
INTERVIEW WITH FILSE, THE SPANISH FEDERATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AND GUIDE- INTERPRETERS FOR DEAFBLIND PEOPLE, TRANSLATED BY DAVID APONTE

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FILSE. Founded on April 1st, 2000, FILSE is the Spanish Federation of Sign Language Interpreters and Guide- interpreters for Deaf-blind people. Prior to FILSE, this profession was represented by the ILSE association, founded in 1990. Several Interpreter and Guide-Interpreter associations in Spain are affiliated with this federation.

C.V.G Under the law, Deaf citizens have equal access and equal opportunities to education, employment, health care and justice. Sign language interpreters are a fundamental resource to Deaf citizens in gaining this access. In Spain, with the passing of Law 27/2007 of 23 October, by which Spanish sign languages are recognized and Law 17/2010 of 3 June, recognizing Catalan Sign Language (LSC), there is an ever-growing number of government institutions which house a sign language interpreting service in their local offices.

The profession of Sign Language Interpreters (SLI) has also seen a great development from the beginning of its training in the associative movement of deaf people thirty years ago. Nowadays, in Spain training of Sign Language Interpreting is going to be included at the university level and be equated to interpreters of spoken languages. This change is a challenge for future professionals and for those universities that will start

this training by incorporating a new language with a gestural mode instead of spoken mode that will enrich and complement the concept of communication and interpretation in academia. However, when compared with other countries, there is still a long way to go in training, resources and professionalization. *FITISPos International Journal*, Volume 3, 2016 wants to contribute to the full development of the ILS in this globalized but also multilingual world with two interviews by Carmen Valero-Garcés (CVG) to important representatives of institutions and associations.

The first one is an interview with the director of CATIE, a center of excellence designed to advance interpreter education in the USA. And the second one is an interview to the Spanish Federation of Sign Language Interpreters (FILSE) (*Federación Española de Intérpretes de Lengua de Signos y Guías-Intérpretes*). Both interviews are in a bilingual format.

Interview 2. Spanish Federation of Sign Language Interpreters (FILSE) (*Federación Española de Intérpretes de Lengua de Signos y Guías-Intérpretes*).

C.V.G What is FILSE?

Founded on April 1st, 2000, FILSE is the Spanish Federation of Sign Language Interpreters and Guide- interpreters for Deafblind people. Prior to FILSE, this profession was represented by the ILSE association, founded in 1990. The following Interpreter and Guide-Interpreter associations are affiliated with this federation:

ACAILSE: Canary Islands

ACILS: Catalonia

AILSA: Andalusia

ARA-Ilse: Aragon

CILSE-CyL: Castile and León

ESHIE: Basque Country

OIDME: Melilla

CILSGA (ILS Association and G-I of Galicia) and GILSE-CV (ILS Association and G-I of the Valencian Community) also formed part of FILSE until it was disbanded.

FILSE's main objective is to represent the professions of Sign Language Interpreters and Guide-Interpreters. In order to do this, FILSE maintains close ties with organizations for deaf and deaf-blind people and with interpreters and guide-interpreters, as well as with organizations that have any type of connection with the profession.

C.V.G. What is the current state surrounding sign language interpreting in Spain? (Development, current status in comparison to other languages being interpreted, the interpreters' profiles, job opportunities, etc.).

Sign language interpreting in Spain has changed drastically. Initially, it was a job that was undertaken by relatives, friends, or other individuals involved in the lives of deaf people. Currently, it stands as a profession developed by accredited and/or certified professionals with formal training involving—up to this point in time—a higher level education cycle. This training is in the process of becoming an actual university-level degree and may possibly be incorporated into the 2016/17 course of study. With this educational change, the same status that other interpreted languages in Spain currently hold will be obtained.

With regard to the job market, several recruiting services currently exist: the hiring of interpreters exists in certain regional and local administrations, and they are also hired by the associative movement of deaf and deaf-blind individuals and interpreters and guide-interpreters, as well as service companies.

C.V.G. What type of academic training is available? What about accreditation? What is the current state? What are the future prospects? Who should provide training, what type of training should be provided, and how should this training be provided? At institutions? Universities? Through the associations?

The final (2nd) course of the higher level education cycle is currently being taught at most of the autonomous communities, and university-level education of interpreters and guide-interpreters is expected to be implemented in two Spanish universities by the 2016/17 course of study.

Interpreters and guide-interpreters who are accredited and certified through this cycle currently coexist within the job market. These “certified” professionals were accredited by the associative movement of deaf people prior to the existence of the higher level education cycle. Some of these professionals decided to obtain degrees as sign language interpreters and guide-interpreters, and others continue to exercise their professional duties with this “accreditation.”

FILSE opts for high-quality university education.

C.V.G. Is there an increasing demand for professional sign language interpreters? What are the most demanding fields? Is trilingual sign language interpreting (e.g. Spanish/ sign language/ another language) a reality nowadays or will it become one in this multilingual world?

The current number of unemployed professionals is quite high. The type of training that has been offered so far (the Higher Level Education Cycle [CFGS]) and which has been established in almost all of the autonomous communities has resulted in a high number of professionals unable to integrate into the job market.

The most demanding training areas may include legal, educational, and medical fields. In terms of whether this reality means having knowledge of more languages, it is quite possible, but we would almost dare say that this is more so the case with other types of sign languages than with spoken languages. It must be noted that a good command of

English significantly facilitates the interpreter's job when it comes to researching in other types of sign languages.

C.V.G. How do you envision the future of sign language interpreters in this globalized world? Is it shifting toward an international sign language? Is there any type of interest within the European Union or at an international level?

In our opinion, there will always be a need for Spanish sign language interpreters and guide-interpreters. An International Sign Language System will be used more in international settings or with immigrant service users. Let us not forget that the International Sign Language System is not the language of a community, which limits its use to very specific situations.

C.V.G. Has there been any type of advancement or interest in the research of sign language in Spain?

Currently, there is a high interest in the research of sign language and the way in which it is interpreted, but there continues to be a low number of researchers who are dedicated to this type of study.

C.V.G. Recommendations for future sign language professionals and additional comments:

Maintain as much contact as possible with the users of these languages, stay informed about meetings, conferences, and other settings in which sign language is the language being used, maintain contact with other professionals of sign language interpreting and other languages, and become an active participant in the associated movement of Interpreters and Guide-Interpreters.

Thank you.