Interpreting for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers in the Netherlands: challenges and policy recommendations

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LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers face unique challenges in proving their claims, as their identities are often criminalized or stigmatized in their home countries. Asylum processes rely heavily on credibility assessments, where interpreters play a crucial role in communication. Common issues in interpreter-mediated asylum interviews include lack of specialized training, linguistic barriers, cultural biases, confidentiality concerns, and structural undervaluation of interpreters. In the Netherlands, Work Instruction 2019/17 provides guidelines for assessing LGBTIQ+ claims incorporating international recommendations, but gaps persist in interpreter selection, training, and oversight. This review identifies best practices, including comprehensive interpreter training, trauma-informed approaches, and standardized ethical guidelines. Policy recommendations are suggested, emphasizing the need for clearer protocols, ongoing professional development, and institutional recognition of interpreters' impact on asylum outcomes.

KEYWORDS

LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, trauma-informed interpreting, interpreter training, interpreter selection, interpreter oversight, LGBTIQ+ applicants, interpreting protocols

1 Introduction

The right to seek asylum is a fundamental human right enshrined in international law (United Nations, 1948, 1951, 1966), allowing individuals to escape persecution based on factors such as race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Recently asylum systems have experienced an increase in claims based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022a). This policy review focuses on LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, whose identities may be criminalized or socially stigmatized in their home countries and often face significant challenges in proving their claims. Unlike other claims where physical evidence may be available, LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers must rely on personal testimony, which is subject to credibility assessments influenced by caseworkers' cultural predispositions and host system's structural biases (de Bruine et al., 2023). For instance, concealing their identity may be determinant in staying safe in their home countries, but when they are arguing their cases in their host countries, they are expected to have performed their identities, which results in a traumatizing paradox (Singer, 2021).

In the Netherlands, asylum seekers citing persecution due to their sexual orientation or gender identity must undergo a structured evaluation process led by the Immigration and

Naturalization Service (IND). This process includes interviews to assess credibility (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, 2024; Government of the Netherlands, 2025; Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, 2025). Work Instruction 2019/17 (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, 2019) sets specific guidelines for assessing LGBTIQ+ claims that incorporate international guidelines for handling LGBTIQ+ asylum cases, including the use of open-ended questions and consultation with specialized coordinators. However, challenges remain, such as the reliance on Western-centric models of self-identification and inconsistent application of policies across cases (Vissers, 2018; Jansen, 2023; Selim et al., 2023).

Additionally, most asylum interviews in the Netherlands and elsewhere require the mediation of interpreters, and their renderings heavily influence caseworkers' perceptions of the applicants and case outcomes. However, and despite advances in the international arena (ILGA-Europe, 2016; UNHCR Austria, 2017), the regulation of interpreter selection and training is still lacking (Pöllabauer, 2023), leading to potential distortions in asylum seekers' testimonies because of the involvement of non-professional interpreters and the lack of specific training in interpreting programs that can adequately equip professionals handling sensitive topics related to SOGIESC. These are some of the systemic issues that highlight the need for improved policies in asylum adjudication.

This policy review will focus on the gaps identified in the policies implemented by the Netherlands for interviews in LGBTIQ+ asylum claims, specifically focusing on arrangements related to the interpretation of asylum interviews. After outlining challenges involved in interpreting the interviews of LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants, we will outline best practices before highlighting both these strengths and the gaps in the Netherlands' current approach.

2 Challenges in interpreting for LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants

Interpreted asylum interviews pose various challenges that may impact the accuracy of interpreting and therefore, the credibility of the applicant as perceived by the caseworker, and ultimately the fairness of the process (e.g., Smith-Khan, 2023b; Ottosson et al., 2024). The following is a brief outline of these issues, synthesized from an article by the first two authors currently under review. Although not comprehensive, this overview is intended to provide sufficient context for our recommendations.

