

Lost in Translation: Unveiling Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives on Interpretation Services in Community Health



Adanne Ogbaa, ScM in Medical Sciences Candidate¹
Chanita Hall, MBA², Karen Saal, MD¹
¹Brown University/Warren Alpert Medical School ²PCHC Central



Background

- Clear communication is a cornerstone of quality healthcare delivery
- Especially crucial in federally qualified health centers with linguistically diverse populations, like Providence Community Health Centers (PCHC)
- PCHC serves approximately 60,000 individuals.
- Includes a significant youth demographic: 20,000 patients under the age of 18
- A substantial majority, 90%, live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Nearly half (49.51%) of PCHC patients require services in a language other than English
- Language barriers can greatly influence patient satisfaction and healthcare effectiveness

Objectives

- To explore healthcare providers' perceptions and attitudes towards translation and interpretation services at PCHC
- To identify the challenges and barriers in providing effective interpretation services

Methods

This research project is a joint effort involving multiple PCHC sites, pooling resources and knowledge for comprehensive study.

Study Design:

- Qualitative approach with a literature foundation
- Semi-structured interviews

Setting:

- Conducted at PCHC

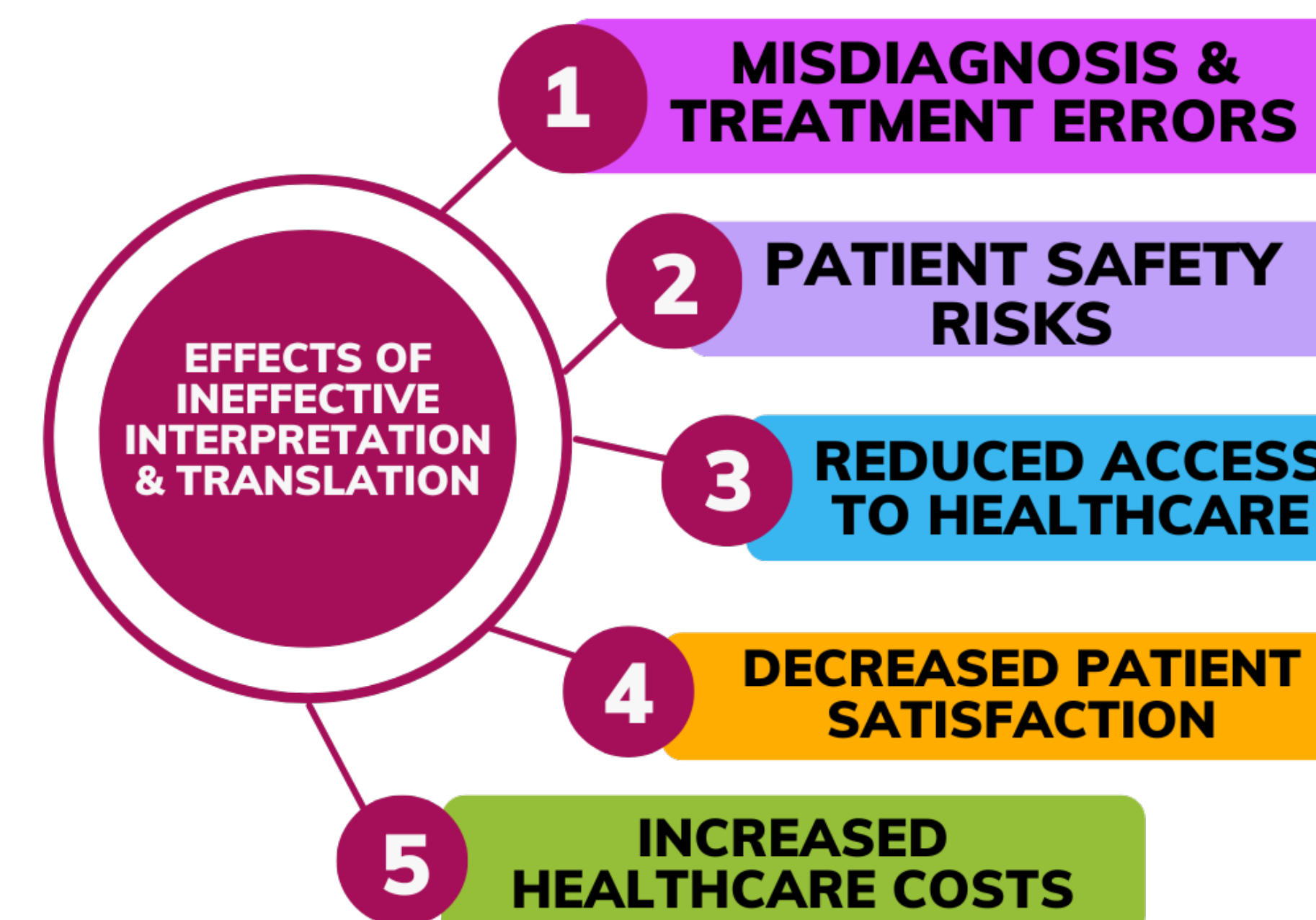
Participants:

- 18 healthcare providers: 11 doctors and 7 nurses
- Employed purposive sampling for diverse roles and experiences.

