81. Perceptions of interpreters working for refugee clients of the psychological effects of their work[1]

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Abstract

This study aims at presenting a picture of the perceptions of the interpreters working for refugees in legal and public healthcare settings in Türkiye with a focus on the psychological effects of their work. Taking this objective as a departure point, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the causes of psychological challenges, reactions to these challenges, coping strategies, and negative and positive psychological changes that interpreters went through in the course of their work. Interviews were analyzed following a thematic analysis procedure, complemented with the analysis of the questionnaire results. The findings revealed that the interpreters came under a degree of psychological strain, including psychological stress, in the course of their work. The reasons included trauma-related stories of refugees, service providers' lack of awareness of the interpreters' work specifications, unfavorable working conditions, and racism against refugees in the workplace. The interpreters were also found to show certain reactions to psychological challenges, including feeling sad, crying, and sleep problems among others. Findings

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also revealed that the interpreters employed a few strategies to cope with these challenges such as socializing with friends, and that the interpreting work with refugees led to mostly positive psychological changes on the interpreters. The changes involved gaining self-confidence and feeling stronger than before. The findings, pinpointing the needs for support structures for interpreters working for refugees in Türkiye, will feed into the overall discussions on the psychological dimensions of interpreting for refugee clients.

Keywords: interpreting, refugee clients, psychological challenges, coping strategies

Mülteci Çevirmenliğinin Psikolojik Etkilerinin Çevirmen Bakış Açısıyla İncelenmesi[5]

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'de hukuk ve sağlık hizmetlerinde mülteciler için çalışan çevirmenlerin işin psikolojik etkilerine yönelik bakış açılarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçla, anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden elde edilen verilere dayanarak çevirmenlerin işleri sırasında yaşadıkları psikolojik zorluklar, bu zorluklara verdikleri tepkiler, zorluklarla başa çıkma stratejileri ve işin seyrinde yaşadıkları olumlu ve olumsuz psikolojik değişimlere odaklanılmaktadır. Çevirmenlerle yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler tematik analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiş olup; anketlerden elde edilen verilerle desteklenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular mültecilerin travma hikayeleri, çevirmenlerin birlikte çalıştıkları görevlilerin çevirmenlerin çalışma koşul ve özelliklerine yönelik farkındalık eksikliği, elverişsiz iş koşulları ve çevirmenlerin çalıştıkları kurumlarda mültecilere yönelik ırkçılık gibi nedenlerle çevirmenlerin psikolojik baskı altında kaldığını ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, çevirmenlerin psikolojik zorluklara üzgün hissetme, ağlama, uyku sorunları gibi tepkiler gösterdiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Çevirmenler bu zorluklarla baş etmek için arkadaşlarıyla sosyalleşme gibi bazı stratejiler uygulamaktadırlar. Mültecilere çeviri yapmanın çevirmenlerde özgüven kazanma ve eskisinden daha güçlü hissetme gibi olumlu değişikliklere yol açtığı da bulgular arasında yer almaktadır. Türkiye'de mülteciler için çalışan çevirmenlere yönelik psikolojik destek ihtiyaçlarına işaret eden bulgular, mülteci çevirmenliğinin psikolojik boyutlarına ilişkin genel tartışmalara katkı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: mülteci çevirmenliği, psikolojik zorluklar, stres faktörleri, başa çıkma stratejileri

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Introduction

Community interpreters play a major role in the communication between refugees, asylum seekers and other groups of immigrants, and staff members such as healthcare providers, legal professionals and civil servants in host countries. Besides the task of translating and interpreting, interpreters might have to undertake other tasks such as giving cultural clarifications, explaining technical and bureaucratic issues, and building trust among others (Angelelli, 2004; Hale, 2008; Pöchhacker, 2000). In addition to these complex tasks, interpreters working especially for traumatized migrant groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, also need to possess emotionally demanding skills (Gallagher et al., 2017; Resara et al., 2015).

In general, working with traumatized individuals can be challenging for professionals from diverse occupational groups, such as social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists, and physicians (Denkinger et al., 2018; Mirdal et al., 2012; Mirza et al., 2017), and continuous engagement with these individuals might lead to such mental health conditions as psychological stress, anxiety and depression among others, which might bring about certain physical and psychological symptoms, such as chronic diseases including obesity and cancer, and loss of interest or appetite, sadness, feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, insomnia and poor concentration (American Psychiatric Association, n.d.; Demyttenaere, 2004; Mirza & Jenkins, 2004). These mental health conditions might also negatively affect job performance and reduce productivity (Adler et al., 2006; Gilmour & Patten, 2007).

Similar to the other professional groups, interpreters working for refugee clients might be psychologically affected from constant contact with traumatized individuals. In addition to the traumatic stories told by these individuals (Splevins et al., 2010; Butler, 2008), interpreters can be psychologically burdened by factors such as the parties' wrong or conflicting expectations in the triad involving service providers[6] and refugees (Green et al., 2012; Resara et al., 2015; Sleptsova et al., 2014; Splevins et al., 2010; Williams, 2005), poor workplace conditions (Doherty et al., 2010; Green et al., 2012; Holmgren et al., 2003; Polat Ulaş, 2021b; Resara et al., 2015; Splevins et al., 2010; Williams, 2005), interpreters' own refugee background (Crezee et al., 2013; Holmgren et al., 2003; Kindermann et al., 2017), among others. As a result, interpreters might show certain psychological or behavioral reactions such as sadness, crying, exhaustion, anger (Butler, 2008; Crezee et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2010; Holmgren et al., 2003; Splevins et al., 2010). In the absence of psychological support, interpreters may sometimes employ their own coping strategies, such as socializing with friends or family members, to minimize the effects of psychological burden (Doherty et al., 2010; Green et al., 2012). On the other hand, working with traumatized individuals can also contribute to the personal development of interpreters and can enrich their lives (Doherty et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2005; Splevins et al., 2010).

In light of these, the present study aims to gain an understanding of the psychological impacts of working with refugees on the interpreters in legal and healthcare institutions in Türkiye and the factors leading to psychological challenges, interpreters' reactions to challenging situations and their coping strategies, if any, as well as the negative and positive psychological changes interpreters went through in the course of their work. The interpreters in the study were giving services to Syrian refugees who came to Türkiye after the 2011 Syrian civil war. The legal settings refer to courts, police stations, and child monitoring centers. In these settings, interpreters, included in the annual lists formed by the Provincial Justice Commissions in accordance with the directive issued pursuant to the Code of Criminal Procedure

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[6]   Service providers refer to professionals in fields such as healthcare and law.

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(Ministry of Justice, 2013), provide services. Interpreters are not permanent staff members of the courthouses and are assigned interpreting jobs not on a regular basis. Healthcare settings refer to public healthcare institutions where patient guides were employed to facilitate communication between service providers and Syrian patients within the scope of the project named "Improving the Health Status of the Syrian Population under Temporary Protection and Related Services Provided by Turkish Authorities" (SIHHAT). The project has been implemented since 2017 in cooperation with the European Union and the Turkish Ministry of Health. The project consisted of two stages, and the interpreters included in this study were working within the scope of SIHHAT-1 (sıhhat, n.d.). In this scope, 7 rounds of in-service training were organized for the patient guides who provided communication and interpreting services as well as accompanied Syrian patients within the premises of the healthcare institutions.

