
Jaana Vuori, Sari Hokkanen, Marta Choroszewicz & Anni-Kaisa Leminen
Ethnic inequality among public service interpreters

In the article, we analyse the working conditions of public service interpreters and review how interpreters from different ethnic-linguistic backgrounds experience the profession's pros and cons in Finland. We compare interpreters whose mother tongue is either Finnish or Swedish and interpreters with other linguistic backgrounds. We have analysed the survey responses of 125 public interpreters through cross-tabulation. Although the interpreters are generally satisfied with their work, they have experienced negative attitudes and discrimination, and they report some interpreting-specific problems. Overall, the interpreters' professional positions are quite low and most work part-time. Interpreters' positions vary, to an extent, in relation to their linguistic backgrounds. Public-service interpreters work with ethnic minorities, and many interpreters themselves represent an ethnic-linguistic minority. The ethno-specific nature of the profession has a negative effect on interpreters' working conditions, causes skilled interpreters to leave the profession, and hinders the equal treatment of migrants in society.