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Linguistic Preservation through National News Interpretation: A Case of Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM)

Chew, Kai Mun
(The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Chew, Kai Mun. 2025. Linguistic Preservation through National News Interpretation: A Case of Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM). ***Sign Languages and Linguistics Convergence Research,*** *2*(2), 91-112. This study examines how national news interpretation in Malaysian Sign Language (Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia, BIM) contributes to linguistic preservation and cultural visibility for the Deaf community in Malaysia. Since 1995, BIM has been incorporated into Malaysian television news, with expanded coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic through BERNAMA since 2021 and ASTRO since 2022. Employing an exploratory mixed-methods design, the study integrates quantitative and qualitative data from a bilingual questionnaire involving 15 participants to evaluate perceived accessibility, linguistic impact, and cultural significance of BIM-interpreted broadcasts. Findings indicate that viewers value BIM interpretation not only as a medium of accessibility but also as a symbol of linguistic legitimacy and Deaf cultural recognition. However, persistent issues—such as inadequate interpreter window size, signing pace, and synchronisation—limit effective comprehension. Respondents overwhelmingly support standardisation led by Deaf organisations to ensure accuracy and cultural alignment. The study concludes that sustained, high-quality news interpretation can reinforce BIM's social visibility and strengthen national frameworks for linguistic preservation and inclusion.

Key Words: Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM), Media Interpretation, Deaf Culture, Language Preservation, Accessibility

1. Introduction

This paper examines how the interpretation of national television news in Malaysian Sign Language—Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM)—may contribute to linguistic preservation and cultural transmission within Malaysia's Deaf community. As a minority language, BIM is sustained through community use and intergenerational socialisation, while also being shaped by broader institutions such as education, media, and language policy (Bell et al., 2015; Chong, 2018; Ladd, 2003). When BIM consistently appears in national news broadcasts, it becomes visible in an influential public domain, potentially strengthening the legitimacy of language and the Deaf cultural presence within mainstream civic communication (De Meulder, 2015; Nakamura, 2002). BIM interpretation has appeared on Malaysian television news since 1995, with expanded implementation during and after the COVID-19 period through BERNAMA (January 2021) and later ASTRO (March 2022). These expansions provide a timely context for evaluating whether televised interpreting functions solely as an accessibility measure or also as an instrument of language maintenance. This study is built on scholarship on reversing language shift and revitalisation (Fishman, 1991; Hinton & Hale, 2001) and on sign-language interpreting in media contexts, including crisis and public-information settings (McKee, 2014; Napier, 2002; Tamayo, 2022).

1.1. Background and context

1.1.1. BIM, Deaf community, and language legitimacy

BIM is a natural sign language used by Deaf communities in Malaysia, developed within local sociocultural histories and shaped through community practices and institutional contexts (Bell et al., 2015; Chong, 2018; Nakamura, 2002). It is argued that Deaf cultural continuity is closely tied to language access and to the social recognition of the language in public spaces (Ladd, 2003) and in this sense, visibility—where BIM is seen, by whom, and how often—matters not only for comprehension but also for status and legitimacy (De Meulder, 2015). Historical approaches to Deaf education and the different

communication methods, such as signed exact Malay or *Kod Tangan Bahasa Malaysia* (KTBM), as well as Total Communication, have influenced language ideologies and the positioning of signing in public life (Asmah Haji Omar, 1978; Saleena Yahaya-Isa, 2005).

1.1.2. Media exposure and language maintenance

Language maintenance research argues that minority languages benefit from stable domains of use and institutional support that increase prestige and counter language shift (Fishman, 1991). Revitalisation scholarship similarly emphasises the importance of creating environments where threatened languages are used, circulated, and valued in public life (Hinton & Hale, 2001). Within sign-language contexts, recurring media presence can serve as institutional support, normalising the language in mainstream civic spaces and thus encouraging wider recognition of Deaf linguistic rights (De Meulder, 2015).

