

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 11. Issue.2. 2024 (April-June)

ISSN
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

ASSESSING STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STATUS OF
INTERPRETING PROFESSION IN TANZANIA

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doi: 10.33329/ijelr.11.2.35



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Article information

Article Received:19/3/2024
Article Accepted:20/04/2024
Published online:27/04/2024

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the current status of the interpreting profession in Tanzania. The study aims to provide insights into how various stakeholders view the interpreting profession in the Tanzanian context. The study adopted a qualitative research approach using interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and a questionnaire to gather data from a diverse range of stakeholders which included professional interpreters, clients or end-users of interpreting services and interpreter trainers as well as the National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA). The findings reveal a variety of perspectives on the status of the interpreting profession in Tanzania. Stakeholders highlighted challenges such as a lack of standardized training programs for interpreters, limited recognition of interpreting as a profession, lack of awareness of importance of interpreting services, lack of professional organisations and lack of policies governing the profession. The discussion section analyses the implications of these findings for the development and enhancement of the status of interpreting profession in Tanzania. The study posited potential strategies to address the identified challenges and to improve the overall perception and status of interpreting in the country. In effect, this paper underscores the importance of understanding stakeholders' perceptions in shaping policies and initiatives aimed at advancing the interpreting profession in Tanzania.

Keywords: status, profession, interpreting, interpreting profession, interpreting stakeholder

1. Introduction

The interpreting profession plays a crucial role in facilitating communication across different languages and cultures in Tanzania (Mwinuka, 2023). Interpreting services are particularly important in government institutions, where officials need to communicate with citizens who do not speak the official languages fluently. Government agencies such as the judiciary, immigration services and police departments often require the assistance of interpreters during legal proceedings, interviews and interactions with foreign nationals (RMMS, 2015).

Tanzania is a country located in East Africa, and it is a linguistically diverse country with over 120 ethnic groups and more than 100 languages spoken. Kiswahili and English are the official languages (Batibo, 2005: 83), but there are also numerous regional and international languages used by different communities. This linguistic diversity creates a need for professional interpreters who can bridge communication gaps between individuals who speak different languages.

The demand for interpretation services in Tanzania is further motivated by the presence of several International organisations operating in the country. Some of these institutions include among many others, the United Nations agencies, the African Union bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that often require the services of professional interpreters during conferences, workshops and meetings involving participants from different countries (Dauda, 2018: 4). According to Getta (2021) the demand for professional interpreters in Tanzania has grown due to globalisation, increased international collaborations and the country's linguistic diversity.

Despite the role played by interpreting profession there is no in-depth analysis of feedback from the interpreting stakeholders regarding the status of interpreting as a profession in Tanzania. This study, therefore, fills this gap by assessing the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the current status of the interpreting profession in the country. This article analyses the perspectives of interpreting stakeholders in Tanzania to gain insights into the challenges, opportunities, and future prospects of the profession.

2. Literature Review

Status is a term that can have multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Gentile (2016: 66) provides the following explanations with reference to the concept of status: "it should be pointed out that this word can either refer to social status or to professional status, which indicate two separate (but at the same time intertwined) notions." For Gentile, there are two dimensions of status: social and professional status.

Gentile defines social status as a position an individual occupies in a social structure, while a professional status can be understood as a concept deriving from achieved status. Gentile (2016) lists medical doctors, teachers and conference interpreters as professional statuses. For Gentile, professional status is attributed on the basis of the type of occupation and the level of education, which are both attained through personal achievements. The author adds that professional status is linked to attributes such as academic training, expertise and remuneration of professionals. Professional status indicates therefore the set of skills which enable a professional to render a service to the society (Gentile, 2016: 66).

2.1 Research on the Status of Interpreting

According to Gentile (2016: 1) the professional status of interpreting is arguably one of the least studied in interpreting research. This is despite interpreting, especially conference interpreting, playing a crucial role worldwide for more than seven decades today since the end of the Second World War.

However, in recent years there has been a rising interest among academics and practitioners with regard to professional status Gentile (2016), Hoyte-West, (2020) and Ndlove (2020). Tseng (1992) on conference interpreting in Taiwan is one of the pioneer studies with regards to the professionalisation of interpreting. Tseng's findings indicate that conference interpreting in Taiwan was at an infant stage and the profession was characterised by market disorders.

