Tact in Translation

Negotiating trust by the Russian interpreter, at home and abroad

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Anthropology of Russia and Interpreting

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Declaration

I, Eline Helmer, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Being the only conversational participant with the ability to follow both sides of a cross-linguistic dialogue gives the interpreter the power to obscure or clarify. Because of heightened mutual dependency, all interpreters need trust to perform their roles. They actively build trust, both between self and client and between clients. In academic linguistic contexts, trust is often regarded as based on impartiality: the more objective and invisible the interpreter, the better and more professional he or she will be. In practice, this approach is not always possible, or desirable. The trust relationship between client and interpreter can also be based on closeness and personal interdependence. Interpreting *po-chelovecheski* (lit. 'approaching someone in a humane way') is a colloquial way for Russian interpreters to describe this approach.

This thesis explores the negotiation of trust by Russian interpreters. The Russian translation market's unregulated character, and historical framing of 'the foreigner' as someone to be protected *and* mistrusted, make for an interesting case to study face-to-face interpreting at all levels of the international dialogue. Based on ethnographic fieldwork with interpreters from St Petersburg, Moscow and Pskov, I argue that becoming 'someone's voice' presents a specific caring relationship. Interpreters deliberately 'perform trustworthiness' by actively working towards becoming 'one of them' (*svoi*) and avoiding actions that could spark mistrust. This trust then allows them to encourage trust between interlocutors through practices of smoothening ('smoothen' = *sgladit'*) and softening ('soften' = *smiagchit'*). Drawing on 37 interviews with 41 interpreters, supplemented by participant observation, I explore the gender dynamics, emotional load and moral ambiguity of these practices.

Instead of evaluating interpreters' work along formal-informal, professional-intimate and economic-social binaries, studying interpreting through the interdisciplinary lens of care demonstrates the deficiencies of these divisions. This thesis provides a starting point for a relational and embodied understanding of interpreting, as well as insights into professional trust relationships in Russia at large.

<u>Impact statement</u>

Why am I doing this?

Six years ago, I started studying Russia by commencing on an MSc in Russian and East European studies. During the past years, and particularly in the four years I lived in Russia myself, I have witnessed how trust is often hard to find at several stages of the international dialogue. Widespread mistrust dominates the way popular media frame the relations between Russia and Western Europe, which in turn is reflected in the stories I hear from friends and family. My own struggles dealing with this lack of trust made me eager to learn from experts in this field. In my own studies, I quickly realised the importance of language: as my Russian language skills improved, I found it easier to engage in conversations based on empathy and trust. After helping out during a training session for interpreters at the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg, I realised that interpreters have elaborate experience navigating conversations across linguistic and cultural boundaries. I could learn a lot from them. This, in combination with a lack of acknowledgement of their skills extending beyond 'simple translation', made me eager to document and investigate their stories.

Who is this study for and what will they get from it?

This research presents a detailed and systematic overview of trust-building elements in interpreting. First, it will be interesting for interpreters in training and practising interpreters. Nearly all participants in this study stressed the importance of contact with practising interpreters during their time at university. However, not all young interpreters get this opportunity, and experienced interpreters often miss the exchange of professional experience. Second, gaining a better understanding of what an interpreter does is relevant for users of interpreting services. It allows them to have realistic expectations of interpreters' performance. Trust building is not an exception, but an integral element of the profession. Thirdly, this thesis is a relevant read for anthropologists interested in gaining a deeper understanding of interpreting and translation in their work. I point out several parallels between the anthropologist and the interpreter, showing how academic literature from both fields can complement each other. Finally, this study is relevant for people engaging in all types of international

dialogue. I learned a lot from the interpreters' practical expertise that helped me in my day-to-day conversations crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries.

How can I evidence it?

So far, I have published two articles in interdisciplinary, online, open-access journals. The first article was published as one of the online *Working Papers* of the CGES (Centre for German and European Studies) in 2019, the second as part of the online *Global Encyclopeadia of Informality*, also in 2019. On this last article I received the following comment from one participant: "I really liked your way of studying interpreting from the point of view of *chelovechnost*, I never thought about it that way. And I agree with all the statements about the Russian market, that's really how it is." Additionally, I have given an online lecture in June 2020. Of the forty attendees, many were practising interpreters. These interpreters later indicated that the presentation was relevant for them. One participant commented the following: "I really liked your lecture. I even made some notes for myself."

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Eline Helmer, 30 September 2020, International Translation Day

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1   Introduction to the introduction

The interpreter needs trust. Being the only conversational participant with the ability to follow both sides of the cross-linguistic dialogue puts the interpreter in a powerful position. He or she can mediate a conversation, enhance mutual understanding and de-escalate conflict through forms of 'everyday diplomacy' (Morris, 2016). However, this same powerful role also evokes questions of loyalty: to which side does the interpreter hold alliance? Can an interpreter be completely neutral in the first place? Since interpreter-mediated encounters are situations of heightened mutual dependency, trust is especially relevant. The interpreter's role as a trust mediator is inherent to the interpreter's position (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). When an interpreter loses the trust of the client, he or she loses professional credibility. Since trust is not permanent but continuously tested against the expectations of those involved in the interpreted encounter, interpreters are constantly engaged in the building and continuation of trust relationships (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006; Sztompka, 1999). This thesis aims to provide insights into the ways in which interpreters experience the need for trust and how they actively try to build it.

Among interpreters and their clients, trust is often seen as based on detachment. In academic linguistic contexts, trust is linked to impartiality: the more objective, distant and invisible the interpreter, the better and more professional he or she will be. Although this everyday image of an interpreter as an unbiased mediator who 'just translates' has been challenged in recent years, it is still prevalent in both academic and public discourse (Inghilleri, 2005; Wadensjö, 2008)[1]. Impartiality ranks high on the lists of characteristics of the ideal interpreter as presented in textbooks, interpreter training programs and codes of ethics. It constitutes 'the professional ideal' (Rudvin,

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[1] I use translation to refer to both written and oral translation ('translate', Oxford University Press (OUP), 2020). When referring to oral translation specifically, I use the term 'interpreting'. Otto Kade (1968) defined interpreting as "a form of translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language" (Kade, 1968:35, as cited in Pöchhacker, 2010:154).

2007; Wadensjö, 2008). This in turn influences the ambitions of young interpreters, as well as the expectations of users of interpreting services, who demand a 'literal translation' from an objective 'translation machine' occupying a neutral space in-between the interlocutors.

Following from this view of the interpreter as a conduit, any deviation between the source language and the target language is considered a threat to neutrality, and therefore a failure (Raymond, 2014:44). Since both interpreters and those who use their services are aware that these deviations are inevitable for various reasons (e.g., different cultural contexts and meanings, time pressure), interpreting is framed as a form of 'damage control', and the interpreter's key task is to prevent or limit damage resulting from interpreting difficulties (Gile, 2009a). Salacuse (2013) quotes an experienced executive stating that "involving an interpreter in negotiating a joint venture is a lot like trying to kiss your future spouse through a screen door" (Salacuse, 2013:117). This approach focusses on what is *lost* in translation.

In practice, however, the trust relationship between client and interpreter can be based on closeness and personal interdependence, instead of objectivity and distance. As interpreters enter the market, they soon discover that being 'a machine' is not always possible, or desirable. When 'professional impartiality' conflicts with 'professionally distributed care', formal rules of professional conduct can be experienced as restricting and undesirable (Rothstein, 2011:24). They are replaced by individual perceptions of rightness, based on particularist interpersonal relations. Examples of cases where being a 'machine' might be undesirable are emotionally loaded events (e.g., adoption procedures), cases of mistrust between the speakers (e.g., business negotiations) or a boring speaker during a lecture or excursion. Such situations show that practices of building selective, particularistic, delicate relationships in order to help others can be seen as right in some situations (Blau, 1952). Instead of focusing on what is *lost* in translation, this thesis offers insights into what is *gained*.

In this sense, this study contributes to an understanding of the very core of the interpreters' profession in times when this foundation is threatened by partial or even total replacement by artificial intelligence. Although not a new development at all (see for example Gordin's 2020 paper on the fascinating history of Soviet machine

translation), this discussion keeps on gaining relevance as technology advances. By exploring the social, relational sides of interpreting, this study explores the relevance of precisely those aspects that cannot be taken over by a robot or machine.

By framing deviations from the 'professional ideal' as added value instead of as failure, this research loosely links to studies by Rutten on imperfection in creative labour and among cultural creatives. In a newspaper article published in March 2020, she shows the wider implications of her work by calling on the Dutch government to be 'less afraid of imperfect policy' in the way it deals with COVID-19 (Rutten, 2020). In the final paragraph, Rutten states that "acknowledging one's imperfection is what builds trust" (Rutten, 2020). Although interpreters do not embrace imperfection the way creatives do, this link between imperfection on the one hand and trust on the other is relevant to interpreting. Both interpreters and users of their services are confronted with the ambivalence of the detached and cold professional ideal mentioned earlier: on the one hand striving for unattainable perfection is believed to build trust, on the other hand interpreters know from practice that often the opposite holds true. Although Rutten published extensively on imperfection, the concept of 'trust' received considerably less attention in her work (Rutten, in Byford et al., 2019; Rutten, 2017). Since she does not unpack the concept of trust, she provides a starting point for my research. I will look into the tension between actual practices and the idealised 'professional ideology', illustrating the wider relevance of imperfection to trust-building (Wadensjö, 2004).

Rutten is not the only researcher mentioning trust in passing. Despite the fact that trust is a tricky concept, a willed action rather than a natural given, it is simply taken for granted by most scholars (Broch-Due and Ystanes, 2011; Meinert, 2015). In their 2016 book *Trusting and its tribulations: interdisciplinary engagements with intimacy, sociality and trust*, Broch-Due and Ystanes argue for a shift from a representational stance on 'trust' to a performativity of 'trusting'; of practices, doings and actions. Their argument is largely framed as a response to the fact that the term 'trust' in the social sciences is mainly used in reports of quantitative survey studies of generalised trust in different entities. These surveys primarily deal with social or macro trust (Sztompka, 1999), such as positional, group, institutional, commercial and systemic trust. A similar argument for the study of trust in practice is made by Corsín Jiménez, who states that "the

question today is not what trust is but what kind of work the notion does" (2011:79). This thesis aims to provide such a performativity of 'trusting'.

Trust can only be understood by studying practices and processes of trust-building, trust-maintenance and trust-losing in an anthropological way. Corsín Jiménez (2011) notes that it is particularly ethnography that does the work of unpacking trust, instead of taking it as a sociological given (cited in Grasseni, 2013:130). My thesis therefore explores interpreters' trust negotiating practices through long-term ethnographic fieldwork with Russian interpreters from St Petersburg, Moscow and Pskov, working both in Russia and abroad. I conducted 37 in-depth interviews with 41 interpreters, supplemented by participant observation. Interview transcripts were analysed using a grounded theory approach, using thematic categories developed during a pilot study.

This thesis focusses on the experiences of professional Russian interpreters with native knowledge of Russian and a (Western) European language as their second or third language (usually English, German, French or Dutch). Just as in many Western European countries, the standard of successful interpreting in Russia today is defined in terms of 'invisibility': interpreters performing in such a way that nobody notices their presence. Negotiating this professional detachment with the human character of interpersonal interaction is not unique to Soviet or post-Soviet Russia, but a challenge for interpreters around the globe. Still, current Russian interpreting practices are a particularly interesting case to study face-to-face interpreting at all levels of the international dialogue for two reasons. Firstly, what makes trust especially important in Russia today is the unregulated character of the translation market. A register of 'certified interpreters' as a separate formal status does not exist and most interpreters are not registered as IP (*individual'nyi predprinimatel'*[2], self-employed). Whereas over 200,000 people registered on Headhunter (one of the leading online recruitment platforms in Russia) call themselves interpreter or translator on their resume, only 7,500 are registered as IP (Znamenskaia, 2020). According to Antropov (2012), interpreters are afraid of being fined for mistakes in their documents and/or reports by the government and of the time-consuming bureaucracy surrounding the application

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[2] The Library of Congress's romanization table was used for transliteration from Cyrillic (Barry, 1997).

procedure to obtain the status of IP. A recent article, based on Rosstat (Russian Federal State Statistics Service) data, adds the absence of 'a tax-paying culture' among interpreters to the list of reasons explaining the low numbers of interpreters registered as IP (Znamenskaia, 2020). In practice, the status of the university degree and a record of uninterrupted practice separate 'professional' from 'non-professional' interpreters. Since many interpreters work on a freelance basis, they need to find and keep their own clients, making personal networks key. The overall lack of systemic trust in institutions contributes to this importance of personal trust relations. Secondly, the interpreter's role as a bridge between people from entirely different linguistic and cultural backgrounds becomes particularly pronounced as this gap widens. In the Soviet period, this gap between 'us' and 'them' was particularly wide. The word 'foreigner' (*inostranets*) still has connotations quite different from its English equivalent: according to Fedorova (2002), an *inostranets* is understood not just as a representative of another country, but of a completely different world. The foreigner became a figure that simultaneously required protection, while also being subjected to mistrust.

The main findings of this thesis revolve around the concept of interpreting *po-chelovecheski* (lit. 'approaching someone in a humane way'). Hendley (2017:59, 83) describes behaving *po-chelovecheski* as 'conduct[ing] oneself in a civilised manner' with 'a commitment to fairness'. It is 'a way of working out problems on an interpersonal level without involving [outsiders]'. According to Barsukova (as cited in Moskalenko, 2016), it directly opposes formal ways of problem-solving, since 'language-wise, in Russia one can either act according to the law, or *po-chelovecheski*'. In the context of the interpreting (oral translation) market, interpreting *po-chelovecheski* is a colloquial way for Russian interpreters to describe the approach to interpreting based on exercising empathy and a willingness to be flexible in relations with others. I argue that becoming 'someone's voice' presents a specific caring relationship, influenced by similar dynamics that impact other caring relationships in Russia today, such as gender and age. Interpreters deliberately 'perform trustworthiness' by actively working towards becoming 'one of them' (*svoi*) and avoiding actions that could spark mistrust. This trust then allows them to encourage trust between interlocutors through practices of smoothening and softening (verb infinitives *sgladit'* and *smiagchit'*). Generally, the first is used to refer to finding a way out of a tense situation, the second to refer to softening

a particular sentence or gesture in translation (although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably). I explore the gender dynamics, emotional load and moral ambiguity of these practices.

