CHALLENGES AND OUTLOOK OF COMMUNITY INTERPRETING IN GHANA

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Abstract: Language is one of the most important parts of cultures around the world. Even if today advanced technology has brought people closer than never before, connections between different people and their cultures have continued to grow as well. This extraordinary growth in communication between people who do not speak the same language requires the intervention of interpreters to help bridge the linguistic gap. Many cultures across the globe speak different languages which result in so many communication barriers. Community interpreting is a new field of endeavour in Ghana as over the years researchers have not really given it the attention it deserves. However, with the influx of migrants into Ghana in recent years, there is the need to give it a lot more attention. Beyond the technical or strictly professional issues, it seems interesting to us to address the human component involved in the interpreting process. For this purpose, community interpreting is the best field to explore the feelings and emotions that, in this case, burst in and influence the course of the communication. In this type of intercultural communication it is important to explore the language models, policies and practices in that, without these policies we can never bridge the linguistic gap in a multilingual country such as Ghana. This article seeks therefore to establish the current state of community interpreting in Ghana, with a particular emphasis on its historical context, professionalization and interpreter training.

Keywords: Community interpreting, intercultural communication, Public service interpreting, multilingual community

ENJEUX ET PERSPECTIVES DE L'INTERPRÉTATION COMMUNAUTAIRE AU GHANA

Résumé : La langue fait partie de l'une des plus importantes cultures à travers le monde. Même si aujourd'hui la technologie de pointe a rapproché les gens plus que jamais, les liens entre les différentes personnes et leurs cultures ont également continué à se développer. Ce développement exponentiel de la communication entre des personnes qui ne parlent pas la même langue nécessite l'intervention d'interprètes dans l'optique de combler le fossé linguistique. De nombreuses cultures à travers le monde parlent des langues différentes, ce qui entraîne l'immense problème de la barrière communicative. L'interprétation communautaire est un nouveau domaine d'activité au Ghana, car au fil des ans, les chercheurs ne lui ont pas vraiment accordé l'attention qu'elle méritait. Cependant, avec l'afflux des migrants au Ghana ces dernières années, il est nécessaire d'y accorder beaucoup plus d'attention. Au-delà des enjeux techniques ou strictement professionnels, il nous semble intéressant d'aborder

la composante humaine impliquée dans le processus d'interprétation. À cette fin, l'interprétation communautaire est le meilleur terrain pour explorer les sentiments et les émotions qui, dans ce cas, font irruption et influencent le cours de la communication. Dans ce type de communication interculturelle, il est important d'explorer les modèles linguistiques, les politiques et les pratiques dans la mesure où, sans ces politiques, nous ne pourrons jamais combler le fossé linguistique dans un pays multilingue comme le Ghana. Cet article cherche donc à établir l'état actuel de l'interprétation communautaire au Ghana, avec un accent particulier sur son contexte historique, sa professionnalisation et la formation des interprètes.

Mots-clés: interprétation communautaire, communication interculturelle, interprétation des services publics, communauté multilingue

Introduction

It all began at the Tower of Babel[1]. In Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, people driven by ambition decided to build a tower that would reach heaven. Fearing for his supreme power and authority, God decided to thwart their plans by making them speak in different tongues and thus spreading confusion among them. Unable to understand one another, they could no longer communicate or work as a team anymore. From that time, it is believed that people started learning each other's languages so as to bridge the linguistic gap that has been created by the confusion that raked their camp. For linguists, translators and interpreters alike, however, this myth often symbolizes the birth of their professions including community interpreting. (Hale, 2011) defines community interpreting as "the type of interpreting that takes place between residents of a community. It takes place in a public service context, when the users of a service do not speak the majority language of the country." Community interpreting can lead to conflict when participants in interactions requiring interpretation, including the interpreter, ignore the needs, roles, goals, and opinions of other participants. Again, when the interpreter works to establish communication with a reciprocal purpose, he or she must invest in a collaboration - sometimes using diplomacy, sometimes invention or even cunning - that consists of creating a space for understanding with the aim of satisfying all the actors in the process beyond the mutual non-understanding or the sometimes insurmountable conflicts that risk interrupting the flow of speech. Research in the field of community interpreting is still developing, and the need for professional training is great. It is also essential that there be cross-fertilization between research, training and practice, in which each aspect feeds the other. As a matter of fact, governments and their agencies offer public services to their citizens in the supreme interest of the same citizens. In Ghana, the community interpreting services are required in sectors such as the court of justice, the police service, customs excise and preventive service (CEPS), National Health Service, central government, decentralised government, local government, welfare services, community support groups, church services, marriage ceremonies, culture and heritage, childcare, education and learning, border and immigration services. In recent years, community interpreting has been gaining interest in academic and professional circles, unlike simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. However, it is still at the bottom of the

