# Developments in Dialogue Interpreting: from Insights of Practitioners towards an Established Curriculum?

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## Abstract

*Interpreting in Estonia has undergone many important changes in the past 20 years. The society and the interpreting market have witnessed an essential makeover and the areas where interpreting is needed have grown from the once often state-controlled political and conference interpreting to include different varieties typical of a modern open society. Although the attention in training has tended to focus on conference interpreting, awareness of dialogue interpreting and the role implications of interpreters is rising both among interpreters and clients. An urge for organising dialogue interpreter training has been indicated by practitioners in the field as well as clients, and has been documented by research (cf. Mullamaa 2005, 2006a, 2008, 2009; Kääramees 2009; Remme 2010). The training and professionalisation of dialogue interpreters, however, are currently still in an embryonic state. Nevertheless, research has been able to contribute to the development of practices, in many cases constituting thus a positive example of "action research". In the article below, we analyse the relevant on-going processes and developments in the field through the results in recent research. The main focus will be on the interpreters´ role.*

**Keywords:** Dialogue interpreting, interpreting for the society, Estonia, societal changes, professionalisation, training of dialogue interpreters

## *Introduction*

The call for an increased acknowledgement of the dynamics in the interpreters´ role and thus also interpreter training is currently on the agenda in many countries of the world. In Estonia, the training courses today mainly educate interpreters for the conference domain. At the same time, interviews with practitioners (Mullamaa 2005, 2006a, 2008; 2014 *in press*; Kääramees 2009) and representatives of public institutions (Remme 2010) have demonstrated that also other types of interpreting are practised. In this article we will give a brief survey of the development of dialogue interpreting in Estonia in recent years, based on the research carried out in the field. We will be focusing on the interpreters´ role.

## *1. Theoretical Background*

### 1.1. The Interpreter's Role in the Modern era

### 1.1.1. The Interpreter´s Role in Interpreting Studies

The interpreter's role has often been seen as controversial in Interpreting Studies (IS). As we know, already Anderson (1976/2002: 212) holds that "the interpreter's role is always partially undefined" and points to "problems of inconsistency within a single role". Wadensjö (1998) and Linell (1997) pioneer in explicitly bringing to the fore the approach according to which the monological approach and the strict codes of professional conduct may often not meet the needs of communicative situations emerging during interpreting. Katan, Straniero-Sergio (2001); Mason and Stewart (2001); Wadensjö (2001); Miguelez (2001); Pöllabauer (2003); Kondo (2003) et. al. analyse the different aspects of the impact of interpreter interaction and the effects of pragmatic (mis)leading, modality, asides and seating position on the outcome of the communicative situation. As an important new development, interpreters are demonstrated to make conscious choices.

The importance of interpreters´ values is stressed:

[...]his values are there, because without them he cannot start to empathize with the speaker in the first place, and we might as well admit this as an essential aspect of the process of our profession (Kondo 2003: 87).

The role dynamics are especially important in situations which entail ethical decision-making. The well-known study by Tate and Turner (1997/ 2002) demonstrates that a number of interpreters report they prefer to follow the prescribed code of behavior even if they are convinced that it is not ethical. They do so merely for not to "step out of [their] role as an interpreter" (ibid.: 378). At the same time, Katan and Straniero-Sergio (2001) demonstrate that interpreters' comfort and ease to comply with the commission and tonality of the interpreting situations are highly valued by the audience. In some situations, "capacity [...] refers both to the traditional capacity to interpret and also to be a primary participant" (ibid.: 218). Cronin (2002) points to *ethical* responsibilities *above* cultural mediation. Angelelli (2004: 21) regrets that  rather than studying, exploring, problematizing [...] the role of interpreter, most educational institutions continue to abide by an unchallenged belief system [...] paradoxically, this lip service obscures important aspects of their [interpreters' ] power and it prevents them from exploring and understanding the complex role that they play.

Similar developments take place in Translation Studies where, in addition to adopting a clear social paradigm (cf. Pym, Shlesinger, Jettmarova 2006), in the same period, almost provocative texts on how the translator can (sub)consciously manipulate the material (cf. Jones 2004) appear. "Neutrality is a myth", states Pym (2004a). Jones (2004: 10) indicates as important factors to be considered: *self*   - " the translator's own psyche, personal history and motivations, political and ideological loyalties and views, ethical principles and conceptualizations of his/her own role, preferred translating tactics and strategies";  significant others; and the wider social context.

We find a most welcome addition to the earlier research results  in  Valero-Garcés (2005) and Bot (2005), Angelelli (2006), Pöchhacker (2006), Braun  (2007), Lee (2007), Rudvin (2006, 2007), Hale (2007), Wadensjö, Dimitrova *et al* (2007). Important additions to understanding the role of interpreters have been made by the several descriptions of the interpreter´s  role in Valero Garces and Martin (2008)**.** Also Lipkin (2008), Jacobsen (2008) as well as  Apostolou (2009) have illustrated the multiplicity of the ethical dilemmas interpreters may face in different interpreting situations, in different societies and *translation cultures* (cf. Prunč (1997)). New vistas have been opened in the area by recent research by e.g. Pöchhacker (2008), Angelelli (2008), Rudvin and Tomassini (2008) and Merlini (2009), among many others**.** Most of the contributions demonstrate an increased awareness of the dynamics in the role of the interpreter. More is accepted, allowed and even encouraged than earlier. For example, Pöchhacker (2008: 16) points out:

 /…/ intercultural mediation by an interpreter is necessarily a matter of social relations – an interpersonal interaction for which the interpreter is contracted to mediate.

