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Accessibility of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Viewers to UAE TV Content Through Sign Language Interpreting

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Abstract:

Despite significant advances in the quality of television clips in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), access to content for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals has been limited to news and religious programming for years. This study uses three research methods: a focus group of nine deaf individuals, an analytical questionnaire administered to 100 deaf individuals, and interviews with five certified sign language interpreters to identify challenges and potential solutions for creating an inclusive media environment for individuals with hearing disabilities. Our research found that programs translated into sign language are limited to news and religious programs. The main obstacle remains the small size of the interpreter box on the screen. The translators in this study, echoing the sentiments of the deaf community, emphasized the paramount importance of social inclusion before considering technological solutions. It is crucial not to overlook the needs and requirements of any segment of society when developing technological solutions.

Keywords: Media Accessibility, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, UAE TV Content, Sign Language, Interpreters.

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1. Introduction

Arabic countries have several sign languages, including Jordanian, Saudi, Egyptian, and Yemeni. Arabic sign language (ArSL) was standardized in 1999 by the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO; LAS, 2000). Hand gestures, lip patterns, and facial expressions are part of sign language, independent language. A finger spelling method spells words or names not built into the language's vocabulary.

Translation studies have taken on an increasingly sociological and technological focus today, and accessibility for disadvantaged groups like people with disabilities or minorities has become a compelling study topic. In the 21st century, new media play a central role in how society works, including how we exchange information and who gets access to it. Accessibility is no longer viewed as a concept referring to special services for people with disabilities but rather as solutions that consider the needs of everyone, even those with disabilities. As Gambier (2003) notes, accessibility is now the keyword in screen translation, an all-encompassing concept of audiovisual translation. We are at an essential point in the media revolution at which legislation, research, and technology are working together to ensure equal access to the media. Regarding population, sign language communities constitute a minority of deaf people. They also include their families and the professionals who play a vital role in their cultural and linguistic development. The findings of our study, which highlight the challenges and potential solutions for creating an inclusive media environment for individuals with hearing disabilities, are particularly significant in this context.

2. Literature Review

This review examines studies, reports, and theoretical frameworks to illuminate the state of media accessibility, identify areas for improvement, and explore different strategies for sign language interpretation. Additionally, it investigates technological advancements in media accessibility to provide insights into how these developments benefit the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

2.1. Sign Language

Around 1950, sign language interpretation appeared on television (Ladd, 2007). Along with subtitling and audio description, it is considered one of the three mature TV accessibility services (Bosch-Baliarda et al., 2020; European Commission, 2010). There are more than 300 sign languages worldwide, so hiring their services remains challenging because of a lack of need for more in this field (Adeyanju et al., 2021). Different geographical locations have their sign language and no universal sign language (Ghalib, 2022). There are also similarities between ArSLs and other established sign languages, such as links between form and meaning that are usually pictorial, iconic, or both (Abdel-Fattah, 2005). Deaf communities in countries that share the same language might use different sign languages if they were not in contact when these languages were developed. This is the case regarding ArSL (Adeyanju et al., 2021). Arabic was expected to have one sign language instead of many. Outside deaf communities, people and scholars cannot appreciate having other sign language vernaculars similar to what happens in spoken Arabic now, with so many vernaculars (rather than one standard form). As a result, attempts are being made to develop a standard ArSL variety, which has not been successful so far (Abdel-Fattah, 2005).

2.2. Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Neves (2008) noted that deaf people are not homogenized but rather are stratified based on their levels of education and literacy, the age at which they acquired their first language, their level of deafness, their use of hearing aids, their knowledge of spoken languages and their level of general knowledge. Both deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers frequently complain about how different their ideal subtitles should be because their perspectives differ. It is still worthwhile to pursue subtitles that would satisfy the majority of receivers, even though these two audiences would benefit from substantially different subtitles (Díaz-Cintas et al., 2007). There are two types of hearing loss: congenital and acquired (Hawkins, 2009), Depending on the degree of hearing loss, there are four main categories: mild (26 - 40dB), moderate (41 - 60 dB), severe (61 - 80 dB), and profound (81+ dB; WHO, 2017). Regarding the onset of hearing loss, there are three types: pre-lingual, prelingual, and post-lingual (Rogers, 2020). When a child is born or before learning a language (2 - 3 years of age), they experience pre-lingual hearing loss; prelingual hearing loss occurs when they acquire a language (between 3 and 5 years old); and post-lingual hearing loss occurs after they have acquired their first language (aged 5+). As a result of the degree and onset of hearing loss, subtitle processing is directly impacted, as well as literacy and reading skills, which directly impacts language development (Sirés, 2016).

2.3. Interpreters as a Bridge

As the deaf community's rights gained international recognition in the 1980s, signing language interpreting became recognized as a profession. Wehrmeyer (2014) reported that deaf audiences have difficulty understanding hearing interpreters. Signified language interpreting (SLI) refers to interpreting between one sign language and another and is sometimes also known as visual language interpreting. A sign language interpreter is employed when deaf signers and non-deaf, non-signing 'hearing' people interact. It is often called a 'cradle-to-grave' profession, one of SLI's unique features. Even when deaf individuals are bilingual in a signed and written or spoken language, interpreters remain with them throughout their lives because they cannot hear the majority spoken language (Napier & Leeson, 2016). Sign language interpreters are, thus, essential mechanisms by which deaf people in any society can achieve equal access and opportunities (Mäkipää & Hämesalo, 1993).

