

Conflict or convergence? Interpreters' and police officers' perceptions of the role of the public service interpreter

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Abstract. *This paper presents the findings of a research project investigating perceptions of public service interpreting among police officers and practising interpreters in the legal system of England and Wales. The data were secured from both groups responding to six instances of interpreting practice where the interpreter involved had to make an ethics-related choice. The results suggest that despite the markedly different professional cultures there are in fact few points of actual professional conflict, with the police officers showing an understanding of the interpreters' agenda. It is argued this is because both groups ultimately pursue the same aim, namely effective communication.*

Keywords: *Public Service interpreting, interpreter roles, investigative interviewing, professional conflict.*

Resumo. *Este artigo apresenta os resultados de um projeto de investigação das perceções sobre interpretação em serviços públicos entre agentes policiais e intérpretes no sistema jurídico de Inglaterra e do País de Gales. Os dados foram obtidos junto dos dois grupos através da resposta a seis exemplos de interpretação em que o intérprete se viu obrigado a tomar decisões de natureza ética. Os resultados indicam que, apesar das culturas profissionais marcadamente diferentes, na realidade existem poucos aspetos de verdadeiro conflito profissional, enquanto os agentes policiais revelam uma compreensão da motivação dos intérpretes. Defende-se que tal se deve ao facto de, em última instância, os dois grupos procurarem alcançar o mesmo objetivo: uma comunicação eficaz.*

Palavras-chave: *Interpretação em serviços públicos, papéis de intérprete, interrogatório de investigação, conflito profissional.*

Introduction

As noted by Jacobsen (2009: 156), research in public service interpreting (or, in her paper, 'community interpreting') 'has traditionally focused on role perceptions and expectations among users of interpreting services and interpreting practitioners'. However, only a handful of the studies investigating interpreter roles are based on input provided

by more than one group of the triadic setting (service provider – interpreter – service user). Meant to help redress the balance, this paper presents and discusses the findings of a study comparing interpreters' and service providers' (police officers' in this case) perceptions of the role of the public service interpreter. Rather than role issues themselves, however, its focus is on areas of potential professional conflict and its implications for interpreting practice in police contexts. When it comes to public service interpreting, interpreter roles are among the most topical issues of scholarly interest and, unlike the kinds of questions that require specialised linguistic knowledge (for example to do with semantic or pragmatic transfer between languages), they can serve as a common ground to generate findings based on input from both interpreting practitioners and service providers.

In England and Wales, which share a legal system, interpreters work with the police mostly to provide assistance in investigative interviews with crime victims, witnesses and suspects. Until 2012, police investigators were able to book individual interpreters directly and used recommended registers with admission criteria ensuring professionalization. In January 2012, however, the UK Ministry of Justice, in an attempt to cut costs, outsourced interpreting provision to a private company, a move that meant a proportion of the trained interpreters who had been until then working in the justice system on a freelance basis decided to opt out. A number of reports (see in particular Justice Committee, 2013) have since indicated that the use of unqualified or underqualified individuals working as interpreters led to operational difficulties in the administration of justice. In May 2016 a different language services company won the Ministry of Justice's four-year contract. It has been an eventful few years for the interpreting profession but, with the recent socio-political changes in the world and the resulting increase in immigration into Britain leading to superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007), police forces, too, face new challenges. It is against this background that it is important to find out how the two professions can best work together to ensure an equal access to justice for those who cannot communicate in English.

Research background

Previous multi-perspective studies

Research on interpreter roles is quite substantial but, given the focus of this paper, it is not presented here in detail¹. What is important to note is the fact that the discussion of roles in public service interpreting (PSI) seems to be situated in at least three conceptual and/or descriptive domains. The first pertains to the role with arguably the most currency among PSI professionals, that of the 'faithful renderer of others' utterances' (Hale, 2008: 114). The main concerns here are with pragmatic or socio-pragmatic equivalence issues. The second domain is linked to the changing economic and political landscape where PSI functions and the *emerging* roles of interpreters as e.g. cultural mediators or social workers (cf. Schaeffner *et al's* (2013) collection). Finally, roles can arise spontaneously in any PSI setting; the interpreter can become, often unwittingly, a confidant, an expert witness (Martin and Herraez, 2013), an ally (Altano, 1990) or even a messenger (cf. Kredens and Morris' (2010) discussion of prison interpreting), and this list is by no means exhaustive.