On the one hand, Gentile (2016) findings provide valuable insights into the interpreters' professional status from a sociological perspective. Gentile survey highlights important aspects for interpreting profession such as professional identity, status, prestige and social role.

The study revealed that the profession, especially conference interpreting, enjoys a high status and prestige compared to community interpreting. The findings reveal further that interpreting in general, plays a crucial social role and interpreters think that their social value is much higher compared to the perception of the society. The findings established that the increasing awareness of the social function performed by the profession seems to be the motivation behind why interpreters follow the path towards full professionalization. Basically, Gentile's global survey on Interpreter's professional status contributes to a better understanding of the interpreting profession and the need for improved support and recognition for interpreters.

Hoyte-West (2020) exploratory study on the professional status of conference interpreters in the Republic of Ireland reveals several important findings. These include the lack of formal recognition and regulation of the profession, the need for continuous professional development opportunities, challenges related to working conditions, and the impact of technology on the field. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers, professional associations, and interpreters themselves to improve the professional status and working conditions of conference interpreters in Ireland.

Lastly, Ndlovu (2020) study has revealed that translation and interpretation in Zimbabwe lack formal training; a cognitive base; licensing; professional autonomy; a professional association and a regulating/accrediting body. Other challenges include lack of standards of professional and intellectual excellence; lack of regulatory framework and a code of ethics. In other words, translation and interpretation are not yet fully-fledged disciplines in Zimbabwe. The study has also demonstrated that there is no clear language policy in favour of translation and interpretation.

2.2 Factors Influencing the Status of Interpreting Profession

According to Hoyte-West, (2020) the status of interpreting can be influenced by various factors, such as the level of demand for interpreting services, the quality of interpreting services, the level of professionalism and qualifications of interpreters, and the legal and ethical frameworks that govern the profession. With regard to training, Wadensjö (2011) is of the view that education is expected to improve the individual interpreter's status as a professional. However, the author acknowledges that at present the link between professional education and professional status is somewhat insecure for interpreters because the interpreting market is unstructured. Wadensjö argues that freelance interpreters usually get jobs from agents or interpretation companies that most often look for interpreters who provide services at lowest cost. It can, therefore, be argued that a high status of interpreting can lead to better working conditions, higher pay, and greater respect for the profession, while a low status can lead to marginalisation, undervaluation, and a lack of awareness and support that the profession is supposed to enjoy.

2.3 Challenges Facing the Status of Interpreting Profession

Like any profession interpreting is not spared, it faces various challenges and issues that impact its status. In this section and for the purpose of this article, these challenges are related to quality, standards and professional recognition.

Ensuring high-quality interpretation services is one of the primary challenges in the interpreting profession. Interpreters need to have not only language proficiency, but also excellent listening, memory, and cognitive skills. One of the common challenges interpreters face when interpreting is speakers' speed during speech delivery.

...speed of delivery of source speeches, speeches read out without the interpreters having had the texts or the time to prepare their interpretation, cognitive problems related to remote interpreting, relays and multiple relays in multi-lingual conferences, foreign accents and English as a lingua-franca (Gile & Napier, 2020: 20).

Therefore, it becomes difficult in maintaining consistent quality interpreting across interpreters due to factors such as varying levels of training, experience, and specialization. If a speaker speaks too fast in a field that an interpreter is less familiar with, maintaining quality interpreting is likely to be challenging.

Furthermore, the lack of universally recognised standards for interpreter training and certification poses a challenge (Hlavac, Tobias, Sundin, and Knowles, 2023). Different countries and regions may have their own certification processes or requirements, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of interpreters. This lack of standardization can make it challenging for clients to assess the competence of interpreters and select the most suitable ones for their needs.

In situations such as the ones presented above, Dean & Pollard Jr (2013) posits that interpreters should possess what they call 'control resources'. These authors define control resources as techniques that may prove useful in responding to interpreting assignment challenges or difficulties. They mention a number of these resources which they refer to as attributes as follows:

Attributes like a sense of humour, studiousness, being contemplative, well-read, or culturally-savvy, punctuality, the ability to handle sensitive interpersonal situations with care, advanced education, physical fitness, mathematical ability, or being well travelled, all may comprise control resources during a given assignment (Dean & Pollard Jr, 2013: 17).