2.4. Accessibility as a Goal

Concerning television accessibility in general, as well as subtitles in particular, it may be best to see TV accessibility through the lens of providing accessibility solutions for four distinct groups that should be categorized in quite different ways: profoundly deaf - whose first language is sign language and their second language is written text; the oral deaf who identifies with the spoken language as their first language and considers themselves to be part of the hearing community, despite having very little or no hearing left; those who are late-deafened have acquired deafness to some degree, but have a memory of hearing; and the hard-of-hearing, who can hear to a certain extent. They may all need different services and have different needs sub-groups (Neves, 2007). Throughout the 21st century, media access is an

integral part of cultural life. Although some broadcasters provide subtitles to address access issues, the issue of literacy comes into play: Many people with hearing impairments cannot comprehend written content when presented in written form (Powers et al., 1998). Among audio-visual translations (AVT), accessibility is a crucial concept. It is a legal and technical issue and a concept that shifts how translations are evaluated to optimize their user-friendliness, software, websites, and other applications. The criteria include acceptability, legibility, readability (for subtitles), synchronicity (for dubbing, voiceover, and free commentary), and relevance, which describes which information is being conveyed, deleted, or added (Gambier, 2016). As a broader concept, accessibility represents more than compensating for sight and hearing impairments; it involves multiple ways of engaging the senses to make tangible and digital realities accessible to everyone (Rogers, 2020). Media accessibility is more inclusive and empathic when it is universal because it makes everyone (with or without disabilities) share the same need to be able to access original content. The concept of media accessibility is not limited to the provision of access to content created by people who do not have disabilities. It also entails granting them access to the process of creation itself (Pablo Romero-Fresco, 2018)).

2.5. New Technologies for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

As a result of the advent of accessible video recording technology is becoming more accessible than ever to record, edit, and share sign language footage for teaching or research (Napier & Leeson, 2016). which has led to a positive effect on sign language literacy. Additionally, technological devices that enable video communication (e.g., smartphones, tablets, webcams, and video conference facilities) increase the chances of sign language users communicating directly. Schäffer (2019) has used hololens

since it was released. The research examines the potential for Augmented Reality interpreters to be integrated into TV+HoloLens systems for signing language interpretation. Researchers primarily aim to understand how members of the BSL and DGS communities respond to new sign language interpretations through a HoloLens optical head-mounted display. The study participants pointed out that the HoloLens was not yet suitable for this type of use because of its technical limitations. In South Africa, Wehmeyer (2014) examined deaf and hearing adults' viewing habits while watching interpreted news broadcasts using eye-tracking software. This study has shown that deaf viewers pay the most attention to the interpreter and access picture materials secondarily but do not use subtitles or lip-reading very frequently. Based on Wehmeyer's (2014) research, viewing patterns seem to be influenced more by picture density than comprehension. The author confirms that deaf viewers use interpreters as primary sources of information. However, she also questions the effectiveness of subtitles as an alternative source when an interpreter is present.

2.6. Deaf People and the Media

The relationship between individuals and the media constantly evolves, influenced by advancements, societal attitudes, and efforts to improve accessibility. Understanding this relationship is crucial to assessing the inclusivity and accessibility of media content for individuals with hearing difficulties. In the past, deaf individuals faced challenges when trying to access media content. Before the availability of subtitles and sign language interpretation on television, they were primarily excluded from consuming media. According to Kyle and Woll (1985), the introduction of televised sign language interpretation in the 1950s was a milestone that provided a means for deaf individuals to access information and entertainment.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, accessibility is the central concept used because when discussing accessing information and quality, we discuss accessibility. We can also use the old uses and gratification theory. Users' reasons for using media are explained by the fact that the media and the public are active recipients. The media does not passively deliver content to individuals; instead, it reaches them directly based on their needs. Another concept we used in this paper is pluralism. This critical concept declares that a plural media system must reflect society's diversity and guarantee universal access to media content for social inclusion (García-Prieto et al., 2022). Through all these concepts, we can understand the needs of deaf viewers as media consumers regarding high-quality media content.

Media accessibility is centered around ensuring that everyone can access multimedia content, including those facing challenges due to disabilities. It involves a range of practices, theories, technologies, and tools that aim to remove these barriers. According to Richart MaRset (2020), media accessibility goes beyond making existing content available; it also involves incorporating accessibility into the content creation.

The Uses and Gratification theory offers a framework for understanding how people actively utilize media to fulfill their needs and desires. According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), this theory suggests that individuals who consume media choose media sources based on their needs, such as information, personal identity, social integration, or entertainment. This theory is particularly relevant for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community as it helps explain their media consumption patterns.

Media pluralism ensures that a society's media system reflects its diversity. As García Prieto et al. (2022) pointed out, media pluralism aims to create a media landscape that embraces and represents the voices and needs of groups within society, including marginalized or minority communities. When it comes to people who are hard of hearing, community media pluralism emphasizes the importance of inclusivity in content and delivery. It advocates for representing these communities in media programming and making content accessible through sign language, subtitles, and other adaptive technologies. By adopting this approach, not only does the media become more diverse in its content, but it is also inclusive in its accessibility, thus promoting social integration and equal representation for all community members regardless of their hearing abilities.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

A questionnaire and focus group discussion will determine the extent to which deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers are satisfied with Emirati television programs. By focusing on value and quality rather than numbers, the quantitative results will be converted to qualitative ones. We contacted specialized organizations for people with special needs to obtain a sample of deaf people to facilitate the selection process for the deaf target audience, whose ages ranged from 13 to 65. A sub-target audience of sign language interpreters has been established to help people understand the sign language shown on the screen, emphasizing quality rather than quantity. We will conduct individual interviews to assess the quality of the screen translation. Sign language interpreters can provide professional first-hand information and report specific feedback from their deaf consumers.

