Elucidation & Sign Language (SL) on Arabian Media-Telecast (AMT): Perception of Deaf Community Members (DCM) in Iraq

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Abstract

Being part of a language minority ought not to serve as an excuse to deny people their right to obtain learning. Despite sharing a same cultural and linguistic background with the hearing-impaired population, the Deaf society has barriers to communication via mainstream media like open-signal broadcasting. In order to come up with well-rounded solutions that address the demands of the Deaf Society, this issue was studied from their perspective. The goal was to find out how the Arabian Deaf Society felt about the ASL interpretations shown on Iraqi open signal TV stations. Individuals from Baghdad, Iraq's Deaf Society Centers have been the samples involved in this qualitative research. A translator who was acquainted to all of the respondents was present for the joint sessions. Findings reveal that members of the Deaf society feel underrepresented when thinking of both the quantity and placement of mediators on television. On account of the limited range of shows that are translated and the hiring of interpreting professionals who fail to appropriately transmit the content, the individuals questioned said that the Deaf Society feels isolated and mocked. A greater education of translators is also necessary, according to them, in areas like language variety, machine learning algorithms use, and sequencing. Finally, the researchers take into account the results and their interpretations to advocate for inclusive and equitable strategies that would help close the knowledge exposure deficit for Baghdad's Deaf Society Centers.

Keywords

Deaf Society, Language experts, LSI, NISII, ASL

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Introduction

Deafness as a phenomenon underwent a transition, going from being conceived from a rehabilitative medical approach to a social construction from its assessment from a socio-anthropological perspective focused on law (Vilugrón, 2020). This transition made it possible for sign language (SL) to be recognized as the mother tongue of those born with deafness. In this way, concepts such as deaf culture, Deaf Community and 'Deaf' written with a capital letter made their way to denote the non-hearing person who is part of an established Deaf Community and differentiate it from 'deaf' which only denotes generically to a person who does not listen (Stone, 2007).

A Deaf person is understood as someone capable of valuing deafness by recognizing that it represents benefits such as a different way to learn. In other words, the Deaf person is conceived as a person without limitations beyond the barriers imposed by society. For these people, deafness is not a disability but an opportunity, since it allows them to have a unique perception of the world by activating other senses and values (Vilugrón, 2020). In this sense, seen from the perspective of the Deaf person who identifies and recognizes himself as such, the main difficulty that deaf communities face is the lack of understanding of the society of hearing people with whom they live (Suárez et al., 2021).

The Deaf Community in the world has organized and has taken a different position from that which had been assumed to free itself from the stigma that places them in the territory of disability, since from this point of view it is considered that a deaf person needs rehabilitation; while in reality he needs to receive appreciation and recognition for who he is and what he is capable of achieving. The Deaf Community fights for its recognition as subjects and objects of law with a particular culture and language (Almeida & Angelino, 2017). In this context, the Deaf Community is described as a social group with its own identity, since from the different appreciations of the epistemologies of the deaf, a construction of reality different from how hearing people conceive it is achieved. Deaf people have their own knowledge of the Deaf person; they develop and prioritize different values as well as their own traditions, cultures, norms of behavior and language (Vilugrón, 2020).

Belonging to the Deaf Community and being part of its culture does not imply the requirement of total or partial hearing loss but rather the recognition of deaf identity (Vilugrón, 2020), which includes shared experiences and the use of sign language of said deaf community (Garcia, 2020). Suárez et al. (2021) explain that identity as a Deaf person is achieved based on the sense of belonging, compliance with the norms and values of the culture and community, and the type of deafness that the person has (congenital or acquired). For this reason, within the Deaf Community there are hearing members such as the daughters of deaf parents (known as CODA for Children of Deaf Adults) and other people who, by being part of a family nucleus of Deaf people, become integrated to the community reflecting this compliance with the norms and values of the community.

One of the distinguishing features of the Deaf community is the use of sign language as the native language for those with congenital deafness or who lose their hearing in the early months of life. Similarly, it is recognized as a second language for those who acquire deafness after having learned Spanish while being hearing individuals. The sign language serves as a means of cohesion and identity for the community, allowing all individuals, regardless of their age, to adopt values and patterns specific to their culture. According to (NISII) of Iraq, in the latest census conducted in 2017, a total of 9,486 individuals reported that Iraqi Sign Language (ISL) was their native language. Out of these, only 8,790 were deaf, as some children of deaf adults (CODA) also have ISL as their native language.