"I am the tightrope woman:" Interpreting as a constant balancing act
This thesis takes as a starting point the assumption that the interpreter operates not in between languages and cultures, but in the space in which they overlap. The ideal of the interpreter as an in-between figure, frequently used in academic discourse (e.g., Bahadir, 2004; Bischoff et al., 2012; Hagedorn, 1988; Karttunen, 1994; Martínez-Gómez, 2015) is misleading. It suggests that the interpreter operates in an ideological void, in a neutral space between different cultural and linguistic practices (Inghilleri, 2005). Instead, interpreters act in an inherently heterogeneous and hybrid place where cultures and meanings overlap (Inghilleri, 2005). They are "persons embedded in a society that possesses its own values, cultural norms, and societal blueprints" and therefore, like any other human being, "perceive reality through their own social lenses" (Angelelli, 2004b:2).

Interpreters are 'liminal' beings: people who are neither this nor that, but who can simultaneously be both (Turner, 1966:99). They are both "[i]ncluded in, and at the same time excluded from, the scene of interpretation" (Apostolou, 2009:3). According to high-level Russian interpreter Pavel Palazhchenko (1997:63), the interpreter enjoys 'relative freedom' because he or she is not 'totally involved'. This makes the interpreter 'more one's own person'. As liminal beings both mark and transcend boundaries, they have the power to question categories and constantly shape definitions of what is considered to be 'normal' (Douglas, 1966:54-5). According to Hanks and Severi (2014:12), in order to understand cultures, we should focus on "the constant work of translation of languages, nonlinguistic codes, contexts of communication, and different traditions, which constitutes the field of 'cultural knowledge', both within a single tradition and in different societies." When does a message require more than 'just translation'? What needs to be added, deleted or changed in order to deliver a message across both a linguistic and cultural boundary? The interpreter is both an insider and an outsider who constantly balances the two roles strategically. Or, in the words of another high-level Russian interpreter: "I am the tightrope woman."

On the one hand, the liminal position of the interpreter is a suspicious one. So-called 'threshold people', located both between and within several social categories, frequently slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space (Turner, 1967). Culturally, those people or things that are unclear and not easily classified into one category are often viewed as dangerous, polluting, and regarded with mistrust (Douglas, 1966). The same mistrust is applicable to interpreters: there are countless stories, novels and films in which interpreters are the object of 'spy fever'. Examples range from Shakespeare's play 'Henry VI' to the 2005 film *The interpreter* with Nicole Kidman (Pollack, 2005). The historical tradition of the interpreter as a traitor is as old as the profession itself (Mairs, 2011). Or, as the famous Italian saying goes, 'traduttore, traditore' – the translator is a traitor.

On the other hand, their liminal position is one of interpreters' greatest assets. Next to their own culture, they have gathered an awareness of another one through language acquisition, social experience, practical work, travels, specialist studies, the learning of facts etc. (Stolze, 2010:144). This 'fusion of horizons' allows for the comprehension of messages originally composed against another horizon (Gadamer, 1960, as cited in Stolze, 2010:144). It enables interpreters to translate 'worlds', instead of words, defined as "oriented contexts for the apprehension of reality" (Hanks and Severi, 2014:8). It is precisely the quality of being positioned firmly within, and not between, social/interactional spaces that turns the interpreter into an expert mediator, constantly making strategic assessments of how to best get a message across. Being part of two languages and cultures, as well as of both the 'system' and the 'lifeworld' of the client contributes to the interpreter's professional credibility as a trust mediator (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). In these cases, it is often the interpreter's social knowledge and engagement that provides the foundation for trust, rather than non-involvement and neutrality.

Why interpreters? Unrecognised human capital

This thesis presents insights into an often-neglected range of skills and agency. In both academic research (particularly before the 1990s) and public discourse at large, interpreters are described as 'invisible', as a 'ghost', a 'window' or a 'nonperson' (Goffman, 1990, as cited in Wadensjö, 2008). Such a 'translation machine' is not

supposed to have thoughts, tactics and strategies of its own. For this reason, the social knowledge of interpreters has been ignored for years (Angelelli, 2004b; Venuti, 2008). This leads to resentment amongst these professionals, who are generally proud of their role as mediators, of the way they contribute to the de-escalation of conflicts and encourage dialogue. By allowing interpreters to talk about the social side to their profession, this research aims to document their accumulated experiences, forming a reservoir of unrecognised human capital.[3]

My research project has collected experience-based knowledge that has been built by individual professionals over the years, but that has rarely been collected into one volume. Given the normative approach to interpreting highlighted above, little to no attention has been paid to the social role of the interpreter during interpreter training at Russian universities. As a result, each interpreter has come up with his or her own tactics and strategies of 'on the spot' mediation. Given the fact that face-to-face interpreters are often 'lone wolves', they rarely discuss these highly personal approaches with their colleagues (Brodskii, 2012:167). Experienced interpreters' reflections on the way their time at university prepared (and did not prepare) them for the job could lead to concrete recommendations to improve the universities' curriculum, better preparing students for interpreting on the ground.

1.2   The politicised role of interpreting in (Soviet) Russia

From tolmach to perevodchik[4]

In Russian history, the first documented mention of interpreting as an occupation stems from the sixteenth century, in the form of a written account of the payment for the services of *tolmachi* (old name for interpreter, of Tatar origin)[5] who had served Ivan IV

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[3] One of the goals of anthropological writings is the aim 'to give voice' to the unheard. This aim has a certain patronizing undertone, by speaking for those who supposedly cannot speak for themselves. In my research, participants are most definitely able to make their own voices heard through research, websites and social media. However, due to their demanding profession only a few find the time to document and present their experiences. This required a researcher full-time dedicated to this task, one that I took upon myself.
[4] In modern Russian, there is only one word for translator and interpreter, '*perevodchik*'. One needs to add the adjective 'written' (*pismennyi*) or 'oral' (*ustnyi*) in order to differentiate between the two.
[5] During the Tatar-Mongol 'Yoke' period (1243–1480), Russian princes used interpreters' services in negotiations with Mongol khans who ruled over Rus'. These interpreters were initially Golden Horde soldiers who spoke Russian and lived among civilian Tatars in Tatar Sloboda, a settlement along the

during diplomatic negotiations (Alikina, 2010). A central role in those years was played by the government's central diplomatic office, the so called *Posolsky Prikaz*, which existed from 1549 to 1720 and served as a hub for interpreting services (see Kunenkov, 2012). Based on a 1666 report from Grigorii Kotoshikhin, a former *Posolsky Prikaz* employee himself, Maier (2009) notes around 50 translators and 70 interpreters in this period, although this number varied considerably. In 1689, these interpreters of the *Posolsky Prikaz* worked into and from 14 foreign languages (Burlyay et al., 2015:363).[6] When the responsibilities of the diplomatic office increased, so did those of the interpreters, who soon began to conduct international negotiations independently. Besides passing a language examination, interpreters had to swear loyalty to the monarch before being hired (Burlyay et al., 2015). Tyulenev (2011) and Baer (2011) note how translations were used as a tool during the Westernization initiated by Peter the Great. As Pushkin's 1830 dictum says: "translators are the post-horses of enlightenment" (Baer, 2011:154-155). In 1720, Peter the Great replaced the *Posolsky Prikaz* by the newly founded College of Foreign Affairs, where aristocratic students were trained to become translators and interpreters (Roland, 1999).[7] This developed along with the emergence of an aristocratic class that spoke European languages, and in particular French, as fluently as Russian. In this period, the fundamental principles and rules of professional translation and interpreting were laid down (Burlyay et al., 2015:363). In their (2004) article on written translation in the 18th century, Vorob'ev and Zlobin's (2004) state that interpreters belonged to the relatively high 9th or 10th grade in the 1722 'Table of ranks'.[8]

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road leading from Moscow to the Golden Horde (Burlyay et al., 2015:363). Later on, the interpreters of Tatar origin were joined by Russians who had learned the Tatar language (Semenets and Panasyev, 1991, as cited in Pochhacker, 2015).

[6] These foreign languages were Greek, Latin, Swedish, Dutch, English, Italian, Armenian, Tatar, Turkish, Kalmyk, Nogai, Khiva, Persian and Mongolian (Burlyay et al., 2015:363).

[7] Roland (1999) provides an overview of interpreters as diplomats throughout history. The book reflects a rather 'classical' view of diplomacy – a practice taking place behind the closed doors of presidential offices, international organisations and embassies. For an article on the interpreter as an everyday diplomat, see Helmer (2019b).

[8] The Table of Ranks was a formal list of positions and ranks in the military, government, and court of Imperial Russia. It was introduced by Peter the Great in 1722 and abolished by the Bolsheviks in 1917 (Segrillo, 2016).

In the first years of the Soviet Union, deciding on a suitable policy concerning foreign language learning proved to be a challenge. On the one hand, the new country's leaders encouraged the study of foreign languages in order to communicate with workers abroad. Lenin, his wife Krupskaya, as well as Stalin and other Soviet leaders often expressed the significance of foreign language study for the building of Communism (Ornstein, 1958). It was seen as an important attribute of citizens of the Soviet Union, the envisioned leaders of the world proletariat (Pavlenko, 2003).[9] On the other hand, a practical problem quickly emerged: within the Soviet Union 'bourgeois elements' were the only ones who spoke the languages of potential allies abroad. Lenin was reluctant to appoint aristocrats to Foreign Office positions (Roland, 1999). Nevertheless, in the 1920s and the 1930s interpreting at official negotiations was mostly done by employees of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, most of which were former diplomats of tsarist Russia (Burlyay et al., 2015). Especially in the early years of the newly established Soviet Union, the interpreter's representative role was not without danger. Describing her experience as an interpreter for a foreign delegation in the 1930s, Tamara Solonevich (2016:132) describes the importance of reproducing the official line through memorised answers, of not being 'naïve'. When a new colleague complained about her salary to foreign guests, she lost her job that same day, was arrested and never heard of again.

Consecutive interpreting dominated in the first half of the 20th century, very much in line with the developments in Western Europe at the time. However, the type of consecutive interpreting differed. Whereas the Western tradition relied on note-taking and therefore allowed for the interpretation of long passages, with a ban on interrupting the speaker, consecutive interpreting in (Soviet) Russia was (and often still is) done paragraph by paragraph. Chernov (1999) provides two possible explanations for this difference. First, consecutive interpreting as a profession became organised at a conference with an official intergovernmental status (Paris Peace Conference) and

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[9] Their multilingual approach to translation differed from America's monolingual goal at the time. This is reflected in the history of Soviet machine translation: whereas America concentrated on one language pair (Russian-English), the Soviet Union worked with approximately 20 language pairs, leading to fundamentally different structures of each attempts at building a translation machine (Gordin, 2020).

later in the League of Nations. At these conferences, speakers preferred to deliver their statement uninterruptedly, and there were enough people in the audience to listen to the original while it lasted. This was not the case in the Soviet Union, due to its multilingual make-up. Second, prior to the appearance of Min'iar-Beloruchev's manuals (I will come back to these in 2.1), training in consecutive interpreting had been strongly influenced by the practice of military interpreting taught at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages, where interpreters were trained to rely on memory instead of notes for security reasons.

Although the first experiment with simultaneous interpreting had already occurred in 1928 at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, followed by several other occasions in the 1930s, simultaneous interpreting only emerged at a large scale in the 1940s. Little has been written on consecutive interpreting in this period, but several authors explored the experiences of Russian interpreters both during the Second World War (Beyda, 2014; Salevsky, 2014) and right after it (Gaiba, 1999). The Nuremberg trials became the first big international showcase of simultaneous interpreting and led to the introduction of the term into the Russian language (Burlyay et al., 2015). This emergence of a new type of interpreting sparked the professionalisation of the profession in Russia at large: according to Garbovsky (2015), professional training in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting took flight in this period. This Soviet school of interpreting developed some unique teaching methods and produced numerous top-quality interpreters (Burlyay et al., 2015).

By the end of WW II, the government realised the importance of foreign-language study for the purposes of national security, as well as for economic and technological development. The foreign language education system had to be radically transformed, with at least six years of foreign language study to be included in the new system. However, due to the shortage of qualified teachers and a lack of coordinated standards, this did not result in the desired level. Upon the initiative of leading Soviet linguist Professor Lev Shcherba, specialised foreign language schools for talented pupils were set up in Moscow and Leningrad in 1949, after which other cities followed suit (Pavlenko, 2003). One of the most significant features of the program at these newly developed schools was the attempt to teach as many subjects as possible in the foreign language itself (Ornstein, 1958). Ornstein (1958) cites an eyewitness account

from Professor Fan Parker who visited such a school in Moscow, rating the students' knowledge of English as 'excellent'. Other sources point to the schools' overemphasis on writing and little attention to speaking (Monk, 1990; Ornstein, 1958). Finally, since the very first years of specialised schools, their development into prestigious institutions with a rather undemocratic screening process for admission became the cause of 'active concern' (Monk, 1990).