Another aspect related to quality is the issue of interpreter neutrality and impartiality. Interpreters are expected to remain neutral and faithfully convey the message without adding personal opinions or biases. However, achieving complete neutrality can be challenging in certain sensitive or emotionally charged situations, where interpreters may inadvertently influence the communication process.

Globally, the interpreting profession often faces issues related to professional recognition and status and prestige. Despite its importance in facilitating communication, interpreting is sometimes undervalued or misunderstood by both the general public and other professionals. Community interpreting in particular, faces this challenge compared to conference interpreting. Although there are improvements after the introduction of training in community interpreting in some countries, Gile & Napier (2020: 66) posit that its status remains below that of conference interpreting with some disparities between countries. This lack of recognition can lead to lower remuneration, limited career advancement opportunities, and a lack of resources for professional development. In Australia, for example, Hlavac, Tobias, Sundin, and Knowles (2023: 110) posit that professional development became

mandatory in Australia from 2019 for all translators and interpreters who wished to retain or gain a credential from the National Accreditation Authority.

Additionally, there is a lack of understanding among clients and the public about the different types of interpreting services available. This can lead to misconceptions about the role and responsibilities of interpreters, potentially resulting in unrealistic expectations or dissatisfaction with the services provided.

3. Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. However, for data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the findings quantitative techniques were used. Regarding the data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions and questionnaires were used with a diverse range of stakeholders involved in interpreting services in Tanzania. The participants included professional interpreters, clients and the National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA). This variety of stakeholders represent the group of practitioners and consumers of interpreting services on one hand and trainers on the other hand.

The data collected through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were transcribed and coded in order to establish different themes for thematic analysis. Apart from transcription, notes taken during interviews and FGD served as a baseline in analysis. On the other hand, questionnaires data were grouped into themes for descriptive analysis and interpretation with the aid of tables.

Specifically, from all the research instruments used, the sample size for this study was 49 respondents. The table below recapitulates the information on research participants.

Category of Respondents	Description	Number
National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA)	Three respondents took part in the Focus Group Discussion. They are full-time employees at BAKITA in the Translation and Interpretation section. This is the government institution. The Council among other objectives, organises refresher courses for interpreters and provide interpretation and translation services to individuals, government and non-government institutions.	3
Trainers/Lecturers	A total of eleven lecturers from two universities, the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Dodoma participated in this study. Of the eleven lecturers, eight filled in a questionnaire while three granted an interview.	11
Practising Interpreters	This category of respondents included a total of 24 interpreters who filled out and returned the questionnaire. They are practising interpreters based in Tanzania.	24
Clients of Interpretation Services	A total of eleven respondents, representing six organisations/institutions filled the questionnaire. The institutions are: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanzania, Lusofonia Centre for Languages, BAKITA, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, World Bank-Tanzania, East African Community and Pan African Postal Union (all located in Tanzania).	11

Apart from data collection methods, this study is also underpinned by two theoretical approaches that are important in understanding the status of interpreting profession and professionalisation in general. These are Tseng (1992) Model of Professionalisation and Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008) Indicative Criteria of a Profession.

Tseng's (1992) Model of Professionalisation is a socio-professional model that describes four phases of professionalisation of an occupation. These are: market disorder, consensus and commitment, professional networks and professional autonomy. In his model, Tseng demonstrates interest in successful strategies to help an occupation achieve the status of a full-fledged profession and acquire internal and external control. Tseng's model shows that professionalisation moves gradually from market disorder to consensus and commitment, formal networks and finally professional autonomy.

Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008) Indicative Criteria of a Profession. In attempting to make a distinction between professions and occupations the authors combine attribute and power approaches to derive eight key features of a profession. The eight traits or features resulting from the above approaches are: public recognition, monopoly over types of work, professional autonomy, the knowledge base and the professional education. Others include the professional organisations, the existence of codified ethical standards and the prestige and remuneration of social work. These factors are necessary for any occupation transiting to become a recognised profession and are used as baseline for analysis in the present study.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses findings based on responses obtained from the research instruments. A series of four (4) tables are presented based on data collected from each group of respondents. Tables 4.1(a) and 4.1(b) present data obtained from a questionnaire addressed to both practising interpreters and end-users or consumers of interpreting services. The question aimed at determining how practicing interpreters and clients/end-users of interpreting services perceive the status of the profession in Tanzania based on eight criteria of a profession proposed by Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008). Respondents were therefore required to indicate the level of development of interpreting profession in Tanzania based on those criteria.

