Sign Language Interpretation In Arab World: A Descriptive Analysis Of 20 Years Of Research

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Abstract

This study aimed to show the most prominent studies that dealt with interpretation and sign language interpreters in the Arab world. The study is utilized the descriptive Analysis method of 20 Years of Research. From 2000 to 2021, the topics covered by these studies, their methodology, and the countries in which these studies were conducted and were discussed. The results of the study showed that there is a weakness in the studies that dealt with interpretation in sign language in Arab thought. The study recommended that more studies should be done on the subject of sign language interpretation in the Arab world because of its great importance. In addition to, s ome of the titles and topics should spot the light the Arab world, or the researchers may not pay attention to them. For example, studying the performance of translators, accreditation of translators, li.censes to practice the profession and translators' certificates Countries where studies on must conduct or should increase the number of these studies interpretation and articles. Moreover, i ncreasing the focus on qualitative studies and mixed studies, as this is the modern trend and strengthof studies around the world .

Keywords: interpretation, sign language interpretation, sign language interpreters, Deaf.

Introduction

Communication is a crucial feature in the daily lives of both deaf and hard of hearing people. Information can only be transmitted through a common communicative, linguistic and cultural medium (Humphrey, Ross III, Clark, & Featherstone. 2020). According to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in 2021, there are approximately 72,000,000 deaf people in the world. Historically, deaf individuals have relied on the use of sign language to communicate with each other and with other members of the community, including hearing individuals. Since most hearing people do not know the language of sign communication is often difficult between deaf and hearing individuals without the help of source language interpreters. Therefore, sign language interpreters play a critical role as mediators by facilitating communication between deaf and hearing people in all aspects of life (Donne, 2012; MacDonald, 2015).

There have been many positive changes in the community's attitude towards and communication with the deaf community due to community efforts, as well as legislation passed in the United States (USA) in addition to the amount of rules which applied in the USA and other country to protect the rights of deaf individuals. Thus, these laws have guaranteed the right of deaf individuals to education from primary school to secondary school and then to study in higher education programs with equal access. Furthermore, these laws have helped the deaf community gain the right to work in many professions such as, the Education of All Children with Disabilities Act, Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2000 and the "Americans with

Disabilities Act" (ADA), These are according to the foreign versions, while for the Arabic ones the provision of Arabic interpreters in these settings. These rights have increased the demand for professional language translators to work in both educational and community settings around the world (Ball, 2007; Freeman & Rogers, 2010; Roziner & Shlesinger, 2010).

Some differences between sign language users and translators appear due to the difficulty of agreeing on a single sign language method and strategy. Alasadi and Abdulsada (2009) noted that sign language interpreters have a clear tendency to use the restricted (literal) method among many translators, based on the principle of the adequacy of the deaf and his good ability to analyze Linguistic information and understanding it is like other students who are not deaf, so there is no need for deep interpretation and translation with cultural considerations, for the deaf is part of the same culture and does not differ from it. The other trend is represented by the tendency of some translators to use the free (interpreted) translation method during interpreters based on the principle of plurality of language and the plurality of culture for the deaf, and that the deaf community has a language and culture that differs somewhat from the language and culture circulating in Jordan, and accordingly it is necessary to Interpreting information more deeply for the deaf to bring that information closer to his language and culture (Hussein, 2013).

There is a general agreement between sign language interpreters and researchers in the field of sign language that sign language interpreters are affected by several factors, including the availability of social skills of the sign language interpreter, a wide culture in the deaf community, and good sign skills, so the educational interpreter is considered bilingual and bilingual. This alone is not enough, as the educational interpreter must possess a set of tools and means to help him convey the audible information in a clear, acceptable and meaningful way to the other party (the deaf). Likewise, the interpreter must be compatible with the social values system of the deaf community, and this should be taken into consideration during interpreter. The linguistic structure and the social structure in the culture of the deaf must be realized by the educational interpreter in all situations (Vigor, 2012).

Over the years, sign language interpreters have evolved into a collaborative process between the interpreter and deaf individuals. There are three vital processes involved in sign language interpretation, including receiving the intended message, interpreting the word from the original language, and transmitting information in the target language (Metzger, Fleetwood, & Collins, 2004). The source language translator is an essential component of the processes identified above. Sign language interpreters have continued to evolve to provide effective interpreter capability for the deaf (Bentley-Sassaman, 2010; Daggett, 2014).