The development of the interpreting profession, with a special focus on the identity and role of interpreters, is paid due attention to in Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger (2009, 2010). The results seem to suggest that the role boundaries and power relationships of interpreters are becoming more dynamic in many different countries of the world.  There is a development towards integrating the insights from actual practices and research also in training (cf. Angelelli 2008) and with the professional codes in many different countries.

The influx of fresh and new ideas and approaches in viewing the interpreter´s role illustrates that IS is developing and evolving. At the same time, Wadensjö (2007: 3) aptly points out that the array of different approaches  in the discipline may have caused a certain overlap in terminology due to the plurality of existing terms:

The multitude of more or less overlapping synonyms such as community, community-based, liaison, public service, sign-language, court, conference and dialogue interpreting, can partly be explained by conflicting ways of conceptualising and thinking about the activity, about the actors involved and their status in terms of professionalism.

In  the same vein, Pöchhacker (2007: 20-21) invites us to be open to a common understanding of interpreting processes and a more lenient view on "domains":

Considering the growing acceptance of multiple perspectives and methodological pluralism in our field, it seems reasonable to hope for a blurring of boundaries between paradigms, and thus for an increasingly coherent disciplinary space. /…/ dividing the field into separate paradigms purely on the basis of professional domains would not be helpful for interpreting research as a whole, as it would obscure productive links and interrelations.

Wadensjö (2007: 8) expresses the belief that that "little by little, a shared body of knowledge about interpreters and about professionalism in interpreting is building up", dedicating a whole edited volume to supporting the process. In its essence, both Wadensjö ( 2007) and Pöchhacker (2007) thus invite the scholars to a shared and tolerant approach to research and the evolving processes in the field. One of the recent accounts analysing the developments in the field comes from Englund-Dimitrova (2010). The conclusions drawn allow her to point to some generalisations concerning a certain "geographical spread of IS" that is still prevailing ( ibid.: 257)  and a diversity of approaches and methods in the discipline.

### 1.1.2.  The Interpreter´s Role as Perceived by the Community: Two Examples

As shown above, the role boundaries and power relationships in the interpreting profession have become more ambiguous - as is the case in many other spheres in the modern world. The traditional neutral image seems to be questioned more and more often. These findings from theory have been backed up by reflections from the real world. Let us here take a look at just two of them. Case 1 is chosen as the approach it illustrates was rather new in its time, and was published in a journal with a considerable size of readership all across the world.  We also believe that the connection between the interpreter´s role and its relevance for a society is made quite visible here.

Case 1: In 2005 the news magazine *TIME* awarded the honorary title of "European hero 2005" to the sign language interpreter from the Ukraine, Natalya Dmitruk, who in the days decisive for Ukrainian democracy decided to "step out of her role" and not to mediate the false message of the totalitarian regime.  *TIME* (Zarakhovich, Sept. 2005: 16) reports on her as a "rebel", explaining:

On Nov. 25, Dmitruk was assigned to translate the afternoon news into sign language for a deaf audience of some 100.000. But instead of repeating the official announcement that Yuchenko had lost, she signed instead: "Yuchenko is our President. Do not believe the Central Electoral Commission. They are lying"

This "intrusion" of the *self* of the interpreter who valued the absolute ethics more than obedience to role prescriptions supported this society to democracy at this given point in time. As Zarakhovich (ibid.) puts it "in a country intimidated into silence, a signer for the death was the first to speak out".

In the same vein, Case 2 is chosen because it represents an instance of public demonstration of "client" attitudes towards the interpreter´s role. More than that, it also concerns our immediate context and object of research: liaison interpreters in Estonia.

Case 2: In 2009 the first foreigner ever to receive the City of Uppsala´s (Sweden) medal of honour is the interpreter from Estonia who interpreted between the twin cities during their cooperation starting from the very beginning of the challenging 1990s. Again, more than just immaculate translation skills are at stake, and the speech explaining why her work deserves to be awarded, explicitly points out that it is "more than just linguistic mediation" that has supported the communication and successful cooperation (personal archives).

Examples like these are considerably more. Based on such data we can conclude that as time progresses, the interpreters´ intercultural mediation and interpersonal skills are shown more approval, and not just in research. The changes in the scenes of interpreting and the character of the profession call for new approaches in training, new role descriptions, and possibly also a revision of principles of what is to be considered good interpreting practice both by our "clients" – whom I would rather like to call "colleagues" – and interpreters themselves.

### 1.2. Goffman: Professional Roles

One way for describing the interpreters´ role could be to see it through the prism of  the development of professional roles (cf. Mullamaa 2005, 2006a, 2008, 2009). How have professional roles been described traditionally?

Goffman (1959) points to practitioners' inclination to create a front and image they rely on in their professional life. Goffman (ibid: 22) defines *front* as "that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance". Goffman (ibid.) further distinguishes between *appearance* and *manner* - defined as "the stimuli which make up personal front".  He (ibid: 26-27) mentions several professions where the *front*, *appearance* and *manner* of practitioners set the scene for clients to believe in the quality of their service. If we take a look at some earlier interpreter training manuals, I suggest that a parallel could be drawn here between Goffman´s descriptions above and some earlier guidelines for interpreters. Many interpreter training manuals tend to suggest how to make a credible impression. Detailed instructions for behaviour are provided:

On the day of your assignment, wear appropriate attire and arrive early at the courthouse. Report to the clerk's office [...], introduce yourself and find out what courtroom(s) you will be working in. [...] When you introduce yourself to court personnel, state your name and hand them a business card, if you have one [...] (Mikkelson 2000: 56-57).

