Thank you all for joining us on this incredible journey.

Isabelle Heyerick & Suzanne Ehrlich
Conference Co-Chairs and Co-Editors

February 2017

Contributors

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Mallerie Shirley is a Muslim American Sign Language/English interpreter who learned sign language as a child. Mallerie interprets at Mosques and Islamic events across North America, and occasionally world-wide. The inspiration for this work was seeing too many Muslims miss out on the religion she values so much, including her own brother.

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Dr. Jefwa Mweri has been associated with the Deaf since 1991 when he joined University of Nairobi – Kenya for his MA degree in Linguistics where he met Philemon Akach (now Dr.) who was the working for Kenya National Association of the deaf as program manager and interpreter. Since then Dr Mweri has been involved in many activities such as training Interpreters, teaching KSL, HIV and AIDS awareness creation among the Deaf, production of KSL educational materials, Research in KSL. Dr. Mweri has published numerous articles in reputable journals on KSL interpretation, sociolinguistic and grammatical issues on KSL. Dr. Mweri's PhD thesis is entitled: Register Variation: A Comparative Study of Planned and Unplanned Discourse in Kenyan Sign Language (KSL). Dr.

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Campbell McDermid, PhD is an Assistant Professor at NTID. His research interests include pragmatics and cohesion.

Cynthia Collward holds a CSC and has been interpreting since 1984. She is currently the Coordinator for programs and services at the National Institute for the Deaf.

Kathleen Holcombe, MA is an interpreter educator in Western New York and Viet Nam. Her research interests include reflective practice and the application of Demand Control Scheme to the interpreting field.

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Erin Trine is a certified interpreter and interpreter educator from the United States. She is dedicated to advancing the interpreting field both locally and internationally so that consumers are better served. She currently teaches interpreting at Western Oregon University.

Dareen Khlifat is an interpreter, mentor, and advocate from Jordan. She has been interpreting for 15 years in a wide variety of settings. Dareen continuously works to support the professionalization of interpreting in Jordan and to support the Deaf community. She supports high standards in interpreting and inclusion for the Deaf community in all aspects of society.

Maya de Wit was the first accredited sign language interpreter with the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). She works as a Dutch & American Sign Language and international sign interpreter and is an accredited International Sign Interpreter with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI). Maya

is also an international trainer and independent researcher, publishing since 2000 every four years a comprehensive status update on the sign language interpreting profession in Europe. She served from 2006 – 2012 as president of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli) and was a member of the board of the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA). In 2011 Maya obtained their master's degree in the first European Master of Sign Language Interpreting (EUMASLI). You can reach Maya at maya@tolkngt.nl.

Irma Sluis received her degree as a Dutch Sign Language Interpreter (BA) in 2001 and is since then registered at the Dutch Registry of Sign Language Interpreters. Irma interprets between spoken English, Dutch, Dutch Sign Language (NGT), and International Sign. She has gained expertise in different specialties, including international settings, conference interpreting, academic and higher education, TV interpreting, and linguistics.

In September 2011 she finalized her MA in the European Master in Sign Language Interpreting (www.eumasli.eu). Her thesis explored the perspective of the deaf consumer on sign-to-voice interpreting and how to use this to improve the quality of the interpretation into spoken language. The deaf perspective is also the basis of her latest research on the quality of sign language interpreters in the Netherlands, which is co-authored with Maya de Wit. You can reach Irma at irmasluistolkngt@ziggo.nl.

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Her online persona blogs and tweets about research and pedagogy in interpreting.

You can follow her on Twitter @tulkur. You can also reach her at

elisabet.tiseliussu.se.

Maya de Wit was the first accredited sign language interpreter with the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). She works as a Dutch & American Sign Language and international sign interpreter and is an accredited International Sign Interpreter with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI). Maya is also an international trainer and independent researcher, publishing since 2000 every four years a comprehensive status update on the sign language interpreting profession in Europe. She served from 2006 – 2012 as president of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsl) and was a member of the board of the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA). In 2011 Maya obtained their master's degree in the first European Master of Sign Language Interpreting (EUMASLI). You can reach Maya at maya@tolkngt.nl.

Leonida Kaula holds a Masters of Arts in interpretation from the University of Nairobi and Bachelors in Communication and Sociology. She have been a freelance interpreter for the past 18 years working in diverse settings, currently interpreting on television for the Kenyan parliament during the National Assembly and Senate proceedings. Leonida teaches a component of interpreting incorporated in the sign language training program at the Kenya Sign Language Research Project and is also an adjunct lecturer for St. Pauls University and Moi University respectively. She is the current chair of the Kenya Sign Language Interpreters Association since Feb 2012 and was re- elected for the second term in January 2016.

“Excuse Me, the Imam said What?”: Gaining Communication Access to Islam

Cheryl Ringel & Mallerie Shirley

Abstract

Deaf Muslims continue to struggle for basic communication access to their religion, with Islam lagging behind Judaism and Christianity in supporting their Deaf followers. It was 1846 when an Episcopal Church offered signed ministry to their Deaf congregants. In 1907 and 1911 two associations of Jewish Deaf gathered for social and religious functions (Costello, 2009). However, it was not until 2005 that a Deaf Muslim organization emerged, Global Deaf Muslim, with the purpose not of offering religious teaching directly in sign, but rather to begin an organized effort to obtain communication access in Islam via signed language interpreters -- an effort that continues to this day.

This paper presents findings from interviews conducted with Deaf Muslims, Deaf Muslim leaders, parents of Deaf Muslims, Imams and Masjid officials, and interpreters working with Deaf Muslims in the USA and Canada. The study is a qualitative look at the barriers to Islam identified by these groups. Fifty-nine individuals from four metropolitan areas home to large contingencies of Deaf Muslims (Atlanta, Minneapolis, Toronto, and Washington, DC) were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in spoken English or via an American Sign Language translation of the interview protocol according to each respondent's preference.

The goal was to gather information about Deaf Muslims' experiences trying to gain communication access to Islam and specifically to identify successful strategies that could be replicated elsewhere. Strong agreement about barriers and successful strategies was found within groups, but between-group differences were notable. The differences in perspective

could inform the parties involved and allow for a more successful approach in the future. All Deaf Muslims interviewed indicated the extreme positive impact gaining access to Islam had on their life, highlighting the importance of succeeding in their quest.

Introduction

Freedom of religion as a human right is rooted in ancient times as religious tolerance (Religious Freedom Project 2011) and has been internationally recognized via the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Specifically, article 18 addresses these rights, stating the following:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” (United Nations 2015, page XX).

However, if one cannot access one's religion, one cannot exercise the pursuant human right of religious freedom.

Typically, when talking about accessibility for Deaf people, access is compared to the situation of non-Deaf people. When looking at Deaf Muslims' communication access there is also an awareness of different levels of access based on which religion one follows. Islam seems to lag behind both Judaism and Christianity in terms of communication access. Research and literature concerning Christianity and Judaism shows advanced accommodation activities some beginning decades ago, as well as a holistic view of integration – having full services offered in signed languages, rather than having communication through interpreters. Several examples can be found in the literature: Christian Episcopalian woman enrolls her son in a Sunday school for the Deaf (Bouman, 2003); a Washington DC Catholic parish incorporates sign language into their service simply because nearby Gallaudet University brings a large Deaf population to the area;

“We don't have anybody in church right now who is fully deaf and a part of the deaf community. But we tried to integrate signing... It's like if you build it, they will come.”(US

Catholic 2014, 18)

In Judaism, accessibility of synagogues is framed as a human right;

“... access to synagogue environments must be viewed as an entitlement rather than cause for a fundraising initiative. It is only when the struggle of dis/abled Jews is understood in a human rights framework rather than one proposing tzedekah [charity], that we will take our place within the Jewish community.”(Finkler 2011, 38)

In 2012 a Vatican-level conference with Deaf presenters addressing authentic sign language translations took place (National Catholic Reporter 2012, 1).

Meanwhile, in 2011, an Islamic journal reported that

“Most mosques have to comply with local laws requiring that buildings be wheelchair accessible via ramps and elevators. Beyond this, however, it is a very rare mosque that will hire sign language interpreters for khutbahs [Friday sermon] or provide accessible Eid prayer locations.” (Islamic Horizons 2011, 3)

One result of different religions having differing levels of accommodation for Deaf followers is the issues of proselytization and conversion. There was a number of Deaf Muslim young adults who indicated they had either left Islam or at least had seen conversion as an appealing option even if they did not follow through. One young woman recalled being invited to her Christian friend’s church—where services were interpreted—and a Christian youth group where everyone was Deaf and/or signed. This phenomenon is seen as true for Deaf followers across religions, “...deaf Jews are being heavily targeted by Christian missionaries looking for converts. Because many deaf Jews lack solid knowledge of their religion, they are more susceptible to outside influences...” (Stutz 1996, 20).

Throughout the interviews, respondents reported the extreme impact that the lack of access to Islam had on Deaf Muslims. Anecdotally, Deaf Muslims recalled not understanding the most basic elements of Islam until attending an event where interpreting services were offered alongside the Imam who explained the basics of Islamic prayers. One Deaf respondent was struck when realizing that in his mid-thirties he was getting information typically obtained by a young child. Given the serious consequences that non-accommodation can lead to, it is imperative to address the barriers that still hinder Deaf Muslims from accessing Islam. This

research looks at the current obstacles and examines cases where these have been successfully overcome. It seems to come at a time when the Muslim Ummah (community) is ready to better accommodate Deaf Muslims.

The struggle for accommodation in Islam for Deaf Muslims may be at a tipping point. Within the past decade, a number of happenings at national and international level brought attention to the plight of Deaf Muslims. In 2005 Global Deaf Muslim (GDM), a non-profit organization was established. GDM is an organization representing and run by Deaf Muslims in the United States. GDM currently has chapters in at least six states as well as two international chapters. The GDM vision, as stated on their website, is the following:

“A Muslim Ummah that recognizes the rights of Deaf Muslims and actively strives to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive of all Muslims.”

[\(http://globaldeafmuslim.org/index.php/about-3/mission/\)](http://globaldeafmuslim.org/index.php/about-3/mission/)

GDM has spent much time and effort organizing religious services, celebrations, and Quran classes that are interpreted into American Sign Language (ASL). They also support the development of an ASL translation of the Quran. International conferences specifically for Deaf Muslims have been held in Istanbul (2006) and Doha, Qatar (2013), and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2016). One issue of the 2013 conference was the introduction of a sign language dictionary in order to standardize common Islamic terms—e.g., those terms that are spoken in Arabic by non-Deaf Muslims regardless of their nationality or language. In 2014 the book “Deaf Muslims Searching for Islam” written by Mahmood was initially only sold as an e-book publication, but following major interest became available in hard copy. The international media network, Al Jazeera, interviewed the president of GDM, who is Deaf, in ASL, on the *Talk to Al Jazeera* show in 2014. An ASL interpreter appeared on-screen as a post-production element for the spoken English thus bringing the story of the struggle for access to Deaf and non-Deaf audiences alike. With these national and international happenings, it seems that perhaps we are seeing a tipping point in the quest for communication access by Deaf Muslims.

Methods

Due to the disenfranchised nature of the Deaf Muslim population in our areas, we used a purposive snowball sample for our interviews. Individuals in each category who were already known to the researchers were interviewed and then asked to suggest further respondents. The two researchers are involved at different levels in the Muslim community that was approached for this research. Both are interpreters who work in Muslim settings. One is married into a Muslim family, but is not a Muslim, and the other converted to Islam at a young age. This gives the authors both insight into and access to the specific population represented in the research. The researchers interviewed five different groups: Deaf Muslims, Deaf Muslim leaders, parents of Deaf Muslims, Imams and other Masjid officials, and interpreters who work with Deaf Muslims. The total sample size was 59 interviewees with the following n-size for each group: Deaf Muslims, 30; Deaf Muslim leaders, 6; parents of Deaf Muslims, 8; Imams and Masjid officials, 5; and interpreters working in Muslim settings, 10. These participants were located in the metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Minneapolis, Toronto, and Washington, DC.

Both the consent form and the interview protocol were presented in spoken English or in a digital format as an ASL translation, based on the interviewee's preference¹. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, with all or part of the interview being recorded (when permission was granted by the interviewee).

Content analysis of the data was conducted using conceptual analysis and Key Words In Context (KWIC) recording only the existence of the concept, not its frequency. This allowed for the discovery of trends both within and across groups, as well as the existence of notable differences. Interviews were KWIC analyzed informally (see Bernard and Ryan, 2010) to find repeated themes. No count was kept of the number of times a salient word was found in any

¹ It should be noted that although this research was not conducted under the auspices of an institution, the informed consent form developed by the researchers is comparable to those used under university IRB direction

given interview, but if a majority, or a large minority of respondents in one group mentioned that same concept (even once) it was noted as a theme.

Results

Several of the questions on the interview protocol yielded pronounced themes that were consistent—and at times unanimous—within groups. Several key between-group differences were found.

Barriers to Access

Respondents were asked to identify barriers to access.

Hearing respondents from both the Masjid officials and Imams group and the parents of Deaf Muslims group noted financial resources, literally meaning they did not know where to get the money to pay interpreters. Although some events were interpreted with pro-bono services, not all were. These groups also mentioned logistics in their responses across the board (details on what ‘logistics’ meant can be found in the discussion section).

A majority of Deaf Muslims and interpreters mentioned finances and logistics as well, but also noted attitude or philosophy of non-Deaf Muslims as a barrier.

Additionally, several Deaf Muslim leaders noted some form of politics or power as a barrier.

Interpreters reported a lack of awareness on the part of Muslim leaders and organizations as a major barrier.

Gaining Access

Respondents were asked how they went about trying to gain access to their religion.

Deaf Muslim leaders said that organizing was the approach most used to assert influence on getting the accommodations needed. Parents addressed organizing as well, but more for information sharing and support rather than trying to approach the problem collectively.

Parents also noted that they took it upon themselves to both request and sometimes pay out-of-pocket for interpreters when the family wanted to attend religious ceremonies or events.

The interpreters noted it was important to repeatedly contact Muslim organizations when events were pending to be sure they provided interpreters to make an event accessible. Deaf

Muslims also noted, though not unanimously, that technology was used in some cases for access, including videos of interpreted Islamic classes that can be found on YouTube.

The responding interpreters were asked to detail the actions they took in securing accommodations. The ten interpreters interviewed, reported a variety of strategies. Each interpreter mentioned having used at least one (and in most cases all) of these approaches: (1) offering pro-bono or “low bono” (i.e. reduced rate) services even when the job was going to be challenging and arduous; (2) assisting the process by offering to coordinate the hiring and scheduling of interpreters at no additional cost; (3) being an advocate by personally making contact when Deaf Muslims were not getting a response about interpreting services; (4) spending time explaining the need for accommodations as well as standard practices for sign language interpreting such as; working in a team, needing preparation materials, etc.

Solutions

When asked to consider what could solve the problem of not having communication access to Islam, the responses from Deaf Muslims, Deaf Muslim leaders and interpreters shared a common theme. These groups noted that more interpreters—more male interpreters, more Muslim interpreters, and in a perfect world more male Muslim interpreters—were needed. This is because often in Muslim settings the men and women are separated and it is unorthodox and/or sometimes uncomfortable if the interpreter and the Deaf consumer are not of the same gender. Both groups also identified that if there were no Muslim interpreters available, non-Muslim interpreters needed to be trained not only in the content of the religion, but also in the culture of the Muslim community. It should be noted that -- true to this issue -- nine out of the ten interpreters interviewed were female, and seven were non-Muslim.

Beyond this across-group theme, Deaf Muslim leaders also reiterated the need to organize in order to collectively make Masjid officials respond to requests for services. Deaf Muslims responded with the need for transportation and for advertising to ensure people are aware that interpreting will be provided.

An additional theme from the interpreter respondents was the need for respect for interpreters and the interpreting process.

Discussion

Barriers to Access

By collecting data from a variety of stakeholders involved in making Islam accessible for Deaf Muslims, we were able to see some divergence between key players. For example, both the hearing groups (Masjid officials and parents) and the Deaf Muslims noted logistics as a barrier. However, their definitions of those logistics were not similar. For example, Masjid officials spoke to logistical barriers as being unfamiliar with finding and hiring interpreters. An example of a logistical barrier noted by the Deaf Muslim respondents included logistics during an event, e.g., dealing with gender separation which left a female interpreter unable to stand in the location where she could be seen by all of the Deaf Muslims.

Further, the fact that the Deaf Muslims included the issue of “attitude” in their responses to what barriers exist is interesting as well as troubling. One thought is that the slow response on the part of Imams and the Masjid community translates as attitudinal to Deaf Muslims when it could be linked to an issue of logistics, such as not knowing where to begin. In contrast, perhaps the perceived attitude issue goes unnoticed by Masjid officials because it is part of the privilege of direct access that hearing Muslims have by virtue of being hearing, a privilege of which they may not even be aware.

Deaf Muslim leaders were the only respondents to mention politics and power issues. The power issue was defined in light of the general need to organize (strength in numbers), but there were also two distinct political issues mentioned. The first was the politics of the Masjid. Deaf Muslim leaders noted the importance of knowing whom to approach about accommodations. One respondent shared about having worked with an Imam for some time who expressed being supportive of providing interpreters for Deaf Muslims. As time went by nothing ever came of the requests for interpreting services. Eventually it was discovered that while the Imam may have the final word, there was another official who had served at the Masjid for many years, and he was the person who had the power to actually make things happen.

A second facet of the politics mentioned by Deaf leaders was on a more global scale. They noted that when trying to get funding for interpreting services in the Masjid or trying to secure financial support for Deaf activities, they were vying for attention amidst challenging world politics. One could wonder if the Masjid and the individual Muslims who are members of the community will give money in order to accommodate the needs of the Deaf Muslim community when pressing international issues command their attention, such as civil war, military coups, or other situations affecting Muslims as a whole across the globe?

Gaining Access

Though Deaf Muslim leaders and some Deaf Muslim respondents noted organizing as an approach to gaining access, they saw this on different scales. Deaf leaders believed in the need for an organization with as many Deaf Muslims involved as possible, to show a collective need. While not noted by a majority of Deaf Muslims, several addressed how just banding together as a group of two, three, or four could accomplish the goal of access. A Deaf Muslim college student shared his experience of establishing a chapter of the Muslim Student Association on campus. Later, this same student, with the help of two friends, approached an Imam and secured interpreting services for Jummah (Friday) prayers at the local Masjid. This respondent proudly noted that interpreting services are still being offered at that Masjid more than ten years later.

Related to the approach of organizing and collective effort, hearing parents of Deaf Muslims indicated it would help to have a network of parents who share the same concern. In this case, organizing to use numbers as a force was not the goal. Rather, organizing was seen as a way to share information and offer support to one another. Parents, when answering how they gained access for their children, mentioned that they took it upon themselves to request—in some cases directly contacting an interpreter—and pay for interpreters for events the family wished to attend. All of the parents who were interviewed were immigrants, and perhaps the ideas of collectively fighting for access rights and of ensuring that the party responsible for the accommodation pays—both distinctively American ideas—were not a part of their schema.

When interpreters mentioned access being gained through persistence in getting Muslim organizations to provide interpreters, a personal anecdote or two most often followed

the comment. One interpreter recalled interpreting at an event featuring distinguished Muslim scholars. At the end of the program, a young Deaf woman wanted to approach one of the scholars, presumably to ask a question or discuss a point from the thought-provoking lecture. The interpreter was surprised when, instead, the young woman asked the Sheikh if he would be attending or presenting at an upcoming national Muslim conference, and if so could he please contact someone about providing interpreting services. She explained that she had e-mailed a number of individuals involved in coordinating the conference but had never heard back over a number of weeks. Several interpreters indicated they had been approached by Deaf consumers in this way and had accepted the role of co-advocating for Deaf Muslims' attempts to get interpreting services. One interpreter shared that she had, on behalf of Deaf potential conference attendees, request accessibility via the "contact us" e-mail link on the website for an upcoming Muslim conference, but to no avail. After Deaf Muslims indicated they wanted to attend but were getting no assurance of interpreting services, the interpreter then tried to advocate by making direct contact with the conference organization, starting the conversation to be hired as an interpreter at the event.