The 1961 resolution 'On the improvement of the studying of foreign languages' pointed out that, although improved, graduates' knowledge of a foreign tongue was still weak. The resolution included, amongst other things, a proposal to split existing classes, develop new textbooks, intensify foreign language teaching in primary and secondary schools and expand film and audio material for distance learning.[10] However, policies restricting contact with foreigners were still in place, making it nearly impossible to practise the language with native speakers (Pavlenko, 2003).[11] Conversational foreign language was also subordinate in the school curriculum, where a heavy emphasis was placed on grammatical analysis of written texts (Ornstein, 1958). As a result, the majority of the students graduated with excellent grammatical knowledge but hardly any conversational practice. Pavlenko (2003) discusses the politicised context of foreign language learning in the 1970s, when teaching materials and curricula were permeated by texts, vocabulary and exercises of ideological value in order to ensure that students would not be 'contaminated' by the languages they were learning (Pavlenko, 2003:323). Remembering her own first English class as a fifth grader in 1975, she recalls how her teacher welcomed the new pupils, stating that "Your knowledge of this language will prove crucial when we are at war with the imperialist Britain and United States and you will have to decode and translate intercepted messages." Those teaching translation and interpretation to future interpreters were

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[10] A great example of this last measure is presented in the 1964 film *Walking the Streets of Moscow (Ia shagaiu po Moskve),* in which one of the main characters washes the windows of a new café while listening to English classes on a record player (Daneliya, 1964).
[11] On February 15, 1947, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had passed a decree prohibiting marriages between citizens of the USSR and foreigners (Wolff, 1949). Guins (1955) commented that this was mainly to prevent marriages with citizens from the 'capitalist camp'. Although citizens of satellite countries formally remained aliens, marriages between Soviet citizens and Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians, etc. were considered politically desirable for rapprochement with the friendly nations of the 'socialist camp' (Appelbaum, 2015).

very well aware of the representative role of these professionals, as they repeatedly told their students that "the motherland starts from the interpreter" *([r]odina nachinaetsia s perevodchika)* (Brodskii, 2012:160). The novel '*Intourist interpreter*' (*Perevodchitsa iz Inturista*) written from the perspective of an *Intourist* interpreter, paints a similar picture. Written by Kira Mikhailovskaia and published in 1964, it stresses the political responsibility of the main character, who has to make sure that foreign guests 'fall in love with our country" (p.3). Throughout the period of the Cold War, a clear alignment with the dominant ideology was a key factor in the recruitment of interpreters for negotiations (Baigorri-Jalón, 2010:180).

An important source of information concerning the specific social context of interpreting in Russia in the 20th century are biographies written by Russian interpreters themselves. The majority of these biographies have to do with the interpreter's work in diplomacy and world affairs (Andres, 2015b). Opinions are divided as to whether interpreters are free to publish their memoirs at all. Thiéry (1985), for example, states that memoirs violate interpreters' ethical obligation of confidentiality. By contrast, Kusterer (1995), although emphasising discretion, sees writing memoirs as a thoroughly justified endeavour, since interpreters have a duty toward history (as cited in Andres, 2015b:250). Stalin's and Molotov's (English) interpreter Valentin M. Berezhkov, unlike many others in the dictator's orbit, survived and published his memoirs in 1994.[12] His son, Sergei Berezhkov, later interpreted for President Boris Yeltsin. Vladimir Ivanovich Erofeyev (French) also interpreted for Stalin. In 2005, he published the book *Diplomat: A Book of Memories* (*Diplomat: Kniga vospominanii*). Gorbachev's interpreters Palazhchenko and Korchilov both published their memoirs, in 1997 and 1999 respectively. Even diplomatic interpreters who do not publish their memoirs are occasionally included in news reporting (for example Graham, 2017). However, apart from rare comments about the social contexts of the interpreting profession, these biographies, written based on (selective) memory, rarely deal with interpreting as such. They rather present the interpreter's view as a witness of

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[12] This is especially remarkable since the KGB learned that the interpreter's parents had defected to the West during World War II. This was enough to send thousands of others to Siberia or worse. Berezhkov still does not understand why Stalin spared him ('Stalin's interpreter', 2015).

important events, a 'fly on the wall' perspective on international relations (Andres, 2015b).

In the second half of the 20th century, scholarly evidence emerged (e.g., Denissenko, 1989) supporting the existing Russian (and partly East-European) preference for working from one's native language (A) into one's first foreign language (B) (Gile, 2009a). This topic is referred to as 'directionality' in interpreting research, separating 'into A' from 'into B' interpreting. In the 1980s, the prevailing position in the West was that high quality expression was possible only in one's native language, therefore supported interpreting 'into A' as the only practical direction (Gile, 2009a:237; Seleskovitch, 1999:62, as cited in Brander de la Iglesia and Opdenhoff, 2014:8). In contrast, their Soviet counterparts argued the reverse.[13] There are several explanations for this Soviet preference for interpreting 'into B'. First of all, the Soviet school of translation theory puts great emphasis on understanding of the source text. In 1989, Denissenko published his article 'Communicative and interpretative linguistics', in which he argued the following:

> A full or near full message gotten across even if in a somewhat stiff, less idiomatic or slightly accented language serves the purpose much better than an elegantly-worded and an impeccably pronounced half-message or less. (Denissenko, 1989:157)

Up to this day, the translators' school in Moscow insists that complete comprehension of the original is essential for an interpreter and continues teaching based on this theory (Bellos, 2011:64-65). Another explanation for the preference for interpreting 'into B' is the theory on 'prognosis' outlined by the scholar of simultaneous interpreting Chernov. This theory outlines the importance of understanding and predicting language in order to enable simultaneous translation (Gile, 2009a). A third and final argument for the preference of 'into B' interpreting is a political one. Once you agree that 'into B' interpreting is more effective than 'into A', this means only native Russian speakers can work for their country abroad. Indeed, during the Soviet period only Soviet

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[13] In many parts of the world where people speak languages used by only a small population, working both ways has always been the norm. There were simply not enough translators and interpreters with knowledge of on the one hand major target languages as their A language and the local language as their B or C language to argue for an 'into A' preference (Gile 2009a:237).

interpreters were allowed to work for the Soviet Union at, for example, the UN (Roland, 1999). Delegations would not bring their own interpreters but instead be assigned a Soviet interpreter-guide who would interpret both ways.[14]

In the late Soviet period, studying a foreign language offered young students one of the few chances to go abroad. This was attractive for different reasons. On the one hand, admission to specialised foreign language schools and institutes (especially to the Moscow Institute of International Relations) was highly selective, typically limited to privileged children of high-ranking party and government officials. For these people with a 'clean' ideological and ethnic background, the study of foreign languages could be a first step towards a professional career in diplomacy.[15] Besides going abroad, this also meant access to material goods typically inaccessible to regular Soviet citizens (Pavlenko, 2003). On the other hand, translation was seen as a means of escaping an oppressive regime. Most studies on this topic focus on purely written translation. Tyulenev (2011) and Baer (2011), for example, trace the way translators have been associated with the 'Westernization' of the country since the eighteenth century, noting how in the Soviet years, translation provided salvation from the Soviet regime's ideological pressures. Because translators could hide themselves at least to some extent behind the original author, translation offered somewhat more space for deviation from the norms than original writing (Bear, 2011)[16]. After perestroika, Russian organizations started operating internationally, resulting in a conference 'boom' dramatically increasing the need for (simultaneous) interpreters (Chernov, 2002). The opportunity for 'escape' outlined above became available to a larger group of people (Tyulenev, 2011). In an earlier article (Helmer, 2017), I have outlined how learning a foreign language became a socially accepted strategy of coping with the chaotic transition period, a theme also pointed out by Caldwell (2004). Finally, Luehrmann (2004) demonstrates how in the early 2000s foreign language courses were part of the

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[14] Bellos (2011:64-65) argues that this final argument for 'into B' interpreting was in fact the main one, dismissing the two arguments mentioned earlier as a 'cover story'. However, this political motivation is not unique for the Soviet Union: during private meetings between world leaders today, it continues to be common practice for each side to bring along their own interpreter (see figure 8).
[15] Razlogova (2014) notes how graduates without the 'proper' ideological background could work as screen translators, interpreting foreign films.
[16] Translation became a haven for otherwise unpublishable authors like Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Zabolotskii and Arsenii Tarkovskii (Baer, 2011).

online matchmaking industry, marketing knowledge of foreign languages as a means to meet and marry foreign men.

Research on Russian interpreters covering recent developments is rare. Publications of both Russian and foreign scholars take historical periods as their focus. When it comes to more recent developments, studies mainly focus on simultaneous interpreting in Russia (Chernov, 1999) and at the U.N. (Jalon, 2004). The everyday practices of face-to-face interpreters in Russia today remain an untouched topic.

Facilitating mutual understanding in times of 'othering'
The brief historical overview above has shown that certain themes surrounding the interpreter seem timeless. In their role as a bridge between 'us' and 'them', they become responsible for much more than 'mere translation'. Throughout history, the interpreter's role is politicised as their loyalty to the client plays a key role: not only does the motherland 'start from the interpreter', but also the interpreter is the one to bring the voices of 'alien countries' home. The interpreter's ability to bridge difference between people from entirely different linguistic and cultural backgrounds becomes particularly challenging as the gap between interlocutors widens because of worsening international relations. A climate of mutual mistrust influenced interpreting in the past and again complicates mutual understanding today.

This research took place in rather turbulent times, in a period of growing mistrust between many of the Russian and Western European clients of the participating interpreters. I started in 2017, a time of increasingly negative images of Russia in Europe and the other way around (Lipman, 2016). In a report from 2017, the USA-based Pew Research Center reported that a little over two-third of the respondents in Europe had an unfavourable view of Russia. Similar results characterised the Russian view towards Europeans: since the start of the Ukrainian conflict in 2014, the number of Russians indicating negative attitudes towards the EU considerably surpassed the number of those expressing a favourable attitude. The category 'Europe/the European Union/the West/particular EU countries' ranked third on the list of parties perceived as enemies by the Russian respondents in a 2018 survey (Levada Center, 2018). For many, defending Russia against this enemy applies not just to the realm of defence and security, but also to culture and values (Lipman, 2016). People across Europe,

including Western Russia, are confronted with warnings of a 'new Cold War', advice on how to deal with anti-Russian and anti-Western propaganda, information warfare, and reports on increased militarisation. The spreading of (dis)information on those themes by both social and traditional media impacts mutual trust. The Dutch news platform 'Raam op Rusland' (Window to Russia), set up in 2016 with a start-up grant from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs, describes the relationship between Russia and the West as one of 'growing mistrust', 'disappointment', 'confusion' and 'lack of interest' (RaamopRusland, 2018). The current situation is characterised by increased division and 'othering' on both sides, rather than by unity. Images of 'the other' as the enemy surfacing in public debates impact personal relationships on the ground. An article published in De Groene Amsterdammer (Van der Linde, 2014) describes how the distance between Russian migrants and their Dutch friends and colleagues is widening due to an increasingly 'anti-Russian atmosphere'. A more recent article published in 'De Correspondent' in 2016 mentions a similar trend (Tiekstra, 2016). In an interview in 2016, Dutch Russia-expert and journalist Jelle Brandt Cortsius states that, since 2014, "[t]he friendly and hospitable Russia that I knew seemed to have disappeared […] People automatically mistrusted me" (Ceelen, 2015). In such situations of heightened mistrust on both a political and public level, the interpreters' experiences 'on the ground' provide insights into the way trust is created on an everyday basis in times when precisely trust is what is lacking from the geopolitical East-West dialogue. However, since 2019, the share of Russians with a favourable attitude toward the EU has consistently been greater than the share of Russians who have an unfavourable attitude, reaching 49 percent in January 2020. Time will tell if this trend continues (Saradzhyan, 2020).

1.3   Trust negotiation by the Russian interpreter

This research project aims to investigate the ways in which Russian interpreters working in both Western Europe and Russia negotiate trust on an everyday basis. In order to answer this question, I have further divided this question into three sub-questions, specifying which situations, tactics and strategies I aim to explore. I define tactics and strategies roughly based on Gile's (2009a) *Basic concepts and models for*

interpreter and translator training.[17] In his practice-oriented approach, tactics are immediate decisions made when encountering difficulties, whereas strategies are 'overall action plans', willed actions with a slightly longer time frame in mind. What sets my approach apart from Gile's (2009a), is first of all that I use the term 'tactics' not solely referring to online translation, as he does, but also to face-to-face interpreting. Secondly, I am interested in both intentional and unintentional tactics. In contract, Gile uses the terms 'tactics' and 'strategies' as restricted to deliberate decisions and actions aimed at preventing or solving problems, as opposed to spontaneous, perhaps unconscious reactions. In my approach, tactics answer the 'what'? questions, strategies the 'why'? question. In this regard, my approach to strategy partly corresponds to Habermas' (1987, as cited in Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006:437) distinction between 'strategic action' and 'communicative action'. Communicative action is sincere, open and directed towards achieving understanding and consensus (Habermas, 1987, as cited in Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006:437). Strategic action describes situations when, instead of the sincere and open communicative action directed towards achieving understanding and consensus, at least one party instrumentalises speech to achieve a particular gain. Strategic action is oriented towards success rather than to understanding. According to Robb and Greenhalgh (2006), this might be either intentional or unconscious. Below I discuss the three sub-questions in more detail.

Sub-question 1:

In which situations do interpreters feel friction between neutrality and loyalty/empathy?

First and foremost, I am interested in the situations during which interpreters experience tension between neutrality and loyalty/empathy, between the theory they were taught at school and the real-life practices of the interpreter's profession. Other authors have approached this friction from different angles. Gile (2009a) states that, in spite of their preparation and skills, throughout their careers, interpreters continue to

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[17] In this sense I use the terms 'strategies' and 'tactics' in a way differing from De Certeau (1984:34–38), who distinguishes the two in terms of the person employing them. In his view, strategic action belongs to those institutions that possess both will and power, whereas tactics are the 'weapons of the weak', whose attempts to play with the available resources are ultimately efforts to resist and subvert the system.

encounter difficulties in both comprehension and reformulation. Problems result from processing capacity and time constraints whose order of magnitude is measured in seconds or even fractions of a second (Gile, 2009a:216). However, the tension between theory and practice extends beyond comprehension and reformulation of speech. Paying attention to the social context in which these activities occur reveals a more balanced negotiation among participants (Caldwell, 2004:37). Angelelli (2004b) and Wadensjö (2004) mention friction in terms of expectations: the tension that emerges between the prescribed/expected role of interpreters and their actual role on the ground. Hlavac (2017) speaks of a clash between the interpreter's professional and personal responsibility. Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) describe a conflict between the interpreter's professional 'bureaucratic' persona and their informal 'lifeworld' persona. Göhring (1976, cited in Bahadir, 2004:809) speaks of 'culture shock': a 'transitional experience' that allows interpreters to "develop an awareness for culture-specific attitudes, norms, beliefs, actions, etc., to reflect upon their own culturally bound situation and to 'open' themselves for other cultures" (Göhring 1976, cited in Bahadir, 2004:809). I aim to build on these concepts by investigating when friction occurs, focussing on the interpreters' perspective. In case of a conflict of trust and loyalty, towards whom or what do interpreters feel loyalty/empathy? And how does frequent exposure to such situations shape the interpreter, both as a professional and a person?