2.1 Lack of specialized training and standardized guidelines

Despite the stakes for the lives of LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants, non-professional interpreting or other *ad hoc* solutions are common in asylum interviews (e.g., Maréchal, 2022; Jacobs, 2024). The availability of trained interpreters in the relevant languages is limited due to their infrequent inclusion in Western educational programs (Veglio, 2024; Singureanu et al., 2025, p. 57–58), but when professional interpreters are engaged, issues subsist, as formal training in asylum-related linguistic, legal, and psychological aspects is both scarce and pressing (Lee, 2014). The 20–25-h training developed by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) under Regulation 2021/2303

(European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2021) is neither formally assessed nor linked to any accreditation (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022a), and no accreditation is required to serve as an interpreter in such cases. The subsequent training gaps may result in inconsistencies and misinterpretations, especially considering the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural challenges involved. Additionally, interpreting-specific guidelines for asylum interviews are rarely implemented (e.g., van der Kleij, 2015), especially when non-professional interpreters are involved, and guidelines for interpreting LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants remain limited.

2.2 Linguistic challenges

Many languages lack specific terms for describing LGBTIQ+ identities (e.g., Raza-Sheikh, 2020; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024) and translations require adaptation and sometimes paraphrasing. Since the languages of asylum applicants are usually less resourced, the lack of glossaries and standard terminology (Lai et al., 2024) may introduce imprecisions or incongruences when different translators or interpreters are involved in the same case, or if machine translation is involved (Refugee Action, 2023; Smith-Khan, 2023b; Giustini, 2024). Dialectal variants and differing cultural connotations may further increase irregularity of translation equivalences. Resulting variations may impact credibility assessments if caseworkers are not aware of these issues (Smith-Khan, 2023a). Additionally, lack of knowledge and awareness of sociolinguistic issues may lead to the use of incorrect or pejorative terms, distorting testimony and impacting trust on the part of the applicant.

2.3 Cultural sensitivity and interpreter bias

Interpreters often share applicants' cultural backgrounds (Eklöf et al., 2017), which can aid communication and accuracy by ensuring understanding, but also introduce bias. Socialized beliefs and cultural taboos about gender and sexuality may lead to omissions, alterations, or misrepresentations of testimony, impacting credibility assessments (ILGA-Europe, 2016). Additionally, interpreters from specific cultural backgrounds may refuse to participate in LGBTIQ+ asylum interviews because of their religious beliefs, making it difficult to find interpreters for specific languages.

2.4 Confidentiality and trust issues

When interpreters and applicants share the same cultural background, applicants may fear that interpreters from their communities will disclose sensitive information, leading to self-censorship (Selim et al., 2023). Conversely, differences in sociocultural background may result in trust issues (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024), and these issues can also manifest between interpreters and applicants with different gender identities. If non-professional interpreters are involved breach of confidentiality may occur, as they are not bound by any codes of practice. Despite confidentiality being a requirement at the European Union level (European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2024, article 13), engaging non-professional interpreters remains a common practice (e.g., Jacobs and van Hest, 2025).

2.5 Emotional and psychological barriers

Trauma is very prevalent among LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants and may affect their ability to present a coherent narrative (Bögner et al., 2010). Additionally, interpreters may encounter difficulties managing emotionally distressing content (see Crezee et al., 2011). The lack of training in trauma-informed interpreting (Bancroft, 2017; Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, 2018) can hinder effective communication and contribute to re-traumatization.

2.6 Legal complexity and credibility assessments

Given the frequent absence of documentary evidence to support their claims, the credibility assessments of LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants rely primarily on their verbal testimony (Berg and Millbank, 2009). In this context, interpretation presents multiple challenges mentioned above: the need to paraphrase due to linguistic asymmetries, potential omissions resulting from insufficient training, interpreter bias, culturally divergent narrative structures, and alterations in emotional tone. These factors can distort meaning and reinforce systemic biases that privilege Western conceptions of LGBTIQ+ identities. Effective interpretation in LGBTIQ+ asylum interviews requires a hybrid skillset that draws on both legal and public service interpreting. Regarding the former, accuracy, procedural knowledge, and impartiality are essential, but also awareness of the institutional discursive situation (Barsky, 1994) by both applicants and interpreters. Concerning the latter, the communicative situation of asylum interviews demands sensitivity to emotional expression, identity disclosure, sociolinguistic asymmetries, and sociocultural nuance. However, these skillsets are rarely taught or practiced in an integrated manner.