In Iraq, studies are being conducted to promote the recognition of sign language as a means to reduce the information gap, particularly in the fields of education and law. These studies aim to advocate for the rights of Deaf individuals to have sign language recognized as their mother tongue and as an inclusive right (Bermúdez & Seminario, 2020). This is necessary, as León & León (2019) point out; the Iraqi deaf population is a linguistic minority that experiences deprivation of abilities and opportunities due to limited options for accessing education caused by language barriers. Furthermore, there are studies such as the one conducted in Baghdad to enhance

access to education via proposals for the implementation of an educational program for deaf individuals (Goico et al., 2021).

In sign language, each sign and gesture has a specific meaning, and spatial dimensions and movement are used to convey information. One of the primary characteristics of LS is its lack of universality. On the contrary, there are many sign languages that originate from the same deaf communities in different countries. Furthermore, within the same country, there may and often are variations of the LS. Some of the most standardized sign languages include American Sign Language (ASL), Indo-Pakistani Sign Language (IPSL), and the sign languages used in Indonesia (known as SIBI) (System Bahasa Isyarat). However, in other countries such as Peru, Colombia, and South Africa, for instance, there is no standardized sign language (SL) and they are characterized by a wide linguistic diversity among different deaf communities in the country.

Esteban and his colleagues (2019) argue that the anthropological perspective on deafness, rather than the disability perspective, is not fully understood by those who are unfamiliar with the identity of those who identify themselves as part of the deaf community. These individuals also lack knowledge about the nature of SL as a fully-fledged language and are unaware of its speakers as a linguistic minority who legitimately strive for the exercise of their right to language respect and access to information in SL. However, internationally, the SL has been recognized as a vital aspect for the exercise of linguistic and cultural rights of deaf individuals, since it is via this language that they provide and receive information. However, there is still a considerable distance to go in achieving equity in terms of information access in SL, as has been confirmed even in cities with significant initiatives for providing the deaf community with information in various settings (Ramos et al., 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the disadvantage of deaf individuals in an unexpected situation where information is crucial was made evident. Despite governments having signed regulations that establish the State's obligation to ensure access to information, this need has become even more pressing (International Federation of the Deaf IFD, 2022). In the face of these situations, there is an increasing struggle for the recognition of SL as an essential vehicle to access information and services. For instance, in the United States, a human rights organization filed a lawsuit against the government for failing to provide American Sign Language(ASL) interpreters during the news broadcasts that reported on the developments after the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic (Yi et al., 2021).

1. Significance of the Study

Just as SL serves as a method of communication for the deaf community, free-to-air television programming is a very significant media that reaches a substantial portion of the public. Accessing information via free-to-air TV channels is a significant advancement in promoting cultural plurality and ensuring the right to knowledge (Esteban & Ramallo, 2019; García-Prieto, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to target and include these channels towards the audience that requires access to information, without any limitations imposed by their membership in a language minority. However, there has been little research conducted on the accessibility of information via television for deaf individuals in Iraq, whereas the academic community has shown significant interest in this topic on a global scale.

2. Theoretical Background

In doing this particular study, it is crucial to include the perspective and view of the deaf community. This is because the members of this community are directly impacted by the issue at hand, and their insights provide valuable information for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Other study endeavors have focused on understanding the needs and perspectives of deaf communities about sign interpretation on television channels. These studies have also put forward targeted solutions that align with the unique features and requirements of each community. Wehrmeyer (2015) conducted a study of 360 individuals who are deaf in South Africa in order to investigate the variables that influence their comprehension of translated sign language material. She emphasized the magnitude of the interpreter's area on the screen and the heightened difficulty faced by interpreters due to the diverse cultural and linguistic composition of the Deaf Community in South Africa. Bosch-Baliarda et al. (2020) obtained comparable findings in their investigation on the receptiveness of Spanish Deaf individuals towards a proposition for an on-screen display of

a sign language interpreter. Similarly, García-Prieto and Figuereo Benítez (2022) interviewed 13 experts to identify the reasons behind the shortcomings and potential remedies for enhancing the accessibility of information on Spanish public television for deaf and blind individuals. Similarly, individuals from the deaf community, as questioned by Yi et al. (2021) in Korea, concurred that the interpreter's physical presence should be more prominent in order to facilitate effective communication. This is because the size of the interpreter serves as the primary means of conveying information to the deaf individual, and facial expressions play a crucial role in their communication via sign language.