3.2. Research Problem

The accessibility of all UAE TV programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers throughout the content still needs to be studied. Because accessibility objectives like social integration and the elimination of dependency barriers constantly evolve with the changes in our environment, and most importantly, because of how we perceive this, accessibility remains an open concept. It is also essential to identify the challenges media professionals face in order to understand the deaf community, which aims to raise awareness of their informational and entertainment needs. The study focuses on the most critical aspects of media accessibility, including a 'pick and choose' feature that allows viewers to select specific content and subtitles on the screen.

3.3. Purpose of the Study

The research aims to identify solutions that benefit deaf viewers and television channels. In addition to raising awareness of the importance of media presence for people with disabilities, using media accessibility in UAE TV content raises the status of Emirati media in the global media market. Additionally, the need for sign language interpretation on screens opens up a possibility for deaf community members to participate in media forums.

3.4. Objectives of the Study

The following were the study objectives:

- Deepen understanding of the difficulties faced by deaf viewers through TV content and media itself.
- Examine the quality of TV sign language interpretation by deaf viewers.
- Understand how sign language interpreters sign programs such as news.

- Confirm that the purpose of TV channels is to bring information from society to society.
- Understand how new technologies contribute to providing high-quality sign language.
- Deepen understanding of using accessibility concepts to help deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

3.5. Sampling

Deaf viewers and sign interpreters will be chosen through cooperation with relevant associations, such as Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, Zayed Higher Organization for People of Determination, UAE Hand speakers, Althiqa Club, UAE Deaf Association, the United Ara Emirates' Government portal, Ministry of Community Development, and other institutions. We expect the number of participants in the focus group discussions to be between 8 and 10.

Three TV channels are covered: Abu Dhabi TV channel, Dubai TV channel, and Sharjah Broadcasting Authority. They were chosen because of their importance in UAE society and because they are the most viewed channels.

Quantitative data is not being targeted in this study due to the criticism of how translation statistics are presented on the screen, overlooking the accessibility of viewers to information.

The questionnaires with deaf participants covered the following items:

- A deaf viewer has difficulties accessing TV content through sign language.
- A deaf viewer needs sign language interpretation for all TV programs.

- TV programs that require sign language interpretation.
- Quality and effectiveness of media translators on screen.

The interviews with sign interpreters covered the following items:

- A deaf viewer's difficulties in understanding sign language interpretation.
- A deaf viewer needs sign language interpretation for all TV programs.
- A relationship between media organizations and deaf people through the interpreters.
- Cooperation between media professionals and translators in producing a high-quality integrated program.
- Translators' recommendations on the importance of sign language.

3.6. Research Questions

1. What are the ratings of deaf TV viewers' satisfaction with the content presented on UAE TV channels?
2. What are the most common programs that support on-screen sign language translation? Are entertainment programs included?
3. Regarding sign language interpretation on the Emirati screen, what challenges do deaf viewers face in understanding UAE TV content?
4. How do sign language interpreters help convey important information to deaf viewers?
5. In what ways do media professionals struggle to understand the needs of deaf viewers?

4.Results

4.1. Survey

An analytical questionnaire was conducted to assess the level of accessibility for deaf users. One hundred deaf individuals participated in the questionnaire, distributed via email and social media sites of organizations such as Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, Zayed Higher Organization for People of Determination, Dubai Club for the Disabled, and Ajman Club.

Table 1 displays the gender distribution of the participants. Of the 100 participants, 30% were male, and 70% were female.

Table 1: Gender of the Participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	30%
Female	70	70%
Total	100	100%

A written question was developed to determine the deaf community's preferences in television programming. It has been observed that news, religious, sports, heritage, educational, and series programs are popular among them.

Table 2 contains an outline of the experience of deaf viewers regarding the simultaneous handling of footage and translation. A majority of respondents (85%) reported that they have experience with simultaneous handling, while 15% indicated otherwise.

Table 2: Deaf Viewer Experience: Simultaneous Handling of Footage and Translation

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	85	85%
No	15	15%

Table 3 presents the assessment of the effectiveness of the non-Emirati sign language interpreter regarding clarity, accuracy, and use of Emirati language. Most respondents (91%) affirmed the effectiveness, while 9% indicated otherwise.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Non-Emirati Sign Language Interpreter: Clarity, Accuracy, and Use of Emirati Language

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	91%
No	9	9%

Table 4 outlines the preferred media sources for information during disasters and diseases. The majority of respondents (76%) indicated social media sites as their preferred source, followed by TV (19%) and family and friends (5%).

Table 4: Preferred Media Source for Information during Disasters and Diseases

	Frequency	Percentage
TV	19	19%
Social media sites	76	76%
Family and friends	5	5%

Table 5 assesses Emirati television's accessibility for deaf individuals regarding information and entertainment. 42% of respondents affirmed accessibility, while 58% indicated otherwise.

Table 5: Accessibility of Emirati Television for Deaf Individuals: Information and Entertainment

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	42%
No	58	58%

Table 6 outlines the primary factors contributing to the absence of translation on Emirati television. The majority of respondents (66%) identified the lack of interpreters as a critical factor, followed by the lack of community awareness of the deaf category (25%) and the lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category (9%).

Table 6: Primary Factors Contributing to the Absence of Translation on Emirati Television

	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of interpreters	66	66%
Lack of community awareness of the deaf category	25	25%
Lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category	9	9%

Table 7 displays the deaf community's preferences for television programs concerning content and format. Most respondents (76%) preferred all the above options, including news, comedy, cultural, and tourist programs. A smaller percentage had specific preferences, with 8% for news programs, 2% for comedy programs, 11% for cultural programs, and 3% for tourist programs.