Similar advice on establishing an image is given in Edwards (1995: 66-72). Image and role are explicitly interlinked: "Image is important because it will be taken for reality" (ibid.). Special advice is given for the dress code, making a clear connection between image and competence:

The interpreter should dress soberly. [...] *The image the interpreter wishes to project is that of someone serious, who has interpreting and only interpreting on her mind.* [...] *Your look should convey the reality of your competence* ( ibid. 71, emphasis mine).

At the same time, in most of the earlier interpreter training manuals at our disposal, there is very little discussion on the essential dilemmas of ethically complex situations. Neither do we find much discussion on the interpreters´ role and their latitude to act *if* this should be unavoidable. In the classical quotes by Wadensjö (1998) and Tate and Turner (1997/2002) the tensions between the official guidelines and the actual world are pointed out:

Rules belong to an idealized, abstract world. They ´exist´ in the minds of people. Utterances, in contrast, belong to the concrete world. An individual who is occupied with interpreting *relates* to linguistic, social and other cultural norms, but interpreting as an activity can never be a simple application of norms of grammar, generic style, politeness, and so forth. Such a view would presuppose the denial of personal responsibility (Wadensjö 1998: 41).

Tate and Turner  (1997/2002: 374) express the deficiency of what they call "the mechanistic model" in the following way:

[...] the ideologically normative strength of the perspective which says that it is only proper for the interpreter to be entirely uninvolved and mechanised - facilitated by its tidy "black-and-whiteness", the unambiguous directives for action which it conveniently supplies - has created a situation, where, we could argue, professionals in the field have been reluctant openly to look at what they know *actually* happens in many situations.

The plea by Angelelli  to carefully take into account the interpreters´ actual role and tasks also in interpreter training and evaluation was refreshingly direct and may in retrospect prove to denote another turning point in the history of the discipline. Angelelli (2008: 160) states:

/…the gap between theory and practice persists and, many times, we witness parallel conversations rather than converging dialogue. This chapter is a plea to revert the current situation, to encourage meaningful dialogue between theory and practice. For the sake of our profession we need to take action and see that results of research are accounted for in situated practices. The time has come.

The situation is the more urgent as, according to Angelelli (2008: 160), despite a respectable amount of research pointing to essential features of the interpreter´s role not much has changed in official assessment (and thus the official "*professional role"* KM) yet:

/…/ other skills (such as interpersonal or social ones) are as crucial as cognitive and linguistic ones, but are seldom taught and almost never measured./…/ Issues of alignment, affect, trust, and respect that are salient in interpreters´ performance and perceptions (Angelelli 2004b) should be accounted for in assessment of interpreters rather than taken for granted or simply ignored.

In 2006 I carried out a study on the interpreters´ self-descriptions. To highlight the different aspects that occurred, I suggested that the role could be described through notions that help us better grasp the multifaceted nature of interpreters´ tasks and identity. Inspired by Goffman (1959), I suggested that the notions of *professional self* and *personal self* could be introduced to analyse the interpreter's role. The notion of *professional self* could then cover the dimensions of professional *front, manner and performance. Personal self* would refer to the interpreters' *self* - their work principles, background, ethics, ideology and values (cf. Jones 2004 above). I suggest that introducing and understanding these notions could help us analyse the interpreter's role, support interpreters in balancing their *self* and the official role and help them maintain their professional integrity. I do realise that it clearly makes the multifaceted nature of the interpreters´ role too much "black and white". But I hope that this deliberate simplification may help us take a step further in explaining the – intrinsically much more complex and intricate – processes, and can thus, hopefully, help us to envision some of the intrinsic features of the professional role.

Today, accepting the personality as a part of the professional identity is a viable approach in mainstream research on professions where "the tools are the persons themselves: their education, world views, ability to emphasise and mediate" (Nõmm 2010). Professional roles are divided into career-oriented and psycho-social ones (cf. Kram, 1980 ibid.). Capacity to interact with colleagues, readiness to help, friendliness, and other "soft values" have become an inseparable part of such professions (Ullian 1994 in Nõmm 2010, Cochran 2004).

## 2. The Developing of Dialogue Interpreting in Estonia From 2005-2010

Below, I will briefly sum up the development of dialogue interpreting in Estonia as reflected through the results of three autonomous pieces of research carried out in the field (Mullamaa (2006a), Kääramees (2009) and Remme (2010)).

### 2. 1. Self-Descriptions of Practicing Dialogue Interpreters in Estonia in 2006

In my PhD thesis (Mullamaa 2006) I focused on the role of dialogue interpreters in Estonia with an additional emphasis on the possible influences on their role by the changes in the society. Using the methodological framework of ethnography and the principles of chaining I found and interviewed practising liaison interpreters in Estonia. The work was carried out in three stages, consisting of pre-interviews, pre-questionnaires, in-depth interviews and post-interviews and questionnaires.[i]

In 2003-2006, I carried out 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews[ii] to identify and gather the self-descriptions of practicing liaison interpreters in Estonia. The participants were found through preliminary interviews, questionnaires and the process of chaining (http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pa765/ethno.htm). The goal was to analyse how they view their role, the societal dimension and possible dichotomies in their role.    We used convergent interviewing (cf. http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/iview.html, cf. also Van Maanen 1990). The interviews were transcribed and 217 excerpts from these have been analysed to identify the role descriptions of our liaison interpreters.[iii]

Below, I will briefly sum up the main answers relating to the interpreters´ role. [iv]Many more excerpts could be quoted and analysed from the 217 excerpt corpus, many more aspects could be focused on. Even more quotes could be cited to illustrate the results. However, for the purposes of this paper I have chosen to present just a small selection of some of the typical remarks with a hope to be able to give our readers a general idea of the tonality and character of the participant answers and our research results. The main focus is on the role of interpreters[v].[vi]

### 2.1.1. Conceptualizing One's Role

Our interviews confirmed that liaison interpreting as a different niche does exist in Estonia, and that there are a number of practitioners who have chosen to specialize in this field. The background information given by our participants demonstrates that they often work for the upper-market, and are relatively well paid. They are mostly women, they all have higher education, often also a scientific degree, and most have another full-time or free-lance job. The informants emphasise their belief in good cooperation with clients.