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[1] The construction of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11: 1-9

ladder in training programs and remains an unregulated and poorly recognized profession. Yet, throughout human history, it is a profession widely practiced in multilingual communities, an activity that resembles a laboratory that makes it possible to observe the various contexts of intercultural communication, the various human and institutional behaviors resulting from cultural, social, economic and legal divergences that very often, risk slowing down, or making communication almost impossible. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of community interpreting in Ghana, with a particular focus on its historical context, professionalization and interpreter training. Beyond the technical or strictly professional issues, it seems interesting to us to address the human component involved in the interpreting process. For this purpose, community interpreting is the best field to explore the feelings and emotions that, in this case, burst in and influence the course of the communication. If the inter-linguistic transfer can be easily hidden in many situations - and ethnocentric translation testifies to this - it can in no way be ignored in a face-to-face meeting based on a certain reciprocity. (Klimkiewicz, 2005) argues that « le processus de l'interprétation s'inscrit dans une dynamique d'emblée asymétrique et de nature « trialogique » puisqu'il s'agit de trois actants, à savoir le client, l'intervenant et l'interprète qui participent à l'échelle verbal tout en créant activement un espèce de communication interculturel ». [the process of interpreting is part of a dynamic that is at first asymmetrical and "trialogical" in nature since it involves three agents, namely the client, the practitioner and the interpreter, who are involved in the communication process while actively creating a species of intercultural communication]. (Daniel Gile, 1995) specifies that conference interpreting consists of substituting a "discourse of high formal and conceptual level in another language, in its entirety and respecting the same level of discourse". In this case, the interpreter does not translate a simple dialogue but a sustained speech appropriate to the communication situation (conference, assembly, official meeting, etc.). The same requirement is also maintained even when the speaker's language level is not recommended. Here the interpreter aims to anticipate the expectations of the target audience, otherwise, to reduce the distance between the speaker and the receiver by using more appropriate language. (Klimkiewicz, 2005) further postulates that l'interprétation communautaire s'inscrit dans un lieu plus complexe. C'est-à-dire à cause de la hiérarchisation à plusieurs niveaux, elle met en scène une communication d'emblée asymétrique entre le professionnel et son client: Langue mineure et langue majeure, savoir, compétence et non-savoir, ignorance, institution et individu et structures, lois, règlements-expérience, sentiments, [Community interpreting takes place in a more complex place. That is, because of the multilevel hierarchy, it stages an immediately asymmetrical communication between the professional and the client: minor language and major language; knowledge, competence and non-knowledge, ignorance; institution and individual; structures, laws, regulations-experience, and feelings] page 3. As a general rule, in this type of intervention, the power relations are almost palpable: if the professional invests in the translation of the other as an authority in his or her field of activity, the client feels constantly obliged to translate himself or herself, i.e., to explain himself or herself, to clarify certain information in order to make himself or herself accessible to his or her interlocutor.

In this regard, two questions are raised in this study as follows: What is the current state of community interpreting in Ghana? To which extent community interpreting can be popularized at the national level? This article aims to provide an outlook of community

interpreting in Ghana, with a particular reflection on its historical context, professionalization, interpreter training and mode of interpreting.

1. Sociolinguistic context

In recent years, the market for community interpreting services has grown in Ghana due to the sharp increase in migration flows. Every day we witness a wave of migrants in perpetual movement, entering through the borders and moving within the country. The cities, especially Accra, Kumasi, Koforidua, Sunyani, Takoradi, Tamale, Ho, etc. are fast becoming linguistically and culturally diverse communities with many cultural minorities of different foreign languages. Many of these foreigners find themselves, at least in the initial phase of their residence in a new community, often unable to communicate effectively in the official languages of the country. This creates enormous challenges for public service providers, who should be able to ensure equitable access to their services for anyone who needs them. Yet in Ghana, not all public service providers are prepared or equipped to operate in such a multilingual environment, and in many countries as well, comprehensive policies and structural funding are still lacking. (Eberhard, 2020) posits that:

> Ghana, like most African countries, is a truly multilingual country. It has 81 living languages for a population of approximately 30 million people. 73 of these languages are indigenous while 8 are non-indigenous. 13 of these languages are institutional, as they are used as languages of wider communication, and enjoy both governmental and non-governmental support. 46 are developing; these languages are in active use, with limited standardized literature. 14 are considered as vigorous, since they are used for cross generational face-to-face communication in a sustainable way. 6 are in trouble, and 2 are dying.
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> Eberhard (2020) cited by Amfo (2013 p. 2)

Despite the number of languages present in the country as mentioned above, (Eberhard, 2020) cited by Amfo (2013 P.2) argues that Akan and English are the main languages spoken in the country. English is the de facto lingua franca which was inherited from the British as a result of our colonial past. This makes English a language of prestige as a vehicle of communication in the country's daily interactions, linking it to social prestige and power (Guerini, 2008). All the languages spoken within Ghanaian borders belong to the Niger-Congo family; according to the 2021 national census, Akan[2] is the native language of about 47.5% of the Ghanaian population, which is also spoken as a second language or as a lingua franca[3] by at least 40% of the remaining Ghanaian population. It is worth noting that 9 out of the country's 16 regions speak Akan. In some parts of the north, Hausa, although not indigenous to Ghana, plays an important role as a lingua franca. Its use for this purpose is also found in the southern slum communities, where residents are of northern descent. Eberhard reveals that multilingualism is ubiquitous in Ghana, with over eighty-one languages spoken throughout the country. This quantification has certainly given rise to much controversy because quantification depends on who is doing the counting and for what purpose. Often, there is also a definitional problem with respect to what constitutes

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[2] Figures extracted from the 2021 Ghana Statistical Service report p.9

[3] By lingua franca I mean a (simplified) variety of language which is used in communication between speakers who have no native language in common. The term is employed here as a synonym of vehicular language

a language and a dialect. In this regard (Heine, 2000) maintains that the main criteria taken into account when defining a language are varying combinations of having national status, being written, being the standard form of a range of speech varieties, not being intelligible to speakers of other 'languages' and having relatively large numbers of native speakers (Heine, 2000). In other words, what constitutes a language continues to be determined by ethnic politics, language politics and ideology. Furthermore, African intellectuals are making the situation worse by failing to make a clear distinction between languages and relying on the controversial distinction made by the colonialists. It is important to note that paragraph 2 of the constitution of Ghana, in its article 6 states that: "No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, and creed, economic or social status." If the constitution opposes any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, this is another way of encouraging interpretation in the court of justice, in customs, in the police and in all sectors that require public service. The language model in Ghana is a triglossic one with at least three languages being spoken in a particular speech community. These languages have distinct and complementary roles (Babito 2005). English leads in this classification. It is followed by Akan, which (Eberhard, 2020 P. 2) describes as the "de facto national working language" of Ghana. Languages that are less used in communication largely include minority languages and are placed third. Despite the situation described above, these languages are expected to play a key role in accessing public services in education, justice, health, immigration, customs, etc.

2. Language policies and practices

A language is imposed in two ways, either de facto or de jure. After independence, Ghana, like most African countries, had to choose a national language of communication that would also be the language of government authority, education, commerce and foreign affairs. English, which was the colonial language already in use in the territory was chosen. This choice appears to have been made de facto (naturally) rather than de jure (by legislative instrument). In addition to its role in governance, education, commerce and foreign affairs, English also plays the role of "colonizer" of other local languages, hence its primacy in the media, education, health and the public sector. Language policy in Ghana is focused on the education sector. This is the only sector of the economy that seems to get special attention when it comes to legislating the language to be used as a vehicle of instruction in elementary school. In this regard, Amfo (2013 P. 3) states "Even so, it has been a checkered history of either using indigenous languages or English, or sometimes both, in the first few years of basic education." The successful implementation of these policies, however, has been hampered by inadequate preparation, uncooperative attitudes and insufficient supervision. The result has been a consistent violation of children's language rights, with a corresponding denial of the right to equal educational opportunity as stipulated in the Ghanaian constitution. Apart from the education sector, one does not hear of language policy in other areas. The successful implementation of these policies, however, has been hampered by inadequate preparation, uncooperative attitudes and insufficient supervision. The result has been a consistent violation of children's language rights, with a corresponding denial of the right to equal educational opportunity as stipulated in the Ghanaian constitution. Apart from the education sector, one does not hear of language policy in other areas. So the MP who dares to speak in court in the local language is either ridiculed or judged as less intelligent or less educated. In 2015, when the

