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Ambassador of the Deaf Community to the World of Hearers



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BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

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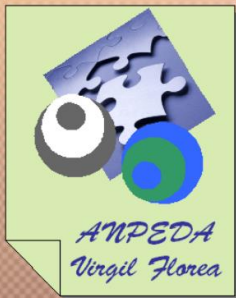
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Foreword

The members of the Deaf Community and their friends know very well the fact that most of them cannot afford to pay for unauthorized interpreter every time they need one, for economic reasons. So, in many and various situations the members of their own families, friends, teachers, social workers etc., play the role of interpreter. For these friends, who are a bridge between the world of the deaf and the world of the hearing, this guide is made.

Any person (hearing or deaf) who plays the role of interpreter in communication between deaf and hearing people needs to establish and maintain relationships with the people who take part in the communication setting in a manner that is honest and fair. So, it's important to mention from the beginning that, if a person who has knowledge and skills in sign language accepts to play the role of interpreter, pro bono or for a lower remuneration, doesn't matter if she/he has specific training, must behave in an ethical manner, based on respect and honor. We will name all these friends of Deaf Community in this guide, sign language interpreters without specific certification/ mediators/ facilitators of communication/ ally. The fact that they don't have any certification, doesn't make them any less important to members of Deaf Community, on the one hand, and doesn't absolve them of the duty to respect the principles of honor and professional ethics in interpreting situations, on the other hand.

Maybe the first rule of honor that needs to be respected is that she/he will refrain from making inaccurate statements regarding their competence, education, experience or certification.

Another unwritten but important rule for sign language interpreters (with or without certification) is the duty for understanding the difference between



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interpreting settings and other social interactions. They will assume responsibility to ensure relationships with all parties involved are reasonable and fair.

This guide is part of the project “Bridge between two worlds (BBTW)”, which contributes to the improvement of communication between deaf and hearing people by mediators, who are involved in the interpretation of spoken, written and signed messages between deaf and hearing people. People consisting of the main target group regarding this project, e.g. mediators like CODAs, teachers for deaf, friends and other family members, in general are not professionally qualified as sign language interpreters, but are playing the role of sign language interpreters, they act as “ambassadors of the Deaf Community to the world of hearers” and vice versa. This group is quite heterogeneous concerning their competences in sign language, their knowledge about the culture and tradition of the Deaf community as well as their background knowledge on the role of sign language interpreters, of ethic codes, professionalism, and other aspects, which are necessary for ensuring best possible communication/ interpreting between deaf and hearing people.

The main barrier for deaf people's integration into a hearing society is communication due to different languages, including a visual-gestural language only known by a few hearing people. This leads to a lack of communication and social participation for deaf people. Addressing this issue, our project was developed to reduce communication barriers by creating self-improvement tools for non-professional adult interpreters. In our opinion, deaf individuals have valuable perspectives and experiences to share about sign language interpreting services. The paper aims to provide insight into these perspectives and experiences. Therefore, the guide is based on results from questionnaires (including deaf respondents) and expertise (the authors have



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many years of experience working with deaf people and sign language interpreters). It includes five chapters: Professional and honor code of sign language interpreters, Code of ethics, Dealing with deaf and hearing people in an interpreting setting, Role of "sign language interpreters" and Deaf interpreters. The guide can be used as a basis for training activities to raise awareness and improve the skills of those acting as ambassadors between deaf and hearing people or for personal development and professional self-improvement, through individual study.

Summary

The "Bridge between two worlds (BBTW)" project aims to improve communication between deaf and hearing people through the use of non-professional adult interpreters. This includes friends, family, teachers, and social workers of the deaf community who act as sign language interpreters without formal certification. The guide, based on results from questionnaires and expertise, covers the professional and honor code of sign language interpreters, code of ethics, dealing with deaf and hearing people in an interpreting setting, role of sign language interpreters, and deaf interpreters. Interpreters, both certified and non-certified, must behave ethically and with respect, refrain from making inaccurate statements about their competence, and understand the difference between interpreting and other social interactions. The guide can be used for training or personal development and self-improvement.



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Chapter 1: Professional and honor code of sign language interpreters

Professional and honor code of sign language interpreters

A professional and honor code is a set of principles and standards that outline acceptable behavior and ethical conduct for individuals in a particular profession. It sets guidelines for how professionals should act in various situations, such as when dealing with clients, colleagues, or confidential information. An honor code also emphasizes the importance of upholding personal integrity, honesty, and responsibility in professional practices.





The aim of a professional and honor code is to promote trust, respect, and credibility within the industry/ **community** and to maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Before mentioning the main principles that should guide the interpreter's work, here are some examples of situations where sign language interpreters may not adhere to these (**examples of bad practice**):

- Interpreting personal opinions: **When interpreters include** their own personal opinions in the interpretation process, this can compromise the accuracy and impartiality of the message being conveyed.
- Breaching confidentiality: If an interpreter discusses confidential information about an interpreting assignment or client outside of the assignment.
- Inappropriate dress: If an interpreter dresses inappropriately for an assignment, for example by wearing clothes that are too casual or offensive, this can negatively impact their professional image and the perception of sign language interpreting as a profession.
- Interpreter not showing up on time for an assignment or not giving adequate notice for absence.
- Interpreter failing to continue to learn and improve their skills and knowledge in the field.
- Interpreting content in a way that does not accurately reflect the message being conveyed by the speaker.

A professional and honor code for sign language interpreters would include the following principles:



- Confidentiality: Interpreters must maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all communication between parties involved.
- Impartiality: Interpreters must remain neutral and unbiased, avoiding conflicts of interest and avoiding expressions of personal opinions or beliefs.
- Competence: Interpreters must have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide accurate and professional interpretation services.
- Equality and respect for the deaf community: Interpreters must promote equal communication opportunities for deaf individuals and respect their rights to communicate in their preferred language.
- Professionalism: Interpreters must act in a professional manner, maintaining a high level of ethics, respect, and cultural sensitivity in all interactions.
- Collegiality: Interpreters must work collaboratively with other professionals in the field, promoting teamwork, cooperation, and mutual support.

Adherence to a professional and honor code is essential for sign language interpreters, with or without certification, to build trust and credibility in their interpretation, and to provide the highest quality of interpretation services to the deaf community.

We feel the need to give special attention to the concept of "respect" as part of the attitude that should characterize the sign language interpreter. There are many specific, important, concrete nuances to be aware of. We will try to give just a few examples.

Deaf people should be considered experts in their own profession and have control over their environment, while interpreters should be seen as specialists in facilitating communication. However, hearing people often mistakenly view



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interpreters as experts on all things related to the Deaf person's profession and grant them authority that rightfully belongs to the Deaf person. This leads to the disenfranchisement of Deaf people. To avoid this power imbalance, interpreters must acknowledge Deaf people's experiences and work to defer to them as experts in their field and related issues. Interpreters must also acknowledge and address confusion among hearing people and commit themselves to being allies for the Deaf community.

The relationship between Deaf people and interpreters should be grounded in equity and agency. Interpreters play a vital role in the equitable distribution of resources and can act as gatekeepers. Deaf people have the right to be included in spaces that are not designed for them, and interpreters can work to create an equitable space of discourse.

In our point, the educational process for future interpreters or lifelong learning courses should prioritize building relationships with the Deaf community through a service learning model as part of the program curriculum (to practice, spending time with members of the deaf community, in real life situations e.g. participating in a social activity held at the club). Service learning should be introduced at the beginning of the SL Studies Program, so that students can learn about civic engagement and community responsibility from the start of their language learning experience. Service learning should focus on developing a meaningful relationship between future practitioners and the Deaf community without interfering with its culture, boundaries, and norms. Deaf people are the gatekeepers of the community, so interpreting students must work to be accepted and welcomed by them.

Deaf people value interpreters who make an effort to understand their communication preferences, who take the time to understand their unique communication needs, use language features that foster social engagement,



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and show respect for the Deaf community. Interpreters who fail to engage enough in relation with Deaf consumers risk alienating them and misinterpreting messages. In addition, Deaf people appreciate interpreters who actively engage with them, fostering a sense of social connection and creating an environment of respect.

Deaf professionals often encounter situations where they require the assistance of interpreters to communicate with hearing individuals. Of course, they want to feel equal in communication with the hearing person and that the interpreter represents them professionally. **They often rely on interpreters to represent them in important settings, such as business meetings or legal proceedings. It is essential for interpreters to not only facilitate communication, but also to conduct themselves in a professional manner and accurately convey the message of the Deaf individual. Failure to do so can have serious consequences and damage the trust between the Deaf community and hearing individuals.**

Message equivalency is also an important factor for Deaf people. Equivalent meaning in a register suitable to the situation is important in interpretations. Interpreters can improve message equivalency by equivalent messages by finding appropriate meanings, thinking nonlinearly, and knowing how much information to convey. A deaf participant stated that focusing too much on linguistic forms can lead to losing sight of the message's meaning and encouraged interpreters to ask for the meaning of a word and its definition to the deaf person. Another deaf participant said that linear thinking by interpreters may lead to ineffective use of space and not effectively communicating the intended message. So, it is important of course to respect the spoken language, to respect the sign language ... but the most important is



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to respect the people involved in the communication and the communication itself taking great care to keep the accuracy of the message.

Interpreters must provide interpreting services to the best of their ability and not allow personal feelings to interfere with the interpreting process. Interpreters must render the message faithfully, without interjecting personal opinions, accept assignments using discretion, and strive to maintain high professional standards.



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Summary

A professional and honor code is a set of principles and standards that outline acceptable behavior and ethical conduct for individuals in a particular profession. It sets guidelines for how professionals should act in various situations, such as when dealing with clients, colleagues, or confidential information. An honor code also emphasizes the importance of upholding personal integrity, honesty, and responsibility in professional practices. The aim of a professional and honor code is to promote trust, respect, and credibility within the industry and to maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

A professional and honor code for sign language interpreters outlines principles and standards for professional conduct and behavior in the field. This code emphasizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality, impartiality, competence, equality and respect for the deaf community, professionalism, and collegiality. Interpreters should acknowledge and respect the expertise of the deaf community, promote equitable communication opportunities, and act as allies for the deaf community. Deaf people value interpreters who understand their communication preferences and show respect for their culture. Interpreters must provide accurate and impartial interpretation, not allowing personal feelings to interfere with the interpreting process. Interpreters must also respect the message being conveyed and maintain message equivalency.



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Chapter 2: Code of ethics

Code of ethics

A code of ethics sets out guidelines, rules and principles to govern behavior in professions that involve direct interaction with people, such as doctors, psychologists, social workers, **interpreters**. It is more necessary when two or more cultures interact, as they may have different values and ways of behaving, which can lead to conflict **as it happens with the sign language interpreter**.