While table 4.2 recapitulates perceptions of the practising interpreters with regard to the status of interpreting from an open ended question table 4.3 presents trainers responses obtained through Interview regarding the challenges facing interpreting profession in Tanzania. The responses from the two instruments are also summarised in table form based on themes developed by the researcher supported by quotations from respondents.

Table 4.1(a) below demonstrates the perspectives of practising interpreters on the status of development of the interpreting profession in Tanzania with regard to eight indicative criteria of a profession proposed by Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008) adopted to this study.

With regard to the eight criteria the findings reveal that the interpreting profession is underdeveloped in almost every aspect. As far as the professional education is concerned of the 24 practising interpreters 6 interpreters representing 25% of the total respondents and 10 interpreters (41.7%) are of the opinion that the interpreting education is very underdeveloped and underdeveloped respectively. Those who think that interpreting education is developed are 5 (20.8%) while 1 (4.2%) respondent is of the opinion that that interpreting education is very developed.

Table 4.1(a) Distribution of practising interpreters as per their opinions on the level of development of the interpreting profession in Tanzania with respect to the following aspects/criteria

S/N	Aspects/Criteria	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Professional education	Very underdeveloped	6	25
		Underdeveloped	10	41.7
		Neutral	2	8.3
		Developed	5	20.8
		Very developed	1	4.2
2.	Consensus and commitment among professionals	Very underdeveloped	5	20.8
		Underdeveloped	9	37.5
		Neutral	5	20.8
		Developed	3	12.5
		Very developed	2	8.3
3.	Professional associations and organisations	Very underdeveloped	15	62.5
		Underdeveloped	6	25
		Neutral	1	4.2
		Developed	2	8.3
		Very developed	0	0
4.	Professional autonomy	Very underdeveloped	9	37.5
		Underdeveloped	7	29.2
		Neutral	3	12.5
		Developed	3	12.5
		Very developed	2	8.3
5.	Public awareness	Very underdeveloped	7	29.2
		Underdeveloped	9	37.5
		Neutral	1	4.2
		Developed	5	20.8
		Very developed	2	8.3
6.	Codified ethical standards	Very underdeveloped	11	45.8
		Underdeveloped	9	37.5
		Neutral	1	4.2
		Developed	3	12.5
		Very developed	0	0
7.	Prestige of the profession	Very Underdeveloped	6	25
		Underdeveloped	8	33.3
		Neutral	1	4.2
		Developed	7	29.2
		Very developed	2	8.3
8.	Remuneration of interpreting services	Very underdeveloped	4	16.6
		Underdeveloped	7	29.2
		Neutral	1	4.2
		Developed	9	37.5
		Very developed	3	12.5

Furthermore, the results reveal that consensus and commitment among professional interpreters is also a challenge because responses demonstrate that this aspect is very underdeveloped

(20.8 %) and underdeveloped (37.5%). On the other hand, the findings depict that professional associations and organisations are very underdeveloped by 62.5% and underdeveloped by 25% respectively. Two (2) interpreters, representing 8.3% see this aspect as developed.

The results also reveal that the professional autonomy and public awareness of the profession are yet to develop. According to the findings, professional autonomy and public awareness are underdeveloped by 66.7% each. However, results show there are efforts to raise the public awareness because 20.8% and 8.3% view this aspect as developed and very developed respectively.

The statistics above are also reflected in other aspects including codified ethical standards which is very underdeveloped by 45.8%, prestige of the profession 33.3% underdeveloped and remuneration of interpreting services underdeveloped by 29.2%. Despite these statistics, findings depict that 37.5% and 12.5% of respondents see remuneration of interpreting services as developed and very developed respectively.