Table 7: Preferred Television Program for Deaf Community: Content and Forma

	Frequency	Percentage
News program	8	8%
Comedy program	2	2%
Cultural program	11	11%
Tourist program	3	3%
all the above	76	76%

Table 8 presents responses regarding the potential of robotic sign language interpreters to enhance translation through hand movements and facial gestures. 29% of respondents expressed affirmation (yes), while 71% were skeptical (no).

Table 8: Robotic Sign Language Interpreters: Enhancing Translation through Hand Movements and Facial Gestures

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	29%
No	71	71%

Table 9 reflects opinions on the balance between technological solutions and human involvement in message delivery. 26% of respondents supported the idea (yes), while 74% opposed it (no).

Table 9: Balancing Technological Solutions and Human Involvement in Message Delivery

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	26%
No	74	74%

The questionnaire concluded with an opportunity for participants to suggest solutions that would enable information to be accessible to the deaf community seamlessly and efficiently. The responses included: (providing interpreters, educating the community about the deaf group, increasing the size of the translator's image, creating a television program for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, integrating people who are deaf or hard of hearing into society, translating all programs, learning sign language, and incorporating a sign language curriculum into schools).

4.2. Data Analysis: Survey

Research Hypothesis 1 (Ha): The greater the availability of sign language interpreters, the more TV programs will be watched by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Level of significance: alpha = 0.05, two-tailed.

Analysis table:

Table 1: Which Emirati TV programs that you are keen to follow? * In your opinion, what is the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television? Crosstabulation

		In your opinion, what is the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television?						Total	
		Lack of community awareness of the deaf category		Lack of interpreters		Lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Which Emirati TV programs that you are keen to follow?	Everything	2	9.1%	0	0.0%	2	22.2%	4	4.2%
	News	7	31.8%	25	38.5%	1	11.1%	33	34.4%
	Fatawa + News	2	9.1%	10	15.4%	0	0.0%	12	12.5%
	Heritage programs	0	0.0%	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
	Akhbar Al-Dar	0	0.0%	6	9.2%	1	11.1%	7	7.3%
	Islamic	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	Sport	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	Fatawa	2	9.1%	12	18.5%	3	33.3%	17	17.7%
	Cook program	2	9.1%	5	7.7%	0	0.0%	7	7.3%
	Cultural	3	13.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.1%
	Sports	2	9.1%	2	3.1%	2	22.2%	6	6.3%
	Dubai	1	4.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	Sky News	1	4.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	Sama dubsi	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Total		22	100.0%	65	100.0%	9	100.0%	96	100.0%

Table 1 contains data on Emirati TV programs that respondents are keen to follow, categorized by program type, and explores the perceived reasons for the lack of translation on Emirati television. The majority of respondents express interest in following news programs (34.4%), Fatawa + News (12.5%), and Fatwa (17.7%), while other categories like cultural programs, sports, and cooking programs also garner attention.

A substantial proportion of respondents who are keen on following news programs (31.8%) and Fatawa + News (9.1%), Cultural (13.3%) think the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television is the lack of community awareness of the deaf category. Additionally, those interested in "everything," "cook program," and "Fatawa" express concerns about the lack of community awareness of the deaf category, with 9.1%, 9.1%, and 9.1%, respectively, suggesting a potential need for increased community education and awareness initiatives to address translation issues for these program types. Also, a notable proportion of participants keen on following news programs (38.5%), Fatawa + News (15.4%), only Fatawa (18.5%), and Akhbar Al-Dar (9.2%) think the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television is the lack of interpreters. Further, a notable proportion of participants keen on following everything in the Emirati TV programs (22.2%) think the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television is the lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category. Most people who follow sports and Fatawa on Emirati TV programs also think that way.

Table 2: Chi - Square Tests for research hypothesis 1			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2 - sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.847	26	**.016**
N of Valid Cases	96		

A chi-square test was conducted in Table 2 to examine the association between the availability of translators and the preference for watching TV programs, with the hypothesis that increased translator availability is positively correlated with higher viewership and contributes to an enhanced understanding of the community's culture. The analysis revealed a significant association, $\chi 2(26) = 43.847$, $p = 0.016$. As a result, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and accept our alternative hypothesis at a 5% significance level. The observed relationship suggests that as translator availability increases, there is a corresponding increase in the likelihood of individuals watching TV programs and experiencing an elevation in cultural awareness within the community.

Table 3: Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.676	.016
	Cramer's V	.478	.016
N of Valid Cases		96	

The symmetrical measures in Table 3 (i.e., Phi (Φ) and Cramer's V) were utilized to assess the association between translator availability and preferences for watching TV programs. A strong positive association was observed, with Phi (Φ) yielding a value of 0.676 and Cramer's V indicating a moderately strong association with a value of 0.478. Both measures

demonstrated statistical significance at the 0.016 level, supporting the research hypothesis that increased translator availability correlates with a heightened preference for watching TV programs and increased cultural awareness within the community.

Research Hypothesis 2 (Ha): There is an association/correlation between the availability of entertainment and cultural programs for the deaf community on television and the extent of their dependence on other sources, such as social media sites.

Level of significance: alpha=0.05, two-tailed.

