

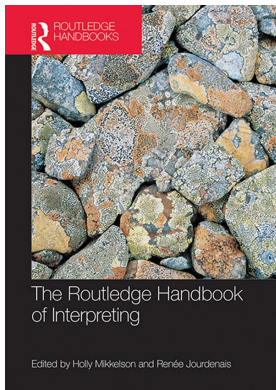
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3

KEY EXTERNAL PLAYERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERPRETING PROFESSION

Sofía García-Beyaert

Introduction

Providing service to end-users who have cross-linguistic communication needs is the societal role of interpreting as a profession. The contexts in which interpreting services are needed are very diverse. The degree of development of interpreting as a profession is diverse too: significant differences in interpreters' wages, professional authority, and accountability for the quality of the service delivered are present across sectors. There is an equally diverse array of contextual factors, which have an imprint on the way interpreting is performed and is expected to be performed.

This chapter looks at interpreting from an inside-out perspective. We will look into different kinds of actors who are not within interpreting circles: they are not interpreters nor interpreting scholars themselves. They are external to the profession, and yet they play a key role – whether actually deployed or (still) only potential – in the way the discipline and the profession evolve. Focusing on “key external players” is an opportunity to situate interpreting within a complex societal web of interests, powers, rights, and responsibilities.

This chapter has two objectives; one is descriptive, aiming at a characterization of the variety of external players, and the other is analytical, reflecting on the implication of external player configurations. This analysis will inform recommendations for professional and research practices that are aware of external players. The end of the chapter will briefly consider future directions in connection with the approach proposed here.

We will place a gravitational centre on the user of the interpreting service. This underlines the fact that the interpreting profession is a service that meets needs in society. Figure 3.1 represents different typologies of players around the service user that contribute to the delivery of interpreting services. Internal players have been covered in Chapter 2. External players, as categorized here, include *grantors*, *receivers* and *providers* of the service. *Grantors* is the category of players who have power to determine whether the interpreting service is provided or not. Grantors are typically either *decision-makers*, *resource holders* or both. They play a crucial role in whether the *receivers*, who are the end-users of the service, obtain what they need or not. *Providers* include *agencies*, which often play the role of intermediaries between interpreters and end-users. They are in such close contact with the profession that they could potentially be

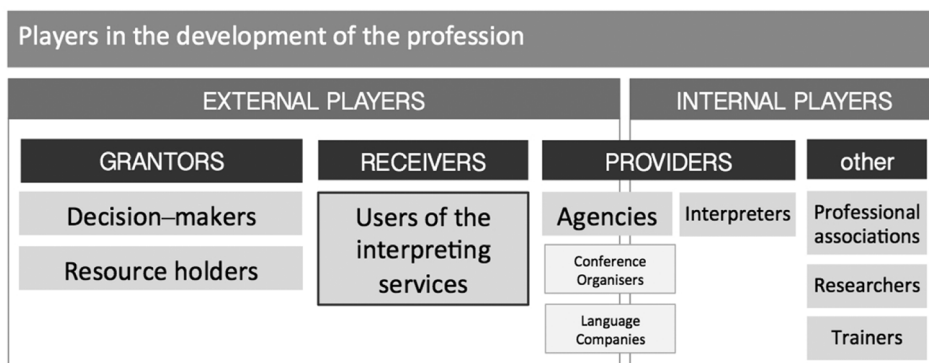


Figure 3.1 Typology of players in the development of the interpreting profession.

considered internal players but, as we will see, they do not always become proactively involved with shaping the profession (hence their hybrid character as represented in the chart).

Grantors, *receivers*, and *providers* are complementary concepts. They reflect the logic of service provision, in which demand (*receivers*) and supply (*providers*) are ultimately governed by tangible resources (managed by *grantors*). A clear-cut taxonomy of players, however, is not reflective of their complex relations and identities, which actually have a crucial impact on the development of the profession. But the categories proposed here will be useful referents throughout the chapter. Having separate categories is helpful for the analysis, as it allows us to contrast different types of players and to formulate enquiries about their different conceptions of interpreting, about how they perceive each other, about what their vested interests might be, and whether such interests are ever likely to enter into conflict with one another.

Three cases of interpreting development will be illustrated here to show three different configurations in the map of external players. Consideration will begin with conference interpreting users when interpreting was an incipient professional activity, after World War II (WWII). The second case of analysis is sign language interpreting, a profession whose development has clearly been influenced by legislation (since the 1970s in the US). The final examination is devoted to the de-professionalizing trends observed since 2007 in the court interpreting sector in countries like the UK, Ireland, or Spain.

The three cases are presented in chronological order. The order is sequential in two other ways (which are not necessarily correlated): the map of players is increasingly complex, and the social recognition of the profession is decreasingly present. The cases have indeed been chosen for their multi-layered diversity.

They should be considered as a sample. This chapter cannot pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the numerous external players that help shape the profession in a large variety of sectors, nor does it pretend to provide an exhaustive description of every relevant trait of the selected cases. The goal is rather to look at variation among external players configurations as they affect the way in which the profession develops, and to offer concrete tools for their analysis.

Two sorts of content are interwoven throughout the chapter. One is descriptive information, aiming at the characterization of players and their circumstances. The other is analytical, reflecting on the implications of external player configurations. This analysis will inform recommendations for professional and research practices that are aware of external players. The end of the chapter will briefly consider future directions in connection with the approach proposed here.