All interpreters shared their views about their role, noting that it involved a high degree of advocacy when interpreting for Deaf Muslims. Some interpreters admitted, abashedly, that they had gone beyond what they felt was best practice, perhaps bending their own ethics. However, they believed it was the right thing to do given the barriers Deaf Muslims are up against. One interpreter, who is Muslim, noted that when she sees an announcement of an event in the Muslim community that she thinks Deaf Muslims would be interested in attending, she contacts the event organizer and inquires if interpreting services will be provided. When the organizer says to be willing to provide such a service, she alerts the local Deaf Muslim community about the event and encourages people to attend. While it is not a given that she will be interpreting the event, that is often the outcome. Likewise, if organizers of an event reach out to secure interpreting services, she does all she can to ensure that Deaf Muslims

attend. This has included offering to carpool with Deaf Muslim attendees if this increases the likelihood that they will attend².

Solutions

The Deaf Muslims, Deaf Muslim leaders, and interpreters all addressed the issue of needing more Muslim interpreters. More than one respondent joked about the fact that sometimes Imams will say the interpreter must be Muslim and male, a comment at times met with laughter by Deaf Muslims. Imams do not realize the paucity of male sign language interpreters in the US or the dearth of Muslim interpreters on top of that.

Deaf Muslims listed advertising of interpreted events as one solution. This is actually in line with the unorthodox behavior of the interpreter³ who looks out for events of interest and alerts Deaf Muslims.

Beyond alerting the Deaf Muslim community about interpreted events, more than one (though not a majority) of the Deaf Muslims suggested the Masjid should offer transportation to interpreted events. They noted that local public transportation was inadequate and that the Masjid should understand that Deaf Muslims are disenfranchised and geographically dispersed across the metropolitan area. These respondents felt that because they often struggle economically, the Muslim community could make it possible for them to attend interpreted events via transportation.

Both Imams and Deaf Muslim leaders raised the tenets of Islam that address righting the injustices and inequalities in the world. Though, not thematic (based on our conceptual content analysis and KWIC – see Methods section), such issues were noted as tools for negotiating access. The issue of other major religions—namely Judaism and Christianity—being far ahead of Islam in terms of including Deaf followers in their religious communities was brought up repeatedly in interviews. This was not in answer to any question, but rather offered within the environment of the semi-structured interviews. The idea that other religions might proselytize

² In the United States it would not be ethical for an interpreter to seek out paid work by encouraging Deaf people to attend an event that s/he then offers to interpret. Likewise, it is against best practice to share rides between the interpreter and the Deaf consumer.

³ As noted above, for sign language interpreters in the United States to “drum up business” for oneself by inquiring about interpreting services that you then offer, and being sure Deaf people attend so that services are offered and you are paid could be considered unethical.

to disconnected Deaf Muslims was seen as both a tragedy and an incentive. Deaf leaders used this fact to emphasize the urgency of welcoming Deaf people into the Masjid and the Ummah. Whether or not it is an urban legend, several respondents cited situations where Muslims had converted to Christianity due to having easier access to the religion. Indeed, several Deaf Muslims shared stories of having attended interpreted Christian services and joined youth groups of Deaf or signing Christians and even requesting their parents' permission to convert.

Conclusion

The interviews conducted as part of this research reveal a complex set of barriers and strategies involved in the movement for Deaf Muslims to gain access to Islam. Some of the differences in viewpoints between groups may be hurdles if they remain unknown or misunderstood. For instance, the fact that Deaf Muslims feel there is an attitude on the part of the Muslim community that is at the core of their struggle, an attitude the Muslim community apparently does not recognize. Hopefully, the results of this research will create an opportunity to address this issue.

As discussed above, the problem of Deaf Muslims accessing Islam currently seems to be at a tipping point. The primary stakeholder groups related to Deaf Muslims accessing Islam are aware of the barriers they face. There is in-group agreement on these barriers, but definitions differ amongst the various groups. Likewise, different groups see different strategies as the way to success. One issue noted by all the groups—with unanimity among Deaf Muslims, Imams, parents of Deaf Muslims and interpreters—is the need for more, and more suitable, interpreters. This is a daunting task, and one that has not been addressed to date with any global approach.

An additional note: When this research was presented at the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters conference in 2015, the presentation was attended by interpreters from a number of countries, none of whom were Muslim but all of whom were interpreting in Muslim settings and were engaged in similar struggles and efforts to alleviate them. Again, the fact that the issue of access is being addressed in a number of nations shows that perhaps Deaf

Muslims are on the verge of achieving greater access to Islam. Given the positive response to the presentation, one of the researchers suggested the use of social media, in this case a Facebook page, to support one another internationally.

This momentum for Deaf Muslims gaining their human right to freedom of religion is going to require actions on the part of all stakeholders. Deaf Muslim organizations can work in partnership with interpreters to put together a more formal training for interpreters who are interested in interpreting Muslim events but need knowledge of content and culture. In 2014 a leading Deaf news and Deaf blog site, The Limping Chicken, notes that a model has been developed by Tariq Mahmood who trains interpreters in this way across the UK⁴, so there is room for international collaboration.

Deaf Muslim organizations should also continue their work as a collective expression of the Deaf Muslim community's needs. During interviews many Deaf Muslims noted their access to Islam through such organizations had been life changing.

Masjids could take the suggestions offered by Deaf Muslims and be sure to advertise when interpretation will be provided and also work to provide transportation if that is a barrier. Beyond that, Masjids could look to their own Deaf community to see what needs are locally unique.

Parents of Deaf Muslims can try to network with each other via the Deaf Muslim organizations, and maybe find solutions to the issues they face.

Interpreters who interpret in Muslim settings need to work to educate the Muslim community, Masjid officials, and those who plan Muslim events about standard practices for providing accessible communication. Perhaps this means developing a "how to" checklist that can be kept at the local Mosque ready for use when an event is being planned; or sent to the planners of major Muslim conferences at the start of their planning season.

Stakeholder groups all working together may lead to what is on the other side of the tipping point—a clear path for Deaf Muslims to Islam.

⁴ <http://limpingchicken.com/2014/07/10/tariq-mahmood-deaf-muslims-searching-for-islam/>

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Expectations of Deaf Professionals Utilizing Designated Interpreters

Katherine W. Vance & Lindsay C. Nickels

Introduction

A combination of legislative and educational opportunities have changed the landscape for deaf professionals and deaf pre-professionals seeking employment in career paths previously unforged by members of the deaf community. As a result, the role of the interpreter has changed causing a shift from a more generalized community interpreter to one which functions closely with a deaf professional or deaf pre-professional in a specialized role and designated capacity. This small-scale study considered this need by collecting quantitative and qualitative data from deaf professionals regarding their expectations of interpreters and how they implement their services in a professional context. This data was collected in order to ascertain a better understanding of how these individuals envision their interactions with interpreters and what the implications of said expectations have on the role of the interpreter. This data was coupled with comparable quantitative and qualitative data solicited from deaf students in a university/pre-professional setting. The purpose of these research endeavors was to define expectations of deaf professionals and to identify improved ways to train and potentially employ future interpreters in a university context for students pursuing professional degrees. The results of this research suggest a revision to deaf professional—designated interpreter relationships and an adoption of a more teleological ethical stance.

Literature Review

United States (U.S.) civil rights legislation has been momentous in breaking down barriers to education and employment for deaf and hard of hearing individuals (Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; PL-94-142 1975; Rehabilitation Act 1973). As deaf and hard of hearing individuals gain access to institutions of higher education, more graduates are receiving master and doctorate degrees (Christiansen and Barnartt 1995) resulting in higher numbers of deaf professionals (Kushalnagar and Rashid 2008). While the number of deaf professionals continues to proliferate in the workforce, the demands and functions of signed language interpreters working with the deaf professional population are also changing. Currently, these interpreters only possess general certification, which only guarantees they meet the minimum professional standards necessary to perform in interpretation assignments. Despite the fact that interpreters functioning in the context for a deaf professional hold specialized knowledge and skills needed to render effective interpretations, specialized training, education, and certification related to this discipline are not offered.

A new philosophical model has evolved in the field of signed language interpreting: the Deaf Professional-Designated Interpreter (DP-DI) Model (Hauser and Hauser 2008). The DP-DI Model represents a deaf professional (DP) and a signed language interpreter “who have worked together for a significant period of time [and] have developed some specific interpreting techniques, most likely without realizing it” (Hauser and Hauser 2008, p. 3). The levels of trust and familiarity in the DP-DI model vary quite distinctly from a non-designated role. To those unfamiliar with the designated interpreter (DI) role, it can be perceived as though the interpreter is making ethical violations or breaching confidentiality (Hauser et al. 2008; Kale and Larson 1998). DPs have shifted into a position of power where they are content experts and are controlling the communication event; thus, altering the dynamics of the DP-DI relationship (Napier, Carmichael, and Wiltshire 2008).

The specific selection process DPs utilize to select DIs is unclear. While Hauser et al. (2008) suggests that skill is important, the authors imply that it is not the most important

trait. On the contrary, Stanton (2011) stresses the importance of skill; particularly while working for a deaf lawyer whose position makes it necessary for legal terminology to be rendered literally in an interpretation. General traits found in a DI which are necessary for maintaining a DP-DI relationship have been identified through anecdotal literature, (i.e., interpreting competency, trust, loyalty, respect, teamwork, and knowledge of the discipline) (Cook 2004; Hauser et al. 2008; Kale and Larson 1998), but empirical studies have yet to show the priority in which DPs employ these traits during selection of DIs. Further research is needed in order to effectively train and prepare DIs to be members of a DP-DI team that can function in a manner that benefits the professional and allows him/her to be a successful professional.

In the context of this study, a deaf professional “refers to any deaf or hard of hearing employees, trainees, or interns who require interpreting services to access the level of communication needed for them to learn, perform their job responsibilities, or both” (Hauser and Hauser 2008, p. 4). Additionally, in the context of this study, a designated interpreter refers to an interpreter who has worked with a DP for a significant period of time resulting in the following competencies: maintaining specialized knowledge of the context in which they function, understanding the various power relationships at work between deaf and non-deaf colleagues, maintaining high competencies in American Sign Language (ASL) and English, and developing a strong relationship of trust which often leads the interpreter away from a position of neutrality (Cook 2004; Hauser et al. 2008; Kale and Larson 1998). The research question for this study was: what traits do deaf professionals look for when they employ a designated interpreter? The goal of the study was that the findings may have potential impact on the way that DIs are hired by interpreting agencies or other coordinators and how interpreter education may need to be altered to meet the ever-growing demands of this particular population.

Methodology

This research project explores the perspectives and opinions of the DP population as they relate to the selection of DI. Although our research targeted the DP population spanning several countries, our respondents were only from North America and as such this

study is placed in a North American context. Grounded in the framework of social constructivism (see Crotty 1998; Creswell 2003 and others), our study aims to discover the varied views of our participants in order to get a better understanding of expectations and desired traits that are commonly sought after when DPs work with DIs.

Chiefly focused on explicating the experiences and opinions of our research participants, the design of this study begins with an element of quantitative inquiry: the survey. A survey was fitting for our study so we could establish the traditional expectations concerning the use of DIs, the set of which we had previously learned about through our own experience and anecdotal evidence from other DPs and DIs. In general, surveys are useful in studies that seek to investigate the very thoughts and feelings we are interested in; however, the rigidity of a series of close-ended questions does not afford the participants an opportunity to expand on their own personal expectations or experiences that may have led them to their selection criteria and process. Purely quantitative elements of inquiry are additionally problematic in that the knowledge we had and used in the development of this study is likely incomplete, leaving the potential for us to miss out on important information and concerns that we may not have anticipated.

It is for these reasons that we decided to include a fairly robust element of qualitative inquiry into our survey design. Through the inclusion of qualitative inquiry, manifest in a collection of open-ended questions (see section on survey design), we as the researchers were able to use the insights gathered from the participants to not only inform our analysis of this limited study, but to also inform our future research endeavors by revealing possible gaps in our survey design.

Whereas a survey research approach may be best for ascertaining the information necessary to fuel this and future phases of this study, it is also important to be cautious in drawing conclusions from this data seeing as self-reported data is not always the most valid or reliable means of arriving at answers to research questions. With that said, self-reported data is the best option we have for gathering the targeted information seeing as we cannot do so through other means such as observation or ethnography due to ethical standards and expectations of confidentiality within interpreting settings, which would make getting access quite difficult. Moreover, we are mainly interested in the insights and opinions of DPs, data that is best sought through self-reported data.

Since the number of DPs is still growing and is not necessarily concentrated in one location, we do not have direct access to a large number of them. Therefore, we decided to use a snowball method of sampling, which allowed us to gain access to professional and social networks outside of our own personal connections that contained individuals who would satisfy the eligibility criteria. We did this both through contacting people in our own individual networks, as well as through larger entities that would have access to potential participants (i.e. National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Deaf professionals network on LinkedIn, etc.). Using a digital platform for the survey creation and distribution granted us the opportunity to reach a much larger pool of people resulting in a more representative sample of DPs. A digital platform carries with it some positives and negatives, the former of which include an increased functionality and ability to track statistical data, while the latter refers to the inability to track whether or not the survey link was passed on to a larger group after being sent to the initial contact.

Open coding was used in the analysis of qualitative inquiry elements. We each went through the coding process separately, through which we interpreted and conceptualized the data in a way that allowed us to uncover relationships in the raw data, making it more statistically analyzable. Individually, we were able to identify emergent themes and striking elements in the responses and compare those items with one another before determining how to present the results.

Survey Design

The survey used consisted of 26 questions in total (7 demographic questions, 6 open-ended questions, and 13 close-ended questions). Two surveys were used; the wording for the DP survey was slightly altered to create a separate survey for deaf pre-professionals (DPPs, who consist mostly of university students, especially those in professional tracks, i.e. medicine, engineering, education, etc.) in order for the questions to be more fitting for the pre-professional setting. Many of the questions remained exactly the same, so in essence, only one survey was created. Through these questions, the survey gathered information about the frequency with which the participants used interpreters, asking about number of days per week and number of hours per day they use interpreters, as well as in what capacity (i.e. rendering from spoken to signed language or vice versa). Following the questions concerning frequency of use, the survey asked about previously identified traits of

DIs. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 16 traits on a five-point scale (i.e. not important, somewhat important, not considered, important, or very important) when selecting an interpreter for the pre-professional or professional setting (16 traits can be seen in table 1).

These 16 traits were then broken down into 4 categories (see table 1 for categories and their respective traits) and participants were asked to rank the 4 traits in order of importance (1-4, most important to least important). These categories are representative of the larger, overarching characteristics expected of working interpreters. Subsequent to ranking said characteristics, participants were given an opportunity to explain which trait was most important to them and their reasoning for selecting that trait through an open-ended response. The hope was that we might ascertain some further elucidation on the responses given in the preceding sections, or some unexpected information for us to use in future phases.

Category	Relevant Traits
Proficiency/Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASL to English proficiency (or generally signed to spoken) • English to ASL proficiency (or generally spoken to signed) • Specialized knowledge • Level of education
Professional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism • Teamwork • Easily liked • Trustworthiness
Professional Demeanor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty • Respect • Adaptability • Positive attitude
Physical Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness • Attire • Gender

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age
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Table 1: Interpreter traits and respective categories

The survey also included a short section describing common scenarios in a pre-professional/professional environment (depending on which survey they completed) where the deaf pre-professional (DPP) or DP may desire the use of an interpreter. Participants were asked about the three most important traits for each of these scenarios. Establishing these different contexts and again soliciting information about the participants' preferred traits allowed us to see if there was any consistency among popular choices or if, instead, different traits were chosen each time. We were also able to compare these selections with the ranking section to identify discrepancies. This was followed by a series of open-ended questions (see table 3).

Although simple in its design, this survey was an appropriate starting point for a multiphasic research study, which is our intention. It provided a good baseline from which we will be able build subsequent, more refined, stages of inquiry. In particular, the open-ended questions were helpful in uncovering items and considerations we may have missed in our initial design while simultaneously retrieving expansion on the participants' choice of traits. These qualitative inquiry elements worked to ensure that we were able to access the true feelings and opinions of our participants without having fed them the answer through a set of limited options.

Data

Our participants came from a wide variety of demographics. Participants ranged from their 20s to their 50s and resided all across the U.S. and Canada. Similarly, our sample of participants represented a great deal of diversity in professions: medicine, information technology, post-secondary education, art and design, etc. While not a large enough sample to allow for generalizability, the sample was at least diverse enough to provide an assortment of perspectives on working with DIs. The data came from a total of 25 participants over both groups (21 DPs and 4 DPPs), with 14 completed (11 DPs and 3 DPPs) survey responses. The 11 participants making up this discrepancy include those individuals

who either completed the quantitative portion of the survey while opting out of the qualitative elements, or chose to answer questions at random but did not complete the survey in its entirety.

Analysis & Discussion

The results collected in this survey, while insightful to the process employed by DPs and DPPs utilizing DIs, are not generalizable due to the sample and response size. Nonetheless, the results present in the collected responses provided the researchers with empirical data about the priority given to characteristics held by DIs.

Demographics

In order to get a sense of our participants, the survey included questions at the end asking for demographic information. Participants were not required to respond to these questions in order to submit their survey responses. These questions included the participants' gender identification, the majority of whom identified as female (64%) and age, responses to which ranged from 20 to '50s'. An overwhelming percentage of our participants identified as 'Deaf' (82%), and only a couple identified as 'deaf' or 'other.' As mentioned in the previous section, our participants came from a range of locations across the U.S. and Canada and from a variety of professions (including education, information technology, medicine, and several others). The majority of our participants had a bachelor's degree as the highest degree earned (55%), though we also had some with master's degrees, medical degrees, and PhDs. Participants mostly used ASL as their preferred communication mode in the workplace (64%), though some chose to use an English sign system, spoken or written English, or other modes

Frequency of Use

As mentioned, respondents were polled about frequency of use of a DI in the workplace or pre-professional setting. The majority of respondents from both surveys (76%) noted that DIs were utilized for more than 10 hours per week, with a majority (65%) noting that DIs were utilized on a daily basis. While all respondents utilized interpreters for interpretations rendered from a spoken language to a signed language, the responses varied

for how often the participant utilized an interpreter to render an interpretation from a signed to a spoken language, where 7% reported never utilizing an interpreter in this capacity and 21% reported rarely doing so. An analysis of the demographic and identity data provided by the respondents implies a correlation with an individuals' comfort level utilizing his or her spoken voice as well as mastery of the spoken language, i.e. English. Frequent contact and provision of interpreting services has been shown through this study to impact the priorities of traits inherent to DIs employed in these contexts.

Scenarios for the use of DIs

When presented with specific scenarios for utilizing a DI, the ranking of traits varied. The traits presented can be broken down into four categories (see table 1). Variations occurred across scenarios as expected; for example, the prioritization of a given trait differed during a one-on-one meeting with a supervisor compared to a presentation at a professional conference. In respect to the categories found in table 1 above, the highest ranked traits for both DPs and DPPs (in no particular order) were: interpreting ability; trustworthiness; adaptability; and attire. Worth noting is the expectation of adaptability in professional demeanor. Both through proposed scenarios and self-reported data in open-ended questions, respondents indicated the importance of adaptability as it was frequently mentioned as something that is valued in a DI. However, since none of the traits were explicitly defined it is possible that not all respondents view "adaptability" in a similar way. The identification of the frequency it occurred through responses has led the researchers to determine further research is needed to understand the expectations of DPs around an interpreter's degree of adaptability.

Ranking of Traits

The ranking of traits in table 2 below was determined by calculating the means of individual traits and then ordering these means from lowest to highest, with a mean of 1 being the highest possible ranking, and 4 being the lowest possible ranking. Since the ranking was determined through means, it is possible in some cases that the trait ranked highest may have also been ranked lowest by other participants, and vice versa. As the data will show (see table 2), no trait was ranked highest or lowest by all participants; there was always some degree of variation. Additionally, the means of some traits were tied, which

can be seen in the table; however, those traits more consistently marked with higher rankings were given the rank so deserving.