To examine the perceptions of interpreters working with refugees of the psychological effects of their job, questionnaires were distributed to 42 interpreters working in the mentioned legal and healthcare settings. Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 interpreters to enrich the data yielded through the questionnaires. Delving into the interpreters' reflections, we intend to address the issue of interpreting for refugees in Türkiye with a focus on the psychological effects of the job and to provide recommendations on the subject.

Related Studies

Working with traumatized individuals, such as refugees and asylum seekers, can result in emotional and psychological challenges for professionals due to the constant exposure to traumatic stories. Professionals may suffer from a variety of mental health conditions, including stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, which might negatively impact their cognitive, emotional, and social skills (Yeshaw & Andualem, 2017, p. 2803). Studies on the mental health of different professional groups providing services to traumatized individuals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, counselors, and physicians, social workers, psychotherapists in humanitarian relief settings have shown that these groups may suffer from high levels of mental disorders, such as depression, burnout, distress, post-traumatic stress, secondary traumatic stress due to their work (Deighton et al, 2007; Denkinger et al., 2018; Miller & McGowen, 2000; Moore, 2004; Sprang et al., 2007; Steed & Bicknell, 2001). Factors such as personal trauma history, personal asylum background, long-term work with refugees have been found to lead to the mentioned mental disorders (Denkinger et al., 2018; Kim, 2000; Moore, 2004; Pearlman & MacIan, 1995; Price, 1998). It has also been reported that a lack of relevant support, training and resources in the workplace adversely affects the likelihood of the aforementioned disorders among professional groups (Boscarino et al., 2004; Figley, 2002), and training on the subject has been found to reduce symptoms such as burnout (Sprang et al., 2007).

In a similar vein, a plethora of studies analysing the issues of empathy, psychological and emotional conditions among interpreters working with refugees have shown that interpreters might also be adversely affected from the stories of refugees in the work environment (Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012; Costa et al., 2020; Crezee et al., 2013, 2015; González Campanella, 2022; Lai et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2005; Polat Ulaş, 2022; Rudvin & Carfagnini, 2020; Splevins et al., 2010; Williams, 2005). The most commonly reported reactions among interpreters are sadness, anxiety, anger, insomnia, and depression (Butler, 2008; Doherty et al., 2010; Loutan et al., 1999; Miller et al., 2005; Rudvin & Carfagnini, 2020; Splevins et al., 2010; Sultanić, 2021). Post-traumatic stress disorder was also reported in more severe cases (Kindermann et al., 2017). In general, factors that lead to negative psychological effects among interpreters include upsetting stories of vulnerable clients (Butler, 2008; Splevins et al., 2010),

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demanding expectations of the parties (Resara et al., 2015; Sleptsova et al., 2014; Splevins et al., 2010), unfavourable working conditions including low pay, racism, and a lack of recognition (Doherty et al., 2010; Green et al., 2012; Holmgren et al., 2003; Polat Ulaş, 2021b; Resara et al., 2015). Interpreters' own refugee backgrounds or experiences similar to those of refugees can further complicate their work emotionally (Crezee et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2010; Holmgren et al., 2003; Kindermann et al., 2017). Interpreters, having similar experiences with refugees/asylum-seekers and building deep empathic bonds with them, were found to be more inclined to adverse psychological reactions (Crezee et al., 2013; Green et al., 2012; Merlini, 2015; Miller et al., 2005; Polat Ulaş, 2022; Rudvin & Carfagnini, 2020).

Another important finding in the literature on the subject concerns coping strategies employed by interpreters who are constantly subject to traumatic stories. In this respect, it was found that interpreters mostly resorted to several simple methods such as spending time with family, friends, and colleagues; forgetting about the case that caused stress and sadness after leaving the workplace, and physical exercise (Lai et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2005; Rudvin & Carfagnini, 2020; Splevins et al., 2010). On the other hand, consulting a therapist, the most essential strategy for individuals facing such psychological situations, was found to be a less common method among interpreters (Lai et al. 2015; Miller et al. 2005; Polat Ulaş, 2022). In this regard, the literature underlines the dire need for appropriate training and support mechanisms for interpreters working in the relevant area (Costa et al. 2020; Crezee et al., 2013; Lai et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2005; Polat Ulaş, 2022; Splevins et al., 2010).

The literature on the emotional and psychological challenges of interpreters working for refugees also reveals evidence of interpreters becoming desensitized to refugee stories over the course of time (Miller et al., 2005; Polat Ulaş, 2022; Splevins et al., 2010). Another finding that has received increasing attention recently is that providing services to refugees might positively change interpreters' perspectives of life (Miller et al., 2005; Splevins et al., 2010). Accordingly, they might also experience a sense of fulfillment and job satisfaction (Doherty et al., 2010; Splevins et al., 2010). This shows that interpreters' constant engagement with refugees' traumatic stories can, on the one hand, lead to psychological burdens on them, but on the other hand it can contribute to their personal growth and can enrich their lives.

In recent years, numerous studies on community interpreting have been published in Türkiye. Interpreter roles and attitudes, practices and professionalisation issues have been addressed in the studies in the specific areas of healthcare interpreting (Duman, 2018; Erkmen, 2020; Özsöz, 2019; Öztürk 2015; Şener Erkırtay, 2021; Turan, 2016), court interpreting (Aral Duvan, 2021; Eryılmaz, 2020), disaster interpreting (Doğan & Kahraman, 2011; Kurultay & Bulut, 2012), sports interpreting (Bulut, 2016; Katar, 2019; Uyanık, 2015), sign language interpreting (Conker, 2017; Gökçe, 2018; Oral & Okyayuz, 2020; Şen Bartan et al. , 2021). Furthermore, in line with the increasing refugee population in Türkiye in recent years, studies have been carried out with a particular focus on interpreting for refugees (Doğan, 2017; Erdoğan, 2021; Koçlu, 2019; Polat Ulaş, 2021a, 2021b; Toker, 2019). Besides these, there are also empirical studies, albeit few in number, on trauma, emotional labor, and coping strategies among interpreters working for refugees in various settings, including healthcare and legal institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations (Hasdemir, 2018; Polat Ulaş, 2022). There are also studies underlining the role and importance of interpreters in psychotherapy (Arkan, 2023; Şan, 2021). It is worth mentioning a few training programmes for interpreters for refugees in Türkiye in recent years. Organized with the participation of the Turkish Translation and Interpreting Association representatives, the first series of training was given to the community interpreters of the Turkish Red

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Crescent in 2018[7]. Subsequently, the Turkish Red Crescent also organized training sessions on interpreting in psychosocial support services, ensuring the participation of specialists working with the interpreters in the sessions, and initiated the preparation of a guideline on this subject (Şan, 2023). In 2022, the Turkish Ministry of Health, forming a team of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and interpreting specialists, organized training sessions on mental health and interpreting for interpreters working in psychosocial support services, and since then, it has been offering supervision for the interpreters (Şan, 2023). With the current study, which used questionnaires and interviews with the interpreters working for refugees in legal and healthcare institutions to examine the psychological effects of the work, it is our intention to contribute to the existing research on the subject in Türkiye.