Case Studies

Case 1: International organizations and the birth of the interpreting profession

When it comes to the professionalization of interpreting, the “Association Internationale d’Interprètes de Conférences” (AIIC) is irrefutably a trailblazer. Even though the professionalizing trend preceded the founding of AIIC, it was not until the association came together that the momentum gathered to give conference interpreting the final push towards professionalization. Several references to the association itself and to its role across the history of interpreting have been made in other chapters of this volume (see, for example, Chapters 1, 2, 20, and 25). Here we will focus on the context of its development, and particularly, on the following question: with whom did AIIC negotiate to develop its nascent corporate interests?

When the association was created in the 1950s, favourable circumstances converged to transform interpreting from an occasional occupation to a real profession. New possibilities had arisen on the technical side. With the technological developments for simultaneous interpreting (see Chapter 1), an innovative supply was to meet a newly arisen demand. Indeed, unprecedented and sustained forms of international exchange appeared with the creation of several post-war international organizations.

A critical mass of professional interpreters started to gather around the UN (founded in 1946), the Council of Europe (1949), and their subsidiary organizations, both as staff members and as freelancers (Keiser 1999). AIIC was founded in 1952 and soon established negotiating commissions that sought to finalize collective bargaining agreements with these international organizations for the benefit of both staff and freelance interpreters. The UN, the Council of Europe, and other similar bodies decided in 1969 to start signing agreements with AIIC for five-year periods of time. They would grant interpreters stable remuneration and appropriate working conditions as well as health coverage and other insurance plans, and in some cases the agreements included access to pension plans (Keiser 1999, p. 87). Conference interpreters were, for the first time, identifying themselves as a corporate body and as such, were laying down the standards for trade around their professional activity. New international organizations could rely on this new professional body to develop their work.

The alignment with the growing “internationalism” trend is the first characteristic of AIIC’s initial interlocutors which we will briefly devote some attention to. Although the concept of international organizations was not novel to the post World War II period (Reinalda 2009; Henig 2010), the period of 1945–50 was characterized by an evolved approach to international relations. The organizations under the umbrella of the UN, those related to the European convergence processes, and most often too, international NGOs were, according to Iriye (2002), motivated by the trend of “internationalism”.

“Internationalism” denotes the prevailing sense of a global community that gained singular maturity after WWII. It is the realization that the world is increasingly interconnected and that international relations should transcend the search for peace: peoples’ wellbeing is considered a matter for international concern (Iriye 2002, p. 42). Despite its unprecedented carnage, WWII brought together regions of the world that had until then remained apart. During the Cold War that immediately followed WWII, international organizations were eager to find solutions to avoid thinking of international affairs in an irrevocably bipolar fashion; and the emergence of atomic weapons represented a new global threat that required international supervision to avoid a nuclear war (Iriye 2002).

Whatever the relative weight of unilateral interests, the conception of an interdependent world after 1945 provided for a more favourable climate of collaboration than ever before. The

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention of Human Rights (1953) were born in that climate. The first sprouts for the creation of the European Union emerged in the 1950s, and from 1960s on, progressive institutional integration gave birth to the first democratic supranational government.

The second characteristic of AIIC's interlocutors is readiness for international dialogue, which was a direct consequence of increasing internationalism from the League of Nations through the years when AIIC was first being established. That international collaboration for the common good involves intellectual exchange is self-evident. This fact is also reflected in the functioning of both the Council of Europe and the UN. The structure of the Council of Europe provided a deliberative organ, the Parliamentary Assembly, with representatives from each signatory state, which in turn serves the purpose of informing the decisions of its other organ, the Committee of Ministers. The UN too has an Assembly, which served as a forum for representatives of all member states. While the Security Council is the most powerful of the six UN components because it is the only one that has genuine powers to implement actions, the Assembly is the administrative and political centre of the UN, and all UN organs are attached to it in one way or another (Reuter 1958, pp. 271–4).

The evolution of the seating arrangements for international encounters is another subtle yet explicit sign of an evolving commitment to international dialogue. (See García-Beyaert 2014, for an online photographic illustration of the evolution we describe here.) At the League of Nations in the early 1920s, seats are arranged in straight lines. Difficulties in seeing and hearing each other had been pointed out during sessions of the International Labour Organization (ILO, an agency of the League of Nations) where alternative seating arrangements were tested (Baigorri-Jalón 2005, p. 993). In 1951, the UN General Assembly permanent headquarters were constructed. The design followed a more convenient and dialogue-inviting shape with seating arranged in a semi-circular and gradient set-up. Pictures of the Council of Europe's Assembly in the late 1960s show a room where the semi-circle is closer to a full circle, where visibility of and by every participant is granted.

International dialogue goes hand in hand with cross-linguistic communication. Multilingualism in dialogue-oriented organizations is the third characteristic we will focus on. In international settings, cross-linguistic communication typically happened from and/or into French or English. Increased internationalism, increased interest in inclusive exchange, and a commitment to international democracy certainly help to explain the progressive transition towards truly multilingual conferences. It is no coincidence that Winston Churchill addressed the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe at its first session in August 1949 in French: "beware, I am going to speak in French", he started (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 10). An inclusive linguistic attitude carried strong symbolism.