These three domains are inextricably linked as a matter of course and clear-cut role distinctions are notoriously difficult to make. A further difficulty arises because of the

sheer variety of contextually delineated norms and practices; as a result discussions of PSI roles should not be divorced from the actual social contexts where they occur. As Eades (2010: 5) points out, for example, '[t]o understand language usage in any specific legal context is impossible without an examination of structural institutional aspects of the legal system'. Jurisdictions have their own laws governing PSI provision, but regulations at the level of a jurisdiction's institutions are equally important. Such regulations can in some cases differ quite significantly across the various public sector institutions, which is why research into role issues should arguably begin at this basic community-of-practice level, take into account the workings of the professional culture in question, and be informed by as many of the stakeholder groups as possible.

This kind of triangulation is by no means lacking in PSI research and a lot of the studies have court interpreting as their focus. Kelly (2000) for example, in trying to obtain data for her study on the interpreter as a 'cultural bridge' in Massachusetts (2000: 132) cast her net quite widely and secured input from a variety of court actors. The judges, attorneys, interpreters and interpreter trainers in her study were in the main of the opinion that 'there are instances where the interpreter may need to interject relevant information' (2000: 147). Similarly, Fowler (this issue, 2013 and personal communication), in her study sought to investigate the effectiveness of interpreting via video link in an English magistrates' court by interviewing an array of court actors involved in remand hearings: interpreters, a district judge, magistrates, crown prosecutors, defence advocates and court clerks. There was almost unanimous agreement that prison video link was inferior to face-to-face communication, but the responses also revealed how the different roles seemed to foreground different aspects of the technology, with the court clerks, for example, mentioning its cost-effectiveness. Finally, in Australia, Lee (2009) secured the participation of an impressive 226 legal professionals as well as 36 court interpreters to investigate role and quality issues and identified some significant differences between the groups' perceptions.

Another recent study benefiting from a multi-perspective approach is Baixauli-Olmos' (2013) investigation of interpreting in Spanish prisons, which uses input obtained from interpreters, prison managers, inmates and prison workers. The four groups of respondents were all asked about the same general issues, although the questions were formulated in different ways. The author used the responses to establish how the role of the interpreter is affected by the relevant constraints germane to the prison setting and found that it 'develops and evolves, being constantly constructed, (re)negotiated and asserted, in accordance with the changing nature of its surroundings' (2013: 59).

Mendoza (2012), focusing on PSI outside of the criminal justice system, identified differences in the ways novice and experienced American Sign Language interpreters made decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas. She used five scenarios involving ethically complex choices and found that novice interpreters 'looked for clear-cut ethical issues and based their decisions on the overt ethical dilemma', whereas the experienced interpreters 'were able to distinguish more subtle ethical issues embedded in the ethical dilemma' (2012: 67). Finally, Dragoje and Ellam's (2007) study of PSI in a medical setting was based on responses from all three groups involved in interpreted communication. The service providers (health professionals working for the Hunter New England health service), service users (patients) and interpreters were all asked questions related to a number of professional and ethical tenets (e.g. professional conduct, confidentiality and

competence). One of the most interesting findings was that while ‘health professionals and interpreters agreed on which tenets were most important for both areas, the feelings seem[ed] to be much stronger for the health professionals than the interpreters’ (2007: 22); for example 72% of the health professionals saw a breach of confidentiality as unethical behaviour compared to only 38% of the interpreters.

If there is one finding that the studies *supra* have in common (with the exception of Lee’s (2009) study to a certain extent), it is that the attitudes of interpreters, service providers and service users, to the various aspects of interpreting provision and practice, are in the main convergent. Also of note is the fact that the two latter groups’ awareness of just what it is they can expect from interpreters is quite good, or in any case not a major cause for concern. However, there seem to be no studies that take a multi-perspective approach to interpreter roles in police interviews.

Interpreting in police interviews

As Mulayim *et al.* (2015: 21) note, ‘[t]he basic premise of investigative interviewing is to elicit as much information as possible from an interviewee without resorting to coercion or deception’. Investigative interviewing in law enforcement contexts has traditionally been of interest to psychologists (cf. Milne and Bull, 1999; Memon and Bull, 1999), but the last decade has brought a number of studies with a linguistic focus (Heydon and Lai, 2013; Carter, 2011; Oxburgh *et al.*, 2016). In England and Wales the police interview is a highly regulated stage of the evidence-gathering process²; importantly, all interviews with suspects are routinely audio-recorded and can be played back in court, although in practice sections of transcribed records are normally read out for the benefit of the jury. This raises interesting questions regarding the evidential status and, by extension, the discursive practices of the police interview. As Haworth’s (2009: 9) research suggests, ‘the existence of the future audiences and purposes affects the interaction in the interview room itself, adding a further level of unacknowledged influence over the evidence’. Haworth (2006) also shows how the discourse of the police interview can be affected by the institutional status of the participants, their contextually assigned discursive roles and their knowledge. Other empirically-based studies such as Haworth (2015), MacLeod (2016) and Oxburgh *et al.* (2010) provide a good reference platform for research into aspects of *interpreting* in police interviews. What happens when the interpreter is added to the already linguistically complex communicative event?