Sub-question 2:

What kinds of tactics are accessible to interpreters in such situations?

Secondly, I aim to investigate what interpreters do in the situations outlined above. Jean Delisle (in Roland, 1999:2) comments that interpreters "[i]nstinctively […] put up their guard when tension is in the air, discussions are lively and passions are unleashed." What does this mean, that interpreters 'put up their guard'? What kinds of tactics do they have at their disposal? How do interpreters manage to 'smoothen' and 'soften' the difficult situations described in the first question? These tactics, sometimes referred to as 'short-term strategies', vary greatly, since practising interpreters do not always agree on what constitutes 'professionalism' in their field (Stolze, 2010:141). Whereas one interpreter might view his or her role as a provider of 'subtitles', others place the giving of cultural explanations among their professional responsibilities (Palazhchenko, 1997). How does interpreters' view of their professional role, as well

as their work experience shape their judgements on how and when to do more than 'just translate'? This is usually not something interpreters have been taught at university. What are the off-book tactics developed by experienced interpreters? How can we learn from them in order to better prepare aspiring interpreters?

Sub-question 3:
Why do interpreters do what they do? What do they aim to achieve? What are their strategies?

This final question aims to uncover the interpreters' (usually hidden) motivations behind their choice of tactics (question 2) in situations of friction (question 1). As mentioned earlier, I regard interpreting as a situated practice, influenced by social roles and conventions (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf, 2014; Wadensjö, 1998). I therefore do not limit my research to strictly 'professional' motivations. Additionally, I pay attention to the role of identity in interpreter-mediated encounters. Next to the role of the Russian interpreter, he or she might be 'a migrant', 'a host' or 'a mother'. How does this affect their strategies during the process of trust negotiation? To what extent can their stories enrich our understanding of mediation in the intercultural East-West dialogue at large?

Methods

The data required for answering the questions outlined above were collected during ethnographic fieldwork with Russian interpreters from St Petersburg, Moscow and Pskov. Most of them work in Russia, some of them abroad, in a Western European country. Qualitative data was gathered through 37 semi-structured interviews with 41 interpreters, supplemented by participant observation during 11 interpreted encounters. My own experience as a foreign language teacher at a Russian university in both Pskov and St Petersburg, combined with volunteer interpreting, further deepened my understanding of the current Russian translation market. Whereas the interviews provide more thought-through views of the interpreting profession, participant observation allows for insights into the spontaneous mediation of intercultural dialogue. Although all interpreters who participated in this study work with the Russian language, their second or even third language can be any (Western) European language, usually English, German, French or Dutch.

The participants of this study are all 'face-to-face' interpreters. For these interpreters, the establishing of good relations with the clients is especially key (Brodskii, 2012:176). Unlike conference interpreters, these interpreters usually interpret people who do not belong to the same 'speech community'. The term 'speech community' refers to a social, rather than a linguistic entity (Hymes 1974:47, as cited in Angelelli, 2000:584). The interpreter is not so much an outsider but a 'discovering' party (Angelelli, 2000).[18] These interpreters mainly work consecutively but can also use 'chuchotage' (whispered interpreting). It includes community interpreting,[19] interpreting for business executives, diplomats or delegates attending international meetings. I exclude interpreters working in booths at the back of conference halls or other forms of distance interpreting. In these contexts, interpreters have limited direct interaction with conference participants, thus "the opportunity for cooperation and co-construction of meaning during the interpretation is minimal" (Napier, 2007:412). The main focus is on dialogue interpreting in which the constant interaction with both speaker and listener allow for negotiation and clarification (Angelelli, 2002; Wadensjö, 1998).

The interview transcripts and notes from participant observation were analysed using a grounded theory approach. During an explorative pilot study in the spring of 2018, I interviewed five interpreters in St Petersburg. The thematic analysis of this pilot study provided me with the first categories that later formed the overarching codes of the main analytical process.

The 'fieldwork' of the interpreter: Towards an anthropology of interpreting
Several parallels connect interpreting studies (IS) and anthropology, interpreters and anthropologists. First of all, these parallels illustrate my dual position in the field. During the participant observation and interviews, interpreters expressed interest in

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[18] For more comparisons between conference and community interpreting, see Angelelli (2000).
[19] The term 'community interpreting' was introduced by the Institute of Linguists in London during the early 1980s. It refers to the individual interpreting provided for individuals or small groups (such as families), usually immigrants, refugees or migrant workers, for communication with government authorities, in schools or hospitals or social institutions (Snell-Hornby, 2006:118). Community interpreting is the preferred term in the United States, as well as in most of the academic literature in IS. However, in United Kingdom this activity is known as 'public service interpreting', while in Canada 'cultural interpreting' is often used.

anthropological methods of studying cultural practices. Many stressed the similarities in our work despite different educational backgrounds. Simultaneously, during meetings with colleagues conducting anthropological research in Russia, these anthropologists enthusiastically shared instances of interpreting during their fieldwork. Secondly, these parallels demonstrate the relevance of this thesis for both disciplines. In the following paragraphs I will highlight the possibilities in which IS and anthropology could benefit from each other's accumulated research. It points to the need for an anthropology of interpreting, to which this thesis aims to contribute.

All anthropologists undertaking ethnographic fieldwork are engaged in constant processes of translation. Firstly, because many ethnographers face the task of translating words and concepts from one language to another. They simultaneously try to capture real life in writing by 'translating' the lived experiences of the people they study into texts in the language of social anthropology for an often-academic audience (Bahadir, 2004:806; Hanks and Severi, 2014:6). In his (2010) essay 'The Concept of Cultural Translation', using Sudan as an example, Asad notes that cultural translation must accommodate itself to a different language not only in the sense of English as opposed to the language of the people studied, but also in the sense of a British, middle class, academic game as opposed to the modes of life of the "tribal" Sudan. Already in 1973, Leach wrote that "[l]ooked at in this way social anthropologists are engaged in establishing a methodology for the translation of cultural language (Leach, 1973:772, as cited in Asad, 1986:142). Therefore, instead of only a 'linguistic technique', or a 'mere heuristic', translation can be described as "the definition of the core strategy of social anthropology itself" (Hanks and Severi, 2014:6). The power dynamics involved in these processes of making the foreign accessible to an audience at home have received little attention in anthropological research (Sturge, 1997), and relatively few anthropologists would describe their own craft as a kind of translation (Hanks and Severi, 2014:2). Competence in a (foreign) language has often been assumed rather than openly discussed. Moreover, employing professional interpreters is a strategy to which ethnographers relate as an admission of failure (Sturge, 1997). Agar (2008:150), commenting on the scarcity of literature on language knowledge in anthropology, states that he gets the impression of "nervous ethnographers who are far from fluent

trying not to bring up the subject." As a result, even if interpreters were present during the research, they remain largely unmentioned in resulting publications (Sturge, 1997).

Furthermore, researchers working in the field of IS can benefit from research practices originally associated with anthropology, such as ethnography. Within IS research, very little attention has been paid to the development of sociologically informed models of professional activity (Inghilleri, 2006:58). This is a shame, since the interpreter is a professional who *acts* interculturally rather than merely possessing the abstract knowledge of this acting (Bahadir, 2004:809). Ethnography therefore provides the method *par excellence* for researching these practices. Like fieldworkers who write down their reflections on the ethnographic research process, the commentaries and evaluations of interpreters form a reservoir of intercultural knowledge and social experience. In order to fully understand the interpreter's profession and learn from their expertise, it is necessary to take a closer look at this 'fieldwork' of the interpreter (Bahadir, 2004:816). Bahadir (2004) mentions another way in which anthropological research can contribute to the discipline. She argues that interpreting should, just like anthropology did in the second half of the last century, "take a stance and develop a consciousness for the political and ethical dilemma between the domesticating of the Other and leaving the Other as foreign" (Bahadir, 2004:815).

Finally, anthropology and IS share a history characterised by ideals of transparency, invisibility and neutrality. As a result, professional standards revolving around a certain degree of 'dehumanization' are present both interpreting and social research. Heinz Göhring, a German sociologist and interpreter, for example, firmly beliefs in the possibility of an impartial, rational and enlightened way of encountering cultures. In his eyes, both interpreters and anthropologists should strive for the highest possible detachment and objectivity (Göhring 1977, as cited in Bahadir, 2004:806). In her (1999) book titled *Sign Language Interpreting: Deconstructing the Myth of Neutrality*, Melanie Metzger describes the similarity between the researcher and the interpreter, referring to the 'observer's paradox'. This concept was first introduced by Labov (1972), who encountered it during sociolinguistic fieldwork. Labov describes how sociolinguistic fieldworkers' main aim is to collect discourse as it occurs in daily interaction. However, daily interaction does not include the presence of a researcher. As a result, reality is at odds with the professional's goal. This is quite similar to the

situation faced by interpreters, who set the goal of not influencing the form, content, structure, and outcomes of the speech they interpret. However, interpreters, by their very presence, influence the interaction (Metzger, 1999). The same goes for my research. When Göhring (1977, 1980, as cited in Bahadir, 2004) states that any expert in intercultural communication should be equipped with the methodological resources of cultural anthropology, ethnography, and sociology, he does therefore not provide a definite solution. He views the ideal translator/ interpreter as cultural expert acting like a 'mini-ethnographer', but ignores the fact that also ethnographers are not free of bias. Furthermore, equipping interpreters with those methodological resources mentioned above is far from straightforward. In her interviews with anthropologists of a senior career cluster, Okely (in Marcus and Okely, 2007:359) noted that they all "escaped training 'techniques' and bureaucratic, transferable skills" and found their own instead. By stressing the importance of anthropologists' cumulative experiences, Okely shows that there is more than translation and research practices with which interpreters and anthropologists can enrich each other's knowledge.

Given the shared translation dilemmas of the two disciplines described above, there are plenty of opportunities for cross-learning between them. Already in the early 1970s, George Steiner recognised the interdisciplinary potential of translation studies (TS). He regarded the discipline as "a point of contact […] situated […] within a framework of subjects including ethnography, sociology and formal rhetoric which clarify the process of 'life between languages'" (Steiner, 1975:238, as cited in Snell-Hornby, 2006:31). Another example is Wolf's (1997) article, in which she points to parallels between cultural anthropology and translation with regard to power relations. She concludes by calling for "more intensive interdisciplinary collaboration" (1997:132). In another article from the same year, Sturge touches on the possibilities of cross-fertilisation between the disciplines, stating that "[it] seems at least possible that recent work in translation theory could be applied to ethnographic texts, and equally that the questions raised by new ethnography might contribute to translation studies' focus on the political dimensions of translation" (Sturge, 1997:23).

The aim of this study is to contribute to this cross-learning by exploring how ethnographic fieldwork can contribute to IS and how insights from IS can in turn enrich the anthropology of trust-building across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Agar

(2008), looking back at forty years of anthropological fieldwork, concludes that "translation is what I do, what I've always done, and second *languaculture*[20] learning is how I acquire the ability to translate." The reason why it took him forty years to realise this association between himself and a translator[21] is, in his own words, the latter's mechanical image. He "didn't take them as seriously as [he] should have," because "Why would an aspiring science look to lowly job descriptions for clarity and inspiration?" However, his conclusion still bears traces of this rather condescending attitude: he attributes the role of 'translator' to himself, but does not recognise the translator's ethnographic qualities. This way, he falls into the same trap that places himself at the centre point, instead of the translator. I aim to avoid that in this study.

1.4   The status of the Russian interpreter

The role of the interpreter is one with unclear expectations (Inghilleri, 2005, see also section 2.2). The interpreting (and translation) professions are unregulated in most of the world, with no requirements relating to qualifications, training, experience or continuing professional development (Pym, 2012:3). As result, the interpreter's professional status is, by and large, ambivalent and insecure (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger, 2009:125 as cited in Stolze, 2010:141). Due to the unclear social role, the professional status is similarly debatable. Given the absence of a register of 'sworn interpreters' in present-day Russia, the question 'What defines professionalism?' remains a debated topic amongst interpreters and their clients today.

An ambiguous social status

On the one hand, knowing a foreign language has always been an admired skill in Russia. Interpreters' social status is therefore one of intelligent, so called 'cultured' people. Knowledge of a foreign language and contact with foreigners contributed to the interpreters' status, also mentioned in relation to diplomatic interpreters during the Cold War by Baigorri-Jalón (2010). Additionally, compared to teaching, working as an interpreter is often preferred for financial reasons. The great majority of students who

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[20] 'Languaculture' is a concept Agar (2008) uses to underline the inseparability of language and culture.
[21] Agar uses the word 'translator' also when he refers to interpreting.

participated in White's (2005:447) study confirm this. Whereas they all wanted to work as linguists, many were reluctant to become poorly paid teachers at state schools. Instead, they expressed enthusiasm about translating/interpreting or other private sector jobs, for example in tourism, instead.

However, in order to carry out his or her profession, knowledge of a foreign language is not enough. An interpreter needs thorough knowledge of his or her own language as well, something often overlooked by students with the ambition to become an interpreter. Knowledge of 'cultured' Russian contributes to a certain intellectual status. Foley's (2006) study into the concept of the 'client' in legal interpreting points out that some interpreters see the language as their main client: the interpreter first and foremost serves this language. Russians often refer to their mother tongue citing Turgenev's *Poems in Prose* from 1882, in which he describes Russian as 'great and mighty' (*velikii i moguchii*). The Russian produced by interpreters should similarly be 'beautiful' and 'cultured' (*kul'turnyi*). Jennifer Patico (2005:484) elaborates on this term. One teacher whom she interviewed describes *kul'turnyi* in a way I think is relevant here. She refers to someone who is respectful of others and "[knew] how to behave in a given situation." The link between being 'cultured' and language is also pointed out by Pesmen (2000), whose participants 'surprisingly often' discussed beautiful and/or correct Russian. One of the participants in her study, Oleg, spoke with respect of the few 'cultured' people who still spoke beautiful Russian, citing it as a moral virtue.