In the interest of the growing need and demand for qualified sign language interpreters to work with deaf individuals, sign language interpretation's practice as a professional profession has expanded to include related programs to ensure effective pedagogy for students and society at large. Completing an Interpreter Education Program (IEP) increases the qualifications of sign language interpreters in both educational and non-teaching settings (Shores et al., 2014; Yarger, 2001). It is also stated in Mendoza (2010) and Metzger (2005), there must be more effective and standardized teaching methods. For sign language interpreters in sign language programmers. In the United States, a degree in sign language interpretation is not enough to work as a professional sign language interpreter. It also requires that sign-language interpreters of English must undergo interpreter certification, which includes testing, training and interviews,

before beginning work in the field, as requirements vary by state (Godfrey, 2010), (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [RID], 2021) & (Witter- Merithew et al., 2005). This assessment process is based on a code of professional conduct (CPC) that covers the assessment of interpreters' knowledge and interpretation. The skills and the strengths and weaknesses of interpreters' roles and responsibilities (RID, 2021). Interpreters in most of the United States must undergo IEPs and accreditation regulations to become eligible. In some states, if they do not complete this process, they are not legally working as a professional translator, as this protects the rights of deaf individuals in terms of providing them with effective interpretation (Godfrey, 2010).

The field of interpretation can be seen from a variety of perspectives. The terms "conference interpretation" and "community interpretation" are used interchangeably. Sign Language Interpretation is frequently considered a different field from the rest of the field. Indeed, breaking down interpretation into categories based on the job, language pair, technique, model, or research approach is quite beneficial and offers the required foundation for many crucial operations (Pöchhacker, 2004). Teaching or studying the history of the field can arise. During what he placed empirical studies in the context of the fabric of studies, that have been woven together since the first empirical tests of interpretation conducted in 1950.However, any categorization must represent a specific point of view. For example, conference and community interpretations may differ in terms of the style of discourse. They may also converge in terms of research technique if quantitative studies with a focus on survey or empirical methodologies are required. As a result, practitioners, educators, students, and researchers benefit greatly from analyzing a topic from a range of perspectives.

This presentation will focus on one aspect of sign language interpretation that is sometimes adequately reserved for its category

within the discipline. Many comparisons have been made in the past between spoken and signed interpretation. According to Roberts (1987), spoken language translators have predominated in community conversational circumstances in recent history, whereas sign language interpretation has predominated in conference scenarios and other high-level settings. Roberts also claims that spoken language translators have been accorded some respect, possibly due to the environments in which they work. Sign language interpretation has frequently encountered linguistic biases or misunderstandings about the status of signed languages as complete language systems.

Whether these two factors remain current or not, one of the obvious differences between the work of source language translators and spoken language translators is the difference in status. That is, where most spoken language translators work primarily between two spoken languages, most Sign Language interpretations work between one spoken language and one sign language. Roziner and Shlesinger (2010) stated that this methodological distinction has ramifications for practice modality. Source language interpreters working in sequential mode, for example, must utilize their hands and eyes linguistically, which limits their capacity to engage in note-taking techniques used by spoken language interpreters. On the other hand, simultaneous audio input and output is an issue for spoken language interpreters.

The penultimate factor is to consider when distinguishing spoken and source language interpretation is where in spoken language interpretation scenarios. One would think that the major players would not understand each other's language. It may not be the case with source language interpreters who are frequently sign language interpreters' customers. Both languages are utilized in an interpreted event for Deaf bilinguals. Thus, source language interpreters may encounter circumstances in which one of the primary participants is already bilingual, which raises questions

regarding language contact and the concepts of free versus literal interpretation that has discussed in the field of translation and interpretation (Metzger, et al. 2004).