Table 4: If an entire television program was launched for the deaf community, what program would you like to watch? * In light of the occurrence of disasters and diseases, what is the most popular media source for information? Crosstabulation

		In light of the occurrence of disasters and diseases, what is the most popular media source for information?						Total	
		TV		Social media		Family and friends			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
If entire television program was launched for the deaf community, what type of program would you like to watch?	Cultural program	3	15.8%	7	9.2%	1	20.0%	11	11.0%
	News program	3	15.8%	2	2.6%	3	60.0%	8	8.0%
	Comedy program	0	0.0%	2	2.6%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%
	Tourist program	1	5.3%	2	2.6%	0	0.0%	3	3.0%
	all the above	12	63.2%	63	82.9%	1	20.0%	76	76.0%
Total		19	100.0%	76	100.0%	5	100.0%	100	100.0%

Table 4 shows preferences for television programs within the deaf community and the favored media sources for information during disasters and diseases. The analysis encompasses responses across three media source categories: TV, social media, and family/friends. The analysis encompasses responses across three media source categories: TV, social media, and

family/friends. Regarding television program preferences, a substantial majority (76.0%) desired to watch "all the above" options, encompassing cultural, news, comedy, and tourist programs. This underscores a diverse range of preferences within the deaf community.

Examining information sources during crises, an overwhelming percentage (82.9%) of respondents leaned toward social media as their preferred channel, emphasizing its pivotal role in disseminating information within the deaf community. They want to see "all the above" options, encompassing cultural, news, comedy, and tourist programs. This is also the case for people who leaned toward TV as their preferred channel, 63.2%.

A notable proportion (i.e., 60.0%) of the participants within the deaf community who preferred news programs identified family and friends as their preferred media sources for information during disasters and diseases.

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2 - sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.156	8	.001
N of Valid Cases	100		

A chi-square analysis was conducted in Table 5 to investigate the association between the availability of entertainment and cultural programs for the deaf community on television channels and the extent of their reliance on other sources, specifically social networking sites. The Pearson Chi-Square test revealed a statistically significant association, $\chi 2(8) = 26.156$, $p = 0.001$, indicating a statistically significant result. The results support the research hypothesis, suggesting an association/correlation between the availability of entertainment and cultural programs for the deaf community

on television channels and the extent of their dependence on other sources, such as social networking sites.

Table 6: Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.511	.001
	Cramer's V	.362	.001
N of Valid Cases		100	

Phi (Φ) and Cramer's V were employed to assess the association between the availability of entertainment and cultural programs for the deaf community on television channels and their reliance on social networking sites. The results indicate a statistically significant and moderately strong association between the two variables. Specifically, Phi (Φ) yielded a value of 0.511, and Cramer's V was calculated as 0.362, both with approximate significances of 0.001. These findings strengthen the evidence of a meaningful association, supporting the outcomes of the chi-square tests.

Research Hypothesis 3 (Ha): There is an association/correlation between the small number of programs translated into sign language for people who are deaf or hard of hearing on Emirati channels and the media's lack of awareness of these groups' needs.

Level of significance: alpha=0.05, two-tailed.

Table 7: What is the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television? * Does Emirati Television meet your needs as a deaf person to access information? And also entertainment? Crosstabulation

		Does Emirati Television meet your needs as a deaf person to access information? And also entertainment?				Total	
		No		Yes			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
In your opinion, what is the biggest reason for the lack of translation on Emirati television?	Lack of community awareness of the deaf category	7	12.1%	18	42.9%	25	25.0%
	Lack of interpreters	48	82.8%	18	42.9%	66	66.0%
	Lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category	3	5.2%	6	14.3%	9	9.0%
Total		58	100.0%	42	100.0%	100	100.0%

The crosstabulation in Table 7 displays the examination results for the association between the perceived reasons for the lack of translation on Emirati television and the extent to which Emirati television meets the needs of deaf individuals for both information access and entertainment. Notably, respondents who identified the "lack of interpreters" as the primary

reason for the lack of translation were most likely to express dissatisfaction with Emirati television meeting their needs, with 82.8% answering "No" to the adequacy of television in meeting their requirements for information and entertainment. Conversely, those who attributed the lack of translation to "lack of community awareness of the deaf category" or "lack of media professionals' awareness of the deaf category" exhibited a higher percentage of satisfaction, with 42.9% and 14.3% respectively responding "Yes" to the adequacy of Emirati television. These findings suggest a notable association between the perceived reasons for translation deficiencies and the satisfaction levels of deaf individuals with Emirati television, underscoring the impact of interpreter availability on their overall contentment with the medium.

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2 - sided)
Pearson Chi - Square	17.361[a]	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. one cell (16.7%) has an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.78.

A chi-square analysis was conducted in Table 8 to explore the association between the small number of programs translated into the language of people who are deaf or hard of hearing on Emirati television and the media's lack of awareness of the needs of these groups. The Pearson Chi-Square test revealed a statistically significant association, $\chi 2(2) = 17.361$, $p < 0.001$. As the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which means there is an association between the small number of translated programs on Emirati television for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and the media's lack of awareness of their needs.

Table 9: Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.417	.000
	Cramer's V	.417	.000
N of Valid Cases		100	

The symmetric measures, Phi (Φ) and Cramer's V, further substantiate the significant association between the small number of programs translated into the language of people who are deaf or hard of hearing on Emirati television and the media's lack of awareness of their needs. Phi and Cramer's V yield a value of 0.417, with an approximate significance of 0.000. These results reinforce the findings from the Pearson Chi-Square test, providing additional support for rejecting the null hypothesis. The values of Phi and Cramer's V indicate a moderate-strength association, highlighting the robustness and consistency of the observed relationship.