1.2. Research rationale

Although BIM news interpretation has existed for decades, there is limited published work that directly examines whether Deaf viewers perceive broadcast interpreting as contributing to (a) effective access to news, and (b) broader outcomes related to BIM preservation and Deaf cultural continuity. Prior work on Malaysian media interpreting has documented strategies and adaptations used in BIM news contexts (Chew & Cheung, 2022). Nevertheless, the link between broadcast interpreting and language preservation remains under-discussed. In addition, the rapid expansion of interpreted news during and after COVID-19 raises new questions about consistency, implementation, and the role of media in minority-language sustainability (Chew & Cheung, 2022; McKee, 2014).

1.3. Research problem and objectives

Despite expanded visibility, BIM interpreting on television can remain uneven in scheduling, format, and accessibility quality—factors that may limit its effectiveness as either an access service or a preservation mechanism. Media

accessibility is not determined only by the existence of interpretation, but also by whether broadcast conditions support comprehension (Bosch Baliarda, 2021) and whether interpreting constraints compromise clarity under live conditions (Napier, 2002; Tamayo, 2022).

In light of the current state of affairs, this study aims to address the following issue:

To what extent does national news interpretation in BIM support language visibility, accessibility, and cultural transmission for the Malaysian Deaf community?

The study is anchored on three objectives, namely:

1. To document Deaf viewers' engagement with BIM-interpreted national news (viewing habits and perceived usefulness).
2. To evaluate perceived accessibility of BIM-interpreted news content, including factors that support or hinder comprehension.
3. To examine perceived contributions of BIM news interpretation to language preservation and Deaf cultural continuity.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study contributes to scholarship on minority language maintenance by examining broadcast news interpretation as a potential preservation domain for a national sign language. It also contributes to interpreting studies by focusing on audience-facing outcomes in media interpreting. Practically, the findings may inform broadcasters and stakeholders on how to improve accessibility and strengthen BIM's public presence through more effective implementation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Media, minority language maintenance, and Deaf cultural continuity

Minority language maintenance research argues that threatened languages are strengthened when they gain stable domains of use and institutional support, which increase prestige and counter language shift (Fishman, 1991). Revitalisation

scholarship similarly emphasises that sustainability depends not only on documentation but on creating environments where the language is used, transmitted, and socially valued (Hinton & Hale, 2001). In Deaf communities, language maintenance is closely linked to cultural continuity because sign languages support identity formation, belonging, and intergenerational transmission (Ladd, 2003).

Media, particularly television and digital platforms, can provide a high-visibility domain that normalises minority language use in mainstream civic spaces. For sign languages, media visibility is also tied to language rights and public recognition. Legal recognition frameworks emphasise that sign languages require explicit institutional acknowledgement to support access and equality in public life (De Meulder, 2015). Thus, recurring sign language presence in national broadcasting can be conceptualised as both (a) a mechanism of accessibility and (b) an institutional signal of linguistic legitimacy.

2.2. Sign language interpreting in broadcast news and media accessibility

Broadcast news interpreting is a distinctive interpreting environment characterised by time pressure, rapid topic shifts, and visual constraints. Research in crisis and public-information settings shows that televised sign language interpreters often perform a dual function: providing access to essential information while also representing the presence of Deaf people within national civic discourse (McKee, 2014). However, accessibility is not guaranteed by the mere existence of interpretation. Audience reception research demonstrates that formal parameters—such as interpreter size on screen, placement, framing, and production choices—strongly influence comprehensibility and perceived accessibility of sign-interpreted TV content (Bosch Baliarda, 2021). Work on sign languages in audiovisual settings further highlights that media translation and interpreting are shaped by technical and creative constraints that can either enhance or diminish inclusion depending on implementation (Tamayo, 2022).

In Malaysia, BIM media interpreting has been described as requiring adaptations and strategies that respond to broadcast constraints and audience

needs (Chew & Cheung, 2022). Technological developments also influence broadcast accessibility. Interpreting-and-technology research suggests that platform-mediated workflows may expand reach but also introduce new constraints, including technical failures, altered teamwork dynamics, and increased fatigue (Pastor, 2021).