The Limit and Limitation of the Study

The total number of studies to examine is 44. These first specific empirical studies of sign language interpretation, which began in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the millennium, begin nearly twenty years after the first modern studies of spoken language were conducted. The 44 studies represented here were mainly selected from several sources, universities and refereed journals. This study covers two decades, divided into the net (2000 to 2021). The description of these studies, by two decades, will follow a summary and conclusion. The study also indicated for two studies which conducted in the 1980s in the Arab World. It is worth emphasizing three points about the studies included in this examination below. First, only those studies that appear in the data base or journal are included, and among those. So we mention that this study has relied on studies that appear in the engines and scientific journals of the Saudi Digital Library (DSL). Second, only those experimental and data-based studies are included in this examination. Finally, the purpose of this examination is to begin to develop a sense of studies in the field of sign language interpretation (SLI) and the analysis does not include a critique of the quality of the studies examined. A qualitative analysis of this kind is beyond the scope of this paper.

The field of interpretation can consider from numerous perspectives. Conference interpreting and community interpreting is often considered separate from one another, and further still, signed language interpretation. Sign language interpreting is sometimes identified as a separate category within the field. Pöchhacker (2004) stated that dissecting interpretation into taxonomies related to the task, language pair or modality, paradigm, or research methodology, is quite useful and provides the necessary foundation from which numerous significant activities can spring such as teaching or studying the history of the field, or from which empirical studies can be contextualized within the tapestry of studies. They have been woven together since the first empirical examinations of interpreting were conducted in the 1950s (Donner, 2012).

Nevertheless, any given taxonomy necessarily reflects a particular point of view. For example, where conference and community interpreting might diverge about discourse genre, they might also converge about research methodology if one were to focus on quantitative studies focusing on survey or experimental methods. For this reason, repeated examination of a field, with a variety of points of view, is quite useful to practitioners, educators, students, and scholars.

Based on the scarcity of Arabic studies and researchers that dealt with the subject of the study, sign language interpretation in the Arab world (This study adopts the descriptive approach by referring to various previous studies that took place twenty years ago in the Arab world), and accordingly the researcher hopes that it will be one of the first studies that dealt with the subject of the study.

Questions of Study

Based on the problem and objectives of the study, the following questions can be asked:

1. What are the most prominent topics dealt with in Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world?

2. What are the most prominent research methodologies used in Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world?

3. What are the most prominent countries

in which Sign Language Interpretation studies have been applied in the Arab world?

4. What are the most prominent languages used in writing Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world?

Objective of study

This study aims to:

1. A statement of the most prominent topics dealt with in Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world.

2. A statement of the most prominent research methodologies used in Sign Language Interpretation studies in Sign Language in the Arab world.

3. A statement of the most prominent countries in which Sign Language Interpretation studies have been applied in the Arab world.

4. A statement of the most prominent languages used in writing Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world.

Method

Literature search procedures

Various search procedures were employed to find the relevant articles. A computer-assisted search, a variety of databases was conducted, including Google Scholar, Academic Search Elite, and Education Full-Text centre from 2000 to 2021. The keywords used in the search procedure included interpretation, sign language interpretation, sign language interpreters, Arab countries. This search resulted in 44 potential studies related to sign interpretation. After, further investigation, all the studies met the inclusion criteria.

Criteria for inclusion

Studies used in this paper had to meet the following criteria to be involved in this literature review: studies had to have been published in a peer-reviewed journal between 2000 and 2021 to focus only on the most recent technological practices. Although, studies had to meet the purpose of the study which are finding out the most prominent topics dealt with in Sign Language Interpretation studies in the Arab world, research methodologies used in Sign Language Interpretation studies in Sign Language in the Arab world. Additionally, the most prominent countries in which Sign Language Interpretation studies have been applied in the Arab world, and the most prominent languages used in writing Sign Language Interpretation studies in sign language in the Arab world.

Result

Theoretical and Empirical studies of SLI: 2000-2021

In the adulterous period from 2000 to 2021, several empirical studies took place in the Arab countries and there were a number of theoretical and empirical studies that were carried out in the Arab faith. The researcher was able to obtain a number of studies that match the conditions of this study.

Topics from 2000-2021

Some many titles and topics were in the period of 2000-2021, and the objectives differed according to the data of the titles and according to the area to be studied or according to the nature of the study or the target group of this study.

There were many titles and topics that were in the time period, and the goals differed according to the different titles data and according to the region to be studied, as this period did not differ from the previous one in terms of the titles or topics that were covered, and compared to studies around the world, we note that there is more diversification in terms of topics, which indicates that interest in the subject of

the study is still enjoyed by countries around the world.