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An ethical code for sign language interpreters (with or without academic background) is necessary firstly to protect the privacy of parties communicating through an interpreter. Because interpreters deal with personal information (sometimes sensitive information), they need to respect very strict ethical principles. These principles refer to concepts like confidentiality, linguistic competence, impartiality.

In the following, we will list some of the principles that must be the basis of interpretation services, whether they are offered by professionals or by friends/relatives. We will use an alphabetical order so as not to suggest that certain principles are more important than others.

ACCURACY

The interpreter must reproduce the message in its entirety, without shortening (extracting the essential) and without adding additional information (to explain more). Accuracy is a crucial aspect of sign language interpreting, as it ensures that the message being conveyed is understood correctly by all parties involved. In order to achieve high levels of accuracy, interpreters must have a thorough understanding of both the spoken language and the sign language being used, as well as the cultural context of the conversation.

Interpreters use a variety of techniques to ensure accuracy, including active listening, note-taking, and repetition. They also use a process known as "shadowing" where they repeat what they have just interpreted, which helps to confirm that they have understood the message correctly. Additionally, they may use specialized terminology and idiomatic expressions to convey the intended meaning as accurately as possible. There are also strategies in which messages / conversations are repeated so that all participants receive the information completely. For example, in panel discussions, when a sign



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language contribution from the audience is repeated on stage for other deaf people in the audience, because it is not guaranteed that everyone has seen the contribution / message.

However, it should be noted that interpreting is not a word-for-word process, and interpreting sign languages is more challenging than interpreting spoken languages because of the added visual and spatial dimension. Therefore, sign language interpreters may need to paraphrase or summarize content to ensure that the message is understood correctly.

In summary, accuracy is essential in sign language interpreting settings, and interpreters use a variety of techniques to ensure that the message being conveyed is understood correctly. However, it should be noted that interpreting from and into sign languages in combination with a spoken language is very challenging, due to the different modes of languages (linear/in-line and spoken versus non-linear/simultaneously and signed). Although interpretation between other spoken languages with very different cultural backgrounds might be challenging as well, the two different modes of language representation may require more creativity and flexibility from the interpreter.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information in the interpretation situation must remain strictly confidential. Confidentiality is a critical aspect of sign language interpreting, as it ensures that sensitive and private information is protected and kept secure. In sign language interpreting settings, confidentiality is particularly important because the information being shared may be highly personal, medical or legal in nature.



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Interpreters have a professional and ethical responsibility to keep information confidential and not disclose it to anyone without the explicit consent of the parties involved. This includes not only the information being shared during the interpreting session but also any notes or records of the session that the interpreter may take including the previous period of preparation for the interpretation session. To maintain confidentiality, interpreters may use various techniques, such as using non-disclosure agreements, securing their notes and records, and avoiding discussing the content of the interpreting session with anyone who is not involved. They may also be trained on how to handle confidential information and how to recognize information that is sensitive and requires protection.

In some cases, interpreters may be required by law to report certain information, such as suspected abuse or neglect. However, they will typically inform the parties involved of this requirement before the interpreting session and they will try to obtain their consent. It's also important to note that the interpreters should be aware of any existing laws, regulations and ethical guidelines that apply to the interpreting setting or context, and follow them accordingly.

In summary, confidentiality is a critical aspect of sign language interpreting and interpreters have a professional and ethical responsibility to protect sensitive and private information shared during interpreting sessions. They use various techniques to maintain confidentiality and are also aware of any existing laws, regulations and ethical guidelines that apply to the interpreting setting or context.



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DISCRETION

Discretion is an important aspect of sign language interpreting, as it involves making thoughtful and appropriate decisions in interpreting situations. Interpreters must use discretion to determine the most appropriate way to convey meaning in a given context. They must take into account the needs of the parties involved, the purpose of the interpreting session, and the cultural and social context of the communication. A sample of sensitive situations when interpreters use discretion is when interpreting idiomatic expressions, figurative language, and specialized terminology that may not have a direct translation. They must use their knowledge of the languages and cultures involved to determine the most appropriate way to convey the meaning of these phrases.

They also use discretion when interpreting sensitive or confidential information. They must determine the best way to convey the information in a way that respects the privacy and dignity of the parties involved. This may involve using a more formal or less direct language, or omitting certain details. Discretion must be one of the character traits cultivated by any person who plays the role of an interpreter. Of course it is absolutely not recommended and not at all necessary to ask additional questions out of curiosity!

Interpreters also use discretion when working with people who have different communication needs, such as people who are deaf-blind (like Lormen or tactile sign language) or have cognitive or developmental disabilities. They must take into account the unique needs of the person and use strategies to ensure that the message is understood correctly.

In summary, discretion is an important aspect of sign language interpreting as it involves making thoughtful and appropriate decisions in interpreting



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situations. Interpreters use discretion when interpreting idiomatic expressions, figurative language, specialized terminology, sensitive or confidential information and working with people who have different communication needs. They must take into account the needs of the parties involved, the purpose of the interpreting session, and the cultural and social context of the communication.

SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

As long as we accept the role of interpreter, we must assume that we will have a cooperative/non-conflicting attitude with other interpreters, members of the Deaf Community or other involved parties.

The spirit of cooperation is essential in the work of sign language interpreters. This involves working closely with deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals, their families, and other professionals to ensure effective communication. Interpreters must maintain a high level of cultural competence and ethical standards, and respect the confidentiality and privacy of all parties involved. Effective collaboration between interpreters and their customer is crucial for accurate interpretation and to ensure the best outcome for all parties involved.

Sign language interpreters must have excellent interpersonal skills, as they are often the main means of communication between the deaf or hard-of-hearing individual and the hearing world. The work of sign language interpreters is demanding and requires high levels of skill and dedication. They must be able to work under pressure and in a variety of settings, including medical appointments, courtrooms, and educational settings. The spirit of cooperation is essential in this work as it allows interpreters to provide the support and



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assistance that their clients need to communicate effectively and be understood.

In summary, sign language interpreting work requires a spirit of cooperation between the interpreter, deaf or hard-of-hearing individual, and other parties involved. Interpreters must have excellent interpersonal skills, and stay up-to-date on new developments in sign language and interpretation. Their work is demanding, requires high levels of skill and dedication, and they must be able to work under pressure in various settings while maintaining cultural competence, ethical standards, and respecting confidentiality and privacy. Effective collaboration is crucial for accurate interpretation and the best outcome for all parties.

IMPARTIALITY

The interpreter must not introduce personal opinions, advice or appreciation in his communication.

Impartiality is a critical aspect of sign language interpreter work. Interpreters must remain neutral and impartial when communicating between deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals and hearing individuals, regardless of the context or subject matter. They must not take sides or express personal opinions, as this could compromise the accuracy and effectiveness of their interpretation.

To ensure impartiality and maintain the trust of their clients, sign language interpreters must be well-informed about their role and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on relevant laws and regulations, and continually improve their skills and knowledge. Maintaining impartiality is crucial for sign language



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interpreters to provide accurate, effective communication and support the best possible outcome for all parties involved.

In summary, impartiality is essential in sign language interpreter work. Interpreters must remain neutral and impartial in their communication, not expressing personal opinions or taking sides. Maintaining impartiality helps to build trust with clients and ensures accurate, effective communication, which supports the best possible outcome for all parties involved. Interpreters must stay informed about their role and responsibilities, be knowledgeable about relevant laws and regulations, and continually improve their skills to ensure impartiality in their work.

HONESTY

The person playing the role of interpreter will demonstrate sincerity when talking about their training, experience or skills. Honesty is a critical aspect of sign language interpreter work. Interpreters must be truthful in their communication and accurately convey the message of the speaker without adding, omitting, or changing information. Honesty helps to build trust between the interpreter and the parties involved and ensures that the interpretation is accurate and effective.

Honesty is a key characteristic for sign language interpreters to have in order to perform their role effectively. The importance of honesty in sign language interpreting is also recognized by professional organizations, such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which set ethical codes of conduct for interpreters to follow. These codes typically emphasize the importance of honesty, confidentiality, impartiality, and cultural competence.



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In summary, honesty is a critical component of sign language interpreting, and helps to ensure that the interpretation is accurate, effective, and trustworthy. Interpreters must maintain honesty and professional integrity to provide the best possible service to the deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals they serve.

RESPECT

The person playing the interpreter role must show respect for all parties involved in the interpreting setting, including the deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals they serve, the speakers, and the audience. While interpreters need to have a basic knowledge and stay updated with the practices and procedures of different fields, having the right attitude towards their work and the people they work with is crucial. This means being respectful, empathetic, and understanding towards the deaf community and their needs.

Interpreters must also respect the cultural and linguistic differences of those they serve, and must strive to understand and be culturally sensitive to the needs and perspectives of the deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals they work with. This helps to build trust and establish effective communication, and ensures that the interpretation is accurate and culturally appropriate.

In conclusion, showing respect is a key aspect of sign language interpreter work, and helps to ensure effective and culturally appropriate communication for all parties involved. Interpreters must maintain respect for all individuals and adhere to ethical codes of conduct to provide the best possible service to the deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals they serve.

Due to the complexity of sign language interpretation, there are many controversial issues. We therefore consider a code of ethics to be a "living



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tool" for sign language interpreters and a guiding element for their profession. Interpreters not only work with deaf people but also with other professionals such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, etc. This not only means that interpreters need to have a basic knowledge in these areas but also that they need to be up to date with the principles, practices and procedures of each field they interact with. An example of how this phrase could be applied is in a medical setting, where an interpreter is needed to assist a deaf patient during a medical appointment. In this case, the interpreter not only needs to have knowledge of medical terminology and procedures, but also needs to have a positive attitude towards the patient and the doctor. This includes being respectful, empathetic, and understanding towards the patient's communication needs, and being cooperative with the doctor to ensure accurate and effective communication. Another example that illustrates the complexity of the situations an interpreter has to manage is the existence of certain very "sensitive" topics for the parties involved such as the cochlear implant (a medical device that provides a sense of sound to a deaf person) debate or oralism (teaching deaf people to speak and lip-read) vs. manualism (teaching sign language). These issues can be highly charged and emotional for both the deaf individuals and the professionals involved.

For interpreters, managing these situations requires a high degree of sensitivity, professionalism, and neutrality. They need to ensure that both parties are able to communicate their perspectives effectively, without any bias or influence from the interpreter. This can be a delicate balance to achieve, as the interpreter needs to be aware of the emotional and cultural nuances of the conversation and the individuals involved.

So, dealing with all interlocutors is not always easy and conversation processes can be highly dynamic. For this reason, the sign language interpreter must be



constantly concerned with personal and professional development, consciously setting certain goals in this regard.

- One objective is to reflect on one's own behavior and to learn how to be an ally.
- Learning how to assist all interlocutors, without taking sides.
- Further aims are to realize that a third person can never be invisible. Awareness and management of one's own role in this situation is important as well.
- Identifying requirements, speaker's intentions for corresponding settings.