An attempt at answering that question was made in Wadensjö’s (1998) seminal work, in which using data from *inter alia* police immigration interviews, she demonstrated that the interpreter’s prescribed role as an essentially non-participating ‘conduit’ is a myth, and suggested a dialogic, discourse-based approach to making sense of interpreter-mediated interaction. Interpreted-mediated police interviews have since received extensive treatment in monographs by Berk-Seligson (2009), Nakane (2014) and Mulayim *et al.* (2015).

A recent study echoing Wadensjö’s and based on data from police interviews is Gal-lai (2013), who argues that ‘the unrealistic institutional demands for verbatim translations by invisible interpreters should be abandoned and the coordinating role of interpreters as co-participants and co-constructors of meaning should be fully integrated into Interpreters’ and Police authorities’ Codes of Practice’ (2013: 69). A similar recommendation for collaboration between the stakeholders was made in Heydon and Lai (2013), which used eight English-foreign language combinations in mock police interviews and

indicated that a common feature of cognitive interviews, a free-form narrative by the interviewee, posed a serious problem vis-a-vis the cognitive requirements and linguistic transfer germane to interpreting as such.

The need for more collaboration was identified also in Nakane (2007), where what can be interpreted as some evidence of professional conflict can be found. Nakane investigated the practice of communicating the suspect's rights in interpreter-mediated police interviews, using data from two drug-trafficking cases in Australia and found that the 'superficially simple procedure of [police] caution delivery is susceptible to the potential violation of suspects' rights, especially when mediated by an interpreter' (2007: 107). Among the reasons why this should be the case, Nakane listed: the delivery of the caution in long segments and the strain this causes for interpreters³; police officers' arbitrary decisions on turn boundaries; and their 'lack of awareness of the difficulties involved in transforming a written text into dialogic speech mode' (2007: 107–108). The sources of the implicit conflict are thus not linked to the differing institutional cultures, but rather seem to stem from the service providers' limited understanding of the nature of the interpreting process.

Research on aspects of interpreting in police interviews with input from both interpreters and service providers was attempted by Ortega Herráez and Foulquié Rubio (2008) but they obtained no responses from the latter. Indeed they report on having been treated with the 'utmost contempt' (2008: 132) on one occasion at a police station when trying to collect data. What they did find was that apart from the most typical scenario of the police interview, interpreters in Spain get involved also in other translation-related activities, for example transcription of tapped telephone conversations, translation of documents, making international telephone calls and helping foreigners with immigration bureaucracy. The authors note this can lead to situations of conflict with the prescribed role but an equally important issue seems to be the potential of the wide role remit to engender professional conflict of various kinds between interpreters and police officers.

Data and method

The data for this study were obtained from two groups of informants, PSI interpreters with experience of working in police interviews in England, and police interviewers based in England or Wales who have used interpreters in their work. In order to generate discussion of interpreter roles it was decided that, similar to Mendoza (2012), a number of vignettes would be used as points of departure. Vignettes have a rich tradition in social science research; they 'can elicit perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes from responses or comments to stories depicting scenarios and situations' (Barter and Renold, 1999, online). They are at times associated with certain limitations, too, chief amongst which has to do with the difference between beliefs and actions, the 'distance between the vignette and social reality, what people believe they would do in a given situation is not necessarily how they would behave in actuality' (Barter and Renold, 1999: 311). However, as the focus of the study is a comparison of perceptions between two groups of respondents, the limitation is not a major concern (although it was anticipated that the interpreters in particular would, as a matter of course, be in a position to rely on their own professional practice and contribute real examples).