Table 1: Theoretical and Empirical studies of SLI: 2000 – 2021:

| N=44		#	%
Topic	Interpreter Effectiveness/Characteristics	8	18
	Source-to-Target Comparison	4	9
	Language contact: free vs literal	3	7
	Working Conditions/ Occupational Safety	6	14
	Educational Interpreting	9	20
	Conference Interpreting	5	12
	Legal Interpreting	7	16
	Job burnout	2	4

We notice from Table (1) that there are divisions in the titles of research and studies for the period from 2000 to 2021, where the aspects of Educational Interpreting and Interpreter Effectiveness got the highest percentages (20%, 18%), while each of the Job burnout and Language Contact at the lowest rates (4%, 7%).

We also note from the above table that the number of studies that dealt with the Source-to-Target Comparison with a percentage of (9%), Working Conditions with a percentage of (14%), while the studies that fell under the subject of Legal Interpreting with a percentage of (16%). Finally, the section of Working Conditions/ Occupational has three studies were a percentage of (14%).

This can be seen from the figure (1)

Figure (1) topic of studies of SLI: 2000 – 2021
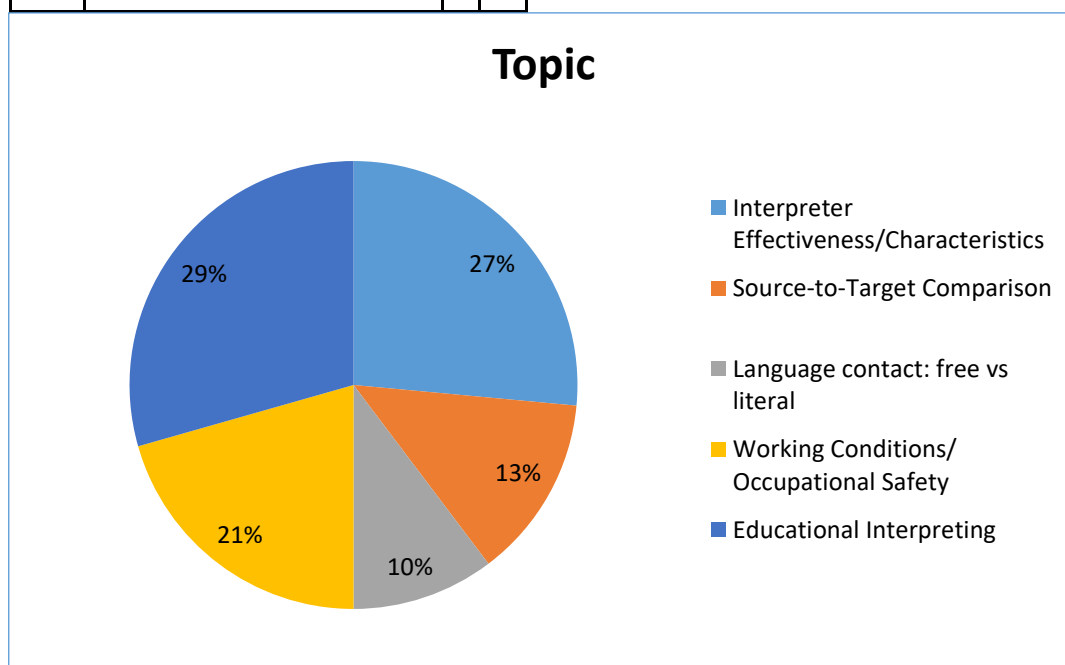
In comparison with the studies that dealt with translation in sign language around the world for the same time period, we note that as for the topics, there was a diversity in their presentation, better than the studies that were in the Arab belief, while the number of studies reached 37 for the period from 2000 to 2005, which indicates that there is more discussion of the issue than the Arab countries. Between 2000 and 2005, one new

subject develops, bringing the total number of topics in the 1990s to twelve. A qualitative, contextual study of question-answer clustering pairs in an American Sign Language sermon is introduced in this new topic, religious interpretation (Richey, 2003).