Data Collection Tools:

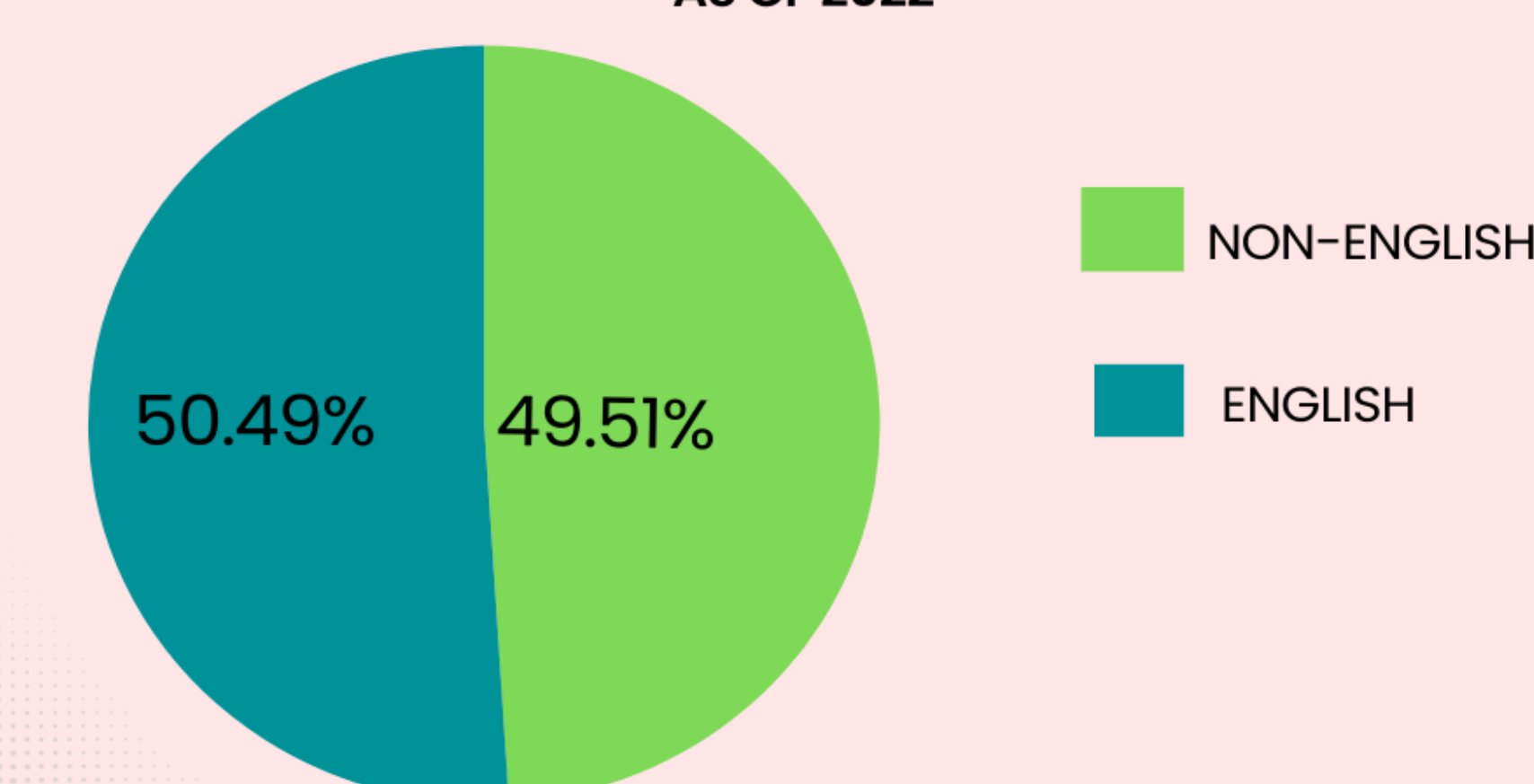
- Semi-structured interview guide conducted in-person, via Zoom, and by phone to accommodate participants.

