



TALLINN UNIVERSITY

School of Governance

School of Humanities

2021

Group 2: Roman Gorbunov (team leader), Liisa Kõrgekuhi, Säde Liis Nelke, Ingrid Sogenbits, Kano Yasui

SYNERGY BETWEEN INTERPRETER AND PUBLIC OFFICIAL

LIFE project portfolio

Supervisor: Jekaterina Maadla

Table of contents

LIFE project report – Synergy between interpreter and public official	3
Goals	3
Importance of the problem, description of methods	3
Work process, reaching the target group	4
Sustainability	4
Summary and results	4
The video	5
Action plan	6
Theoretical backing	7
"Community Interpreting" Sandra B. Hale	7
"Error Analysis in Consecutive Interpreting of Students With Chinese and English Language Pairs" Hairuoi Wang	8
Various other materials	8
Media coverage	9
Self-reflection reports	10
Roman Gorbunov	10
Liisa Kõrgekuhi	10
Säde Liis Nelke	10
Ingrid Sogenbits	11
Kano Yasui	11

LIFE project report – Synergy between interpreter and public official

Goals

The goal of this LIFE project was to create an educational video on the topic of collaboration between an interpreter and a public official.

We were given relative freedom in setting a more specific theme. Our group chose to portray possible problems that might arise in a situation where a foreigner is in need of help from a public official, yet there is a language barrier. In that situation, the services of an interpreter are needed.

With portraying problems that might arise in this setting, we hoped to create a learning experience for future public officials and interpreters, so as to better avoid these problems. The impact of our work will only become tangible in time.

Importance of the problem, description of methods

As the very first phase of our project, we researched the state of the interpreting services, both in Estonia and in various different countries such as Japan and Italy. The findings can be generalised as not encouraging positive change. Often, both practicing self-taught community interpreters and those who need their services don't find professional training necessary for interpreting (Hale 2007: 164). Wages do not attract professionals and often the jobs don't even require any proper qualifications. In fact, there is no way to attain proper qualifications as an interpreter in Estonia. Another universal problem lies in the lack of a proper code of ethics for interpreters, which leads to confusion and unprofessional work. In an endless cycle, this in turn damages the reputation of the interpreting profession.

We decided to condense the problem in a short video which consists of explanatory scenes by an interpreter and a public official and three possible issues that might arise during this kind of conversation. The explanatory scenes allowed us to make the hands on scenes shorter. Making the video short and condensed was one of our main objectives as simple and quick explanations are easier to grasp for a viewer.

The issues are of a different type - it shows how they might vary. Issues can be linguistic, participant-related, cultural and many more. One of the reasons for these problems (that do not exist in written translation) is that an interpreter has to act on the spot while making interpreting decisions. Our video shows just a few of them and in one of our explanatory scenes, we explain that there might be numerous other types of issues. In our opinion, it is

important to note that because with this knowledge and awareness, the parties involved can improve their performance. Being aware of possible issues can improve comprehension during the communication process (Hale 2007: 16).

In the explanatory parts of the video, we have both a public official and an interpreter. Dividing the introduction between the two is our way to emphasise the point of view of two parties. It is clear that the task of an interpreter and a public official are different. Both explain what they need to be able to perform at their best and what are the main challenges.

In our "ELU theoretical backing" file, additional materials and sources that we used can be found.

Work process, reaching the target group

This problem could be tackled from multiple angles, but we've chosen to mainly focus on the issue of quality of interpreting services. In our video, we chose to present three issues we found important: the issue of (overflowing) empathy; the issue of cultural differences leading to misunderstandings (and how an interpreter should react); the issue of dialects and slang (and how an interpreter can manage them).

Our choices were based both on research and the personal experience of our team members. We have Ingrid, a former public official; Roman and Elisaveta, interpreting students; and Kano Yasui, who could discuss differences between English, standard Japanese, and dialects.