Table 4.1(b) Distribution of interpreting end-users as per their opinions on the level or status of development of the interpreting profession in Tanzania with respect to the following aspects/criteria

S/N	Aspects/Criteria	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Professional education	Very underdeveloped	1	9.1
		Underdeveloped	5	45.5
		Neutral	2	18.2
		Developed	3	27.3
		Very developed	1	9.1
2.	Consensus and commitment among professionals	Very underdeveloped	1	9.1
		Underdeveloped	4	36.4
		Neutral	2	18.2
		Developed	3	27.3
		Very developed	1	9.1
3.	Professional associations and organisations	Very underdeveloped	5	45.5
		Underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Neutral	3	27.3
		Developed	1	9.1
		Very developed	0	0
4.	Professional autonomy	Very underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Neutral	3	27.3
		Developed	3	27.3
		Very developed	1	9.1
5.	Public awareness	Very underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Underdeveloped	5	45.5
		Neutral	0	0
		Developed	3	27.3
		Very developed	1	9.1
6.	Codified ethical standards	Very underdeveloped	4	36.4
		Underdeveloped	3	27.3
		Neutral	2	18.2
		Developed	1	9.1
		Very developed	1	9.1

7.	Prestige of the profession	Very underdeveloped	3	27.3
		Underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Neutral	3	27.3
		Developed	2	18.2
		Very developed	1	9.1
8.	Remuneration of interpreting services	Very underdeveloped	1	9.1
		Underdeveloped	2	18.2
		Neutral	3	27.3
		Developed	4	36.4
		Very developed	1	9.1

The results reveal that seven indicative criteria of a profession are underdeveloped with the exception of remuneration of interpreting services which is developed by 36.4% and very developed by 9.1%. Responses indicate that of the eleven end-users of interpreting services 5 end-users (45.5%) are of the opinion that the professional education is underdeveloped while 27.3% say that it is developed.

Regarding consensus and commitment among professionals and professional associations and organisations responses from end-users of interpreting services reveal that these two criteria are yet to be developed in Tanzania. The data show that professional associations do not exist in Tanzania because more than 60% of respondents indicate that associations are very underdeveloped and underdeveloped with 27.3% of respondents remaining neutral.

On the other hand, as it is the case for practising interpreters, results from end-users of interpreting services also reveal that public awareness of interpreting services, professional autonomy, prestige of the profession and codified ethical standards are to a larger extent underdeveloped in Tanzania. Although statistics from responses show that public awareness and professional autonomy are developed by 27.3% each the majority of responses show that these aspects are underdeveloped for more than 45%.

Table 4.2 Distribution of interpreters as per their perceptions on the status of the interpreting profession in Tanzania

S/N	Themes	Quotations/Descriptions
1.	Growing	<p>"It's a growing profession"</p> <p>"The status of interpretation in Tanzania is growing very fast"</p> <p>"So far it is encouraging"</p> <p>"It is growing as an important profession"</p> <p>"It is a growing industry"</p> <p>"Not well mature and still developing"</p> <p>"The status of interpreting in Tanzania is neither high nor low"</p>
2.	High demand	<p>"Interpreting is at a very high demand due to increasing interconnectedness of the world"</p> <p>"The status of interpreting is at a high demand from state house to other international organizations"</p>
3.	Recognized	<p>"The status of interpreting in Tanzania still has low level of appreciation within the society"</p> <p>"Interpreting in Tanzania seems like a new career"</p>

		<p>"Many young Tanzanians have shown interest in the profession as it pays better than many other professions"</p> <p>"It is recognized as an important profession"</p> <p>"Interpreting profession is well recognized currently"</p>
4.	Not organized	<p>"It appears to me not to be organized"</p> <p>"Interpreting in Tanzania is informal"</p> <p>"It is mostly haphazardly done. Very often by people who do not have skills in interpreting"</p>
5.	Not recognized	<p>"It is not well known"</p> <p>"It is not recognized officially as a profession"</p> <p>"Interpreting in Tanzania still lacks official status and recognition"</p> <p>"Interpreting in Tanzania has not yet attained its level of profession"</p>
6.	Not respected	<p>"Everyone can do nasty stuff without respecting ethics/profession"</p> <p>"The profession is not given its due respect"</p>
7.	No association	<p>"There doesn't exist a professional association"</p> <p>"There's no union for interpreters"</p>
8.	Untrained Interpreters	<p>"Most interpreters are untrained"</p> <p>"No training"</p> <p>"Most interpreters in Tanzania are not trained as interpreters"</p>
9.	No supervisory body	<p>"There is no accredited supervisory body"</p>
10.	Difficult market	<p>"It is a very difficult market"</p>

As shown in the table 4.2 above, results present interpreters mixed perceptions regarding the status of interpreting profession in Tanzania. While there are positive appreciations of the status, negative appreciations are quite dominant. The developed themes show on one hand that the interpreting profession in Tanzania is a growing profession with high demand and recognized to some extent.