Methodology

The present study was based on a qualitative methodology (Silverman, 2014), employing interviews and questionnaires submitted to interpreters working for refugees in particular community interpreting settings—legal and public healthcare institutions. This in turn enabled the authors to compare legal and healthcare settings. A total of 42 interpreters were asked to complete the online questionnaire consisting of 33 open-ended and multiple-choice questions, and subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 interpreters. The first section of the questionnaire aimed to obtain demographic information of the interpreters such as age, the province they lived in, nationality, education level, language pairs, and experience in the field. The remaining part explored interpreters' perceptions regarding their psychological challenges in the course of their work with refugees and the reasons for the challenges, their reactions to psychologically challenging situations, and the coping strategies they applied, as well as the psychological changes they went through as a result of their work.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 interpreters to back up the data gathered through the questionnaires, and parallel questions were posed to the participants in the questionnaires and interviews. All interviews, except one, were conducted online due to the fact that the interpreters were located in various regions of Türkiye, as pointed below in the demographic information relating to the interpreters (Table 2).

Before accessing the interpreters, questionnaire and interview questions received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at Dokuz Eylül University. Data collection process started on 25 February, 2022 and continued until 15 September, 2022. Interpreters were informed that the participation was confidential and on a voluntary basis, and all interpreters signed the consent form accepting that they read the form and consented to participate in the research. All interpreters were coded as "I", depending on the setting they work in (e.g. Court_I1 or SIHHAT_I1) to secure their confidentiality.

In the second phase of the research, the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed. First, the data from the interviews were examined, which were then supported by the findings of the questionnaire. The interviews, which were transcribed verbatim by the authors, were thematically analyzed in line with the stages proposed by Silverman (2014). Thematic analysis is a method used for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 79). It is a common method in qualitative research because of its wide range of advantages such as enabling researchers to interpret qualitative data in a systematic and flexible way, and also employing it to different theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006, Clarke & Braun, 2016). In accordance with the stages of thematic analysis proposed by Silverman (2014), the transcribed audio-recorded data were

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[7]   See https://ceviridernegi.org/egitim/ for further details of the training.

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coded and then recurrent themes and sub-themes brought up by the interpreters were identified. A total of four themes were defined, which were "stress factors", "reactions to stressful situations and/or psychological challenges", "coping strategies", "positive and negative psychological changes". Furthermore, there were a total of eighteen sub-themes detected. "Stress factors" had seven sub-themes in total, which were "the desire to help patients", "low fees and failures in the payments", "heavy workload", "insecure and uncomfortable job", "a lack of awareness of the interpreter's role and a lack of value given to the interpreting job", "problems caused by the inability of refugee patients to adapt to Türkiye's healthcare system", "hostile reactions of Turkish people against refugee patients". Three sub-themes were found in the category of "reactions to stressful situations and/or psychological challenges" and those were "feeling sad and desperate", "low fees and failures in the payments", and "negative impact on daily life". The answers of the interpreters further revealed four sub-themes regarding their "coping strategies", namely "becoming desensitized", "acting professionally", "socializing with friends and family", and "avoiding empathy". The last category "positive and negative psychological changes" brought up four sub-themes, i.e. "personal contributions", "economic contributions", "the pleasure of helping others", and "knowing new people from different cultures".

Demographic information relating to the interpreters who filled out the questionnaires is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the interpreters who filled out online questionnaire

Interpreters						
Gender	**Age**	**Nationality**	**Education Level**	**City**	**Languages**	**Working Experience In The Field**
28 Male 14 Female	Between 23-65 years	Turkish (27 interpreters) Syrian (3 interpreters) Saudi Arabian (1 interpreter) Double Citizenship (Turkish and Syrian) (11 interpreters)	Bachelor's Degree (17 interpreters) High School Graduate (12 interpreters) Associate's Degree (8 interpreters) Master's Degree (2 interpreters) Primary School Graduate (1 interpreter) Secondary School Graduate (2 interpreters)	Mersin (14 ints.) Gaziantep (12 ints.) Adana (7 ints.) Istanbul (3 ints.) Izmir (3 ints.) Aydın (1. int.) Van (1 int.) Osmaniye (1 int.)	Arabic Turkish English Kurdish Hebrew	Ranges from one year to more than five years

Data analysis showed that 28 of the interpreters were male whereas 14 were female. The number of male interpreters was two times higher compared to that of female interpreters. This result might be considered as interesting, as in conference interpreting, usually the opposite is the case. When it comes to the question on languages, Arabic was among the language combinations of all the interpreters who responded to the questionnaire, which came as no surprise. The reason underlying the common use of

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Arabic and the frequent need for interpreters working between Arabic and Turkish is the political developments in the last decade that resulted in the inflow of migrants and refugees mainly from Syria as well as other Arabic-speaking countries. 39 among them interpreted between Arabic and Turkish, whereas 3 among these 42 stated that English was included in their language combinations. 2 among them said their second language was Kurdish, and 1 said that his/her language combination included Hebrew. This finding revealed the absolute predominance of Arabic and Arabic-Turkish as the language combination. As for the nationality of the participating interpreters, 27 stated that they were nationals of the Turkish Republic, whereas 11 stated that they had double citizenship, that of Syria and the Republic of Türkiye. 3 of them said that they were from Syria and 1 said that s/he was Arab. Looking at the age range of the participating interpreters, it was observed that the age was quite variable, between 23 and 65. The average age of the interpreters was 38.8. The majority of the interpreters (n=14) were based in Mersin, followed by Gaziantep (n=12). The remaining interpreters were based in different provinces in Türkiye, such as Adana (n=7), İstanbul (n=3), Izmir (n=3), Aydın (n=1), Van (n=1), and Osmaniye (n=1). The interpreters who filled out the questionnaire were further asked to be interviewed. The volunteer interpreters were then asked related questions to yield a further insight into the subject.

Demographic information of the interpreters who responded to the interview questions are provided in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Demographic information relating to the interpreters who responded to the interview questions

Interpreters					
Gender	Age	**Nationality**	**Education Level**	**Languages**	**Working Experience In The Field**
5 Male 4 Female	Between 25-56 years	Turkish (4 interpreters) Syrian (1 interpreter) Double Citizenship (Turkish and Syrian) (4 interpreters)	Bachelor's Degree (7 interpreters) High School Graduate (1 interpreter) Associate's Degree (1 interpreter)	Arabic Turkish English	Ranges from 4 years to 11 years

Interviews were conducted with 9 interpreters, 5 of whom worked at the courthouses and police stations, and 4 of whom worked at healthcare settings. Among the interpreters who participated in the interviews, 4 were female (3 legal interpreters, 1 healthcare interpreter), and 5 were male (1 legal interpreter, 4 healthcare interpreters), which indicated a fair gender distribution among the interpreters. The age of the interpreters varied between 25 and 56, with an average of 36.3. With respect to nationality, 4 interpreters were Turkish nationals, 1 was Syrian, and 4 had double citizenship from Türkiye and Syria. As can be inferred from their nationalities, all interpreters interpreted between Turkish and Arabic. Only one of them (a female legal interpreter) worked between Turkish and English besides Turkish and Arabic. In terms of educational background, 7 interpreters were university graduates from different departments, such as public administration, theology, mechanical engineering, business administration. One among these 7 interpreters (a female legal interpreter) graduated from English Literature and

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Language. Obviously, she was the only interpreter who worked between Turkish and English. One of them (a male healthcare interpreter) had an associate degree in documentation, whereas one (a female legal interpreter) was a high school graduate. Interestingly, none of the interpreters were trained on translation and interpreting. Only one of them had a degree in languages, which was exceptional in this group. With regard to work experience in interpreting for refugees, most of the interpreters (n=6) had 4 or 5 years of experience in the field, which showed that they started to work around 2017. The remaining 3 were more experienced in their job, having started 10 or 11 years ago, which then indicated that they had been working since 2011, when the war in Syria first broke out. The average work experience of the interpreters in the field of interpreting for refugees either in legal or healthcare settings was 7 years. All 9 interpreters stated that they had been working in the same settings ever since they started working as an interpreter. Only one (a female legal interpreter) stated that she also worked at Child Monitoring Centers as an interpreter and at the International Labor Organization as a project coordinator.

Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the questionnaire results and the findings of the interview analysis will be presented and discussed in combination. Issues to be addressed are the psychological challenges faced by the interpreters working for refugees in legal and healthcare settings, the reactions of the interpreters to these challenges, their coping strategies, and the psychological changes they experienced in the course of their work.

Psychological Challenges

In the current study, the issue of stress caused by working with refugees on interpreters was addressed in the framework of their psychological challenges. In this respect, psychological stress was treated as a mental state triggered by the imbalance between the demands and the individual's means of resisting these demands (Cox, 1978, 1985). It is argued that this form of stress can put one's well-being at risk if one's resources are exceeded (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 19). The questionnaire responses of the interpreters on the subject yielded controversial results. The vast majority of the 42 interpreters (69%, n=29) said "No", and only 13 interpreters marked "Yes" when asked whether interpreting for refugees created psychological stress. Of the 29 interpreters describing their stress level, 20 interpreters said that they had "little" (n=15) or "very little" (n=5) stress during the interpreting assignments. On the other hand, 9 interpreters mentioned that they had "much" (n=6) or "too much" (n=3) stress.

Figure 1. Stress of the interpreters

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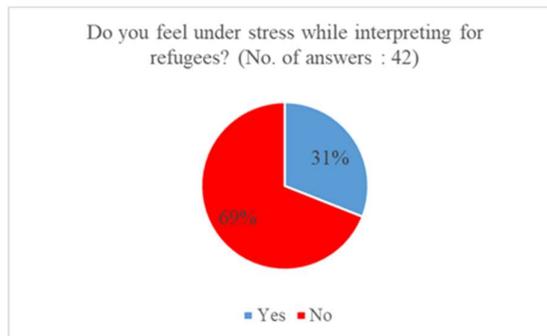Perceptions of interpreters working for refugee clients of the psychological effects of their work / Şener Erkırtay, O. & Polat Ulaş, A. & Kıncal, Ş.
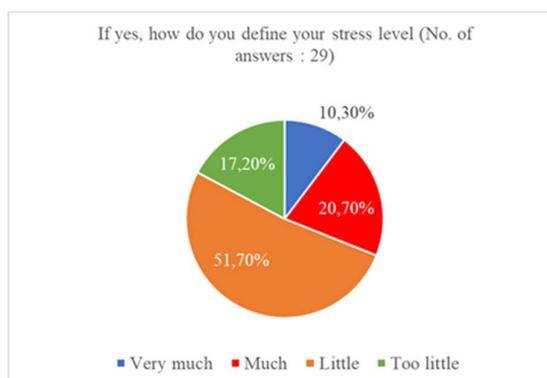
Figure 2. Interpreters' description of stress level

To delve deeper into the issue, the reasons for the psychological stress were asked to the interpreters in the questionnaire, and they were presented six options: "unfavorable conditions of refugees", "exposure to trauma-related stories of refugees", "inability to provide first hand help to refugees", "expectations of service providers", "unfavorable working conditions" and "other". The great majority of the 42 interpreters (n=30) gave responses, and accordingly, "exposure to trauma-related stories of refugees" (53,3%, n=16), "unfavorable conditions of refugees" (50%, n=15), and "inability to provide first hand help to refugees" (46,7%, n=14) ranked as the first three factors, which were followed by "unfavorable working conditions" (33,3%, n=10), "expectations of service providers" (16,7%, n=5), "mobbing" (3,3%, n=1) and "inability to receive the financial reward for the service I provide" (3,3%, n=1). The most mentioned factor leading to psychological stress for the interpreters, i.e., saddening stories and experiences of refugees, has also been found in both qualitative and quantitative studies in the literature as one of the factors causing interpreters to feel stressed (Butler, 2008; Crezee et al., 2013; Green et al., 2012; Miller et al., 2005; Resara et al., 2015).
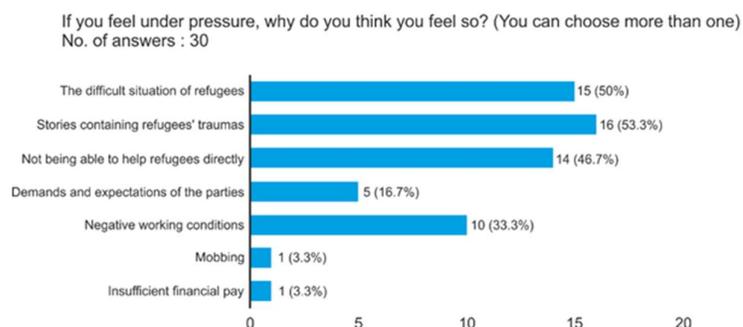
Figure 3. Interpreters' description of stress factors

The thematic analysis of the interviews with the interpreters yielded a number of results overlapping with some of the questionnaire findings. For legal interpreters, two sub-themes emerged in terms of factors causing stress and negatively affecting their psychology. The first one was "a lack of awareness of the interpreter's role and a lack of value given to the interpreting job", particularly emphasized by Court_I1, Court_I2, Court_I5. In this regard, Court_I1 described interpreting as "a lost job that does not get its due", identifying the recruitment of people without sufficient knowledge of interpreting languages and without training in this field, a lack of a control mechanism, and inconsistencies in the assignment system as the most fundamental shortcomings, which were also emphasized especially by the legal interpreters in the empirical study of the second author (Polat Ulaş, 2021a, 2021b). In a similar

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vein, Court_I2, complaining about legal professionals' lack of awareness of the interpreter's work, stated:

> [Officials] work without much awareness. They need an interpreter at work. They call interpreters. They do not know how this interpreting job functions, so we have to explain things to everyone. We always need to explain something. We also have to follow up our own work and so on. Files, months of follow-up… I can only speak for myself of course, but in general, officials working with interpreters should be informed and trained about interpreters, rather than training interpreters on emotional well-being. If interpreter colleagues need it, training should also be given on this.

> [*Çok bilinçsiz de çalışıyorlar. İşte tercümana ihtiyaç duyuyor. Evet, çağırıyorlar. Bu tercümanlık mesleğinin, işinin nasıl işlediğini bilmiyorlar. İşte onlar ve biz herkese bir şeyleri açıklamak zorunda kalıyoruz. Sürekli bir açıklama yapma ihtiyacında. İşte kendi işimizi kendimiz takip etmek zorunluluğu vesair. Dosyalar, aylarca süren takipler. Sadece ben kendim için konuşabilirim. Tabi çok genel değil ama genel olarak tercüman arkadaşların ihtiyacı varsa da duygu durumu için de duygu durumu eğitiminden ziyade tercümanla çalışan hizmetkarların, tercümanlarla ilgili bilgilendirilmesi, eğitilmesi gerekir.*] [Court_I2]

This finding was in line with the factor "expectations of service providers", mentioned by 16.7% of the questionnaire respondents, and can also be considered under the factor "unfavorable working conditions", mentioned by 33,3% respondents, in that expectations of service providers working with interpreters outside the scope of interpreters' responsibilities left interpreters in a difficult situation in the fulfillment of their duties, thus imposing a burden on them and deteriorating their working conditions (Hsieh, 2006). It was also underlined in other studies that a lack of awareness and recognition of the interpreter role by the staff working with interpreters has negative effects on the psychology of interpreters (Green et al., 2012; Holmgren et al., 2003; Resara et al., 2015).