2.3. Interpreter demands, well-being, and ethical decision-making in broadcast contexts

Because broadcast interpreting is high-demand work with limited control over pacing and content density, interpreter well-being and decision-making become directly relevant to communication quality. The Demand-Control approach applies job demand-control reasoning to sign language interpreting and frames interpreter stress as emerging from the interaction between environmental demands and the degree of situational control (Dean & Pollard, 2001). This framework is helpful for broadcast contexts where interpreters face intense performance visibility, limited preparation time, and constrained opportunities to manage turn-taking or content flow.

Dean and Pollard further extend this perspective to ethical reasoning, arguing that ethical practice requires ongoing analysis of context and principled decision-making under real constraints (Dean & Pollard, 2011). For televised BIM interpretation, this is relevant because interpreters must balance accuracy, clarity, and cultural sensitivity while operating under institutional and technical constraints.

Pandemic-era changes further underscore these dynamics. The COVID-19 period accelerated the adoption of remote and hybrid interpreting arrangements globally, highlighting both opportunities (expanded access, flexibility) and risks (technical issues, altered working conditions, and new sources of strain) for sign language interpreters (De Meulder et al., 2021). These developments matter for understanding the contemporary context of televised BIM interpretation and the conditions under which it can support sustained accessibility and language visibility.

2.4. Research gap

Across the literature, broadcast sign language interpreting is consistently framed as necessary for inclusive access to civic information (McKee, 2014), and

minority-language scholarship suggests that institutionalised visibility can support language maintenance and prestige (Fishman, 1991; Hinton & Hale, 2001). In BIM's Malaysian context, sustained media presence may therefore contribute to linguistic legitimacy and cultural continuity. Yet the same literature also indicates that outcomes depend on implementation quality, production parameters, interpreter working conditions, and the ethical judgments required in high-pressure environments (Bosch Baliarda, 2021; Dean & Pollard, 2001, 2011; Tamayo, 2022).

Within this framework, there remains a need to examine how Deaf audiences evaluate national news interpretation in BIM in terms of perceived accessibility, language visibility, and cultural significance—especially in light of post-pandemic changes in interpreting provision (De Meulder et al., 2021). This gap motivates the present study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study adopts an exploratory, convergent mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same bilingual questionnaire and analysed in parallel, then integrated during analysis. The design is appropriate for an emerging topic, aiming to generate preliminary empirical insights into how televised Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM) news interpretation is perceived and how viewers link this media exposure to language visibility, cultural recognition, and inclusion.

3.2. Participants and sampling strategy

Participants were recruited using non-probability purposive sampling with snowball referral, targeting individuals who (a) identify as Deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing, and (b) have experience watching or encountering national news with BIM interpretation. Recruitment was conducted by distributing the survey link via Deaf association WhatsApp groups and personal networks, and participants were encouraged to forward the survey to eligible contacts.

Because the Deaf community constitutes a small, network-based population and participation in research often depends on trust and community referral, recruitment was constrained by (i) limited access to broad sampling frames, (ii) reliance on voluntary online participation, and (iii) variation in digital access and language preference, such as written Malay or English. The study is positioned as exploratory; therefore, findings are reported as descriptive patterns rather than statistically generalisable claims.

3.3. Research instrument: bilingual structured questionnaire

Data were collected using the structured questionnaire "National News Viewership with Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpretation", administered in English and Malay. The opening section includes informed consent and confidentiality statements, specifying that participation is voluntary, responses are aggregated, no individual is identifiable, and data are stored for five years.

The questionnaire contains four main components:

1. News viewership habits
   Items capture frequency of watching news with BIM interpretation, preferred channels (e.g., RTM, BERNAMA News, ASTRO Awani, TV3), and whether participants watch BIM-interpreted news via online platforms.
2. Perceptions of BIM interpreting on national news (Likert-scale items)
   Key constructs are operationalised through 5-point agreement items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), including:
   - Clarity/Comprehension ("The BIM interpretation in the news is clear and easy to understand.")
   - Social inclusion ("Seeing BIM on national television makes me feel more included in society.")
   - Language maintenance ("…helps preserve BIM as a language.")
   - Cultural promotion / public awareness / perceived improvement over time
   - Production/presentation features (professionalism, screen position, interpreter size)

An open text item follows these scales to capture concrete suggestions for improvement.