Metzger (2006) posited that Scholars of signed language interpreting have produced a substantial amount of study over the last four decades. This work covers a wide range of topics, from a psycho-linguistic to a sociolinguistics standpoint, from analysis methods of the mental processes in which signed language interpreters engage to evaluations of the management and interaction framework of interpreted events, from linguistically-oriented studies to substantial literature on aspects of the environment in specific settings or various applications of the data interpretation process that impact on the flow and outcome of the analyzing process. These contributions to our knowledge of sign language interpretation do not operate in a vacuum, nor do they represent challenges that are unique to sign language interpreters. This study analyses major studies in sign language interpretation research and situates them within the broader context of public analyzing studies.

Methodologies between 2000-2021

Methodological approaches in the 2000-2021 studies are differentiate in terms of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, and in addition to the percentage of the survey- or nature-based studies, the shifts are small (less than 5%). Methodological approaches in the 2000-2021 studies are differentiate in terms of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, and in addition to the percentage of the survey- or nature-based studies. However, the percentage of empirical studies drops from a third to less than a quarter between 2000-2021. It is possible to point out that there is a lack of qualitative studies in the Arab world compared to

studies that worked in the world. It assumes that there will be more focus on this type of study in the future.

Table 2: Theoretical and Empirical studies of SLI: 2000 - 2021 methodology

N=44		#	%
Methodology	Quantitative	7	16
	Qualitative	8	18
	Mixed method	8	18
	Survey	14	32
	Experimental	7	16

Table (2) shows that the highest percentage is for the Survey is (32%) and Experimental is (16%), followed by percentage of Mixed method and Qualitative score of (18%), while the Quantitative with a percentage of (16%). Two studies on cognitive processing are worth mentioning because of their important influence on both understanding research and practice.

One Canadian research on legal interpretation investigates the role of simultaneous and sequential modes in legal settings, finding that these modes must be properly selected and employed within the legal process (Russell, 2000). The second (Napier, 2002) is a survey of exclusions in interpreted texts from a university lecture supplier, which explored as a functional behavioral processing error (for example, insufficient lag time), and is done from a Discussion of issues Interaction viewpoint in which the inconsistencies are based totally on how aware the interlocutor is of them. In addition to other forms of omissions, Napier discovers that interpreters make purposeful omissions that mean to promote the quality of their target texts (including those omissions of which the interpreter is not even aware). These two studies have consequences for interpretation practice and training, and they pose problems for additional investigation.

Figure (2) Methodology of studies of SLI: 2000 – 2021
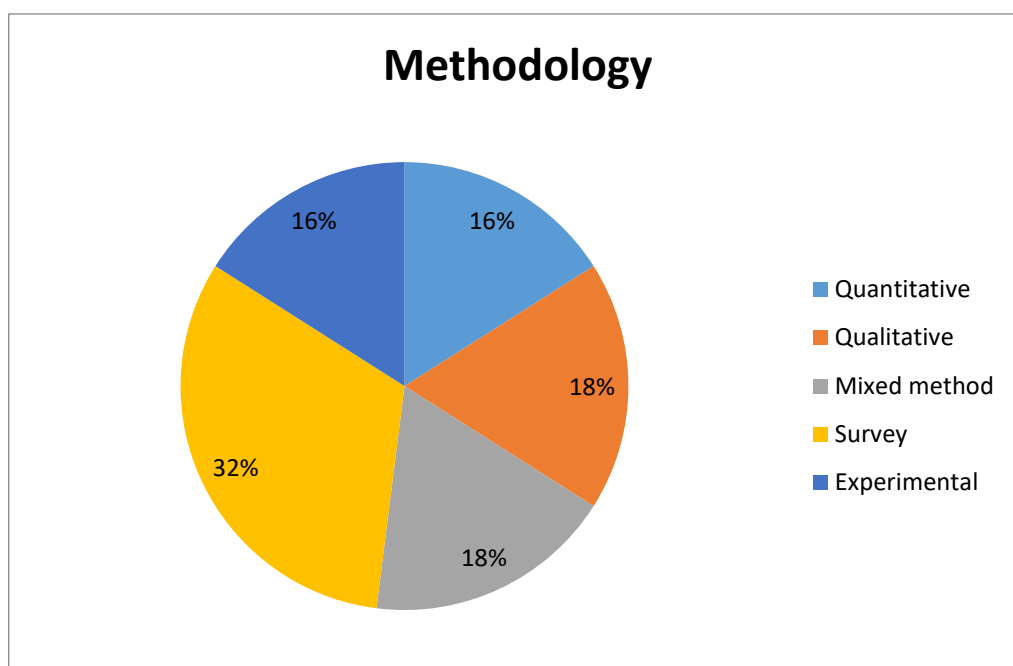
Furthermore, one of the studies on interpreter efficacy and features examines customer experience with reference to the extremely growing and highly widespread usage of video conferencing to link sign language interpreters to distant events (Steinberg, 2003). Another topic worth exploring is the usage of video relay services, which employ videophone technology to offer translators for deaf and hearing callers.