2.7 Structural undervaluation of interpreters

Monolingualism has been identified as a major challenge in legal systems (e.g., Angermeyer, 2008, 2014; Cho, 2021; Maréchal, 2022). This structural obstacle hinders the smooth conduct of multilingual encounters by reinforcing ideological constructs or *fantasies* (Žižek, 1989) that shape assumptions, expectations, and behaviors in counterproductive ways. These fantasies give rise to expectations that infringe upon applicants' rights—for example, the presumption that they should be proficient in the national language (Maryns, 2005, 2006); the suspicion directed at those who exhibit some understanding of the host country's language yet still request an interpreter (e.g., Jacobs, 2024); or the belief that the mere presence of an interpreter neutralizes linguistic inequality (Mowbray, 2022), positioning speakers of non-dominant languages on equal footing with speakers of dominant ones. This latter view ignores the fact that languages function as markers of social identity and that structurally legitimized inequalities are distributed across them, shaping assessments and interaction (e.g., Castelló-Cogollos and Monzó-Nebot, 2023). Despite formal recognition of the key role of interpreters (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2025), low pay, delayed payments, and the

reliance on untrained interpreters undermine the quality of interpretation in asylum settings (see Kunreuther and Rao, 2023 for an assessment of the valuation of interpreting in contemporary societies). Moreover, interpreters are positioned as subordinate to authorities, facing pressure to perform neutrality and fulfill bureaucratic functions (Maréchal, 2025). They are frequently conceptualized as neutral conduits (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024), rather than as professionals whose work materially influences credibility assessments—an assumption that can hinder effective collaboration with caseworkers. The inconsistent assignment of interpreters to the same case—often driven by last-minute availability (see, e.g., Jacobs, 2024; Pöllabauer, 2024)—reduces continuity and introduces discrepancies that may compromise the evaluation of applicants' credibility. A broader underestimation of linguistic differences and of the interpreter's role contributes to the absence of institutionalized practices for recording interviews (Maryns, 2013), thereby preventing verification of whether distortions occurred during interpretation and limiting applicants' ability to appeal decisions. Although the European Union has formally recognized the necessity of recording asylum interviews (European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2024), implementation at the national level remains inconsistent.

3 Best practices and gaps in the Netherlands

The Netherlands recently revised its policies on hearing and deciding asylum claims based on LGBTIQ+ orientation in response to strong criticism (Vissers, 2018). The updated Dutch IND procedures (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, 2019) place the applicant's personal narrative at the center of credibility assessments in LGBTIQ+ asylum cases, emphasizing individual feelings, experiences, and the process of self-discovery rather than requiring fixed forms of proof. Hearings are guided by thematic areas—such as relationships, community involvement, and experiences of discrimination—but these are not intended to serve as rigid checklists. Strict limitations on evidence gathering prohibit medical or psychological testing, the submission of explicit images, and reliance on stereotypical assumptions about LGBTIQ+ identities, following UNHCR recommendations (UNHCR, 2019). Open and respectful questioning is a core principle, requiring interviewers to adapt their approach to the applicant's cultural background, avoid bias, and foster authentic engagement. Moreover, specialized LGBTIQ+ coordinators are now involved in all such cases to ensure consistent, fair, and informed decision-making across all IND offices.

Despite the improved policies and guidelines governing LGBTIQ+ asylum cases in the Netherlands (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, 2019), significant gaps remain in the training, oversight, and standardization of interpreter practices generally and in these cases. One of the primary concerns is the lack of specialized training programs tailored to interpreting for LGBTIQ+ individuals. There are no specific undergraduate training programs than can prepare interpreters for legal or social service settings. Despite Belgium having developed specific training to this effect (e.g., Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering, and Kruispunt Migratie-Integratie, 2015), differences between Flemish and Dutch in specialized terminology make Belgian training unsuited for practice in the Netherlands. Available training is

private and costly. Similarly, there are no possibilities to develop specialized skills in languages of lesser diffusion (LLDs) or lesser equivalency than English[1] in university programs.