1. Detailed perspectives on sufficiency, comprehension barriers, and standardisation
   Respondents rate the importance of continuing BIM interpretation and whether the current provision is sufficient; if insufficient, they specify unmet needs.
   Additional items examine reported difficulty understanding TV signing and perceived causes (e.g., signing too fast; non-synchronisation; incorrect BIM use).
   The instrument also includes questions about whether signing on TV should be standardised, which standard to use (e.g., KTBM/BIM/combination), and who should decide on quality.
2. Open-ended feedback (qualitative prompts)
   Multiple open-ended questions elicit narrative accounts of improvements, impacts on understanding current events, viewing challenges, and additional suggestions.

Validity considerations

To support content and results validity, questionnaire items were aligned with the research aims (accessibility/clarity, inclusion, cultural recognition, and perceived language maintenance) and provided in both English and Malay to reduce language barriers arising from the sampling.

Because this study is exploratory and the instrument is newly assembled for this project context, the results are interpreted cautiously, with an emphasis on descriptive patterns and triangulation with open-ended responses.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The questionnaire was administered online using a form-based survey platform. After reading the study information statement, participants indicated their understanding of the study purpose and provided voluntary consent before proceeding. Respondents then completed demographic and language background items, followed by viewership and perception sections, and concluded with open-ended prompts.

3.5. Data analysis

Quantitative analysis

Given the exploratory aim and small sample, quantitative analysis focuses on descriptive statistics, including frequencies and counts for categorical items and central tendency (mean/median) for Likert-scale items assessing clarity, inclusion, language preservation, and screen presentation features.

To avoid over-precision with a small N, results are reported using raw counts (n) and, where percentages are used, they are paired with counts (e.g., *n = 9, 60%*), rather than percentages alone.

Qualitative analysis

Open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis proceeded through:

Familiarisation with responses;

1. Initial coding of meaning units (e.g., interpreter too small; signing too fast; not synchronised; improved understanding of current events);
2. Grouping codes into candidate themes (e.g., visibility and screen layout, pace/accuracy and comprehensibility, cultural affirmation and inclusion);
3. Reviewing and refining themes against the dataset; and
4. Defining themes and selecting representative excerpts for reporting.
5. To strengthen trustworthiness, coding decisions were documented in an audit trail and theme definitions were checked for coherence prior to write-up.

3.6. Mixed-methods integration

Integration occurs through interpretation using a **weaving/joint-display approach**: quantitative patterns (e.g., ratings of clarity, inclusion, adequacy of interpreter size/placement) identify the main issues, while qualitative themes explain **why** respondents hold these views and what improvements they recommend. For example, if comprehension ratings are lower, open-ended responses describing “signing too fast” or “not synchronised with the news” help explain the mechanism behind the rating patterns. This integrated approach supports a more defensible account of how televised BIM interpretation contributes to accessibility

and potential language/cultural maintenance.

3.7. Ethical considerations

The study follows standard ethical safeguards: participation is voluntary, respondents may discontinue at any time, data are confidential and reported in aggregate, and study data are retained for five years.

3.8. Limitations

The principal limitation is the small, non-probability sample, which restricts statistical generalisability. Nevertheless, the design is appropriate for exploratory work aimed at identifying key themes and practical issues to inform subsequent larger-scale studies and stakeholder discussions.

4. Findings

4.1. Reporting Approach

This chapter presents descriptive findings from 15 respondents (n = 15) who completed the *National News Viewership with Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpretation* survey. Because the study is exploratory and the sample size is small, results are reported primarily as frequencies (n). Percentages are provided only alongside counts and should be interpreted descriptively rather than as population-level estimates.

4.2 Participant Characteristics

4.2.1. Demographic Profile

Table 1 summarises respondent characteristics, including self-identification (Deaf/hearing status), gender, education, and self-reported BIM proficiency.