Summary

A code of ethics for sign language interpreters outlines guidelines, rules, and principles for behavior in a profession that involves direct interaction with people. The code is necessary to protect privacy and respect strict ethical principles such as confidentiality, accuracy, impartiality, and informed choice. Interpreters must ensure accuracy in the interpretation process, keep all information confidential, use discretion in decision-making, be impartial, and maintain cultural competence. The interpreter must also be aware of any laws and regulations that apply to the interpreting setting. Discretion involves making appropriate decisions in interpreting situations while taking into account the needs of the parties involved and the cultural and social context of the communication. Interpreters must use their knowledge of the languages and cultures involved to determine the best way to convey meaning in a sensitive manner. Accuracy involves interpreting the message in its entirety without adding or omitting information. Confidentiality requires the interpreter to protect sensitive and private information shared during the interpreting session and not to disclose it to anyone without the explicit consent of the parties involved. Impartiality requires the interpreter to remain neutral and not take sides in the interpreting situation. The interpreter should respect the rights of participants in interpreted situations to informed choice, and inform them of any requirements or limitations in the interpreting setting.



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Chapter 3: Dealing with deaf and hearing people in an interpreting setting.

Dealing with deaf and hearing people in an interpreting setting

It is important to understand that communication between hearing and deaf people raises some problems/ faces certain difficulties even when the hearing person knows sign language good enough from a family member or completed a course for learning sign language.





For example, hearing people might not be aware about the importance of the visual contact during communication with a deaf person, certain cultural norms specific to the Deaf Community, etc. On the other hand, the deaf person might not be aware of/ accept certain cultural norms specific to hearing people. Working together, hearing and deaf people, in an interpreting setting, can be a challenge that we can overcome well only if we are prepared to face various specific obstacles.

One of the principal rules in an interpreting setting is that each communication/message needs to be accessible for all participants. So, it's important to have an explicit communication policy for the office or space where deaf and hearing people are together to ensure that communication is accessible for everybody. For example, this policy states that the both languages (verbal and sign language) will be used when at least a deaf and at least a hearing person are together in the office/a common space. By using both languages (with the help of an interpreter if needed), communication became respectful and accessible for everyone. This policy can be sometimes challenging for deaf and hearing people, too. It is possibly necessary to be reminded of this rule from time to time. It isn't easy to be permanently careful to "translate" always all messages. It is also important to pay attention to all participants in the conversation and interpreters and to work together for a complete transfer of all information.

Another challenge in an interpreting setting is sign language variations (variations in signs due to different regions/regiolects, different social backgrounds and families, sociolects etc.). Sign language variation can be a problem not mandatory for deaf people, who have capacity to adapt quickly their communication most often, but for hearing people who have learned sign language as a second language. For ethical reasons, it's recommended to



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respect the local sign language and cultural patterns. So, in an interpreting setting, the participants need to be open for learning new signs or to use new tools in their communications, in a word, to acquire new communication skills. This strategy requires certain flexibility from interpreters but it should be avoided that the setting is going to be interrupted too often during interpreting sessions in order to clarify some signs, some cultural patterns, and to negotiate/agree on using certain signs with certain meanings, for example. Ideally, this situation will be avoided by adequate qualification of the interpreter. In case of misunderstanding, clarification by the interpreter must be indicated to the listener and an interruption is necessary. The interpreter must not impose the use of a sign or another but need to be careful and flexible, open to observe and understand another signification of a sign in a new context/ geographical area. Also, he/she must not introduce their own sign language or international sign language but has to learn/acquire and use the local sign language/the sign language used by deaf who need assistance.

The differences between deaf and hearing communities' cultures can be also sources of misunderstandings and/or conflicts. For example, certain jokes that the deaf are amused can seem offensive for hearing people and vice versa. Ideally, both hearing and deaf people should be made aware about the cultural differences to avoid possible conflicts caused by ignorance.

When working as an interpreter in a setting where both deaf and hearing people are present, it's important to ensure that effective communication is established and maintained. This can be achieved by following a few key guidelines:

1. Clearly identify the parties involved in the communication, including the deaf person(s), the hearing person(s), and other interpreter(s).
2. Establish clear lines of sight between the parties involved to facilitate visual communication.



3. Encourage all parties to speak clearly and at a moderate pace to facilitate accurate interpretation.
4. Provide visual aids, such as written materials or diagrams, to support the interpretation process.
5. Use appropriate terminology when interpreting and explain any technical or specialized language to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Here we would like to emphasize that this is not the task of an interpreter, but the task of a communication assistant.
6. Be aware of cultural and linguistic differences and make adjustments as needed to ensure effective communication.
7. Be mindful of accessibility needs for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and make sure that the interpreting setting is accessible and accommodating inclusive.
8. Seek feedback from all parties involved to ensure that communication is effective, and everyone is satisfied with the interpreting service provided.

When interpreting for both deaf and hearing individuals in the same setting, it is important to ensure that all parties have equal access to the information being shared. This may involve providing sign language interpretation for deaf individuals and spoken language interpretation for hearing individuals. It may also involve providing captioning or written translations for all parties to read. Clear communication and flexibility are key in order to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

There are several mistakes that can be made in sign language interpreting situations when both deaf and hearing people are involved. Some examples include:



1. Not providing adequate level: Not providing appropriate interpreting services or captioning for deaf and hard of hearing individuals can make it difficult for them to fully participate in the conversation or event.
2. Using incorrect signs or signing too fast: Sign language interpreters should be familiar with the specific signs used by the deaf or hard of hearing individuals they are interpreting for. Interpreting too quickly or using incorrect signs can lead to misunderstandings.
3. Not clearly identifying the signing interpreter: In group settings, it is important to clearly identify the signing interpreter as such to avoid confusion and ensure that the deaf or hard of hearing individuals know who to direct their attention to.
4. Not providing enough context: Interpreters should provide more background information and context to ensure that the deaf or hard of hearing individuals understand the conversation.
5. Not providing interpreting services for all parties: It is important that interpreting services are provided for all parties involved in the conversation, including deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as hearing individuals who may not speak the same language as the deaf or hard of hearing individuals.
6. Not being aware of the culture and norms of the deaf community: Sign language interpreters should be familiar with the culture and norms of the deaf community they are interpreting for, as they may differ from the hearing culture.

It's important to note that these are not the only mistakes that can be made, and each interpreting situation may require different accommodations and considerations. By being aware of potential mistakes and actively working to avoid them, interpreters can help ensure that everyone involved has equal access to the information being shared.



Since one of the main causes of the challenges faced when dealing with deaf and hearing people in an interpreting setting are the cultural differences between the two communities, we will try to list the main cultural differences between the deaf community and the hearing world:

- 1. Language:** The deaf community primarily uses Sign Language (SL) as their primary mode of communication, while the hearing world primarily uses spoken language. This difference in communication can have a significant impact on how the deaf community interacts with the world around them and how they experience it.
- 2. Communication:** The deaf community relies heavily on visual cues and gestures, while the hearing world relies on auditory cues. This difference highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting diverse forms of communication and learning to promote inclusivity and understanding between the deaf community and the hearing world.
- 3. Socialization:** The deaf community has a strong sense of community and often socializes with each other, has its own social networks and events, such as Deaf clubs, where they can communicate and socialize with others who use sign language. The deaf community often has a strong sense of community and belonging among its members, while the hearing world may not have as strong of a sense of community based on hearing status.
- 4. Access to information:** The deaf community may face barriers in accessing information due to a lack of accessibility in the hearing world, such as not having closed captioning on television or videos.

Perspective on hearing: The deaf community may view their hearing impairment as a different way of experiencing the world rather than a deficit, while the hearing world may view it as a disability. The deaf



community views deafness as a cultural identity, rather than a medical condition. They see it as a way of life.

5. World view in general: The deaf community may have a different perspective on the world and may view things differently from the hearing world. This difference in world view can be attributed to a number of factors, including the use of sign language as the primary mode of communication, the experience of growing up deaf in a hearing world, and the shared culture and experiences of the deaf community. Deaf individuals may have a different understanding of social norms, communication, and identity, which can shape their perception of the world around them. Overall, the differences in worldview between the deaf community and the hearing world highlight the importance of understanding and respecting diverse perspectives and experiences. It is important to recognize that there is no single "correct" worldview, and that diversity in perspectives can lead to greater understanding and appreciation for different ways of living and experiencing the world.
6. Education: The deaf community may have different education experiences and may be more likely to attend schools for the deaf. There can be notable differences between schools for the deaf and schools for the hearing. In schools for the hearing, students are typically exposed to a wide range of auditory experiences and modes of communication, such as spoken language, music, and other forms of audio-based media. In contrast, schools for the deaf may focus more heavily on sign language as the primary mode of communication and may place a greater emphasis on visual learning and communication. So, deaf students may have a deeper understanding of visual communication and may view the world more through a visual lens.



7. Arts and entertainment: Arts and entertainment are an essential part of the culture and provide a means for creative expression and entertainment. For the deaf community, the experience of art and entertainment can be quite different due to their unique perspective and mode of communication. This can lead to the development of different forms of art and entertainment that cater to their specific needs and preferences. So, the deaf community may have different forms of art and entertainment, such as visual storytelling and theater performances with captions. Visual storytelling is one such form of art that is highly valued by the deaf community. Through the use of visual elements such as pictures, graphics, and videos, visual storytelling enables deaf individuals to communicate and express themselves in a more comprehensive and nuanced way. Moreover, theater performances with captions are another form of entertainment that is highly appreciated by the deaf community. In such performances, captions or subtitles are provided on the screen, allowing deaf individuals to follow the dialogue and understand the plot of the performance. In addition, sign language poetry or songs and different types of sign language performance are forms of art that are highly valued in the deaf community. These art forms allow deaf individuals to express themselves through the use of their primary language, sign language, and showcase their creativity and talent to the wider community. Overall, the deaf community has developed a rich and diverse culture of art and entertainment that caters to their unique needs and preferences.



Excursion “Demand-Control-Schema”¹

Taking into account the above mentioned explanations and remarks, we would like to point out a model/ schema that may provide helpful impulses for some of you during the interpreting setting and might prevent you from getting lost in a difficult interpreting setting.

The Demand-Control Schema was originally developed by Robert Karasek for the occupational research². Pollard and Dean modified the schema and adapted it to interpreting processes. The model can seem a little “heavy in theory”, but it offers many approaches that can be integrated very well into practice and thus reflect on one's own translation processes.

This schema is intended to support particularly interpreter trainees during the interpreting procedure, and we consider it very useful for the target group of our project: "amateurs interpretations", in order to better understand different interpreting processes as well as other associated means of control and to enable them to adapt their own actions accordingly. So, the demand-control schema can also give valuable impulses to communication assistants, to people playing the role of sign language interpreters and acting as ambassadors between deaf and hearing interlocutors. This schema is not about improving sign language competences, but about interpreting settings within different situations that may appear, in which at least three people are directly involved in communicative exchanges.