Their remarks on client interaction, initiating sub-dialogues, as well as on the feedback that they have received from clients, suggest that clients trust them. Reports on clients asking interpreters to help as hosts or leaving interpreters alone with clients, suggest that there is trust also from the clients' side.

When asked to define their role, in the beginning of our interviews, however, many participants demonstrate some hesitancy. Only when the interview proceeds, the choices made to facilitate interaction become more justified (Abbreviations: P = Participant):

(1) P5: You can't be just someone there at the back. [...] Of course I…perceive that I may not dominate - and this is not the goal or…of course not at all. But I think it would be weird otherwise.

Aspects related to the *self* seem to be important  in choosing the domain of work. Most participants (P1, P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14) prefer to work in liaison situations. They report that the more interactive communication model in liaison interpreting is more suitable for their personality:

(2) P5: *this is why I like to do  [liaison] more [...]. There you can see at once that something is going on, that there is communication*. In this respect *it is more interesting to participate as an interpreter* - instead of just sitting in a glass box, wearing headphones, in front of the mike.

Participants even refer to feeling as "service personnel" in more official interpreting situations. The participatory framework in liaison interpreting situations is favoured over the former one:

(3) P10: It's rather that at the conference one is service personnel and this is what the attitude towards you is - wall paper or service personnel, right. [...] But then…if you are in liaison then actually it is always so that there will be time. When the immediate interpreting work is done, a few words will be exchanged. The relationship is human in a way. Here one is definitely not….there is no client - service-provider relationship.

## 2.1.2. Interaction with Clients

Participants report that "the personal side is always there when we work with people" (P2):

(4) P2: *You can't switch it off.* You cannot remain SO neutral and unbiased [...]. *Then what's the difference, I will then type the words in the Internet and I will automatically get some equivalent back* - well, that's not quite it.

According to our informants, the ability to balance the capacity to empathize and assist the client, nevertheless focusing on mediating *between* the parties (thus finding a good balance between the *personal self* and *professional self* in the best interests of the primary parties) determines the quality of interpreter-mediated communication:

(5) P6: In my view, this is *this additional merit for what you are always praised or known as a good interpreter*, right? You may be a doctor or a masseur who simply "works through" the patient, right. But when you are told that [...] you should do this and that and you might change your life like this, then *you are given something additional, something an ordinary one doesn't give you*, right?

Participation, including the *personal self* dimension is a consciously chosen strategy:

(6) P13: *I think I am not a machine because it feels that they wouldn't get it then.* I don't know if I could do that - well, I should try it. *I actually think I can't - or, rather - let's say this out - it's not needed.*

Close cooperation creates comfort, comfort creates quality:

(7) P10: [...] the people - *the client and the one you interpret - even if the discussion is official and important - also they ….feel good in such atmosphere*. [...] *you will have an enormous inspiration, even a glow. In a word, everything succeeds.*

Participants even express the view that strictly resorting to the official rules (*professional self*) and not sensing the audience might be destructive in informal interpreting situations:

(8) P12: [...] when interpreting *in liaison, in a role that's more free you have to depart from the audience. [...] And when the interpreter would be there very much of an official, very conventional - it would ruin the atmosphere and would become…would make the atmosphere freezing.* Or at least the interpreter himself *would have a negative and hindering effect on it.*

The participants who preferred resorting to the principles of interpreter behaviour "following the rules", report having met with client dissatisfaction:

(9) P11: These people were not satisfied with me *because I was simply a machine, very dry, many times repeating what the speaker did before.*

In general, our informants tended to be very client conscious. At the same time, they reported that do not tend to fully follow the mainly linguistic interpreting model that is still prevalently taught in training. Many of them, furthermore, explicitly questioned that. An interesting picture emerges where on the one hand, the so-called machine-like model is questioned, which is in tune with the results of many other studies in the world (see Wadensjö (1998), Tate and Turner (1997/2002), Pöllabauer (2003, 2006), Linell (1997, 1998), Angelelli (2004, 2008)). At the same time, there is no tendency to try to help the weaker one (as suggested by Wadensjö (1998)) or the one in the power position (as suggested by Pöllabauer (2006) or Amato (2007)). Participants do not demonstrate their agency (differently from what is suggested in Angelelli (2004)).  Our informants do not use their power to influence one or another side (differently from Anderson (1976/2002) suggests). They do not enforce the aspect of entertainment (differently from what Katan and Straniero-Sergio (2001) report of). In almost all interviews it is explicitly expressed that any interpreter behaviour that does not strictly follow the implicit neutrality rules is mostly there just to facilitate client interaction (P1-P14).

