The Norms of Sign Language Interpreting in Turkey: A pre-investigational study on the field[*]

Türkiye'de İşaret Dili Tercümanlığının Normları: Alan Üzerine Bir Ön İnceleme

Review / Derleme

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ABSTRACT

Sign language interpreting is a developing profession, but an emerging study field in Turkey although it has been recognized as a profession as of 2006, and sign language interpreters have been hired to offer free interpreting services at social service offices since 2007. Currently, most of the interpreters of Turkish Sign Language are CODAs (Child of Deaf Adults), and there is not a university degree program for training new interpreters. Moreover, it has received little attention by Turkish translation and interpreting scholars so far. This paper aims to share the preliminary findings of an ongoing study in which the author provides detailed information on historical and current dynamics of Turkish Deaf community and sign language interpreting, and explores the current norms of sign language interpreting in Turkey as well as the roles adopted by Turkish sign language interpreters, which have been investigated through semi-structured interviews with seventeen interpreters. This paper, however, does not include the research data and final conclusions since they are still being processed by the researcher, rather it includes the literature review on the role of the sign language interpreter and the theoretical framework which rests on the concept of translation norms of Gideon Toury (1995). The translation norms of Toury (1995) have been adapted to the field of sign language interpreting in Turkey taking a basis of Moira Inghilleri's work (2003) where she examines interpreted asylum interviews. Although larger research data are limitedly included in this paper due to space restrictions, the current paper indicates that norms govern how sign language interpreters perceive their roles, and how this affects the professional status of the interpreters. This study also aspires to contribute to the field by demonstrating how research and practice on sign language interpreting can benefit from translation theories, especially, in countries like Turkey where establishing sign language interpreting undergraduate programs is a topic of discussion nowadays.

Keywords: Sign Language Interpreting, Translation Norms, The Role of the Interpreter

Ö Z E T

2006 yılından beri meslek olarak tanınmasına ve de 2007 yılından itibaren sosyal hizmetler bünye-sinde ücretsiz çeviri hizmeti sunmak adına işaret dili tercümanlarının devlet tarafından işe alınma-sına rağmen, ülkemizde işaret dili tercümanlığı gelişmekte olan bir meslek dalı olmakla birlikte daha yeni yeni gündeme gelen bir araştırma alanıdır. Günümüzde, Türkiye'deki işaret dili tercümanlarının çoğunun KODA (Sağır Bireylerin Çocukları) olmasının yanı sıra yeni tercümanlar yetiştiren bir üni-versite bölümü de bulunmamaktadır. Bununla birlikte işaret dili tercümanlığı, çeviribilim alanında çalışan Türk akademisyenlerin çok azının ilgisini bu zamana kadar çekmiştir. Bu makale yazarın devam etmekte olan tez çalışmasının ön bulgularını paylaşmayı amaçlamaktadır. Söz konusu yüksek lisans tezinde yazar, Türk Sağır toplumu ve işaret dili tercümanlığının geçmiş ve günümüzdeki dinamikleri ile ilgili detaylı bilgi vermekle birlikte Türkiye'de işaret dili tercümanlığı alanında hüküm süren mevcut normları ortaya koymaktadır ve on yedi işaret dili tercümanı ile yapılan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile elde edilen veriler ışığında işaret dili tercümanlarının benimsedikleri rolleri tartışmaktadır. Ancak söz konusu tez üzerinde çalışmaların devam etmesi sebebiyle araştırma verileri kapsamlı olarak bu makaleye dahil edilmese de, makale tez çalışmasında kullanılan işaret dili tercümanının rolü ile ilgili literatür incelemesini ve Gideon Toury'nin (1995) çeviri normlarına dayanan kuramsal çerçevesini içermektedir. Bu çalışmada Toury'nin çeviri normları, Moira Inghilleri'nin (2003) bu kavramları sözlü çeviriye uyarladığı çalışması örnek alınarak kullanılmıştır. Alan ve zaman limiti sebebiyle bahsi ge-çen daha büyük araştırma verilerinin sınırlı kısmının verilmiş olmasına rağmen bu çalışma, mevcut normların işaret dili tercümanlarının kendi rollerini algılama şekillerini nasıl yönlendirdiği ve bu duru-mun tercümanların mesleki konumu üzerindeki etkileri ile ilgili böyle bir çalışmanın yapılabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışma işaret dili tercümanlığı alanındaki araştırma ve uygulamaların çeviribilim kuramlarından faydalanabileceğini göstermesi ile de özellikle üniversitelerde işaret dili tercümanlığı bölümlerinin açılmasının bu günlerde tartışma aşamasında olduğu Türkiye gibi ülkelerde alana katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşaret Dili Tercümanlığı, Çeviri Normları, Çevirmenin Rolü