The practical aspects of multilingual conferences had begun to be explored in the times of the League of Nations, introducing, among other things, the simultaneous mode for more participatory and inclusive meetings. The ILO, mentioned above, was born under the League of Nations and continued working under the UN. At the first ILO Conference in Washington DC in 1919, government, workers and employers were gathered for the first time "on an equal footing" (Reinalda 2009, p. 227) to adopt the first international labour conventions and recommendations. To respond to the ever-growing complexity of the communicative needs of this endeavour, the ILO hosted the first simultaneous interpreting experiment in 1929 with "relatively primitive" technical conditions (Baigorri-Jalón 2007, p. 32) that enabled for the first time the simultaneity of interpreting rendered into seven different languages. These were important steps in the democratization of international dialogue, allowing the participation of workers who, in Baigorri-Jalón's words, would otherwise have been "condemned to silence in

international affairs due to their lack of linguistic competence in the vehicular language” (Baigorri-Jalón 2005, p. 995). These steps paved the way for future international organizations.

The simultaneous interpreting system was adopted at the UN as well as the Council of Europe (Roland 1999, p. 131). The Council of Europe had only two official languages, English and French, but the plenary sessions of the Assembly also included German, Italian, Russian, Greek, and Spanish as working languages. As for the UN, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish were all established as the official languages in 1946 (Arabic is today a sixth official language). Multilingualism is at the core of international organizations, and interpreting is central to their functioning.

One may wonder about the operational and economic sustainability of multilingualism in a post-war context. The budget of the League of Nations had been 8 million dollars (United Nations 1947, p. 96). In June 1947, the estimated budget for 1948 just for the Conference and General Services section of the United Nations (which included the translation and interpreting services), was nearly 9 million dollars (Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs 1947, p. 56). Despite post-war penury, international organizations were well funded. Their budgets, it was recognized, amounted to only a very small fraction of wartime expenditures, and were thus good investments if they were to enable peace through international cooperation (United Nations 1947, p. 96).

In the case of the UN, it was the General Assembly’s responsibility to decide on the budget. The General Assembly – the deliberative organ – was also probably the most in need of effective cross-linguistic communication. So, once they were formed, AIC negotiating committees addressed resourceful service users who had international communication at the core of their identity. These service users were *end-users (receivers)* as well as *decision-makers* and holders of the purse strings (*resource holders*). The management of the interpreting service was in-house or directly contracted with AIC freelancers. International Organizations were also, then, their own *providers*. Every category of the players chart in Figure 3.1 was condensed, in this rather singular case, into one single entity as AIC’s interlocutor. Such a simplified map of players also meant a high degree of homogeneity. Best practices could easily spread as professional culture from one organization to the other. Lastly, there was no player with a vested interest in an alternative development of the profession. AIC professionals seized the opportunity to act as a coordinated group and negotiate the terms that would ensure lasting quality in the service. This is not to say that negotiations were always easy (see Keiser 1999), but the conditions in which the profession was born were rather comfortable.

Case 2: Deaf identity and the development of sign language interpreting as a profession

The case of sign language interpreting presents more complexity than the development of interpreting for international organizations. As Barry (1994, p. 787) points out, the wide variations in the level of socioeconomic development among countries result in variation in the programmes they offer to deaf people as well. Accounts from Bangladesh, French-speaking Africa, Peru, Brazil, or Ecuador in the 1990s draw a picture of the majority of deaf people as uneducated, unemployed, and isolated from the rest of society (Erting *et al.* 1994, p. 775). But the rights of deaf people are today internationally recognized: the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – a legally binding document – had 158 signatory countries as of October 2013 (United Nations Enable 2013). Compliance with the Convention involves the development of inclusion policies to provide interpreting services for deaf people.

As a result, sign language interpreting is now a relatively mature profession in the Western world. Scholars and practitioners are right to point out the existing challenges and to encourage

further development (see for example Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2004; and see Chapters 7 and 8 for complementary information on this branch of the profession). However, sign language interpreters are now part of the social imaginary and are clearly associated with the role of facilitating communication. Even if the intricacies of the task may not yet be accurately comprehended, the average person acknowledges the importance of sign language interpreting and is likely willing to devote public money to such services. In 1988, the European Parliament stressed the importance of recognizing sign language interpreting as a profession and ten years later, it called on the European Commission to work towards ensuring EU funding for (among other things) training of sign language tutors and interpreters (Timmermans 2005, p. 13). In June 2013, the European Commission started a pilot project that incorporates technology and sign language interpretation in facilitating communication between officials at the European institutions and sign language users.

Sign language interpreting has developed into a professional service in welfare societies as a response to undeniable and growing necessities and has been backed with the evolving support of a variety of external players. If interpreting is the response endorsed by different (external) players, what was the successful formulation of the demand? This is the backbone question that will guide the analysis for this case.

The evolution of sign language interpreting in the US is well documented and is likely relevant for other countries (Cokely 2005, p. 3). Let us focus on that country (for which chapters 2 and 7 offer important background information) to analyse the role of problem formulation and conceptions of entitlement by different external players.

Several pieces of legislation and policy measures contributed to the expansion of sign language interpreting as a professional collectivity in the US. The framework for those policies was around meeting the needs and guaranteeing the civil rights of people with disabilities through diverse measures of accommodation (The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, the American with Disabilities Act of 1990).