There is, however, a structured interpreter credentialing system (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand, 2025). This system is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018) and demands the highest levels (at C1 or C2) of linguistic competence for legal interpreting, further requiring that interpreters are registered with the Bureau Wbtv (Register of Sworn Interpreters and Translators). While the Bureau Wbtv requires interpreters to meet language proficiency standards and complete general legal training, there is no mandated curriculum to ensure that interpreters are adequately prepared to address the specific linguistic, cultural, and psychological complexities of asylum interviews—particularly in LGBTIQ+ asylum claims—nor the cognitive demands of interpreting in ways that facilitate applicants' ability to develop their narratives effectively. Additionally, without formal training in SOGIESC-related terminology, interpreters may struggle to accurately convey key aspects of the asylum seeker's testimony, leading to potential misinterpretations and variability in paraphrasing that may lead to unfair credibility assessments.

Another critical shortcoming is the absence of quality guidelines and control mechanisms and systematic evaluations of interpreter performance. The Legal Aid Board has recently adopted revised codes of conduct for translators and interpreters, respectively (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand, 2023) that uphold five core values: integrity, independence, and impartiality; confidentiality; completeness; transparency; and professionalism. In the context of LGBTIQ+ asylum interviews, certain elements of the interpreter's role—as outlined in the revised version of the Code of Conduct for Sworn Interpreters—are particularly relevant. Interpreters are expected to introduce themselves in both languages and briefly explain their role before the interview begins. They must maintain impartiality, adhere to confidentiality requirements, interpret all utterances fully and accurately, report any difficulties with terminology, and decline assignments for which they are not adequately qualified. However, no oversight measures such as periodic assessments, feedback mechanisms, and structured professional development opportunities to ensure their qualification for underserved contexts have been implemented. Additionally, the revised guidelines are unable to make any requirements for caseworkers to learn how to work with an interpreter. No arrangements have been made so far for interviews to be recorded in application of EU regulations (European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2024). Furthermore, training and accreditation systems and recruiting practices do not ensure professional interpreters are available (especially for languages of lesser diffusion). Ethical standards are therefore not ensured.

Bias poses another challenge that has yet to be adequately addressed. Since interpreters often share cultural and linguistic backgrounds with asylum seekers, their personal beliefs and experiences may influence the way they translate and frame information. In the context of LGBTIQ+ asylum cases, interpreters who hold conservative views on gender and sexuality may consciously or unconsciously distort applicants' statements, omit crucial details,

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1   Cindy Roat, personal communication with the first author, 28 February 2025.

or introduce subtle modifications that affect how decision-makers perceive the credibility of the claim. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive bias-awareness training, clear reporting structures for cases of suspected bias, and the inclusion of independent checks on interpreter fidelity in asylum hearings. This would be considerably facilitated by the recording of the interpreted interviews.

Another significant gap is the lack of specific protocols addressing interpreter involvement in LGBTIQ+ asylum cases. Work Instruction 2019/17 fails to provide concrete guidance on the role of interpreters, leaving room for inconsistencies in practice. For instance, there are no instructions regarding how or whether to ask about preferred pronouns or gender identity terms. Moreover, interpreters often lack access to support networks or training in trauma-informed interpretation and the use of culturally sensitive or affirming language. While the revised Code of Conduct for Sworn Interpreters emphasizes impartiality, professionalism, and respect for all individuals regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, it does not require specific training or offer LGBTIQ+-specific guidance. This leaves interpreters to navigate complex identity-related terminology and emotionally charged situations without formal preparation—potentially affecting both the quality of interpretation and the well-being of all parties involved.

Furthermore, the shortage of qualified interpreters for languages of lesser diffusion (Balogh et al., 2016) exacerbates existing challenges. Many asylum seekers come from regions where their native languages are not widely spoken outside their countries of origin, making it difficult to find trained interpreters with the necessary linguistic and cultural knowledge. This shortage often results in reliance on interpreters with a different linguistic combination, lower levels of proficiency, or without legal or asylum-related experience, further increasing the potential for distortion and misrepresentation.

4 Policy recommendations for the Netherlands

Best practices in interpreting for LGBTIQ+ asylum applicants in the Netherlands.