1. Introduction

WHO states that 360 million people worldwide have disabling hearing loss. According to 2002 Turkey Disability Survey, 0.37% of the total population has hearing disability, and 0.38% of the total population has speaking disability. The proportion of profo-undly deaf people and profoundly mute people to the disabled population is 32.45% and 45.99% respectively. The survey also indicates that 10.31% of speaking disability is caused by hearing disability. Another statistics given by 2012 Health Survey demons-trates that 2.2% of the total population has hearing problems, and 4.7% uses hearing aids in Turkey. On the other hand, although there is no up-to-date statistical information regarding the number of deaf people, associations of the Deaf claim that there are abo-ut 3 million deaf people in Turkey[1]

Today, it is an established fact that sign languages are full-fledged languages and native language of Deaf people (Tervoort, 1953; Stokoe, 1960). Research has shown that when a sufficient number of deaf people come together, sign languages develop naturally

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1   http://www.tsmf.org.tr/tarihce/, http://uiefed.org/2-baskanin-mesaji.html , http://www.ief.org.tr

among them and they form a community (Armstrong and Wilcox, 2003). According to 2010 Brussels Declaration on Sign Languages in the European Union, "Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Europe are the users and preservers of many indigenous national sign languages and form vulnerable communities equal to other linguistic and cultural minorities". As it can be concluded from the above statement, Deaf communities are acknowledged as minority groups, and sign languages must be treated as minority languages. However, the needs of Deaf communities are significantly different from others in that deaf people usually cannot learn the majority spoken language properly unlike the members of other spoken language minorities due to various reasons including late language acquisition which usually results from late diagnosis of deafness, and/or inadequate education methods (Traxler, 2000; Mayberry, 2007). This means that Deaf people need sign language interpreters in almost every setting of life such as courtrooms, hospitals, schools, police stations, banks, public offices, and so on.

Apart from few countries such as the UK, Australia, the US, and Sweden, sign language interpreting is still an emerging profession in most of the countries throughout the world. According to the European Parliament resolution on sign languages and professional sign language interpreters dated 23 November 2016, it is not possible to talk about a sufficient number of skilled and qualified sign language interpreters in all member states, and the ratio of sign language users to sign language interpreters varies between 8:1 and 2500:1, with an average ratio of 160:1. The current situation is no different in Turkey although sign language interpreting gained official recognition in 2006, and the government started to hire interpreters in order to deliver free interpreting services at the Social Service Departments as of 2007. The main reason behind this situation mainly results from inadequate short-term courses to train sign language interpreters provided by various institutions, and non-standardized certification system (Conker, 2017).

The aim of this paper is to share the state-of-the-art of the role of the SL interpreter as well as the preliminary findings of the author's ongoing MA thesis. Although sign language interpreting has begun to draw the attention of a few Turkish academics[2] recently, the mentioned study is the first one focusing on the role of sign language interpreters in Turkey. The study aims to find out perceptions of sign language interpreters regarding their role through semi-structured interviews. The answers have been analyzed according to four models proposed by Anna Witter-Merithew (1986), and the theoretical framework is built on Moira Inghilleri's (2003) work where she employed Gideon Toury's (1995) translation norms concept as a model for interpreting settings. However, this paper does not include the larger research data and final conclusions due to limited space and ongoing processing of the data.

2. Literature Review on the Role of the Sign Language Interpreter

In 1986, Anna Witter-Merithew's essay on historical development of sign language interpreting profession in the USA was published in RID newsletter 'Views' (Roy and

2   Demirdağ and Bozacı, 2015; Oral, 2015, 2016; Conker, 2017

Napier, 2015). In her essay, Witter-Merithew explained four models, which are also metaphors used to understand interpreters' behavioral dispositions: the helper model, the conduit model, the communication facilitator model, and the bi-lingual / bi-cultural model. These models and metaphors explained below have been invariable themes of discussions on sign language interpreters' role since the publication of this essay.

The Helper Model: Witter-Merithew (1986) uses this metaphor to talk about pre-RID time in which untrained, unqualified individuals mostly having deaf parents provided voluntary interpreting services to help their deaf parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, parishioners, etc. The helper model has some disadvantages for both deaf people and interpreters in that interpreters with inadequate communication skills may cause more harm than good and may patronize the Deaf by thinking they are not self-sufficient people and speaking on behalf of them. Furthermore, interpreters mostly provide voluntary service in non-standardized and inconvenient working conditions in this model.