Contrary to what one might think, widespread frustration within the deaf community arose with the institutionalization of sign language interpreting as a profession. Witter-Merithew and Johnson offer a summary of concerns that represent “a departure from the original and primary purpose for which the Deaf community organized interpreters” (2004, p. 21). Cokely documents and analyses such a fissure, pointing out a shift in positionality from “Interpretation/transliteration *as my contribution*” where interpreters were closely connected to the Deaf community, to “interpretation/transliteration *as a legislative fiat*” where interpretation is “an activity in which legislatively mandated employment for practitioners required little or no involvement from the Community” (2005, p. 25). Despite the fact that regional interpreter education centres have received federal funding for more than 25 years, the connection to the community has been lost when it comes to training interpreters (Swabey and Gajewski 2008, p. 54).

According to Kent (2013), the institutionalized model of sign language interpreters’ education was drawn from previously professionalized fields of simultaneous interpreting (conference interpreting). This explains an overemphasis on speed as a quality criterion for the interpreting performance. It is actually potentially detrimental to communication when it comes to interaction with Deaf people. While sign language interpreting typically takes place simultaneously, turn-taking dynamics are often involved (sign language interpreting is most often dialogic, with the exception of conferences or broadcasted events, for example) and time is a key dimension to the search for mutual understanding. Kent hypothesizes that “continuing Deaf dissatisfaction with most interpreters is microsocial evidence of [macrosocial] intergroup conflict” (2013, p. 11).

Macrosocial tensions are present indeed. The very concept of disability, which is central to the legislation and policy measures that have served as a driving force for the development of the profession, is considered problematic by many in the Deaf community. Harlan L. Lane

(1992; 2002) and Branson & Miller (2002) convincingly frame disability as a hegemonic social construction that oppresses the Deaf community. These authors show that a narrow social construction by society at large of what it means to be deaf results in loss of choices for members of the Deaf community. Social constructions of deafness as a disability turn out to be more constrictive than the sensory limitation itself; hence the claim that the Hearing world oppresses the Deaf community and hence the concept of “audism”: “like racism and sexism, audism insists that inherent biological factors determine individual traits and capacity” (Lane, 2002, p. 282).

There are, then, at least two social constructions of deafness: one as difference, another as pathology (Horejes 2012, p. 73). Paddy Ladd coined the term “Deafhood” to offer a positive, culturally focused alternative to the medically oriented word “deafness” (Ladd 2003; Ladd and Lane 2013). Two different understandings of the essence of the problem lead to frictions regarding the way legal provisions are formulated and regarding the way they are applied; interpreting is a case in point. Friction allows us to identify different groups of active external actors: the deaf community on the one hand and society at large on the other hand.

Where would these two groups fall in the chart of players in Figure 3.1? We would find it hard to create unequivocal matches. From a traditional mainstream perspective, members of the deaf community should certainly be assigned the central position of *receivers*. They are users of interpreting services. Society at large (in the US and other countries), through the democratic mechanisms already in place, has set up legislative instruments as well as pathways for policy implementation that give deaf persons access to interpreters for identified basic needs. Institutions and citizens who take part in the political mechanisms of welfare societies fall, therefore, in what seems to be an obvious position of *grantors*. Grantors entitle receivers to a special service (interpreting) on the basis that the receivers’ disability sets them on an unequal footing that leads to unjust treatment if no accommodations are arranged.

Consider the alternative construction of deafness as difference rather than as disability; or, using Ladd’s (2003) term, consider Deafhood. What would happen to this player classification exercise? Scales start to tilt based on the premise that the Deaf community is, within our societies, just another cultural group which should enjoy equal access to welfare and other services. Interpreters are, then, the link between two communities that coexist within a common societal framework, and hence interlocutors on both sides of such link are both users of the interpreting service. Both deaf and non-deaf interlocutors are *receivers*. As in the UN or the Council of Europe, interpreting services are set up for the benefit of all participants. With this more egalitarian construction of the Deaf individual, it becomes more natural to envision members of the Deaf community as active participants in the democratic apparatus, as constituent members of the *grantors* group.

What these competing rationales illustrate is that the way external players construct and formulate a problem that requires societal attention affects the outcome. Depending on what the circumstances which require interpreting are constructed to be (disability versus communication amongst cultural groups), the shape that interpreting takes as a profession can vary significantly. Problem formulation by the different players we have identified here is in turn determined by a variety of macrosocial factors such as ideological conceptions on the best functioning model for societies, social constructions of entitlement and the groups that are entitled, power dynamics among minority and majority groups, etc.

Before we move on to our last case study, it is worth noting that the centrality of the deaf community as an external player in the development of sign language interpreting has a double dimension: both its active and its passive roles are important. On the one hand, the deaf community has developed over the last decades a true sense of empowerment despite – or against – historic oppression and has managed to formulate impactful claims (active role). On the other hand, even from a non-emancipated stance, the fact that there is a group that is identifiable/identified

by the rest of society has been key, as we have seen, to paving the way to entitlement and subsequent legislation and implementation programmes (passive role). “Disability” may not be a tag that the deaf community happily endorses, but it offers the framework within which society has been ready to accept that interpreting services are a necessary social tool.

Interestingly, the press release for the EU pilot project we mentioned earlier in this section is articulated around communication needs, language difference and participation. “Impairment” is only mentioned once and secondarily so (European Commission 2013). The programme itself – targeting inclusive political participation – and the way it is publicized may well be symptoms of a progressive shift in the problem formulation in society at large, drifting away from the centrality of disability.