On the other hand, findings reveal interpreters' concerns of regarding the status of interpreting profession as not organised, not recognised, absence of professional associations and few trained interpreters on the market. Other issues raised include lack of respect of the profession, lack of supervisory/regulatory body and unregulated market. This entails that negative appreciations of the profession dominate the positive perceptions.

Table 4.3 Challenges facing the interpreting profession in Tanzania according to the interpreting trainers and BAKITA.

S/N	Challenge	Quotations/Descriptions
1.	No association	<p>"lack of a professional body to unite interpreters"</p> <p>"No any recognized professional board which unites interpreters"</p> <p>"The absence of interpreters' association"</p> <p>"Poor status accorded to the profession, doubtlessly due to lack of a professional body"</p>
2.	Lack of interpreter training	<p>"There is a need to establish a well-designed interpreter training programme in Universities"</p>

3.	Public awareness	"The public is not aware of interpreting services, most students are also not aware that interpreting is a profession like any other profession"
4.	Not recognised	"It is not known, interpreters are considered simply as linguists" "Awareness is still low as it is considered that all those with more than one language can also do interpretation."
5.	Untrained interpreters	"Many Tanzanians who practice interpreting have not been trained as interpreters" "A small number of trained interpreters in the country" "Lack of equipment and interpreting specifically trained personnel" "Very low level of professionalism"
6.	Lack of interpreting policies	"An unregulated market" "Very few institutions which offer employment" "There are no clear policies guiding the profession and unstructured market"

During interview and FGD responses regarding challenges facing the profession from BAKITA and interpreter trainers revealed a number of issues which are summarily presented in table 4.3 above in six thematic areas. Challenges such as lack of professional association, training programme, public awareness, presence of untrained interpreters, non-recognition of interpreting and lack of policies governing the profession are fundamental to the development of interpreting profession. They affect negatively the status of the profession in Tanzania.

5. Discussions of Findings

This section discusses the results presented in section 4 above based on the eight indicative criteria developed by Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008) as well as themes developed in table 4.2 and challenges facing the interpreting profession highlighted in table 4.3.

5.1 Professional Education

The findings demonstrate that there is a gradual growing recognition of the importance of professional education in interpreting. On one hand, the introduction of training programmes for aspiring interpreters such as the Bachelor degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Dodoma and BAKITA refresher courses have brought new impetus to professional education in interpreting. On the other hand, during interview lecturers pointed out that the Government of Tanzania through the 2023 revised curriculum has included interpretation and translation topics in all language subjects at both ordinary and advanced secondary school levels (URT, 2023). The curriculum contains specific objectives with regard to interpretation and translation studies aiming at equipping learners with basic principles of interpretation and translation.

It was further revealed that there are some practising interpreters without any formal training in Interpreting. Most of them are natural interpreters who have acquired experience over the years. This phenomenon can lead to lowering the professional status in the era where professional education is considered important in all professions. It can therefore be argued here that for the interpreting profession to thrive in Tanzania, there is a need for more specialised and standardised training programmes, especially at Master's degree level that meet the demands of the industry and realities in Tanzania. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), one of the key players in conference interpreting, through its Training Committee, prepared a set of ten requirements for interpreting courses. One of the requirements is that training should be at postgraduate level (Phelan, 2001: 184).

5.2 Consensus and Commitment among Professionals

While there is a low consensus among interpreting professionals in Tanzania about the importance of ethical standards and best practices, there is still a need for more unity and collaboration among practitioners. Practising interpreters highlighted the importance consensus and commitment if their profession is to gain recognition it deserves. The findings have depicted that unity among practitioners can promote the status of profession and address challenges facing the industry. Clients or end-users of interpreting services also posit that consensus among interpreters is underdeveloped. Collaboration and unity among professionals are therefore key for the interpreting profession to flourish in Tanzania.