The other sub-theme that emerged regarding the legal interpreters was "low fees and failures in the payments", which was underlined Court_I1 and Court_I2 in particular. Both interpreters complained that they were paid disproportionately for their efforts as interpreters. This factor was also additionally mentioned by 1 respondent in the questionnaire as "inability to receive the financial reward for the service I provide". The issue of low fees received by interpreters, associated with "unfavorable working conditions"—also marked by 33,3% of the questionnaire respondents—is a widespread problem, reducing the motivation of interpreters in their work (Hale, 2015; Polat Ulaş, 2021b; Rudvin, 2015).

For SIHHAT interpreters, similarly, two sub-themes emerged as a result of the thematic analysis in terms of factors causing stress and adversely affecting their psychology. The first of these—"problems caused by the inability of refugee patients to adapt to Türkiye's healthcare system" and their aggressive behaviors, rows and arguments within the premises of healthcare institutions—was underlined by all 4 of the interviewed SIHHAT interpreters. For this issue, SIHHAT_I2 mentioned that the reluctance of the refugee patients to understand how the healthcare system functions in Türkiye and their inability to adapt to what is expected from them, such as waiting for their turn, cause problems during the interpreter's daily practice. He remarked:

> They want everything to be done immediately. They could not get used to it, I mean they have been here for 10-12 years, they still could not adapt to the system here. They want an appointment immediately, they want to be examined as soon as they enter [the doctor's room]. There are some troubles and chaos in these.

> [*Her şeyin hemen olmasını istiyorlar. Alışamadılar yani 10-12 yıldır buradalar, hala buradaki sisteme ayak uyduramadılar. Hemen randevu olmasını istiyor, hemen girer girmez muayene olmak istiyor. İşte onlarda biraz sıkıntılar, kargaşalar yaşanıyor.*] [SIHHAT_I2]

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The other sub-theme related to the SIHHAT interpreters was "hostile reactions of Turkish people against refugee patients", and was highlighted by nearly all of the interviewed interpreters. For instance, SIHHAT_I1 mentioned racist behavior of some doctors, while SIHHAT_I3 touched upon the issue of hostile reactions of Turkish patients against refugee patients and interpreters keeping their appointments. Discrimination and prejudices against refugees were also stressed in the literature as the factors adversely affecting the psychology of interpreters, especially of those who are refugees or migrants themselves (Polat Ulaş, 2021b, 2022; Williams, 2005). Interpreters, unable to resist such attitudes due to their liminal positions in the host country, can be highly overwhelmed under those conditions.

The thematic analysis also revealed a number of overlapping sub-themes for both legal and SIHHAT interpreters in terms of factors causing stress and negatively affecting their psychology. One of these, "the problems of refugees and the inability to find a solution for them", was stressed by Court_I1 and SIHHAT_I2. On this issue, Court_I1 emphasized that the situation, having the most negative emotional impact on her within the scope of interpreting work, was not being able to find solutions for refugees. Similarly, SIHHAT_I2 stated that it was very upsetting for him not to be able to provide sufficient help to refugees as an interpreter due to limited resources. He remarked:

> We cannot help, I mean, resources are limited. After all, I am an interpreter. I give the necessary information to a patient, I give the necessary guidance, and of course I interpret when needed. That is all. When you see such situations [no ID, foot cut off, arm amputated], you wish you were a higher authority, you could get their stuff done, you could help them.

> [*Yardımcı olamıyoruz yani kısıtlı imkanlar. Sonuçta ben de bir tercümanım bir hastaya gerekli bilgiyi veririm, gerekli yönlendirmeyi yaparım, tabii istediği zaman da ihtiyaç olduğunda tercümanlığını yaparım. Bu kadar yani. İnsan böyle durumları görünce keşke daha bir üst yetkili olsaydım, işini yürütseydim, yardım etseydim diye düşünüyor.*] [SIHHAT_I2]

This sub-theme also overlaps with the factors "unfavorable conditions of refugees", marked by 50% of the questionnaire respondents, and "inability to provide first hand help to refugees", mentioned by 46.7% of them. Interpreters' feeling helpless and powerless in the face of adverse conditions in which refugees find themselves was also underscored in the literature as a factor contributing to the psychological challenges they face (Costa et al., 2020; Crezee et al., 2013; Holmgren et al., 2003; Splevins et al., 2010).

Other overlapping sub-themes for legal and SIHHAT interpreters were "heavy workload" (see also Polat Ulaş, 2021b), frequently mentioned by Court_I1 and SIHHAT_I3 in particular, and "insecure and uncomfortable job", noted by Court_I1 and SIHHAT_I4. With regard to the latter issue, Court_I1 stated that she might be threatened by some refugees if she did not interpret in the way they wanted. Similarly, SIHHAT_I4 pointed out that if the procedure did not turn out the way refugees wished—for instance in cases such as keeping a report on false identity—he could sometimes be threatened and cursed by refugees. He even mentioned that there were some incidents of assault in an institution where he had once worked. It can be said that these two sub-themes were in line with the previously mentioned stress factor of "unfavorable working conditions", noted by 33.3% of the questionnaire respondents.

The traumatic content of the stories interpreters listen to and narrate is one of the most significant factors that makes interpreting for refugees challenging (Butler, 2008; Miller et al., 2005; Splevins et al., 2010). As mentioned earlier, 16 of the 42 questionnaire respondents pointed to "exposure to trauma-related stories of refugees" as the reason for psychological stress in the interpreting assignments. When asked what kind of content their interpreting assignments with refugees covered, "violence" was the

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option selected by a significant number (69%, n=29) of the 42 questionnaire respondents. The other remarkable options indicated were "physical assault" (57,1%, n=24), "loss of a beloved one" (45,2%, n=19), "child abuse" (45,2%, n=19), "sexual abuse" (40,5%, n=17), "grave crimes such as murder" (40,5%, n=17), "torture" (35,7%, n=15), and "terminal illness" (33,3%, n=14), respectively. Besides, 2 interpreters pointed to "terror", and 1 interpreter mentioned "divorce" as regards the content of the stories in their interpreting assignments. "Ambulant patient" (n=1), "mild illnesses" (n=1), "illness" (n=1), and "health" (n=1) were the other responses given. As can be understood, the issues the interpreters dealt with in their assignments with refugees were generally related to unsettling experiences that might lead to trauma, similar to the findings in the literature (Costa et al., 2020; Crezee et al., 2013; Lai et al., 2015; Splevins et al., 2010). During the interview with Court_I1, she further emphasized the issue of traumatic content of the stories, especially those related to children. She stated that the traumatic cases of children in Child Monitoring Centers affected her quite adversely as an interpreter and that she decided not to accept interpreting assignments in such cases any more. The literature has also shown that traumatic cases relating to refugee children—a highly vulnerable group— can be a significant source of emotional distress for interpreters (Amato & Mack, 2017; Polat Ulaş, 2022).