The scenarios (see 1 – 6 below for details) were situated in a variety of PSI contexts, each of which involved a potentially difficult ethical choice invoking considerations of role, and were created on the basis of the author's own experience of working as a public service interpreter in a variety of settings, but also anecdotal evidence gathered informally from PSI colleagues. Both informant groups were asked to adopt the perspective of the interpreter facing the particular challenge. The discussions were moderated and semi-structured. The moderators' role was to introduce each of the scenarios in turn and encourage the participants to share their views, but also to intervene in cases where the discussion seemed to be diverging from the particular ethical dilemma discussed.

Input from the interpreters was obtained in June 2009 during a meeting of the Aston Interpreter Network, an initiative run at Aston University's Centre for Forensic Linguistics and intended to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and best practice between academics and practitioners. The informants were emailed a set of eleven scenarios to consider before the meeting, seven of which were discussed. Twenty-three interpreters contributed to the moderator-led digitally-recorded discussion. All of them had received formal training in PSI at post-graduate level. The police informants were participants in a two-week course for specialist interviewers in England and Wales responsible for interviewing in serious or complex categories of crime. The input for this project was secured during three three-hour sessions devoted specifically to interviewing through interpreters in February and April 2011. Approximately forty minutes of each of these sessions were devoted to discussing six of the scenarios mentioned above. In total, twenty-two police officers contributed to the moderator-led digitally-recorded discussion. The moderator explained in detail the principles of accuracy, impartiality and neutrality in PSI before the scenarios were introduced.

The digital recordings were played back and responses from participants in both groups were noted down for each scenario. A simple coding system was used whereby individual contributions to the discussion were isolated and classified as advocating one of the solutions advanced within each group. The classification provided two inter-subjective perspectives for each scenario, the interpreters' and the police officers', which were then analysed qualitatively with a view to identifying points of agreement and/or disagreement.

Findings

This section presents the vignettes and the responses to the scenarios provided by the two professional groups and identifies areas of agreement and/or disagreement in the perception of interpreter roles.

Scenario 1

A man suspected of murder is being interviewed by the police. He denies any involvement in the crime. The interviewing police officer leaves the room for two minutes. The man becomes agitated and tells you, "Look, it was an accident. I only wanted to scare her. I'm not guilty". The officer comes back with his coffee. What do you do?

This scenario led to a discussion of the consequences of unsolicited confidences and ways of dealing with these. The police officers' responses centred on the legal status of the interpreter following the suspect's admission of guilt. The general feeling here was that the interpreter should volunteer the unsolicited information to the interviewing police

officer after he came back into the room; the interpreter's status would then change to that of a witness and a new interpreter would have to be secured. The interpreters' discussion in contrast focused on the logistics of the situation. The dominant opinion was that the interpreter in question should have followed the police interviewer outside thus pre-empting the suspect's confession. They also stressed the general need for a pre-interview brief explaining the role of the interpreter to suspects.

Scenario 2

A French woman originally from Lyon is seeking a divorce from her English husband, who had cheated on her and wouldn't let her work. A County Court judge grants her the divorce, but has to decide on the amount of financial settlement she is to receive from the husband. During the hearing the judge asks her about the market value of the house she has kept in Lyon. She says it's worth £30,000 but, a native of Lyon, you know that this kind of property is in fact worth at least ten times more. What do you do?

In this scenario the professional groups appeared to be in agreement: the apparent lie should be interpreted unchanged. The moderators challenged both groups on the grounds that general familiarity with property prices is an inherent part of cultural competence and conveying erroneous information to a party lacking the relevant cultural grounding would therefore mean putting him at a disadvantage. This 'cultural broker' role was nevertheless rejected with the argument that it was the judge's responsibility to verify the information provided by the applicant in the case. An interpreter also noted that although some of the answers suspects provide can sound 'outrageous', they may at the same time be a true reflection of what had happened and it was not the interpreter's responsibility to adjudicate on what constituted the truth. Another interpreter informant also raised the question of the interpreter in this scenario potentially acting as an 'expert witness' offering knowledge of the property market, a role also strongly rejected by her colleagues.

Scenario 3

A male interpreter, you arrive at a hospital for an assignment and it turns out that you are supposed to translate for a young woman about to undergo a gynaecological examination. There clearly has been a mistake as a female interpreter should have been booked. The woman says she is in two minds about your presence in the surgery but says she doesn't want to miss the appointment and suggests that you go ahead. What do you do?

This scenario produced a number of responses that varied within, rather than between, the groups. Interestingly, the police interviewers displayed a more pro-active attitude in trying to solve the dilemma, looking for impromptu solutions that could help the interpreter protect himself against the potential legal repercussions, while still proceeding with the interpreting task. They suggested that a written agreement should be produced and signed by all concerned before the examination. The interpreters displayed some awareness of the problems with the procurement of female interpreters for particular pairs of languages. Some suggested that the examination could be carried out behind a screen but said they would still feel uncomfortable even if the patient was willing to proceed.