Case 3: Outsourced management and the de-professionalization of court interpreting

Among the non-conference interpreting sectors, court interpreting typically enjoys a privileged position (see Chapter 12 on court interpreting). The right to an interpreter in criminal proceedings is generally granted and supported by (sometimes ancient) legislative precepts in different countries. Yet the maturity of court interpreting as a professional activity is in many jurisdictions clearly below ideal standards. There is far too often a gap between, on the one hand, the widespread and historic recognition that language assistance (in criminal proceedings) is necessary for procedural fairness in the presence of language barriers and, on the other hand, the recognition that, in the presence of language barriers, ensuring effective communication involves sophisticated measures (infrastructure) and skills (interpreters’ expert abilities). The latter requires conscious policy-making. In the last few years, oblivious policy-makers have led countries like the United Kingdom, Spain, or Ireland into processes of “de-professionalization” (Slaney 2012) of court interpreting in the face of ever increasing numbers of multilingual trials in such countries. Professional interpreters are being pushed out of the system and non-professional “linguists” (as some have inaccurately called them) are being hired instead. Why are experienced professional interpreters not the ones facilitating crucial communication in court? Policy-makers are not the only forces at play: a variety of players bear a responsibility for such a dangerous set-up. Exploring answers to this question will lead us to consider every one of the categories that are represented in our chart, including our hybrid internal/external category of *providers*.

In the language industry, *agencies* are natural intermediaries between freelance interpreters and consumers of interpreting services, but they have typically been little studied (Ozolins 2007, p. 121). The agency responsible for the provision of court interpreting services in the UK, however, has gathered considerable media attention in that country, as well as interest among interpreting practitioners and researchers worldwide. In a context of progressive privatization of public services in search of the kind of efficiency that characterizes the private sector – a trend that started under the Thatcher Government – the Ministry of Justice outsourced the management of interpreting services. Interpreters would not be contracted by contacting freelancers directly: an agency would be in charge of a central management. Throughout 2011 and 2012, the provision of interpreting services for justice courts and tribunals was progressively assigned nationwide to Applied Language Services, soon to be absorbed by Capita, a for-profit company. Since 1994, England has had a National Registry of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), a not-for-profit bank of qualified interpreters that most criminal justice system agencies had voluntarily committed to using (Maniar 2013). Capita, far from committing to quality interpreting through the system in place, decreased interpreters’ rates – thus turning away many experienced and qualified interpreters – and also decreased minimum qualification requirements. Indeed, Jajo the rabbit and Masha the cat are interpreters’ pets who were successfully enrolled on Capita’s rosters.

By doing so, their owners denounced the meagre screening and background checks applied to the “interpreters” that Capita is ready to send to court (Crawford 2012; Lillington 2012).

A similar situation exists in Spain. Seprotec Multilingual solutions has been assigned an increasing number of public contracts in different jurisdictions to cover interpreting services for the police and in court since 2007. This company’s name has been associated in the field with numerous scandals and complaints since the first contract was granted and up until the 2013 request for tenders (Diagonal 2011 highlights some of them). In August 2013, Seprotec was granted a new contract, worth almost 10,000,000 euros, to cover translation and interpreting services for the police at the national level (BOE 2013). At the time when this contract was let, Seprotec was subject to investigation by the antifraud agency of Catalonia for allegedly falsifying information regarding the qualifications of up to 90% of their pool of interpreters in order to win the tenders (Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Cataluña 2013).

Waterhouse (2013) studied the situation in Ireland in one of the few academic contributions on the topic of managing court interpreting services. With no pre-existing infrastructure to respond to the demand, a drastic increase in the number of multilingual cases (paralleling the novelty of multiculturalism in Irish society) led to chaos in court: individual interpreters and language companies started “scrambling and jostling with one another [at the court] to be assigned to each relevant case” (*ibid.*, p. 182). A single contract for centralized management by an experienced company, the US firm Lionbridge, was sought as a solution by court authorities in 2007. As in the UK or in Spain, outsourced management by a private company has not proved ideal, but policy-makers have shown little sensitivity. Despite criticism of the lack of guarantees for quality in the original contract (which focused on language ability and devoted little attention to interpreting skills), the requirements for competence in interpreting completely disappeared from the 2012 new request for tenders (*ibid.*, p. 188).

Marc Starr is an interpreter registered with the NRPSI in the UK, with over 10 years of experience, mainly in court. In an informal interview he made the following observations:

[I]f a policy was going to be made, the public ... had to be seen as being on side, I guess. And one of the things I believe has not helped at all is shock horror stories in the press about “this is the [expenditure] on interpreters” ... and it mentions five-figure, six-figure, seven-figure sums ... and it’s always focused on the cost ... and nothing to do with the benefit that was brought ...

(Starr 2013)

In Starr’s analysis, such media coverage of the situation, paired with alarming news on foreign criminals, contributed to the depiction of interpreting as an “extravagance” and helped the average person draw the conclusion that public spending on interpreters is undeserved by the end-user (prototypically, the foreign defendant). In Ireland too, after studying the (occasional) media coverage of court interpreting issues, Waterhouse reports a tendency of newspapers to sensationalize the amounts “lost in translation” (2013, p. 190). Browsing the comment sections at the foot of articles in online newspapers featuring court interpreting generally provides, regardless of the country, a picture of hostility around aspects of language accommodation for newcomers. The argument that the burden of language acquisition and adaptation to the national language falls on the foreign individual is pervasively expressed in one way or another. “The ‘other’ should learn our language”, is the rationale. In the matter of court interpreting, the public is an important constituent of our *grantor* external player category. Public money funds public institutions, including the justice system and its interpreter services (the public as *resource holder*) and the popularity of policy measures is something policy-makers are sensitive to (the public influencing *decision-makers*).

