

ABSTRACT

Issues in Translating From a Sign Language to an Oral/ Written Language

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Translation at its most complex, is still rooted in one basic desire and need: to bring together people of distinct languages and cultures. Centuries after the first humble attempts at translation, in a world now defined by the concept of a global village, increasing emphasis is being placed on the integration of diverse groups into mainstream international society and greater global participation by minorities.

This research paper explores the translation/interpretation of the language of one such minority group, namely the Deaf. Although it has traditionally occupied a lowly status in the hierarchy of the translation industry, sign language translation offers many lessons to the broader study of translation.

Chapter One will explore the nature of the overall translation process and outline the basic objectives and concerns of translation.

Chapter Two will compare the structure and peculiarities of sign languages to those of their oral/ written counterparts, and investigate how closely sign language interpretation adheres to the standard path of translation/ interpretation.

Chapter Three will report the experiences of actual sign language interpreters and some of the problems that arise in their task. It will compare their observations to issues in current research on sign language interpretation. The objective of Chapter Three is dual - to reveal problems that are peculiar to the nature of Sign and the deaf speaker, especially with regard to the Jamaican experience; and secondly, and more importantly, to show how most of the difficulties encountered are merely manifestations of translation/ interpretation between any two languages.

In conclusion, this study seeks to offer recommendations as to how the incorporation of sign language studies into *mainstream* translation/interpretation programmes could enhance the preparation of the student translator.

Keywords: Bertha McLaren; Sign Language; Deaf; Mainstream translation theory