The Conduit Model: First used by Reddy (1976), the conduit metaphor refers to a model in which interpreters see themselves as machines whose only responsibility is to transfer knowledge between people. Witter-Merithew (1986, p. 293) explains that this model emerged in the field of sign language interpreting as a result of interpreters' desire to dissociate themselves from the "helping" view of the task following the setting of professional standards and code of ethics for interpreters with the foundation of RID. Emerging by adopting the values of conference interpreters, this model however, ignores the realities of Deaf world and deaf people's special communication needs, and the fact that unlike conference interpreters, sign language interpreters have to be visible and take part in face-to-face communication settings. The main aspects of this model are maintaining impartiality and confidentiality, interpreting faithfully and accurately, and upholding a professional distance.

The Communication Facilitator Model: A new perspective emerged in the mid-70's after the interpreters adopting conduit model received negative reactions from the Deaf community because of their 'cold and self-serving' attitude and denying responsibility for interpreted communication failures (Witter-Merithew, 1986, p. 294). The academic arena of the profession began to "explore alternatives to the extremes of the Conduit Model", and interpreters began to take responsibility for meeting with the people they provided service prior to the occasion in order to discuss the role and responsibilities, and for planning positioning, lighting, and remuneration (p. 294).

The Bi-lingual / Bi-cultural Model: Emerging from the academic discussions on the nature of power relations between Deaf people and interpreters, and what effect each model has on these power relations in the 80s, The Bi-Bi model puts "the highest emphasis on the integrity and accuracy of the interpretation" while at the same time requiring the interpreter "to recognize the language and culture are inseparable" (p. 294).

Cynthia Roy argues that "metaphors and metaphorical descriptions have assisted our understanding of the role of the interpreter" in her 1993 article, and adds that the way interpreters describe their profession affects the perceptions regarding their role:

> "Interpreters themselves find it difficult to explain their role
> without resorting to conduit metaphors, and this explanation
> then leads to the perception of interpreters of passive, neutral
> participants, whose job it is mechanically to transmit the con-
> tent of the source message in the form of the target message."
> (Roy, 1992, p. 299)

Moreover, Roy argues that the conduit model is still followed by many interpreters, and although the communication facilitator model brought some significant changes to the profession in terms of raising respect for the ASL and modifying expectations of linguistic expertise of interpreters and responsibilities they take, it is still very similar to the conduit model (as cited in Metzger, 1999, p. 22). The conduit model "accounts only for one-way communication process" while assuming that the main parties of the interaction are equals having equal rights and social status (Roy, 1992). She also reports that it is not possible for interpreters to act like inactive machines in any interpersonal and intercultural communication event since "the only participant who can logically maintain, adjust, and if necessary, repair differences in structure and use is the interpreter" (Roy, 1993, p. 352). In her doctoral dissertation (1989), Roy investigates a videotaped meeting between a university professor, a university student, and an interpreter in order to find out the choices of the interpreter when overlapping talks occurs, and the sociolinguistic factors affecting those decisions (Roy, 1992). Her work exposes that the interpreter takes part as an active participant within the interaction just like the primary speakers who tacitly agree with his decisions, and that most of his decisions reflects "his understanding and interpretation of the social situation of a meeting between teacher and student" (Roy, 1992, p. 324). As a result, this study shows that the interpreter who is "a competent bilingual who possesses not only knowledge of two languages but also knowledge about the social situation, the 'ways of speaking' of both languages, and strategies for the management of the communication event" is responsible for neither success nor failure of an interpreted interaction on his own, but all participating parties share the responsibility in different degrees (p. 324).

In her 1999 work, Melanie Metzger investigates frames, schemas, and footings within two interpreting settings (one mock medical interview interpreted by a student interpreter, and a real-life medical interview interpreted by a professional interpreter) in order to discover the interpreter's involvement in and influence on the interpreted interactive encounters. Metzger (1999)ç proves that the traditional view of interpreter's "neutrality" is nothing but a myth, and that SL interpreters are not just conduits in a communicative interaction but its participants. She adds:

> "In interpreted discourse, the interpreter has the power to inf-
> luence the interaction not only through interpreter-generated
> utterances that are not renditions or constructions of others'
> discourse, but also through a misrepresentation of the source
> message footings within renditions" (p. 204).

She suggests that interpreters should be aware of the impact of their choices on the interpreted discourse and make responsible decisions. Meztger's (1999, p. 157) study also brings about another question of what she defines as the 'paradox of neutrality' of the interpreter by demonstrating that interpreters also have the power not to influence the interactive discourse with certain strategies as well as influencing it. She suggests that more research should be done to find an answer for the question of whether interpreters should conduct full participation or minimize their influence in interpreted interactions (p. 204).