Research hypothesis 4 (Ha): There is an association/correlation between the small size of the translator's box on the screen and the extent to which the media message reaches the deaf audience.

Level of significance: alpha=0.05, two-tailed.

Table 10: What are the proposed solutions to facilitate accessing information for the deaf community? * In both cases, do you think that translation affects the deaf viewer in dealing with all elements, such as footage and translation, at the same time? Crosstabulation

		In both cases, do you think that translation affects the deaf viewer's ability to deal with all elements, such as footage and translation, simultaneously?				Total	
		No		Yes			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
In your opinion, what are the proposed solutions to facilitate accessing information for the deaf community?	Educating the community about the deaf group	1	11.1%	19	28.4%	20	26.3%
	Increasing the size of the translator's image	3	33.3%	5	7.5%	8	10.5%
	Incorporating a sign language curriculum into schools	0	0.0%	4	6.0%	4	5.3%
	Learning sign language	4	44.4%	7	10.4%	11	14.5%
	Translation of all programs	0	0.0%	3	4.5%	3	3.9%
	Increase the number of translators	0	0.0%	24	35.8%	24	31.6%
	Interpreters	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	1	1.3%
	Integrating people who are deaf or hard of hearing into society	1	11.1%	1	1.5%	2	2.6%
	A television program for the deaf	0	0.0%	3	4.5%	3	3.9%
Total		9	100.0%	67	100.0%	76	100.0%

Table 10 presents a crosstabulation exploring the relationship between proposed solutions to facilitate information access for the deaf community and the perception of whether translation affects the deaf viewer in simultaneously dealing with all elements, such as footage and translation. Notably, when respondents responded that translation does not impact the deaf viewer, there was a higher prevalence of support for specific solutions. Specifically, 44.4% of those who perceived an impact favored "Learning sign language," and 35.8% supported "Increasing the number of translators." In contrast, respondents who indicated that translation has an impact showed diverse preferences for proposed solutions, including "Educating the community about the deaf group" (28.4%) and "Increasing the number of translators" (35.8%), Learning sign language (10.4%).

Table 11: Chi - Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2 - sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.768[a]	8	.011
Likelihood Ratio	19.574	8	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.473	1	.491
No. of Valid Cases	76		

a. 14 cells (77.8%) have expected counts of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.12.

A chi-square analysis in Table 11 examined the association between the small size of the translator's screen on screen and the extent to which the media message reaches the deaf audience. The Pearson Chi-Square test yielded a statistically significant result, $\chi^2(8) = 19.768$, $p = 0.011$, indicating that the variables are not independent. This suggests an association between

the size of the translator's screen and the effectiveness of media messages reaching the deaf audience.

Table 12: Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.510	.011
	Cramer's V	.510	.011
N of Valid Cases		76	

The symmetric measures in Table 12, Phi (Φ) and Cramer's V, further reinforce the significant association between the small size of the translator's screen on screen and the effectiveness of media messages reaching the deaf audience. Phi and Cramer's V yield a value of 0.510, with an approximate significance of 0.011. These results substantiate and enhance the findings from the Pearson Chi-Square test, indicating a moderate-strength association. The values of Phi and Cramer's V highlight the robustness and consistency of the observed relationship. Overall, the collective evidence from these statistical measures strengthens the conclusion that there is a meaningful and statistically significant association between the small size of the translator's screen and the effectiveness of media messages teaching the deaf audience.

4.3. Focus Group Discussion

On October 26, 2023, at the University of Sharjah (Disability Resource Center), a discussion group was held with seven deaf individuals and two hard-of-hearing individuals. The group consisted of eight males and one female, aged between 20 and 25 years, who were university students. The session lasted for 50 minutes.

The focus group discussion reached several conclusions regarding the viewing preferences of deaf individuals. News programs are the most popular, regarding "What programs do deaf people watch most?" This was attributed to the presence of a sign language interpreter, which facilitated a greater understanding of global events. As demonstrated by the focus group discussion sample, most participants were male. Thus, they indicated they would follow sports programs and matches even when an interpreter was unavailable. In this regard, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with seeking assistance from someone close to them because they believe in self-reliance. Additionally, they noted that brief answers are not as clear and detailed as those provided through sign language interpretation.

It should be noted that deaf individuals possess diverse reading levels. All participants concurred that the written translation should be declined due to the requirement of detailed explanations for specific Arabic names and the challenge of inserting the translation or writing at an adequate pace. Given that the native language of people who are deaf or hard of hearing is sign language, unlike deaf individuals who became deaf later in life and possess strong reading abilities, not all deaf individuals possess a well-developed reading culture.

The attendees were asked to provide their thoughts on the translator's fund regarding sign language translation. Everyone expressed dissatisfaction with the small size of the translator's image on the screen. This may be a significant issue for individuals with poor vision, including the elderly and those with multiple disabilities. The primary challenge for deaf individuals is focusing on the translator's image, which may be unclear and distorted, potentially affecting the quality of the television viewing experience. It should be noted that there is a feature on the TV controller to adjust the screen size, but this may also reduce the broadcast quality and distract from other scenes.

It is of utmost importance that the translator's appearance and background do not interfere with the clarity and quality of the translation. The primary focus should be on the accuracy and comprehensibility of the translation, regardless of the translator's attire or background. A well-lit and appropriately sized shot of the translator and a clear and focused image of the broadcaster are crucial for ensuring an effective and efficient communication experience.

Providing sign language interpreters for all TV programs may not be a challenge in the UAE, as sign language is widely used and understood. It is crucial to obtain the approval of the deaf community for the chosen translator, as they play a vital role in facilitating effective communication between the broadcaster and the deaf individuals. The translator must be familiar with the community's communication methods to ensure seamless communication.