5.3 Professional Associations and Organisations

Stakeholders perceptions were mixed on this aspect especially on its existence in Tanzania as well as its importance regarding raising the status of the interpreting profession. While 65.5% of 24 of interpreters indicated that the professional associations were very underdeveloped 45.5% of clients pointed out that this criteria was very underdeveloped. In other words, these statistics reveal that there is no national professional associations of interpreters in Tanzania.

It is however undeniable fact that professional associations, where present, play a crucial role in promoting the profession, providing support to members, and advocating for the rights and interests of interpreters and the profession at large. This has been evidenced by the presence of global or regional professional bodies such as the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI) and the East Africa Interpreters and Translators Association (EAITA)) to name a few. The establishment of AIIC, for example is inarguably one of the first initiatives taken by interpreters to professionalise their profession (Furmanek, 2013).

5.4 Professional Autonomy

As far as the professional autonomy is concerned findings from clients, practising interpreters and interpreting lectures demonstrate that the profession enjoys a limited degree of autonomy. They posit that the professional autonomy is underdeveloped because of challenges facing the profession.

Some of the issues raised by interpreters include low remuneration and interpretation fees and undefined scales of fees paid to interpretation services. In this context, there is, therefore, a need for greater recognition of the value of interpreting as a profession and for more autonomous decision-making processes for interpreters. This is, however, the highest level of professional maturity according to Tseng's (1992) model of the profession. At this stage, the profession has a political recognition and the professional services are appreciated and recognised by decision making bodies of the country.

5.5 Public Awareness

Despite stakeholders understanding the importance of public awareness regarding the interpreting services, the level of public awareness in Tanzania is relatively low and underdeveloped. This can in turn lead to a lack of understanding and appreciation for the work of interpreters. Majority of practising interpreters and clients indicate that the general public is yet to recognise the works of interpreters as opposed to other professionals. Greater public awareness campaigns and education initiatives are therefore needed to promote the value of interpreting services and increase demand for high-quality interpreting services.

5.6 Codified Ethical Standards

Responses indicate that the interpreting profession in Tanzania is yet to make significant progress in developing codified ethical standards. This has been evidenced by overwhelming majority of responses indicating that the codified ethical standards are underdeveloped. This is inarguably due to lack of professional associations and organisations which are responsible to establish their own codes of conduct. This implies that there a need for establishment, adoption and implementation of ethical standards to ensure consistency and quality across the industry in the country. This can also be attained by avoiding hiring unqualified and untrained interpreters who may compromise the quality of services.

5.7 Prestige of the Profession

The prestige of the interpreting profession in Tanzania is still low. Some clients view interpreting as a less prestigious profession. The majority of clients indicated that this aspect is very underdeveloped. The low prestigious nature of the profession can be attributed to numerous challenges facing the profession as stated by lecturers and BAKITA during FGD. They include lack of professional body, limited training, lack of autonomy, limited awareness of interpreting as a profession, to name a few. These factors, among other things, hamper the professional prestige that professionals should enjoy.

It can be argued that the greater recognition and respect for the profession, particularly among the stakeholders and the general public, is necessary to promote the status of interpreting and attract more talented individuals to the field. Unless stakeholders undertake deliberate efforts the prestige and autonomous of the profession will remain farfetched.

5.8 Remuneration of Interpreting Services

Respondents have mixed opinions with regard to the remuneration of interpreting services in Tanzania. Most interpreters are often paid low fees for their services, this can make it difficult for them to earn a living wage. Interpreters also see the market as very difficult market. However, observing critically, their responses suggest that professional fee is generally considered to be low. This can lead to downgrading the status of interpreting and forcing aspiring interpreters to shy away from the field or seek employment in other fields.

It can be argued here that inadequate remuneration of interpreting services reflects the current state of the profession in the country. The profession is still striving to exit the market disorder stage suggested by Tseng (1992). At this stage, more often, practitioners lack knowledge and awareness of their professional practices. The market is also characterised by competition from individuals who want to work as interpreters but are not qualified. In this case, clients tend to give low interpretation fees to such individual interpreters. At the same time, clients would even ask interpreters to offer their best as opposed to professional interpreters who are paid handsomely.