McIntire and Sanderson (1995) expose the relationship between power and the role of the interpreter, especially in legal settings. They show how power is distributed in the relationship interpreters have with their deaf and hearing consumers. Revisiting the models described by Witter-Merithew (1986), they suggest that interpreters retained power from the deaf by acting as if deaf people were "powerless, incompetent, and unable to get what they needed on their own" in the helper model while in the conduit model, they tended to become 'invisible' by hiding behind the Code of Ethics and refusing to take any kind of responsibility, thus acting as if they had no power (McIntire and Sanderson, 1995, p. 328). Adopting a slightly gentler model, the communication facilitator interpreters began to empower themselves by at least taking some responsibility for the message, and even for the success of the communication. Finally, in the bi-lingual/bi-cultural model, interpreters acknowledge that they have the responsibility for the success of the communication which takes place between parties "who have both rights to and responsibilities for their destinies" (McIntire and Sanderson, 1995, p. 329).

McIntire and Sanderson (1995) suggest that interpreters can decide in which model to work in a particular situation by taking some factors into consideration, yet they should be equipped by adequate training to allow them to make correct decisions.

> "The D/deaf person's sense of her own power should have an impact on the interpreter's decision-making and other behaviors. But not all interpreters are equipped for this. The interpreter who has retreated to a conduit model will be of no help to the D/deaf person who has no experience working with an interpreter. The helper interpreter who sees the D/deaf consumer as helpless will soon be brought up short by a seasoned, empowered consumer." (McIntire and Sanderson, 1995, p. 334)

Furthermore, McIntire and Sanderson (1995, p. 330, 331)claim that the powerless language such as the use of super-polite forms, hedges, special lexicon, empty adjectives reflecting the speaker's feelings used by the interpreters most of whom are women or most of whose trainers are women affects how both interpreters and deaf people are perceived within interpreted communication settings in a society where deaf people are still seen as 'handicapped', and thus powerless although more and more Deaf people think of themselves as members of a cultural minority group.

In her article, Nadia Grbić (1997) also mentions power relations affecting the interpreting task and perceived role of the interpreter. She indicates that some interpreters act in the role of benefactors, and define themselves as 'adviser, advocate, helper, and social worker' (p. 346). According to Grbić (1997), these interpreters act as if deaf people would not take responsibility of their actions without their help and appear to be defending the rights of this defenseless group whereas in fact they are holding the biggest power. Besides, their exercises reflect suspicion for those who are not familiar with deafness (p. 346). Grbić refers this situation as "pseudo-loyalty" in that while the benefactor interpreters feel themselves authorized to give advice and make decisions on behalf of deaf people as representatives of the "strong" (hearing) culture, they need to take the side of the "weak" (deaf) culture to prove their raison d'être (p. 346). Grbić also criticizes the interpreters in the role of linguistic conduits who place themselves "at the bottom of the power pyramid" (p. 346) by calling themselves as 'non-persons' without acknowledging their potential of manipulation with the role they choose. She refers their seeming neutrality as "double pseudo-loyalty" (p. 346). She suggests that self-perception of sign language interpreters on their role, the assigned roles to the SL interpreters in the hearing society and in the deaf community, and the assigned roles to the deaf community by the "strong culture" as well as the existing social interpreting practices' connections to these roles are the questions that need to be answered (p.346).

Anna Mindess (2014) examines the individual, situational, and societal factors affecting the role of the interpreter to explain what the part of the SL interpreter's responsibility is not while dealing with the linguistic or cultural elements of the interaction. The individual factors include the clients' emotional states like being upset or depressed, personality traits like being rude or aggressive, physical states like being drunk or ill. Mindess (2014, p. 202) argues that interpreters should acknowledge deaf people's rights to use obscene language, to express hostility, and to insult intentionally whenever they want. Mentioning deaf people's complaints about the interpreters acting in the helper model who deny deaf people access hearing people's negative comments, Mindess also suggests that interpreters should not feel obliged to fix everything as long as they are sure that kind of uncomfortable situations do not result from cultural differences (p. 201).