Scenario 4

You arrive at a psychiatric hospital to interpret at an assessment interview with a young man detained under the Mental Health Act. The doctor is late. A nurse tells you the young man “has been feeling lonely” and asks you to talk to him and “cheer him up” in the interview room until the doctor arrives. What do you do?

There was unanimous agreement the interpreter should not step out of role by talking to the patient with the doctor absent. The moderator working with the police informants pointed out that the conversation could provide valuable contextual information for the subsequent interpreting task, but that did not lead them to change their response, although one police officer showed a remarkably high level of apparent metalinguistic awareness by remarking the conversation could be used by the interpreter to make sure the patient’s accent was comprehensible.

Scenario 5

At a police station in an Eastern European country a young man on a stag-night trip from England is being interviewed following a street brawl which he had apparently initiated. A police officer tells him that he faces a prison sentence, but adds that ‘there’s another way of dealing with this situation’ and leaves the room for a short time. You are aware that the young man has just been invited to offer a bribe, but he has no idea this is the case. What do you do?

Similar to Scenario 3, this one generated a number of proposed solutions that varied within rather than between the groups. After much discussion leading to a variety of solutions, respondents in both groups seemed content with one whereby the propositional meaning would be conveyed in the target language, with the pragmatic meaning mentioned as a possible interpretation given the context of culture. Interestingly, some of the discussion in the police group suggested the officers’ tacit recognition of the interpreter as an active (or even pro-active) participant in the interaction. For example, the officers suggested the interpreter should ‘seek clarification’ or make informed guesses (‘I’d tell the suspect what the police officer meant if there were a general culture of bribery in that country, but there’d be danger of misinterpretation’).

Scenario 6

You are the interpreter during a hearing in a case of unfair dismissal. The applicant is an attractive young man/woman and you quickly establish a friendly connection with him/her. The hearing is adjourned until the following week. Outside the court building the man/woman asks you out for coffee. What do you do?

This was a scenario where the solutions differed between the groups, with the police interviewers suggesting that accepting the client’s offer would not be in breach of professional conduct and advancing a number of solutions that could be used to ensure this was not actually the case. A parallel was drawn in the police group with ‘solicitors giving their clients a lift home’. Almost all of the interpreters were adamant the offer should be rejected (or ‘politely declined’). A few would accept it, but only if accompanied by a third party (e.g. a solicitor working on the case) as a ‘witness’. The interpreters also suggested it was important ‘to control the signs of friendliness’ and ensure emotional detachment in their job.

Discussion

Interpreters and police officers operate in professional cultures that are different in many ways. A key difference is that, unlike police officers, interpreters tend to work on their own, typically have no recourse to institutional support and are often left to deal intuitively with ethical dilemmas related, for example, to role issues. It is in this context that perhaps the most interesting finding of the present study is the extent to which both groups' responses to the scenarios are similar, or in any case suggest the lack of any fundamental professional conflict. What is important to note is the fact that both groups rejected the roles of interpreter as confidant and cultural broker, but also that of indifferent participant. While this is not particularly surprising coming from practising interpreters, the fact the police officers effectively rejected that last role goes counter to the 'conduit' model still widespread in some corners of the criminal justice system. That said, it must be borne in mind that the police informants were relatively senior in terms of their rank and have had considerable experience working with interpreters so, in a process of inter-professional educational osmosis, may have been sensitised to the complexity of the issues inherent in interpreting.

Arguably the most obvious point of conflict was that between interpreters' duty to maintain confidentiality and police officers' expectation that the former should volunteer information of relevance to the inquiry. As indicated above, the police informants seemed to put the relevant criminal procedure rules before considering confidentiality, which nevertheless is one of the basic tenets enshrined in any PSI code of conduct. This does not mean that the officers were insensitive to the interpreter's predicament nor were they reluctant to consider alternative solutions; for example, the hypothetical notion of legal professional privilege for interpreter-service user exchanges was discussed at some length. Although the interpreter informants, perhaps not unsurprisingly, did not refer to any legal regulations at all, but rather focused on pre-emptive solutions instead, it seems that this particular conflict is not so much about role expectations, but the interpreter's legal status. In the eyes of the law, and contrary to what some service users may assume, interpreters in England and Wales do not in fact enjoy any kind of status that would protect their off-the-record interactions with a suspect or defendant as privileged but equally, just like other citizens, they are under no obligation to report a crime. Also the National Register of Public Service Interpreters Code of Professional Conduct is not explicit about whether interpreters should be pro-active in flagging up unwanted confidences to the police⁴. One way or another, it seems that statutory regulation of the status of the PSI interpreter (on top of existing certification schemes) would go a long way in protecting both service users and interpreters themselves, and result in a better working relationship between interpreters and service providers. A radical solution sometimes proposed for interpreters working in legal contexts is to accord them the status of expert witnesses. Fenton (1995: 33), for example, writing about the situation in New Zealand, argued that 'recognising the interpreter as an expert witness instead of perpetuating the unrealistic role prescription of a mere conduit would (...) seem a logical step'⁵.