We aim our project mainly at students, especially those studying translation, interpreting or studying to work as public officials. This video will also be useful for teachers, working interpreters, public officials, police officers, and anyone who might need to use the services of an interpreter.

For that, we intend to keep the video available in the Tallinn University YouTube channel, as well as mention it in the university information newsletter coming out on 13th of December. Furthermore, Jekaterina Maadla will use the video as teaching material in both classrooms and conferences.

Sustainability

Thankfully, the format of an educational video will allow our resource to be kept in use for over a long period of time with minimal issues. It can be recirculated after a period of time, or kept in constant use, since there is no harm in just keeping this material as open-access material on a platform such as YouTube. In addition, we already know that Jekateriina Maadla, who is our project instructor, will be using this material in teaching.

Summary and results

To start with, the most important result of this project is the fact that we have reached all of our goals: we successfully cooperated with each other to fulfill all tasks within the project, meaning that the principle of bringing students from different areas together to improve their learning capabilities worked well. Different points of view and readiness to learn from each other helped us to quickly advance in the topic.

1. We accomplished the main task - we have made a video which can be used by our university for teaching students and professors. We do hope that our input won't stay unnoticed.
2. We worked through different sources and, by doing that, enlarged our knowledge about the topic.

The video

The video is currently available on Youtube by name **TLU LIFE Synergy between Interpreter and Public Official**.

Link: <https://youtu.be/QXZKFU22PIg>

Action plan

Here is our action plan. We set major dates at the beginning, and then adjusted them according to our needs as the project progressed.

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Initial planning	29.09	All 5
Progress report	6.10	5
Script preparation and improvement	8.10	Ingrid, Säde, Kano
Mid-term prep and presentation	17.-18.10	5
Visiting the victim support office	18.10	Liisa, Kano, Ingrid
Interview	22.10	Liisa, Ingrid
Casting (finding the helper)	19.10-31.10	5
Booking room, camera, lights, audio equipment	01.11	Säde, Roman
Filming	4.-5. and 11.-12. november	5
Gathering theoretical backing to one document	14.11	Säde + 4
Editing, subtitling	05.12	Roman
Figuring out distribution	05.12	Ingrid, Säde, Roman
Managing the project portfolio	12.12	Säde + 4
Writing the self-reflective reports	12.12	Individual
Creating the final presentation slides, text	13.12	Roman
ELU final presentation	17.12	5

Theoretical backing

Here are various outtakes that supported our chosen themes.

"Community Interpreting" Sandra B. Hale

Hale, Sandra B. 2007. Community Interpreting. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

The problems of community interpreting is rarely recognised by the parties involved. It is also the responsibility of all parties to make the communication meet their needs. (Hale 2007: 137)

"5.2 Sources of challenges faced by interpreters The main sources of challenges faced by community interpreters can be divided into four main areas: interpreting-related issues; context related issues, participant-related issues and system-related issues (see Figure 5.1)." (Hale 2007: 138)

Interpreting-related issues

Linguistic:

Semantic differences

Cultural:

Cross-cultural differences that can lead to miscommunication

"There are, however, cultural differences that may require some intervention in order to avoid misunderstandings, as it may not be possible to reflect such differences through language." (Hale 2007: 141)

In our video, the problem is described in the second scenario

Participant-related issues

Interpreter stepping out of her role.

"The injunction to disqualify oneself as an interpreter if there is any suspicion of an insurmountable conflict of interest that will interfere with accuracy is explicitly stated in the codes. However, a definition or explanation of impartiality is not offered by any of the codes." (Hale 2007: 120)