Another important and more obvious component of the *grantors* category is of course the regulators and managers who administer public money for the common good. As mentioned above, legislation generally ensures the right to an interpreter in criminal proceedings. However, in the case of each of the example countries that we have used here, there are no specifications regarding the actual delivery of the interpreting service and the minimum requirements for the interpreter. In other words, there are certain guarantees for the presence of an interpreter but the quality of the interpreting service provided is not clearly factored in as an aspect that is determinant of procedural fairness of trials.

The 2010 EU Directive on the right to translation and interpretation in criminal proceedings aims precisely at facilitating the application of the right to “have the free assistance of an interpreter” enshrined in Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights. However, no definition is provided of what “quality” or “adequate” interpretation to safeguard the fairness of proceedings is. No specifications on what it takes to be an interpreter who is “appropriately qualified” are offered.

If regulation is loose or evasive in regards to actual quality, what are the incentives for *decision-makers* or for service *providers* to ensure that every measure is taken to provide actual professional interpretation, guaranteeing effective communication in every case?

In the market logic of privatized public services, the absence of specific measures paired with little knowledge, sensitivity or interest by public contract issuers regarding the intricacies of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication, takes us to a situation where effective communication is de-emphasized. In all three countries of focus here – England, Spain, and Ireland – the first consequence of outsourcing the management of interpreting services was a drastic decrease in the fees of interpreters. And yet, with hourly fees up to four times lower than what these companies receive from the state, the cost of interpretation to the state is unlikely reduced by externalizing management (Slaney 2012; Waterhouse 2013, p. 191; APTIJ 2014). Contracted agencies, in an unrestricted framework, have been able to maximize their profits (which is their ultimate goal and their very *raison d'être*) by decreasing their own costs as much as possible, hiring whoever is willing to work for the rates offered (which generally does not include committed interpreters with training and experience).

With very minimal requirements, and in a context of abundant economic migrants looking for opportunities in their new country, finding somewhat multilingual individuals willing to take on the job at the rate that is available has not been a challenge – not enough of a challenge to disrupt this operating model, in any case. As an added factor, a market logic in the absence of strict regulation has had the effect of diminishing any chances there might be for quality interpreting. Bacik is right to indicate that “privatization of services has the potential to create unacceptable conflicts of interest that may actually threaten the right to a fair trial” (Bacik 2007, p. 222 cited in Waterhouse 2013). A contributor named Tarik Aziz offered a good example of a conflict of interest, as he commented on Waterhouse’s 2010 contribution to the blog Human Rights in Ireland. Aziz said: “another interesting thing about Lionbridge’s brilliant strategy is that by the time the interpreter [*sic*] become used to the juridical vocabulary they get rid of them, hiring new people. If a client is satisfied with the services provided by a certain interpreter and request their presence again, Lionbridge will do the contrary, fearing that the interpreter might try to work with their client directly” (comment published in Waterhouse 2010).

This is far from an ideal situation of agencies establishing a collaborative relationship with interpreters, in which both categories of *providers* are allies in the provision of professional services. Ozolins (2007) reminds us that different agencies have different takes on what their relation to professional issues should be. Agencies are not uniformly committed to providing feedback, to offering training to interpreters, or to ensuring minimum standards of practice (*ibid.*, p. 127). In the case of court interpreting in England, Ireland, and Spain, the focus of the agency is on its

contractual relationship with the purchaser rather than its professional partnership with interpreters (*ibid.*, p. 129). In other words, the agency is much more of an external player and is not developing its potential as a contributor to professional standards (internal player).

Linda Okahara, from the non-profit *Asian Health Services* in California, wishes structural factors encouraged agencies to compete on the basis of the level of commitment to professionalism and not only on issues of price (cited in Ozolins 2007, p. 127). But competition is based on what the buyers value. Her commentary is a good reminder of the dialectic dynamics in the construction of players' roles and their influence on the development of the profession. As we have seen here, agencies have a key impact on the way the service is provided and on the way the profession evolves; but it is also the case that macro contextual elements (Okahara's structural factors) have a determining impact on whether agencies take on the opportunity to be crucial internal players in offering quality services, and therefore in the development of the profession, or whether they choose to remain unengaged in aspects of professionalism. Macro contextual elements are shaped by players, and players' roles are shaped by macro contextual elements. Legislation, contractors' perceptions of what is desirable, and the presence of competitors that do strive to offer quality services are among the contextual elements that can have an impact on the way actual interpreting services are provided.

Another important factor in the macro context is the role of the *receiver* of the service, the only external player on our list we have not considered yet for this case. As opposed to the case of sign language interpreting and its development, an active actor on the non-hegemonic receivers' end (the "hegemonic" receivers are members of the judiciary system in this case) seems to be lacking. In all the backlash against the privatization of interpreting services, the voice of those directly affected by it is not heard. But who are the people affected by this poor policy-making, whose basic rights are undermined? The only way to categorize them as a group is by making reference to what they do not share with the mainstream. They do not speak the societal language(s). Mainstream members of society can identify them as "the others", but this does not give them a group identity. Individuals affected by the poor quality of interpretation during trials do not relate to each other in any other way: their cultural backgrounds are as diverse as can be. I would argue that it is more difficult for them to identify a common source of structural oppression worth resisting than it has been the case for deaf people who have a point of reference regarding the kind of interpreting services they expect. Those affected by poor court interpreting policy measures do not have common shared experiences as a community, which is a key element in generating reference points on the one hand, and a sense of empowerment on the other.