Moreover, there have been studies conducted by Labio-Bernal and García-Prieto (2022) that have examined the shortcomings in terms of accessibility in sign language on television channels in Spain and England. Additionally, Araújo et al. (2013) have conducted studies focused on suggesting technological solutions for interpreting signs on open television. The latter proposed an automated translation into the Brazilian LS and its subsequent integration, deployment, and assessment for real-time digital television systems.

In Arab territory, especially Iraq, no research has been published that addresses interpretation in Iraqi Arabic Sign Language on television channels, even though in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Korea and South Africa, among others, the importance of this issue has been recognized and has been advanced in this regard. Consequently, studies are needed that pave the way for concrete proposals for the benefit of the deaf community. These investigations should be carried out from different epistemological bases, including qualitative studies that allow us to delve deeper into the perceptions and feelings of the communities regarding this issue of sign language interpretation on TV channels. It is in this context that this research arose with the purpose of knowing, from using an empirical method, how the deaf society feels about ISL renditionon free-to-air television channels in Iraq.

3. Methodology

This qualitative-phenomenological study was proposed to achieve a better approach to understanding the way in which people from the deaf community perceive interpretation in ISL on Arabian television channels. Contact was made with representative members of the Deaf community, residing in different districts, and the nature and purpose of the study was explained to them so that the invitation could be extended to other members of the community. For this purpose, they were additionally provided with an infographic in which the informed consent information was shown in a simple and didactic way. This type of research can face certain difficulties when gathering the sample, because as Palma-García (2022) points out, research that involves the participation of deaf people can be an arduous task, as a consequence of previous experiences that the community has had with other researchers. This is because this community may present a certain degree of negative predisposition to researchers as a product of the erroneous conception of the deaf individuals and their culture that was disseminated from a disability perspective, showing them with a profile in which they do not see themselves represented. Thus, it has been possible for deaf communities to distrust invitations from researchers without giving them the opportunity to know their own conception of the deaf community as part of their identity and not as a disability or something that must be corrected. This situation could somehow explain reduced sample sizes to twenty individuals. However, since these are qualitative approaches, this number of participants has proven to be sufficient for the purpose of the proposed studies.

In this research, the following inclusion criteria were proposed for deaf people to participate:

1. Being of legal age,
2. Having been born deaf,
3. Being recognized members of the Deaf Community and
4. Having extensive knowledge of ISL.

For this purpose, 11 people who identified as deaf who met all these criteria participated and who expressed their will once the complete informed consent form was read to them (this reading was done with the help of an ISL interpreter they trusted). . This sample size was considered favorable as it included people with extensive knowledge of the perspective of the deaf community, not only because they are native members of it, but because of the roles they play

within the same community. Among the people interviewed were SL instructors and artists, but all, regardless of their occupation, were known and appreciated by the deaf community.

The information was collected through the interview technique in its group modality, since this, according to Amezcua (2003) and Salinas et al. (2009), allows access to the social discourse of the participants, which makes it feasible to reach a consensual vision of the group and makes it possible to know the ideological representations prevalent in a certain social group, as is the case of the deaf community. This technique allows us to find a consensus of ideas among representative members (not in statistical terms but in cultural terms) of a social group (in this case, the Deaf Community) and to know, from the individual opinions of the people in the group, a joint representation before a topic of discussion (Barbour, 2013). The influence of the researchers was minimized, following the parameters of Salinas et al. (2009), to enable access to rich and diversified information that was the product of the interaction of each participant in a pleasant and spontaneous debate.

