

Ethics and ethos of legal interpreters in post-conflict immigration situations

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The purpose of our study is to examine the role of the legal interpreter in post-conflict scenarios, through analyzing the practice of interpreters regarding shame, evil, will to help, and how ethics and ethical codes have contributed to the creation of the ethos of the interpreter.

Our point of interest is migration as a phenomenon related to globalization and conflicts. As we are all aware, since the summer of 2015 all Europe has received large numbers of refugees and immigrants who require interpreting, so the demand for interpreters is high and urgent. Due to globalization, this demand is becoming permanent, not only temporary. We are facing a situation where formally trained interpreters are working side by side with interpreters without formal training, that is, who are self-taught due to different circumstances, such as non-existent formal training for their working languages. The latter situation is interesting as it provides us with an issue that is rapidly evolving.

As to our corpus, on the legal side we have official documents from the Finnish government referring directly to the interpreting practice, and the ethical documents are from AIIC (World Association of Conference Interpreters), the EU, and national Finnish organizations. As to the methodological procedure, we studied the legal and ethical documents, and then compared them to the responses we obtained through our questionnaire. First, we identified the ethical principles discussed in the documents and we selected the references to professional ethics shared by all or most of them. In second place, we observed those principles in relation to their real usage through the responses obtained from the interpreters to our questionnaire. For our analysis, we have taken into consideration the interpreting situation and particularly shame, evil, and will to help, and how the interpreters have created their ethos.