On the other hand, interpreting is still seen as a job on the side; one that can be taken up by anyone who knows a foreign language. Reducing the interpreting profession to simple foreign language knowledge does not do it justice. Nevertheless, this misconception persists. Since during the last decades more and more people learned to speak foreign languages (mainly English), the idea that anyone who knows more than one language is capable of carrying out the interpreter's job gained relevance (Blokh et al., 2018). What lies at the root of these remarks is a lack of knowledge on behalf of the people making use of the service, both clients and employers. Even today, interpreters are often treated condescendingly. They are asked to make coffee, to check the microphone and fulfil other tasks unrelated to their professional responsibilities (Brodskii, 2012:157). Their work is not seen as one that can be done full time. Caldwell (2004), who conducted fieldwork in Moscow around the turn of the

century, describes how people, responding to the uncertain financial circumstances during the transition from a planned to a market economy, pieced together various forms of employment. Amongst Caldwell's examples is interpreting as a supplementary source of income for researchers working in state-funded institutes. Another common misconception is that people who know multiple languages might as well take on 'more prestigious positions,' as if 'interpreter' alone is somehow not enough (Blokh et al., 2018:7). In his biography, Palazhchenko (1997:7) refers to this problem, stating that as an interpreter, "one [soon] begins to feel that, knowing and understanding so much, one could do more important things." Nevertheless, he concludes with the phrase that he "quickly saw that this attitude was a trap. Interpretation is, after all, a craft, and wide-ranging knowledge is not a great merit in and of itself."

Finally, it is important to note that the interpreter's professional status is only one part of their multi-sided identity. This professional status of 'interpreter' is supplemented by other forms of identity, such as nationality, age and gender. In this thesis, I will show how in professional interpreting situations, these different statuses can co-exist, but also contradict one another. In these situations, one can be perceived as more important than another. In this sense, my research corresponds to Cronin's (2002:46) writings on the 'cultural turn' in interpreting studies (see also Wolf, 2014). He encourages scholars to explicitly address questions of power and issues such as class, gender, and race in interpreting situations.

(In)formal definitions of professionalism

Tracking the formal definitions of professional interpreting in Russia is not straightforward. In Russia, the profession of interpreter was only added to the Labour Code (*trudovoi kodeks*) in the 1980s (Bashkov, 1999). Although a national trade union exists since 2004 (*Natsional'naia liga perevodchikov*), this union was not mentioned by any of the interpreters in this study. In Russia, most interpreters are not registered as an IP (*individual'nyi predprinimatel',* self-employed, see 1.1) and a national register of 'sworn interpreters' as a separate formal status does not exist to date. In 2012, presidential resolution number 547 aimed at the creation of a 'national system of professional qualification for translation services' (Minzdravsotsrazvitiia Rossii, 2012). It indicates the different responsibilities of interpreters. Although this document recognises simultaneous interpreting and sign language interpreting as separate

categories, consecutive interpreting is in the same section as written translation. The presidential decree of 2012 indicates the following professional categories:

- Interpreter of the 3rd category: higher education, no need to demonstrate proof of working experience.
- Interpreter of the 2nd category: higher education and a minimum of three years of working experience as an interpreter.
- Interpreter of the 1st category: higher education and a minimum of three years of working experience as an interpreter of the second category.

What these categories demonstrate is that professionalism is based on a combination of higher education and experience. Although this decree was never mentioned by the participants of this study as such, the requirements overlap with the professional requirements interpreters consider to be relevant and frame using the umbrella term of 'reputation'.

What contributes to this reputation is first of all 'real interpreter education', referring to a specialised degree in interpreting. The prestige of famous universities offering this degree – amongst others the School of Conference Interpreting and Translation (SCIT) at Herzen University in St Petersburg and the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the Moscow State Linguistic University in Moscow – is passed on to its graduates. However, many professional interpreters lack such a specialised degree and graduated from a university department of foreign languages or linguistics instead, where students are usually taught foreign language skills in parallel with translation and interpreting (Hsieh, 2015:178). One possible explanation for this is that specialised translator/interpreter training is one of the most expensive degrees in Russia today. Another explanation is that specialised interpreter training does not exist as a separate degree for most less popular languages. Interpreter training in these languages usually takes the form of extracurricular seminars and workshops.

A second factor determining professionalism is the quality and duration of an interpreter's working experience. Interpreters stressed the importance of an uninterrupted track record. They emphasised that interpreting is a skill that, once acquired, demands continuous maintenance. It is therefore no surprise that several of

the mothers who participated in this study told me that the long interruption of maternity leave proved a major challenge to their career. In the same way the prestige of the university from which a degree was received partially reflects on the interpreter, so does the social status of the interpreter's clients influence their reputation. 'Cool clients' such as powerful politicians, famous actors and musicians were often mentioned during the interviews.

1.5   Content and structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2, the literature review, is titled 'Interpreting and the role of the interpreter'. In this chapter, I present an overview of the state of current research on interpreting and trust. In order to gain an understanding of the complex social position of the interpreter, I start this chapter with an overview of literature on the paradoxes surrounding the interpreter's profession that partially have their roots in the development of the (relatively young) academic discipline of IS. This will be followed by a section explaining why the study of trust is a particularly relevant topic in the interpreted encounter, also described as a 'zone of uncertainty'. Next, I will review the limited existing literature on trust in interpreted encounters, introducing the concepts 'opaque visibility' and 'transparent visibility' that will be referred to in the empirical chapters. Based on different theories of trust, section 2.4 sets out different categories of trust (systemic trust, interpersonal trust, positional trust) and points out their relevance to IS. I introduce the concept of second-hand cues to study indirect trust and briefly look into concepts as loyalty and mistrust. Next, I will particularly pay attention to social categories such as nationality and gender that, besides the interpreter's professional identity, can contribute to trust relationships. I close this discussion with a more thorough look at the concept of 'role', comparing it to 'footing' and 'positioning'. In the conclusion I situate this particular study within the discussed literature.

In chapter 3, I discuss the methodological dilemmas of studying trust in interpreting and outline the approach I took in this study. First, I present my methodology, the theoretical framework of ethnography and the way this supports the methods chosen. The next part reflects on my own positionality within this study. By referring to literature on the reflexive turn in anthropology, I reflect on my position as both an insider and

outsider in relation to the participants of this study. This is followed by accounts of how, where and when I conducted my fieldwork, including remarks on the arbitrary geographical and temporal limits of the period of 'data collection'. In the fifth section, I provide details about how I approached and recruited participants, illustrated by a diagram (figure 3). Subsequently, section 3.6 gives a detailed account of my methods, the specific approach I used to collect data. I explain how the pilot study helped me define the key themes for thematic analysis. The 'grounded theorizing' approach used to analyse the data is outlined next. Section 3.8 forms a reflection on some of the ethical aspects of my fieldwork, such as consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, I will elaborate on my commitment to an open research approach, including sharing results with the research participants and open access publications.

Chapter 4 provides a framework of analysis, which will be used in the subsequent empirical chapters. Purely literature based, it presents a theoretical discussion of trust in general, as well as in the context of interpreting and Russia more specifically. Based on a discussion of the theoretical concepts of trust and control, I present trust as a double bounded continuum. Bounded by extreme certainty on the one hand and complete uncertainty on the other, trust operates in the uncertain middle. In this chapter, I introduce some of the concepts that are key to studying trust as a social achievement, instead of as a natural given. I link this approach of studying trust to the interactionist approach in IS. Examples of concepts introduced in this chapter are a personal trust history, Geertzian moments, defensive arrangements and a thick-relationship theory of trust. After a brief overview of studies of trust in Russia, I will elaborate on the relevance of trust theory to the study of Russian interpreters as trust negotiators. The concept of 'second-hand cues' introduced in chapter 2 comes in handy here.

Chapter 5 is the first ethnographic chapter. How does the interpreter (the trustee) encourage clients (the trustors) to trust both them (the interpreter) and each other? How is this trust established, maintained and, when necessary, restored? In order to answer these questions, this chapter draws on in-depth interviews and participant observation with Russian interpreters. I focus on practices of 'performing trustworthiness'. How does the interpreter establish, maintain and restore trust in him

or herself? Particular attention will be paid to the way interpreters avoid sparking mistrust and actively engage in practices of becoming 'one of them', or *svoi* in Russian.

After having explored the way interpreters negotiate trust in their role as trustees (people who are trusted), chapter 6 concentrates on the way the interpreter can facilitate trust between clients. It explores the ways in which interpreters encourage trust between interlocutors: How do interpreters establish, maintain and restore trust between parties? Here the main focus will be on practices of how interpreters try to smoothen and soften, *sgladit'* and *smiagchit'* in Russian. The conclusion on interpreting *po-chelovecheski* summarises the key findings of this chapter and forms a bridge to the next.

Chapter 7 explores the particular Russian case through the lens of 'care'. Becoming 'someone's voice' presents a specific form of a caring relationship, requiring empathy and intimacy. However, the interpreter's aspiration to be caring is often considered to be at odds with professionalism. The aim of this chapter is to step back from dividing lines of professional and intimate, formal and informal and instead look at face-to-face interpreting through the interdisciplinary lens of care. This approach acknowledges the inherent inseparability of 'the social' and 'the economic' in caring relations. I argue for a relational understanding of the interpreter's role, showing the interpreters' struggle to be both professional *and* caring. On the one hand, being able to help their clients not only in terms of linguistic, but also social and emotional communication adds a certain 'depth' to the interpreters' profession. On the other hand, interpreters - especially women - often find this role is thrust on them and comes with the emotional load, lower social status and remuneration typical of 'feminised', caring sections of the economy.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter of this thesis and summarises its main findings. Based on the experiences of Russian interpreters, my thesis argues that interpreters deliberately 'perform trustworthiness' by actively working towards becoming 'one of them' (*svoi*) and avoiding actions that could spark mistrust. This trust then allows them to encourage trust between interlocutors through practices of smoothening and softening. Instead of balancing between formal and informal, or professional and intimate, studying the relationship between interpreter and client as one of care helps us to understand interpreting in Russia. After having summarised the main findings, I

point out the key contributions to IS, to the anthropology of interpreting, and to trust theory. Subsequently I point out directions for further research. I also use this chapter to share some reflections on the research process, as well as some considerations concerning the future of interpreting, both of which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic of the last months.

Chapter 2. Literature review: Interpreting and the role of the interpreter

2.1 Introduction

A focus on written translation across the field of TS

Interpreting as an oral form of translation originated long before written translation. Bellos (2011:11) even argues that translation has been an entirely spoken affair for over 90 per cent of its history. Given the globalised character of today's interactions, due to a growth in tourism, refugee and migration flows, interpreting is "arguably the most widespread form of translation activity in the world today" (Cronin, 2002:46). However, IS as an academic field is relatively young. Although some studies were published in the 1950s and 1960s, it only emerged as a discipline in the 1970s (Gile, 2009b:148). Up to this day, IS makes up a minor field within TS. Cronin (2002) attributes this paucity of academic interest to a larger neglect of orality among scholars. He points to an overall hierarchy in which oral cultures are ranked lower than written ones. Another reason explaining the minority position of IS is the fact that oral utterances leave no written traces. Or, in the words of Andrew Dawrant, native English speaker and Chinese-language interpreter at the UN: "[w]e [interpreters] leave no legacy. Our work is ephemeral. It is words in the air" (Hoffman, 2011, as cited in Delisle and Woodsworth, 2012:247). Our knowledge of the past performance of interpreters therefore relies on indirect sources such as letters, diaries, memoirs and biographies of interpreters themselves. Other sources used by researchers are documents only marginally or incidentally concerned with interpreting (Bowen et al. 1995, as cited in Delisle and Woodsworth, 2012:247).

The Soviet school of TS similarly focussed on written translation. It is a distinct tradition that developed largely in isolation. Cooperation between East and West in the emerging field of TS in the early 20th century was rare, although according to Ayvasyan and Pym (2017:233-4), from the 1950s onward there was a "basic mutual awareness" of what each side was doing, albeit often framed in the antagonistic terms of the Cold War. Little has been written about oral translation in the Soviet Union and Russia. Key

authors in the Russian tradition of TS such as V.N. Komissarov, L.S. Barkhudarov and A.D. Shveitser focussed primarily on written translation, with research on oral translation being of secondary importance (Garbovsky, 2013; 2015). Andrey Fedorov (1906 – 1997), a member of the School of Russian formalists, was one of the first to include research on interpreting into his work. His book *Introduction to Translation Theory* (*Vvedenie v teoriiu perevoda*), based on his professorial thesis, appeared in 1953 and is one of the first works on TS as such (Ayvasyan and Pym, 2017). It presents a general theory of translation, including a few pages devoted to the translation of (written) speeches as literary texts. However, according to Garbovsky (2015:8), these can "hardly be considered as theory of interpreting".[22] R.K. Min'iar-Beloruchev is one of the few authors who pays attention to a form of face-to-face interpreting: the consecutive interpreting of diplomatic interpreters and guides.[23] This emphasis on diplomatic and guide interpreting and not on other forms of 'face-to-face' interpreting, such as legal or community interpreting, is not surprising: according to Alikina (2010), the idea of 'community interpreting' or 'social interpreting' as such does not exist in Russia.