Toward the end of the session, a discourse on technology and artificial intelligence took place, during which the attendees declined to disregard the human aspect, as sign language is also contingent upon facial expressions. The deaf community must not be dissociated from the human community.

4.4. Interviews: Sign Language Interpreters

This thematic analysis examines five interviews conducted in the UAE using the Zoom application with persons deeply committed to sign language interpretation. Mr. Wael Samir Kamel, Mr. Saeed Ali Alkashbri, Mr. Salah Odeh, Mr. Hassan Hamouda, and Mrs. Abeer Rashid Al Shehhi.

Concerning the in-depth investigation of sign language translation on the screen, Mr. Wael believes that most bilingual translators who speak and translate sign language are individuals raised in families with at least one deaf member. These individuals possess an extensive background in sign language, which is one reason for the limited number of translators.

Mr. Saeed expressed the view that numerous translators are available in the UAE. However, they are not employed in service institutions, raising questions about practicing sign language effectively. To become proficient in the world of media, translators require ample practice and a thorough understanding of the terminology used by the deaf community, as well as their trust and approval. Additionally, familiarity with Emirati terms used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing is crucial.

Interviewees collectively advocate for a larger pool of translators to meet the diverse needs of the deaf community. Mr. Hamouda specifically ties this need to the inherent right of people who are deaf or hard of hearing and hard-of-hearing to access television content. The interviews shed light on the varied learning experiences within the deaf community. Mr. Hamouda and Mr. Wael discuss challenges in learning and practicing sign language consistently, emphasizing the need for simplified translations and visual cues to accommodate diverse levels of understanding.

As a translator, Mr. Wael recognizes the challenges of translating specific nouns, particularly those with identical signs. In such cases, the translator must begin with the word's first letter and proceed with standard translation practices. For example, translate words with the same meaning, such as "home, house, residence."Regarding the TV program officials, Wael relies on himself to translate the "Fatawa" program because it contains current paragraphs and was not prepared in advance. He also reads the news daily and translates it for the "Akhbar Al-Dar" program. The efficiency and speed of the translator are critical in ensuring the success of live programs.

Regarding the translator's relationship with the organizers of television programs, Saeed, similar to Wael Samir, relies on his knowledge of daily

and expected news to provide live commentary during programs, even when the news is pre-prepared in the broadcast room. Mr. Saeed said, "To become proficient in the world of media, translators require ample practice and a thorough understanding of the terminology used by the deaf community, as well as their trust and approval. Additionally, familiarity with Emirati terms used by the deaf is crucial."

Cultural programs emerge as a crucial aspect of the thematic landscape. Mr. Hamouda stresses the need to translate such programs to provide valuable information about customs and traditions in the Emirates, aligning with broader goals of inclusivity. Cultural programs are of utmost importance, particularly in the UAE, where traditional television programming is highly regarded. Mrs. Abeer said: "We hope that our television stations will be full of sign language interpretation in all their programs, not just the news bulletin." Mr. Salah pointed out that regarding cultural and entertainment programs, it is proposed that the ideal solution would be to gradually implement translation measures and find gradual solutions rather than trying to develop a comprehensive plan without testing it on the deaf community first.

Interviewees, particularly Mr. Alkashbri, advocate for technological diversity in translation. However, concerns about the limitations of translator robots for sign language translation due to the necessity of facial expressions and gestures are raised, highlighting the nuanced challenges in integrating technology. Mr. Salah said, "The utilization of technological solutions, such as automatic written translation, should not replace the crucial role of human interpreters. While such advancements may benefit those with a strong linguistic background, it is essential to expand the screen box to cater to those who rely on visual cues instead of auditory ones for television viewing.". Mr. Wael supports the idea of enlarging the display image of the

translator on the screen, even if it means occupying three-quarters of the screen, to ensure deaf viewers can fully comprehend the program.

5. Findings

The current study aimed to identify the challenges and solutions related to the accessibility of Emirati television content for individuals with hearing disabilities. Several research methods were used, including questionnaires, to provide statistical data. The results confirmed the hypothesis about the availability of entertainment and cultural programs for the deaf community and their dependence on other media sources for information. The analysis revealed a significant association between the availability of such programs on TV channels and the community's dependence on social networking sites for information. The discussion group revealed the participants' dissatisfaction with the lack of entertainment and cultural television content translation. The five interviews provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges, aspirations, and strategies within the UAE's sign language interpretation field. The analytical questionnaire evaluated the preferences of deaf people for programs supported by sign language, with Sharjah Channel being the most popular Emirati television channel among deaf people. The range of preferences revealed that the programs "Akhbar Al-Dar" and "Fatawa" were preferred by people who are deaf or hard of hearing, leading to spontaneous exposure to sign language-supported programming.

Our research aims to identify the main reasons for misunderstanding media messages: learning difficulties, language limitations, lack of knowledge, and social integration challenges. We conducted interviews with non-national translators who agreed that translators should possess knowledge of Emirati sign language. Our hypothesis states that translating

more television programs into sign language will increase deaf viewers' awareness of culture. Lack of linguistic knowledge among deaf individuals is the greatest challenge in achieving this.

Expanding the size of the translator's box on the screen has been identified as a crucial solution to improve the legibility of media messages for the deaf audience. Although many translators recommend this change, it has not yet been implemented by media organizations. Our research also found a significant relationship between the small size of the translator's box and the difficulty in delivering media messages to the deaf audience. This supports previous research that suggests enlarging the size of the box to ensure clear communication. The discussion group emphasized the importance of enlarging the box before focusing on other factors, such as the quality of the shot or the interpreter's clothing.