MP for Efutu, Mr. Afenyo-Markin, asked to speak in Mfantse (an Akan dialect) in parliament, his request was bluntly rejected and considered a malicious request. With respect to the use of local languages, the judiciary appears to be doing better than the legislature, although there appears to be a lack of a clearly documented language policy. The promotion of the use of interpretation services appears to be championed by agencies such as The Legal Aid Scheme. However, the general lack of standard interpretation services, due to lack of training and regulation, hinders the effectiveness of justice for all, which is a fundamental right of individuals (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). (Moeketsi, 1999) maintained that: "Interpreters, where present, tend to be "...ill-trained, over-worked, unsupervised, generally undermined and ... bound to be erratic." (Roberts-Smith, 1989 & 1991) also observes that:

> Untrained interpreters, far from facilitating communication, can cause many problems. Their language skills may be deficient, they may not have the necessary appreciation of relevant cross-cultural differences, they may not have interpreting skills (as opposed to conversational abilities); their choice of words may be imprecise and consequently misleading and they may have a tendency to flavour the interpretation with their own views and perception of the facts."

> Roberts-Smith, (1989 & 1991 P. 71)

In the health sector, there is no clearly articulated language policy. Like other professionals in the country, health professionals are trained in English with no requirement for local or foreign language skills. Graduates of health programs are assigned to health facilities without any consideration of their local language skills. In addition, the healthcare teams in our facilities do not have language professionals or interpreters on staff. Interpretation services, when needed, are provided by anyone who is available and considered proficient in the languages in question. These are usually people who work in health care facilities, whether they are nurses, laboratory or cleaning staff, or relatives of patients.

The "Okyeame" in traditional Ghanaian society: the role of the African Griot

The "Okyeame" is the West African linguist or griot of the royal court. The "Okyeame" linguists or "Kyeame" as they are commonly called play a key role in our cultural environment as they mediate between the chief and his people. Chiefs are revered and, because of their sacrosanct nature, it is a bad omen for them to make mistakes. They therefore tend to interact through the linguist who, in turn, "embellishes" the language for his subjects and vice versa. The Okyeame is not simply a spokesperson but an "interpreter" and is generally considered a high-ranking advisor to the chief. It must be noted that the "Okyeame" could embellish the words of the king, make them pleasant, but he never altered the meaning that the king wanted to convey (Bandia, 2005). The position of Okyeame is said to encompass a wide range of responsibilities, including mediation, judicial and political advocacy, and the preservation and interpretation of royal history. The Okyeame's most visible public role is that of the primary intermediary between the sovereign and those who seek his advice, which has led to the popular characterization of his profession as that of a linguist. The study and use of local languages is an important part of missionary work. The

Basel and Scottish missionaries recognized the centrality of indigenous languages in their work and thus the need to develop and study them. One cannot ignore the central role of the interpreters trained by these missionaries to help spread the gospel in the country. The introduction of European education dates from 1529 when European merchants established schools in Elmina, Cape Coast, and Christianburg Castles. The main purpose was to Christianize the local people and train them for employment as interpreters in European trading companies. These interpreters relayed the message of the man of God to the community. In addition to religious interpreters, the British colonizers also trained interpreters. They trained a class of men to further their colonial project. Being able to communicate with the colonized was one of the prerequisites for the imposition of colonial power. "This went beyond the (trivial) fact of verbal exchanges, because in the long run such exchanges depended on a shared communicative praxis providing the common ground on which unilateral claims could be imposed" (Fabian, 1986). The British quickly realized that in order to advance their colonial project, they needed to be able to speak directly to the local population. To do this, they needed native intermediaries who could speak, write and read English. These interpreters were very important to the colonizers. Not only did they need to have a thorough knowledge of the English language, but they also needed to be able to master cultural and legal concepts so that they could translate them into a language that was readable and understandable to both the colonizers and the colonized.