"With the help of the D-C scheme [Demand-Control Scheme], interpreting situations can be analyzed and structured during teaching

¹Literature: R. K. Dean & R. Pollard JR.(2008): Welche Vorteile bietet der Einsatz des Demand-Control-Schemas im Dolmetschunterricht?. In: Das Zeichen: 80, S. 472 - 477.

² cf. Karasek, Administrative Science Quarterly 24, 285 - 306 & Karasek & Theorell: Healthy work: Stress, productivity and the reconstruction of working life. Basic Books 1990.



according to environmental, interpersonal, paralinguistic and intrapersonal requirements, the so-called demands, in order to subsequently determine the interpreter's control options, the so called controls, with regard to the described demands” (cf. Dean & Pollard, 2008, p. 472).

Examples of the respective demands can be:

- environmental demands, specific to the setting: e.g. noise in the room
- interpersonal demands, specific to the interaction of the consumers and interpreter: e.g. difficulties with clients or colleagues
- language-accompanying demands, specific to the expressive skills of the consumers: e.g. difficulties in understanding the respective language due to dialect
- internal demands, specific to the interpreter: e.g. conflicts in the family or circle of friends that accompany one, thoughts, feelings

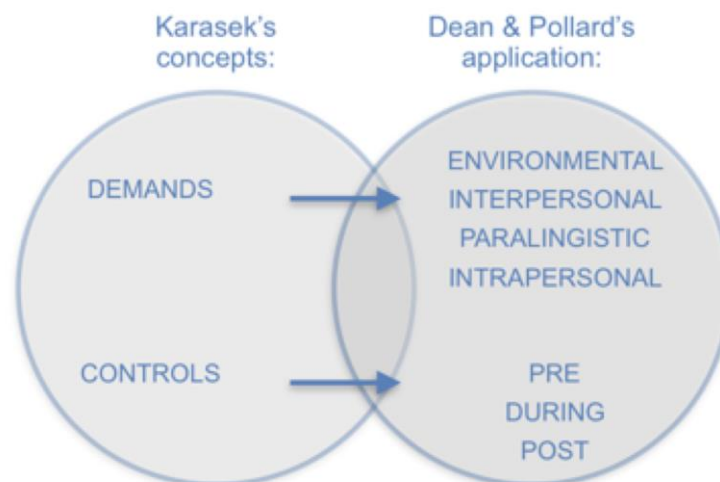


Figure 1: DC-Schema by Dean & Pollard (2011)

Picture: https://dodir.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Masterthesis_VRBANIC_TINA.pdf [01.02.2023]



In contrast, Dean & Pollard developed four central so-called EIPI requirements (Environmental, Interpersonal, Paralinguistic, Intrapersonal), on the basis of which the criteria for decision-making and determination of consequences can be assessed.

By dealing with the D-C schema, interpreter trainees/mediators/facilitators can develop abilities to judge as well as analytical skills. These skills and abilities can also facilitate decision-making in interpreting situations. The EIPI analysis can be used to define best translational, behavioural and other requirements for the interpreting situation, so that the interpreters/mediators/facilitators can meet the requirements of the interpreting situation. Thus, on the basis of the demand-control schema, one's own behaviour in the situation is not sorted into right or wrong behaviour. Rather, it is a matter of confronting or testing various behavioural possibilities and the resulting consequences in order to subsequently react appropriately to a demand.

"The analysis of one's own activity thus helps to actively develop oneself professionally on an ongoing basis, instead of helplessly, self-critically or passively exposing oneself to the feeling of having no influence on the situation" (Dean & Pollard, 2008, p. 473).

The following describes a possible situation as example (cf. Dean & Pollard, 2008, pp. 474 - 476):

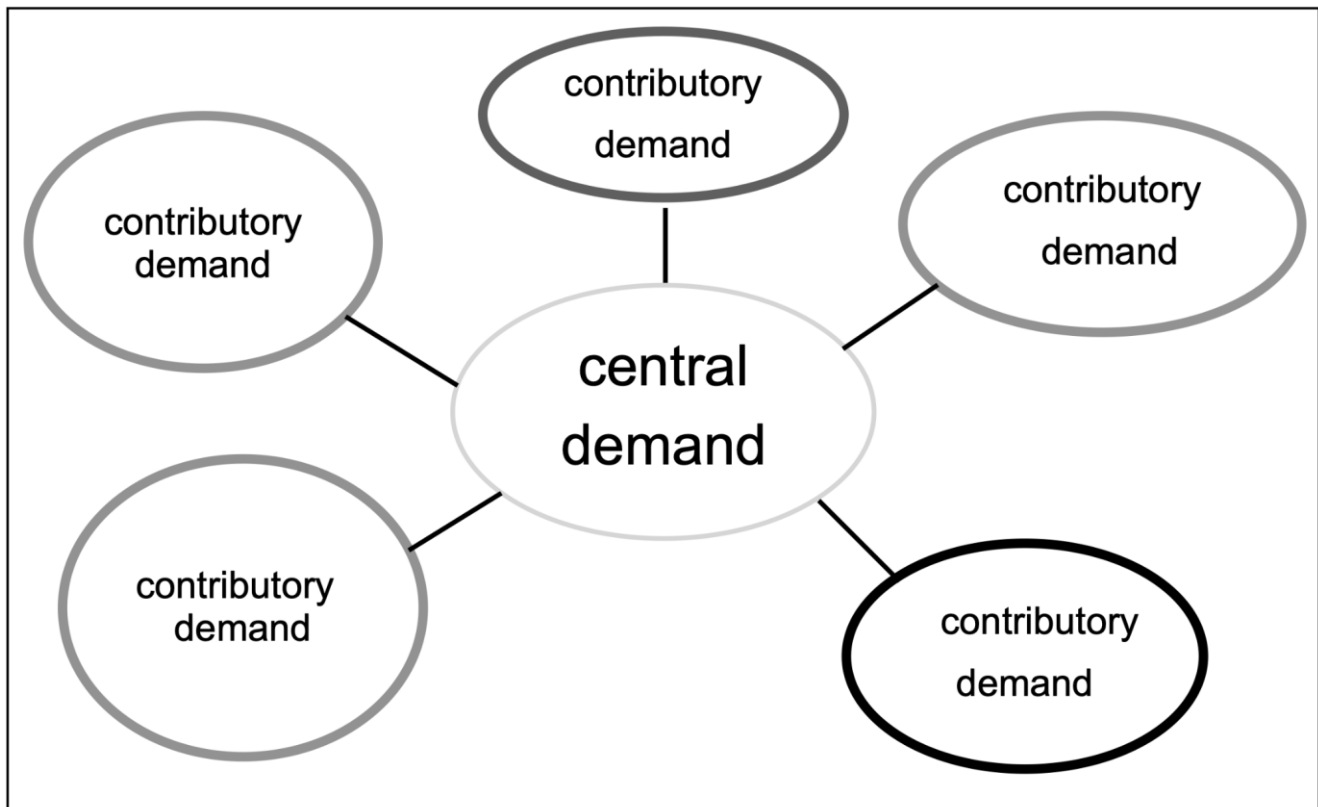
"You are interpreting a conversation and cannot hear the speaker because he speaks too quietly."



Example: Central demand

You are interpreting a group discussion and cannot hear the speaker because he speaks too quietly.

First, we need to work out the requirements for the situation.



(Pic. see Dean & Pollard, 2008, S. 474)



Then, a list of possible controls (Controls) is drawn up, adapted to the requirements.

"This list of requirements offers the interpreter trainee a real-life context and the use of the D-C scheme provides the associated linguistic framework for having an informed discussion about translational and behavioural choices, consequences, objectivity and neutrality, and ethical behaviour in relation to the domains" (cf. Dean & Pollard, 2008, p. 473).

Type of demand	Sources				
Linguistic	Clients' communication modalities	Interpersonal	Parties' understanding of the interpreter's role		
	Clients' linguistic fluency		Parties' adherence to expected role norms		
	Clients' communication speed		Communication directed to the interpreter		
	Clients' communication clarity		Power and authority dynamics		
	Voice volume; signing space		Oppression, dishonesty, unfairness, etc.		
	Interpreter's receptive skills		Communication control, e.g., turn-taking		
	Interpreter's expressive skills		Intrapersonal	Dynamic nature and intensity of event	
	Use of technical vocabulary			Vicarious reactions	
	Environmental			General nature of assignment	Safety concerns
				Specific setting of assignment	Physiological responses and distractions
Sight lines		Doubts or questions about performance			
Background noise		Availability of supervision and support			
Room temperature		Anonymity and isolation			
Chemicals and odors		No legal cloak of confidentiality			
Seating arrangements		Liability concerns			
Lighting quality					
Visual distractions					

Picture: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Categories-and-examples-of-demand-sources-in-sign-language-interpreting-assignments_tbl1_8263239
[01.02.2023].

It follows that the controls (Controls) should include conditions such as objectivity and neutrality, ethical behaviour and consequences. Furthermore, the Controls should be chosen as well according to the situation in order to preserve the role of the interpreter.

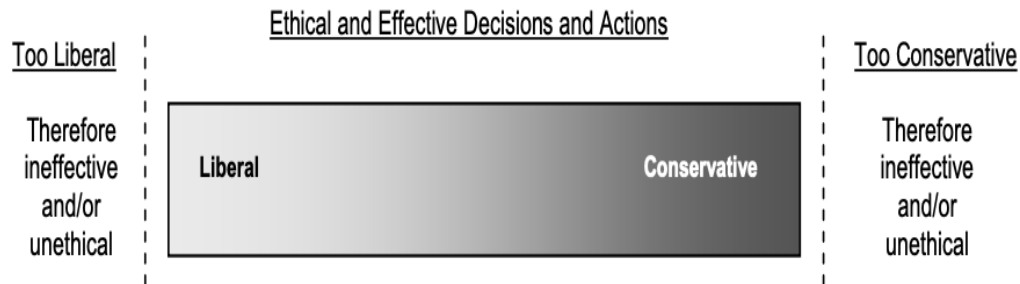


Pre-assignment Controls	Environmental Demands	Interpersonal Demands	Assignment Controls
<p>Controls that are employed before or in the preparation for the formal assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal (ITP) Informal ➤ Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-related Personal ➤ Direct Preparation for the assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts Team Interpreter Consumers Materials/Readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical surroundings (room temp., chemicals and odors, seating arrangements/sight lines, lighting quality, visual distractions, background noise, space – people, furniture, equipment) ➤ Goal/Purpose of setting ➤ Terminology ➤ Personnel/Cientele (Who's present?) ➤ SAFETY <hr/> <p>Paralinguistic Demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Idiosyncrasies of speaking/signing ➤ Volume/Sign Space ➤ Pace ➤ Accents/Regional Signs ➤ Clarity of speech/signs ➤ Physical position ➤ Physical or cognitive limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Power & personal dynamics ➤ Communication style and goals ➤ Emotional tone or mood ➤ Role & cultural differences ➤ Communication flow (turn-taking, etc...) ➤ Relationship nuances (new, familiar, intimate, tension, power, etc...) ➤ "thought worlds" <hr/> <p>Intrapersonal Demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feelings or ruminations one may have about own safety, interpreting performance, liability, the people and the dynamics, the environment ➤ Physiological distractions ➤ Psychological responses or distractions ➤ Availability of supervision and support ➤ Anonymity and isolation 	<p>Controls that are employed during the interpreting assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acknowledgments ➤ Self-talk ➤ Direct Interventions ➤ Adjusted Translations ➤ Prior Relationships ➤ Code of Ethics ➤ Role Metaphors
<p>Post-Assignment Controls</p> <p>Controls that are employed after the assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Debriefing/Venting with support system ➤ Self-Care ➤ Follow-up with people involved, with further education, with referring party ➤ Supervision: Formal with supervisor; Informal with colleagues 			

Based on the Demand-Control Schema for Interpreting developed by Robyn Dean and Robert Pollard (graphic by Lenetha Zinsky)

Picture: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Video-Relay-Service-Interpreting%3A-Interpreters%27-and-Holcombe/f2b7c30ea0755f963808f3fe1e7e70bf18442d25/figure/4>
[01.02.2023].