Building on the challenges outlined in earlier sections and drawing from the ongoing research of the first two authors, this section consolidates best practices and policy recommendations to strengthen interpreter training, accountability, and structural supports for interpreting in LGBTIQ+ asylum cases. The Dutch context serves as the specific reference point, given existing institutional gaps and the need for reform that is sensitive to both international standards and local constraints.

4.1 Training, credentialing, and specialization

A central challenge in the Netherlands, as in many jurisdictions, is the lack of interpreter training tailored specifically to the complexities of LGBTIQ+ asylum cases. While the Netherlands maintains a general code of conduct for sworn interpreters and translators (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand, 2023), this framework fails to address the nuanced realities of working with asylum seekers with diverse SOGIESC. Effective communication in these contexts requires

specialized competencies that go beyond general linguistic fluency and legal terminology.

To address this, official interpreter guidelines should be developed specifically for LGBTIQ+ asylum settings. These should outline expectations around trust-building, accurate and respectful rendering of culturally sensitive language, and recognition of biases (ILGA-Europe, 2016). Existing practices—such as interpreters introducing themselves and clarifying their role—should be preserved and expanded through the integration of LGBTIQ+-specific elements in interpreter and caseworker training protocols (UNHCR, 2019).

Training must cover trauma-informed interpreting, self-care, legal frameworks, and asylum processes (d'Ardenne et al., 2007; Crezee et al., 2015; Bancroft, 2017). Furthermore, interpreters should be instructed in the challenges of credibility assessments and cultural variations in LGBTIQ+ identities (Scheffer, 2001; Crezee and Lai, 2022). Reflective assignments, role-playing exercises (UNHCR Austria, 2017), and specialized courses in intercultural development are effective tools to enhance self-awareness and develop ethical practice.

Caseworkers too should be trained to collaborate effectively with interpreters (European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2024), particularly by developing an understanding of the interpretive process, identifying language needs, and adapting interview techniques accordingly (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022c). Instruction in machine translation literacy (Bowker, 2023) may help clarify the limitations of automated tools, emphasizing the importance of human interpretation in sensitive cases.

To support these aims, interpreter accreditation in the Netherlands must be reformed. The current registration with the Bureau Wbtv emphasizes language proficiency but does not assess interpreters' ability to navigate asylum-specific discourse or LGBTIQ+ sensitivity. A new specialization pathway is needed—accredited by relevant bodies—to assess not only CEFR-level language skills, but also psychosocial aptitude, SOGIESC knowledge, and capacity for emotional regulation and bias control (Ramirez and Crezee, 2024; Pöllabauer, 2007). Training should also be financially accessible, particularly for individuals from marginalized linguistic communities and those interpreting in languages of lesser diffusion (Balogh et al., 2016; Singureanu et al., 2025; Pöllabauer and Zwischenberger, 2025).

4.2 Techniques and ethical practice in interpretation

Interpreter effectiveness in LGBTIQ+ asylum cases depends on clearly defined roles, transparency in process, and techniques grounded in ethical and trauma-informed practice (Bancroft, 2017; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022b). Applicants should be informed of the interpreter's confidentiality obligations and, where possible, be given choice in the interpreter's gender and linguistic background. Open-ended questions must be preserved in translation, and cultural or linguistic ambiguities—especially in the absence of direct equivalents for certain SOGIESC terms—must be managed with care (Raza-Sheikh, 2020; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024).

The use of first-person interpreting, minimal intervention, and avoidance of euphemisms, condensations, or narrative adaptations are all crucial (Hlavac, 2017). Interpreters should facilitate accurate communication without inserting personal views or diluting testimony, particularly as this could distort credibility assessments

(Fobear, 2015; Berg and Millbank, 2009). Recognizing unconscious bias and the pressures of dominant cultural norms requires regular self-reflection and peer-supported discussion.

While these guidelines exist in abstract, their implementation in Dutch asylum procedures remains inconsistent. Caseworkers and interpreters alike should be encouraged to normalize interpreter interventions—such as pausing or clarifying phrasing—as a matter of ethical conduct, not disruption. Without institutional backing, interpreters may feel compelled to prioritize compliance over professionalism, especially in freelance arrangements that lack job security or peer support (Maréchal, 2025).