Results



PATIENTS BEST SERVED IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

*AS OF 2022



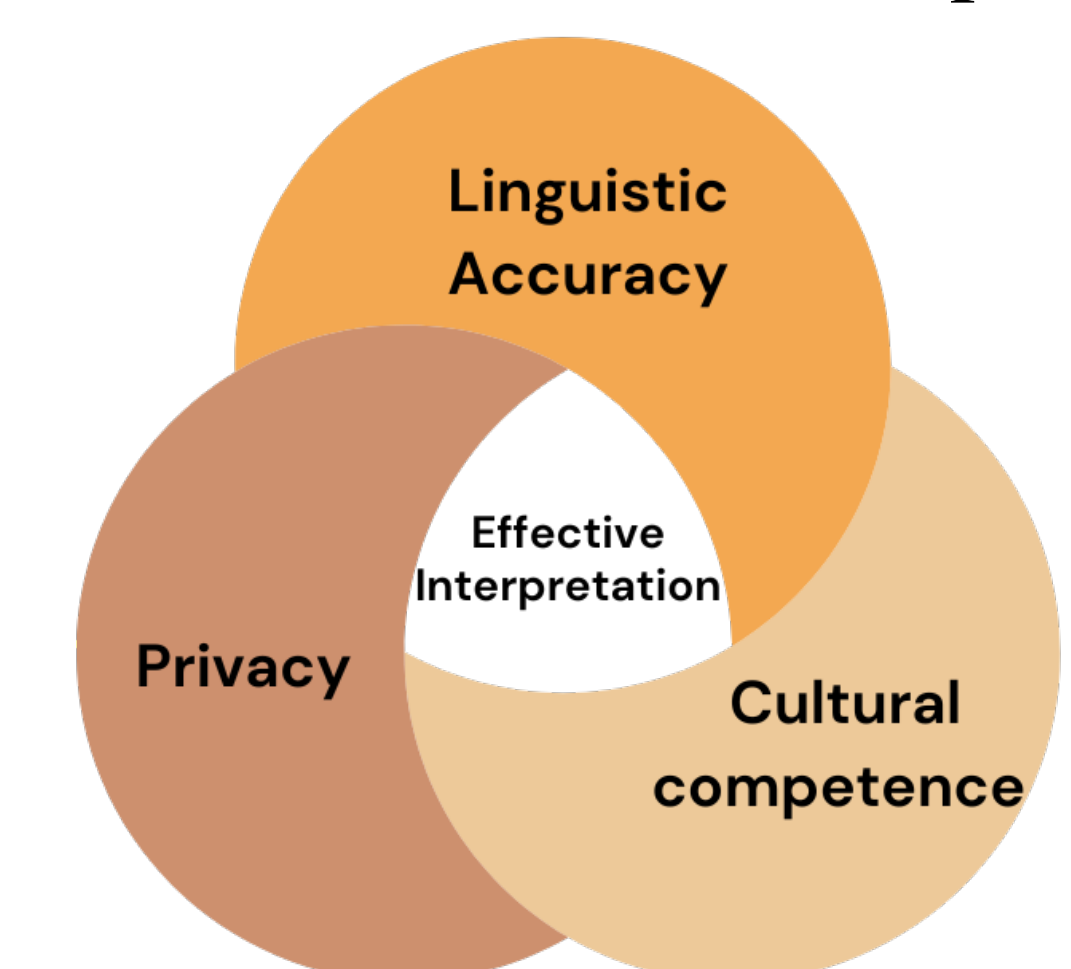
Key Themes and Quotes from Healthcare Providers

Themes	Important Quotes
A significant proportion of patient encounters require interpretation services	"Probably like 75% of my day has to be translated" "On a daily basis, like at least more than 75% " "Honestly, it could be like 70+ % " "I would say 50 -80% of my day is speaking Spanish"
In-person interpretation is preferred for clear communication, capturing nuances, and understanding body language	"I prefer someone in person, just because I find that it creates an efficiency , the translation occurs much faster " "The most effective way for translation to occur is when another person who speaks that language on site is able to go in there personally with the provider to discuss the patients needs" "Probably like a live person with you. Just because the patients get it better, like patients feel more comfortable "
The use of interpretation services increases the workload on healthcare providers and prolongs patient encounters	"Doing my job in Spanish is harder than doing it in English... I go home extra tired" "It makes each encounter about 25 to 50% longer " "Depending on which type of translation service is used, it definitely puts a hindrance . It slows down the day"
Technical issues , difficulty in finding interpreters for less common languages , and reliance on untrained interpreters are significant barriers	"You don't get extra time ... everything has to be said twice" "Sometimes there's a disconnect with the language line " "We realize we're in the wrong dialect " "The speaker on our iPad keeps sounding like they are underwater"
Suggestions include enhancing the reliability and quality of technology, increasing the availability of in-person interpreters, and improving the training of healthcare providers in linguistic competence	"It would be good for people who are interpreting to have additional paid training " "There should be certified translators available" "It would be great to anticipate translation requirements in advance and prepare accordingly" "Try to invest in providers to learn new languages"

Results

Best Practice Suggestions from the Literature

- Implementation of robust quality assurance measures
- Prioritize cultural sensitivity
- Consider health literacy
- Avoid the use of untrained interpreters



Conclusions and Next Steps for PCHC

- Enhanced communication accuracy leads to better patient care and safety
- Prioritize the recruitment of certified medical interpreters to ensure high-quality language services
- Integrate patient feedback mechanisms to continually gauge the effectiveness of interpretation services
- Allocate appropriate funds towards training and staffing to underscore the commitment to accurate medical interpretation

Acknowledgements

I extend my gratitude to the health care providers who participated in this study for their valuable insights.

References?

