Deaf Witnesses of the NS era and Forced Sterilization: Two Examples

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Interview

• First experience with Deaf Jews (12 interviews)
• Semi-structure (Open and Closed Questions)
• Family, School, Language, Experiences
• Behavior, Gender aspect
• Oral-interviews with Holocaust survivors
• Witnesses of Forced Sterilization &
• Deaf Hitler Youth
Analyse of Interview with interpreters

- 2 Interview examples (Yale Archive)
  - 1. Distractions and interruptions
  - 2. Mistakes in attribution of speech
  - 3. Blurred meaning, lost meaning and interpreting errors
  - 4. Omissions
  - 5. Missing the point

Reference:
Against Audism in Interviews with Deaf Holocaust Survivors (Mark Zaurov 2012, EHRI)
http://www.ehri-project.eu/against-audism

„Dialogues“

„Dialogues“ between a Deaf interviewee, a sign language interpreter and a hearing researcher who usually lacks knowledge of sign language exemplify an unequal power relation: colonizer and colonized.

Hearing specialists writing about Deaf issues are often not sufficiently familiar with these issues.
Factors

- Insider/Outsider (Clifford Geertz (1973): Thick description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture)
  -> Issues of cultural knowledge and biases
- Notes on paper -> Flow interruption?
- Face nod?
- Artificial space (studio) or natural space?
- Challenge with natural space?
- New technology: webcam inside of Laptop (Skype / ooVoo)

Context/Issues

Interviews
- Deaf Family
- Deaf School
- Activate in politic and Deaf Community
- Age around 90 years
- Deaf Hitler Youth

Points
- Enthusiasm for Germany Hitler
- Dis- and Agreement of Forced Sterilization
- Process of Sterilization
- View of Sterilization
- Benefit of Sterilization
- Taboo in German Deaf Community for long time
- Honor of Deaf German politics?
Different Interview-Design?

- I think that the best team consists of a Deaf interviewer familiar with the cultural background of the interviewee (Insider), if necessary assisted by a Deaf interpreter.
- Here, I have only recounted some faults found in two interviews. Deaf researchers would find similar flaws in other interviews, each of them containing their own particular communicative challenges.
- Question: Need to establish a useful body of Deaf (Jewish) testimonies that does justice to Deaf culture and the state-of-the-art in Deaf studies and Holocaust studies and furthermore?
- (Fund for Deaf Researchers)

Related Publications in English

http://www.signum-verlag.de/BTitel/978-3-936675-28-3.html

http://igjad.de/english/dvdbox_preorder.html

Zaurov, Mark (2012): Against Audism in Interviews with Deaf Holocaust Survivors.
http://www.ehri-project.eu/against-audism