[Table 1] Demographic profile of respondents (n = 15)

Variable	Category	N	%
Self-identification	Deaf	10	66.7
	Hard of Hearing	2	13.3
	Hearing	2	13.3
	Not reported	1	6.7
Gender	Female	8	53.3
	Male	6	40.0
	Prefer not to say	1	6.7
Education level	Secondary (High school)	4	26.7
	Diploma	3	20.0
	Bachelor's degree	5	33.3
	Postgraduate	3	20.0
BIM proficiency	Native	2	13.3
	Fluent	6	40.0
	Intermediate	6	40.0
	Beginner	1	6.7

4.2.2. Occupational Background

To improve readability and reduce over-fragmentation in a small-n dataset, occupations were grouped into broader categories (Table 2).

[Table 2] Grouped occupational background (n = 15)

Group	Examples included	n	%
Administration / service	clerical/admin roles, driver	4	26.7
Education	Teacher	2	13.3
Language services	BIM interpreter	1	6.7
Professional / technical	business owner, IT developer, HR-related	3	20.0
Student	Student	1	6.7
Other / mixed	sign language instructor, other unspecified roles	4	26.7

4.3. News Viewership and BIM Exposure

4.3.1. BIM Learning and Daily Use

Respondents reported multiple pathways for learning BIM, reflecting both institutional and community-based exposure. Table 3 reports these as multiple-response items; hence, totals may exceed n = 15.

[Table 3] BIM learning pathways and daily BIM use (n = 15)

Item	Response option	n	%
BIM learning pathways (multiple response)	School for the Deaf	13	86.7
	Community classes	11	73.3
	Friends	9	60.0
	Family	4	26.7
	Online resources	2	13.3
	Self-taught	2	13.3
Daily BIM use	Always	5	33.3
	Very frequently	3	20.0
	Frequently	3	20.0
	Sometimes	4	26.7

4.3.2. Viewing Habits for News with BIM Interpretation

Table 4 summarises how often respondents watch news with BIM interpretation and which channels/platforms they use.

[Table 4] Viewing habits for BIM-interpreted news (n = 15)

Item	Response option	n	%
Frequency of watching BIM-interpreted news	Occasionally	7	46.7
	Rarely	4	26.7
	Never	4	26.7
Channels watched (multiple response)	RTM	13	86.7
	Bernama News	5	33.3
	Astro Awani	2	13.3

Item	Response option	n	%
	Other channels	3	20.0
Watches BIM news online	Yes	11	73.3
	No	4	26.7
Preferred time of viewing (multiple response)	Evening	13	86.7
	Whenever available	8	53.3
	Night (late)	3	20.0

Overall, respondents reported encountering BIM-interpreted news primarily via RTM (13/15; 86.7%), and many also reported watching such content online (11/15; 73.3%). Watching frequency was generally infrequent (7/15 occasional; 8/15 rarely/never).

4.4. Perceptions of BIM Interpretation on National News

Respondents rated nine perception statements on a 5-point Likert scale. These results are interpreted descriptively.

[Table 5] Perceptions toward BIM interpretation (n = 15)

Statement	M	SD
BIM interpretation in news is clear and easy to understand	3.27	1.37
Seeing BIM on national TV makes me feel more included in society	3.87	1.10
BIM interpreting helps preserve BIM as a language	4.07	1.06
BIM interpreting promotes Deaf culture	3.93	1.03
BIM interpreters increase awareness of the Deaf community	3.93	1.22
Quality of BIM interpreting on the news has improved over time	3.67	1.25
Presentation of BIM interpreter is professional	3.73	1.12
BIM interpreter is positioned appropriately on screen	3.33	1.27
Size of BIM interpreter on screen is adequate	2.53	1.44

Respondents tended to endorse BIM interpretation as supporting language preservation (M = 4.07) and cultural visibility (M = 3.93). However, the lowest mean concerned the adequacy of the interpreter window size (M = 2.53), indicating dissatisfaction with on-screen visibility.

4.5. Information Access, Comprehension Barriers, and Standardisation Preferences

4.5.1. Main Source of Information

When asked where they obtain information mostly, respondents most commonly selected the internet (8/15; 53.3%), with smaller groups selecting TV, print media, and family/friends.