For the comfort of the deaf people, an interpreter they trusted participated and one of the researchers participated by communicating in ISL, which generated more openness in the interviewees. The protocol for the interview followed the steps proposed by Troncoso-Pantoja and Amaya-Placencia (2017). In that sense, the environment of the interview was agreed, a first part of socialization was carried out, so that the deaf people felt comfortable with the interviewer (this is fundamental in the deaf culture), it was confirmed that they had understood the objective of research and the conditions of participation, the informed consent of each participant was confirmed (unanimously they demanded anonymity and non-disclosure of their images in the scientific article), the interview questions began (it was indicated that there were no good questions or bad and that they felt free to express and discuss their opinions), at the end of the interview both the people interviewed and the interpreter were thanked. There was no predetermined order of participation to answer the guiding questions; this was voluntary and spontaneous, as expected in this information collection technique (Barbour, 2013).

The interview categories or topics were:

1. Presence of the interpreter on TV,
2. Quality of the interpretation and
3. Type of content that is interpreted.

The choice of these categories was based on a review of previous studies in different countries. Consequently, the questions in the interview guide were derived from (Annex A) and allowed the participants to expand on the discussion.

5. Results and Discussion

In the literature, it has been observed that, among the factors that affect the understanding of an interpreted broadcast, the following stand out:

(1) The mastery of SL by the audience, since not all deaf people are literate in ISL,
(2) The professional and linguistic skills of the interpreter and the variety of SL used and
(3) The proportion of the screen allocated to the interpreter, among other factors.

Below, the results for each category are shown and discussed. Certain viewpoints spoken by individuals who are deaf have been transcribed word for word.

Responses oriented to these factors were observed and show consistency with the opinions reported in previous studies. In this way, a certain unification of criteria on the topic is perceived in the different deaf communities regardless of the country, although there are some particular differences, which are shown to the extent that the results are presented in each category addressed in the interview.

5.1 Presence of interpreters on TV

This category relates to the number of performers and the way they are displayed on the television screen. The responses of the Deaf people interviewed were that the number of interpreters is scarce. A deaf person interviewed stated that the community believes that the small number of interpreters denotes a lack of interest in generating true inclusion for access to information and recreation. Several of the deaf people interviewed consider that, far from increasing the number of interpreters, there has been a reduction in them on State channels. This is

what one of them expressed is directly transcribed:

(1)   …. We want to know what is happening with the government…, they are not giving that importance to the interpreters. For example, they have brought out interpreters who we consider good for the community.

Given their opinion of the small number of interpreters and the risk that they continue to be reduced due to budgetary problems, they wondered if it would be an option for them for the reporter or communicator to know about deaf culture and the ISL. They wanted to know how the deaf community would perceive it and if they considered that this would reduce the gap in access to information. Everyone expressed their liking and openness to this idea, but highlighting the importance of adequate training so that it is not about complying with a legal requirement or appearing to be included, but rather about really addressing their needs. This is summarized in the following opinions:

(2)   It would be much better because the deaf person could understand and not need the interpreter on the screen, but we would have the reporter who interprets us correctly, but obviously the sign must be seen correctly, he must be trained in a great knowledge of the language.

(3)   They lack a lot of learning. If the reporter can do the interpretation it would be very good, but he must know the culture of the deaf community, that is important. Many are based on knowing sign language, but not the culture of the deaf.

(4)   If the reporter knows, the interpreter may be able to help. On other channels there are reporters who know ISL but do not dare to sign. It would be nice if reporters could interpret, but there aren't any.

It is considered that communication faculties and schools should analyze the possibilities of teaching ISL to future communicators. On the other hand, it is considered necessary to specify the reality of the offer of the professional career of ISL interpreter that contemplates, among others, the linguistic variety of this language and the in-depth knowledge of the Iraqi deaf culture; as well as the elements inherent to sign language due to its gestural-visual nature (Emmorey, 2021). In this way, it would be possible to respond to needs based on knowledge of them from within the deaf community, since doing so in a way that is disjointed from them leads to failure and generates discontent and frustration (Goico et al., 2021).

The way in which the interpreter is presented on TV channels has been the subject of discussion in various studies. The space on the screen and the variety of SL with which the interpreter signs were also the main problems associated with understanding the information in previous studies (Wehrmeyer, 2015; Yi et al., 2021). Bosch-Baliarda et al. (2020) in an experimental study analyzed the eye movements of deaf people while viewing different locations of the interpreter on the screen and concluded that **1⁄4** of the screen is a good size to facilitate understanding although, in the same study, some Deaf people proposed that a third of the split screen be taken up.