Reactions to stressful situations and psychological challenges

Studies demonstrated that interpreters working in community settings frequently encounter situations that might negatively affect their emotional and psychological health (Valero Garces, 2015). Therefore, another issue examined in the questionnaire was what kind of reactions the interpreters gave while or after interpreting the stories of refugees when they first started to work as interpreters. Among the options presented, "feeling sad" was the option selected by the vast majority (78,6%, n=33) of the 42 respondents. Surprisingly, the second most marked option (33,3%, n=14) was "completing the interpreting as an ordinary job and then forgetting it". All the other responses given pointed to negative reactions, such as "inability to forget interpreted stories" (26,2%, n=11), "headache" (26,2%, n=11), "bad temper" (21,4%, n=9), "crying" (14,3%, n=6), "sleep problems" (14,3%, n=6), "depression" (11,9%, n=5), "reluctance to go to work" (7,1%, n=3), and "loss of appetite" (7,1%, n=3), respectively.

When you first started refugee interpreting, what were your reactions while/ after interpreting the stories of refugees?
(You can choose more than one)
No. of answers : 42

Defining interpreting as an ordinary task — 14 (33.3%)
Feeling sad — 33 (78.6%)
Crying — 6 (14.3%)
Not being able to forget the stories of refugees — 11 (26.2%)
Reluctance to go to work — 3 (7.1%)
Headache — 11 (26.2%)
Loss of appetite — 3 (7.1%)
Sleep problems — 6 (14.3%)
Nightmares — 0 (0%)
Depression — 5 (11.9%)
Anxiety — 9 (21.4%)
I just do my job — 1 (2.4%)

Figure 4. Interpreters' descriptions of reactions while/after interpreting the stories of refugees

When asked whether the mentioned reactions changed over time, the majority of the 42 respondents (64,3%, n=27) marked "Yes". As also observed in other studies (Miller et al. 2005, p. 35; Polat Ulaş 2022, p. 81; Splevins et al. 2010, p. 1711), interpreters' getting used to the nature of their work may lessen the felt psychological impact and their associated reactions.

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The interview analysis revealed three sub-themes in terms of the legal interpreters' reactions to stressful situations or psychological challenges. Accordingly, feeling sad and desperate emerged as a reaction in the statements of all the interviewed interpreters (Court_I1, Court_I2, Court_I3, Court_I5) except one. Thus, this reaction deserves an emphasis in the case of legal interpreting. Likewise, the sub-theme of negative psychological effect was put forth also by all of the SIHHAT interpreters included in the interviews. For example, when asked whether he was negatively affected in psychological terms due to his work with refugees, SIHHAT_I4 referred to the way he was influenced by what the patients went through and how incapable he felt when he sends the patient to an institution but cannot follow what happens next.He responded as follows:

> Yes. Even if we frequently encounter such situations, one can still be affected. Sometimes it is possible to get used to the situation. But it can cause thoughts, stress and sadness. The psychological effects increase or decrease depending on the situation. When we put ourselves in the shoes of the patient, our psychology is shut down, we can't talk to anyone. You put yourselves in the shoes of that person, "what are they doing? I was helping them here but what about afterwards?" So we can't follow the process, we can't follow what happens after we send them to an institution. And that affects your day. It affects the way you talk to your family, your smile. You even see them in your dreams, "what happened to this patient?"

> *[Evet. Sonuçta insan ne kadar bu durumlarla karşılaşmış alışmış olsa da bu durumdan etkilenebiliyor. İnsan bir durum ile karşılaşa karşılaşa alışkanlık gösterebiliyor. Bu ister istemez uzun düşüncelere, strese üzüntüye sebep verebilir. Genellikle duruma göre de psikolojik etkileri artıyor ya da azalıyor. Hastanın durumunda olmayı düşününce tamamiyle psikolojimiz kapanıyor, hiç kimseyle konuşamıyoruz. İnsanın yerine koyuyorsun kendini "acaba ne yapıyor bu, tamam ben burada yardımcı olabiliyorum buna ama buradan gittikten sonra bu insan ne yapıyor, ne ediyor?". Yani burada bir kuruma yönlendirdiğimizde gidiyor geliyor. Orada işinin yürüyüp yürümediğini, süreci takip edemiyorsun. O da senin de düşünce yapını da gününü de etkiliyor. Ailene karşı konuşmadır, gülümsemen, etkileniyor. Uyurken bile rüyanızda geçebiliyor "Acaba bu hasta ne oldu?".] [SIHHAT_I4]*

The interpreter's preoccupation with the fate of the refugees was in fact associated with his meager means of assistance to them. This concern of the interpreters was also mentioned as "inability to provide first hand help to refugees" in the questionnaire (nearly 47%). Interpreters' associated feelings of helplessness and powerlessness against dire situations refugees face was a significant finding in the literature (Costa et al., 2020; Crezee et al., 2013; Holmgren et al., 2003; Splevins et al., 2010).

The third sub-theme that came up with regard to the legal interpreters was their loss of motivation for work due to low fees and failures in the payments, and it was mentioned particularly by Court_I1 and Court_I2. This point, however, never came up in the interviews with the SIHHAT interpreters, and the reason for this might be the salaries paid to the interpreters on a regular basis within the scope of the SIHHAT project.

Two sub-themes emerged regarding the reactions of the SIHHAT interpreters to the psychological challenges they faced. The first one was feeling sad and desperate, similar to that of the legal interpreters, mentioned above. The second one was the negative impact on their family and daily life, and the issue was mentioned by SIHHAT_I3 and SIHHAT_I4. For instance, SIHHAT_I3 mentioned the fact that a long work day at the hospital was exhausting for him and that he did not want to interact with family members any more due to all the problems he was exposed to throughout the day. He stated:

> After a long work day at the hospital when I come home, I don't have any energy to talk to my wife. I get exhausted talking there all the time. I have to stay silent at home. Then my wife is like "Why are you so silent? Is there a problem?" And I say "I have been too busy, I have a headache. I'm tired of talking. I would like to stay silent for some time". And sometimes we have problems with her because of this. I'm exhausted from talking all the time, listening to people's troubles…

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[Ben hastanede gün boyu çalışıp eve geldiğim zaman eşimle konuşacak takatim olmuyor. Orada konuşa konuşa yıpranıyorum. Eve geldiğim zaman da sürekli susmak zorunda kalıyorum. Eşim de, "Neden susuyorsun, bir problem mi var?" diye soruyor. "İş yoğunluğu vardı, başım ağrıyor" diyorum, "Konuşmaktan bıktım. Rica etsem, biraz sessiz kalmak istiyorum" diyorum. Bu durumdan dolayı eşimle de problemler oluyor. Çok konuşmaktan yoruluyorum artık, insanların dertlerini dinlemekten de.] [SIHHAT_I3]

Thus, it can be claimed that the demanding job of the interpreters might have an influence on their family life and social relationships, as well as on their psychological state.

Coping Strategies

Interpreting for traumatized individuals might stimulate both positive and negative emotions in interpreters since their job includes coping with stressful and psychological challenges (Chen, 2023). Therefore, the interpreters were also asked how they cope with psychological challenges in the questionnaire, and a total of 38 interpreters out of 42 gave responses regarding their coping strategies. Coping strategies were indicated as "taking up a new hobby" (60,5%, n=23), "participating in such activities as sports and dance" (39,5%, n=15), "sharing their experiences with their beloved ones" (23,7%, n=9), "sharing their experiences with their colleagues" (23,7%, n=9), "receiving professional support" (13,2%, n=5), "enduring stress" (2,6%, n=1), "taking a vacation" (2,6%, n=1), and "not bothering" (2,6%, n=1), respectively. Despite the challenges, almost all of the interpreters (90,5%, n=38) asserted that they were pleased with working with refugees.