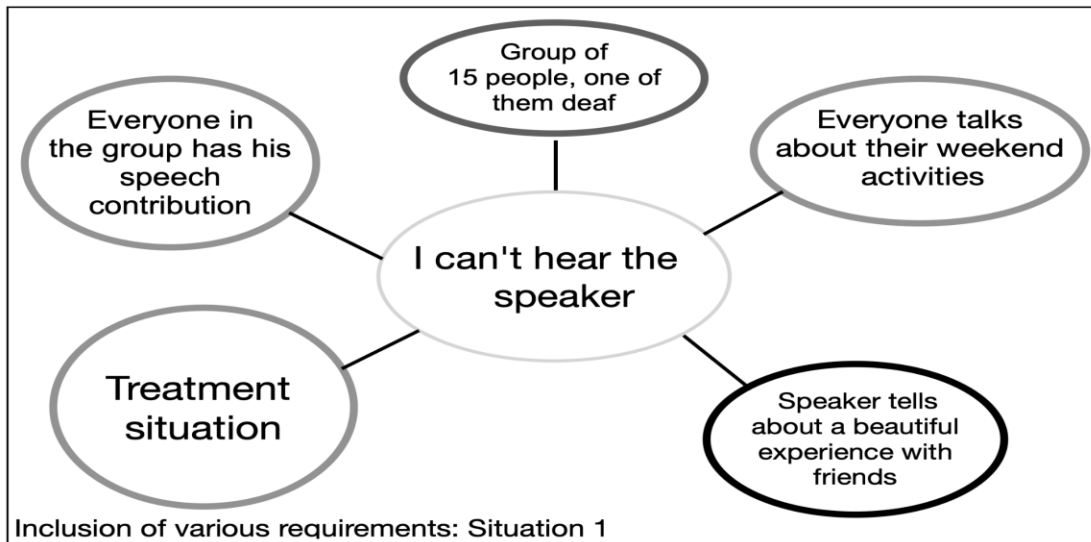
As the figure above shows, ethical behaviour should not be determined by actions that are too liberal or too conservative.



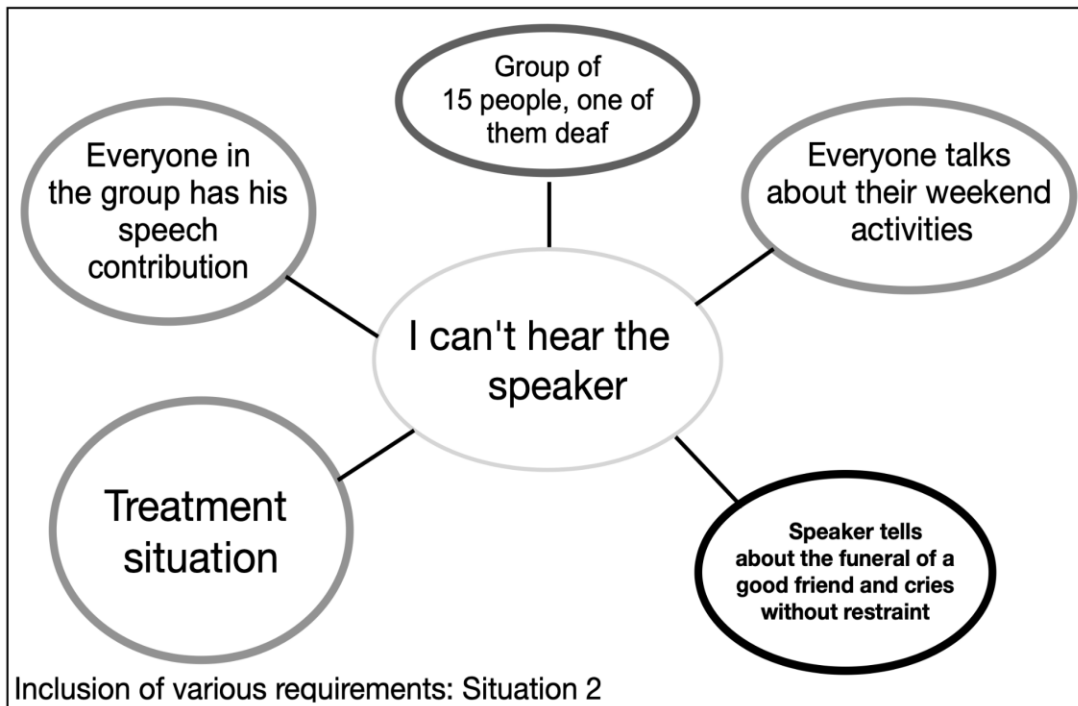
*Figure 1. The DC-S practice profession model of ethical reasoning
Reprinted from Dean and Pollard (2005:270)*

Picture: R. K. Dean & R. Pollard JR. (2011): Context-based ethical Reasoning in Interpreting: A Demand Control Schema Perspective. In: The Interpreter and Translator trainer 5 (1). S. 155-182
<http://intrpr.info/library/dean-pollard-context-based-ethical-reasoning-in-interpreting.pdf> [01.02.2023].

This involves to imagine or actually observe any situation (situation 1 or 2) that could be a potential interpreting situation and then to analyze it by using the D-C scheme.



(Pic see Dean & Pollard, 2008, S. 475)



(Pic see Dean & Pollard, 2008, S. 475)

"To be effective as an interpreter, one needs talent and a certain behavioural repertoire beyond mere language skills" (Dean & Pollard, 2008, p. 475).



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The more often deal with the D-C scheme, the more the behavioural repertoire is trained, so that versatile behaviours can be applied in different linguistically indistinguishable interpreting situations.

Summary

When working with the deaf community, it is important to understand that communication between hearing and deaf people can raise problems and difficulties, even if the hearing person knows sign language well. One of the main challenges in an interpreting setting is that communication needs to be accessible for all participants, and an explicit communication policy should be in place to ensure this. Another challenge are sign language variations, and it is important to respect local sign language and cultural patterns. Cultural differences can also lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, and it is important for both hearing and deaf people to be aware of these differences to avoid possible conflicts caused by ignorance. To ensure effective communication, clear lines of sight should be established, all parties should speak clearly and at a moderate pace, visual aids should be provided, and appropriate terminology should be used. Interpreters should also be aware of accessibility needs and seek feedback from all parties to ensure that communication is effective. Some common mistakes in sign language interpreting situations include not providing adequate level of interpreting services, using incorrect signs or signing too fast, not clearly identifying the signing interpreter, not providing enough context, not providing interpreting services for all parties and not being aware of the culture and norms of the deaf community.



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Chapter 4: Role of " sign language interpreters "

The role of sign language interpreters is to facilitate communication between individuals who use sign language and those who do not. They interpret spoken language into sign language and vice versa, allowing individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to fully participate in various settings such as educational settings, workplaces, medical appointments and public events. They also help bridge the communication barriers between people with different communication styles and help to ensure that everyone has equal access to information and is able to communicate effectively.





Concerning the skills and knowledge that sign language interpreters (SLI) need to be effective in their work, we underline linguistic proficiency, cultural competence and ethical considerations. They have to face several complex challenges, such as managing the demands of the interpreting task, working with different communication modes and balancing the needs of different stakeholders.

We ask ourselves a question that we want to find an answer to: If the work of a sign language interpreter is so complex, which entails the need for lifelong training and certification recognized by the competent authorities, why is the presence of uncertified SLIs allowed or even required in various interpreting situations? There are few reasons why the presence of uncertified SLIs/ mediators/ facilitators (the principal target group of our guide) are important and may be allowed or even required in various interpreting situations:

- 1. Shortage of certified interpreters:** In some areas there may be a shortage of certified SLIs, making it difficult for organizations, agencies or particular persons to secure the services of certified professionals for every interpreting situation.
- 2. Financial constraints:** Hiring certified SLs can be expensive and some organizations, agencies or particular persons may not have the budget to do so. In these cases, they may turn to non-certified interpreters as a more cost-effective solution.
- 3. Emergency situations:** In emergency situations, such as natural disasters or medical emergencies, certified SLIs may not be readily available. In these cases, organizations, agencies or particular persons may rely on uncertified interpreters to provide communication support.
- 4. Informal settings:** In some informal settings, such as small gatherings or social events, the need for a certified interpreter may not be deemed necessary.



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It is important to note that while uncertified interpreters may be able to facilitate communication, they may not have the same level of skill, knowledge, and expertise as certified interpreters. Therefore, organizations should strive to use certified interpreters whenever possible. Unfortunately, some organizations or agencies may not be aware of the importance of using certified SLIs or may not understand the difference between certified and uncertified interpreters. Therefore, it is crucial to educate organizations, agencies, and individuals about the importance of using certified SLIs and the potential risks associated with using uncertified interpreters on the one hand, and it is recommended for non-certified interpreters to train throughout their lives and even obtain the appropriate certification, on the other hand. Education and awareness-raising efforts can help promote the recognition and respect of the professional standards and ethical considerations of the interpreting profession. In conclusion, the use of uncertified interpreters may be allowed or even required in certain situations due to factors such as a shortage of certified professionals, financial constraints, emergency situations, or informal settings. However, the use of uncertified interpreters should be avoided when appropriate and organizations should strive to use certified interpreters whenever possible.

In the following we will do an exercise of imagination to understand what the consequences would be if there were no sign language interpreters!

If there were no sign language interpreters, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing would likely face significant communication barriers in various settings, such as in education, employment, and healthcare. They may also have limited access to information and services that provide spoken language (the vast majority of social and institutional situations!!!). This could include in the classroom, where they may have difficulty understanding lectures and participating in discussion, in the workplace where they may have trouble



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communicating with colleagues and receiving instructions, and in healthcare settings, where they may have difficulty communicating with medical professionals and understanding important information about their health.