In the case of Arabian TV, the person interpreting in ASL is located in the lower right corner of the screen, generally with a solid white background. However, even within the same TV channel, the size dedicated to the presence of the interpreter in different programs is not uniform (Figure 1). Furthermore, this box, in some cases, is very small.

Figure (1) Screenshots illustrating the presentation of the ASL interpreter on the screen of a TV channel.
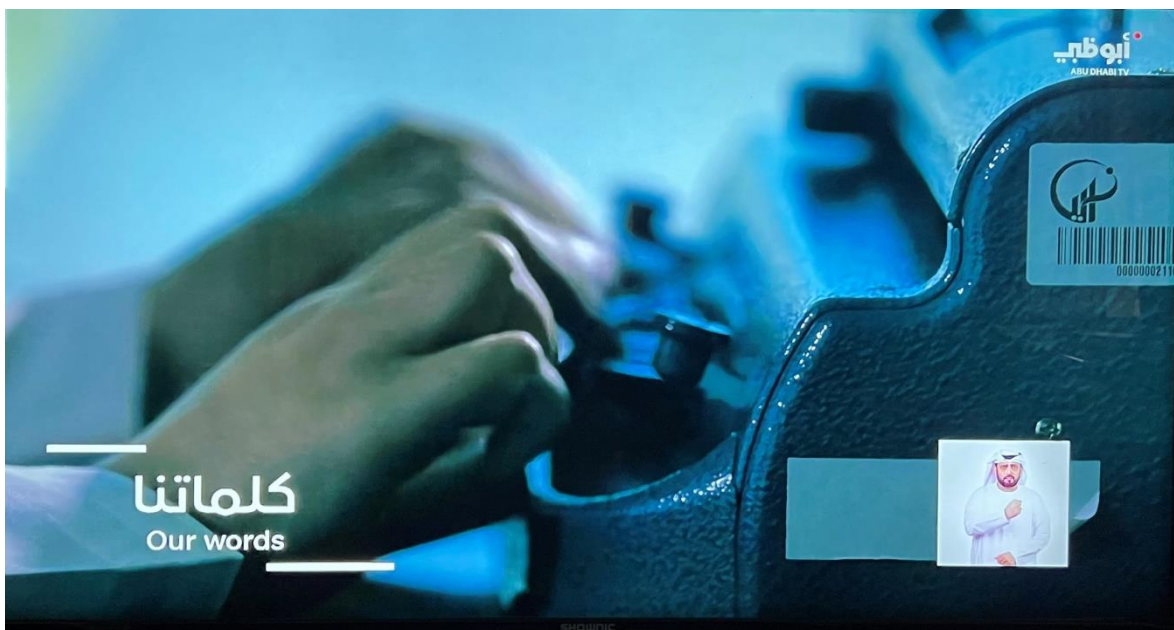**(Source: Saudi News Channel)**

Figure (2) Screenshots illustrating the presentation of the ASL interpreter on the screen of a TV channel
(Source: Abu Dhabi Channel)

Figure (3) Screenshots illustrating the lacking to ASL interpreter on the screen of a TV channel
(Source: Al Emarat TV Channel)

Figure (4) Screenshots illustrating the lacking to ASL interpreter on the screen of a TV channel
(Source: Al Hadath News TV Channel)

The participants were inquired about their perception of the sufficiency of the space allocated to the artist on television displays. The feedback unanimously indicated that the space provided was inadequate, as shown by the full transcriptions of the following interventions:

(5)   The object is not visible, it presents a challenge, and its size should be increased. In contrast to other nations, such as foreign channels, the interpreter is shown in a bigger format, allowing viewers to see them well without the need to approach the screen. This results in a much improved level of comprehension.

(6)   In order to ensure comprehension for the deaf, it is advisable to have a bigger area. However, the existing size is insufficient as it does not allow for proper visibility. Ideally, the size should be at least 25% of the television screen.

The need to expand the enclosure in which the interpreter is visible may be seen in transcriptions (5) and (6). Moreover, one of the individuals who are deaf and were questioned expressed the opinion that Iraq and some of other Arab countries should adopt a similar approach to other nations that have more effective utilisation of screen space. The research conducted by deaf individuals in this study expressed the idea of allocating 25% of the screen for the interpreter, as observed in transcript 6. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Bosch-Baliarda et al. (2020), despite the fact that their studies were conducted in different countries and utilised different methodological approaches.