### 2.1.3. Reflections of the *Professional Self* and *Personal Self*

The *self* can be rejected at the verbal level,  yet not in situations that confront interpreter ethics or their  political views or ideology. So reveals P4, speaking about her interpreting for a director of one of the numerous Lenin-named-kolchoses:

(10) P4: [the client] went into such contradiction with my own beliefs and worldview  [...] and then I felt *that it is me and the role*, and that I must convey exactly what he says, in words, and how he feels. [...] my face [laughter] had been twisted in a grimace. So probably somehow, while this was so  appalling for me, it still sought its way out somehow. Because *I tried to express what he …but it was so much in contradiction with …**me** that it was indeed so difficult".*

The *personal self* dimension is definitely there in emotional situations:

(11) P3: Yes, I have also had to visit the asylum for mentally retarded people. *My personality and role get to a certain extent confused there*.

It can also be perceived in ethical quandaries which may include one of the primary parties telling a lie (P4, P7, P10), if "there would be something that would damage something dear for us" (P1) - their home town, country or nature (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P11, P12, P13). Interpreters mention stressful situations where there is a contradiction between their *personal* and *professional self*. For example, situations where something important for Estonia (natural resources, one's hometown, one's country) is misused or unduly degraded raise the sense of responsibility in interpreters:

(12) P7: On the one hand the processing of  peat-fields,  mining there…selling this peat abroad. And then on the other side Estonian nature…'s value or something like this. Of course this raises questions [...]. It's like…maybe in your thoughts making it softer for yourself.

These findings suggest that there is considerably more *personal self* to be perceived in the self-descriptions of participants than has been considered to be a part of the interpreter's role traditionally. Participants mention that in cases like these they often enter into sub-dialogues with clients, either after the interpreted event, or in less formal settings sometimes even during it and admit that in some instances they might not fully follow the official rules in this respect. At the same time, our informants stress that they are keen to observe that the potential power in such mediating processes would not be misused.  The optimal communication between primary parties remains the most important.

### 2.1.4. "Such an Ugly Thing"….

Participants report that they have felt some contradiction between what is stipulated in the principles of interpreter neutrality and their actual practice.

Often, however, immediately after revealing the views supporting the existence of the *personal self* dimension in their role, a caveat – usually referring to the rules of neutrality - occurs:

(13) P6: And *this is again such an*…in this respect… *an ugly thing that...[...] actually you don't have the right to do thi*s. Actually you simply have to plainly interpret from one language into another. But…but if you do not explain, the other party will not get it.

Interpreters have mixed emotions about what they (should) do. On the one hand, intervention is unprofessional by the current standards:

(14) P14: This is a very good question, because *it shows that I am not very professional*.

**At closer inspection, though, it proves to be made because it is ethical:**

(15) P14: I do this because - I think it comes from the principle of *honesty*.

Our data thus shows that there exist situations when interpreters exceed their traditional role boundaries. Naturally, the question arises if this can be seen as exceeding the acceptable limits and imposing interpreter "power". The answer remains for our readers to decide. However, the participants themselves emphasize that their goal is to ensure a positive spirit of cooperation, and to ensure effective mediation between participants. The interpreter's *self* is allowed to intervene only in ethically most challenging situations. And this is done bearing in mind the principles of honesty and universal ethics.

*(16) P10: If I take it from the viewpoint of [interpreting] ethics, it was misusing power. But if I take it from the human viewpoint, this was using power in the interest of the client.*

Thus, our informants tend to unite here what we have suggested to be identified as the *professional* and *personal self* aspect. On the one hand, the participants constantly monitor themselves and what is allowed by the current rules (*professional self*). In critical ethical situations, universal ethics *(personal self)* gets the upper hand.

### 2.1.5. The Results of the Interviews: Conclusion

The results of the 2006 study can be summed up as follows:

1. There is a group of interpreters who specialise in liaison interpreting in Estonia. Their work principles can be described as a specific translation culture (Prunč 1997).

2. Their self-descriptions yield an interesting picture of increased interpreter interaction, where at the same time neutrality is observed in the interests of the clients. Our practitioners do exceed traditional role boundaries for coordinating communication and in ethically challenging situations. At the same time, differently from some other reports on dialogue interpreters (Wadensjö 1998, Pöllabauer 2003, 2006, Angelelli 2004), the interpreter's *self* does not come strongly to the fore. Although there is a strong involvement of the *personal self* (values, ethics, evaluation), this seldom comes to the fore (the exception being seriously challenging ethical dilemmas).

3. The notions of *personal self* and *professional self* help to analyse the interpreter's role. Many practitioners have found their way for reconciling these two sides in a way that is also fully accepted by their clients. No doubt, the role and identity of interpreters entail even more aspects than these notions can cover. The *personal self* dimension does not only exist in the professional roles of *liaison* interpreters and there are many more "grey" areas, admittedly also in the transcripts of participants, than could possibly be discussed in the framework of the present article. Nevertheless, we suggest that it might be useful to introduce these notions for the theoretical analysis of professional roles, for pedagogical purposes and also as a support for practitioners.

4. The more dynamic role of liaison interpreters in Estonia can be viewed in the light of the individualisation and democratisation processes. Our informants conceptualise their role through mediating between societies, different mindsets, values. The self-descriptions of our practitioners illustrate the dilemmas mediators between different cultures and societies face. The diachronic perspective and the descriptions of their role in the post-Soviet era reflect the role implications of cultural mediators through the different stages in the development of the society.

The insights and comments of our participants are particularly precious while they come from practitioners who have formed their principles and strategies in the course of an extended career. As we have pointed out elsewhere (Mullamaa 2008, 2009), the insights on the essentials of their role have been formed when moving through different political regimes and quickly changing socio-economic and political-cultural situations.

