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Church Interpreting in an Interdenominational Christian Context in Urban Johannesburg, M du Plessis

Abstract

The focus of the present study is church interpreting, which is commonly used in multilingual church environments and is usually performed by untrained, non-professional individuals, usually members of the congregation, who perceive interpreting as a voluntary community service. This study has been undertaken at the Mosaïek Church in Fairland, Johannesburg, an interdenominational Christian church. It is often assumed that anyone who speaks more than one language can be an interpreter; therefore, interpreting is not generally regarded as a profession by laypersons. However, research in interpreting studies demonstrates that interpreting demands skills, beyond bilingualism, that generally confer in interpreters the ability to convey messages. As a result, this study aims to fill the research gap in church interpreting studies, specifically in South Africa, to develop a training programme for church interpreters at Mosaïek Church and raise awareness about the profession. The researcher has recorded professional and non-professional interpreters' rendition of a recorded sermon, keeping as closely to a real-life situation as possible. The recordings have been transcribed and analysed to determine the coping strategies used by each participant, in order to create a training programme for this specific church's non-professional interpreters.