All these could lead to social isolation and very limited opportunities for deaf people. This could have a significant impact on their overall well-being and ability to lead fulfilling lives.

Additionally, deaf people may have limited access to information and services that are provided in spoken languages, such as news broadcasts, public announcements, and emergency alerts. This could lead to lack of understanding of important events and a lack of ability to take action in emergency situations.

The question that every person who knows the problems of the deaf community and reads these lines is: don't all these difficulties still exist, even if there are certified sign language interpreters for this work? It's a rhetorical question, of course, and the answer is obvious: YES! This is because, as we have shown above, there are too few certified interpreters, and the costs of the interpreting service are too high for the vast majority of deaf people. This is why we consider so important the existence of "occasional" interpreters, uncertified or who have a certificate but do not practice interpreting as a primary job. That's why we think this guide is very welcome because most of these non-formal interpreters (not a few: relatives, teachers, friends of deaf people, etc.) are self-taught in order to improve sign language interpreting services.



Excursion “Role-Space Model”³

Until the 1980s, in Germany (and in other countries as well) relatives or teachers of the deaf and social workers, but also children of deaf parents (Codas) secured, in exclusivity, linguistic mediation between the deaf and the hearing⁴. Often they have taken on the function or role of a "helper" or "carer" to solve the problems or issues of the deaf, as it still happens today as well. But, due to the emancipation movements, which came, in Germany for example, through the research of German Sign Language by Prof. Dr. Siegmund Prillwitz, and in other countries as well as a result of similar contributions, this role model changed. The interpreting profession moved into the foreground and gained more and more importance (cf. Hillert, 2007, pp. 324-325). By means of a professional and honour code, concrete guidelines were established so that interpreters could adapt and professionalize their actions accordingly. Additionally, a changed awareness of deaf people's existence and their needs also emerged within the society. But until today, the understanding of the interpreter's role is in flux and there is no uniform agreement about a tangible and unambiguous understanding of such a role. This text is intended to take a closer look and a better understanding regarding the role-space model.

Lee & Llewellyn-Jones had years of experience as interpreters. They also made observations of natural one-to-one conversations in order to answer the

³ Literature:

P. Llewellyn-Jones & R. G. Lee (2011): 'Rolle', die zweite: Plädoyer für eine multidimensionale Analyse des Dolmetschverhaltens. In: Das Zeichen (88). S. 363 - 367

P. Llewellyn-Jones & R. G. Lee (2016): Was ist role-space? Versuch einer Definition. In: Das Zeichen (102). S. 140 - 157

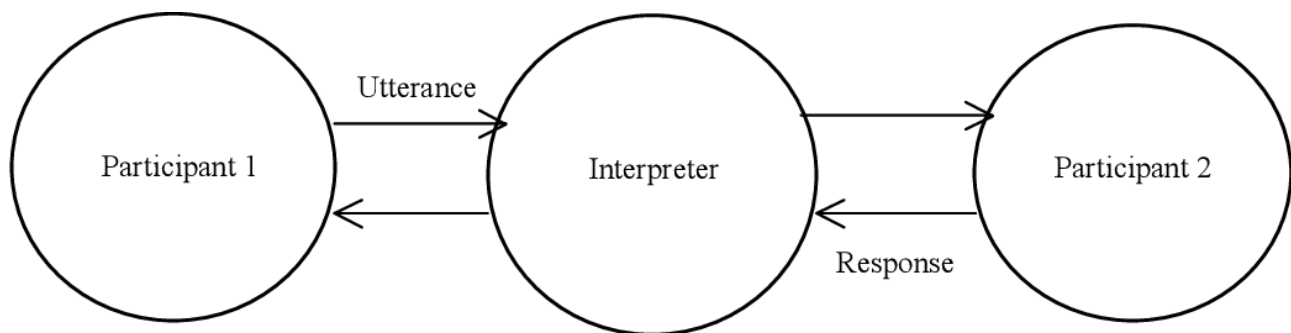
Gudrun Hillert (2007): Von der Rolle der GebärdensprachdolmetscherInnen - oder: GebärdensprachdolmetscherInnen von der Rolle?. In: Das Zeichen (76). S. 322 - 333

⁴ cf. Hillert, 2007, p. 324; quoted from Deutscher Gehörlosenbund e.V. & Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Elternvertreter und Förderer Deutscher Gehörlosenschulen e.V. 1986, p. 12; Donath 1987, p. 63.



following question: How can an interpreter engage himself within a conversational setting so that it is as close as possible to the natural state (without interpreter) (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, pp. 363 - 367)?

Many models dictate that an interpreter or communication mediator should be 'invisible' and be seen as a “tube” or conduit of the linguistic content. But this would mean that conversations are monological and sequential utterances.



Picture: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Getting-to-the-Core-of-Role%3A-Defining-Interpreters%27-Llewellyn-Jones-Lee/8088c103705fb9ad081b6dbee53ed7d151d31450> [07.11.22].

In principle, a conversation between two people can be assessed as monological. However, in the case of an interaction in which an interpreter or language mediator participates, it is not true. These interactions have in common that they have a mental reality (= situation), which requires cooperation and feedback (non-verbal, phatic, reinforcing contributions) between the persons. Interactions, on the other hand, are dynamic and thus the roles and relationships of the interlocutors are constantly changing (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, p. 364).



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Furthermore, interpreters or communication assistants are to be understood as a kind of bridge between different language areas.

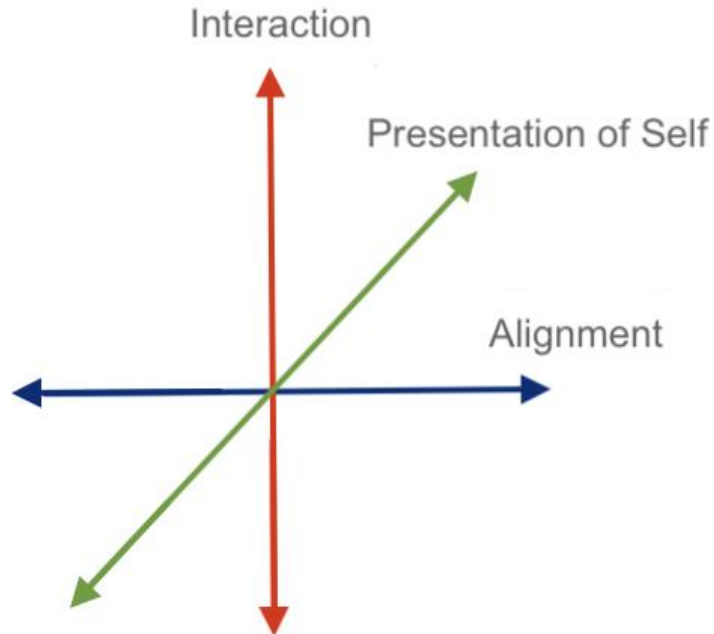
Thus, the aim of interpreting conversations is not only the realisation of an information transfer, but also to take other important aspects into consideration. For example, fluency in the working languages, a mature knowledge of the different cultures, world views and the clients' probable knowledge of the world. It is also important that the client's goals are recognized and that the consequences of success and failure of the conversation can be clearly assessed. Furthermore, the interpreter or communication assistant should be in a position to acquire information about the setting and operational conditions and finally should know about the rules and codes of ethics (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2016, pp. 154-155).

Lee & Llewellyn-Jones describe their understanding of the role of an interpreter or communication assistant, which is defined by three main aspects as follows:

1. Self-representation
2. Interaction management
3. Alignment



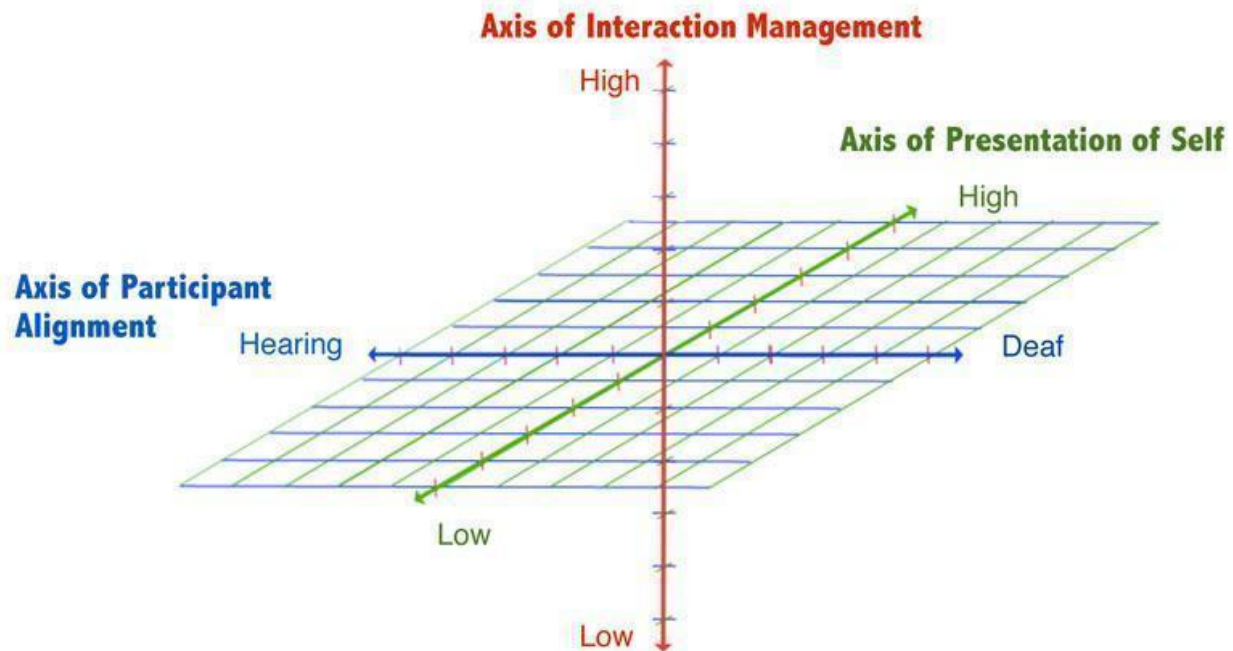
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Interactions between the axes

(Picture see Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2016, S. 152)