Our research involved several well-known technological practices. Most survey participants rejected the idea of an automated translator robot, emphasizing the importance of human solutions and avoiding isolation for the deaf community through technology. In our interviews, translators emphasized the need for inclusion, suggesting developing comprehensive plans to understand the deaf community's requirements. Focus group discussions recommended providing interpreters, educating the community in sign language, offering a university course on sign language for media students, and expanding the interpreter's display on the screen. Interpreter interviews highlight the significance of inclusivity in cultural and educational contexts, influencing academic discourse to advocate for a more inclusive media landscape for the deaf community in the UAE.

6. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significance of translation as an effective means of fostering understanding and clarity. The primary obstacle is incorporating cultural and entertainment programs with sign language translation. Deaf individuals primarily watch news programs due to the presence of sign language interpreters. The optimal solution currently is to integrate deaf individuals into society and teach sign language. One of the significant hindrances for individuals with hearing impairments is the tiny size of the translator box displayed on screens, limiting their ability to appreciate video scenes. In light of the technological advancements in the media industry in the UAE, our study aimed to identify solutions that would enhance accessibility for deaf individuals. Previous research has explored various inventions that facilitate sign language translation, such as robots and glasses. However, our interviews revealed that technological solutions are not a top priority for the individuals we spoke to, and focusing solely on technological advancements will not adequately address conveying media messages to those with hearing impairments.

6.1. Future Work

The translation and sign language research for the deaf community is currently limited in the Emirates and the Arab world. As a result, we have faced difficulties understanding the Arab deaf community due to the scarcity of such research and articles. We propose translating recorded programs on television channels and their subsequent broadcast to address this issue. This initiative would create more opportunities for translators in the UAE and open new career prospects in the on-screen translation industry. Our research indicates that most deaf viewers prefer the Sharjah Channel. Therefore, we suggest using the "Maraya" application of the

Sharjah Radio and Television Authority to establish a special section for the deaf category. This section would include various programs and support the feature of half the screen being translated and the other half displaying media material. We plan to test this solution and gauge its acceptance among the deaf community, as their feedback will be the most effective measure of its success.

Future studies could be about the following titles:

"Examining the Impact of Sign Language Interpreting on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Viewers' Access to UAE TV Content"

"Exploring the Effectiveness of Sign Language Interpreting Services in Enhancing TV Accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals in the UAE"

"A Comparative Analysis of Sign Language Interpretation Methods for Improving TV Accessibility for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community in the UAE"

"Investigating the Role of Technology in Facilitating Sign Language Interpreting for Accessing UAE TV Content Among Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences"

"Understanding the Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing the Accessibility of UAE TV Content for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals via Sign Language Interpreting"

"Assessing Policy Implications and Legal Frameworks for Enhancing the Accessibility of UAE TV Content Through Sign Language Interpreting Services"

"Exploring User Experience and Satisfaction Levels with Sign Language Interpreting Services for Accessing TV Content Among the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Population in the UAE"

"Longitudinal Study on the Evolution of Sign Language Interpreting Practices and Their Impact on TV Accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Viewers in the UAE"

"Examining the Role of Education and Awareness Campaigns in Promoting the Use of Sign Language Interpreting for Accessing TV Content Among Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals in the UAE"

"Investigating Technological Innovations and Advances in Sign Language Interpreting for Improving the Accessibility of UAE TV Content for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community"

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إمكانية وصول المشاهدين الصم وضعاف السمع إلى محتوى تلفزيون دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة من خلال ترجمة لغة الإشارة

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ملخص البحث:

على الرغم من التقدم الكبير في جودة المقاطع التلفزيونية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، إلا أن وصول المحتوى للصم وضعاف السمع كان يقتصر على الأخبار والبرامج الدينية لسنوات. تستخدم هذه الدراسة ثلاث طرق بحث: مجموعة تركيز مكونة من تسعة أفراد صم، واستبانة تحليلية يتم إجراؤها على 100 فرد أصم، ومقابلات مع خمسة مترجمين معتمدين للغة الإشارة لتحديد التحديات والحلول المحتملة لخلق بيئة إعلامية شاملة للأفراد ذوي الإعاقة السمعية. وكما وجدنا في بحثنا فإن البرامج المترجمة إلى لغة الإشارة تقتصر على البرامج الإخبارية والبرامج الدينية. وتظل العقبة الرئيسة هي صغر حجم صندوق المترجم الفوري على الشاشة، على الرغم من أن الفرد السامع يركز على صوت مذيع البرنامج بينما يعتمد الفرد الأصم على الإشارات البصرية للمترجم الفوري. أكد المترجمون في هذه الدراسة على أهمية الإدماج الاجتماعي قبل النظر في الحلول التكنولوجية. ومن الأهمية بمكان عدم إغفال احتياجات ومتطلبات أي شريحة من المجتمع عند تطوير الحلول التكنولوجية. على الرغم من أن لغة الإشارة الإماراتية تشبه لغة الإشارة العربية، إلا أنه من الضروري أن يكون لدى المترجمين العرب معرفة بالمصطلحات الإماراتية لترجمة محتوى الصم على التلفزيون الإماراتي بشكل فعال.

الكلمات الدالة: إمكانية الوصول إلى وسائل الإعلام، الصم وضعاف السمع، محتوى تلفزيون الإمارات العربية المتحدة، لغة الإشارة، المترجمين الفوريين.

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