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Institutional norms in east African conference interpreting contexts

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Abstract

In any specialized field,the practioners of an art or science tend to develop norms that govern their practice.Such norms are developed in certain contexts and thereafter professionals operating in different spaces try to adapt them in their practice. Given the differences in socioeconomic and cultural contexts, in different geographical spaces it may be difficult to take norms developed in a particular context in their original form and superpose their use in another context. Institutional conference interpreting norms provide one such example.

Institutional norms in East African Institutions tend to influence the way interpreting is done in East African institutions and these norms seem very different from “established/ international” norms.The overall aim of this research is to study the geopolitics of interpreting by examining the differences in interpreting norms in different geopolitical spaces and to consider whether (East) Africa is a special geopolitical space in this context and if so,what the particularities are.This study particularly uses the perceptions of practising interpreters in order to establish whether the current work environment proposed in these institutions requires any improvement.

The study reveals that (East)Africa is a different geopolitical space with its own particularities and hence the answer to the questions as to whether AIIC norms and standards are inclusive and whether they take into account the needs and interests of all interpreters in the world today, is negative. At least with regards to (East) Africa, AIIC still has a lot to do for its impact to be felt and also in terms of taking into account the needs and interests of all interpreters.

Key Terms:

Norms, Institutions, Geopolitics, Ideology, In-house/staff interpreter, Freelance interpreter, East Africa[1], Directionality, Working conditions.

[1] East Africa in this report refers to the Eastern region of Africa with 20 countries including

- Burundi
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mozambique
- Réunion
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

(The United Nations Statistics Department, 2016)