

# The Role of Translation and Interpreting during Informed Consent: Ethical and Methodological Considerations

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Informed consent is a crucial component of conducting ethical and responsible research that involves human subjects. This practice typically involves both sharing information with potential participants and ensuring that they understand the benefits and risks of involvement before voluntarily agreeing to participate. In translation and interpreting studies, scholars such as Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) and Mellinger and Hanson (2017) have described the importance of obtaining consent prior to conducting research involving human subjects. Informed consent can be obtained in several ways, but typically the process involves written documentation and an opportunity for participants to ask questions about their involvement. For instance, in healthcare contexts, medical researchers regularly obtain consent from patients through a combination of printed information, consent forms, and dialogue between provider and patient. In addition, efforts to reconceptualize the informed consent paradigm from a singular *act* to a *process* allow medical professionals to engage patients to improve comprehension. Translation and interpreting studies scholars have followed similar practices in line with best practices established in social science research (e.g., Israel 2015).

Largely absent from these discussions is the role that translation and interpreting play in obtaining informed consent. In healthcare contexts, interpreting studies have explored the role of the interpreter in decision-making processes for medical decisions (e.g., Clifford 2005) and have described the challenges of sight translation of consent documents (e.g., Feinauer and Lesch 2013); however, their impact on informed consent for research studies remains relatively unexplored. Therefore, this paper examines the ethical and methodological challenges of conducting research with participants whose languages differ from those of the researchers. Moreover, the paper investigates how deontological and consequentialist ethics address language mediation during informed consent and how researchers may need to alter their approach to this process to ensure research participant comprehension and the overall voluntariness of their involvement.

## References

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