Yet an empowered and/or active group of receivers would most likely tip the scales in the configuration of players: it would change the set-up of structural factors Okahara referred to. A couple of examples where power distribution is different are illustrative:

Stern (2012) compares two different contexts of interpreting. She compares working conditions of interpreters in domestic and international courts and shows that there is a stark contrast between the two. In courts of national jurisdiction "there is a strong sense that a court is a monolingual and monolithic judicial body that is not really ideally suited for interpreted communication", she says during an interview (Stern 2013); whereas in the model of international courts, "there is a whole concept that the court assures the level of quality of interpretation, including opportunities for an early identification of errors". It would not be too far-fetched to consider that the high profile of international trials could explain the difference in the efforts to attain quality. Also, the inherently international character of these courts offers a context where there is no mainstream culture. It is similar to the case of other international organizations (covered in case 1), where there might be a need to restrict the number of operational languages or to prioritize a few languages over others for pragmatic reasons, but all interlocutors stand in principle (and in practice, to the extent possible) on an equal footing, and all necessary efforts are made to ensure the effectiveness of communication.

Another instance of stark contrast between daily trials and a high profile trial is observed in the trial of those accused of the Madrid bombing attacks, in Spain. On March 11, 2004, 191 people died and over 1,500 were wounded when four trains were bombed in terrorist attacks that were attributed mainly to Islamic extremists. Three years later, 400 journalists from all over the world gathered to cover a trial that involved three judges and over 50 lawyers, and lasted about five months (Martin and Ortega Herráez 2013, p. 101). The dimensions of the trial itself, but also very likely public attention and international visibility, motivated the judiciary authorities to take extra measures to ensure effective communication with witnesses and defendants who were speakers of different Arabic variants. Simultaneous interpreting (and some of the necessary technical equipment) was introduced for the occasion as an unprecedented set-up in the history of Spanish courts (*ibid.*, p. 104). In their concluding commentary of a chapter analysing the collaboration between interpreters and legal professionals during the trials, Martin and Ortega Herráez conclude: “Certainly the authorities have shown that they are aware of the importance of recruiting fully qualified interpreters, and one may wonder why all trials do not merit a similar level of services” (*ibid.*, p. 113).

Visibility, but also voice of those affected, and a successful framing of interpreting as a matter of public interest are certainly concepts worth considering in the search for answers.

Recommendations for practice

When incorporating awareness of external player configurations in the practice and research of interpreting, posing reflective questions can be edifying. For any individual case of interpreting practice one might be involved in or researching, one initial, simple question is stirring: how many external players can be identified?

The three cases we have studied here show how diverse external player configurations can be. From one context of interpreting to the next, not only the number of players, but also their relative positioning in an imaginary map of players can vary greatly. Resorting to a typology of players (Figure 3.1) has proved helpful for the brief examination of each individual case we have presented here. Having a typology as a backdrop has also proved useful for the overall comparative analysis across cases.

By contrasting the different cases against each other, a complementary tool for the analysis of external players can be offered. Figure 3.2 is a diagram based on some of the factors for which variation is observed in the three cases we just covered. Such factors represent different layers of the imaginary map of players. They can be classified into two general categories: factors that have an influence on the distribution of “power” among players; and factors related to players’ perceptions and conceptualizations, which I have called “ideational”. Each of these factors will vary over a spectrum of possibilities for each interpreting context. Opposite ends of such spectrums are provided for each factor.

With Figure 3.2 in mind, let’s go back to the question “how many external players can be identified?” The more players involved, the more likely the configuration will be complex. Chances of disparity are simply higher. And, with a complex map of players, the development of the profession will naturally be less straightforward.

In the presence of multiple players, it is particularly likely that the distribution in the typologies of players (factor 1) will be broadly distributed: we will be able to assign at least one different player to each of the categories of the chart in Figure 3.1. The case of court interpreting in the UK, Spain, and Ireland was one of broad distribution, unlike the case of interpreting for international organizations in the 1950s and 60s. Uneven leverage (factor 2) is the general tendency. Configurations where every player has the same level of power are rare.