In other words, professional interpreters are usually paid higher compared to unprofessional interpreters because they are aware of their status and that of their profession. The fact that they are aware of what they are supposed to earn as salary and other benefits they feel proud of their profession and can have negotiation power.

6. Recommendations Arising from the Research

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are set forth to ensure the promotion of the status of interpreting as a profession in Tanzania. The recommendations are tailored to specific stakeholders for smooth implementation.

6.1 Practising Interpreters

Practising interpreters who do not have specific training in interpreting should engage in professional development or continuing education. Professional development is crucial for the purposes of upskilling of practitioners, potential enlargement of client base and an image of the profession that is responsive to and knowledgeable of contemporary developments in the interpreting field.

Professional bodies play a critical role in the promotion of a profession. Practising interpreters should create a professional association that will unite them and act as a platform to channel the challenges facing the interpreting profession. The association will also play a key role of creating awareness to the public, regulating the profession and establishing a code of ethics. Other roles that interpreters can play to popularise their profession, under the umbrella of a professional body, include organising seminars, workshops and community outreach campaigns.

Practising interpreters should be engaged in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of professional interpreting and to advocate for the recognition of interpreters' rights. Some of the issues they can advocate for include working conditions and legal recognition of interpreting as a profession. By highlighting the critical role of interpreters in facilitating communication across languages, interpreters will contribute to elevate the status of interpreting as a valued profession.

Collaboration between interpreters with government institutions in promoting the professional status of interpreting is key. Interpreters should work closely with relevant government bodies such as BAKITA to develop policies, guidelines, and regulations that support the professionalization of interpreting. This collaboration should also be extended to participating in consultations on language-related policies and contributing expertise to legislative processes that affect interpreting services.

6.2 Interpreter Trainers

Trainers through their training institutions should consider offering an independent Master degree programme in interpreting studies. As Phelan (2001) argues that interpreter training programme should be at postgraduate level.

Raising awareness is also a task that training institutions through lecturers can do through dissemination of research findings. By disseminating research findings to the public they contribute to allay, for example, confusion between translation and interpretation as well as raising of awareness of the profession.

Another way trainers can contribute to raising status of the profession is through establishing training collaboration mechanisms with practising interpreters and clients/institutions. This is one of the ways of making training programmes more relevant. Bringing into the programme experts from the field comes with advantages of providing students with hands on experiences, creating networks and motivate students to aspire to become professionals.

6.3 BAKITA

As one of the policy implementation organs, BAKITA has a crucial role to play in elevating the status of interpretation and translation in Tanzania. In addition to organising refresher courses, BAKITA should widen its scope and mandate to become accrediting body for translators and interpreters seeking government accreditation, certification and recognition.

6.4 Clients

Internal clients being one of the important actors in the interpreting profession in Tanzania should consider hosting a forum (open day) that brings together interpreters, trainers, student interpreters and the general public. Such forum or platform will enlighten the general public regarding the interpreting profession. This will contribute to raising awareness regarding interpreting.

Furthermore, clients especially international organisations, based in Tanzania should play an advisory role and professional guidance to training institutions, interpreters and lecturers on issues related to the current state of the profession. It will be of paramount significance if these end-users could establish collaboration with training institutions considering that most of the international organizations and institutions use technology in their translation and interpretation activities.

6.5 Policymakers/Government

Despite the introduction of interpreting studies in secondary schools, the findings have revealed that there is no specific policy related to interpreting. The following recommendations are worth noting in this regard.

The government, through its relevant bodies including the Parliament and ministries, should formulate enabling policies that recognise interpreting as a profession in Tanzania. The government intervention through clear policies will create awareness of the profession among the stakeholders and the society. It is also important for the government to introduce employment opportunities for interpreters and translators in the ministries and government departments that require their services.

7. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of interpreting stakeholders in Tanzania regarding the current status of the profession. By addressing key challenges and capitalizing on available opportunities, it is possible to elevate the standards of interpreting in and enhance the overall professional status of the interpreting profession in Tanzania. The present study has argued that the promotion of the status of interpreting in Tanzania should take a multistakeholder approach. It entails practising interpreters, employers, members from academia and government institutions working together for promotion and recognition of the profession.

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