3. Content and objective of the training program

To date, community interpreting remains essentially an unregulated profession, lacking common standards of quality, training, ethics, remuneration and definition. In addition to the term "community interpreting", other terms are used, such as public service interpreting, dialogue interpreting, intercultural mediation or ad hoc interpreting, the latter often being performed by a relative, which can lead to a risk of bias. Interpreters working for public services often do not have the required professional training, nor the possibility to follow a recognized training. Training programs for community interpreters vary in scope and objectives. The general objective is, of course, to ensure a high level of accuracy by improving proficiency in the working languages. In addition to knowledge of language structures, the aim is to train students in the use of specialized terminology and to familiarize them with the fields and administrative procedures of the particular areas in which they wish to specialize; for example: health services, local government, social services and legal services. Most programs are also designed to develop awareness of potential cultural differences among participants in the interpreting act. It is not uncommon for community interpreters to have to intervene to bridge cultural differences, for example, by explaining or adjusting conventions about the degree of formality of addressing the other party. Differences in conventions about when and where to discuss topics that are taboo for either party, such as money, sex, drinking, or religion, may also require deliberate intervention by the interpreter to avoid a breakdown in communication. According to Shackman (1984 : 18): "The UK Community interpreter is responsible for enabling the professional and client, with very different backgrounds and perceptions and in an equal relationship of power and knowledge, to communicate to their mutual satisfaction". But (Sanders, 1992) suggests that the interpreter is duty-bound to bridge a power gap as well as linguistic and culture gap. To meet these training

requirements, the content of the training program must be designed to meet the needs of the industry. In Ghana, for example, as in many countries in the region, it is believed that anyone who speaks two languages is automatically an interpreter. Therefore, anyone with a license or diploma in any language can serve as an interpreter, including in the court of law, customs, police or any other public sector. This is commonplace in recruitment advertisements for court interpreters. An example of this is the following advertisement: "The Judicial Service of Ghana invites applications from suitably qualified persons for the following vacant positions."

Sample court interpreter recruitment ads: Published in the Daily Graphic on September 6, 2021

Court Interpreters
Qualifications and Requirements:
- HND. University Diploma or Bachelor's Degree from a recognized accredited institution, academic qualification in the spoken language(s) will be an added advantage.
- Computer literacy in Microsoft Office Application and knowledge in the use of the internet.
- High level of integrity.
- Should have a good command of the English language.
- Fluency in at least (3) of the followings sets of local languages/dialects

This advertisement for interpreters for the Accra High Court of Justice is not specific about the type of training the interpreters need. Will the interpreters who are recruited have this knowledge of language structures or be able to use specialized terminology? We believe that many people might have gone to jail because of inappropriate interpretation by untrained people. Additionally, there is no training school for community interpreters, so their job is done by conference interpreters. Furthermore, the program in professional fields such as health is not communicative because it is spread over a period of four months. This structuring does not give the student the adequate rudiments to be able to communicate with the client and subsequently narrow the existing language gap.

4. Professionalization

The contributions to the research on community interpreting attempt to shed light on the still unclear issues concerning the practice of this rather young activity and, therefore, to support its professionalization process, considered as the way to its social recognition. (Rudvin, 2007) contends:

> Professionalisation qualification is related to the professional's differentiation from the layman in that he or she is paid for his or her services, that he or she is trained to perform in this specific field, and that he or she therefore possesses certain skills and a "superior" competence. Thus, he/she acquires credibility in the eyes of the public (and of potential clients).

(Rudvin, 2007) cited by (Vargas-Urpi, 2012):24)

In Ghana, community interpreting is not new. It has always existed in multilingual societies such as ours where more than 81 languages are spoken. Although demand has increased, public service interpreting is still largely an unregulated profession, lacking common standards of quality, training, ethics, remuneration and definition. As a result, community interpreting is less remunerated. It has gradually developed as a profession over the past few decades in response to international migration and the resulting linguistic heterogeneity in most countries. Increasingly, it seems to be developing into a number of distinct areas of professional expertise, such as medical interpreting, mental health interpreting, educational interpreting and legal interpreting. Yet, to a large extent, community interpreting is practiced by untrained and often unpaid individuals, which (Harris, 1977) call 'natural translators.' The same is true in Ghana, where interpretation is most often done by 'good Samaritans' such as parents, friends, family members, etc. Because it is often done by a close relative, this form of community interpretation is not free from the risk of bias and concealment of information. Because it is often done by a close relative, this form of community interpretation is not free from the risk of bias and concealment of information. This situation highlights the need for and relevance of theoretical training in the ethics and professional conduct of the profession.