Secondly, Mindess (2014, p. 202-208) lists six factors under the heading of situational factors that the interpreter does not need to make any cultural adjustments when she encounters with them. The first factor is parallelism, which refers to the notions that are similar in both cultures, so the interpreter does not need to make any kind of cultural adjustment. The second is the situations where deaf people do not identify themselves with Deaf culture. Some deaf people function in mainstream culture and they do not need cultural adjustments. The third factor is the degree of biculturalism of the participants. Sometimes deaf people may be fully bicultural due to either the education they received or families, or to their personalities while sometimes hearing people may be familiar with the Deaf culture and interested in to be exposed to the elements of the culture. In either case, the interpreter can focus on interpreting the content of

the message. The fourth factor is the nature of involvement between the participants. If the interaction is between people who already know each other like employers in an office, or family members at a family gathering, and who probably have developed a certain code of communication between them, the interpreter does not need to intervene into the interaction much other than transferring the message correctly. However, if it is a one-time interaction, or the interactions are rare and always with the presence of an interpreter, then the interpreter should be on the alert for misunderstandings, which may be caused by cultural differences. Mindess (2014, p. 204) lists the fifth factor as the special circumstances such as educational or mental healthcare settings where the use of specific terms, words, or signs are of utmost importance, and so they must be preserved. Finally, the last factor is the presence of a Deaf interpreter who can ease the communication with a Deaf client from another country or with limited sign language skills, or who would be able to talk to the Deaf client directly and bluntly in certain situations where similar intervention from a hearing interpreter can be regarded insulting or inappropriate.

Finally, Mindess (2014) elaborates power imbalances and discrimination that is inherent in the societies that contribute unfair outcomes in certain interpreting situations. Mindess (2014, p. 206) indicates that interpreted interactions mostly occur between a hearing person whose position has inherent power (e.g., a doctor or teacher) and a deaf person at a position with less power (e.g., a patient or student). Since hearing people tend to assume that Deaf people share the same cultural viewpoint with them, failure of communication in such asymmetrical relations may be inevitable (p. 206). Therefore, Mindess suggests that interpreters must be aware of such power imbalances despite the fact that it is not within their role to erase them:

> "Although it is not the interpreter's role to even out the power imbalance, we need to be aware of its presence. In such situations, the Deaf person may benefit from the presence of an advocate, who would work to achieve a greater balance of power between the participants." (Mindess, 2014, p. 207).

On the other hand, Mindess (2014, p. 208) argues that deaf people usually do not know what to expect from an interpreter because of constantly shifting of views on role, and that interpreters still appear to be withholding power by deciding what role to assume for themselves. She advocates that interpreters should consider preferences of deaf clients for the interpreter's role and let them guide regarding the role in interpreted settings.

Another significant factor affecting the perceptions on and assumption of interpreters' roles is oppression, which is another form of power used by the hearing majority over Deaf people according to Mindess (2014, p. 208). She defines the deaf community as an oppressed minority by citing Charlotte Baker-Shenk's (1986) presentation on which the indicators of oppression of the deaf community are listed (p. 208-209):

Sign language is not recognized and its use in schools is not allowed;

Deaf culture is denied by teachers and counsellors;

Deaf students are blamed for their low academic achievements without considering insufficient signing skills of their teachers;

Deaf people are usually viewed as abnormal and incapable of determining their own destiny by the hearing majority;

Deaf people have less employment opportunities and lower average income;

Deaf people are rarely at the power holding positions at the institutions which are supposed to serve them.

The common characteristics of oppressors are also described by Baker-Shenk. They include: a) the oppressors' belief that the oppressed wants to be liked them; b) their paternalistic attitude exposing itself through ideas that they know the best for the oppressed, and the oppressed needs their help; c) they implicitly deny the idea of empowerment of the oppressed by resisting due to the fear of losing power (Baker-Shenk, 1986 in Mindess, 2014, p. 209).

Mindess (2014, p. 194) argues that unlike spoken community interpreters who are themselves members of the same linguistic community with their clients, sign language interpreters are more prone to be perceived as an outsider and to face mistrust by their deaf clients because of the fact that they never share the main identity factor with deaf people (i.e. being deaf) although they may have other shared identities like being Muslim, Jews, Black, or Hispanic. As a result, they may be perceived on the same side with the hearing majority. According to Mindess (2014, p. 209), considering these issues, sign language interpreters can choose not to act in an oppressive manner, and even when their role requires to do so, they can try to alleviate that by understanding how oppression affects Deaf people, and by abstaining from audist[3] behavior in interpreting settings.

3. The Norms of Sign Language Interpreting in Turkey

The theoretical framework of the study rests on the work of Moira Inghilleri (2003) where she employed Toury's (1995) concept of translation norms as a model while exploring interpreting as a norm governed activity.