In this research, the deaf individuals questioned did not express any objection to the placement of the interpreter on either side of the screen. In relation to these preferences, Bosch-Baliarda et al. (2020) conducted empirical research and found that positioning the news narrator on the left side (left side of the screen for the viewer) enhances accessibility to information. This positioning facilitates comprehension of the message and the corresponding scene, especially when there are other images in the background. In advanced nations, significant advancements have been achieved in the visual representation of the interpreter on the screen. Since 2020, the deaf population in Korea has had access to smart SL broadcasting services. This service offers screen size adaptation to enhance information accessibility for those with both hearing loss and visual impairments.

In addition, advanced technology has been integrated to enable the customisation of interpretation location and the inclusion of subtitles, in order to cater to the specific requirements of deaf individuals who use SL for communication. The primary constraint for accessing these services is the financial capacity to own a smart television that is compatible with these features (Yi et al., 2021). However, this is not a significant issue for the majority of the Korean people, since this technology has already been adopted widely. In the context of Arab countries, especially Iraq, finding a solution to this issue is still far off. Therefore, it is essential to consider other approaches that may help bridge the gap in access to information via terrestrial television in the short and medium term, taking into account the resources that are already accessible.

According to the deaf individuals questioned, Baghdad Deaf School (BDS) and Ismaani Deaf Centre (IDC) groups believe that having an interpreter present is the most effective means of providing information to their group. They do not perceive subtitles as a viable option. They clarified that a portion of the deaf population lacks access to formal education, resulting in a limited proficiency in spoken Arabic. Consequently, they are unable to read the subtitles at the speed required by news broadcasts. Bosch-Baliarda et al. (2020) have observed that subtitles, although being seen as a cost-effective and straightforward remedy, do not really address the issue since they are not well regarded by the Deaf Community. Nevertheless, Wehrmeyer (2015) discovered that there is variation in the perspectives of different deaf populations, as shown in South Africa. The author mentioned that despite the low educational level of deaf individuals, they showed a preference for subtitles over simultaneous interpretation. This preference was based on the belief that simultaneous interpretation posed a greater hindrance to understanding due to the challenges of dividing attention and the visual prominence of the interpreter on the screen.

5.2 The Standard of Performance

Interpretation quality pertains to the capacity to effectively convey and comprehend various subjects and information in a manner that is easily comprehensible to those who are deaf. The interviewees express their need for interpreters who possess enough training and are capable of signing in a comprehensible manner, using both lexical signs and classifiers. The majority of those questioned emphasised that not everyone has the inherent ability to become an interpreter, and that this occupation also requires proficient spatial organisation throughout the process of interpretation.

According to the latest specialised literature, the interpretation that includes these factors suggests that SL, as a part of deaf culture, should include its distinct and exclusive qualities. The natural characteristics of the language include lexicon, iconicity, and utilisation of the fingerprint alphabet, linguistic-facial expressions, and the formation of classifiers (Emmorey, 2021; Secora & Emmorey, 2020).

Various criteria exist for assessing proficiency and understanding of deaf culture. Some indicators of their proficiency are their fluency in expressing oneself, their eloquence, and their degree of interpretation in the SL. A respondent, employed in the field of formal Language for

Specific Purposes (LSP) instruction, made the following remark:

(7)   "First, it is imperative to accurately assess them within the community." There are shortcomings in the assessment process since just knowing the language service provider is not sufficient; understanding the culture is also necessary. It resembles a little audition, where you may showcase your abilities to ensure that you perform well. Every individual is granted acceptance without any kind of prejudice. However, in order to get employment, one must undergo an evaluation process. Arabic sign language is not standardised, and each interpreter has their own unique manner of translating.

The individuals questioned said that the Deaf Community feels ridiculed when interpreters without proper qualifications and who provide inadequate or unintelligible information are present. This is because it seems that they are being included and assuring their access to information, but in reality, they are not ensuring that their information demands are satisfied accurately. This predicament may arise, in part, from a deficiency in understanding the Deaf community and its culture from an anthropological standpoint, as highlighted by Esteban and Ramallo (2019). Conducting further study would be suitable in order to further explore this subject.