The international study examines the Ethical guidelines for sign language translators in 12 countries using a quantitative and qualitative research survey (Rodriguez & Guerrero, 2002). In research done in the United Kingdom, Tate and Turner (2002) explore the question of interpreting function and ethics. In the Canadian and the UK study, legal interpretation international studies touch on several topics (Russell, 2000) & (Turner & Taylor 2001). While qualitative research is less frequent in studies from prior decades in the United States. It is found in other countries, such as Harrington (2005) provides a qualitative study of interpreters operating in post-secondary settings in the United Kingdom.

Countries represented between 2000-2021

Studies for this period of time were distributed among ten different countries in the Arab world among 22 countries in the region, which indicates that there is a weakness in dealing with the subject, while at the level of the world, the study of this subject has been diversified by ten countries, which indicates that there is greater interest in the countries of the world due to the importance of the subject.

**Table 3: Theoretical and Empirical studies of SLI: 2000 - 2021 countries represented**

N=44		#	%
Countries	Kingdom Saudi Arabia	14	33
	Jordan	6	14
	Iraq	3	7
	Algeria	2	4
	Tunisia	3	7
	The United Arab Emirates	3	7

	Egypt	8	18
	Syria	2	4
	Bahrain	1	2
	Morocco	2	4

We note from Table (3) that the concentration of studies was in the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia for the years (2000 to 2021), where the percentage amounted to (33%), while the least studies for the same period were in Bahrain with a percentage of (2%) and Morocco, Syria, and Algeria the percentage were (4%). While the percentages of Jordan is (14%) and United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Tunisia are (7%) , as well as the percentage of Egypt is (18%).

Figure (3) Countries of studies of SLI: 2000 – 2021
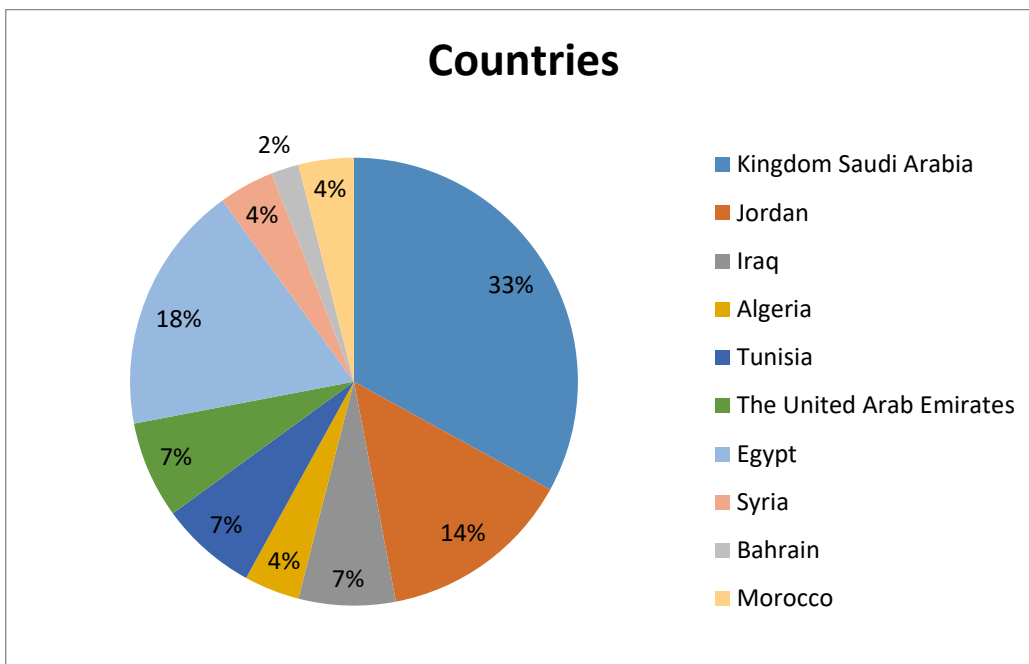
The language between 2000 – 2021

This section of the study contains data regarding the written language of the selected empirical studies.