IS as an academic discipline

When IS emerged in as a separate discipline in the 1970s, it was a strongly profession-oriented movement, exclusively devoted to conference interpreting, and with most authors being practising conference interpreters themselves (Gile, 2009b). Conference interpreting offers ideal conditions for observing input and output, since high level meetings are recorded and often transcribed. The overemphasis on conference interpreting lead to a privileging of positivism in interpreting research at large, one that encouraged depoliticised, minimally contextualised experiments, carefully controlled by an 'objective' researcher. These experiments were carried out almost exclusively in

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[22] Several of the above-mentioned authors published in the annual journal *Translator's Notebooks (Tetradi perevodchika),* of which the first edition was published in 1963. Most of the ideas in the area of translation and interpretation theory were tried out in this journal before they appeared as comprehensive models in the form of monographs (Chernov, 1999:44). They contained personal accounts of professional interpreters, a genre that, before the appearances of the first interpreters' memoirs, was not found elsewhere.

[23] Some of his works include *Metodika obucheniia perevoda na slukh* (1959), *Posledovatel'nyi perevod* (1969), *Obshchaia teoriia perevoda i ustnyi perevod* (1980) and *Kak stat' perevodchikom?* (1999).

conference interpreting because "the booth is the nearest thing we have in interpreting to a cage" (Cronin, 2002:52). Interpreting scholars aimed to define the interpreter's role as a fixed set of expectations. Since the actually experienced interpreting situation is complex and loaded with ethical dilemmas, scholars searched for ways to simplify the professional profile in order to develop the best possible abstraction of the interpreter's role (Bahadir, 2004). This has led to simplified professional standards "with a tendency to neutralise and assimilate interpreting activities into a transparent, totally analysable and predictable, strictly defined shape" (Bahadir, 2004:807). The development of the first codes of ethics contributed to the emergence of a more regulated role of the interpreter. This led to rather rigid and restricted descriptions of the interpreter's normative role as a mere conduit, impossible to maintain in practice.

In the 1980s, TS as a discipline took a 'cultural turn', alongside the cultural turn in other disciplines such as sociology (Cronin, 2002). According to Wolf (2014:9), this turn reached its peak in the 1990s and is "the most decisive turning point the discipline [of TS] has taken since its rise in the 1960s." Snell-Hornby (2009) describes the cultural turn in TS as the abandoning of the 'scientistic' linguistic approach based on 'equivalence' and moving from 'text' to 'culture'. This turn drew attention to relations of power underlying any process of translation, as researchers started to explore the connections of these relations to the translation's and the translator's situatedness in society. However, IS did not immediately follow. Whereas TS made a 'cultural turn', IS moved towards more stringent empirical research instead (Pöchhacker 2006:37). Most research continued to deal with conference interpreting until the 1990s (Cronin, 2002:49, Snell-Hornby, 2006). A similar tendency can be observed in the Soviet school of interpreting. Despite the above-mentioned bias towards written translation, the Russian school has produced a substantial body of literature on simultaneous conference interpreting. Key authors such as A.F. Shiriaev and G. Chernov drew on theories from Soviet psycholinguistics. The last of these two authors, Chernov, also published some of his work in English (e.g., 1999, 2002).

'Going social'

This initial focus on conference interpreting began to shift in the last decade of the 20th century, when IS made a turn that Pöchhacker (2006) roughly describes as "going social." Due to the rise in studies of dialogue interpreting in community settings,

attention shifted from cognition to social interaction. Whereas conference interpreting research had concentrated on a limited number of languages, community interpreting spanned a much larger range (Snell-Hornby, 2006:118). Unlike the first decades of research in IS, only some of the scholars who investigate community interpreting were interpreters themselves. Since most of them came from other academic backgrounds, they brought their knowledge of other disciplines (Gile, 2009b). As a result, the relatively 'closed circle' of researcher-practitioners in IS started to open up to theories and methods from the social sciences (Angelelli, 2004b:23; Gile, 2009b). The increased popularity of questionnaires and ethnography resulted in new studies (partly) based on qualitative data (e.g., Angelelli, 2004a,b, Wadensjö, 1998). The social turn therefore refers to the gradual replacement of some long-standing ways of seeing and thinking about interpreting by a broader conceptualization which gives primacy to the social sphere of interaction rather than criteria like professional status or working mode (Pöchhacker, 2006:228).

Today, conference interpreting is no longer the central axis around which IS revolves (Gile, 2009b:141). Rudvin (2006) even argues that research on community interpreting has already taken the lead within the discipline since the early 2000s. Whereas Pöchhacker (2006) argues that mainstream IS is still only starting to explore what Cronin (2002) terms the 'cultural turn' (related to the cultural turn in TS described above), Rudvin (2006) states that community interpreter as 'the new kid on the block' has already met this challenge. According to her, community interpreting could lead IS at large into a new era of research in which the complexities of language as a social, cultural, institutional and ideological practice are more fully appreciated and understood (Rudvin, 2006:39). Besides progress in academic research the developments described above have also had practical implications for professional codes of ethics. Examples of a code of ethics that critically evaluate the interpreter's role by drawing on this 'social turn' in interpreting studies as well as on cultural studies are the 2002 California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters and the 2004 National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Healthcare.

Content

This second chapter provides a literature review of existing studies on interpreting and the role of the interpreter. It consists of five sections. Following this introduction (section

2.1), section 2.2 sets out to draft the key dilemmas that interpreters face in their day-to-day work. Divided into five paradoxes, this section outlines the complex social position of the interpreter, highlighting the contradicting expectations faced by these professionals. Section 2.3 gives an overview of published sources on trust and interpreting. Next, I will give a brief overview of the different levels that have been used to analyse the concept of trust in the past (2.4), as well as the key social categories on which trust is based (2.5). Together, these sections form a rough outline of the more refined analytical framework that will be discussed in chapter 4.

2.2 The inherent paradoxes of the interpreting profession

Decades of primarily research on conference interpreting have had a lasting impact on the entire discipline of IS (Baker, 2006; Cronin, 2002). Both in interpreter training and research, standards of conference interpreting continued to be blindly transferred to other forms of interpreting (Angelelli, 2000). This has advantages, such as increased regulation across the profession, but disadvantages as well. A first disadvantage is a geographical imbalance of the field. Since the largest markets for conference interpreting are in Western Europe, most studies continue to rely on sources from this region. A second disadvantage is the overlooking of substantive differences between the two interpretation situations. In face-to-face interpreting issues around the interpreter's choices take a more central position than equivalence as such. Gile (2009:149b) describes how in certain difficult personal situations, administrative or 'official' logic can seem unfit. In these cases, ethical issues are often unavoidable, as clients expect the interpreter to help rather than to serve as a neutral conduit. This gap between desired behaviour and actual behaviour has made the notion of the interpreter's role one of the most prominent topics in recent work within IS (Pöllabauer, 2015).[24] Inghilleri (2006:67) refers to the "paradoxical social, cultural and linguistic realities of interpreted events." Metzger (1999:24), exploring neutrality, states that interpreter's neutrality in itself is a paradox, since "interpreters are supposed to provide access to an interaction of which they are, in reality, a part." Cronin (2002:54) even

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[24] This approach was subsequently critiqued for its 'neglect of agency', which I will return to in section 4.1 (Baert, 2006: 525, as cited in Pöllabauer, 2015:355).

compares interpreters to 'monsters', as the ancient Greek root of the word monsters, *teras*, means both horrible and wonderful, object of aberration and adoration. These paradoxes, with their roots in the development of the discipline, in discussions of theory and practice, will be discussed below.

Underestimated and admired

The general public tends to be uninformed about what interpreters do (Ibrahim, 2009). Even within the interpreting profession "the rules or tacit understandings with respect to who may act as an interpreter and what it means to do so in a given context are inconsistent" (Inghilleri, 2005:6). This is partially due to the fact that 'interpreter' is not a protected profession: "[a]nyone who thinks he knows a foreign language and can therefore translate, and who feels like earning a living that way full-time or part-time, can put an ad in the paper without more ado claiming to be a translator and interpreter" (Schmitz, 1988 as cited in Ibrahim, 2009:358). As Ntuli (2012) and Ibrahim (2009) show, even parliamentary interpreters in, respectively, South Africa and Malaysia are frequently not professionally trained interpreters. Widespread interpreting by untrained interpreters[25] fuels the common misconception that everyone who knows more than one language can act as an interpreter. This does not benefit the social status of the interpreter, whose knowledge remains vulnerable to exercises of power outside of their control (Inghilleri, 2006:13).

At the same time, however, interpreters are admired. Raymond Robichaud (one of Canada's first simultaneous interpreters) wrote that "simultaneous interpretation had an aura of mystery if not outright sorcery" (in Delisle, 2009:29). Just like many of his contemporaries, he found it astonishing that people could sit in front of a microphone, put on a headset and repeat in one language what they heard in another. This had been regarded as impossible before. A final reason why interpreters are aften admired relates to interpreters with a personal history of migration. Both Merlini (2009) and Bischoff et al. (2012) point out that this experience of migration turns interpreters into role models of integration for other migrants.

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[25] Bilinguals without special training working as interpreters are also referred to as 'natural translators' (Harris and Sherwood, 1978).

Visible and invisible

For many years, the role of the interpreter was seen normatively, based on a notion of non-involvement on the part of the interpreter, who was supposed to be completely neutral. In academic literature and public discourse at large, the interpreter was seen as 'invisible', a 'ghost', a 'window' or a 'nonperson' (Goffman, 1990:150, as cited in Wadensjö, 2008). Napier (2007:423) illustrates the normative role of the interpreter with the following figure, in which P1 = Participant 1, I = The Interpreter, and P2 = Participant 2.

$$P1 \rightarrow I \rightarrow P2 \rightarrow I \rightarrow P1$$

Figure 1: Turn-taking according to the normative role of the interpreter

In the 1980s, researchers started to study translations as culturally and historically embedded. This shift in TS was, as mentioned in the introduction, not immediately followed by a similar shift in IS (Pöchhacker 2008a:37). Only in the 1990s, when the discipline increasingly opened up to studies on community interpreting, IS made a social turn, opening up to studies from other disciplines. This movement of 'going social', together with Cronin's (2002) call for a 'cultural turn' in IS, offers a fertile background against which to study interpreting as a situated practice. I therefore use the interactionalist[26] approach to interpreting that emerged in this period as a starting point (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf, 2014; Wadensjö, 1998). In section 4.4 I will elaborate on this view, in which the interpreted encounter is described as a 'communicative pas de trois' (Wadensjö, 1998).

As translators and interpreters assume responsibility for their cultural and social practice, their traditional position of supposed neutrality and invisibility becomes untenable (Wolf, 2014:14). Increased ethnographic research has paid attention to the interpreter's visibility. Angelelli (2004b) lists well-documented ethnographies of interpreters in the courtroom (Berk-Seligson, 1990) and in the hospital (Angelelli, 2004a). She also refers to qualitative observation-based studies in academic settings

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[26] Sometimes referred to as (social) interactionistic approach, see, for example, Wadensjö (2017).

(Roy, 2000), in medical settings (Davidson, 2000; Metzger, 1999), in the immigration office and in the police station (Wadensjö, 1998). All these accounts provide evidence of the *visibility* of interpreters, who are not working in a vacuum but in a 'world of people' (Brodskii, 2012:167). Napier (2007:413) provides an illustration of this new, non-normative approach:

P1 → Utterance	I → Relay	P2 → Response	I → Clarification	P2 → Reframe	I → Relay
I → Signal to P2 to wait	I → Continue with relay	P1 → Response	I → Relay	I → Check comprehension	I → Reframe
P2 → Response	I → Relay	P1 Response	I → Request for repetition	P1 → Repeat	I → Relay

Figure 2: Turn-taking according to the non-normative role of the interpreter

This view of interpreters as active social agents at the heart of cross-cultural interaction is a relatively new phenomenon: indicative of this trend is the fact that the first memoirs of interpreters appeared very recently (Mikkelson and Jourdenais, 2015). Although visibility is no longer contested in research circles anymore, invisibility prevails as an inherent element of the interpreter's role. Angelelli (2004b) and Venuti (2008), amongst others, suggest that interpretation by and large continues to be an unrecognised and invisible practice. The lasting effect of the interpreter's normative role will be further explored in section 5.2.

Whereas the literature has moved towards acknowledgement of the interpreting profession, making them more 'visible', technological advancement has arguably offered opportunities to make interpreters even more 'invisible'. The emergence of simultaneous interpreting at the cost of consecutive interpreting has often resulted in the relocation of the interpreter from front stage to booths at the back.[27] When the interpreters' booth is not in the conference hall, as is the case in telephone or digital interpreting, the physical absence is absolute. This alienates the users of the

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[27] Palazhchenko (1997:33) comments on this issue: "Almost every leading consecutive interpreter was something of a prima donna, a star used to shine in front of large and often powerful audiences. I suspect that such people resented the relative obscurity of the booth."

interpreting service from the interpreter. The example given by Delisle (2009:30-31), in which users called their little earpiece "my translator" and said that they would like "to take it with them at the end of the day to use outside the chamber" illustrates this.

The unattainable quest for perfection

During the last decades, multiple translation scholars researching the dilemmas of written translations demonstrated that the perfect translation does not exist (e.g., Boland, 2017; Venuti, 1998). Instead, they point to the highly subjective nature of translation. Accuracy can be viewed as a combination of 'content' (information transfer) and 'packaging' (Gile, 2009:35).[28] However, the meaning and measurement of accuracy, as well as of related terms such as equivalence and fidelity are subject to ongoing scholarly debate in both TS and IS (e.g., Bellos, 2011; Hale, 2007; Gile, 2009). Oral translation is in the same boat: whereas an increasing body of research points to the non-normative role of the interpreter, interpreter training programs still set the unattainable goal of accuracy and fidelity[29] as an attainable reality (Angelelli, 2004b:13). Clients often expect interpreters to give a 'literal' interpretation, stressing the need for an interpreter who 'just translates' (Martínez-Gómez, 2015:182). Morris (1995:25-26, as cited in Lai and Mulayim, 2014:311) notes that court interpreters often get the ambiguous instruction 'not to interpret but to translate'. All these requests refer to rendering the speaker's words verbatim.