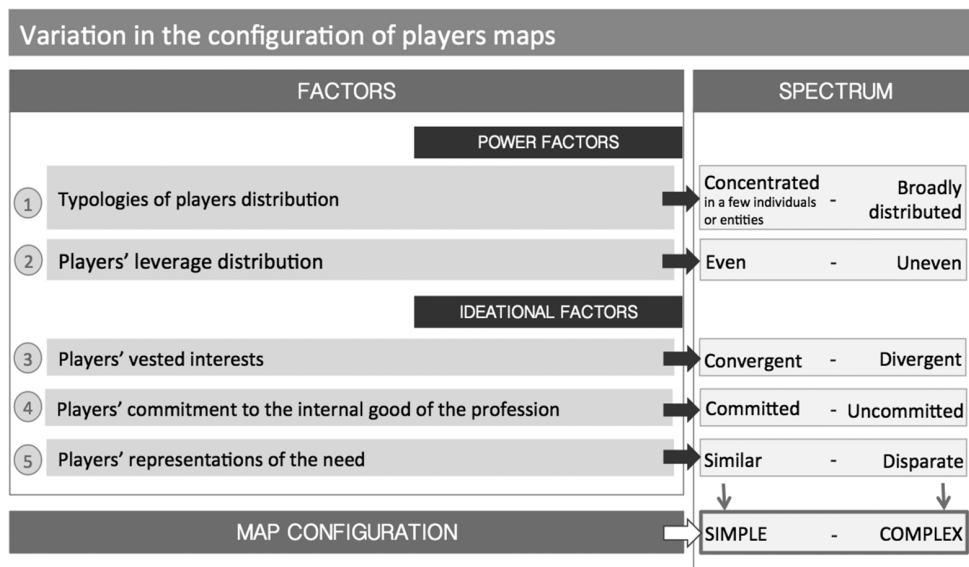


Figure 3.2 Diagram of configuration of players' maps.

In circumstances of broad distribution of the typologies of players, with likely uneven leverage, ideational factors gain relevance. Firstly, the more diverse the roles and influences of the players, the more likely their perceived interests will differ from each other's (factor 3). A key question, then, is whether any player may have interests that enter into conflict with the core values or the internal good (MacIntyre 2007) of the profession (factor 4). On the other hand, even in the absence of conflicting interests, undetected clashes among different players in the conception of what the internal good of interpreting is could become an invisible source of tension that can hamper a healthy evolution of the profession. The case of sign language interpreting is a good example of different players understanding interpreters' roles differently. Another important question to ask oneself, then, is whether all players perceive the need for interpretation in the same way (factor 5). If not, what can be done to unify players' representations of the need for interpreting services?

This last question connects to what in the interpreting discipline is a well-known and often-referred-to problem: third parties' lack of awareness of the profession and the need to "educate clients". Distinguishing different kinds of players, their different ideational resources and their relative power can be considered a shifting tool. It facilitates a transition from a "raising awareness approach" – letting others know what interpreting really is about – to an approach that is focused on generating commitment – convincing others to align with the cause. A more sophisticated understanding of what narratives can resonate best with each of the external players' standpoints can indeed help internal players adopt a proactive and contextually engaged approach, which becomes particularly vital in contexts of diverging interests. The goal is not so much to aim for a simple configuration map; it is rather to acknowledge and understand the different layers of complexity that most contexts entail to be able to take action accordingly.

Future directions

A thorough study of more cases would very likely allow the isolation of more factors than the ones identified above. The study of external players is a whole research avenue in and of itself that has scarcely been explored. As a service profession, interpreting would not make sense without

third parties (those who are served). Consequently, interpreting studies has included service users in the analysis to a certain extent. Dean and Pollard (2005), for example, remind us that interpreting, as a practice profession, involves the participation of the consumer. But the object of enquiry typically remains centred on the professional activity and the communicative situation the interpreter is part of.

The characteristics of the communicative situation constitute a micro level of analysis, which is complexly interconnected to a macro level of analysis that is worth our attention. Just as when we see a map of the world that is produced at the opposite end of the globe, for which the centre is not where we are used to seeing it, we should be reminded here that what is internal and what is external is relative to where we decide to place the emphasis or the gravitational centre. Interpreting studies have traditionally emphasized issues relevant to professionalism and a variety of aspects of the communicative situation. The focus is on the practice of interpreting. It responds to increased specialization and the emergence of interpreting studies as a discipline. However, there is value in minding the relevance of context and relating our centres to other centres of interest. Looking outside of our circles can be enriching.

Pöchhacker noted that “interpreting scholars to date have expended relatively little effort on models of interpreting in history, society or specific institutions” (2004, p. 88). But other disciplines that concern themselves with structures and the members that form structures, like policy analysis, organizational studies, or systems science, have also typically disregarded interpreting as a potential field for new insights. The necessary cross-pollination between fields is yet to come in this regard. Questions concerning the variety of players involved help us gain a deeper understanding of the development of the profession so far; but most importantly, they are key to the future development of interpreting.

Further reading

Ozolins, U., 2007. The interpreter’s “third client”. Interpreters, professionalism and interpreting agencies. In C. Wadensjö, B. Englund Dimitrova, and A.-L. Nilsson, eds. *The Critical Link 4: Professionalization of interpreting in the community. Selected papers from the 4th International Conference on Interpreting in Legal, Health, and Social Service Settings, Stockholm, Sweden, 20–23 May 2004*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, pp. 121–131.

This chapter examines agencies’ relations with interpreters and with purchasers of interpreting services and their role in shaping expectations of professionalism.

Swabey, L. and Gajewski Mickelson, P., 2008. Role definition. A perspective on forty years of professionalism in sign language interpreting. In C. Valero Garcés and Martin, eds. *Crossing Borders in Community Interpreting. Definitions and Dilemmas*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, p. 51–80.

Swabey and Gajewski Mickelson take a systems theory approach to analysing the forces that have shaped the evolution of the sign language interpreter’s role and its definition in the code of ethics. Their analysis includes stakeholders, particularly the deaf consumers.

Witter-Merithew, A. and Johnson, L., 2004. Market disorder within the field of sign language interpreting: Professionalization implications. *Journal of Interpretation*, pp.19–56.

This article uses Traits Theory to analyse the level of professionalization of sign language interpreting. By so doing, the interconnectedness between regulations and actions of internal and external players is (indirectly) addressed.

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