Table 4: Theoretical and Empirical studies of SLI: 2000 - 2021 Language represented

N=44		#	%
Language	Arabic	28	64
	English	12	27
	French	4	9

The language of research for the period 2000-2021 was divided between Arabic, French and English.

The language of research for the period 2000-2021 was divided between Arabic, French and English, where the percentage of the Arabic language was (64%) while the percentage of English language was (27%) and finally the French language got a percentage (9%) of the research in the same period.

Figure (4) language of studies of SLI: 2000 – 2021

Language

Arabic 64%
English 27%
French 9%
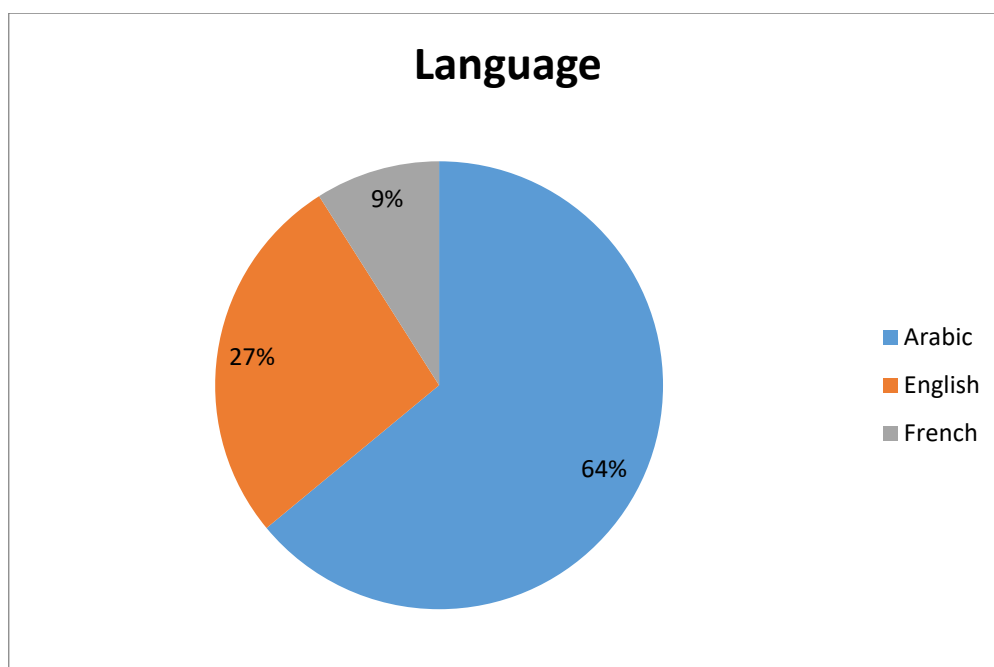
Summary of 2000-2021

This period from 2000-2021 witnessed many Arab studies that dealt with the title of the study, where most of these researches were concentrated in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the total number of researches for this period reached 29, and Educational Interpreting was one of the most important topics dealt with during this period, in addition to the fact that what Almost half of these studies dealt with Quantitative in their methodology, and most of these studies were in Arabic. Alzubairi (2017) stated that the outcomes also hinted a statistically significant connection between Adaptive perfectionism, and manipulative, burnout, and perceived stress. There are no importance varieties in burnout and perceived stress among sample research in all the variable. The researcher adopted the perfect Scale-Revised.