According to Toury (1995, p. 56-60), there are three kinds of norms: initial norms, preliminary norms, and operational norms. Initial norms are related to the translator's choice on adopting source cultural and textual norms, or target cultural and textual norms, that is producing adequate or acceptable texts, which is determined according to the position of translations in the target system as it is explained above. Preliminary norms, on the other hand, are concerned with the directness of translation, i.e., whether the translation is preformed directly from the source language or from a mediating

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3   First used by Tom Humphries in 1977, 'audism' is described by Harlan Lane (1992) as "the attitude perpetuated by a person who believes that he or she is superior based on his or her ability to hear, and it can be applied to deaf or hearing people who behave in the (oppressive) manner of the hearing majority" (cited in Napier and Leeson, 2016).

language, and with the translation policy which determines what text types or texts will be chosen to be transferred to the target culture within a given time period. Finally, operational norms shape the decisions of the translator during the actual translation act. Toury (1995) investigates operational norms under two titles: (1) Matricial norms which govern how the linguistic material is distributed as well as textual segmentation, and the completeness of the target text compared to the source text; and (2) Textual-linguistic norms which have to do with the textual and linguistic decisions made by the translator during the translation act.

Inghilleri (2003) suggests that the main factor which determines the initial norm in the asylum interview setting is the cultural/linguistic dominance relationship between two languages and cultures in the interpreting setting. In other words, official language policies, social/linguistic practices of inclusion/exclusion and material provision for bi- or multi-lingual resources within such fields as economic, political, and educational influence the creation of certain habitus[4]. She shows that the main goal of all participants in the interpreted asylum interviews is to "produce meanings that are acceptable for the target-culture" since it is the applicant's duty – as a linguistic and cultural "other" – to deliver their persecution claims in an intelligible way within the target linguistic/political/cultural context (Inghilleri, 2003, p. 252). Therefore, the initial norm proposed by Inghilleri is the monolingual environment existing in the courtroom despite the multilingual nature of asylum process, which shows itself as a lack of attention given on the "precise meaning expressed in languages other than the official language of the court" (2003, p. 252). In the case of sign language interpreting in Turkey, the initial norm that can affect the choices and perceptions of interpreters is the powerless minority language position of TID[5] when compared to the main spoken language, Turkish. The indicators of oppression given by Baker-Shenk (1986) such as lack of sign language use in schools, and inaccessibility to bi-or multilingual resources are a part of deaf reality in Turkey. Moreover, deaf people usually occupy less powerful positions within the larger Turkish society due to inadequate education they receive. The clearest example of this can be seen in the TMSF – the leading organization of Turkish Deaf community – whose chairperson is a hearing interpreter instead of a deaf person. Another indicator of the Deaf community and TID being in a lesser position can also be found in the data gathered from interviews with SL interpreters for the mentioned thesis research. The first thing that strikes the researcher is that none of the interpreters mentioned interpreting from sign language into spoken language. On the contrary, all of their remarks imply that they only interpret a hearing person's words for deaf people to understand. This clearly demonstrates that deaf people in Turkey are mostly in an information-receiving

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4   Pierre Bourdieu (1990) defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them".

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position rather than a producing one. As for SL interpreters, holding the linguistic capital (See Bourdieu, 1992) of the dominant spoken language and of the language of a disadvantaged minority, they are positioned at the heteronomous pole of the hierarchy. In other words, the fact that hearing SL interpreters are a part of the hearing majority by holding the linguistic capital lacking in the deaf community leads them to have a powerful position with regard to their deaf customers within the hierarchy. This powerful status reflects itself in their helping, advocating, leading, and consulting attitudes. For example, the interpreters tend to modify their deaf customers' text when they think their way of speaking is inappropriate for a specific setting and to omit from the original spoken text when they decide that the content is irrelevant to or uninteresting for the deaf. Nevertheless, they enjoy a less powerful position in relation to the hearing party(s) of the interpreted interaction since their linguistic skill of a less powerful language is not regarded as a valuable asset and interpreting for the deaf is regarded as a charity service.

Inghilleri (2003, p. 252) tailors Toury's preliminary norm concept to fit in interpreting contexts by suggesting that any formal or informal policy regarding the 'right to an interpreter' of a non-native speaker will be effective on not only the quality of interpreting but also the actual text produced. She exemplifies her argument by indicating that applicants for asylum in the US are required by law to provide an interpreter themselves, and if they fail to do so they can be registered an unexcused failure to appear for an interview which is possible to lead to the refusal or referral of the case. She also indicates the research findings demonstrating low importance given to interpreter accuracy in the US courts, which Inghilleri (2003, p. 253) thinks are correlated with the mentioned law. In Turkey, the laws rule that deaf people are listened through a sign language interpreter in the court only when they cannot read or write Turkish. Although interpreters are called upon by the court among registered interpreters in the court system when there is a need, the fact that anyone holding a course achievement certificate can register as a court interpreter shows that whether or not concerned interpreters are qualified for the position is not questioned. On the other hand, provision of SL interpreters in the departments of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies creates the illusion that anyone can benefit from free interpreting services, yet the fact that there is an inadequate number of staff interpreters throughout Turkey shows this does not reflect reality. Besides, deaf students are not provided with sign language interpreters either in deaf schools, in mainstream schools, or in universities. Briefly, the preliminary norm of right to an interpreter in sign language interpreting context in Turkey seems like a pseudo-right, which has little representation in practice.