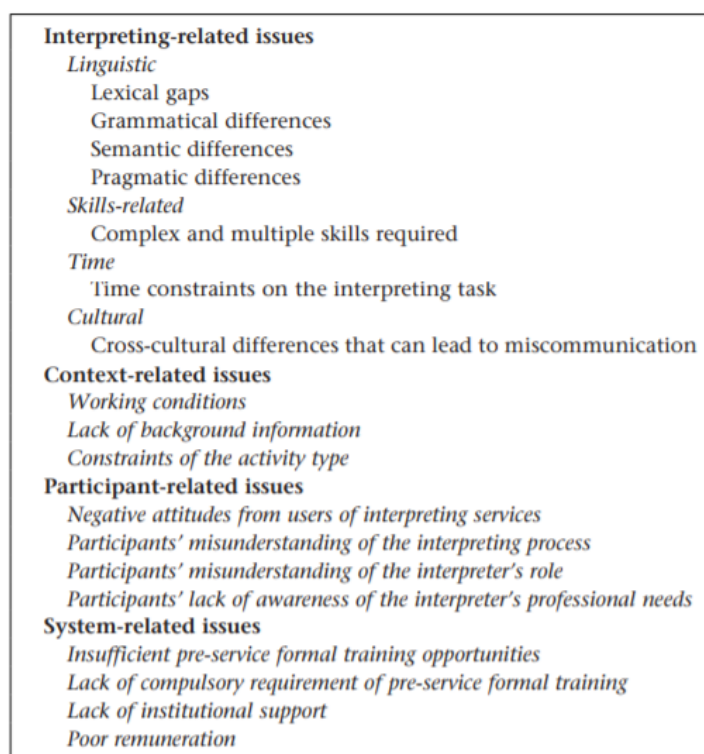


Figure 5.1 Challenges faced by the community interpreter

"Error Analysis in Consecutive Interpreting of Students With Chinese and English Language Pairs" Hairuoi Wang

Wang, Hairuo 2015. Error Analysis in Consecutive Interpreting of Students With Chinese and English Language Pairs. – Canadian Social Science 11, 11, 65–79.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/7755> (13.12.2021).

"Problem triggers may include names, numbers, enumerations, **fast speeches, strong foreign or regional accents, poor speech logic**, poor sound, etc. (Gile, 2009, p.171). (Wang 2015: 66)"

"“Quality deterioration, when it occurs, is **not necessarily detected by observers**. Processing capacity problems may result in **deterioration of the content** of the target language speech (errors, omissions, etc.) and/or of its **delivery (linguistic output**, voice, intonation, etc.).” (Gile, 2009, pp.171-172) This suggests that problem triggers are not directly observable, however, they can be inferred by deterioration of the interpretation, namely errors and omissions." (Wang 2015: 66)

"[A]s the Chinese language is very much different from English, although the student may understand the nouns in Chinese, s/he is not able to produce it adequately in English, thus it is a problem at the phase of production." (Wang 2015: 70)

"One important point is to fully understand the Chinese cultural concepts ... When a cultural concept is well understood, it is necessary to be able to translate it into English, which concerns translation ability." (Wang 2015: 70)

Various other materials

The videos about interpreting shown to us by Jekaterina Maadla at the beginning of the semester were also a great help.

<https://site.unibo.it/interpretazione-giuridica-impli/en/educational-videos>

In addition to these, we also gained inspiration from materials that can be found on the following links:

<https://www.ciol.org.uk/guidance-public-service-interpreters-police>

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/interpreters>

<https://www.state.nj.us/njsncc/documents/conf4/trackA2.pdf>

<https://www.supporthtsurvivors.org/working-with-interpreters>

https://vimeo.com/196593911?fbclid=IwAR3wmWoV_2BlK6YLhTphi9oYAF_1lRjmot-NcOoBsJwHDqkVBj3BikfJJ6g

Media coverage

The goal of this project was to create an educational video. However, without proper circulation, the video loses any purpose. That is why we have taken the following measures to spread the video.