Professional Survey DI Trait Rankings				
	1	2	3	4
Proficiency/comp.	Signed to spoken (2.18)	Spoken to signed (2.18)	Spec. knowledge (2.45)	Level of education (3.18)
Prof. behavior	Professionalism (1.46)	Teamwork (2.38)	Trustworthiness (2.69)	Easily liked (3.46)
Prof. demeanor	Respect (1.69)	Positive attitude (2.46)	Adaptability (2.54)	Loyalty (3.31)
Phys. characteristics	Attire (1.73)	Age (2.64)	Attractiveness (2.73)	Gender (2.91)
Pre-Professional Survey DI Trait Rankings				
	1	2	3	4
Proficiency/comp.	Spoken to signed (2.00)	Signed to spoken (2.50)	Spec. knowledge (2.50)	Level of education (3.00)
Prof. behavior	Trustworthiness (2.00)	Teamwork (2.00)	Professionalism (2.25)	Easily liked (3.75)
Prof. demeanor	Adaptability (1.75)	Respect (2.00)	Positive attitude (3.00)	Loyalty (3.25)
Phys. characteristics	Attire (1.50)	Age (2.25)	Gender (3.00)	Attractiveness (3.25)

Table 2: Ranking of traits results

While there is some similarity in the ranking of traits between the DPs and the DPPs, these results indicate that there may be some difference in expectations. The difference presented in this data could be the result of a difference in experience, where it would be assumed that DPs have much more experience in working with DIs than their DPP

counterparts and so their expectations, or preferred traits, may have evolved. Of course, this is not necessarily the case but is a possible deduction based on the results. Perhaps the fact that they are different simply tells us that there is a need to consider the needs of these two groups separately; or that our next stage of research should seek to investigate the differences that exist between these two groups in the selection of DIs.

One of the more interesting findings from this data is the surprisingly low rank of adaptability for the DP surveys. Although adaptability was noted as a common theme throughout this survey (noted in the other subsections of the analysis, i.e. the scenarios for the use of DIs and the open-ended questions), it appears to fall below the traits of respect and positive attitude. This does not hold true for the DPP survey, where it is the highest ranked trait. There is some consistency among the responses for physical characteristics and the lowest ranked choices are comparable as well. Those traits with a mean below 2.00 were of the most highest ranked (meaning more participants chose them as the most important trait in that category), making professionalism, respect, adaptability, and attire the interpreter traits most likely to be sought after by DPs and DPPs, at least in comparison with the other traits from those categories. The category of proficiency/competency is more balanced in responses, likely indicating that all of these traits are deemed important, with the exception of level of education, which appears to be the trait of least necessity in consideration with the others.

Open-ended Questions

Outlined in Table 1-3 below are the emergent themes which resulted from the use of open coding for the open-ended questions posed in the survey.

Survey Question	Emergent Themes
What factors would you consider when selecting one [interpreter] over [another]?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Specialized knowledge • Proficiency/competency
What influences your decision to no longer utilize an interpreter in the workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational demands • Lack of professionalism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude
What are your expectations of an interpreter’s ethical decision making when working with you as a DI versus a community interpreter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness • Decisions aligned with the DP/DPP • DP/DPP centered decisions
Describe the significance of physical characteristics as they relate to your selection of DIs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection/representative of the DP/DPP • Attire • Personal appearance/grooming • Physical stamina
Describe the importance of the personal relationship you share with your DI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for strong personal relationship • Trustworthiness • Comfort level

Table 1-3: Survey questions and emergent themes

Through the analysis of this data, the researchers found that the data collected did not show that attitude and support of the Deaf community were of utmost importance during the selection of an interpreter. Rather, the selection of a DI is based more on qualities such as professionalism, proficiency, adaptability and the like. The open-ended responses reinforce data collected in the quantitative portions of the survey and suggest that there are differences in DP’s/DPP’s expectations of a DI as opposed to a community interpreter. While the sample population was small, the responses indicate that the DP recognizes an attachment to the DI; this so-called attachment results in others viewing the DI as a reflection of the DP, thus requiring a particular level of trustworthiness and adaptability to be able to accurately represent the DP no matter the scenario.

Interestingly, the responses provided surrounding the significance of physical characteristics in the selection of a DI were minimal and did not suggest any strong value for said characteristics. In a professional setting, it might be assumed that physical

characteristics carry more weight especially considering the significance our participants place on their DI being a 'reflection' of them self. Self-reported data is limited and it can be inferred that respondents were unable to give an unbiased response given the format of the survey design. However, physical stamina was mentioned as a desired trait by one of the professionals as he/she prefers an interpreter who can "keep up with" the physical demands of the work. This idea seems to be in direct correlation that the physical characteristics of the interpreter are a direct reflection of the DP.

Conclusion

Understanding the expectations of DPs seeking DIs is important for the future role of the interpreter. The results of this research will take us one step closer to reimagining the role of the interpreter, affording interpreters and interpreter educators the opportunity to identify improved methods of training and employing future interpreters both in professional contexts, as well as university contexts with students pursuing professional degrees.

The results of this small-scale study suggest that adaptability is a highly valued trait in the role of a DI. Adaptability, appearing in the responses for every section of the distributed survey, is undoubtedly seen as a trait highly valued by DPs and DPPs. With that said, it is important to note that the survey did not provide a definition of adaptability and it was evident from the responses that many individuals understood this trait differently (i.e. some referred to adaptability in terms of logistics and environmental demands, some referenced linguistic adaptability, others were looking for interpreters who were adaptable in terms of compatibility and teamwork, while some simply did not explain adaptability at all). Regardless of that fact, the ubiquity of this trait in the responses is evidence of its significance, though more research is likely needed to flesh out an exact realization of what this concept is.

Furthermore, the results presented here suggest a clarification to DP-DI relationships, favoring the adoption of a more teleological ethical stance, where ethical decision making is determined by the situation and desired outcomes as opposed to strict adherence to rules or tenets of a code of ethics. The responses from this survey showed an

apparent preference for a more “Deaf-centered” approach to decision making in interpreting settings. While a relationship with a community interpreter is often short-lived and characteristic of deontological approach, where the interpreter makes decisions based on guidelines provided to them based on their respective Code of Professional Conduct, a DI is expected to understand the unique decision-making protocol that is understood as part of being in that particular environment. This is not meant to imply that the dedicated interpreter’s ethics are inferior or superior to that of a community interpreter, but rather requires additional skills that involve being able to effectively read the situation, know the DP and his/her preferences, and be autonomous and adaptable in their approach to decision-making.

Somewhat related to the adoption of a teleological approach to decision-making, the results indicated a predilection for good personal relationships with DIs. Based on the responses, having a good personal relationship with one’s DI, even being friends outside of work, can cut down on the anxiety of the interpreting situation, leading to additional comfort with the interpreter and therefore a more equipped team (DP-DI team). The hope is that this comfort facilitates the interpreting process, helping it to run more smoothly.

Lastly, it was apparent in the responses to the survey that a certain level of skill and knowledge is expected of DIs. In this way, just being friendly and adaptable will not cut it, as is often claimed in the interpreting profession (i.e. skill can be taught but attitude cannot). Adaptability was indeed a highly valued trait, but there was always a minimal requirement of having a highly trained, knowledgeable, and proficient interpreter.

Limitations of the study

This investigation, while rich in its data and insight, should be considered cautiously. As a first step in a much larger research endeavor, it is important to note some limitations to this survey study. The main limitations include: sampling method, sample size, and lack of definitions for traits. The sampling method chosen for this study (snowball sampling) does not afford the researchers the opportunity to know exactly where the surveys end up as they are being forwarded to large networks of people. While this is not ideal, perhaps falling into the hands of individuals who do not satisfy our study’s eligibility requirements, there is currently no better means for distributing this survey. The sample population from this

study is obviously too small for the results to be generalizable. However, they do serve as a useful springboard for future refinements.

Also, since we had no explicit definitions of the listed traits, there is a possibility for inconsistent results. On the positive side, this foible will likely lead to better, more consistent results in future research since we can improve upon this for the next stage of this study either through soliciting definitions from the participants or at minimum providing explicit definitions for each trait. It is often argued that self-reported data, such as what was collected in this research, is not always the most reliable source; but in this case we believe it is the only way to uncover the answer to our research question since an ethnographic study, perhaps yielding more rich data, is not really possible.

Implications

The data from this study has revealed implications worth noting and considering during the hiring and education process of signed language interpreters. First, during the screening and hiring process of interpreters, the responsible person (if the DI is not being directly hired by a DP or DPP) should take into consideration those traits which a DP or DPP consider to be most important given a particular work environment or scheduled interpreting request. Consideration for which interpreter is hired should include whether or not the traits identified as being most important or given more priority are present in the interpreter's overall skill set and personality. In essence, if adaptability is as highly valued as suggested in this study, DIs hired should be able to be placed in a variety of contexts with ease and without concern from the DP.

Secondly, as the landscape of the interpreting field in this North American context changes with the addition of DPs, interpreter training and education programs must take into consideration the proposed traits from this study during the selection and screening process of candidates. Additionally, measures should be put in place to be able to determine a student's ability to adapt to various situations and potential for utilizing context-based ethical reasoning (Dean and Pollard 2011). Interpreter educators should also consider the need to include teaching modules centered on the DP-DI model to better prepare students for future interpreting circumstances.

Future Research

Additional research is needed in order to better define which traits DPs look for when they employ DIs. Future research could include a more refined, second round of surveys to collect data from a larger sample size. This survey would outline definitions which were identified as limitations from the original survey as well as include the consideration of race or ethnicity in the category of physical appearance. Additionally, semi-structured interviews could be conducted with participants from this stage of the study in order to glean a more robust definition of “adaptability,” as well as other traits possibly omitted or poorly defined in the original study. Semi-structured interviews would also allow us to document detailed opinions concerning ethical stance of DIs in a DP context. Lastly, further research is needed to determine if physical characteristics have any impact on the selection of DIs by DPs. While the idea of physical characteristics carrying weight on the hiring of a DI may seem trite, if the data collected indicates its importance it would identify an additional area where interpreting for DPs differs from general community interpreting. Of course, a study with a larger participant base would be much more informative about what traits are most significant and would provide us with a wider range of insights from the population, which would lead to results that would hopefully have a more practical application.

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The Deaf as a Vulnerable Group: Are Interpreters Equipped in Advocating for the Human Rights of Deaf Individuals and their Interpreters

Jefwa G. Mweri

Abstract

Over the years, deaf people in Kenya have suffered stigma and discrimination based on their vulnerability. Like other persons with disabilities, deaf individuals suffer diminished capacity to deal with socio-economic challenges because of their disability thus making them among the most vulnerable groups in society. The discrimination they suffer in the hands of majority hearing people often has led to violations that hinder deaf individuals from enjoying their human rights. The forms of discrimination are usually exclusion, restriction, or preference.

Deaf individuals in Kenya are subjected to negative perceptions and stereotyping as a result of which it has been impossible for them to enjoy their fundamental human rights. For deaf individuals to enjoy their rights as human beings, rights that are entrenched in universal, local and internal legal instruments, we conceptualized the notion of deafness as a socio-political construct in which their empowerment is foregrounded so as to disabuse the notion that persons with disability cannot be independent. Though vulnerable groups like members of the deaf community enjoy additional guarantees and special protection for the equal and effective enjoyment of their human rights, they still remain vulnerable to the abuse of their human rights for various reasons.

This paper examines why this is the case, especially in Kenya. It also examines the role of the interpreter as an advocate for deaf people's human rights. While the interpreter has an important role to play as a mediator in the language barrier that exists between deaf and hearing people, they also belong to the majority culture of hearing people that enjoys relatively unrestricted human rights than deaf individuals. The question then is, "Can interpreters be trusted as the willful advocates for the human rights of deaf people?" Similarly, most

interpreters are ill equipped to deal with issues related to the rights of deaf individuals because they lack capacity in terms of knowledge and understanding of issues of human rights. Therefore, this paper will argue that this lack of capacity infringes on deaf individuals' human rights. This lack of capacity is twofold. Deaf individuals lack capacity to claim their rights as rights holders. Similarly, the interpreters equally lack capacity in their abilities to deal with issues of deaf human rights or to assist deaf individuals deal with such issues. In addition, the role of the interpreter is further complicated by the fact that at one point they are right holders and at another point they are duty bearers. The government of Kenya and its institutions are duty bearers also lacks capacity to work towards meeting its obligation in protecting the human rights of deaf individuals and in defining the role of interpreters in the protection of such rights. The question we are asking then is, does the duty bearer (government) respect the rights of deaf individuals and the interpreters?

This paper argues for an approach with a view on deaf individuals as a linguistic minority who are vulnerable due to their disability and their deaf issues must also be viewed as human rights issues. We argue that deafness like any other disability should be seen as a result of having impairment with all its social consequences. This will assist us recognize that they suffer inequalities on a daily basis. The paper argues following the Iceland human rights center (P1):

*In order for disabled persons to freely enjoy their fundamental human rights, numerous cultural and social barriers have to be overcome; changes in values and increased understanding at all levels of society has to be promoted, and those social and cultural norms that perpetuate myths about disability have to be put to rest.*¹

This paper further argues for a human rights approach that works towards fulfilling the rights of deaf people – a human rights based approach (HRBA) that then would empower the government as a rights holder to meet its obligation towards the human rights of deaf individuals, the interpreters to be able to meet their obligation in a conducive environment where their own and their consumers rights are respected and deaf individuals as claim holders to be able to claim their rights and the rightful place in society.

1. ¹ The Iceland human rights center. (www.humanrights.is/en)

Introduction

“One of the most important priorities in the work of the World Federation of Deaf (WFD) is to ensure human rights for Deaf people all over the world, in every aspect of life. Human rights are universal and they belong to everyone regardless of sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status such as disability or deafness. Thus, Deaf people are entitled to exercise civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights on an equal basis with everyone else.”²

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) hardly ever enjoy their fundamental human rights because they are a vulnerable lot. The United Nations estimates that over a billion people live with some form of disability and they are disproportionately represented among the world’s poorest and at greater risk of suffering from violence, disaster, catastrophic health expenses, and many other hardships. The vast majority of people with disabilities have a hard time simply surviving, let alone living lives they have reason to value, to use the lexicon of human development (Hawking 2014). Vulnerability can be defined as the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. Most PWDs suffer diminished capacity to cope with mostly structural inequalities such as handicapping environments, discrimination, and stigma. PWDs vulnerability further manifests itself clearly when their disability in most cases leads to the loss of opportunities in both social and political spheres thus leading to violation of their human rights. The WFD as quoted above has the duty to protect the rights of deaf people worldwide.

Deaf individuals are vulnerable due to their inability to use their auditory faculty like majority of the hearing people, which makes them a language minority. Because of their disability, deaf individuals suffer from numerous structural inequalities such as: cultural and social barrier, structural discrimination, all forms of unfairness, increased likelihood of social isolation and fewer outside contacts compared to children without a disability.³

² WFD website (wfdeaf.org)

³ The Child Protection Sport Unit (CPSU) Briefing. emdp.org/wp-content/.../Safeguarding-Deaf-and-Disabled-Children1.pdf

Cultural and social barriers in most cases stand in the way of persons with disability since they perpetuate myths about them. The myths and stereotypes then are used to discriminate against PWDs. Stereotypes are rigid misconceptions or notions which are applied to all members of a group or to an individual over a period of time, regardless of individual variations. These generalizations normally have no reasonable basis. In Kenya, for example, deaf people are negatively stereotyped as being hot tempered, very rude, and other unflattering characteristics and the stereotypes are used as a basis for discrimination and rejection. All human beings are entitled to actively participate in all spheres of the political, cultural, social and economic arenas. If, for one reason or another, they are denied that chance based on their disability, then they are experiencing discrimination.

The group that is experiencing the discrimination (in this case, deaf individual) is envisaged as not equal to all others that have been included in the process of development. The discrimination that most PWDs suffer is structural. Structural discrimination is defined as a situation experienced when certain communities and societies have discriminatory views about certain people and other societies. They tend to pass on the discriminatory views down through their generations. This form of discrimination often leads to:

- Dependency on others for practical assistance in daily living (including intimate care through interpretation services);
- Frustrations due to speech and language communication needs that may make it difficult to tell others what is happening; which boils down to not being accommodated in a way they can communicate effectively
- Limited access to information

Though stereotyping contributes a lot in the discrimination of deaf individuals, it is not the only thing that drives this discrimination. There are explicit and implicit expressions of discrimination and the implicit expressions are common. Whether implicit or explicit, all forms of discrimination influence the allocation of resources for people in need and affects the environmental designs that impede access. This is mainly as a result of systematic or institutional audism, which establishes hearing and speaking abilities as the communicative norm in the society. Audism therefore leads to discrimination of those who cannot speak since

they are seen as falling outside the norm. Audism is a form of ableism, which advocates for discrimination on the basis of disability. Discrimination on the basis of disability is a systematic issue that is perpetuated by everyone. It is not an individual act or a small community act against deaf individual. According to Bauman, L, D-H, Simser Scot & Hannan, G. (2011), Ableism is described as:

“...prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward persons with a disability. Definitions of ableism hinge on one’s understanding of normal ability and the rights and benefits afforded to persons deemed normal. Some persons believe it is ableism that prevents disabled people from participating in the social fabric of their communities, rather than impairments in physical, mental, or emotional ability. Ableism includes attitudes and behaviors emanating from individuals, communities, and institutions as well as from physical and social environments.” P.9

If we hope to achieve human rights for persons with disability in general and the deaf in particular, we need to address audism and ableism that have defined much of our lives.

Deaf people suffer unfairness in all forms in Kenya, including small inconveniences in day-to-day living, lack of proper education, high levels of school dropouts, early pregnancies, etc. They are socially secluded due to their unique communication need. According to Mweri (2014), this state of affairs is exemplified by the words of the Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in Kenya. While addressing participants at the commencement of the deaf awareness week 2011, he stated: “The deaf were the most likely to be less educated among all persons with disability” (The East African Standard, 2011, p. 7).

In a physical sense, deafness is an impairment of hearing, but in the social sense, it is a social disability involving denial of social rights and status (Turner 2010).⁴ This basically has been the case due to what has come to be known as the medicalization of disability deafness included. “Medicalization being the process by which non medical problems become defined and treated like medical problems usually in terms of illness or disorder.” (Conrad, 1992) In this approach, the focus is on treating a medical condition brought by an impairment that one

⁴ Turner, B.S. (2010). Vulnerability and Human Right.

suffers and putting the person in the periphery by focusing on the impairment and not on the person which leads to marginalization and discrimination. This relegates the social rights and the needs of the individual to the back seat.

Human rights

Turning deafness which as pointed out earlier is an impairment of hearing into a social disability that denies deaf individuals social rights and status, leading to marginalization and discrimination then puts the whole question of deafness in the realm of human rights.

Human rights are commonly understood as being those rights which are inherent in the mere fact of being human. The concept of human rights is based on the belief that every human being is entitled to enjoy her/his rights without discrimination. *Human rights are universal and they belong to everyone regardless of sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status such as disability or deafness.*⁵

The question that may arise here is: do deaf Kenyans enjoy their human rights like all other Kenyans? Deaf individuals in Kenya have suffered negative perceptions and stereotyping that have over the years made it impossible for them to enjoying their fundamental human rights. Though human rights are universal and they belong to everyone, there are particular groups who, for various reasons, are weak and vulnerable or have traditionally been victims of violations and consequently require special protection for the equal and effective enjoyment of their human rights. These groups also include persons with disabilities (PWD).

Since PWDs among other groups are vulnerable and have traditionally been victims of violations, there are some international human rights instruments that have been put in place to set out additional guarantees for persons belonging to these groups specifically for those who are vulnerable due to one form of disability or another. The legal frameworks for Protection of persons with disabilities include:⁶

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (article 3, 21, 23, 25).
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) (article 26).

⁵ UDHR.

http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=104&language_id=1&erc_doc_id=445&category_id=24&category_type=3&group=Human rights treaties and other instruments

3. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) (article 2).
4. Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971).
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7. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979) – CEDAW.
8. Convention (No. 159) concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) (1983).
9. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (article 2, 6, 12, 23, 28).
10. Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illnesses and the Improvement of Mental Health Care (1991).
11. Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993).
12. Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2000).
13. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007).
14. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) (article 18)

Apart from the above international human rights instruments most of which Kenya is a signatory, the Kenya constitution (2012) also caters for protection from discrimination by virtue of disability in article. 82 (3). In Kenya, there is also the Disability Act 2003 amended in 2015. This 2003 act saw the established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD). Despite all these additional guarantees over and above the universal declaration of Human Rights, the rights enjoyed by others, the situation for PWDs in Kenya for example is still wanting. Their rights are guaranteed mainly on paper but not in reality.

The Interpreter

“A Sign Language interpreter can be viewed as any hearing person who has learnt a sign language and acts as a mediator in the language barrier that exists between the deaf and the hearing.” (Mweri 2010)⁶ While the interpreter has an important role to play as a mediator in the language barrier that exists between deaf individuals and the hearing, they also belong to the

⁶ Mweri, J. G. (2010). Interpretation: signs and meaning, diversity in language use, equivalences and cultural untranslatability. *The Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa*, Vol. 2. No.1. 2010, ISSN 1998-1279 21.

majority culture of hearing individuals that enjoys more human rights than deaf individuals.

