

Ethnographic research on ad hoc interpreting in a linguistically diverse emergency department: The challenges of data collection

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ABSTRACT

Getting access to medical settings for research on interpreting has proven to be challenging. This methodological paper describes hindrances and success strategies in the data collection process for a study on language barriers and ad hoc interpreting in a linguistically diverse inner-city hospital emergency department (ED). It reviews the different steps taken by the researcher prior to embarking upon data collection through participant observation and audio recording of ad hoc mediated clinician-patient encounters in the ED. The aim of this paper is to encourage discussion on procedural issues that have previously received little attention and to facilitate future research.

KEYWORDS: access to the field, ad hoc interpreting, audio recording, emergency department, ethnographic data collection, language barriers