The interviews revealed that these individuals lack access to proficient interpreters, which transforms the fundamental right to communicate into a privileged status. The sentiment, shared by almost all individuals with hearing impairment, is succinctly captured in the transcript (8) provided:

(8)   "The transmission of messages by some translators on Arabian television, particularly Iraqi television, is often misunderstood owing to inadequate training, ineffective communication, and a limited understanding of the language. The sensation of scorn arises when the language is not accurately portrayed. The limited significance attributed to interpreters results in their substandard quality of interpretation, hindering the effective reception of the message and subsequently fostering a sense of derision towards the deaf community."

The quality of interpretation plays a crucial role for deaf individuals, since it directly affects their ability to acquire information. One of the respondents noted that the presence of untrained interpreters is seen as disrespectful or mocking towards the Deaf population. Moreover, this exacerbates the disparity that has long been pursued by this linguistic and cultural minority that coexists inside the framework and dynamics of a hearing majority (Vilugrón, 2020). This may be seen in the following transcript:

(9)   "The scarcity and inadequacy of interpreters diminishes the quality of the interpretation, resulting in a sense of isolation."

Regarding the quality of interpretation in the various programmes, all the respondents indicated that it is dubious and perceived that the absence of consistency in the signals hinders comprehension. The language variation within the LS is also evident in countries like Colombia (Suárez et al., 2021) and South Africa (Wehrmeyer, 2015), and has been identified as a contributing factor that exacerbates the challenges encountered by the Deaf Community in obtaining information. The information is sourced from Araújo et al.'s study in 2013.

Multiple deaf individuals contacted in this research agreed that some television interpreters need further training. It is emphasised that linguistic variety and the gradual integration of signs by the Deaf Community must be included as part of the language's growth. An interviewee stated that these interpreters are hired with the expectation that they possess a high level of proficiency, but in reality, they only possess knowledge of general signs and limited expertise in certain areas. It is imperative that they possess comprehensive knowledge of all sign language areas or at least specialise in specific domains such as sports, health, or others. Most deaf individuals believe it is crucial for them to get education on health matters, such as via television and other mediums. Below, the transcript (10) is an illustration of the viewpoints spoken by many individuals that were

interviewed:

> (10)   "Merely believing that they possess sufficient knowledge is insufficient; we must ascertain if they are indeed capable of interpreting in many settings. Occasionally, I find myself in a situation where I need to compensate someone to serve as an interpreter during my visits to the doctor. Unfortunately, this interpreter lacks the necessary skills and expertise. It is crucial that they possess genuine knowledge rather than only claiming to have knowledge, since this pertains to the resolution of practical issues".

The statements made by the interviewed members of the Deaf Community Centres align with the findings of Holdorf and Robinson (2020). According to representatives of the Deaf Community, the lack of interpreters and limited availability of sign language (SL) services hinder their ability to perform everyday activities that are routine for the hearing population, such as purchasing medication, conducting banking transactions, or attending medical appointments.

It is noted that among the deaf community, there is a prevailing perception that interpreters possess training. Nevertheless, based on the accounts of individuals who were questioned, it is evident that the quality of interpretation is subpar, resulting in negative repercussions for the deaf audience. This sentiment is evident in the remarks made by another respondent, who highlighted the following:

> (11)   "The Deaf population in Iraq has a rudimentary type of interpretation, whereas in other regions of the nation it is less developed. The message is incomprehensible, indicating a lack of effective communication. In deaf centres, there is some understanding of the message, but there is a dearth of training."

5.3 Types of Interpreted Content

This category refers to programming that is often translated in LSP (Language Service Provider), which involves providing deaf individuals with access to information on television networks. In the research conducted by Labio-Bernal and García-Prieto (2022), it was identified that there were shortcomings in the accessibility of different types of material. The participants acknowledged that so far, only certain categories of news had been subject to interpretation. Every person questioned expressed a unanimous desire for a more diverse range of material in their community, including entertainment, sports, and other sorts of content, including commercial commercials. The transcript (12) consists of samples of comments that were consistently repeated by all interviewers:

> (12)   "Indeed, when watching the news, one may wonder about the absence of the interpreter while sports are being shown. We have an affinity for sports and entertainment, but, we are not well informed on current events. Many of us are curious in the fate of TV characters, but it is left up to interpretation. All individuals, including the Deaf Community, need access to information."