Operational translation norms within interpreting context have to do with professional differentiation of status of interpreters in the marketplace, the pedagogic content of formal interpreter training institutions or voluntary organizations, code of ethics, and cultural models as well as language theories that inform interpreting practice (Inghilleri, 2003). Additionally, participants' (e.g., interpreters, attorneys, judges, applicants within the interpreted asylum interview/hearing settings) views regarding interpreting,

and research by translation/interpreting researchers also affect the decisions of the interpreter (p. 254-255). In our case, the content and implementation of current SL interpreter training courses are not adequate to provide qualified professional interpreters to the sign language interpreting field (Conker, 2017). The findings of the study also suggest that almost all Coda interpreters have received certificates without attending available training courses because they do not trust the skills of the trainers. In terms of professional status, although sign language interpreting has gained official recognition as a profession as of 2006, and interpreters began to be hired for the 'sign language interpreter' positions at the offices of Social Service Departments of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2007, the absence of formal training institutions, i.e., undergraduate degree programs, and lack of unity between the certification systems and the institutions delivering those certificates complicates SL interpreters to be recognized as fully professionals. The participants also admitted during the interviews that they did not feel as fully professionals because of not holding a degree related to their profession, and not having a proper training for interpreting.

As for the effect of research and academics on the field in Turkey, sign language interpreting is a rather new research area for translation and interpreting scholars in Turkey although studies on Turkish Sign Language have been conducted by researchers as of the beginning of 2000.[6] So far, two articles - one of which on translation strategies used by interpreters for words that do not exist in TID (Oral, 2015), and the other on the effect of sign language interpreting on integration of Deaf community to the larger society (Demirdağ and Bozacı, 2015) - have been published. In her book, Oral (2016) gives brief information on sign languages and introduces the structure of TID along with giving historical information on TID and analyzing spoken language interpreting modes and models in terms of SL interpreting. Finally, there is a recent unpublished MA thesis that analyses the current situation of SL interpreter training and of professionalization process of SL interpreting in Turkey (Conker, 2017). However, the lack of university degree programs[7] creates a natural gap between the field and research, thus blocking interpreters or interpreter candidates to access information and knowledge on their field.

Perceptions of the participants on their profession as interpreters and on their role have also been investigated to understand operational norms of SL interpreting in Turkey. The participants have been directed questions including their opinions on their role, the strategies they use, their opinions on the expectations of deaf people from them, ideal characteristics and skills of a sign language interpreter, and professional ethics. The initial findings of the ongoing study suggest so far that:

The participants define themselves as bridges between two worlds (hearing and deaf), consultants, guardians, helpers and volunteers;

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6   For research on Turkish Sign Language, see Engin, A. (ed.) (2016)

7   A master's and a doctoral program have been opened this year in Ankara University, and student admissions are planned to start in 2018-2019 Spring Semester.

They define their responsibilities as illuminating deaf people's world, mentoring, problem solving, creating livable environments for the deaf, finding rational and radical solutions for their problems, being a friend to them, defending deaf people's rights, thus being familiar with codes and regulations concerning the deaf community, and helping for their needs;

More than half of the interviewers employ indirect speech while transferring the original text and most of them feel free to omit, modify, summarize, and add to the original message in such cases as when they think that spoken text is not relevant to or interesting for the deaf party(s) of the interaction, or that the tone of the signed text of a deaf interlocutor is not acceptable for a given communication setting, or when they decide the deaf audience is not able to understand the original text;

Deaf people expect from SL interpreters to be fluent at TID, to be familiar with deaf culture, to defend their rights, to speak on behalf of them, to help them with their problems, to give opinions and to provide consultancy on various issues from medicine to law;

Although a list of 12-article ethical rules is published on the website of IDTD[8], there is no in-depth information on the professional behavior of SL interpreters. Nevertheless, only few participants are aware of the mentioned list and opinions of most participants on ethical behaviors result from their own experience in time;

The participants are mostly confused about their roles and the adequacy of their strategies, and they feel insecure about their status as professionals since they have not been trained at university level.