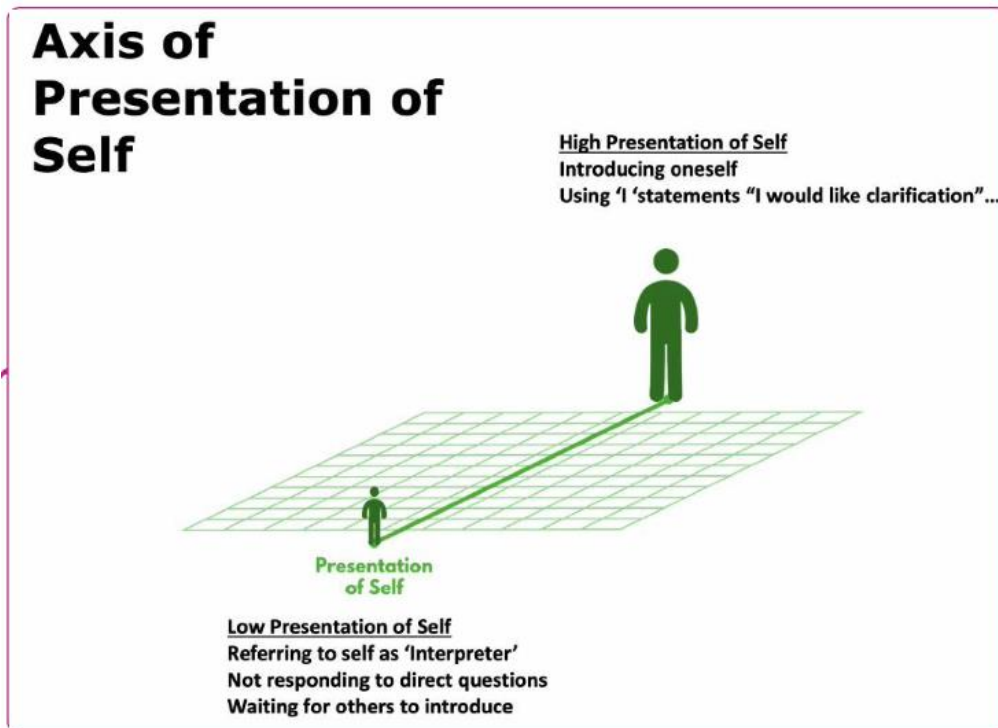
The diagram below shows that alignment is laying on the X-axis (blue). On the Y-axis you find the interaction control (= interaction management, red) and on the Z-axis the self-presentation (= “presentation of the self”, green) (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2016, pp.141-142).



Lee & Llewellyn-Jones

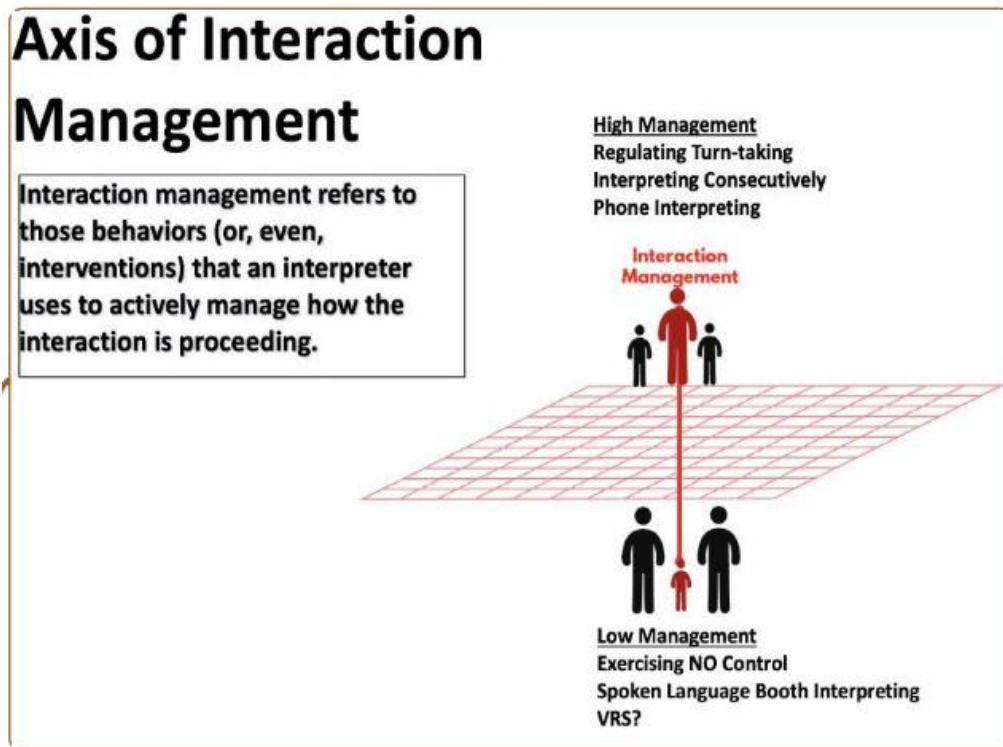
Picture: <https://digiterp.com/new/faqs/role-space/> [07.11.22]

Self-expression refers to behaviours in which the interpreter speaks or acts for and/or about him/herself (for example: introducing him/herself, responding to direct questions, giving insights into personal likes or dislikes). Non-verbal expressions are possible as well.



Picture: <https://www.dolmetschserviceplus.at/robert-g-lee-unterrichtet-role-space-achse-3-presentation-self> [07.11.22].

Interaction management refers to behaviours that an interpreter implements to actively influence the progress of the interaction, which is not at the interpreter's whim, but which allows the interaction to be actively managed, since some statements made by an interlocutor can hinder the interaction and disrupt the flow of speech. This can be, for example, asking that only one person speaks at a time.



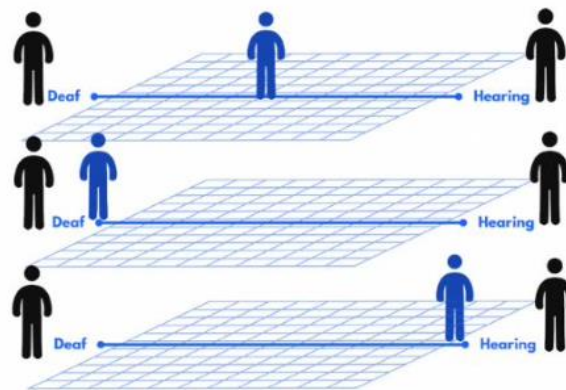
Picture: <https://www.dolmetschserviceplus.at/robert-g-lee-unterrichtet-role-space-achse-1-interaction-management> [07.11.22]

Aligning oneself with a participant means that the interpreter directs his/her communication towards a specific participant and identifies with him/her (for example: repeating the last sentence or smiling when a funny contribution is made) (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, pp. 365- 366). Each individual behaviour can also be a combination of several of these three categories, which can be performed not only verbally but also mimically (smiling, nodding, laughing along) at the same time (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2011, p. 365).



Axis of Participant Alignment

Participant alignment refers to how much the interpreter is directing their communication to, or seeming to identify with, a specific participant (or, possibly, a sub-group of participants). In addition, it may be that the interpreter is reacting directly to utterances made by one of the interlocutors.



Picture: <https://www.dolmetschserviceplus.at/robert-g-lee-unterrichtet-role-space-achse-2-participant-alignment> [07.11.22]

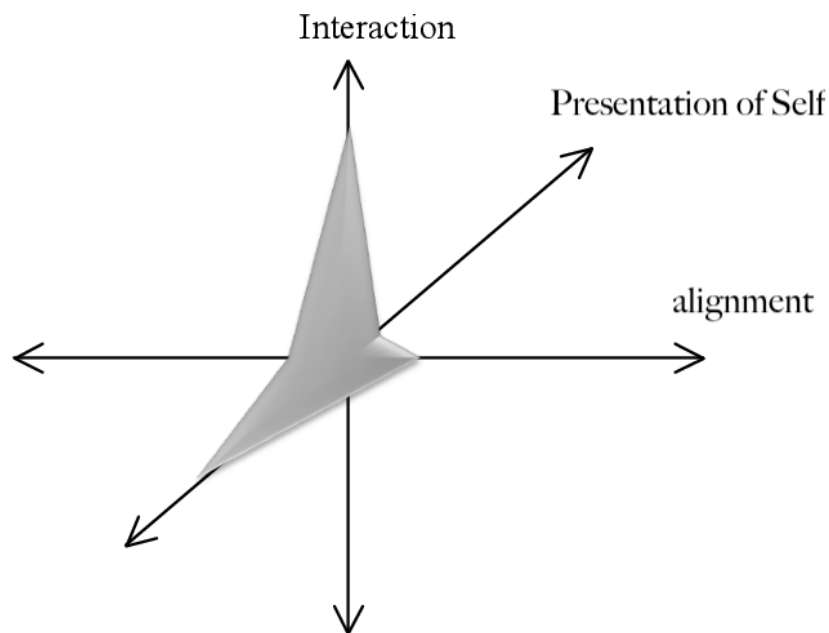
Lee & Llewellyn-Jones refer to this combination of the three dimensions as the "role space" that an interpreter occupies at any given time. Within these three dimensions, interpreters can make decisions and use strategies to facilitate successful interactions. By mapping the interpreter's anticipated/actual positioning on these three axes, a three-dimensional shape or 'space' can emerge that describes the interpreter's appropriate 'role space' within a particular interaction (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2016, p.142).

Within an interaction, the relationships and roles of the interlocutors in the conversation can change again and again, so that interactions can be described as dynamic phenomena (cf. Lee & Llewellyn-Jones, 2016, p.142). For example, situations in court require a very narrow "role space", as little self-



expression, limited process management and minimal balanced alignment with the participant are possible.

The illustration below shows it very well, as the focus is mainly on interaction, whereas self-expression and aligning oneself are at the bottom.



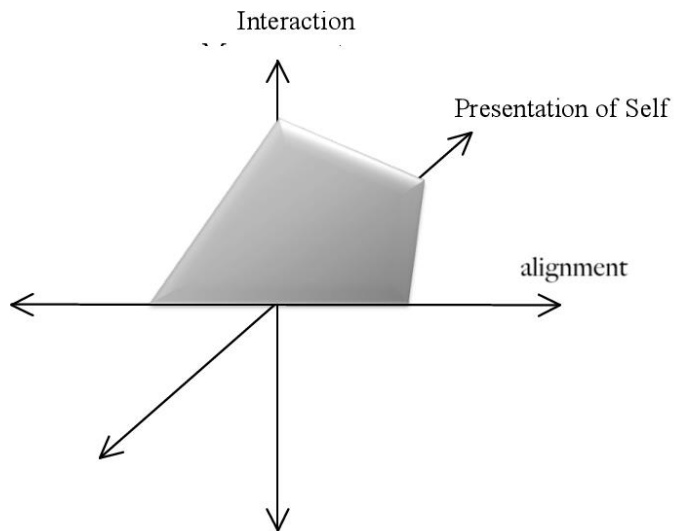
Picture: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Getting-to-the-Core-of-Role%3A-Defining-Interpreters%27-Llewellyn-Jones-Lee/8088c103705fb9ad081b6dbec53ed7d151d31450> [07.11.22]

In another situation, for example when working with children, it may be important for the interpreter to align more with a child and to focus on flow management in order to build trust.