This raises fundamental questions:

- Do they understand the issues of deaf human rights to the extent that they can ensure that deaf individual's consumer rights are not violated?
- Can interpreters also play the role of advocacy in situations where the rights of deaf individuals are infringed upon?
- Do they adhere to their code of ethics and ensure they remain in their roles as mediators?
- Are they equipped to deal with issues related to human rights and deaf people?
- Do they have the knowledge and understanding of issues of human rights in general and those of PWD and deaf individuals specifically? Do they have the capacity to deal with human rights issues where their own rights as interpreters are infringed upon?

The Reality

In the Kenyan Deaf Community, there is general lack of capacity in terms of knowledge and understanding of issues as citizens with human rights. In the greater discourse of human rights, we identify two main players.

1. The duty bearer - The government of Kenya and its institutions (state and non state actors including interpreters)
2. The rights holder – deaf individuals and interpreters.⁷

Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most commonly used to refer to State actors, but non-State actors can also be considered duty bearers. In the Kenyan case the government, national associations of the deaf and even the interpreters sometimes act as duty bearers. More importantly, the state is the major player in this since it has the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill every right.

⁷ WFD website(wfdeaf.org)

The biggest obstacle in the advancement of deaf human rights is that, the government of Kenya and its institutions (state and non- state actors) as duty bearers also lack capacity to ensure the rights of deaf people are protected. This lack of capacity is not because of lack of legal frameworks to protect deaf human rights; it is born out of clear misunderstanding of the deaf and their language. Though Kenyan Sign Language is recognized by the Kenyan constitution as one of the indigenous languages of Kenya and a language of Parliament, nothing much has been done to develop it so that deaf people can access services through a language they understand. This then means that deaf people are unable to get services in the government departments since, for example, no interpreters are provided or because those providing the services have no capacity to respect and reinforce deaf human rights because most of the people running the departments are ignorant about human rights in general and deaf human rights in particular.

Similarly, what complicates matter is the role of the interpreter since as an interpreter giving services to deaf individuals he/she is at that point a duty bearer. Since they have particular obligation or responsibility towards the deaf whether hired by government or by individuals. Like the government and its agencies, the interpreter thus may also lack capacity to meet his/her obligation. Both the interpreter and government and its agencies as duty bearers lack the capacity:

- a) to work towards meeting its obligation in as far as deaf human rights are concerned
- b) to assist deaf individuals claim their right when they are violated.

This lack of capacity is not confined to the government and its agencies as duty bearer alone. In a rights-based approach, every human being is recognized both as a person and as a right-holder. Rights holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights holders under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular contexts, there are often specific social groups whose human rights are not fully realized, respected or protected such as persons with disabilities. In this case, Deaf individuals and the interpreters are right holders, but in Kenya as rights holders they also lack capacity in the following ways:

- Deaf individuals lack capacity to claim their rights as rights holders since they are in most cases not familiar with their rights since no attempts are ever made to educate them on their rights.
- The interpreters equally lack capacity to claim their rights as interpreters. For example, they may lack the capacity to demand for proper payment for services. In Kenya, it is not uncommon to find government or even individuals offering to pay an interpreter as little as 2500 KES (a United States currency equivalent of \$25) for a whole days work. Thus they end up being over worked and underpaid.
- Similarly, the interpreters often lack capacity to assist deaf individuals when their rights are infringed upon since they too may have little knowledge on issues of human rights

The interpreters need their capacity to claim their rights as workers with fair pay and a conducive working environment. The interpreters must also have capacity to understand what deaf human rights are so as to effectively perform their duty. The deaf individuals themselves require capacity to claim their rights as rights holders any time they are violated. This means the government or all duty bearers have an obligation towards educating deaf people and the interpreters about their rights. Lack of capacity leads to vulnerability, however, if we strive to build capacity, this trend can be reversed.

How do we build capacity?

We can build capacity for both rights holders and the duty bearers if we start by viewing deaf individuals' issues as a human rights issue. Though Deaf people have the same rights guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as everyone else, the WFD has identified the implementation of four basic factors as tantamount to the protection of the human rights of Deaf people: Sign language: Bilingual education, Accessibility, and Interpreting.

These four issues are at the core of deaf human rights, especially the fourth that is the focus of this paper. In order to help implement them for the benefit of deaf individuals, we posit that best way is to adopt the human rights based approach (HRBA).⁸

For us to address deaf individual’s issues as human rights issues, there is need for a fundamental shift of paradigm from basic needs approach that disempowers deaf individuals to the human rights based approach that is empowering. This means, the emphasis has to shift from dependence that the basic needs approach has been advocating to independence as advocated for by the HRBA. This approach would give deaf individuals a voice and ensure that they become politically active against social forces. This approach would also assist the interpreters to perform their role or meet their obligations without hindrance. The rights-based approach put the mechanisms in place to ensure that entitlements are attained and safeguarded. The human rights-based approach focuses on those who are most vulnerable, excluded or discriminated against.

The distinctions between the basic needs approach and the HRBA are explained in the table below:

THE BASIC NEEDS APPROACH	THE HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH
Recognizes the existence of needs.	Recognizes the existence of rights.
Focuses on basic needs identification.	Reinforces capacities of duty bearers and rights holders.
Focuses on fulfilling those needs.	Recognizes every human being as a person and as a right-holder.
Works towards fulfilling the needs of beneficiaries.	Works towards fulfilling the rights of people.
	Strives to secure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere, within the framework of essential standards and

⁸ HRBA. www.unfpa.org/human-rights-based-app

	principles, duties and obligations.
	Focuses on those who are most vulnerable, excluded or discriminated against.
	Develops the capacity of states to fulfill the obligations to protect, respect and promote the rights of their citizens.

Table .1. The difference between the basic need approach and the Human Rights based approach

The basic needs approach was the approach used prior to 1977, its main focus on issues of human rights was on basic requirements of beneficiaries' identification and to either supporting initiative to improve service delivery or advocating for their fulfillment.

It would identify beneficiaries, for example, deaf individuals and then focus on improving service delivery for them or advocate for the fulfillment of that service delivery. It aimed at fulfilling the needs of the beneficiaries. All this changed with the introduction of the HRBA after 1997. The approach from then henceforth has been to work towards fulfilling the rights of people and not just their needs.

The HRBA integrates human rights standards and principles into different issues affecting people. In HRBA, human rights are a crosscutting priority that also integrates human rights into national development programmes of different countries. In view of this, the UN came up with a statement of common understanding based on the following tenets:⁹

1. All programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
2. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.

⁹ <http://hrbportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies#sthash.WbJbL9gZ.dpuf>

3. Programmes of development cooperation contribute to the development of the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights.

Thus all programming in all phases of the process, including assessment and analysis, programme planning and design (including setting of goals, objectives and strategies); implementation, monitoring and evaluation were to be guided by Human rights principles that included: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; inter-dependence and inter-relatedness; equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law. It is important to note the main issues deriving from human rights fall on states and their authorities or agents, not on individuals. That is why the state and its agencies are considered duty bearers

Though all these human rights principles drawn from the UN Statement of Common Understanding as mentioned above are important, there are those that directly relate with PWDs. For example, the principle of Equality and Non-discrimination that states: "All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person. All human beings are entitled to their human rights without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status as explained by the human rights treaty bodies."

The principle of participation and inclusion which states: "Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized."

Statement No. 3 of the UN statement of common understanding is also important since it puts more emphasis on capacity building for both duty bearer and rights holder. From the above, it is apparent that a human rights based approach empowers citizens to demand for delivery of the rights and services which they are entitled too, while at the same time striving to develop the capacity of states to enable them fulfill the obligations to protect, respect and promote the rights of their citizens. The HRBA defines clearly what each stakeholder is entitled to. It would clearly draw the line between the rights holders and the duty bearer.

To address issues of human rights for both deaf individuals and the interpreter, the rights holder-duty bearer relationship needs to be redefined to reflect its reciprocal nature as illustrated below:

Fig. 2.



The relationship between the duty bearer and the rights holder is a cyclic relationship. The rights holder through participation is required to claim rights from the duty bearer who can do this through a process of accountability to enable fulfillment of its obligations and responsibility towards the rights holder. It is important to note the existence of the following critical distinction: A *need* not fulfilled leads to dissatisfaction. In contrast, a *right* that is not respected leads to a violation, and its redress or reparation can be legally and legitimately claimed.

Thus since the HRBA focuses on rights, it is expected that the rights holders in this case deaf individuals and to some extent the interpreters would place a legitimate claim once their rights are violated. However, the lack of capacity hinders this from happening. Both the rights holder and the duty bearer need to understand that every human being is recognized both as a person and as a right-holder. Thus one should be able to claim their rights anytime they are violated.

In as far as the rights holders are concerned, both deaf individuals and the interpreters appear to be vulnerable sometimes especially when both are viewed as right holders. Deaf individuals whose fate is decided by circumstances and not choice thus faces all types of

roadblocks in the enjoyment of their rights and so does the interpreter who is caught in between. The interpreters are always in a precarious position because first and foremost they belong to the dominant hearing culture that is by and large responsible for the oppression of deaf individuals. Similarly, at one point he/she belongs to the duty bearer group especially when providing interpretation services because at this point, the interpreter is expected to fulfill his/her obligation to deaf individuals by way of accountability. But sometimes, the rights of interpreters are also infringed upon so that those of deaf individuals can prevail, e.g., the terms of payments or the interpreters' responsibility in causing miscommunication and misunderstanding. This double-edged kind of role the interpreter plays makes interpretation complex and deserving of special understanding and attention.

The scenario above is complicated more in Kenya by virtue of the fact that none of them in most cases have the capacity to claim their rights. Neither does the government as duty bearer have such capacity to meet its obligations nor does deaf individuals and the interpreters as rights holders have the capacity to claim their rights.

From where we stand, the rights of the two that is deaf individuals and the interpreter are intrinsically linked and may be difficult to divorce one from the other. Their relationship is one of interdependency and interrelatedness where the realization of the rights of one may depend on the realization of the rights of the other. It may be difficult to advocate for deaf rights divorced from the interpreter's rights. If, for example, one of the rights deaf people are supposed to enjoy is the right to qualified interpreter, that right may be linked to how well this trained interpreter is paid for his or her service.

Way Forward

WASLI and WFD and other stakeholders that deal with issues of deaf individuals must incorporate human rights principles in their work. By incorporating the HRBA. In this way they – WASLI and WFD as duty bearers will be in a better position to handle the twin issues of deaf rights and the interpreters' rights. We are viewing the two international organizations as duty bearers since they are major actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The two organizations fall under non-State actors and are therefore also considered duty bearers.

Though non-state actors, the two organizations they have an obligation towards the respect of human rights of their consumers.

The HRBA will assist these two international organizational bodies in building capacity of both the rights holders and the duty bearer. This can be done by supporting national associations of the deaf and of interpreters to build the capacity of their membership in terms of human rights while at the same time cooperating with the governments in their respective countries where the human rights of deaf individuals and the interpreter are not respected. The two organizations can also assist to build capacity in the major policy makers in government so that all policies, especially those relating to deaf individuals, reinforce the human rights principles.

Training programmes for interpreters should have the human rights and deaf rights components. This way, the interpreters would be in a better position to assist or advice when the deaf rights are violated and also stake their own legal and legitimate claim once their own rights are violated too. The HRBA is one that would empower deaf individuals and the interpreter and make them more independent enabling them to enjoy their human rights like anybody else.

The Kenyan government must live up to the constitution that has a strong component on bill of rights. For example, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2013 and its amendments in 2010 to align it with the constitution which states: "...a person with disability is entitled under the constitution to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information hence the government has the responsibility to make telecommunication and mass media available to persons with disabilities for their rehabilitation, self development and self reliance." Though these rights are enshrined in the constitution, deaf individuals hardly ever comprehend them. Thus for example very few television stations provide interpretation but no deaf individuals or association has ever sued the government for this violation.

It may require a concerted effort from the government, through its agencies and other non-state actors to ensure that Deaf individuals are included in the civic education programs where they will learn their constitutional rights. By doing this, it will lead to building capacity for its deaf population. The Kenya Sign Language Interpreter's Association and the Kenya National

Association of the Deaf need to work together to ensure that this happens and take into consideration the inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of the deaf and interpreters' rights.

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The Impact of Groupthink within Interpreter Cohorts.

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Abstract

Several authors have reflected on the deportment of sign language interpreters and how their actions impact the human rights of Deaf people. For example, individual interpreters have been cautioned against adopting audist behaviors (Baker-Shenk 1989; Page 1993). However little exists in the literature concerning the behaviors of large cohorts of interpreters working within complex structures, such as in the role of a staff member of a large educational institution or telecommunications company. To address this gap, a small group of interpreter practitioners, some of who were interpreter educators, engaged in an auto-ethnographic conversation to discuss the concept of Groupthink.

Following Janis' (1982) original conceptualization, Groupthink was defined by a number of antecedents, symptoms and resulting behaviors. Antecedents included such things as isolation, group homogeneity, low self-esteem and perceived high stress (Janis 1982). Symptoms included actions such as stereotyped thinking and pressure for conformity (Janis 1982). Adopting a "particularistic" interpretation (Turner & Pratkanis 1998a), where Groupthink was identified by the presence of some antecedents and behaviors, the authors shared examples of the negative symptoms of Groupthink they had witnessed. These included but were not limited to; (1) a tacit agreement to the use of simultaneous communication with Deaf people present (signing in English word order while speaking), (2) disregarded retaliation against Deaf clients for perceived misconduct or lack of deservedness, and (3) nepotistic practices by the group, where less qualified interpreters requested and/or were assigned work over better qualified colleagues due to their power in the group or the support of powerful colleagues. The authors argue that such behaviors impede the ability of Deaf and hearing clients to interact successfully and as such impacts their human rights. The researchers end by

suggesting institutional recognition of the potential for Groupthink where it has to been overlooked and reiterate Janis' (1982) suggested steps to address the deleterious effects of it.

Introduction

Historically, the nature of the role of sign language interpreters has been linked to a helper, machine, a bilingual and bicultural expert, and also as an ally to the Deaf community (Page 1993). Dean and Pollard (2011) later proposed that interpreting is a practice profession, more clearly defined in association with the responsibilities of effective service delivery rather than an inflexible role metaphor. Further, sign language interpreters also provide service as either a self-employed freelance contractor or as a staff member.

Attention has been given in the literature to individual interpreters. For example, burnout of professional interpreters has been identified (Harvey 2002; Schwenke 2012) and sign language interpreters in particular can experience isolation in either of their roles as staff or independent contractors. In addition, authors have looked at the cultural sensitivity and discriminatory or audist beliefs held by interpreters (Baker-Shenk 1989). Further some writers have examined the concept of ethical decision-making within the field, and postulated a teleological-based model (Dean & Pollard 2006).

Working as an ally, Page (1993) and Baker-Shenk (1989) suggested interpreters reflect on the role they adopted as a distanced professional to see if it was based on the norms of the hearing majority, and thus oppressive. Instead, and when assuming a role, interpreters must consider the concepts of loyalty and trust as viewed by Deaf people (Page 1993). Further, instead of adopting the paternalistic view of empowering Deaf people, interpreters should instead be cognizant of the balance of power Deaf people had access to (Page 1993) and respect that Deaf individuals were self-determining (Baker-Shenk 1989).

In addition to working in isolation, and particularly in staff positions, groups of interpreters are employed at larger organizations such as post-secondary institutions, video relay centers, or in agencies that provide interpretation services. Little research has been conducted on the sociological or psychological aspects of working in such specialized groups, as interpreters, within larger organizations or institutions that may house other various work

groups such as administration, faculty, support staff or counselors. No one has, for example, looked at the concept of group dynamics and the impact of such groups on interpreting service provision within institutions and industries.

It may be hypothesized that the isolation experienced by a single interpreter as a staff person or as an independent contractor would be irrelevant in such contexts. Or it may be believed that interpreters working in such settings experience less burnout, due to the support they have available. It might also be postulated that interpreters in such contexts adopt a more cooperative role with colleagues and perhaps conduct themselves in a more ethical manner due to the proximity and surveillance of their colleagues.

However, initial discussions between the four principal investigators, the authors of this manuscript, suggested that while working in groups may have some benefits for interpreters, there are also pitfalls as well. These include external pressure felt by the individual members to conform to the group's hypothetical norms and to achieve consensus. Sometimes the decision to uphold such norms and to thus act cohesively, however, may put interpreters at odds with effective service delivery. Their practices in turn become a detriment to the Deaf individuals they serve rather than a support. We came to believe that perhaps the construct of Groupthink captured some of the pitfalls we were seeing in larger clusters of interpreters and in more hierarchical or institutionalized positions. This in turn became the genesis of this study.

Research questions

To begin to explore the concept of Groupthink within large clusters of interpreters, we postulated a number of research questions:

1. What evidence of the antecedents of Groupthink is there in collectives of sign language interpreters?
2. How does a model of Groupthink apply to the behaviors of interpreters working in groups?
3. How can remedies of Groupthink, as identified in the literature, be potentially applied to large groups of sign language interpreters exhibiting Groupthink behaviors?

Review of the literature

Traditional Model of Groupthink

In the late seventies, Janis (1982) postulated and later refined a model of Groupthink that served as the theoretical framework for this study. The original model was based on a limited number of case studies of American presidents and their administration and Janis (1982) was looking at the antecedents and group characteristics that led to poor decision-making. Groupthink later became a very popular framework in the eighties (Esser 1998). It has since been applied to a number of organizations, such as juries, hockey teams and various administrative boards (Rose 2011), but it has not been applied to cohorts of sign language interpreters.

Most of the data used to formulate the Groupthink model was on secondary sources, such as minutes and memoirs (Janis 1982). Key concepts identified by Janis were a lack of group norms or traditions for handling problem solving or decision-making, a strong desire for group cohesion, external threats and stresses, and the silencing of dissenters.

From the cases studies, Janis (1982) postulated two types of antecedent conditions to Groupthink (structural and situational) and the following six major factors:

1. Insulation of the group
2. Lack of tradition of impartial leadership
3. Lack of norms requiring methodical procedures
4. Homogeneity of members' social background and ideology
5. High stress from external threats with low hope of a better solution than the leader's
6. Low self-esteem temporarily induced by:
 - a. Recent failures that make members' inadequacies salient
 - b. Excessive difficulties on current decision-making tasks that lower each member's sense of self-efficacy
 - c. Moral dilemmas: apparent lack of feasible alternatives except ones that violate ethical standards (Janis 1982, p. 244).

These antecedent conditions led to the following three types of symptoms of Groupthink:

Type I. Overestimation of the group

1. Illusion of invulnerability
2. Belief in inherent morality of the group

Type II. Close-Mindedness

3. Collective rationalizations
4. Stereotypes of out-groups

Type III. Pressures toward uniformity

5. Self-censorship
6. Illusion of unanimity
7. Direct pressure on dissenters
8. Self-appointed mindguards (Janis 1982, p. 244)

Due to these antecedents and group symptoms or characteristics, the following types of defective decision making occurred:

1. Incomplete survey of alternatives
2. Incomplete survey of objectives
3. Failure to examine risks of preferred choice
4. Failure to reappraise initially rejected alternatives
5. Poor information search
6. Selective bias in processing information at hand
7. Failure to work out contingency plans (Janis 1982, p. 244)

Detractors of Groupthink

Since the publication of the Groupthink model, several authors have applied it and reviewed its efficacy. Aldag & Fuller (1993) believed it was a good heuristic start at trying to capture such a complex problem, and defined adoption of the model as “nearly universal” (Aldag & Fuller 1993, p. 133) by many researchers. Benefits to applying the model included the need to broaden the participants’ knowledge base and diversity in views (Lunenburg 2010), to more fully understand the problems and decision-making processes.

Regardless of its popularity, however, many have noted shortcomings with Janis' first conceptualization (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998; Rose 2011). Philosophically, Groupthink was premised on "defensive avoidance" of difficult situations in a passive manner, and the phenomenon was framed in a negative way (Aldag & Fuller 1993, p. 534). Some held the model was not comprehensive enough (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998) and that many aspects were difficult to operationally define (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998; Rose 2011). For example, constructs like "loyalty" and "group cohesion" are not easily described in behavioral terms as they are often based on an individual's private feelings (Esser 1998). Further the various studies done on Groupthink adopted different definitions of the antecedents and symptoms, making their results difficult to compare.