We believe that the general transformation processes of a transition society may have helped our practitioners to shape and test their role model more freely than could have been possible or necessary if a steady hierarchy of training, professionalisation and unionisation had been existing (cf. *provisional selves* in Ibarra 1999; cf. Fornäs 1992). Many participants explicitly stress in their interviews that their *personal self* in their role as an interpreter has become stronger in tune with the past intensive socio-political changes in Estonia. It is unfortunately beyond the limits of this paper to provide a deeper analysis of the macro-societal processes in our country and its influence as reflected in the participants´ quotes, yet participants attributed a number of explicitly pro-individualist approaches they shared with us to the general democratisation and individualisation processes, as well as other substantial societal changes unveiling in the background (cf. Van Deth, Scarbrough 1995: 48-55, Lauristin 1997, Laurisin, Vihalemm 1997, Lauristin *et al.* 1997, Mullamaa 2006b, Lauristin 2010a, Lauristin 2010b, Neeme 2010).

In a broader context, it is of course not surprising that the general trends in modern western societies that put the individual in the centre (cf. Van Deth, Scarbrough 1995: 2), and often encourage a discussion and democratic negotiation of roles and positions (cf. Ibarra 1999, Lauristin 2010a; Lauristin 2010b), have influenced also the interpreting profession in many different countries, including Estonia. The most interesting for me as a researcher was nevertheless to observe the parallelisms that can be drawn to the reports from many other countries in the world.

In many ways, the position of the interpreting market in Estonia has been different from that in established western democracies: be it a sudden need for different types of interpreting in a time-span of just a few years after Estonia regained its independence in the 1990s, the fact that there is still no official authorisation of interpreters, a relatively upper-market oriented character of the interpreted events, no official professional code or union for those who deal with other types of interpreting than the conference sphere. Despite this, the constraints and the perceived dichotomy in our participants´ role seems to be very similar to the descriptions from many other countries of the world. To which extent are the aspects described here inherent to the role of a mediator not wishing to exceed the voice of the parties mediated between? To which extent are the implicit principles even more binding than explicit codes one can choose to openly challenge? To which extent can practitioners´ decisions and choices concerning their professional role be seen to tally with the general processes encouraging one or another pattern of behaviour in society? These and many other questions are the subject of our ongoing research in the field ( Mullamaa 2014, forthcoming).

We are happy that the results of the study have been analysed and applied by the interpreter training centre at our university. Thanks to enthusiastic young teachers, the results have been resorted to in teaching interpreting, and survey of practices at the centre today also include references to the situation of *liaison* interpreting in Estonia and the viewpoints presented by the practitioners in our study. An elective course in dialogue interpreting has started to be given, and there are plans to develop a special course for *liaison* and dialogue interpreters. This course would consider the specific nature of *liaison* interpreting situations in this country, as *inter alia* described in our research above.

## 2.2. Follow-up Studies: Developments in Interpreter Training and the Study on how to Teach Dialogue Interpreting in Estonia

In 2007-2008 MA student Kristel Kääramees carried out another study of dialogue interpreters in Estonia. In many questions posed to her informants, she replicated the 2006a study by Mullamaa and received rather similar answers. The hypotheses of her work were: 1. Dialogue interpreters in Estonia base their work on the principle that the task of the interpreter is to provide linguistic interpreting; 2. Dialogue interpreting in Estonia is not acknowledged as an independent discipline (cf. Kääramees 2009: 7).

In addition to the free-lancers interviewed by Mullamaa (2006), Kääramees (2009) found and interviewed 12 interpreters she divides into the following three groups: a) in-house interpreters who work at the police, b) freelancers who *inter alia* work for the police and the Customs and Tax office, and c) interpreters who work as freelancers and whose mother tongue is not Estonian ( Kääramees 2009: 36). The results show that although a number of the interviewees believe that cultural interpreting (cf. Pöchhacker 2008) is a part and parcel of every interpreter´s job, a number of them still object this view. However, similarly to Mullamaa 2006, all participants (Kääramees 2009: 80) express that additional explanations are to be accepted only if this is justified from the viewpoint of the clarity of communication.

The information we gain about in-house interpreters, their training possibilities, views on ethics and professionalism, indicates that the branch is developing, however not yet acknowledged as a separate discipline.

Most useful are also the expert interviews Kääramees (ibid.) carries out for finding out more about the interpreting market and interpreter training in Sweden. Kääramees (2009: 7) proceeds from the assumption that ”Sweden is a centre of competence in the field and  is also a country with one of the longest experiences in training interpreters”. Thus, she resorts to the organisation of the interpreter market and training there as a possible example for Estonia.  Kääramees ( 2009: 83) carries out interviews with professor Cecilia Wadensjö and specialist Morena Azbel Scmidt at the Institute for Translation and Interpreting (TÖI) at Stockholm University. Important topics including terminology (*kontakttolk-dialogtolk*), the structure and arrangement of the interpreter training courses and the methodology used in training in Sweden are discussed and analysed by Wadensjö and Schmidt (Kääramees 2009: 83-89). The expert interviews with these important specialists in dialogue interpreting also offer most interesting insights into how one is trying to support trainees to manage to cope with work stress (Schmidt, ibid.). Importantly, Cecilia Wadensjö (ibid.) points out that although no special classes in psychology are given, teaching how to manage the emotional side of the work of the interpreter is one of the main tasks of the interpreting courses at TÖI ( Kääramees 2009: 89; cf. our discussion on the practitioners´ *personal self* above). As concerns practising interpreters, we learn that in Sweden psychological support is mainly available for interpreters working for the Red Cross refugees.

Psychological support is, however, not guaranteed for all interpreters: as many interpreters free-lance, they do not have one certain employer to be responsible for this. At the same-time, interpreters should themselves take the responsibility and accept consultations when possible to avoid burnout ( Wadensjö in Kääramees 2009: 89).

