

An X-ray of the Telephone Interpreting Service during the First Nights of the Refugees' Evacuation from Afghanistan to Spain

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ABSTRACT

It has been sufficiently demonstrated that public service interpreters, among others, face traumatic situations during the course of their work. These situations can trigger conditions such as vicarious traumatization, empathy fatigue or burnout syndrome. However, rarely has it been possible to observe the palpable dimension of these during interpreting. This article details observation work carried out using Critical Incident methodology. The authors analyzed real time conversations between those evacuated to Spain from the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021, as well as staff in charge of their reception and psychological, health and social care, mediated by Dari interpreters from the company Dualia Teletraducciones. The analysis highlights moments in which the traumatic situations encountered during interpreting affected the interpreters' performance. The results of the research suggest that the traumatic situations to which interpreters are exposed in public services affect the quality of their performance, leading to extreme behaviors and deviations from professionalism.

KEYWORDS

Interpreting quality, stress, refugees, telephone interpreting, trauma