

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the issue of interpreting in Namibia both during its existence as a German colony and its post-colonial era. In 1884 the territory of present-day Namibia became a colony called German South West Africa. Among the problems encountered by the colonizers were the linguistic and cultural differences that made communication between the Germans and the locals complicated and, at times, even impossible.

Due to their ambivalent role, interpreters were treated with a lot of mistrust and the clients suspected them of twisting the intended information in favour of one of the parties. Although the Colonial Administration emphasised language training for both negotiating parties, at the end, this approach turned out to be too ambitious, and it proved necessary to use interpreting services, especially in the areas of law, religion and diplomacy. This paper explores the role, status, working conditions and competences of interpreters in these areas. Many of the findings are partly intertwined with modern interpretation theory and practice, making it possible to apply some of the crucial theoretic claims on Namibia's colonial era.

The work also creates a broader context encompassing translation issues as well as the development of interpreting services after the collapse of the colony. The importance of interpreting grew substantially during the negotiation process on the independence of Namibia. The concept of oral transmission is connected to the conveying of written texts, especially during the explanation of Christian and European values to the local population of Namibia. The Cultural and linguistic understanding in Namibia opens new perspectives on the creation of an international dialogue taking into account the growing global problems of the present world.

KeyWords: interpreting, Colonialism, Namibia, cultural differences, translation