Instead of the 'perfect' or 'literal' translation, interpreters constantly choose the 'best fit' from an endless number of varieties. What is considered the 'best fit' differs per occasion and per interpreter, since interpreting is a situated practice influenced by the social and cultural backgrounds of all people involved (the client, the interpreter etc.) (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf, 2014; Wadensjö, 1998). The speed of spoken discourse makes faithfulness and accuracy even harder to achieve in interpreting (Apostolou, 2009). Whereas translators are given quite some time between the

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[28] Distinguishing the two is not always straightforward. Gile (2009:36) gives the example of people who deliberately use technical terms to express ideas for which there are also less specialized synonyms in order to send the message that he or she is a specialist.
[29] Fidelity (also named 'faithfulness' or 'faithful rendering') appeared as a key requirement of professional interpreting in 14 codes of professional standards, out of a random sub-sample of 16 from 9 countries (Hale, 2007).

reception of the source text and the provision of the target text, interpreters have little (in the case of consecutive interpreting) to close to no time (in the case of simultaneous interpreting) to contemplate their oral translation. Due to time pressure, what terms such as 'completeness' mean in interpreting is not always clear: some argue that the 'perfect' translation is not a full, but a partial rendition (see for example figure 10).

There is 'considerable slippage' between how employers view the tasks set for interpreters, and the actual functions and linguistic actions that interpreters perform (Davidson, 2000). One of the reasons behind this lack of clarity is the fact that interpreters among themselves do not always agree on one definition of their position; they all have slightly different views on their professional role. Witter-Merithew (1999) describes four models of the interpreter's role that seem to have emerged as a result of the contradiction between interpreters' goals and reality: the helper, the conduit, the communication facilitator and the bilingual bicultural specialist. As a result, clients do not experience consistency in the approach interpreters follow and tension emerges between the prescribed/expected role of interpreters and their actual role on the ground (Angelelli, 2004b; McIntire and Sanderson, 1995; Wadensjö, 2004). Interestingly enough, it is precisely this vagueness that creates wide room to manoeuvre for the individual interpreter (Merlini, 2009). Although it raises issues of professional standards, it also creates the potential for interpreters to define a role for themselves that corresponds to 'who they are' rather than to an already established notion of 'who they must be' (Inghilleri, 2005:14).

Power use and abuse

Snell-Hornby (2006:118) mentions an early study of the history of interpreting by Thieme, Hermann and Glässer (1956) in which the authors discussed the 'vertical' as against the 'horizontal' perspectives of interpretation according to the status of the partners involved. The first perspective refers to partners of equal status, whereas the second perspective implies unequal status. Despite this early example, power differentials in interpreting did not receive much attention in scholarly debates until the last decades of the twentieth century (Angelelli, 2004b; Cronin, 2002). This is remarkable, since "[p]ower is everywhere in the definition, context, and practice of interpreting" (Cronin, 2002:46). Interpreting frequently happens between two parties that do not share the same status, such as between authorities and refugees. Robb

and Greenhalgh (2006) give an example within the field of healthcare interpreting, in which the powerful social position of the medical profession today leads to unequal power dynamics.

Anderson (1976:218) states that the interpreter's position in the middle has the advantage of power inherent in all positions which control scarce resources. As mentioned in the introduction (1.1.), being the only conversational participant with the ability to follow both sides of the cross-linguistic discourse grants the interpreter the power to obscure or clarify (Davidson, 2000; Rubel and Rossman, 2003). However, this dependency on the interpreter also fuels suspicion, or, in the words of David Bellos, "there's nothing like dependency to foster resentment and fear" (2011:118). In chapter 4 and 5 I will come back to the implications of this dependency for trust and loyalty.

One way of minimizing the risks of an abuse of power by an interpreter is the increasing professionalisation of the field. Whereas certain sectors in interpreting have passed through stages of professionalisation quite early on (court interpreting, conference interpreting),[30] others have taken these steps relatively recently (community interpreting). Part of this professionalisation is the drawing up of a code of ethics. Several research projects have looked into the practical usefulness of such a code of ethics, leading to sometimes contradictory findings. One study (Hale, 2011) based on online questionnaires, found the code of ethics both useful and applicable in their everyday practice as an interpreter. However, the findings of Norström et al. (2012), grounded in ethnographic research, point towards the ignoring of situated practices in such codes, leading to major gaps between the code of ethics and the demands of their job. This issue is also discussed in other studies, for example Angelelli (2004b) and Wadensjö (2004:120 – 121). The latter argues for differentiating 'professional ideology' from 'professional practice', in which the first should be seen as a 'myth', as

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[30] The AIIC (Association internationale des interprètes de conférence), the first World Association of Conference Interpreters, was founded in Paris in 1953. The National Association of Judicial Interpreters (NAJIT) was formed in the USA in 1978. Soon thereafter, other court and medical associations of interpreters at the state and national level began to emerge. In 2004, there was still no professional association for community or telephone interpreters (Angelelli, 2004). Although national associations exist (for example ACIS in the UK), there is still no international association for community interpreters in 2020.

'guiding inspiration' rather than a description of everything that can be expected of a professional interpreter.

Finally, languages themselves are often not free of power dynamics. Bellos (2011:171), when writing about translation in general, distinguishes translating 'up' from translating 'down'. In his definition, translating 'up' refers to translation towards a language of greater prestige than the source, while translating 'down' means translating towards a vernacular with a smaller audience than the source, or towards one with less cultural, economic or religious prestige, or one not used as a vernacular tongue. Cronin (1996, as cited in Rubel and Rossman, 2003:6) also refers to this hierarchy among languages. He notes that "[t]ranslation relationships between minority and majority languages are rarely divorced from issues of power and identity, that in turn destabilize universalist theoretical prescriptions on the translation process" (Cronin, 1996:4, as cited in Rubel and Rossman, 2003:6). Power extends beyond the encounter itself. It also depends on the willingness of the translator's *language* to subject itself to this transforming power. As pointed out by Asad (2010:158), this is something the translator cannot determine by individual activity. Instead, it is governed by institutionally defined power relations between the languages/modes of life concerned. To put it crudely: because the languages of developing societies - the societies that social anthropologists have traditionally studied - are 'weaker' in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around. This is because in their political-economic relations with developing countries, Western nations have the greater ability to manipulate the latter.

Bridging and marking difference

Translation bridges boundaries and enables understanding across them (Rubel and Rossman, 2003). However, while facilitating dialogue, an interpreter simultaneously marks the distance between two parties (Rubel and Rossman, 2003). In a way, the interpreter constitutes a boundary or border, since translation separates what is self and what is other (Rubel and Rossman, 2003:15). Historically, interpreters have been used as a distancing device, to communicate whilst keeping a certain hierarchy of language and culture intact (Cronin, 2006). An interpreter does not only mark the distance by his or her presence alone. He or she simultaneously creates a distance by

means of time. Instead of a direct conversation, all parties involved will have to wait for their response to be interpreted. However, the inevitable time gap of consecutive interpreting also has advantages. In court cases, consecutive interpreting grants people time to think, leading people to prefer cooperation with an interpreter working consecutively, even when this is not strictly necessary (Wadensjö, 2008).

2.3 Trust in interpreted encounters

'Zones of uncertainty': The relevance of trust in interpreting

Sztompka (1999:14) explains how definitions of trust have changed from psychological approaches that treated trust as a personal attitude to descriptions of trust as a "trait of interpersonal relations, the feature of the socio-individual field in which people operate, the cultural resource utilised by individuals in their actions." Rather than a goal that becomes permanent once achieved, trust is constantly tested and shaped. In section 4.2 of this thesis, as part of my chapter on trust, I explore the concept of trust in more detail. This chapter, by contrast, reviews literature and concepts relating to the overlap between interpreting and trust. The focus therefore is not so much on trust itself, but on the process of building trust. How and why do people trust each other in interpreted encounters? And in what way is trust mediated by the interpreter?

Trust only becomes relevant where there exists a margin of uncertainty about the effectiveness of our control. The reason for this is that full monitoring and control of somebody's performance make trust unnecessary (Giddens, 1991:19, as quoted in Sztompka, 1999:23). When considering interpreted encounters, total control is unattainable. First of all, the client has no control over the interpretation itself. There is no such thing as 'the perfect translation', leaving much room for manoeuvre to the interpreter (see 2.2.). Adding to this uncertainty is the fact that there is no way for clients of interpreting services adequately to judge the interpreters' performance. Secondly, it is impossible for the users of the interpreting service fully to prevent the interpreter from passing on (secret) information.[31] Although interpreters today work with ethical guidelines and might even swear an oath before reaching the status of the

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[31] One exception is the cruel history of the Roman emperor Carcalla. Afraid of interpreters leaking information, he had them killed after negotiations (Mairs, 2011).

professional interpreter, this does not provide a one hundred percent guarantee that no information can be leaked. For this reason, it can also not fully protect the interpreter against mistrust. When in July 2018 a controversy arose after Donald Trump's recent summit with Russian president Vladimir Putin, American politicians called for the interpreter Marina Gross to be subpoenaed to appear at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Cochrane, 2018; Devaux, 2018). The absence of control caused Inghilleri (2005) to describe the interpreted encounter as a 'zone of uncertainty in social space'. This is a concept introduced by Bourdieu, referring to a zone where problematic gaps emerge between individual expectations and actual experience. Although Inghilleri does not write about trust as such in her 2005 article, her application of 'zones of uncertainty' clearly explains why trust is relevant in interpreting: since there is no 'total control' in interpreted encounters, trust comes to our aid and forms the only basis for a durable interpersonal relationship.

Existing research on trust and interpreting

To date, little has been published on trust in interpreted encounters. Below I will give a brief overview of five articles in this so far rarely explored field.

Robb and Greenhalgh's (2006) article '"You have to cover up the words of the doctor": The mediation of trust in interpreted consultations in primary care' is the first study analysing interpreted consultations from a perspective of critical sociology with a particular focus on trust and power relations. It is the only article I came across that links concepts and theories of trust to the interpreted encounter. Their data consisted of interviews with service users, health service staff, and interpreters who were asked to "describe a consultation in primary care that involved an interpreter." 'Trust' emerged as the dominant theme, mentioned in all but six of their 69 interviews. Cases are analysed according to Greener's (2003) three categories of trust along this axis of 'controllability': voluntary, coercive and hegemonic trust. The first category of trust, voluntary trust, is applicable to situations when the client extends trust to the interpreter on the basis of "perception of commonality and reciprocity" (Robb and Greenhalgh 2006:436). Examples are trust between interpreters and clients on the basis of a shared language, nationality or gender. The second category of trust, coercive trust, is relevant to the interpreting profession since someone consulting an interpreter usually lacks the knowledge and skills to judge the interpreter's expertise. He or she has no

alternative but to trust the interpreter. The final category is hegemonic trust, defined as trusting without even considering an alternative. This category is used to describe trust relationships shaped by larger imperfect power systems. In healthcare interpreting, for example, the powerful social position of the medical profession leads to unequal power dynamics (see 2.2). Finally, the authors refer to the interpreters' responsibilities as extending beyond what Habermas (1984) terms 'communicative action' (sincere efforts to achieve understanding, and reach consensus) and encompass 'strategic action' (speech that seeks consciously or unconsciously to manipulate an outcome) as well (see 1.3). In another article from the same year, published by the same authors and Graham Scambler, they even argue that the preconditions for communicative action are rarely met in the interpreted consultation (Greenhalgh et al., 2006). In line with the interactionist approach to interpreting (see 2.2, 4.4), they state that the interpreter's presence turns a dyadic interaction into a triad. This adds considerable complexity to the social situation, as amongst others a lack of trust and time pressure and power imbalances all promote strategic action. Robb and Greenhalgh's (2006) conclusion - that the role of the interpreter includes the mediation of trust - forms the starting point of this study into the actual trust-negotiating practices of interpreters.

Edwards et al.'s (2005) article "Users' experiences of interpreters: The critical role of trust" presents another study that has trust as its core theme. It draws on data collected with minority ethnic groups living in Manchester and London, UK. Their 50 interviews focussed on the experience of users of interpreting services. The main theme that emerged from their data was trust, but besides a brief reflection on impersonal trust and uncertainty in the interpreted encounter, the article lacks any theoretical reflections on the concept. The authors conclude that personal character and trust are key in people's understandings of good interpreting, leading them to prefer interpreters drawn from their own informal networks. Amongst the policy recommendations presented in the article is the need for professional training courses, good practice and organisational procedures for professional interpreters to refocus on developing a personal and trusting relationship with their clients. What this 'good practice' would look like is not included. I would add that in order to understand *how* an interpreter can develop a personal and trusting relationship with his or her clients (sub-question 2),

one first needs to unpack the notion of trust and explore existing practices, one of the goals of this study.

Next, there are several studies on interpreting that mention trust in their main findings but do not explore it in detail. The first one is Angelelli's (2004b) book *Revisiting the interpreter's role: A study of conference, court, and medical interpreters in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.* It draws on an interdisciplinary range of theories. Based on Bourdieu's social theory, sociological or psychosocial theories and linguistic anthropology (mainly Hymes), she develops an instrument to study the interpersonal role of the interpreter (referred to using the abbreviation 'IPRI'). This instrument proposes five subcomponents for the visibility concept, namely (1) alignment with the parties; (2) establishing trust and mutual respect between the parties; (3) communicating affect as well as message; (4) explaining cultural gaps, interpreting culture as well as language; and (5) establishing communication rules during the conversation. She concludes (2004b:82) that:

> [I]nterpreters do not perceive their role as invisible. Results from this study showed that interpreters in all settings perceived themselves as having some degree of visibility (within a continuum of visibility). This means that to some extent (sometimes greater, sometimes lesser), they perceived that they play a role in building trust, facilitating mutual respect, communicating affect as well as message, explaining cultural gaps, controlling the communication flow, and/or aligning with one of the parties to the interaction in which they participate.

Whereas the importance of the interpreter as a trust-negotiator is recognised, resulting in questions on trust being included in the questionnaire, the closed nature of the questions does not offer insights into how interpreters understand and operationalise this concept. The book itself does not refer to literature on trust, nor does it offer a definition.