The other area of some disagreement was the extent to which interpreters can enter a non-professional, personal relationship with service users. The interpreters argued any such relationship could potentially be detrimental to impartiality, which, interestingly, did not feature in the police officers' discussions of the 'personal relationship' scenario,

possibly betraying a lack of awareness of the significance of what is essentially another basic tenet of PSI.

It seems that most of the problems to do with role confusion can be avoided by spelling out the relevant interaction rules either prior to the interview or as part of the 'Preparation and planning' stage within the PEACE model (where the subsequent stages reflected in the acronym are Engage and Explain; Account, Clarify and Challenge; Closure; and Evaluation; see e.g. Shepherd and Griffiths 2013). While students taking the law track on Public Service Interpreting courses are taught about aspects of police interviewing as a matter of course (for example the Law option on DPSI courses), trainee police officers do not routinely receive instruction in how to work through interpreters. On a positive note, such instruction has been incorporated into continuing professional development courses in some police forces in recent years. Perez and Wilson (2007), for example, have reported on their work since 2000 as trainers in, *inter alia*, Scotland's National Police College, while members of Aston University's Centre for Forensic Linguistics have been involved in training police interviewers from several forces in England and Wales since 2008. Mention must also be made of the very active role of the Interpreting and Translation Services Unit at Cambridgeshire Constabulary in raising awareness of interpreting-related issues through a series of initiatives including a recent one-day conference bringing together police officers, interpreters and academic scholars⁶. However, no centrally managed solutions seem to exist and the individual forces have been sourcing the training sessions pretty much of their own accord, in response to the growing volume of interviews where interpreters are required and/or as a result of the increasing social presence of forensic linguistics. In any case, there can be no doubt that managing interpreter-mediated interviews, or any other communicative events with members of the public for that matter, should be an integral part of police training.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to identify points of conflict and/or agreement between interpreters and police officers responding to instances of interpreting practice where the interpreter involved had to make an ethics-related choice. Making such choices often means a transgressive shift in the role performed by the interpreter, and it was hoped the individual scenarios would generate a discussion of the potential transgressions and thus give an insight into the professional groups' perceptions of aspects of interpreting practice. It was found that despite conceivable conflict of interest, there were in fact few points of actual *professional* conflict, with the police officers showing an understanding of the interpreters' agenda. This is not in itself surprising when one considers the fact that, when working together, interpreters and police officers have ultimately the same aim, namely successful communication. There may of course be differences in what they take that concept to mean, but both groups' professional practice is ultimately geared towards effective administration of justice. As well as actual practice, interpreter roles emerge in a complex interplay of stakeholders' needs and expectations and prescribed codes – the law and codes of conduct – and, to work together effectively, interpreters and police officers have to develop a comprehensive understanding of the professional and statutory factors at play on both sides.

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Notes

¹For in-depth discussions of interpreter roles see in particular Colin and Morris (1996), Hale (2008), Laster and Taylor (1994) and Lee (2009).

²The main piece of legislation laying down the rules for the police interview is the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

³Cf. Russell (2002: 116): 'Arbitrary chunking of text in one language can leave the interpreter unable to even begin her interpretation into another, since a vital syntactic or contextual element may be missing from the first chunk'.

⁴Cf. 'The duty of confidentiality shall not apply where disclosure is required by law', NRPSI Code of Conduct, 3.14, <http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/for-clients-of-interpreters/code-of-professional-conduct.html>, retrieved on 21 February 2016.

⁵For an interpreter's perspective on confidentiality see Leschen, 2016.

⁶'The first UK National Joint Training for Police Officers and Police Interpreters: Working together to obtain the best evidence', 11 September 2015.

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