4.5.2. Difficulty Understanding TV Signing

Responses were split: 7/15 (46.7%) reported difficulty understanding signing on TV, while 8/15 (53.3%) did not report difficulty.

4.5.3. Standardisation and Quality Governance

Most respondents agreed that TV signing should be standardised (12/15; 80.0%) and strongly preferred BIM as the standard variety (14/15; 93.3%). Respondents most often selected national Deaf organisations and Deaf viewers as the appropriate actors to decide quality standards, with much less endorsement of interpreter-only decision-making.

[Table 6] Detailed perspectives on access, comprehension, and standardisation (n = 15)

Topic	Response option	n	%
Main source of information	Internet	8	53.3
	TV	2	13.3
	Print media	2	13.3
	Family/Friends	2	13.3
	Other (“All of the above”)	1	6.7
Difficulty understanding signing on TV	Yes	7	46.7
	No	8	53.3
If difficult, reported reason	Signing too fast	4	26.7
	Not using BIM correctly	2	13.3

Topic	Response option	n	%
	Not synchronized with visuals	1	6.7
	Not applicable / no response	8	53.3
Should TV signing be standardized?	Yes	12	80.0
	No	3	20.0
Preferred standard variety	BIM	14	93.3
	Combination (KTBM + BIM)	1	6.7
	KTBM	0	0.0
Who should decide quality?	National Deaf organizations	9	60.0
	Deaf viewers	5	33.3
	Sign language interpreters	1	6.7
"High-quality signing" (single most important)	Correct BIM use	7	46.7
	Complete information	4	26.7
	Comprehensibility	3	20.0
	Professional appearance	1	6.7
	Smooth delivery	0	0.0

Note. The "reason for difficulty" item is conditional; therefore, "Not applicable / no response" is reported explicitly to avoid missing totals.

4.6. Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Feedback

Theme 1: Interpreter visibility and screen presentation

Respondents emphasised that the interpreter window should be larger and visually clearer. Concerns included the interpreter's frame size and interference from overlays.

Theme 2: Pace and clarity of signing (including finger spelling)

Some respondents described comprehension barriers linked to the pace and visual clarity of signing details.

Theme 3: Interpreter training and consistent BIM accuracy

A significant theme was the need for stronger preparation and quality improvement, with emphasis on correct BIM usage and skill development.

Theme 4: Deaf involvement and Deaf-hearing collaboration

Several respondents argued that Deaf community involvement is essential to improve accuracy and ensure cultural-linguistic alignment. Some explicitly proposed Deaf-hearing co-interpreting.

Theme 5: Broader access across channels and multimodal supports (subtitles)

Respondents recommended extending BIM interpretation across more news channels and pairing signing with subtitles to strengthen accessibility.

Theme 6: Access priorities beyond television (emergency and public services)

A subset of respondents highlighted that accessibility needs are most urgent in high-stakes settings (e.g., hospitals, police), implying that media access should be part of a broader policy response.

4.7. Summary of Findings

Across quantitative and qualitative results, respondents tended to view BIM news interpretation as supporting language visibility, cultural recognition, and inclusion. At the same time, accessibility concerns were consistently raised around interpreter window size, pacing/clarity, and the need for training and quality governance. Most respondents supported standardisation and strongly preferred BIM as the standard variety for national news broadcasts. Given the exploratory design and small sample size, these findings should be interpreted as preliminary patterns that motivate further study with larger samples and deeper qualitative follow-up.

5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This study provides an exploratory account of how a small group of respondents perceive BIM interpretation in national news broadcasts. While the sample is small (n = 15), it captures in-depth perspectives from respondents with

varied educational backgrounds, occupations, and BIM proficiency and therefore offers preliminary insight into perceived benefits and barriers.

5.2. BIM news interpreting as language visibility and cultural validation

Across responses, BIM interpretation was not viewed merely as an access service, but as a mechanism that supports linguistic visibility and cultural recognition. This interpretation aligns with the pattern in the perception ratings: respondents most strongly endorsed BIM interpretation as contributing to language preservation (M = 4.07) and promoting Deaf culture (M = 3.93). These results suggest that regular BIM presence in national media can function as a form of public legitimation and cultural continuity—especially when the interpretation is seen as accurate and professional.