The interview analysis revealed four sub-themes regarding interpreters' strategies for coping with psychological challenges. Three legal interpreters (Court_I1, Court_I2, Court_I4) mentioned that they got used to hearing sad stories; therefore, they became desensitized. The literature also suggests that interpreters working with refugees start to have less emotional distress after a while thanks to the experience gained (Miller et al., 2005, p. 35; Polat Ulaş, 2022, p. 81; Splevins et al., 2010, p. 1711). Both legal and healthcare interpreters mentioned that they strived for acting professionally and focusing only on their work, therefore not bonding emotionally with those they worked for (Court_I2, Court_I5, SIHHAT_I3). For example, SIHHAT_I3 explained this strategy as follows:

...I have a professional approach to my job. Sometimes I empathize with them but sometimes I shouldn't. I'm doing my job without any emotions, I act like a robot. Whatever the patient says, I translate it. I don't establish any emotional connection. Because I'm dealing with patients all the time, not for a week or for two weeks. I can't establish any emotional connection, I feel like I'm robotized. I'm just translating. Whatever happened in that room stays in that room. It doesn't matter to me any more. Whatever happened there, whatever is translated stays there. Same as outside.

[...ben bu işe profesyonel açıdan bakıyorum. Bazen empati kuruyorum, bazen empati kurmamam gerek. Yani duygusuz bir şekilde, yapıyorum, robotlaştım artık. Hasta ne derse onun tercümanlığını yapıyorum. Hiç duygusal bağ kuramıyorum. Çünkü bir hafta değil, iki hafta değil, her zaman bir sürü hastayla uğraşıyorum. Bir duygusal bağ kuramıyorum, robotlaşmış gibiyim. Sadece tercümanlığını yapıyorum. O odada olan yaşandı bitti, artık benim için yok, bir önemi yok. Orada ne yaşandıysa, ne tercüme yapıldıysa orada kalır. Dışarıda da aynı şekilde.] [SIHHAT_I3]

In this excerpt, SIHHAT_I3 emphasized that he avoided bonding or empathizing with the refugees as he faced many challenging situations with different people everyday and he thought the only solution is just doing his job without any emotions if and when possible.

Another sub-theme that came up with respect to two SIHHAT interpreters (SIHHAT_I2, SIHHAT_I4) revealed their tendency to socialize with friends and family and to focus on various activities other than their job. This theme did not emerge in the analysis of the interviews with the legal interpreters.

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Spending time with relatives or friends is a strategy used to cope with stress and relax when interpreters cannot find the opportunity of receiving formal psychological support (Doherty et al., 2010; Green et al., 2012; Lai et al., 2015; Splevins et al., 2010).

Negative and Positive Psychological Changes of the Interpreters

Another issue raised in the study is the negative and positive psychological changes of the interpreters, and the results of the research revealed several positive and negative psychological changes the interpreters went through in the course of their work. The positive changes were marked by more questionnaire respondents (83,3%, n=35), compared to the negative changes (71,4%, n=30). As for the positive changes, the majority of the interpreters (72,5%, n=29) indicated that they became more tolerant of people. More than half noted that they broke down their prejudices (60%, n=24) and gained self-confidence (57,5%, n=23). Half of the interpreters (n=21) reported that they started feeling stronger.
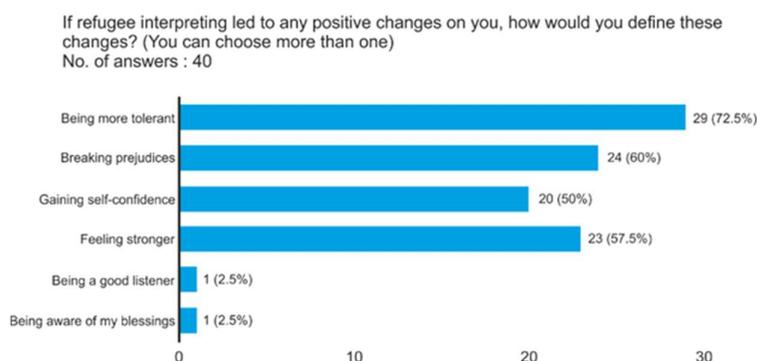
If refugee interpreting led to any positive changes on you, how would you define these changes? (You can choose more than one)
No. of answers : 40

Being more tolerant	29 (72.5%)
Breaking prejudices	24 (60%)
Gaining self-confidence	20 (50%)
Feeling stronger	23 (57.5%)
Being a good listener	1 (2.5%)
Being aware of my blessings	1 (2.5%)

Figure 5. Interpreters' descriptions of positive changes

The interpreters also went through negative changes. First of all, 13 respondents (68,4%) indicated that they fell into despair in the face of the refugees' stories. 5 interpreters (26,3%) pointed to the decrease of their performances, and 4 interpreters (21,1%) to the loss of desire to work for refugees as interpreters.

Similar issues were brought to the fore by both SIHHAT and legal interpreters during the interviews, which backed up the results obtained from the questionnaires. The positive changes the interpreters went through can be divided into four main sub-themes: Personal contributions, economic contributions, pleasure of helping others, and meeting new people.

The first common sub-theme—the personal contributions—related to both SIHHAT and legal interpreters. These included increased self-confidence (Court_I2), professional improvement (SIHHAT_I2, SIHHAT_I4), breadth of vision (Court_I5), and increased awareness of their lives (SIHHAT_I2, SIHHAT_I3), which are described in the framework of personal growth in the literature (Doherty et al., 2010; Green et al., 2012; Splevins et al., 2010). This finding was also ratified in the questionnaire, whereby more than half of the respondents (57,5%) expressed that they were more confident about themselves and felt stronger.

The second common sub-theme was economic contributions. Both SIHHAT_I1 and Court_I1 reported that they gained financial independence thanks to the relevant job. Court_I1, for example, emphasized

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that she had been making money out of this job since 2011. Along the same line, SIHHAT_I1 verbalized his satisfaction with his living conditions, and he noted:

> *[It] has contributed to our living standards. Thank goodness. I mean, if I don't have this job, the living conditions are so hard. So, the positive aspect of doing this job is that we don't need anyone.*
>
> *[Katkıları yaşama durumundan çok faydalı oldu çünkü. Şükran. Yani bu iş olmazsa dışarıda işler çok kötü çünkü. Yani iyi tarafı kimseye muhtaç olmadık yani.] [SIHHAT_I1]*

Since some of the interpreters also had refugee background, they faced difficulties, including economic ones, when they first came to Türkiye. Thus, this finding clearly showed that their language competency opened them new doors, helping them bring home the bacon.