The following remarks by the chairpersons of two leading associations (TNDF[9] and IDTD), both of whom are sign language interpreters, can also give an idea regarding how sign language interpreters perceive their roles and the Deaf community.

Quote 1.

> Currently, CODAs are slightly more professional. Well, yes, those who are not CODA behave more sentimentally, from their heart... [They say] 'I am a volunteer, I am helping'. [...] Actually, you are not helping. 'Help' is not a much acceptable word for the Deaf, though. I mean, you are, in fact, a support to him, not a helper." [....] "You are to determine your own role, actually. Who are you there? Are you an interpreter, or providing support? That is, maybe you need to elude that role. CODAs may not be able to do that at times. [...] First, she will determine [what to choose]: To be a professional, or to continue as a CODA... It doesn't mean that every CODA is an interpreter. (translated from Turkish by the researcher)

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8   The Association of Sign Language Interpreters

9   Turkish National Deaf Federation

Quote 2.

> What should be adopted is the bilingual - bicultural model. But here, in Turkey, the interpreter becomes the guardian of the patient at the doctor's. He even begins to argue [on behalf of the Deaf person] after a while. There is a strange kind of embracement [among interpreters for the Deaf people]. Unfortunately, we can't solve this problem with existing interpreters, we can't get over it yet. It goes beyond translating what has been spoken. Helping the hearing disabled, being side with them, being an advocate for them, and like... Expectations of the Deaf are also usually in this way. For example, they can demand the interpreter to speak on behalf of them, or to assert their rights. (translated from Turkish by the researcher)

The Quote 1 and 2 indicate that the role perception of SL interpreters in Turkey seems closer to the helper model. In Quote 1, it is stated that although CODA interpreters show more professional behaviors compared to non-CODAs, in the end of the remark, it is seen there is no clear difference between the attitudes of two groups. The second quote also affirms that most of sign language interpreters in Turkey see themselves as the advocates and helpers of deaf people.

To sum up, as the preliminary finding of the ongoing study, the initial norms of sign language interpreting reflect the social representation (See Moscovici, 1984) of the Deaf community and powerless position of TID as a result. Both preliminary norms of the pseudo-right to an interpreter and operational norms of helper interpreters with inadequate or no training can be said to be born from the initial norms, which need to be investigated and discussed with further research and analysis.

4. Conclusion

The current paper has covered the current norms of SL interpreting in Turkey. Accordingly, the initial norms of the field have been found as the inherent power imbalance between members of Turkish deaf community and the larger hearing society, which also reflects itself in the dominance of spoken language over sign language, e.g., deaf students are not provided with education in sign language. Another initial norm found is the heteronomous position of SL interpreters in hierarchy, i.e., while they are at a more powerful position in comparison with their deaf customers by holding linguistic capital of the dominant language, they enjoy a less powerful position in relation to the hearing party(s) of the interpreted interaction since their linguistic skill of a less powerful language is not regarded as a valuable asset and interpreting for the deaf is regarded as a charity service.

Interpreted by Inghilleri (2003, p. 252) as 'right to an interpreter', preliminary norms in the case of SL interpreting in Turkey have been found as a 'pseudo-right' which has little representation in practice due to reasons such as absence of sufficient

number of interpreters hired by the state, and failure of providing interpreters at schools, hospitals, and other public offices. Additionally, considering the low quality of current SL interpreter training alternatives and the lack of academic training institutions, 'right to an interpreter' can also be interpreted as 'right to a qualified interpreter' which is of vital importance for the deaf community.

Finally, operational norms include semi-professional status of interpreters in the market, little research on the field in Turkey, and perceptions of SL interpreters on their role. The findings demonstrate that most of the participants tend to think of themselves as helpers, guardians, advocates, and volunteers. It can be concluded from the preliminary findings that the participants' perceptions on their role are heavily informed by the social representation of the Deaf community, and educational, cultural, and social background of interpreters. The discussion regarding this point together with the larger data gathered for the current ongoing study are going to be shared soon in the forthcoming publications of the writer.

Although this paper is limited in terms of shared data and discussion of the findings, it unfolds the current norms of the field, which can enlighten further research. Knowing about current norms of the field can help researchers and interpreter trainers to understand the reasons behind the tendencies and perceptions of interpreters. Curriculums of prospected sign language interpreter training degree programs should be developed by taking the realities of deaf people and interpreters into consideration, which can be achieved through more research and identification of problems. This study demonstrates that although it has its own peculiarities, the field of sign language interpreting can still benefit from the theories of Translation and Interpreting Studies while developing and finding solutions for problems instead of wasting the time and effort that can be spent on implementing efficient methods instead of reinventing the wheel.

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