Some authors then wrote there has been little empirical support for the model (Esser 1998; Rose 2011), and that which existed only addressed certain aspects of Janis' model (Esser 1998; Rose 2011). Where research was done, it typically only involved university students as research subjects (Rose 2011). Also some of the strategies suggested by Janis to avoid Groupthink may in fact exacerbate a group's attempts at maintaining a positive face and may only further dissuade dissention by forcing group cohesion (Turner & Pratkanis 1998b).

Due to these shortcomings, authors have suggested three approaches to applying and researching a model of Groupthink. In a strong or strict stance, every antecedent, group characteristic, and symptom must occur for the phenomenon to be considered Groupthink (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998; Turner & Pratkanis 1998a). On the other hand, authors have identified the application of Groupthink in an additive manner (Schafer & Crichlow 1996; Turner & Pratkanis 1998a), where the chance of Groupthink occurring increases as the presence of the various antecedents increase. A third approach is considered a "weak" model of Groupthink (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998) or "the liberal or particularistic" interpretation (Turner & Pratkanis 1998a, 108), where the presence of some of the antecedents, symptoms or characteristics may be enough to indicate the phenomenon is occurring. The latter is the framework adopted in this study and similar to the "particularistic approach" adopted in other models (Turner & Pratkanis 1998b, p. 215), though as will be seen in the section on our findings, a strict stance could have been adopted as we found evidence of every antecedent,

characteristic, and symptom.

To deal with the perceived shortcomings of Janis' model, various adaptations have been suggested. For example, Turner & Pratkanis (1998b) suggested the Social Identity Maintenance (SIM) model. In this framework, the underlying goal of the members was thought to be "to maintain and reinforce the positive image of the group" (Turner & Pratkanis 1998b, p. 213).

Aldag & Fuller (1993) espoused the "General Group Problem-Solving Model". They believed one of the limitations of the Groupthink model was its emphasis on the process as negative and its focus on poor decisions whereas their model adopted a more neutral stance. They advocated for a process model, as they believed decision-making was not a clear-cut phenomenon. Such a model should consider the group and individual agendas or mandates, the type of group, the members' level of open-mindedness and their ability to accurately estimate their own abilities at problem solving. Other things to consider were the stage of the group in becoming a group and the length of time the individuals had worked together and in their current positions (Aldag & Fuller 1993).

Other facets of a group to consider in their decision-making process and as identified in the literature included leadership style and power (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Schafer & Crichlow 1996; Turner & Pratkanis 1998a), characteristics or complexity of the task (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998), and organizational norms and context (Aldag & Fuller 1993; Esser 1998; Rose 2011; Schafer & Crichlow 1996). In the case of the norms, for example, researchers should identify institutionally mandated processes and the extent to which accountability is enforced. These may certainly impact how a group makes decisions. One should also consider the members' level of identification with the group, to what extent do they feel they belong to the group or are loyal to the group, as well as their identification to the problem to be solved, and do they believe it is significant or unimportant (Packer 2009).

Methodology

To examine Groupthink in cohorts of sign language interpreters, this study adopted an auto-ethnographic approach and an analytic-inductive data analysis process. Within a

qualitative paradigm and auto-ethnography, four interpreters, the principal researchers in this study, shared their personal experiences of having worked within groups of sign language interpreters. They first met to discuss their experiences and document their stories. At that point, only the first author was familiar with the Groupthink model. These stories were then shared with the other researchers and compared for similarities and differences. From there, a review of the literature was conducted to operationally define Groupthink and apply that to the shared narratives.

To guide us in the data collection and later analysis, we also drew upon Narrative Inquiry as a methodology. Narrative Inquiry recognizes that the shared stories are constructions based on memory work and attempts at verbally recreating our past experiences (McCabe, Capron & Peterson 1991). Our current view of what we experienced may differ from our past view (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2000), as our reflections were shaped by our process of reflecting and by our interest in Groupthink. We did in fact end up selecting some stories for inclusion, and some were excluded as was noted in memory work (Bell 2002; McCabe, Capron & Peterson 1991). While recreating our stories and throughout the analysis, we were also aware of outside forces on our story sharing, which may have led to a desire for “political correctness” (Peterson 1999, p.192). For example, we were reticent to harshly or openly critiquing our colleagues or employers given they are a potential audience.

Thus, unlike in a quantitative study, we are not concerned with finding a single truth or in constructs such as validity or reliability for example. Instead we are interested in the concept of shared and multiple “truths” and both the participants’ and the audience’s understanding of the events (Murray 2009). Readers should ask themselves if the findings look authentic and if they are transferable to their own experiences (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). In other words; is there a sense of verisimilitude in the experiences shared here (Connelly & Clandinin 1990)?

Given the study was qualitative in nature, we looked to Patton (1999) who described ways to enhance the credibility of such a study through triangulation. One way to incorporate triangulation in a study is collecting data from different data sources. In the current study those would be the four participants. Also employing multiple analysts, again the four researchers, enhances the trustworthiness of the process and findings (Patton 1999). Patton (1999) also

espoused rigor in the data collection methodology as a means of enhancing triangulation. In this case, the participants shared their stories independently and prior to researching Groupthink or conceptualizing the various aspects of it. We then systematically went through the stories and compared our reflections to the antecedent, group characteristic, and symptoms of Groupthink, to arrive at inter-rater concordance. Patton (1999) also described how the credibility of the researchers is important to note in qualitative research. This study was emic in nature, in the sense that the four participants were insiders as professional interpreters, giving them perhaps a more nuanced understanding of the field. In addition, three of the four participants have conducted research and presented on or published their findings, and two of the four utilized a similar qualitative methodology in their work.

Participants

One of the unique aspects of this study is the diverse background of the four researchers who were also the participants. They represent two genders, male and female, and have experience with interpreting in different countries; the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States. All have engaged in freelance interpreting work and have also worked in various staff positions. Three out of four are interpreter educators and two have held or currently hold interpreter management positions. All four hold national certification and three graduated from an interpreter preparation program. Their ages ranged from mid thirties to mid fifties. Their experience in the field of sign language interpreting ranges from 4 years to over 30 years. To protect the anonymity of each storyteller pseudonyms were assigned to each person and identifying information was omitted. To mask the gender of the storytellers, each person was assigned a female name.

Data and Analysis

The participants shared a total of 13 stories. Upon examination and review of the Groupthink model, some were removed from the pool. Some accounts were about the behaviors of an individual interpreter in a specific setting, and not symptomatic of a group of

interpreters for an employer. For example, one interpreter shared a story about how a more experienced interpreter encouraged a novice to do more of the work in an assignment to get more experience. The expert acted as if she were “on vacation”. In another example from the same participant, an interpreter advertised events she would interpret via social media and by doing so, tried to encourage Deaf people to attend. It was believed that she was taking the choice of venues out of the hands of the Deaf participants by doing so.

A second participant shared a story we did not include in this study about how interpreters could become emotional while interpreting for clients who were upset or angry. These interpreters seemed to take the information personally and could consequently suffer from a burnout.

The third participant shared a story about interpreters allocating turns during interactions between hearing and Deaf people. Some interpreters often favored the hearing person over the Deaf speaker.

The fourth participant noted how some interpreters negotiated late arrivals to assignments or requested to leave early so they could take on additional work. She also noted how some became friends with their clients and went so far as to buy them presents or to spend a lot of social time with them. In another example, she noted how some of her colleagues refused to do interpretation work from a signed language, like ASL, into English, thus leaving her with the responsibility to do so.

As we looked at these stories, we gathered that they were based on the decisions of individuals and not groups. We also did not think the interpreters’ actions were sanctioned by a larger group or employer. In the first case, for example, the interpreter abused her perceived power over the novice to force the novice to take on more of the work. In the second story, the interpreter promoted her assignments perhaps from a desire to make money or control the events Deaf people could attend. In the story shared by the second participant where individual interpreters became emotional or took assignments personally, we did not see evidence of Groupthink. Instead we perceived these as being individual challenges that interpreters face. This was also the case for those who did not want to work from ASL into English or who bought presents for their clients. We did not think that these actions would have been sanctioned by

employers or would have been ignored.

From the remaining stories, four were chosen, one from each participant. We believed these represented Groupthink symptoms and they had high inter-rater concordance for antecedents, symptoms and defective-decision making as outlined in Groupthink. The four narratives will be outlined in the findings sections. However, only a synopsis will be provided to help mask the identities of the storytellers and to provide anonymity for the participants and settings.

Having identified four stories, we then looked for antecedents, symptoms and defective decision-making as outlined in Janis' (1982) model of Groupthink. These were then compared across the four stories to see if there were similarities or differences.

Findings

The following is a brief synopsis of each of the stories shared and examined for Groupthink.

Story One–Interpreting Public Speaking

In this story, Helen talked about interpreting for Deaf students who were judged on their public speaking abilities in educational settings. She noted that some interpreters struggled to interpret accurately when working from a signed language into a spoken language. She questioned if the interpreters sometimes under-represented the Deaf student's ability or conversely - and perhaps less frequently - over-represented the students' ability by making them sound better than they were. This seemed to be common practice that everyone in the interpreting department was aware of and yet no one took action to address it.

Story Two–Retaliation

In the second story, Susan had heard of interpreters who retaliated towards Deaf or hearing participants. They did this because they believed the Deaf or hearing person was not acting in a way that the interpreter deemed to be appropriate. For example, one interpreter

shared that a Deaf client was not signing clearly, so the interpreter decided to purposely alter his or her signing to make it less clear. The interpreter described the Deaf persons' signing as "sloppy." At other times, Susan heard interpreters talk about how hearing people were "idiots at best" for their behavior and how they treated Deaf people. Susan noted that there was no retaliation in other professions, such as doctors towards patients for example, and she wondered why interpreters engaged in it and why it wasn't being addressed.

Story Three–The Treatment of Novices

Marie shared a story where she talked about the overall treatment of novices in the field. She had seen how some experienced interpreters established a hierarchy when working with a novice, where the experienced interpreter took on a dominant role. For example, the more experienced, senior interpreters would say things like, "I will give you a chance to work with me". The field or employers in turn supported this. Due to this hierarchy, the experienced interpreters could dictate work practices. One example shared was a situation where the experienced interpreter insisted that the novice interpreters take their breaks (lunch or dinner) away from the Deaf participants. Their rationale was that it also served as a break for the interpreters or that it helped avoid injuries from signing. However, this left the Deaf person without service, often with others who did not sign at all. Moreover, it also went against the wishes of the more novice interpreters.

Story Four–Nepotism

In the fourth story chosen for this study, Laurel described how in some settings, an interpreter's preference to do a job he or she considered interesting became the priority over their ability to actually interpret successfully. For example, less qualified interpreters were often sent to interpret a class they personally had an interest in, or they were requested to interpret for high profile speakers, or at popular events. Their lack of experience and skill potentially meant they were not ready for those types of assignments and ran counter to the Deaf participant's need for access. Everyone in that work group knew the best interpreter had

not been sent to do the work. Nonetheless, they remained quiet when a lesser qualified or even unqualified person was given the assignment because that person requested it. This was perhaps based on the power of certain interpreters in the group influencing how work was assigned or on the power held by the less-qualified interpreter. This can be regarded as nepotistic.

Data Analysis

Having selected four stories that we felt were the result of Groupthink, we then set about comparing them. We looked for the antecedents, symptoms and defective decision-making characteristic of Groupthink. This involved further discussion and analysis of the stories. The following tables outline the data collected around the shared characteristics noted in all four stories beginning. The first table represents the antecedents.

Antecedent	Example
Insulation of the group	In all four situations, the four participants agreed that the interpreters were seen as set apart from other departments, teachers or professors, and the Deaf community or Deaf students they worked with. They were viewed as autonomous and unsupervised for much of their work.
Lack of tradition of impartial leadership	In every setting, the chosen leaders or management were former or current interpreters or perhaps teachers of the Deaf. They continued management practices and policies that they learned decades ago, which may not be current and which may represent a machine model philosophy.
Lack of norms requiring methodical procedures	There were few if any opportunities to systematically discuss the interpersonal and power dynamics of the group. There was little to no supervision of the interpreters and no regular formal or informal mechanisms (meetings, unanimous reviews such as suggestion boxes, unanimous surveys, etc.) that involved the consumers/clients.
Homogeneity of members' social background and ideology	The four participants agreed that most of the interpreters in these settings were Caucasian, hearing, able-bodied, female, middle class, college educated, and did not have Deaf parents or relatives. Most had potentially learned to become interpreters in a machine model paradigm. Therefore there was much homogeneity of the members.
High stress from external threats with low hope of a better solution than the leader's	Again in all of the settings, the participants had noted how interpreters were often concerned their work would be judged, and they were concerned about their reputation in the field and in the community. They did not, however, have new solutions to the challenges they were facing and relied on past practices.
Low self-esteem	In every setting, the participants felt that many interpreters began their career with low self-esteem. From their perspective, it was endemic to the field.

Table 1 Shared Antecedents of Groupthink

The next table outlines the shared symptoms of Groupthink seen in each of the four stories.

Symptom	Example
Illusion of invulnerability	According to the four participants, there was a shortage of personnel in the field, and so interpreters often found work without difficulty. There was a sense of invulnerability due to that though it was not openly talked about. While some interpreters worked as independent contractors in educational or community settings or for agencies such as a video relay company, their contracts seemed to continue in perpetuity and were rarely rescinded once agreed upon. Even when working in a staff position, and perhaps due to the shortage of interpreters, weaker or unethical interpreters seemed to have a lot of protection.
Belief in inherent morality of the group	The participants felt that in the general society and in the various work places they mentioned in their stories, the interpreters were seen by everyone as there to help, not hinder Deaf people. This there was a strong belief in their inherent morality.
Collective rationalizations	Several collective rationalizations were noted in the shared stories that supported unethical or less qualified interpreters. There was a shared belief in supporting past practices as the best way or only possible way. For example, there was a strong belief in the theory, "No one complains, so nothing is wrong." Everyone agreed that there was not enough funding, which stifled ways of dealing with problems. There was the philosophy, "We tried it once and it didn't work. Why try again?" There seemed to be a conscious or unconscious belief in the machine model of interpreting, as interpreters were neutral and just there to translate.
Stereotypes of out-groups	Upon reflecting on all four stories, the participants thought that Deaf and hearing individuals who wanted change were seen as demanding or angry. There existed an "us" against "them" view, interpreters against the clients, and a belief that the clients "don't understand our work."
Self-censorship	Each of the participants had decided not to speak out or had seen others decide not to speak out, indicating a strong sense of self-censorship.
Illusion of unanimity	Another common experience was that everyone in the four settings

	made a concerted effort to get along and produce a united front to the consumers. Interpreters did not talk about these issues with the consumers or with their group members, though they may have shared them with a select group of trusted peers.
Direct pressure on dissenters	The four participants believed that anyone who wanted change within their group was ostracized. They were rebutted by the mindguards and there was a real fear of being shunned.
Self-appointed mindguards	Each of the participants talked about how some members of the group had taken on the role of dissuading change, and they reminded the group that some things had been tried before, or insisted that new ways wouldn't work. They failed to come up with alternative solutions.

Table 2 Symptoms of Groupthink

The last table turns to the defective decisions identified within the four stories.

Defective Decision	Example
Incomplete survey of alternatives	The participants noted how typically no external experts or resources were called upon to look at the Groupthink symptoms, though they were brought in to teach language (ASL) or interpreting skill sets. There was a hierarchy in terms of who came up with solutions to problems and determined best practices, which was typically top-down, from the “experienced” interpreters or coordinators. There were no or few requests for ideas from the group or individuals in the group and little to no input from the Deaf and hearing clients.
Incomplete survey of objectives	There was little recognition of the goals or objectives of interpreting such as the complexity of the task and all of the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills required to do this. There was no recognition or policies concerned with how to deal with nepotism in assigning interpreters or retaliation from interpreters to the clients. There was no recognition of the hierarchy in the field and how to empower novice interpreters or ways to ensure successful interpretation for Deaf students presenting in a public forum for grades.
Failure to examine risks of preferred choice	In each story, the members of the groups had not looked at the risks of continuing the status quo. According to the participants, members of the group who had spoken up but who had not been heard eventually felt disillusioned. Deaf and hearing people did not in turn get the service they deserved. Continuing the status quo created a barrier or perpetuated the barrier that existed between Deaf people and interpreters (“us” and “them”).
Failure to reappraise initially rejected alternatives	The participants believed that groups should look at what may have been unaffordable before as it might be affordable now. They thought policies that may take a lot of work to establish would be cost efficient once up and running. For example, there are ways to cover break times in assignments to avoid depriving Deaf people of access. There are ways to ensure an interpreter translates a Deaf person’s speech from ASL into English fairly accurately. There are also ways to deal with nepotism in the workforce and retaliation.

<p>Poor information search</p>	<p>In all four cases, the participants noted little or no recognition of literature, which describes the need for supervision in practice professions. There was no recognition of the literature on the role of interpreters in various settings and their impact on the communication triad. Employers or managers failed to recognize the need to bring external experts to help mediate some of the symptoms seen.</p>
<p>Selective bias in processing information at hand</p>	<p>There seemed to be an emphasis on justifying current practices. The workgroups described continued to look at information on sign language interpreting and did not consider other models or sources of best practices. The emphasis was on improving service provision and typically focused on enhancing individual interpreter's language or interpreting abilities. For example, everyone recognized a lack of self-esteem in the field, yet no one acted on it.</p>
<p>Failure to work out contingency plans</p>	<p>There were no contingency plans for the symptoms noted by the participants, which included retaliation, nepotism, hierarchy, or the inability of some interpreters to work successfully from a signed language (like ASL) to a spoken language. In fact the practice in the groups seemed to be to ignore such practices or to allow for them to be informally noted but not officially dealt with.</p>

Table 3 Defective Decisions

Discussion

In all four narratives, we found evidence of all six antecedents of Groupthink, namely (1) insulation from the group, (2) lack of impartial leadership, (3) lack of methodical procedures, (4) homogeneity in the group, (5) high stress from perceived external groups and (6) low self-esteem. We also found evidence of all eight of the symptoms of Groupthink. The antecedents and symptoms may have in turn led to some of the defective decision making noted in the four stories. Those decisions included not taking steps to ensure accurate interpretation services (story one), allowing or ignoring retaliation from interpreters to consumers (story two), the establishment of hierarchies where the newer interpreters were denied their opinions or voice (story three) and nepotistic practices (story four) where unprepared or ill-suited interpreters requested and were given assignments based on their personal interest but not their abilities.

Janis' (1982) described nine ways to avoid or to deal with the Groupthink phenomenon. We feel these may help to deal with the poor decision-making described. The guidelines are the following:

1. Each person should be required to critically evaluate proposals
2. The leader should remain impartial and unbiased
3. Different groups with separate leaders should be established and work independently to address the same problem
4. The main group should divide into two separate groups with different chairs to review policy decisions and then meet to come to consensus
5. "Each member of the policy-making group should discuss periodically the group's deliberations with trusted associates in his or her own unit of the organization and report back their reactions." (p. 266)
6. Outside independent experts should be called in periodically to challenge the group's assumptions
7. A rotating devil's advocate should be chosen to evaluate policy decisions
8. When a rival organization is involved, time needs to be taken to evaluate their goals and

intentions

9. "A "second chance" meeting should be held after a decision to give participants a chance to refute the policy (Janis 1982, p. 270)

We would like to end by looking at the application of these steps to the decision-making model identified in the four stories. As a first step and where it is not happening, questionable practices like those noted in these stories should be identified and the current practices of the department or agency should be scrutinized by those involved. For example, it looks like in several settings problems like poor service, retaliation, an unwritten hierarchy, and nepotistic practices are being ignored. An important question to address is how the employees or freelancers in those settings view these practices. Consequently we should wonder if steps are needed to deal with them. Another issue to consider is if the leadership is impartial enough to deal with these problems or should a neutral, third party be employed? As noted by Janis (1982), it might be better to break larger groups into smaller units with independent chairs to discuss these problems and the decision-making processes around them. Also it behooves management, as described by Janis (1982), to encourage everyone to voice his or her opinions about such issues.

As noted by Janis (1982), one means of dealing with defective decision-making practices is to bring in external experts and to encourage group members to liaise with a trusted confidant to work through their views. The field is currently advocating for such a model as well, described as supervision (Dean & Pollard 2006; 2011). We believe if these steps as well as the ones outline earlier were employed, we would see more effective ways of dealing with the problems noted in the data, which in turn would ensure more effective service provision for Deaf and hearing individuals.