The third common sub-theme was the pleasure of helping others. At this point, Court_I1 expressed:

> *They [refugees] always call me "The mother of Syrians" because I always tried to protect them from the troubles I experienced myself. … I visited them, I tried to help them when they had any problems. I mean, I wasn't only their interpreter but also their guide, their teacher, their language, the one who understood them. […] I feel happy when I can help them.*
>
> *[[…] Hep bana şey derler "Suriyelilerin annesi" çünkü ben onları yaşadığım için onlara sıkıntıları yaşatmamaya çalıştım. … onların evlerine gittim, sıkıntılarına, herhangi bir sıkıntıları olduğunda yardım etmeye çalışıyorum. Yani ben sadece bir tercüman değil, ben onların bir anlamda rehberleri oldum, bir anlamda öğretmenleri oldum, bir anlamda kendilerini anlayan oldum, bir anlamda dilleri oldum ben onların. […] Bunlara destek olmak bana mutluluk veriyor.] [Court_I1]*

In this excerpt, the interpreter emphasized that she was very glad to help the refugees, to act as if she were their guide beyond her job as an interpreter. The fact that she went through similar challenges made her more sensitive to the needs of the refugees and to adopt such a supportive approach.

Likewise, two SIHHAT interpreters (SIHHAT_I2 and SIHHAT_I4) shared the same view, indicating that they were pleased to help refugees. In this regard, SIHHAT_I2 noted:

> *I feel happier when I help poor, disabled, and suffering people. That's why, my conscience is clear. [I] can say that I at least helped that person and could do something for that person.*
>
> *[Vicdanım daha rahat en azından gelen bir yoksula, engelliye, mağdura yardım ediyorsun. Bunlar insanı vicdani olarak rahatlatıyor. […] [E]n azından şu kişiye yardım edebildim, bir el uzatabildim, bir şeyler yapabildim diyorsunuz. [SIHHAT_I2]*

This excerpt also reveals the tendency of the interpreter to help the refugees and that she feels relieved and glad to be able to do something for them.

As community interpreting is predominantly a form of social humanitarian aid work, it is understood that the bonds interpreters establish with refugees provide them with a sense of fulfillment and moral satisfaction (Polat Ulaş & Gündüz, 2020; Splevins et al., 2010).

The last sub-theme regarding the positive changes was emphasized by the legal interpreters. Court_I4 and Court_I5 in particular indicated that they got to know new people from different cultures, which in return expanded their world vision. Court_I4 stated:

> *I met people from different cultures. I learnt about their ideas. I also think that people who meet other people from different cultures can broaden their visions.*
>
> *[Farklı kültürlerden insanları tanıdım. Farklı kültürlerden insanların düşünceleri hakkında biraz fikir sahibi oldum. Bir de şöyle yani başka kültürlerle tanışan insanların ufkunun daha genişleyebileceğini düşünüyorum.] [Court_I4]*

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Referring to the same point, Court_I5 also said that she improved her worldview thanks to the people she met from different cultures. It can be therefore implied that new people from different cultures contribute to personal development by enriching interpreters' lives (see also Miller et al., 2005, p. 35).

Besides the positive changes, both SIHHAT and legal interpreters also highlighted certain negative psychological changes they went through. For instance, Court_I1 and Court_I3 indicated that they lost their motivation for work because the salary they received was not satisfactory despite the challenging nature of their job. Court_I1 states the following on this matter:

> [I]nterpreters do not want to accept the job due to the low payment. Courts pay fees after 6 or 7 months. A statement made at the police station costs 50 Turkish Liras, and with a 20% discount, it reduces to 42 Turkish Liras. Therefore, interpreters do not want to accept the job.
>
> *[[V]erilen para yüzünden zaten tercümanlar gelmek istemiyorlar. 6-7 ay sonra ödeniyor adliyelerde. Karakoldaki bir ifade 50 lira, yüzde 20'si düşünce 42 liraya düşüyor. Bu yüzden insanlar girmek istemiyorlar.] [Court_I1]*

Furthermore, Court_I1 and Court_I3 fell into despair due to the refugees' stories they were exposed to, which correlated with the result obtained from the questionnaire since the majority of interpreters (71,4%, n=30) indicated that they experienced negative changes and they mostly felt helpless (68,4%, n=13). That is why, the negative psychological changes they experienced highlight the importance of psychological support for the interpreters working with refugees.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Interpreting for refugees is a rather demanding work in terms of expectations on the interpreters and the work environment they are involved in. In Türkiye, this form of interpreting has become a widespread practice both in healthcare and legal settings after the inflow of Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers in 2011. The present study was an attempt to gain an insight into the psychological effects of the work with refugees on the interpreters. For this purpose, the challenges faced by the interpreters working for refugees in legal and healthcare settings, the reasons for the challenges, the interpreters' reactions to psychologically challenging situations and the coping strategies they used, as well as the psychological changes they went through were explored through the interviews and questionnaires.

Questionnaire results indicated that interpreters working for refugees had a certain level of psychological stress due to the their job, and the main reasons were "exposure to trauma-related stories of refugees", "unfavorable conditions of refugees", and "inability to provide first hand help to refugees", followed by such other factors as "unfavorable working conditions", "expectations of service providers", "mobbing", and "inability to receive the financial reward for the service I provide". Similarly, the interview analysis yielded several sub-themes relating to the reasons for the psychological challenges. These were "a lack of awareness of the interpreter's role and a lack of value given to the interpreting job" and "low fees and failures in the payments" for the legal interpreters. For the SIHHAT interpreters, the main reasons were "problems caused by the inability of refugee patients to adapt to Türkiye's healthcare system" and "hostile reactions of Turkish people toward refugee patients".

As for the interpreters' reactions to stressful situations and psychological challenges, most of the interpreters pointed to "feeling sad" in the questionnaire. It is a fact that they found the situations they faced quite challenging and difficult to handle, and this resulted in negative effects on them. Interestingly, a number of interpreters also stated that they completed interpreting as an ordinary job and then forgot about it. This difference might be due to the varying situations they encountered during

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their daily practice. As seen in some of the excerpts above, some interpreters have mentioned that they avoided emotional connections with the refugees and focused on just translating, with a view to acting professionally. This might be considered as a strategy they adopted in order to protect their mental well-being. The other questionnaire responses by the interpreters indicated such reactions as headache, bad temper, crying, sleep problems, depression, reluctance to go to work, and loss of appetite. Likewise, "feeling sad and desperate" emerged as a reaction of all of the legal interpreters except one in the interview analysis. All of the interviewed SIHHAT interpreters also acknowledged the negative psychological effect of the work.

The main coping strategies interpreters resorted to came up as "taking up a new hobby", "participating in the activities such as sports and dance", "sharing their experiences with their beloved ones and colleagues", and "receiving professional support". An additional sub-theme that emerged in the interview analysis was becoming desensitized, striving to act professionally and to focus on the work rather than emotionally bonding with the refugees. Positive psychological changes the interpreters went through in the course of their work included becoming more tolerant of people and breaking down prejudices besides an increased self-confidence. Negative changes mentioned, albeit less, were the decrease in job performances and the loss of desire to work for refugees as interpreters.

All in all, interpreters working for refugees face challenges arising from their job, might be psychologically affected by these challenges, and seek ways to cope with them regardless of the setting they work in. Some of these challenges are related to the overall institutional context they work in, including factors such as a lack of awareness on the side of the service providers, poor working conditions, and inadequate financial gains. Others, however, are due to the vulnerable status of refugees. It is clear that interpreters working for refugees are in dire need of support in the existing circumstances. Such support might include professional training and psychological counseling to help them deal with the demands of the job and the expectations of the parties. Raising awareness on the side of the service providers on how to work with interpreters could contribute to improving the quality of service that the interpreters provide. Also, as mentioned by a number of interpreters included in this study, addressing roles and responsibilities through professional training could benefit all the parties involved in the interactions in the settings under study.

Acknowledgements

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