5. Mode of interpreting

The mode of interpretation used by community interpreters is twofold: consecutive interpretation with note-taking and sight interpretation. However, there are two types of consecutive: the long consecutive and the short consecutive. (Russell, 2005) defines consecutive interpreting as follows: "Consecutive interpreting (CI) is defined as the process of interpreting after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas in the source language and then pauses while the interpreter transmits that information". (González, 1991/2012) states when using CI in the court setting, the duration of the source language can be anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes. Long consecutive" is an expression used to describe the consecutive interpretation of a long passage (over several minutes) or possibly an entire speech at a time, usually with note-taking, while "short consecutive" refers to the consecutive interpretation of a short passage, possibly from one word to a few sentences, with or without note-taking. In this case, the interpreter must be trained in note-taking and also in the development of his or her long-term and short-term memory. Note-taking techniques must be developed to provide a constant advantage to the interpreter by reducing the strain on the memory. The effort on short-term memory recognizes the important role of both short-term and long-term memory in interpreting. Here in Ghana, most community interpreters have not been trained in note-taking, so they prefer to interpret after the author has said a word or phrase. Gile posits that:

> The two cognitive operations that concern short-term and long-term memory occur continuously during interpretation and are not automatic. Gile states, "In consecutive, it is associated with the time between when it is written (if written) or mentally processed and sent to memory (long term).

> Gile (1995/2009 : 161)

Although community interpreting (CI) can be performed with or without note-taking, note-taking must be mandatorily introduced into the curriculum of community interpreting teaching and research, particularly in the context of "long consecutive", which is sometimes referred to as "classical consecutive" or even "true consecutive" by some practitioners. How interpreters use note-taking in CI can depend on several factors, such as the length of the source utterance to be interpreted at a time, the physical constraints of the interpreter's location, and the interpreter's memory. It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to note-taking, and different interpreters employ different methods of note-taking. Unfortunately for us in Ghana, there is not yet a school for training community interpreters. This is done by conference and ad hoc interpreters, or even 'good Samaritans'. Interpreting is done by untrained and unqualified people who may be family members, friends, untrained bilingual staff, volunteers, community advocates or anyone who claims to speak two languages.

6. Contribution and recommendations

Community interpreting has long been practiced in Ghana because of its multilingual nature. We cannot move community interpreting forward without the support of stakeholders including interpreters, students, teachers, researchers, professional organizations, agencies, and public authorities. All of these stakeholders are encouraged to share information and contribute content in order to create a database and information sharing spaces. Community interpreting is plagued by many problems ranging from training to non-recognition of the profession. We therefore recommend that universities and interpreting schools include community interpreting in their curricula in order to train interpreters competent to practice in specific areas such as court, customs, police, immigration and many other public sectors. In addition, we would like to draw the attention of university authorities and training centers to also consider the option of having remote interpretation services within their institutions such as video conferencing, telephone, tele-interpreting. It is important to note that it is time to review the professional programs, namely, those in the health sector, law, customs and immigration. Programs must be designed according to the needs and interests of the space in which they practice. In addition to this, however, the authorities in charge of assigning health personnel must not forget that a misunderstood dosage is dangerous for the health of the individual to whom it is prescribed, as well as the reputation of the prescriber. On that note, it will be necessary to post such personnel in areas where they can freely interact with the population and if possible give them some basic courses in sign language interpretation for the deaf.

Conclusion

Community interpreting is based on the simple concept of giving a voice to those who seek access to basic services but are unable to express themselves in the language of communication in their place of residence. As a profession, community interpreting links issues of language and culture to concepts of social justice and equity. The mandate of this profession is to facilitate access to community services for people who do not speak, read, or write the language of the community, or who cannot access basic services without an interpreter. The idea is that we all have a basic right to community services, and adequate access to those services is fundamentally impractical or impossible without professional interpreters, i.e., trained and qualified interpreters - not family members, friends, a cafeteria worker, or someone in the waiting room who happens to speak the client's language to some degree. The major driving forces contributing to addressing the issue of community interpreting in this nation are migration, language policy and language access laws and regulations, etc. It is time for Ghana to follow the lead of the developed countries in setting up training and professionalization structures for the profession. Furthermore, if we want to solve the problems that plague the sector, we must resort to virtual communities of practice such as the use of telephone interpreting, video conferencing and tele-interpreting.

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