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Working in Jordan: The Experiences of a Jordanian Sign Language/Arabic Interpreter

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Abstract

This case study examines the self-reported experiences of a Jordanian Sign Language/Arabic interpreter working in Jordan. Data were collected from a written questionnaire and a semi-structured interview and were coded into categories based on themes. Three primary themes and thirteen secondary themes emerged during the analysis. The three primary themes were Interpersonal Relations, Interpreting Paradigms, and Professional Standards. These themes and the secondary themes are discussed in relation to Jordanian culture and future research suggestions are provided.

Introduction

This study examines the self-reported experiences of an interpreter who interprets between Jordanian Sign Language (*Lughat il-Ishaarah il-Urduniah* or LIU) and spoken Arabic working in Jordan. This paper highlights select findings from the master's thesis "*Mutarjeema: A Case Study of an Arabic/Jordanian Sign Language (LIU) Interpreter in Jordan*" by Trine completed at Western Oregon University in 2013. As a single case study the experiences expressed by the participant are evident of her experiences only and are not necessarily representative of the experiences of other Jordanian Sign Language/Arabic interpreters in Jordan. The authors recognize Jordanian interpreters as peers and colleagues working to serve their communities. Our hope is that this study will serve as a first step to enhance understanding in the field of the work being done in Jordan and open the conversation to consider how the international interpreting community can learn from and best support our Jordanian colleagues and the Deaf community in the region.

Situating the Study

Jordan has been recognized as a leader in the Arab world when it comes to disability rights and has passed legislation to comply with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and worked to integrate persons considered disabled into society (Rutherford, 2007; Al-Majeed Al-Majali, & Faddoul, 2008; HCAPD, 2009; NCHR, 2010; Callard, et al., 2012). However, despite this apparent desire to support disabled persons in their educational and professional endeavors, tangible progress in this area has been slow (Othman, 2010; US State Department, 2011; Azzeh, 2012). In Jordan the Deaf community is considered to be part of the disabled population, rather than a linguistic and cultural minority, and is impacted by both the legislation and social stigmas regarding disability within the country (Hendriks, 2008; Al-Majeed et al., 2008). The reported number of Deaf people within the country ranges from 1% according to Hendriks (2008) to 17.84% (Al-Majeed et al., 2008) of the population¹, and from 20,000 following the Joshua Project (2012) to 60,000 (Hendriks, 2008). Even if the lower numbers prove to be correct, it is clear that the Deaf community comprises a significant portion of the Jordanian population. Consequently, Jordanian Sign Language/Arabic interpreters are vital in providing the access necessary for the Deaf population to engage with society in the ways that legislation mandates. At the time of this study, no formal training was in place for Jordanian Sign Language/Arabic interpreters.

Methodology

This was a single case study conducted with one interpreter from Jordan. The participant is a female interpreter with over ten years of interpreting experience in a variety of settings and a child of a Deaf adult (CODA). The participant self-reported on her experiences through a written questionnaire of twenty questions and a semi-structured interview of twenty-one questions conducted via Skype. Questions ranged in topics to garner a broad understanding of the state of interpreting in Jordan from the participant's

¹ Editors' note: at the time of the study, no numbers regarding the overall population of the country were available.

perspective. Examples of questions include: “Describe the interaction you have with other interpreters”, “What happens if a Deaf person and an interpreter do not understand each other or if an interpreter does not have the skills for a particular job?” and “In the questionnaire you mentioned that it has been four years since the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities has paid attention to interpreters. How has interpreting changed in your country since that time?” (Trine, 2013). The data collected from the questionnaire and interview were combined and analyzed through open coding (Yin, 2008) and axial coding (Merriam, 2009) approaches. This included reviewing the data to identify themes and then comparing those themes to the data in a separate process to ensure that they indeed aligned with the raw data. The study was approved by Western Oregon University’s Institutional Review Board in 2012 and was completed in 2013. Throughout the study the participant is referred to under the pseudonym *Jana*.

Findings

The analysis of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview identified three primary themes and thirteen secondary themes in Jana's reported experiences as an Arabic/LIU interpreter in Jordan. The three primary themes were Interpersonal Relations, Interpreting Paradigms, and Professional Standards. Each primary theme comprised roughly one-third of the total data elicited from a two-page questionnaire and two-hour interview. The primary theme of Interpersonal Relations included information regarding how Jana related to other people; this primary theme contained the secondary themes of Hearing Consumer Relations, Deaf Consumer Relations, and Collegiality. The primary theme of Interpreting Paradigms addressed information regarding ways in which Jana approached the actual work of interpreting; this primary theme contained the secondary themes of Helper Paradigm (Gish, 1990), Conduit Paradigm (Gish, 1990), Communication Facilitator Paradigm (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001), Bilingual-Bicultural Paradigm (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001), Ally Paradigm (Campbell, Rohan, & Woodcock, 2008), and Designated Interpreter Paradigm (Hauser, Finch, & Hauser, 2008). The primary theme of Professional Standards addressed information about the requirements and practices for working as an interpreter in Jordan; this primary theme contained the secondary themes Logistics, Requirements, Training, and Finance. Figure 1-1 below illustrates the primary themes and corresponding secondary

themes identified through the data analysis.

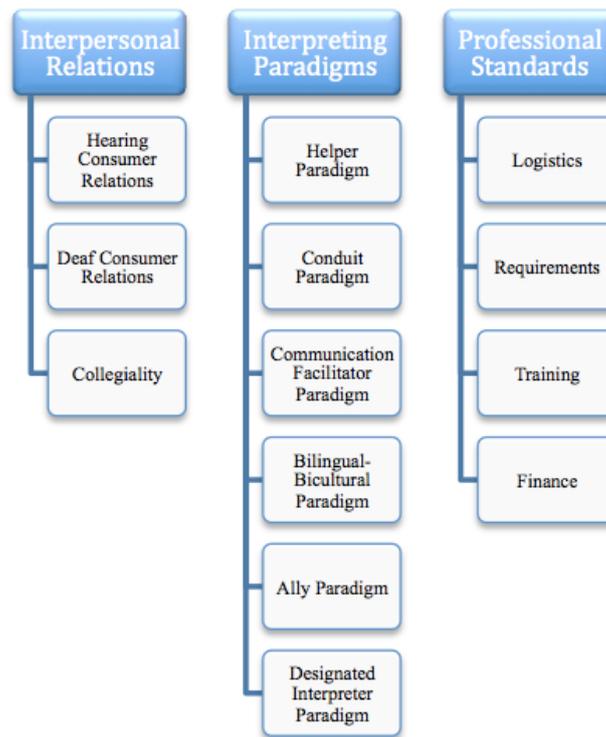


Figure 1-1: Primary and Secondary Themes (Trine, 2013)

Interpersonal Relations

When describing interactions with hearing consumers Jana shared that most people still hold a stigma toward Deaf people and often say unkind or ignorant comments about having a Deaf person present such as “What’s the use” or about her as the interpreter, such as “maybe she will never get married because she is working with crazy people” (Trine, 2013). She has also experienced people praising her for her work and suggesting that because of her kindness God will send her to heaven. She shared her frustration in witnessing discrimination against Deaf people continually in various settings but added that those she has worked with over time “almost understand now” (Trine, 2013). Jana described one of the hardest things about her work as interacting with people who are “are absolutely in ignorance” about Deaf people (Trine, 2013).

Jana has close ties to the Deaf community as a CODA, which she maintained and developed over time by being continually involved with the community. She reports that her relationship with and reputation within the Deaf community are excellent. She

explained that the situation for Deaf people in Jordan has improved tremendously from veritable isolation to the possibility of vibrant lives with relationships, education, and careers. She shared that Deaf people are “in charge” (Trine, 2013) when it comes to determining if an interpreter has the necessary skills for a job and can request a different interpreter if their needs are not being met. However, she stated that getting another interpreter could be problematic due to only having twenty-five interpreters in the entire country (Trine, 2013). Her perspective on what the Deaf community most wanted from interpreters was honesty, to do the best they could, and not to edit or change what Deaf people communicate when interpreting.

In regards to relationships with other interpreters Jana expressed that while she generally had good relationships with other interpreters, overall there was tension. She explained that there was particularly a strong divide between interpreters who had been working for less than five years and those who had been working for twenty-five years, and between interpreters with a general higher education and those without a general higher education, with each group looking down on the other. Jana shared that interpreters primarily work alone and that many interpreters feel competitive with others about receiving work.

Interpreting Paradigms

When Jana shared stories about how she approached the task of interpreting she described approaches that aligned with each of the interpreting paradigms described in Western interpreter education programs at the time of the study. Her approaches varied depending on the situation and her experience. At times she would be extremely involved and at other times she would maintain strong boundaries. She emphasized the importance of interpreting every word a Deaf person signs and of engaging in setting appropriate behavior so as not to cause a misunderstanding between participants. She adamantly explained that it was unacceptable for interpreters to express their own opinion instead of the view of the Deaf person for whom they were interpreting. She also shared that at times - when she had permission from the Deaf consumer - she would participate in an interaction while clarifying what ideas were her own and what information she was interpreting. The

three approaches that appeared most often in the data were the Helper Paradigm (Gish, 1990) which involves a very active and involved approach, the Conduit Paradigm (Gish, 1990) which involves a very distant and machine-like approach, and the Bilingual-Bicultural Paradigm (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001) which involves an approach of recognizing and mediating both linguistic and cultural differences between participants for which one is interpreting.

Professional Standards

When describing what it was like to work as an interpreter Jana continually expressed a deep desire for improvement. She said that she worked an average of thirty hours a week and added that interpreters working in the urban capital of Amman were able to work more often than those in rural areas. She expressed the wish for an organization overseeing the scheduling of interpreting jobs. In university settings the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities is responsible to provide and pay interpreters. At the time of the study Jana stated that low number of twenty-five interpreters in the nation was an improvement from the past when even fewer interpreters were available.

Jana explained that there is no formal training for interpreters in Jordan. Since she craved mentorship when she entered the field she does her best to provide it for others. People usually enter the field because they have a Deaf family member. Those pursuing interpreting as a career take short courses in LIU to learn the language, but no formal interpreting training or mentoring is available for learning the meaning transfer process. She shared that the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities has created a “license for signing” for interpreters working in government organizations but that it is “still insufficient” (Trine, 2013).

Jana explained that the wages for interpreters are not adequate for interpreting to be sustainable as one's sole income. She also noted that the method of payment varies from one interpreting assignment to the next. At the university her supervisor pays her directly, but in the community Deaf people pay interpreters for services. This generally means that interpreters accept a lower rate, or do not accept payment at all, when Deaf people pay. Jana said that the remuneration for a full day of interpreting could range from 7 to 15

Jordanian dinars (roughly equivalent to 9 to 18 Euros respectively). She shared that most interpreters work part time and struggle to earn a living. Jana believes the issue of remuneration is a barrier to more people joining the profession. While she was desperate to see improvement in the professionalization of signed language interpreting in Jordan she acknowledged that Jordan was still “way ahead” of other Arab countries (Trine, 2013).

Discussion and Future Research

Throughout the findings Jana portrays herself as seeking to raise the standards of the field in Jordan and to provide the best possible services to consumers. We can recognize Jana as a colleague with similar experiences and goals to those of her international peers and with much to contribute to the field. Considering the data within the framework of Jordanian culture provides insight into Jana’s reported experiences. Figure 1-2 below illustrates the interconnectedness of the primary themes from the data and highlights that these themes are situated within the larger context of Jordanian culture.



Figure 1-2: The Data and Jordanian Culture

As Held, Cummings and Cotter (2011) report the country of Jordan has maintained unique ties to its region and to the West since its establishment. These ties may have contributed to the culture of Jordan developing differently than the cultures of some of its neighboring nations. Previous research conducted on the cultures of Arabic speaking

nations (Hofstede, 1984) identified the cultures as all sharing a number of common traits. Alkailani, Azzam, and Athamneh (2012) determined that Jordanian culture shows similarities with other Arabic speaking nations in the categories of *masculine* and *collectivist*, but that Jordanian culture diverges in the categories of *power distance* and *uncertainty avoidance*. Based on these categories, Alkailani et al. (2012) note that Jordanian culture values: the accumulation of wealth, distinct gender roles, expertise, structure, youth, minimizing status by those in authority, solidarity, relationship building, and conservatism.

Alkailani et al (2012) identified Jordanian culture as collectivist. Initially, Jana's portrayal of the tension and competition between colleagues may appear to conflict with collectivist values of relationship building and solidarity. However, when considered in conjunction with the masculine characteristics of the culture which values wealth as a symbol of success, this tension is indicative of the professional identities of interpreters. This information may indicate that interpreters feel solidarity with their families or with consumers of their interpreting services, rather than with other interpreting colleagues. This could contribute to viewing colleagues as competition for wages to support their families or as threats to disrupting working relationships that have been established. Working in isolation could also contribute to interpreters not feeling connected to the interpreting community as a whole.

When considering the ratio of interpreters to the Deaf population, even if the lower statistics on the percentage of Deaf people in Jordan are correct, it is surprising that competition is so prevalent. If it is in fact difficult for interpreters to find work, this would suggest that the Deaf community is still marginalized and is not included in Jordanian society in the ways that the CRPD and national legislation directs. It is also possible that interpreters are unaware of potential work, as Jana mentioned that interpreters must schedule all non-government assignments themselves. Currently, there are no professional organizations or formalized trainings that could invite current and future interpreters into a professional community in Jordan. We do see these examples in other countries. This lack of solidarity and professional identity among interpreters could be problematic for the professionalization of the field and consequently for consumers. A 2013 study conducted by Annarino and Hall regarding disenfranchised interpreters in Saipan and Guam suggested that interpreters must feel connected to the profession in order to consider the ethical implications of their decisions when interpreting. Additionally, Guess (2004) posits that

members of collectivist cultures may feel insecure making decisions individually. A solidified professional identity for Jordanian interpreters could positively impact consumers if interpreters were more diligent in making individual ethical decisions and in collectively establishing standards for interpreters to follow.

The cultural descriptors of masculine and strong uncertainty avoidance (Alkailani et al., 2012) may also contribute to the low status of interpreting within Jordan. While Jana shared that projects were in development, at the time of the study there was no formal interpreting education within the country. The uncertainty avoidance value of expertise (Alkailani et al., 2012) may contribute to society not viewing interpreters as professionals since they do not have formalized training or hold a degree in interpreting. This may also be a factor in the low remuneration interpreters receive. Low wages, perceived low status of the profession, and tension amongst colleagues could also be barriers to people wanting to join the field.

When discussing her interpreting work Jana continually demonstrated a desire to provide access for consumers, and she acknowledged that the best way to do so depended on the setting and situation. She shared stories that demonstrated alignment with each interpreting paradigm taught in many interpreter education programs internationally (these paradigms are named above as the secondary themes under Interpreting Paradigms). However, Jordanian interpreters have yet to develop and codify approaches to the work that best serve their communities and culture, and viewing this information through the lens of known paradigms may only provide a partial picture of the approaches Jana utilized.

The Helper Paradigm (Gish, 1990) code occurred with the most frequency in the data analysis. However, Jana's stories did not appear to display the pathology described by Gish (1990) "that Deaf people [are] somehow lacking," as is often seen in the *helper* approach. Her involvement in these situations seemed to stem from her deep connection to the community. Likewise, in the situations coded as Designated Interpreter (Hauser, Finch, & Hauser, 2008) Jana shared that at times she participated in an interpreted interaction by adding her own comments. She emphasized that this only occurred when she had permission from the Deaf consumer and that she clearly differentiated between her own comments and those of the Deaf consumer. It is possible that consumers may have different expectations of Jana as a CODA and trusted community member than they would of other interpreters. Collectivist values of relationship building and solidarity (Alkailani et al., 2012)

may also contribute to Jana utilizing these approaches.

The findings of this study call for further research in a number of ways. This study did not focus on the perspective of the Jordanian Deaf community. We suggest that future studies include Deaf stakeholders and address Deaf community members' perspectives. We also suggest that research on Jordanian Deaf culture and LIU be conducted to raise understanding and the perceived status of the Deaf community. Expanding Jordanian society's view of the Deaf community could also increase society's understanding of interpreters. Research regarding Jordanian Deaf culture could determine if the Deaf culture is also collectivist and what the implications are in interpreting between two collectivist cultures.

We suggest conducting a needs assessment to determine if in fact tens of thousands of Deaf people are being marginalized and excluded from society. Jordan has already demonstrated through legislation that it wants to honor the human rights of the Deaf community and include them in society. We recommend that the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) support Jordanian officials in meeting the standards of the CRPD and the national legislation.

We also suggest that future studies include larger pools of Arabic/LIU interpreters in order to determine if Jana's experiences are common or unique.

In order to foster professional identity and solidarity among interpreters we advise that interpreters engage in professional dialogues with one another, such as Demand-Control Schema case conferencing as described by Dean and Pollard (2001).

Finally, we acknowledge that significant work is being done in Jordan and that improvements have been made since the time of this study in 2013. We suggest continued research on the state of Arabic/LIU interpreting in Jordan to document and support these efforts.

It is our hope that this study provides the first step in investigating the Arabic/LIU interpreting community in Jordan and that more scholarly dialogue will follow to illuminate how we can best support our colleagues and the Deaf community in the region. We trust that the Jordanian Deaf community and interpreting community will move forward together in professionalizing the field in ways that serve them best both culturally and pragmatically. We look forward to learning from our Jordanian colleagues as they establish best practices for Arabic/LIU interpreters working in Jordan.

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International Sign Interpreter Preparations for High-level European Assignments

Maya de Wit & Irma Sluis

Introduction

During the past ten years, deaf sign language users have become increasingly active politically on European level. Due to the intensified involvement of associations such as the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY), the demand for international sign interpreters has increased within EU institutions and in the political arena in Brussels, Strasbourg, and Geneva (Turner and Napier, 2014).

In order for deaf sign language users to exercise their human rights and participate in the European political arena, access through sign language interpreting services is required. The EU institutions and European organizations have extensive experience in working with spoken language interpreters, but little to no experience recruiting and working with sign language interpreters. This lack of experience poses an array of challenges to the deaf associations and individuals, as well as interpreter associations and interpreters.

In this article the results of an explorative study are presented in which experiences and best practices were collected of international sign interpreters working at a European level. The findings are expected to further better understanding among practitioners and users of the interpreting services. This article will zoom in on a selection of the findings, specifically on the profile of the interpreter and preparation techniques, for a full overview of the results we refer to De Wit and Sluis (forthcoming 2015).

Research Question, Framework and Methodology

This study expects to gain further insight into the specific challenges the international sign interpreter encounters, in particular in regards to preparation. The study is composed of two parts.

The first part of the study describes the current status of international sign interpreters at European level, the need for international sign interpreters, the hiring and recruitment process, as well as the profile of the international sign interpreter. The information was collected through a literature review and a specially designed survey on the general profile of the international sign interpreter. The survey was spread amongst international sign interpreters known to work at European level.

The second part focuses on the aspect of preparation for an assignment by international sign interpreters, considering also if and what different preparation was carried out for an international sign assignment in comparison to an assignment in the national sign language of the interpreter. For this part a diary for the international sign interpreter was developed looking at specifically the aspects related to preparation for an international sign assignment.

Current Status of Interpreters at European Level

Next to the need of national sign language interpreters, there is a growing demand for international sign interpreters within Europe (Turner and Napier, 2014). The EUD uses international sign interpreters to make their meetings and conferences accessible for representatives and participants of different European countries¹.

International sign interpreters work in a variety of settings. The primary European level organizations international sign interpreters work for are the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Court of Justice (informal meeting, EU institutions and AIIIC-EU-ND committee, 11/13/2013).

Until 2012 the SCIC (The Directorate General for Interpretation of the European Commission) provided international sign interpreters within these three European institutions. SCIC uses a list of freelance interpreters. To be added to this list, interpreters need to have a

¹ http://eud.eu/International_Sign_Disclaimer-i-206.html, accessed 2/5/2014

university degree and have completed interpreting studies and provided an overview of their worked hours and experience.

Many spoken language interpreters who work for the European institutions are member of the Association of International Conference Interpreters (AIIC). Due to cooperation with efsli and the Sign Language Network, a working group within AIIC, sign language interpreters could starting 2012 become a member of AIIC. This was a big step forward for the international recognition for sign language interpreters working in conference settings.

Preparation and International Sign

The interpreting process consists of different components. One of these components is preparation (Napier, 2002). In order to deliver a quality interpretation, the interpreter needs to undertake preparation (Campbell, Rohan and Woodcock, 2008; Dean and Pollard, 2001; Diriker, 2011; Frishberg, 1990; Humphrey and Alcorn, 1996; Janzen and Korpiniski, 2005; Kauling, 2012; Neumann Solow, 2000; Nolan, 2005; Pollard and Dean, 2008; Seleskovitch, 1978; Stewart, Schein and Cartwright, 1998; Stone, 2007; de Wit, 2010b).