An important and integral part of the Swedish dialogue interpreting identity and principles is the interpreters´ code of ethics (*God tolksed*). Although most interpreters work individually, this document unites them as a common creed, but also as information to be shared with prospective clients to explain them the interpreter´s role and responsibility (Kääramees 2009: 91). Also the organisations and institutions supporting interpreters (*Kammarkollegiet,* the trade union), the situation and conditions on the labour market, the status of dialogue interpreters and the development of the profession in Sweden are discussed. Except for some specifically context-bound developments, the principles of functioning of the Swedish interpreting market, professional support and training could definitely be a good example for Estonia, and possibly also other countries where the profession of dialogue interpreting is still starting to find its rightful place in the society.

### 2.3. Research on the Needs of Clients and the Labour Market of Dialogue Interpreters in Estonia in 2010

We had now documented the existence of dialogue interpreting as a separate field in Estonia, mapped a number of free-lance dialogue interpreters and the self-descriptions of their role (Mullamaa 2005, 2006a, 2008, 2009). We had also interviewed a number of in-house interpreters and found out about their working conditions, their views on their role, as well as carried out and analysed expert interviews with leading specialists in dialogue interpreting and dialogue interpreter training in Scandinavia (Kääramees 2009). The next step would logically be mapping the situation on the labour market in our own context, to "zoom in" the needs and possibilities for specific training programmes. In 2009 MA student Päivi Remme launched her broad-scale study on to which extent public institutions in Estonia rely on interpreters´ assistance. The main hypotheses in Remme´s (2010) study are that in the near future the number of immigrants to Estonia will rise ( cf. EMFP 2007-2009: 11-16; EIP 2007 - 2013: 12 in Remme 2010:16-17). Thus also the need for interpreters will rise, as according to international conventions foreign citizens not knowing the official state language must be granted access to public services (Remme 2010: 3). Remme (ibid.) further postulates that to grant this possibility, interpreter training should be launched and interpreter students be granted a possibility to practice interpreting at public institutions. Remme (2010) thus carries out an extensive study of public institutions in Estonia. The researched institutions include the Hospital Association, prisons, state institutions, schools, social aid offices, local governments and notary´s offices (which in Estonia perform state tasks, cf. Andersen 2009). In addition to administering questionnaires to all these institutions, Remme (2010: 28) carries out interviews with officials responsible for organising interpreting services in respective institutions. A specific position responsible for interpreting in the institution currently only exists in the Police and Border Guard Unit and the Migration and Tax Board. Additional deep-going interviews were carried out with these representatives. The questions focused on the situation on the interpreting market today as well as a prognosis for the future (Remme 2010: 28).

The results show that despite international contracts and EU regulations, public policies in Estonia tend not to facilitate access to public services through interpreting ( Remme 2010: 20). In many institutions it is left for the persons in need themselves to find an interpreter. Remme (ibid.: 19 ) explains this through Estonia´s integration policies which aim at encouraging foreigners to learn Estonian (cf. Kivest 2010 in Remme ibid.). At the same time, as pointed out in Kallas and Lauristin 2008 (cf. Remme 2010:19), Estonia has not been successful in granting the protection for asylum seekers nor in the integration of foreigners. Remme (2010: 20) illustrates the attitude held by some officials with quoting an answer on granting interpreting services at a hospital in Tallinn:

A practising doctor understands without any words what the problem is when the patient shows him the problematic place. Everyone who has gone to school in Estonia has gone through a course in a foreign language (English, German, French). At a certain level, everyone can speak a foreign language. (An official answer by Tallinn City Council to a request for clarification concerning the availability of interpreting services in the medical sphere (Request No. F1-11.2/1401/1 2009 in Remme 2010:20)).

The general attitude on providing interpreting services for schools is illustrated by the fact that the goal of accepting children of new immigrants has been mentioned in 20% of the county governents´, 4% of the local governments´ and 7% of the educational institutions´ developing plans, despite the fact that at the end of the year 2007 there were children of new immigrants learning at 28 % of the general education institutions in Estonia (Kasemets 2007: 112; in Remme 2010: 20).

The majority of the representatives of the local governments in the country do not consider adapting children of new immigrants into the Estonian school system topical (Kasemets 2007: 23), despite the fact that 36% of local governments has dealt with children whose language spoken at home differs from the language of tuition at school (Estonian Integration Plan 2007–2013, in Remme 2010: 20). Out of hospitals only the psychiatric clinics resort to the interpreting service. In other hospitals it is an *ad hoc* task of any person speaking a foreign language available, although the need for interpreting exists (Remme 2010: 26). The social aid departments at city governments state they manage on their own when it concerns clients. But they do employ interpreters when they themselves have training sessions or meet colleagues from abroad (ibid. 36). In the Migration Board the family members of the people in need help to translate. The main languages in which interpreting is needed are Russian, English, Finnish and Swedish. Remme ( 2010: 46) points out that with the exception of schools, the questionnaire results suggest that the need for interpreting will increase in the near future. At the same time, the *ad hoc* nature of the interpreting situations, limited resources, as well as indeed the relatively good language skills of the employees at different institutions, who often manage at least on a "broken-language" basis, leaves it rather questionable if services would be organised on a more systematic basis in the near future.