Albash, et al (2021) posited that t he effect of social structures between academic staff and sign language interpreters in higher education institutions for deaf and hard of hearing students is an important matter that determines the performance and continuation of these programs. The primary goal of this study was to determine the nature of social relations between faculty members and sign language translators through in-depth interviews with participants. Where data was collected (10) using the phenomenological approach. The research recommended that both faculty members and sign language interpreters undertake methods to increase the quality of their current social relationships. Elsayed (2015) said that t he purpose of this study is to determine the most crucial skills that sign language interpreters must have to improve their effectiveness. It also attempts to figure out how to modify it from an Islamic viewpoint to fulfil the deaf community's religious demands as well the unique issues they encounter in their communities. From an Islamic perspective, the research challenge is exhibited in the performance level of sign language interpreters. The following are the findings of the study: Identifying the most significant skills that sign language interpreters must have to improve their effectiveness in interpreting Sign Language from an Islamic perspective. It also indicated the efficiency of the recommended curriculum in building sign language interpreting competencies to teach the deaf on religious topics.

Alamri (2021) added that during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the study intends to investigate the extent of job burnout among Sign Language Interpreters for the deaf in Gulf Cooperation Council nations. Based on these characteristics, it also seeks to distinguish between different types of work burnout and their most common causes (country, the presence of deaf cases among family members and relatives). Sixty-three male and female SLIs from Gulf Cooperation Council states make up the study collection. The Maslach Burnout Inventory- Human Services Survey was utilized as a measurement instrument to meet the study's goals. Furthermore, during the Coronavirus epidemic, the questionnaire was utilized to assess the different types of job burnout and its reasons among sign language interpreters in Gulf Cooperation Council entities.

Alahmed (2021) stated that t he goal of this study was to learn about the accreditation practices of sign language interpreters in Saudi Arabia. The most significant barriers to signinterpreters meanings and understandings obtaining accreditation are in their accreditation. It also included a presented perspective for constructing accreditation practices. The researcher used the questionnaire and interview as tools for the study as the awarding structures for accreditation in Saudi Arabia were interviewed, namely a committee of experts and interpreters of sign language in the Saudi Federation for Deaf Sports, the Saudi Society for Hearing Impairment, the Saudi Society of Sign Language Interpreters and seven language translators.The inclusion of a deaf individual on the accreditation committee, a performance exam in converting the spoken language into a sign language, and the lack of universal accreditation requirements are the most prevalent practices of adopting the Saudi sign language interpreter.

Wit, Crasborn and Napier (2021) proposed the worldwide profile of International Sign (IS) conference interpreters. IS is a collection of changeable communicative practices utilized by deaf people in international situations rather than a language. Furthermore, international institutions and organizations provide. International sign interpreting services to increase accessibility. IS is developing and evolving deaf people's interactions with various sign languages. Because international sign is non-conventional, it needs highly specialized interpreting abilities. IS conference interpreters now have limited and training possibilities, and a new accreditation system implemented. This research contains survey data from current IS interpreters, which gives information about their characteristics and qualifications.

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for this study below:

- Based on these conclusions, researchers should take into their consideration to focus on their researches on the importance of accreditation certificates for sign language interpreters, licenses to practice the profession, as well the performance of sign interpreters.

- To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could focus on the methods which may use in the future studies by focusing on the qualitative method, mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative), and survey.

- Further research is needed to determine the causes of the lack of sign language interpretation in the Arab World.

- Further studies is needed to find out the effects of inclusion deaf people

in the society by offering sign language interpreters for them.

- Researchers should spot the light on the sign interpretation in the Arab world.

Conclusion

This paper identified a statement of the most prominent topics addressed by sign language translation studies in the Arab world, with an indication of the frequencies and percentages. A monumental task at best, although screening was limited by data sources (international bibliography and professional journal) and availability. Therefore, this paper only provides a snapshot of what has been extracted so far, with studies compared over time (by decade) and grouped based on topic, research method, country and language of research.

Most of the studies that dealt with the subject were concentrated in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where they obtained the highest percentages, and there was a development in the number of studies for the years 2000 to 2021 and a significant increase in them, as the number of studies that were subject to the conditions of this study reached 44 studies, most of which were in Arabic, it reached approximately (68%) of all studies.

We note from this study that there is a development in the number of studies 2000-2021 that dealt with the subject of sign language translation. The number of countries in which such studies have been carried out, which indicates an increase in interest in this type of studies. Thus, the tendency to be one of the most important topics in the future.

Accordingly, this study recommends the necessity of conducting more analytical studies that deal with the subject of the study, while expanding the research area and reducing the conditions for completing this type of study.

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