Kauling (2012) explored how national sign language interpreters in the Netherlands prepare for their assignments and found two different methods, which are a) studying the preparation materials, as slide presentations, papers, etc., and b) striving for extra linguistic knowledge. This latter term is posed by Gile (1995), and refers to knowledge about that specific interpreting situation. This could be gathering information about the location, but also learn the underlying intentions of the speaker. This will help the interpreter to have a better understanding of the discourse, and to deliver a higher quality interpretation. This study explored how, specifically, international sign interpreters prepare for international assignments at European level. McKee and Napier (2002) mention the importance for international sign interpreters to gain knowledge about the interpreting setting and other extra linguistic factors:

“(…) interpreting decisions indicate extensive use of contextual knowledge, inferencing, audience awareness, and considerations of relevance and efficiency in the process of interpretation” (p. 1).

Moody (2002) confirms the importance of obtaining the extra linguistic knowledge, considering the limited lexicon of international sign and the need for the interpreter to “act out” the speeches.

Working at European level, interpreters need not only to prepare the content of the speech, background of the speakers, and extra-linguistic knowledge but also get acquainted with how the European institutions function, as well as their decision making process, current issues and specific jargon.

These institutions have little experience and therefore knowledge of working with sign language interpreters. As a result, the interpreter needs to explain the work of sign language interpreters, as well as clarify and assist in arranging practical conditions on site. To guide the institutions, the AIIC Sign Language Network created two new guidelines in 2014. These guidelines provide information for sound engineers² and spoken language interpreters³ on what is important when working with sign language interpreters.

General Profile International Sign Interpreter

To acquire information about the profile of international sign interpreters a survey was designed and sent out to 32 interpreters of which sixteen responded. The questions included whether respondents were male or female, deaf or hearing, in which country they live, if they have a diploma or degree in sign language interpreting, how many years of experience they have as a national sign language interpreter in their home countries and how many years of experience as international sign interpreters. In addition questions regarding language were posed: their native language, what language(s) they know, and into and from which languages

² <http://aiic.net/page/6700/guidelines-for-sound-engineers/lang/1>

³ <http://aiic.net/page/6701/guidelines-for-spoken-language-interpreters-working-in-mixed-teams/lang/1>

they interpret. Furthermore a question on which institutions or organizations in Europe they have worked for.

Half of the respondents were male and half female, whereof 11 hearing and 5 deaf interpreters. The respondents live in different countries: Netherlands (5), United Kingdom (3), Germany (3), Belgium (1), France (1), Denmark (1), Finland (1), and USA (1). The educational degrees of the 16 interpreters were as follows: vocational degree (8), Bachelor's degree (3), Master's degree (3), and one interpreter reported to be attending a Master program and one had completed a training conducted by a governmental agency.

Figure 1 shows the number of years experience the respondents have as a national sign language interpreter and as an international sign interpreter.

Years of experience	Number of interpreters with experience in working in their national sign language	Number of interpreters with experience in working in international sign
0-5 years	3	7
5-10 years	6	5
11-15 years	3	1
16-20 years	1	1
21-25 years	1	2
More than 25 years	2	0

Figure 1: Number of years experience working in a national sign language and in international sign

Three respondents indicated to have less than 5 years experience interpreting in their national sign language, however 7 interpreters stated to have less than 5 years experience working as an international sign interpreter. One respondent said to have no experience interpreting in their national sign language and only had experience in international sign

because he/she is deaf. Other deaf respondents stated that they do have experience interpreting in their national sign language.

As explained previously the interpreters were also asked about language knowledge and competences, specifically regarding their native language, the languages they know, and from and into which language they interpret. In the full article an overview of the native languages of the IS interpreters could be found (de Wit and Sluis, forthcoming 2015).

A comparison of deaf and hearing interpreters' experience of working into their national sign language and international sign is shown in figure 2.

Respondent	Years of experience as a national sign language interpreter	Years of experience as an international sign interpreter
Hearing	7	2
Hearing	7,5	1
Hearing	8	3
Hearing	10	5
Hearing	12	2
Hearing	14	6
Hearing	15	5
Hearing	16	8
Hearing	24	20
Hearing	30	22
Hearing	33	25

Deaf	0	9
Deaf	2	1,5
Deaf	6	6
Deaf	10	8
Deaf	14	12

Figure 2: A comparison between deaf and hearing interpreters in number of years of experience

The responses indicate that deaf interpreters start at an earlier stage in their interpreting career with interpreting into international sign. One deaf interpreter indicated to not have worked in his/her national sign language, however has nine years of experience working into international sign. Figure 3 shows the years of experience the respondents have before starting to work into international sign.

Hearing interpreters	Deaf interpreters
4	-9
5	0
5	0,5
5	2
6,5	2
8	
8	
8	
8	

10	
10	

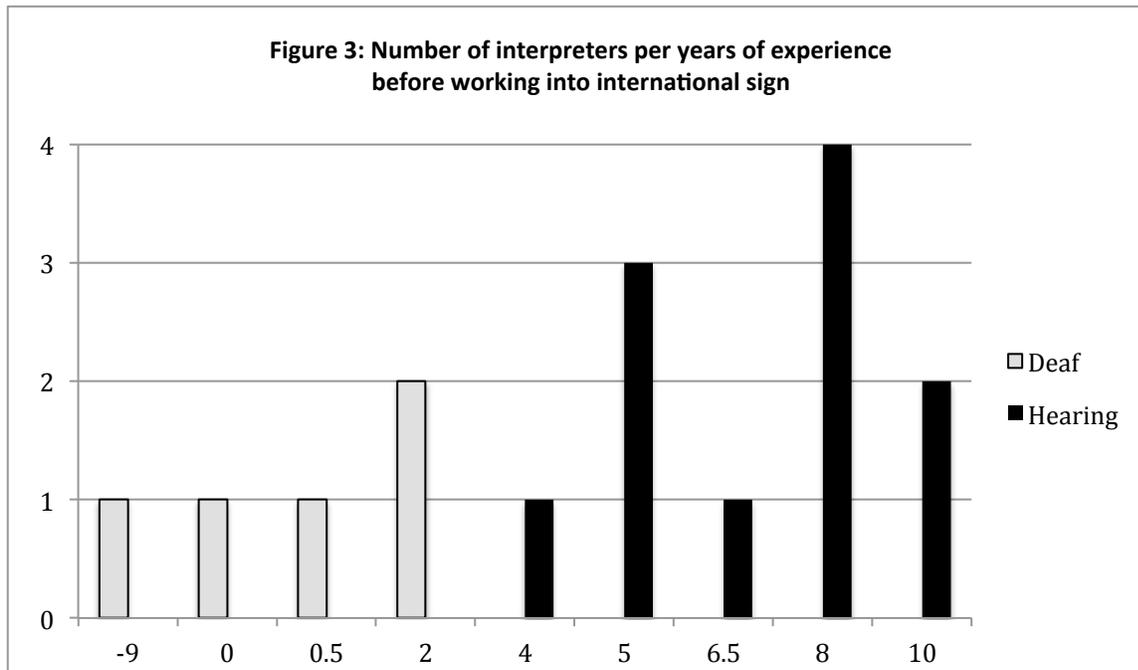


Figure 3: Number of interpreters per years of experience before working into international sign

Preparation Techniques & Strategies

In addition to the survey on the general profile of the sign language interpreter, the interpreters were also asked to fill out a diary. The diary contained questions on the preparation techniques and strategies the interpreters used during an assignment where they used international sign as one of the working languages. The interpreters were asked to fill out the diary following the event where they had worked. The purpose of the diary entries was to gain better insight in the type of the events, such as the background information and logistics, and to obtain information on type and method of preparation the interpreter used specifically for international sign assignments.

In total 32 interpreters were asked to fill out the journal and five interpreters participated: three interpreters made one diary entry, one interpreter three entries and another interpreter seven entries. In total there were 13 international sign assignments that were reported on by the respondents.

Out of the 13 events, interpreters were contacted nine times directly by the organizers, two times by the deaf person, and the other two by interpreter colleagues. Most of the events did not cover a full day and had an average duration of one to four hours. The majority of the events were platform work, where the interpreter faced a larger audience. The interpreters mostly worked in teams of two and occasionally in a team of three. One interpreter reported on a team of 6 with two rotating teams of three interpreters. At all events the team of interpreters knew each other, except for one event. An interpreter coordinator, or so-called head of team, was present at all events. Of the thirteen events, a total of seven events officially announced the presence of an international sign interpreter. This is essential information for deaf people in order to know if they can actually participate in the event.

English and international sign were at all events the source languages for the interpreter. Next to English, the most frequently spoken language interpretation offered was French, Spanish and German. Some respondents reported on the incidental use of other signed languages at the event.

All interpreters mentioned that they prepared for their interpreting assignment. For less than half of the events the interpreters were very familiar with the topic of the event. They mentioned a variety of preparation strategies. The most frequently used preparation technique was the reading of relevant papers, such as the agenda, background information, presentations, and abstracts, which they requested from the event organizers. This was followed by discussion of signs for terminology and concepts with their team interpreter as well as with the deaf clients. In addition, they used Internet searches for additional sources of information, such as information on the hosting organization. An important and crucial part of the preparation strategy was informing the event organizers of the requirements that needed to be fulfilled in order to carry out interpreting services. For example, some of these included the setup of the room, the technical requirements, the seating of the deaf participants and the

placement of the interpreters. The conference rooms were originally built with grounded tables and seats with too short audio extension cords. These rooms also have booths for spoken language interpreters. Because sign language interpreters do not work in the booths, but in the room where they need to be visible to the deaf audience, this frequently needs additional explanation to the event organizers. Next to the more standard settings, some of the events required further exchange with the organizers, such as events that were web streamed with sign language interpretation. Topics that were then discussed were for example solid background colors, contrasting background with the usual black or dark colored outfit of the sign language interpreter, and also wireless headsets and at which size the interpreter was in the cut out of the screen to still have a visible and understandable sign language interpretation.

At half of the events the event organizers provided the background information. The respondents mentioned that at the other events they contacted the presenters themselves, following the inability of the organizers to do so, and explained the presenters about the role of the interpreter and asking them for their presentations.

Looking back on their method of preparations, nine respondents said that they had prepared well, one interpreter said that they had not prepared well and two said that it could have been better and the last one said that they had prepared more or less well. As one respondent stated, " Yes, it was enough preparation with the materials but there was no opportunity made available to meet with the speakers nor the others interpreters, signed or spoken."

In regard to preparations with their colleagues, and interpreter mentioned, "Although I wish my team would be more proactive in preparing. I prepare well, but my team usually does not read the full texts or prep materials." Another respondent stated that the preparations for content were adequate, but the technical facilities appeared not to function well. One of the questions to the respondents was if they would prepare differently if this had been an assignment in their national sign language. One respondent stated, "Yes, in that sense that the concepts in International Sign had to be discussed and agreed on prior to interpreting. In my national sign language there is not such a need for that, unless they are unusual concepts." For six of the events the interpreters said that they would prepare differently when it concerns an

assignment in their national sign language and for seven of the events not. As shows in one of the comments, "Preparing for a national assignment is less stressful. Now working with international and due to the many cultural and linguistic challenges, we prepared more than usual with a national assignment."

For a following time five would prepare differently and seven would not. One respondent also stated the importance of involving the deaf person, "Ask the deaf persons to assist in explaining the organizers the need for preparation in order to provide full access."

Discussion and Conclusions

The research findings indicate, among other things, that due to the inexperience of the event organizers of working with sign language interpreters, the interpreters face challenging working conditions and consequently high stress levels. More importantly, it appears that the interpreter's attention is shifted towards raising awareness and addressing event logistics and therefore leaving less room to focus on providing a quality interpretation. For a full overview of the findings we refer to De Wit and Sluis, (forthcoming, 2015). Overall, international sign interpreters should consider the different preparation strategies proposed by the respondents when not working with their national sign language. These strategies do not seem to be common among all the international sign interpreters responding, but might be of use to further raise awareness among conference organizers and users of the interpreting service. This might in the long term affect the understanding and willingness of all stakeholders at the event to improve access for deaf sign language users.

Recommendations

Considering the frequently mentioned inexperience of event organizers, further actions need to be taken to raise awareness of what access for deaf sign language users through international sign interpreting services means. In addition, more steps need to be taken to

improve the working conditions of international sign interpreters at European level through adequate interpreter preparation. Too often the international sign interpreters are forced to use their time to educate and assist the event organizers in logistics in relation to interpreting services. When working conditions are improved it will assist the interpreter to focus on the quality of the interpretation instead of handling the complexity of the underlying logistics.

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AIIC: What Does it Stand for, and What Can it Do for You?

Maya de Wit & Elisabet Tiselius

Introduction

At the 2015 WASLI (World Association of Sign Language Interpreters) conference in Istanbul, Turkey, the international association of conference interpreters (AIIC) participated for the first time. Members from the Sign Language Network represented the association. The authors presented AIIC as an organization and what it does for its members. The AIIC council unanimously changed the statutes in 2012 in order to welcome sign language conference interpreters to the organization. The following text is a presentation of AIIC as well as a practical guide on how to apply for membership.

AIIC – Background

The international association of conference interpreters, known by its French acronym, AIIC, was founded in 1953 in Paris. The objectives when the organization was established were to lay the foundations of the profession. AIIC has, since its beginnings, been an international organization with individual members from different countries (as opposed to a federation of national bodies). Another initial goal of AIIC was to represent all interpreters equally, whether employed as a freelancer or staff member. The members of the organization would (and still do) vouch for high quality interpreting. The organization aimed to function as a professional organization, but at the same time to represent its members in the way a trade union does, i.e. to negotiate for collective agreements. From the outset the association was open to conference

interpreters of spoken languages, and, since 2012, AIIC is proud to say that we speak and sign all languages. Today, AIIC organizes over 2800 interpreters in 91 countries and it is the only international organization for conference interpreters.

The tasks of the organization

AIIC works towards several different goals in order to strengthen and support the interpreting profession. The organization has been working actively both with the International Standards Organization (ISO), as well as UNESCO for defining, protecting and recognizing the profession. One of AIIC's core tasks is minding technical matters for interpreters, such as ISO-standards for interpreting booths, or standards for remote interpreting. This is also very closely linked to the task of improving and safeguarding working conditions. AIIC has been true to its initial goal to function as a trade union. It is today the only negotiating body in interpreting questions for many international organizations, such as the EU, the UN, Council of Europe and the NATO. These represent the so-called agreement sector of AIIC. The professional delegations for interpreters at these institutions consist of AIIC-members and act on behalf of all interpreters (both staff and freelance) in line with the organization's founding principle to represent all conference interpreters alike. At these institutions AIIC negotiates collective agreements for interpreters.

Training and research are two other important areas of work of the organization. AIIC has developed guidelines for conference interpreting training and keeps an official record of schools abiding to these guidelines. It also provides training for trainers thereby ensuring the continuation of high quality training of future colleagues. Furthermore, AIIC supports and promotes research concerning different types of conference interpreting. AIIC also runs regular market surveys among its members and publishes reports of these results. This way we keep in touch with the actual professional practice and we understand and know the different markets of the members. AIIC has also developed and negotiated insurance products for its members.

AIIC and its members

Just as for any organization built on individual membership, AIIC stands and falls with its individual members. AIIC members contribute to the reputation both of the organization and of the profession by maintaining collegiality and promoting quality. Volunteer members are also contributing to the work of AIIC by organizing themselves in different committees and networks, such as the Sign Language Network or the training committee. Members of the different committees represent AIIC in different contexts and cover their particular area of interest within the organization. Furthermore, AIIC co-operates with other international organizations such as the International Federation of Translators (FIT), the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI) to promote interpreting and translation worldwide.

AIIC and its values

The most distinguished core value of AIIC and its members is the professional secrecy, laid out in article 2 of the code of ethics. The article states that AIIC members “shall be bound by the strictest secrecy” towards all people and with regard to all information. However, not only secrecy is important to a good interpreter, linguistic competence, intercultural communication and professionalism are other core values held high by the organization. In order to become a member, other members, so called sponsors, vouch for the candidate’s linguistic skills and professionalism. Furthermore, a candidate has to work for at least 150 days in order to apply for membership. This clause guarantees that the candidate has experience. AIIC also fosters young interpreters through its pre-candidature where aspiring younger colleagues can register and undertake to follow the ethical and professional standards of the organization.

AIIC members and the private interpreting market

It is important to stress that AIIC members who work on the private market are free to negotiate their own financial conditions for each assignment. AIIC does, however, encourage members to practice collegiality, transparency, as well as professionalism in all contexts. This means with clients; candidates; recruiters and, of course, colleagues. AIIC colleagues on the private market also abide to the association's binding rules. Apart from secrecy these cover, for instance, team strength (not working without colleagues in simultaneous mode, as a case in point), quality (not taking assignments for which an interpreter is not qualified), and ethics.

A few more words on quality

Just as for any high profile service, quality is essential for delivering the high-end service AIIC stands for. Therefore, AIIC monitors the quality of its members. This means that the association keeps strict admission criteria for new members of the association. These criteria are described below. The most important feature is the sponsor system, with seasoned members vouching for the quality of new candidates. AIIC members are obliged to abide by both the Code of Professional Ethics¹ and the Professional Standards².

AIIC's Value Proposition

Being an AIIC member offers a good opportunity for networking. As stated earlier, the AIIC brand is strongly linked to high quality and professional services. Being a member of AIIC means contributing to and promoting that brand, through collegiality and professionalism.

Knowing is power and knowing your market is an important instrument for interpreters, just as for other professionals. Therefore, AIIC provides its members with a wealth of practical

¹ <http://aiic.net/page/6724>

² <http://aiic.net/page/6746>

information (both about the market, but also about training and general interpreting issues). This information is available through the organization's website. The statistics of the annual workload survey is another important instrument that AIIC provides for its members.

Finally, we want to discuss the directory. All AIIC members are listed in the AIIC directory³, accessible both in print and on the Internet. The search engine allows potential clients to search for interpreters based on language, location or name. The directory is also search engine optimized; if somebody looks for an AIIC member's name it is very likely that the particular member's entry in the directory shows up. This means that the member's personal visibility increases only by being part of the directory. AIIC's online visibility is also high in searches on for instance 'conference interpreters' or 'professional interpreters'.

AIIC & Sign language interpreters

For quite some time, AIIC members have identified the benefits of welcoming sign language interpreters into the organization. Clearly, sign language conference interpreting is the same profession as spoken language conference interpreting. Since January 2012 sign language interpreters can become a member of AIIC. This was achieved after close cooperation and fruitful discussions with EFSLI, WASLI, AIIC and the AIIC Sign Language Network. The AIIC general assembly in 2012 in Buenos Aires unanimously decided to welcome sign language conference interpreters. This put signed languages on an equal footing with spoken languages within the world of conference interpreting.

As mentioned above, AIIC members follow a professional code of ethics and working standards. It is important to stress that since AIIC is the official and sole negotiating partner to the EU, UN and other international institutions⁴ (an often unknown fact), it negotiates on behalf of the whole membership, through special negotiating delegations. This means that the work and payment conditions for interpreters agreed upon need to be respected by the

³ <http://aiic.net/directories/interpreters/>

⁴ <http://aiic.net/directories/aiic/sectors/>

institutions. Even more important in this context, this is the case for all interpreters working for the institutions. These conditions are thus not only true for spoken language interpreters or AIIC members only, but also for sign language interpreters. Therefore it is essential that sign language interpreters abide by the standards agreed by AIIC when working for international institutions such as the EU and the UN. If we use the same set of standards as spoken language interpreters, this will be beneficial in furthering the international recognition of the profession of sign language interpreters.

Why join AIIC as a sign language interpreter

The AIIC Sign Language Network, which was driving the work to open up AIIC to sign language conference interpreters, is still in place. At this moment the network, among other tasks, supports sign language interpreters who wish to join the association. In addition, they disseminate information on sign language interpreting at conferences and the essential cooperation between signed and spoken language interpreters at interpreting assignments. To enforce this commitment AIIC has participated and presented at the annual EFSLI and WASLI meetings and conferences. Reports of attendance were published on the AIIC website, to create further insight and awareness amongst AIIC members and visitors of the AIIC website.

Until today only two sign language interpreters have applied for membership and they have subsequently been accepted as full AIIC members. There are, however, many more sign language interpreters with extensive conference experience who would like to become a member. AIIC encourages these potential new members to apply. In order to further the international recognition of the profession of sign language interpreters, it is of essence that the number of sign language interpreter members will increase within AIIC, thereby it will strengthen the legitimacy of the organization to work on behalf of sign language interpreting equally.