## *Discussion*

As the three pieces of research summarised above have shown, the interpreting market in Estonia (that exists in parallel to conference interpreting) is characterised mostly by interpreting for different training sessions, expert panels, representatives of local governments and for different private market arrangements, i.e. *liaison interpreting* (cf. Mullamaa 2006, 2009; Kääramees, 2009). Although interpreting is needed also in public institutions, and should be granted according to international regulations, this is mostly not the case (Remme 2010). This type of interpreting, *dialogue interpreting* (cf. Baker, Malmkjaer 2000: 33, Mullamaa 2006a: 36), occurs on a more systematic basis mainly only in the Police and Migration Board and Tax and Boarder Guard Unit ( Kääramees 2009, Remme 2010).

We have a rather good description of what practitioners (say they) do in the interpreting triad, on how they view their role and position in society and as messengers of new attitudes and ways of life (Mullamaa 2006a, 2009). The views of in-house interpreters on their work arrangements, and also their views on what they would like to learn, are mapped, and guidelines and examples from Scandinavia for developing training for them documented (Kääramees 2009). So is the current and prospective situation on the job market as concerns public institutions ( hospitals, schools, and other public institutions) (Remme 2010).

All three authors believe that developing training for the *liaison* and dialogue interpreting market in Estonia is essential. Remme (2010: 69) believes that the target group could be the personnel at the public institutions who are now and then assigned the *ad hoc* interpreting assignments. Mullamaa (2006a, 2009) and Kääramees (2009) rather suggest that professional practising interpreters be involved and given further education courses.

Bearing in mind the fact that for most people in our context interpreting is their second job carried out in parallel to another, full-time employment, I believe that the most practical arrangement could be independent learning modules that are given based on the principles e.g. similar to these of the Open University. This would enable each person interested to find the "lego"-pieces they find most useful (e.g. different courses in terminology in different language pairs (can be given in cooperation with language centres at universities). This could then be combined with some essential interpreting courses focusing on the techniques, ethics, communicative situation, possibly a broader view of our role, etc. After the completion of a certain amount of courses, one could also qualify for writing a BA/ MA thesis in order to obtain an official diploma or a degree in the field. In due time, certain common principles and once the stage of professionalisation allows, also national standards could be developed in cooperation with practitioners (cf. Mullamaa 2006a: 201).

From the practitioners´ side there is a readiness and request for development, from the researchers´ side a readiness to map and analyse the processes and for suggesting possible scenarios for development. A most positive development has been that the Interpreting Centre at Tartu University has been following the research with keen interest. It has supported the young researchers in developing their research plans, and – within the possible framework – applied the results in the training. Currently, in cooperation with the interpreting centre, we are starting to map the more concrete wishes for further education of practising interpreters. These results will then be taken into account for developing a pilot programme for training liaison and dialogue interpreters.

Step by step, awareness-raising of the specifics of the profession, but also about the people´s right to use the interpreter, and the society´s obligation to grant it is taking place for the wider audience.

On a broader societal level one could hope that the development of liaison and dialogue interpreting shows that the society has reached a certain stage of development. As we know, professional training programs in the field were first developed in the Nordic Countries, Australia, New Zealand, the Canadian Northwest territories (Baker, Malmkaer 2000: 34), in many of them there are also professional associations. Also different Codes of professional practice exist for different modalities of interpreting in many countries (cf. e.g. http://www.sktl.net/). We know that the developments are similar to these in other Central and Eastern European states, e.g. Poland (cf. Tryk 2007)**.** At least in our specific context the development of the profession has gone hand in hand with the democratisation and individualisation processes. Accepting *liaison* and dialogue interpreting, starting and developing training, professional principles etc. in this sphere would put Estonia on the map of many existing *liaison*/ dialogue interpreting training centres, which, as pointed out by Baker, Malmkaer ( 2000: 34) have mainly used to be in developed and democratic countries. I believe that accepting a broader scale of practices of interpreting (interpreter training, professional unions and principles), as well as the aspects related to the interpreters´ role could illustrate that we have come closer to an understanding of a modern society with its different stakeholders and value of each and every citizen. The voice of the citizens  and "grass root" initiative shown for these processes to develop have had a role to play here, and are also a part of the processes themselves.

As discussed above, in IS, the inclusion of *liaison* and dialogue interpreting as a field of study has brought about acknowledging the variety existent in the profession. Despite the length and some clumsiness in adopting the new views, in our experience, the research and developing of training in the field seem to be starting to go more and more hand in hand – an encouraging perspective hopefully for also other "practitioners cum researchers" in the field across the world.

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[i] For a detailed description and analysis of methodology used, please see Mullamaa 2006a.

[ii] A semi-structured interview is a mixture of closed and open questions, which enables the researcher to get a free and creative response from the informants. According to Nunan (1992: 28) "It is /…/ likely that responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say" and can thus "better elicit the responses from the participants - even though responses to closed questions are easier to collate and analyse".

[ii] As non-conference interpreting tasks in Estonia are mainly related to interpreting for expert panels, representatives of local governments, specialist groups, etc. we decided to use the term "liaison interpreting" in order to make this specific feature clearly visible for readers for whom the term "dialogue interpreting" may mostly be related to interpreting for minorities, welfare centres, etc. (cf. Baker, Malmkjaer 2000:33; Mullamaa 2006: 33-38)

[iv] For the detailed interview questions, descriptions and analysis of methodology used, as well as excerpts and transcripts of interviews, interested readers are welcome to consult Mullamaa 2006a.  A summary of some of the most important research results can be found in Mullamaa 2008 and 2009.

[v] For the original answers of all our participants to all the interview questions, as well as a more deep-going analysis, the reader is referred to Mullamaa 2006a.

[vi] Please note that a certain clumsiness is deliberately preserved in the – at places – near verbatim translation of the quotes, to illustrate how informants have been looking for words, while trying to find a wording for the implicitly perceived.

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