As the illustration below shows, the interpreter is more in the upper range of interaction, self-expression and self-alignment.



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Picture: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Getting-to-the-Core-of-Role%3A-Defining-Interpreters%27-Llewellyn-Jones-Lee/8088c103705fb9ad081b6dbec53ed7d151d31450> [07.11.22]



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Summary

The role of sign language interpreters is to facilitate communication between individuals who use sign language and those who do not. They interpret spoken language and vice versa, allowing individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to fully participate in various settings such as education, workplaces, medical appointments, and public events. They also help bridge the communication gap between people with different communication styles and help to ensure that everyone has equal access to information and is able to communicate effectively.

There is shortage of certified interpreters in some areas, which may lead organizations, agencies or individuals to rely on uncertified interpreters in certain situations. However, the use of uncertified interpreters should be avoided when appropriate (for example when it comes to official or even private communications of major importance) and organizations should strive to use certified interpreters whenever possible. In the absence of this possibility (financial difficulties, unavailability of a certified interpreter at the time...) the presence of the interpreter without certification or without much experience in the field is however preferable to the situation where there is no interpreter at all. Without sign language interpreters, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing would face significant communication barriers and limited opportunities in various settings, leading to social isolation and reduced well-being.



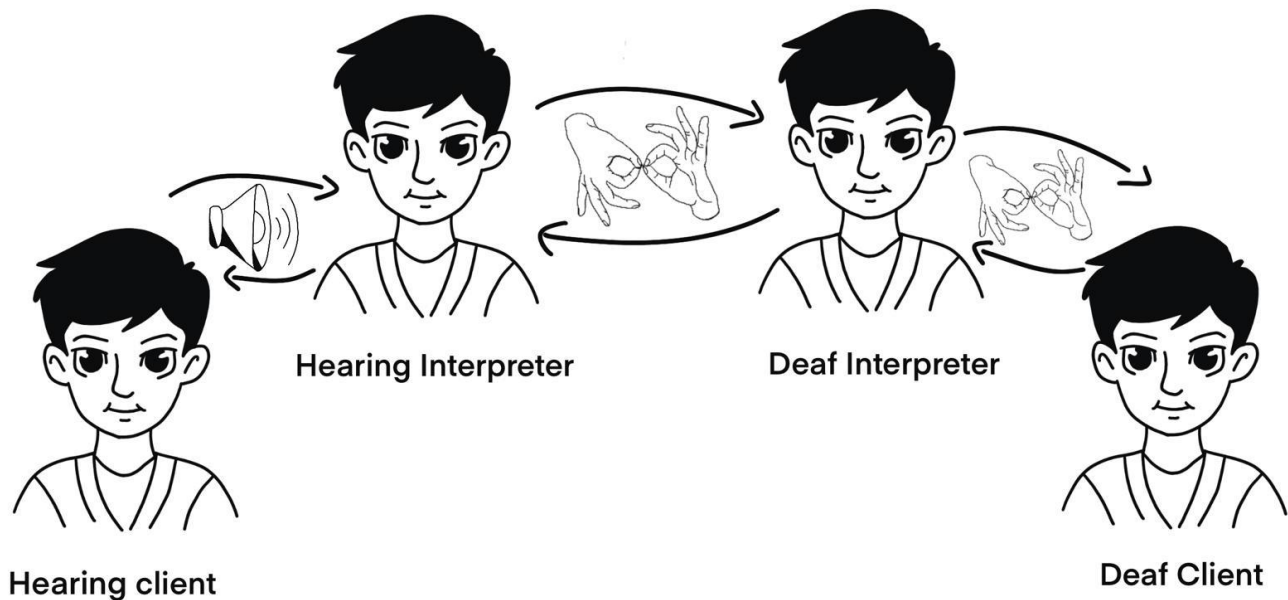
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Chapter 5: Deaf interpreters

Deaf interpreters are DEAF individuals who are fluent in both sign and written national language or English. They are able to interpret for deaf individuals who may not be fluent in written language or International Sign or two sign languages and for hearing individuals who are communicating with deaf individuals. This includes interpreting in a variety of settings such as medical appointments, legal proceedings and educational settings.





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Deaf interpreters can also play a key role in the deaf community, acting as cultural brokers and helping to bridge the barriers between the deaf and hearing worlds. They can also help to ensure that the communication needs of deaf individuals are met. They are able to serve as cultural and linguistic experts, providing understanding and access to the deaf community for hearing people.

Often, deaf interpreters serve as “advocates” for the deaf community, working to promote cultural understanding and awareness of the unique needs and experiences of deaf individuals. They also help to provide access to education, healthcare and other resources for the deaf community.

However, there are unique challenges that deaf interpreters face in their work. One of the main challenges is the communication dynamics that may arise when interpreting for individuals with different levels of sign or spoken languages. So, deaf interpreters may need to navigate complex communication dynamics, which they manages with difficulty, sometimes.

In the book "Deaf Interpreters and Interpreting: A Guide to Practice", a comprehensive guide on the role and practice of deaf interpreters, Brenda E. Cartwright and Holly Mikkelson discuss several unique challenges and opportunities that arise when working with deaf interpreters. Some of these include:

- **Language and cultural differences:** Deaf interpreters are fluent in both sign and written national language or English and may have a deeper understanding of the culture and experiences of the deaf community. However, this can also lead to potential misunderstandings or cultural biases when working with hearing individuals.



- Communication dynamics: Deaf interpreters may need to navigate complex communication dynamics when working with individuals who have different levels of fluency in sign or spoken languages.
- Ethical considerations: Deaf interpreters may face ethical dilemmas when interpreting for deaf individuals who may not have the same level of language or cultural proficiency as they do.
- Professional development: Deaf interpreters may have limited opportunities for professional development and may require additional support and resources to maintain their skills and knowledge.

The same authors mentioned above offer practical strategies for addressing these challenges and maximizing the opportunities presented by working with deaf interpreters. These strategies include:

- Building cultural competence: developing cultural competence when working with deaf individuals and the deaf community.
- Navigating communication dynamics: effectively communicating and interpreting for individuals with different levels of fluency in sign or spoken languages.
- Ethical considerations: addressing ethical dilemmas and ensuring that the rights and needs of deaf individuals are respected.
- Professional development: to continue to develop their skills and knowledge in the field.

Below we attempt a comparative presentation between deaf and hearing interpreters who have no training in the field of interpreting but acts for facilitating communication between individuals who may not share the same



language or mode of communication. There are some key differences between the two.

1. **Language and cultural proficiency:** Deaf interpreters are fluent in sign language and have a deeper understanding of the culture and experiences of the deaf community. Hearing interpreters may not be fluent in sign language and may not have the same level of cultural proficiency but, most likely they have a better level of communication in spoken language.
2. **Communication dynamics:** Deaf interpreters may have a better understanding of the communication needs and preferences of deaf individuals, and may be better equipped to navigate complex communication dynamics when working with individuals with different levels of fluency in sign languages while hearing interpreters may have the opportunity to better manage different communication dynamics in spoken/written languages.
3. **Role in the deaf community:** Deaf interpreters often play a key role in the deaf community, acting as cultural brokers and helping to bridge the gap between the deaf and hearing worlds. They can also serve as advocates for the deaf community, promoting cultural understanding and awareness of the unique needs and experiences of deaf individuals. Hearing interpreters are often only partially/not at all accepted by the deaf community as being part of the community and even they themselves identify less/rarely with the deaf community, limited to providing services.
4. **Professional development:** Deaf interpreters may have limited opportunities for professional development and may require additional support and resources to maintain their skills and knowledge. For hearing



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interpreters, access to education and professional development is much easier, having the tool of verbal communication at their disposal.

We want to strongly emphasize that both hearing and deaf interpreters have important roles to play in ensuring effective communication and understanding among diverse groups, and both types of interpreters need to be lifelong trained in the field of interpretation work and specific ethical issues.

There is a shortage of deaf interpreters compared to hearing interpreters. This can be due to a variety of factors, including a lack of training programs specifically for deaf interpreters and a lack of opportunities for professional development and advancement. Additionally, the field of interpreting is dominated by hearing individuals, which can make it difficult for deaf interpreters to penetrate and establish themselves.

Deaf interpreters (DI) can work together with hearing interpreters (HI) to provide interpreting services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. This is known as a team interpreting, in which the deaf interpreter focuses on providing visual language support and the hearing interpreter focuses on providing spoken language support. This approach can be beneficial for situations where there is a need for both visual and spoken language support, such as in a classroom or a medical setting. Team interpreting can provide the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing with the opportunity to fully understand and participate in the conversation. It also allows the individual to communicate their thoughts and ideas more effectively. Additionally, team interpreting allows the HI and DI to work together to ensure that interpreting is accurate and culturally appropriate. It is important to note that team interpreting requires coordination and collaboration between the two



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interpreters, and prior planning is necessary. It may be particularly necessary in situations where the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing has a specific communication need, such as a unique sign language or specific visual preference. For even better quality interpretation services, team interpreting requires the presence of an interpreter coordinator or a supervisor who will ensure that the interpreting is done accurately and efficiently (in larger conferences and several working teams, it is common for them to have a coordinator).

In conclusion, we can say that, although there are few deaf interpreters, they are very important for the community because they can provide a unique and valuable perspective and understanding of the deaf culture and community. They are also able to effectively bridge the communication gap between the deaf and hearing worlds. It is important for efforts to be made to increase the number of deaf interpreters and provide them the necessary resources and opportunities to succeed in the role of sign language interpreter.



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Summary

Deaf interpreters are individuals who are fluent in both sign language and written language or two different sign languages, simultaneously. They play an important role in interpreting for deaf individuals who may not be fluent in written language or two different sign languages and for hearing individuals who are communicating with deaf individuals in a variety of settings such as medical appointments, legal proceedings and educational settings. They also act as cultural brokers and advocates for the deaf community, helping to bridge the gap between the deaf and hearing worlds and ensure that the communication needs of deaf individuals are met. However, there are unique challenges that deaf interpreters face in their work, such as navigating complex communication dynamics and ethical dilemmas. They may also face limited opportunities for professional development. In contrast, hearing interpreters may not have the same level of cultural proficiency (regarding Deaf Community Culture) but may have better levels of communication in spoken/written language. An optimum is reached when both can work as a team for the client as native speakers (in sign language/verbal language). Although there are few deaf interpreters, they are very important for the community because they can provide a unique and valuable perspective and understanding of the deaf culture and community. They are also able to effectively bridge the communication gap between the deaf and hearing worlds. It is important for efforts to be made to increase the number of deaf interpreters and provide them the necessary resources and opportunities to succeed in the role of sign language interpreter. The ideal situation is where the deaf interpreter (DI) works as a team with the hearing interpreter to provide interpretation services for deaf and hard of hearing people, a situation where DI is responsible for interpreting a visual language



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(SL) and HI is responsible for translating the sign language into spoken/written language.



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