The interviewees agree that only certain categories of material are interpreted, emphasising that the range is limited. They highlight the significant dearth of information resulting from the lack of access to it. Additionally, there is discussion of cultural subjects, such as music. Arabian television, particularly in Iraq, lacks the incorporation of sign language, which has become an important aspect of effectively and comprehensively includes Deaf individuals (Morera et al., 2020). This discovery enables us to recognise the crucial importance of those who identify as Deaf, since they are motivated to advocate for their right to receive all the information that hearing individuals have.

6. Concluding Remarks

This qualitative study was initiated to investigate the attitude of members of the Deaf Community Centres in Baghdad about interpretation in LSP (Language Service Providers) on free-to-air television channels in Arabian broadcast, with a particular focus on Iraq. The study focused on examining the presence of the interpreter on the screen, the quality of the interpretation, and the kinds of material that were translated in ISL.

➢ The Deaf individuals questioned believe that the interpretation of SL (Sign Language) on Arabic free-to-air TV highlights a range of issues that need to be acknowledged and rectified in order to ensure that the deaf population has genuine and effective access to information. As members of the Deaf Community, they firmly assert their entitlement to receive information and entertainment in their own language and insist that it be provided in a suitable manner.

➢ Some of these channels strive to adhere to regulatory laws for the promotion of inclusivity for those with deafness and significant hearing loss, ensuring them access to information. It is crucial to understand that if the interpretation (quality) and presentation (screen presence) of LSP (Language for Specific Purpose) programming are not satisfactory, the investment made to implement it will be misdirected and fail to achieve its intended purpose.

➢ One of the drawbacks of this research was the inadequate representation of individuals from the Deaf population across all age groups. Conducting research to understand the viewpoints of children, teenagers, and older individuals on the issue would be suitable, since their information and entertainment requirements differ. Future research should include examining the viewpoint of interpreters, who may not be cognizant of the Deaf Community's perception on the quality of interpretation in ISL.

➢ From a linguistic standpoint, it would be advisable to conduct research focused on the primary deficiencies found in interpretation. These may include the use of classifiers, the level of naturalness in signing, and the matter of linguistic variety. Moreover, it would be intriguing to further explore the gender parity or disparity in the representation of interpreters on television and the Deaf Community's perspective on this matter.

➢ According to the statements made by members of the Deaf Community Centers in Baghdad, it may be inferred that the availability of information via public broadcasting channels is not really inclusive and does not promote fairness for the Deaf Community. While several Arabian TV networks provide interpretation of the SL (Sign Language), Deaf individuals do not believe that it adequately caters to their requirements because to the diverse linguistic variations within the LSI. It is essential to include the Deaf Community in order to develop regulations regarding interpreter presence and involve capable community members in the assessment and training of new interpreters.

➢ Moreover, it is essential that the individuals in charge of organising the inclusion of interpreters on television possess knowledge of deaf culture, engage with deaf groups, and have a genuine interest in understanding their informational requirements, in order to develop more effective strategies. Deaf populations should be recognised as linguistic and cultural minority. Therefore, any efforts to include them in society with equal rights must be rooted in respect and comprehension of their culture.

➢ It is necessary to expand the range of programming that is shown on TV. Deaf people have the right, like every citizen, to enjoy options for their entertainment through TV screens. However, only informative programs are shown, leaving out the option of enjoying entertainment and sports topics, for example. It must be understood that it is not about fulfilling a sign requirement so that they are informed of social, economic and political news; it is about providing options for the majority of tastes and ages of the people who make up the Deaf Community. It is a long road to travel, but the discussion must be raised to shorten these distances.

➢ In Iraq there is no university career as an ISL interpreter, which makes it difficult to obtain a large number of well-trained interpreters. In this scenario, it is necessary to continue expanding institutional policies aimed at the training of communication professionals. Universities, especially communications faculties, can take initiatives to include elective or

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mandatory ISL courses so that future communicators become interested in their learning and are trained to contribute to access to information based on inclusion and equity. This is a topic of discussion that universities should bring to the table to make decisions that reflect respect for fundamental rights, inclusion and equity.

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