How to join

Once you have at least 150 days of conference interpreting experience you can apply to AIIC. The AIIC Sign Language Network has created a checklist in English and French for sign language interpreters to help them in their application process:

<https://sites.google.com/site/newslnetworksite/how-to-join-aiic> (see the download links to the pdf files at the bottom of that page).

When you apply to AIIC you need to find at least three sponsors (including two from your own world region), who are active AIIC members, and:

- who have listened to you work at a meeting no more than three years prior to the date at which they signed your application;
- who have signed your application form no more than three years prior to the date at which the AIIC Secretariat receives your application;
- who are active members of AIIC;
- who have 5 years' seniority in the languages they are sponsoring;
- who cover at least one language pair.

A full overview of the requirements and procedures can be found on the AIIC website: <http://aiic.net/page/199>. The deadline for submission of your membership application is twice a year on 30 November and 31 May. If you send your application six weeks before that deadline, AIIC will prescreen all the documentation to ensure you have submitted all the necessary paperwork. Should you not have worked 150 days, but would like to show your commitment to becoming an AIIC member, you can also apply for pre-candidateship. This means that three sponsors will vouch for the fact that you work as a conference interpreter and that you abide by AIIC professional standards.

The AIIC Sign Language Network has put together information and practical steps for sign language interpreters on how to become members:

<https://sites.google.com/site/newslnetworksite/>

In conclusion

AIIC and its Sign Language Network sincerely hope that we have shown the benefits of being a member of AIIC. We are looking forward to welcoming new conference interpreting members from the sign language community. AIIC will continue to push the boundaries of conference interpreting forward. Today, interpreters work in a disruptive and game changing world, technology have massive implications on working condition, implications which change fast. Therefore, AIIC has an important role to play. We need to investigate, promote and negotiate these new conditions as well. We are signing and speaking together as one voice for all conference interpreters of the world, why not join the fun? And, if you have already joined, come work in one of AIIC's committees or networks!

The Legislation of Kenyan Sign Language and Its Impact on the Sign Language Interpreting Profession in Kenya

Leonida Tausi Kaula

Abstract

Kenya has moved a step closer in regard to the Sign Language interpreting profession after the promulgation of the current constitution in 2010. The constitution recognizes Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) as the language of the deaf in Kenya and further stipulates that the state should promote the development of KSL. Additionally, KSL is one of three languages of the Kenyan parliament in addition to English and Kiswahili. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) also provided several rights and privileges to the deaf among them including reservation of employment opportunities in the public sector and catering for the communication needs of the deaf in learning academic institutions. The law also reiterates that the deaf have a right to access information and access justice through a language that they understand.

This legislation has provided legal protection and backing that the deaf Kenyans require to demand for their right to communication as they access services and job opportunities resulting from the legislation. Furthermore, recognition of Kenyan Sign Language has also resulted in an increased need for Sign Language interpretation services in different settings. Consequently, Sign Language interpreters have begun interpreting in new settings such as parliament, Court and television settings are also among these domains. While this is a positive step towards awareness and recognition of the profession, Sign Language interpreters are providing services in new domains to which they have not been previously been exposed.

On the other hand, the Kenyan government structure does not include the position of sign language interpreter as one of its job titles. In an attempt to meet the constitutional requirement, different government ministries have employed deaf persons and thereafter encountered challenges hiring a Sign Language interpreter. Diverse terms used to refer to Sign language interpreters have been used in order to meet the demand in the existing job descriptions in the government structure.

Interpreting in educational settings is one other domain that has been impacted greatly by the new legislation. Recognition of Kenyan Sign Language and its use as the language of instruction in deaf schools and as an exam-based subject seems to have contributed to an increased number of deaf Kenyans in higher institutions of learning. In the last six years, more deaf people have attained entry requirements to mainstream universities. Though several of them may be enrolled in the same university, the careers are diverse. This notwithstanding, all are in different departments, enrolled in different academic years and attending classes at different times.

The positive shift of the Kenyan Sign Language recognition has brought about dilemmas associated with sign language interpreting. Practitioners and various stakeholders have had to address these issues in order for the profession to move to the next level. It is therefore necessary to consolidate efforts and ensure that recognition is achieved.

Introduction

The promulgation of a new Kenyan Constitution in 2010 has brought with it great gains to many Kenyans. The clamor for a new constitution had begun in the early 1990's leading to numerous consultations involving different stakeholders. It involved several drafts making it a long process before finally having a document acceptable to most Kenyans. As a matter of fact, the majority rejected a first draft through a referendum vote in 2005. At the time the initial drafts were made, few people knew about signed languages. In my view, the long process involved was a blessing in disguise especially for the Deaf since the final stages of the process

revealed there was already an increased awareness about the deaf and sign language as their language. Ultimately, Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) was recognized in the Constitution bringing with it an unprecedented phenomenon in relation to Sign Language interpretation.

A Brief Background to Sign Language Interpreting in Kenya

Sign Language Interpreting in Kenya may have begun with the onset of the first schools for the Deaf in the early 1960's. A charitable organization, the Kenya Society for Deaf Children (KSDC) established two units for the Deaf in Mombasa and Nairobi in 1958. Soon after, two more fully fledged schools were established by catholic missionaries in Mumias and Nyangoma (Mwangiri 1988). For many years, teachers of the deaf signed to deaf children some of the information from hearing people using the little sign language learnt from their deaf students.

Later in 1987, the Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD) was registered as a non-governmental organization. Funded by the Swedish Deaf Association (SDR), KNAD held a series of training workshops that targeted hearing people interested in learning Kenyan Sign Language (KSL). The graduates of these classes, held in the late 1980's and early 1990's ended up forming the first group of interpreters in Kenya (Okombo et al 2009)

After the formation KNAD in 1987; and the Kenya Sign Language Research Project (KSLRP) in 1991, a few more people who initially worked as receptionists/copy typists of these organizations began interpreting for the deaf persons involved in advocacy for the rights of deaf people. At the time, apart from knowledge of sign language acquired through interaction with deaf colleagues, the interpreters had no formal training in sign language interpretation. Later in 1997, the Danish Association of the Deaf funded a project for sign language interpretation training. The program involved four countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. Its first phase involved 6 people (3 hearing and 3 deaf) who underwent a four-month crash course program in Sign Language and interpreter training in Denmark at the Center for Sign Language and Sign Supported Communication. The 3 hearing persons involved were already practicing interpreters while the deaf persons were Sign Language teachers in their respective countries. The six were trained as trainers of trainers (TOTs) in sign language interpretation. In the second

phase, each of the Deaf Associations of the four countries were required to recruit 3 deaf sign language teachers and 3 practicing interpreters to undergo a two year training program in sign language interpretation. I was among the three interpreter trainees from Kenya as at the time, I worked as the KSLRP's project secretary and provided SL interpretation at the project office and on several occasions in workshops involving deaf people outside KSLRP. One of the other two interpreters worked as a KNAD's secretary too, while the other worked for a certain church for the Deaf in Nairobi. The training was conducted by Danish interpreter trainers together with the team of TOTs that had previously undergone training in Denmark. Within the two-year period, all the trainees converged five times for 4-6 weeks each for a full-time and residential training. After each six-week period, each team returned back to the respective countries for practical experience with supervision by the trainers.

At the end of the two-year training in the year 2000, Kenya had 3 interpreters and 3 deaf people expected to continue training interpreters. However, there was no established SL interpreter training program apart from KSLRP that offered sign language classes. I was absorbed at KSLRP to assist with its training program as a component of interpretation added to the sign language program. The other two trained interpreters continued practicing interpretation: one as a freelance interpreter while the other was later employed by the Judiciary to interpret court cases involving deaf persons. Ever since, KSLRP has trained a number of people who are currently working as interpreters some of whom are members of the Kenya Sign Language Interpreters Association (KSLIA).

In the 90's the U.S. Peace Corps (an American volunteer organization) introduced a deaf education program that placed teachers in Kenyan Schools for the Deaf. Some of the volunteer teachers were deaf so therefore the Peace Corps program relied heavily on interpreters to carry out its pre-service training. Interpreters were needed to facilitate communication between the instructors and the deaf volunteers. The organization invested in one or two interpreters from the U.S. to work with local interpreters to build their capacity. In 1999, a strong group of American Deaf volunteers advocated for funding to build the capacity of local interpreters. Consequently, in September 2000, the Peace Corps organized a workshop for interpreters. The one-week workshop involved two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, 3 deaf Americans

as facilitators and 10 Kenyan Sign Language interpreters as participants including myself. The main resolution of the workshop was to establish an interpreters association. On 22nd October 2001, Kenya Sign Language Interpreters Association was finally registered.

Prior to Legislation

Prior to the promulgation of the current Kenyan constitution in 2010, sign language (SL) interpreters mostly interpreted in churches and seminar/workshops, which in most cases were organized by non- governmental organizations. Often interpreters were perceived as helpers of the deaf and in most cases worked without pay. None of the public entities had employed Sign Language interpreters except the judiciary. Due to lack of SL interpreters in court, deaf persons involved in court cases as defendant, plaintiff or witness encountered accessibility challenges. Often, such court cases would be adjourned several times resulting in delayed judgments or unfair ones for that matter. This in itself was a breach to the right for a fair hearing. Consequently in 2004, advocacy by the Kenya National Association of the Deaf bore fruit as the Judiciary employed at least four SL interpreters posting one each in Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret and Kakamega. The job title of a SL interpreter was and still non- existent in the Kenyan public service structure. The SL interpreters were therefore employed as court clerks (and remunerated as such) with the understanding that they would interpret court cases involving the deaf in all courts around various regions.

In institutions of higher learning, Deaf students who were enrolled experienced accessibility challenges. The Deaf students would find an interpreter for themselves by offering them a small token for transport without any pay for the services provided. Similarly, public and private healthcare centers had no interpreters or health care providers who could sign. SL interpreters were not recognized and therefore not fairly compensated for their work.

The Current Legislation

Article 39 of The Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 requires all television stations to provide a sign language interpreter inset or subtitles in all newscasts, including educational programmes and all programmes covering events of national significance. Despite the provision, interpreter inset or subtitles were not provided and as a result, Deaf Kenyans did not access information as required.

Further article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) requires that state parties ensure that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have access to information and communication on an equal basis. Article 9 (e) requires state parties to provide all forms of live assistance and intermediaries including professional sign language interpreters. Article 21 not only requires state parties to provide information intended for the general public to PWDs in accessible format but also to accept and facilitate the use of sign languages in official interactions. Although Kenya signed the convention on 30th March 2007 and ratified on 19th May 2008, Deaf Kenyans did not enjoy the right to access information since the state did not ensure provision of SL interpretation.

Recognition of KSL in the current constitution saw Kenya move a step further in regard to the sign language interpreting profession. Article 120 (i) stipulates that the official languages of Parliament shall be Kiswahili, English and Kenyan Sign Language, and the business of Parliament may be conducted in English, Kiswahili and Kenyan Sign Language (KSL). Consequently, the Kenyan parliament was required to include Kenyan Sign Language in addition to English and Kiswahili languages previously used. Further article 118 1 (a) requires that parliament conducts its business in an open manner and ensures that its sittings and those of its committees are open to the public. This led to live broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings on the national television channel for the general public. Although to date Kenya has not had a Deaf Member of Parliament, KSL interpretation has been offered on television for deaf viewers. At inception of the constitution in August 2010, neither parliament nor the national television knew how to identify a skilled interpreter. Initially, a former teacher of deaf children interpreted the three-hour session alone. After a few months, deaf consumers raised concerns not only on the long duration of interpretation without a break but also the quality of interpretation. Consultations between KSLIA, KNAD and the concerned department in

parliament agreed to contract a more qualified team of interpreters. Consequently, a team of four (including myself as the team leader) was contracted. Since then, interpreters work as a team to ensure a change over after every 45 to 1-hour period of interpreting. SL interpretation in parliament was unprecedented; hence, the team of interpreters had to grapple with a new domain of learning most of the parliamentary discourse on the job.

The Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 has since been strengthened after the Persons with Disabilities (amendment) Act 2015 was passed. Section 28A (1) recognizes Kenyan Sign Language as the official language of the deaf and (2) places KSL as equivalent to English and Kiswahili. Further Section 21A (1) and (2) requires any public institution offering services to citizens to provide qualified Sign Language interpreters and ensure to disseminate to the public information regarding the availability of Sign Language interpreters for the deaf.

Impact of the Constitution on the Sign Language Interpreting Profession

The above legislations not only resulted in recognition of KSL but also provided the deaf with the legal protection and backing necessary to demand their right of access to information. In addition to SL interpretation during parliamentary proceedings for both the National Assembly and the Senate, there are currently three television stations providing SL interpretation during news namely the National broadcaster Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and two privately owned TV stations namely Kenya Television Network (KTN) and Good News Broadcasting System (GBS). This clearly points to an increased need for Sign Language interpreters in different settings and to some extent, an increased awareness about Sign Language interpreting as an emerging profession in Kenya.

A research project study by (Koigi 2013) entitled “The Linguistic challenges faced by Kenyan Sign Language Interpreters of the Proceedings of the Kenya National Assembly” established that the KSL interpreters had to use strategies such as avoidance, paraphrasing, circumlocution, coinage and conscious transfer of borrowing. Among other recommendations,

the study recommended that structured systems be established to offer language teaching and language enhancement for the KSL interpreters.

A similar research project entitled “A Comparative Analysis of Challenges Associated with English and Kiswahili Source Texts in Kenyan Sign Language Interpretation (Kaula 2014)” established that, only 21.3% of the English source texts were adequately catered for in KSL target text. The remaining 78.7% of the English source texts had various deviations such as omissions, distortions or opposite meaning. Kiswahili had even higher deviations as 81.2% of its source texts had deviations in the target KSL text. The study recommended establishment of structured interpreter training programs that incorporate language enhancement in English, Kiswahili and KSL in order to ensure competency development of KSL interpreters. These studies by Koigi (2013) and Kaula (2014) clearly point at an urgent need to equip the KSL interpreters with necessary skills in these new domains.

A study by Bunyasi (2010) revealed that despite a Ministry of Education policy on use of KSL as a medium of instruction in 2004, teachers in schools for the deaf lacked knowledge and skills in KSL due to lack of training and therefore did not use it for instruction except when teaching it as a subject. Since 2010, another policy from the ministry allowed deaf candidates to take Kenyan Sign Language as a subject in place of Kiswahili. This appears to have contributed in boosting the average grades of deaf learners resulting in a slight increase of admission of deaf Kenyans in higher institutions of learning in the last six years.

Article 54 1(b) of the Kenyan constitution stipulates that a person with any disability is entitled to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person. Further the same article in 1(d) provides entitlement to use Sign Language and any other appropriate means of communication. Consequently, public universities have contracted Sign Language interpreters to cater for deaf students. Despite this being a good opportunity for interpreters to work in an educational setting, it has come with its challenges. Seemingly most of the institutions do not know how to find a skilled interpreter.

At the University of Nairobi, several deaf students are enrolled in different disciplines pursuing diverse courses, at different academic levels and attending classes at different times.

Each deaf student ought to have an interpreter to attend lectures, a challenging situation considering the institutions are dealing with a new phenomenon. While increased enrolment of deaf persons to higher institutions of learning is a positive step as it provides more opportunities for SL interpreters, the job itself is demanding in terms of time and skill. Some of the students are undertaking specialized courses, such as engineering, which has very specialized terminology. Furthermore, from the KSLIA database, most of the interpreters' level of education is Ordinary- level coupled with knowledge of KSL and no training in interpretation leave alone in academic specialized fields. Moreover, the institutions themselves neither have a job title for interpreters nor do they advertise for the job. In most cases, the deaf student is asked to provide the institution with a name of an interpreter who is later contracted without an interview. Some experienced interpreters have reported to KSLIA that they declined the job as remuneration offered to them is extremely low. As an association, KSLIA has no control over how much pay institutions offer interpreters. Moreover, interpreters exercise their own discretion in accepting or declining jobs. Often fresh graduates of sign language classes take up such jobs without any training in interpretation let alone in the specialized field. Consequently, the quality of interpretation provided to the deaf students is likely to be poor.

Article 54 (2) of the Kenyan constitution provides that the state ensures the progressive implementation of the principle that at least five percent of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disabilities. This has resulted in employment of a few Deaf persons in the public service as the government endeavors to fulfill this requirement. Interestingly, government ministries only seem to realize the need for a SL interpreter after hiring the deaf person. However, the greatest setback has been recruitment and remuneration of SL language interpreters since clear guidelines are lacking. In an effort to hire an interpreter, ministries encounter major challenges, as the process is bureaucratic and time consuming. The Kenyan constitution 2010 established the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) a body mandated to review and determine salaries for all government employees. A few interpreters have reported to KSLIA cases of Government ministries putting on hold plans to hire them as they wait for directions from the SRC. At the time of publishing

this paper, KSLIA had received communication in writing from the SRC that the matter is being considered.

The positive move of recognition of KSL has brought to the fore dimensions about SL interpreting that the practitioners themselves and the stakeholders have to grapple with in order for the profession to move to the next level. In addition to an increased awareness of the SL interpreting profession in Kenya, interpreters have begun interpreting in new domains such as the parliament, court, educational and television settings among others.

Currently, none of the existing universities has a Signed Language interpreter training program. The only existing interpreter training program at the University of Nairobi focuses on spoken language interpreting and has not yet incorporated signed language interpreting. Compared to other sign language teaching programs available locally, the Kenya Sign Language Research Project (KSLRP) a joint project between the University of Nairobi and KNAD offers a fairly reliable training. KSLRP's website indicates that its nine month training entails three months basic Sign Language classes; 3 months advanced sign language which incorporates a few components of interpretation and 3 months of internship at an institution/organization of deaf people. However, it is limited as it does not incorporate the intensive practice and exposure to diverse scenarios required in interpreter training.

Currently, there is no certification process to ensure licensing of interpreters in Kenya. It is common to find people with very minimal signing skills interpreting in high-level assignments that require experienced interpreters. Currently, practicing interpreters are at different levels of skill some with several years of experience while others have basic signing skills. Employers are unable to distinguish those levels, as there is a lack of system of licensing interpreters according to qualifications, skill and experience.

In the last few years, there has been increased enrolment for Sign Language training. Moreover, in an attempt to accommodate deaf people, several government ministries have sponsored their staff to undertake sign language training. As of June 2015, KSLRP indicated on its website that in the past three years, at least 150 nurses from different public hospitals and a few police officers have been sponsored for full time sign language training at KSLRP for a period of nine months. The training incorporates some aspect of basic interpreting to equip the

nurses with some interpreting skills in case of a need to interpret for a deaf patient. During the last three months of the training, the learners are placed in an organization/ institution for the deaf for internship and experiential learning.

Recommendations

- ▶ There is need for short training for interpreters already working in the mentioned settings to enhance their skill level in order to improve quality
- ▶ Establish well-structured interpreter training programs that provide the required training. The Center for Translation and Interpretation at the University of Nairobi that has an existing program for spoken language interpretation is considering incorporating sign language interpreter training. However, the centre requires both technical and financial support to implement it.
- ▶ Establishment of a board to certify and license those practicing to get rid of “Mandela fakes” (a term coined by Kenyan sign language interpreter community after the Fake South African interpreter during Nelson Mandela’s memorial to refer to those purporting to be skilled in interpreting but possess very limited signing skills or none at all).
- ▶ KSLIA requires resources to establish a secretariat that will engage with the government in lobbying for recognition of sign language interpreting in Kenya.

Conclusion

Although the new Constitution has provided Deaf Kenyans the right to access, it has not made it possible for them to “enjoy” this right, as there seem to be numerous barriers to that access. Similarly, there seems to be increased job opportunities for interpreters but this does not necessary benefit them due to the numerous challenges enumerated in this paper.

The increased awareness of KSL has resulted in more hearing people enrolling for Sign Language classes creating job opportunities for deaf sign language trainers. Additionally, a few universities such as St. Pauls University, Moi University, Kenya Methodist University have incorporated sign language as a unit while others are considering starting an interpreter training program. As of now, there are challenges of training and certification, remuneration and employment procedures for sign language interpreters. KSLIA has encountered obstacles in its efforts to engage key stakeholders in dealing with some of the challenges majorly because of lack of recognition of the sign language interpreting profession. A stronger KSLIA and KNAD with a common voice are likely to bear the fruits that interpreters in Kenya yearn for.

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