5.3. Accessibility is constrained by production design and synchronisation

Despite strong support for the cultural-linguistic value of BIM interpretation, the findings indicate persistent access barriers created by broadcast design. Respondents' lowest-rated item was the adequacy of the interpreter window size (M = 2.53, SD = 1.44), implying that interpreter visibility remains a practical weakness even when the presence of interpretation is acknowledged.

In addition, the "detailed perspective" section links comprehension difficulty to issues such as inaccurate BIM use, fast signing, and a lack of synchronisation with on-screen visuals. Together, these findings imply that improving access is not only an issue in interpreter training but also in broadcast production.

Practical implications for broadcasters (data-linked, actionable):

- Increase the size of the interpreter window and ensure high visual clarity (lighting, resolution), consistent with the low rating for size adequacy.
- Avoid visual layouts that obstruct the interpreter (e.g., overlays, tickers covering hands/face).
- Improve synchronisation between signed content and graphics/footage to reduce split attention and confusion.

- Where captions are used, standardise caption placement so they do not compete with or obscure the interpreter window (this also matches respondents' interest in multimodal access).

5.4. Community expectations: standardisation and Deaf-led governance

A consistent theme in the findings is the desire for standardisation and Deaf-led or Deaf-centred oversight. The results indicate strong support for standardising TV signing and placing responsibility for quality decisions with Deaf organisations and Deaf viewers. This is important because it positions broadcast interpreting not as a purely technical service but as a public-facing language practice where legitimacy, accuracy, and cultural norms matter.

Accordingly, a key implication is that quality frameworks should be co-designed with Deaf stakeholders. Rather than relying solely on internal broadcaster decisions, a participatory model supports both accountability and cultural-linguistic validity—especially in matters such as interpreter window placement, lexical choices, and register appropriateness.

5.5. Capacity-building: interpreter supply, training, and co-interpreting models

Respondents also pointed to uneven quality and the practical constraints created by a limited pool of experienced BIM interpreters. Respondents' concerns about accuracy, pace, and consistency imply the need for (a) targeted training for news interpreting (fast-paced content, specialised terminology), and (b) quality assurance mechanisms (feedback loops involving Deaf viewers and Deaf organisations). These are consistent with what respondents prioritised as "high-quality signing," including comprehensibility and correct BIM usage.

5.6. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be stated explicitly to avoid overclaiming:

1. Sample size (n = 15) restricts generalisability and supports only descriptive interpretation (the “representative sample” claim must be removed).
2. The Likert items were analysed descriptively; internal consistency (e.g., Cronbach’s alpha) was not computed, so results should be interpreted as item-level indicators rather than a validated scale construct.
3. Qualitative responses were collected through open-ended survey items; a richer understanding would require follow-up interviews or focus groups.

5.7. Conclusion

This exploratory study provides initial evidence that BIM interpretation in national news is valued not only for information access but also for BIM visibility, Deaf cultural recognition, and inclusion, with respondents endorsing its role in language preservation and cultural promotion. At the same time, the findings identify concrete access barriers that reduce effectiveness—especially the interpreter window size and visibility — and reported issues of accuracy, pace, and synchronisation.

Based on those priorities, the most immediate recommendations are:

1. Broadcast design standards: standardise interpreter window size, placement, and non-obstruction, and improve synchronisation between signed content and visuals.
2. Quality governance: formalise Deaf stakeholder involvement in quality assurance and standard-setting, consistent with respondents’ preference for Deaf organisations and Deaf viewers to guide quality decisions.
3. Capacity-building: strengthen training pathways specific to news interpreting (speed, terminology, non-manual cues), and consider models that support accuracy and consistency (including co-interpreting where appropriate).
4. The use of technology and assistive tools offers options to reduce the access problems reported, e.g., visibility, accuracy, and synchronisation.

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Chew, Kai Mun
G/F, Leung Kau Kui Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong,
Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong
The Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
PhD Candidate
Phone: +85256301911
Email: chewkaimun@link.cuhk.edu.hk

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