1. The video is available on YouTube. For the moment it is uploaded to a private channel, but it will be promptly uploaded to Tallinn University's official YouTube channel to reach a wider audience.
2. We will introduce the video on the university newsletter, specifically the one coming out on Monday the 13th of December. Everyone who is subscribed to the weekly newsletter will be able to see and spread the video.
3. Through Jekaterina Maadla, the teacher of interpreting in Tallinn University, this video will be used in teaching in the classroom, as well as will be shown in related conferences. Furthermore, she will share the videos with other people and institutions, who can use it for similar purposes, i.e. the police.
4. Last but not least, our group (and everyone who is aware of this video in general), can at any time suggest someone to watch this video, should it seem appropriate. For example, when we meet someone who we believe will benefit from seeing it, we can share the video with them.

Self-reflection reports

Roman Gorbunov

This LIFE project became the main task for me during this semester. I personally did not expect it to be so demanding in some aspects. At the same time, I really enjoyed working on it and the experience I got during this period was extra-helpful. My role in our project is interesting by itself, it is always exciting to be a team-leader. You can never know what challenges you are going to face and how team members may act in certain situations. In the case of this LIFE project, I basically cannot blame anyone for being passive or ignorant. All my team members tried hard and did everything they were asked for without hesitation. We were lucky to easily understand each other's motivation and started working hard at the very beginning of the semester. We quickly assigned roles and by each deadline we had all the necessary materials and tasks completed. I personally hope that the video we made as a main task for this LIFE project will bring some benefits to our university and won't simply disappear in the vastness of the Internet....

Liisa Kõrgekui

During this project, I learned to work better in a team, had my first experience to act in a video and write a script. I was very much blessed with my team members, each of which always did their part and were all enthusiastic. Working in my team was one of the most pleasant and smoothest experiences of all team work I have ever done. The most challenging task was most probably making the script align with the purpose of the video. Since the video had to be short and concise, the content of the script had to be condensed and re-arranged during the filming process. Filming process was also quite challenging because as an actor I had to learn the text by heart and we had many takes while filming. One has to be really patient when it is hard to stay focused while you are being filmed, especially because we usually met in the evening after a long day. All in all, I think I became more confident while being filmed and had a wonderful time working with my team.

Säde Liis Nelke

During this project, I gained a lot of knowledge about a topic I was very unfamiliar with: that is, what is the state of the interpreting field in different countries and what are dominant issues that the field struggles with. Perhaps more important than the knowledge gained, is the skill of gathering and efficiently choosing materials from which to learn, and finally making a choice about what to present, about what is "most important". In the process of this project, I also struggled (and subsequently got better) with personal time management, as well as with teamwork (in the sense of completing my own tasks and also trusting others to complete theirs) and distribution of tasks. The goal we had – to present through a video a few major

issues that might occur with an interpreter and public official working together – was achieved.

Ingrid Sogenbits

I really enjoyed working with my team members during this project. The project itself was also very interesting, I'm sure public officials usually don't think about their possible cooperation with interpreters but they should. This project helped me as a public official to realize just how important good communication and cooperation with an interpreter is.

I noticed how hard-working my team members were and as I said before, I enjoyed their company. Reminded me what it's like to be young and full of energy.

I personally had serious time management issues and I realized that it is almost mission impossible to juggle between full time job, studies at the university and keeping your children happy and healthy. Luckily for me all of my team members were very conscientious and I believe we achieved all of the goals we set in the beginning of the project.

Kano Yasui

I am very grateful for this LIFE project and could actually gain very practical and useful experience for the future. I personally have never had an opportunity of using an interpreter in life yet, however in this current global world, I think it is significantly important to know how communication is mediated via interpreter. In the beginning, it took time to give some ideas and prepare several situations for instance, according to expected errors of interpreting when it comes to the specific countries like Estonia and Japan. Also, when recording a video, it was unexpectedly hard to follow the initial script we made, so I had to be flexible and sometimes improvisation was needed. However, creating something with team members gave me a lot of knowledge and support. I believe it was also a great opportunity to understand how to cooperate with people and accomplish one project together.