4.3 Structural conditions, institutional reform, and professionalization

The quality of interpreting in asylum proceedings is shaped not only by individual competence but also by institutional conditions. The Netherlands, like many EU countries, has largely adopted a market-based model for interpreter procurement. This model prioritizes efficiency and cost-minimization, often to the detriment of interpreter preparedness, continuity of service, and professional integrity (Pöllabauer, 2024). Interpreters are frequently engaged on an *ad hoc* basis, without sufficient briefing, emotional support, or opportunities for follow-up.

A shift toward structurally embedding multilingualism and recognizing interpretation as a co-constructive element of asylum proceedings is needed. This would entail allocating resources not on the basis of market competition, but on the social need for equitable access to justice. Structured interpreter networks could be created to share best practices and identify systemic problems. Permanent interpreting services would facilitate continuity, allowing for case-specific interpreter assignments, improving trust and procedural fairness, and reducing the burden of re-explaining sensitive narratives.

To professionalize interpreting services, additional reforms are needed. These include (1) developing standardized glossaries for SOGIESC-related terminology (Lai et al., 2024), (2) supporting translation and training materials in minority languages, and (3) building partnerships between state institutions, NGOs, and educational providers. Such partnerships can increase capacity for interpreter education and develop context-specific resources that reflect the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers.

Simultaneously, caseworkers must be trained to understand the cognitive and ethical demands of interpreting. This includes recognizing how interpreter-mediated interactions shape credibility assessments and how institutional cultures can marginalize interpreters as mere transmitters of speech (Monzó-Nebot, 2024). Reframing interpreting as an epistemic and procedural activity would allow interpreters to be treated as co-participants in meaning-making—critical for fair asylum adjudication.

4.4 Monitoring, feedback, and support systems

In the Netherlands, mechanisms to evaluate interpreter performance are weak, and avenues for redress or feedback are limited. Establishing regular assessments, randomized audits, and independent reviews of interpreter-mediated interviews would improve accountability and

provide data to guide reform. Interview recordings, already recommended at the EU level (European Parliament, and Council of the European Union, 2024), should be implemented systematically. Feedback loops involving both asylum seekers and caseworkers could identify specific problems while ensuring that interpreters have an opportunity to learn and grow.

Interpreter well-being must also be prioritized. LGBTIQ+ asylum cases are often emotionally intense, involving disclosures of trauma, abuse, or persecution. Without mental health support, peer supervision, or structured debriefing, interpreters risk burnout or disengagement (d'Ardenne et al., 2007; Crezee et al., 2011). Institutions should invest in supervision programs, mental health resources, and ethical guidance that enable interpreters to sustain long-term professional involvement in such emotionally taxing work (Costa et al., 2020).

Support networks—whether through unions, professional associations, or institutional partnerships—can also provide avenues for grievance resolution and advocacy. In the absence of such networks, interpreters remain isolated, with limited power to influence policy or working conditions. Equitable contracting frameworks and professional protections must be instituted to ensure that interpreters can advocate for both themselves and the quality of the services they provide.

5 Conclusion

The Dutch asylum system faces challenges in ensuring fair treatment for LGBTIQ+ applicants, particularly in credibility assessments and interpreter-mediated interviews. Issues such as cultural bias, linguistic inaccuracies, and lack of specialized training affect the quality of interpretation, which in turn influences asylum decisions. The absence of clear guidelines for interpreters and caseworkers further complicates the process.

To ensure fair and accurate interpretation for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers in the Netherlands, reforms must be wide-ranging, systemic, and inclusive. These reforms include developing specialized training, accrediting LGBTIQ+ competencies, enhancing structural protections for interpreters, and reframing interpreting as a professional and epistemic contribution to asylum processes. Without these changes, the procedural fairness of the Dutch asylum system remains compromised, and the safety and rights of vulnerable applicants are left at risk.

Data availability statement

The data analyzed in this study were obtained from publicly available official websites and institutional publications. Source links and additional access information are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

IC: Conceptualization, Investigation, Resources, Supervision, Writing – original draft. EM-N: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. ER: Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. JS: Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing.

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