



THE UNIVERSITY
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Arts and
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Research Council

Guidelines for Working Conditions for Public Service Interpreters on Film Shoots 2023

Based on 'The Ethical Demands of Translating Gender-Based Violence', a research project led by Dr Charlotte Bosseaux

Guidelines for public service interpreters dealing with Gender-Based Violence (GBV) already exist and are available on the *Ethical Translation* website ('A Guide for Spoken Language Interpreters Working with Adult Survivors of Domestic Abuse', Rebecca Tipton, 2020). Our guidelines are **specific to interpreting on film shoots** to suggest good practice in this context and we recommend also reading Tipton's guidelines to get a comprehensive picture of the nature of an interpreter's role in sensitive contexts.

Recommendations

Collaboration with a charity/organisation: whoever commissions the interpreting work should ideally collaborate with a charity or an organisation which can help support interpreters in case there are issues during the project.

Training: should be provided to interpreters highlighting issues surrounding clients (e.g. trauma) as well as what is exactly expected of them. This would give interpreters more leverage to ask further questions if needed to understand the situation or address clients with further questions if they do not understand. Training should also be provided in the areas related to the film topic (e.g. GBV) with emphasis on the importance of using the correct terminologies in different languages and understanding cultural differences. This should happen before the work has started.

Meetings: meet with participants, interpreters and possibly caseworkers from the charity or organisation together at the start of the project to make sure everything is clear and expectations are explained.

Rate: paying a wage that matches the complex role of the interpreter. If unclear or unsure of ideal rates for interpreters, please consult the Institute of Translation and Interpreting and/or their Scottish counterpart (ITI Scottish Network), the National Register of Public Service Interpreters, or the Interpreting Academy.

Communication: make sure interpreters are informed about the exact content of the material they are asked to translate when they are contacted so that they can make an informed decision. This is because some interpreters might have suffered from the issues raised in the material and there is a duty of care from agencies to make sure interpreters are well informed before making their decision and supported as they perform the work.

Support: organise discussions at the start of the project to make sure interpreters are well and have all the information they need to start. Then organise check-ins during the translation and afterwards (a week or so after the translation is completely finished for instance) to make sure mental health is prioritised.

Choosing interpreters

When working with sensitive topics, we encourage **asking film participants what their gender preference is**. It is important to give them a choice of either a male or a female interpreter to make sure they **feel safe and fully represented**.

We also recommend **prioritising interpreters who specialise in the themes or topics of the documentary**, e.g. in our case, GBV and trauma. If you cannot find interpreters with this specific experience, do make sure they have **experience with interpreting emotional material or material that dealt with difficult situations**. Additionally, when working with GBV, do choose interpreters with an **interest in gender** and who are **willing to engage with the issues raised** in the material.

To ensure confidentiality, **interpreters should not have any relationship with the film interviewees**. Hence, ensure that interpreters do not know the people they are translating, understand confidentiality and have signed an **NDA** which emphasises confidentiality and safety. This is because communities can be small and you do not want what is being discussed in the interviews going back to communities.

Finding interpreters with exact language pairs needed might be challenging, particularly if you are working with localised language varieties.

We recommend **collaborative teamwork** based on the following to allow capturing nuances of the native language and to obtain clear rendering in English:

- a **native speaker** of the source language who can interpret into English,
- a **native English interpreter** who understands the source language and will be able to clarify anything if needed.

Having both interpreters on set should guarantee best practices and optimal interpreting experience for professionals and film participants.

Mental Health Support

We recommend asking your freelancers for an **emergency contact number**. This person/number would only be contacted if a freelancer unexpectedly ceases to engage so that you can check that they are well, even if they are not in direct contact with you, and provide links/info related to mental health support if needed.

Here are examples of associations and organisations you can direct interpreters to for mental health support:

- <https://health-in-mind.org.uk/#>
- <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
- <https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-helpline>
- <https://victimsupport.scot/information-support/get-support/other-organisations-that-can-help/>
- <https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/find-a-service/#>
- <https://www.saheliya.co.uk/>
- <https://www.samh.org.uk/>
- <https://www.penumbra.org.uk/services/>
- <https://www.spititoutproject.com/>