Clifford's (2004) article 'Is fidelity ethical?: The social role of the healthcare interpreter' focusses on relationship building between the client (in this case a practitioner) and the interpreter. He concludes that, under certain circumstances, practitioners may be willing to give interpreters the latitude to go beyond the simple conduit model and take on a wider role. Interpreters may engage in several different roles as their relationships with practitioners grow, according to recognised ethical principles, such as fidelity, understanding, and trust. However, this text does not look into the concept in detail.

Hale (2007) reports on a rather small (41 respondents) survey study involving medical and legal practitioners in Sydney. Both groups overwhelmingly indicate that they trust their interpreters but also state that they mistrust interpreters when they openly take on the 'mediator' or 'gatekeeper' role, lose their impartiality and edit utterances (Hale, 2007:149). How the practitioners assess the extent to which an interpreter takes on this role remains untouched, since the method of the survey does not allow for follow-up questions. The author only reflects on this when discussing data from other research, mainly drawing on Angelelli (2004b) for data.

Martínez-Gómez's (2015) article "Invisible, visible or everywhere in between? Perceptions and actual behaviours of non-professional interpreters and interpreting users" is an example of an article that takes Angelelli's IPRI as a starting point. The primary data are transcripts of interviews with non-professional interpreters in the Spanish prison system. Additionally, the participants of the interviews, as well as external interpreting experts (trainers and practitioners) answered expectation and assessment questionnaires. The author's decision to work with non-professional interpreters is motivated by the idea that they have not been exposed to the 'invisibility discourse' as such during training. This may shed light on constructions of one's role which are more based on actual interactional and interpersonal factors than on acquired norms. However, the study showed that the interpreters place themselves in the middle ground of the visible-invisible continuum, even in the 'invisible' side of the spectrum when it comes to more explicit interventions. The author therefore concludes that non-personhood is still a socially accepted norm – the general popular understanding of how an interpreter should behave (see 2.2). This is an aspect that I will describe in more detail in section 5.2 of this thesis. Although two out of nine questions in the questionnaire were devoted to 'establishing trust/facilitating mutual respect', and even though the results show that interpreters see themselves as remarkably visible when it comes to these practices, the theoretical foundations of the concept of trust are left untouched. The author concludes that the factors influencing self-perception of role, patterns in its dynamic negotiation by all participants, and causes and consequences of shifts in 'provisional identities' all deserve further attention. I hope that my practice-oriented approach will be able to shed light on this. Finally, this article introduces the terms "opaque visibility" (where the interpreter's

assumption of a primary participant role is not so obvious) and "transparent visibility" (where the interpreter's assumption of a primary participant role is obvious). These are productive concepts and I will return to them in chapters 5 and 6.

2.4 Different levels of trust

Micro and macro levels of trust

Giddens (2008) distinguishes between macro and micro level trust relationships. In other publications, he refers to macro level trust relationships by using the word 'abstract' (1991) or 'faceless' (1994) (as cited in Meyer et al., 2008:178). Other authors refer to a similar level of trust by calling it 'social trust' (Sztompka, 1999), 'generalised trust' (Kuchenkova, 2017), 'institutional trust' (Luhmann, 1990) or systems-based trust (Fukuyama, 1995). What these authors have in common is that they all refer to trust at a rather abstract level, directed towards organizations or institutions, instead of to individuals (in which case we would speak of 'interpersonal trust'). Examples could be the school, the church, the courts, the banks or the government. The most abstract objects of trust are the overall qualities of the social system, social order, or the regime. Hosking (2014:45) refers to trust in them as 'trust structures' - the wider social arrangements within which trust networks are embedded. As mentioned in the introduction (1.1.), in the social sciences, trust is mainly used in reports of quantitative survey studies of generalised trust in different entities (Broch-Due and Ystanes, 2016). These surveys primarily deal with precisely with this type of abstract, systemic trust. Systemic trust is often contrasted with interpersonal trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Sztompka, 1999). Interpersonal trust is negotiated between individuals (a decision to trust someone or not). Giddens (2008:80) links interpersonal trust to Goffman's concept of 'face-work'. Face-work refers to a person's actions that make whatever he or she is doing consistent with face, that allow a person to live up to his or her reputation (Goffman, 1982:12). Giddens emphasises the direct contact between individuals by stressing that face-work refers to trust relations "which are sustained by or expressed in social connections established in *circumstances of copresence"* (my italics).

These different categories of trust mentioned above are interconnected and reinforce one another: trust in the system is dependent on trust in the system's representative

(Fukuyama, 1995; Giddens, 1990, as cited in Meyer et al., 2008:178). Giddens (2008) refers to '*access points':* points of connection between lay individuals or collectivities and the representatives of abstract systems. Although they are places of vulnerability for abstract systems, they also provide junctions at which trust can be maintained or built up. In short: they are the meeting ground of facework (comparable to interpersonal trust discussed above) and faceless commitments (comparable to systemic trust discussed above). Due to this interconnectedness of personal and systemic trust, the balance of trust and distrust for a given agent is always very complex and sometimes ambivalent in real life (Sztompka, 1999). Separating these different foundations for direct trust makes sense for analytical purposes only (Giddens, 1990, as cited in Sztompka, 1999). Lewis and Weigert (1985:974) similarly argue that "an adequate sociological theory of trust must offer a conceptualisation of trust that bridges the interpersonal and systemic levels of analysis, rather than dividing them into separate domains." I will again illustrate this with examples referring to interpreting: one might not trust the interpreter as a person, because you know him or her outside of your professional contact (interpersonal trust). One can simultaneously trust the person as a professional, despite personal dislike (positional trust). Similarly, one might trust the organisation that employs the interpreter (institutional trust), while not trusting the government of the country that this interpreters' institution is located in (systemic trust). Linked to this final example is an observation made by Robb and Greenhalgh (2006), who note that sometimes the interpreter embodies, and implicitly takes responsibility for humanising the 'system', by interpreting rather 'cold' bureaucratic language in a more 'human' way.

Finally, besides the different foundations for direct trust outlined above, people might trust another person based on indirect trust. Clients, for example, often recommend interpreters to one another; freelance interpreters often find new clients through word of mouth. In these cases, people decide to trust or not trust another person, relying on 'second-hand cues'. Sztompka (1999:47) shows how these second-hand cues can be multiple by referring to 'pyramids of trust'. A client might decide to work with an interpreter because this interpreter was recommended to him or her by a trusted colleague, because he read an article about the interpreter's work in a trusted newspaper, written by a trusted journalist, and because the interpreter graduated from

a university trusted by the client. In these cases, secondary trust (in the colleague, newspaper, journalist and university) forms a foundation for primary trust (in the interpreter).

Positional trust of the interpreter

Positional trust relates to social roles, understood as ways of acting typical for specific positions. Certain social roles evoke '*prima facie*' trust (e.g., mother, doctor, priest) whereas others are associated with suspicion (e.g., merchant, tax collector, secret agent). However, it is important to realise that these examples do not always hold: the trustworthiness of a social role may vary across different societies and in different historical moments (Sztompka, 1999:43) (see 4.3). Since the interpreter works with people from different linguistic backgrounds, he or she always represents 'the stranger' to a certain extent and therefore represents 'the unknown'. By this, I mean "the unknown culturally defined space which separates off the outside from the world of the 'familiar', structured by the traditions with which the collectivity identifies" (Giddens, as cited in Sztompka, 1999:14). Below is an expert from Andres (2015a:160), in which she describes the prototype of the 'fictional interpreter', drawing on several literary works with an interpreter as the main protagonist.

> Interpreters are often represented as eternal wanderers struggling to straddle the divide between two different worlds and living in a permanent state of 'not belonging'. Due to their nomadic and multilingual nature, interpreters are depicted as lacking orientation and emotional bonds; they are shown as empty within, divided and torn apart by their different '(life)worlds'.

This description of literary characters points to the tension between belonging and not belonging that so often characterises the interpreter's position. This 'liminal' position mentioned in the introduction directly links to trust. Inghilleri (2010, as cited in Tipton, 2015) draws attention to the 'contradictory esteem' in which interpreters are often held, being simultaneously objects of 'necessary trust', as well as of 'deep suspicion'. According to Wadensjö (1998:9), the fact that the interpreter is often viewed as a 'necessary evil' reflects an underlying mistrust and fear of the alien and the deviant. According to Andres (2008:38–39, as cited in Cáceres-Würsig, 2012:128), the role of the interpreter has historically been a suspicious one, linked to the role of a spy or a traitor. Rather than being perceived as occupying a neutral space between

civilisations, interpreters are frequently viewed as serving the intelligence-gathering interests of their employer.

One reason for this distrust of 'the stranger', causing interpreters to be specifically mistrusted, is the phenomenon of the confusion of the messenger with the message. Interpreters are trained to deliver their translation in the first person, which can give the impression that the interpreter is the author of the original utterance. An example is given by Delisle in his introduction to Ruth Roland's book *Interpreters as Diplomats* (1999:3). During the height of the Cold War, an American interpreter was accused of being a 'card-carrying communist'. The reason was his enthusiastic interpretation of a virulent condemnation of the West by the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations. In situations of heightened tensions or conflict, interpreters risk being labelled 'traitors' (Askew and Salama-Carr, 2011; Baker, 2012; Cronin, 2006; Rubel and Rosman, 2003). The shift from modern to postmodern warfare made intelligence gathering a priority for military strategists (Cronin, 2006). This development makes (mis)trust of interpreters even more relevant. An example is provided by a 2011 article that appeared in *The Armed Forces Journal*. This article reported that interpreters in Iraq were ten times more likely to die in combat than deployed American or international forces. These interpreters were in constant danger as neither the troops they were interpreting for nor the enemy they were speaking to had complete confidence in the fidelity of their words (as cited in Polizzotti, 2018:32-33). This had real consequences for their security: Baker (2010:217) concludes her article on interpreters and translators in war zones (including the Iraq war) by stating that military and politicians treat locally hired interpreters as cannon fodder and refuse them basic protection.

It is therefore remarkable that Bellos (2011:129) makes the following argument: "The connection between 'translating' and 'treachery' is of no relevance to modern, thoroughly print-based societies. In a world where you can check the translation against the original, even when it has the form of speech (thanks to the sound-recording devices we have used for the past one-hundred years) the principal grounds for the fear and mistrust of linguistic intermediaries that is endemic to oral societies no longer exists." I think that Bellos (2011) overestimates the prevalence of written transcriptions of interpreted encounters. According to Cronin (2002:48), this is not uncommon, since "the hold of literacy on our analytical worldview means that we tend

to exaggerate the importance of textual translation and ignore the far-reaching historical and political effects of interpreting encounters." As mentioned earlier (2.1), most research in IS focuses on conference interpreting (Cronin, 2002). In this field, the written text produced before and after the event can hardly be seen as separate from the spoken word. However, conference interpreting is a minority sector in the overall field of interpreting (Cronin, 2002). Most interpreting in the world is still largely an oral affair, that will never be recorded on paper or tape.[32] Several authors agree that negotiating trust remains one of the principal tasks of interpreters working in healthcare, contexts of migration, integration and/or assimilation (Bischoff et al, 2012; Edwards et al, 2005; Keselman et al, 2010; Merlini, 2009; Pöllabauer, 2004). I therefore argue that, in contrast to Bellos (2011), the positional (dis)trust of linguistic intermediaries continues to be a relevant topic today.

Trust from the perspective of the client

Trust is built iteratively over time (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). In the case of interpreters, this results in people frequently sticking with the same interpreter for years and building up a professional relationship, also called a 'tandem'. This is important to such an extent that it causes people to prefer unprofessional interpreters drawn from their own network over unfamiliar professional interpreters, as the study of Edwards et al (2005) demonstrates. Especially in sensitive cases such as healthcare interpreting this is a common practice (Rob and Greenhalgh, 2006). This can be explained by the key role of interpersonal trust. Robb and Greenhalgh's (2006) study demonstrates how voluntary, interpersonal trust results in clients granting the interpreter a 'honorary family member' status, calling the interpreter 'uncle' or 'daughter'. According to their findings, this was underpinned first and foremost by commonality in language, ethnicity and country of origin. The (problematic) consequences such expectations can have, in particular when these expectations do not match those of the interpreter or those of another client, will be discussed later (sections 2.4, 2.5 and 5.2).

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[32] I do not include the interpreter's notes here. Although written, they usually do not form a coherent or readable account of the conversation but rather serve as an aid to the interpreter's short-term memory. Even for the interpreters themselves it is hard to remember exactly what was said in any given meeting based on their notes alone (Devaux, 2018).

Trust from the perspective of the employer

Doubts regarding the loyalty of interpreters towards the authorities they serve have been "a constant throughout history" (Cáceres-Würsig, 2012:128). Roland's (1999) book documents how authorities throughout the years have struggled to find ways to best educate loyal interpreters. The younger you are when you learn a language, the higher the chances of achieving native fluency. However, the younger you are when you learn a language, the more national loyalty is perceived as compromised. Cáceres-Würsig (2012:139) describes how this problem already surfaced in the mid-seventeenth century, when thirteen young apprentice interpreters (*giovani di lingua*) at the Venetian embassy were criticised for over-adapting to the Ottoman environment while learning Turkish, losing their 'Venetian essence'.[33] In colonial history, the danger of employing natives as interpreters frequently comes up, since colonisers felt they could not depend on native interpreters' fidelity.

This is part of a larger debate around what Cronin (2002) terms heteronomous and autonomous systems of interpreting. In a colonial context, the first system involves recruiting local interpreters and teaching them the imperial language. In this system, interpreters would be recruited either by force or through inducements. The second system is one where colonisers train their own subjects in the language or languages of the colonised regions (Cronin, 2002:55). Apostolou (2009), Cáceres-Würsig (2012), Cronin (2002) and Roland (1999) all note historical cases of mistrust towards native interpreters. Key informants marrying local women so as to enhance intelligence gathering activities was a widespread practice among colonisers. However, both Cronin (2002) and Cáceres-Würsig (2012) give examples of how these women often changed sides or acted as double agents.

This mistrust towards native interpreters still influences modern interpreting practices. Discussing the work of interpreters during the Iraq war, Baker (2010) explains this mistrust by a combination of ethnicity and language. Locally hired interpreters (and sometimes second-generation interpreters as well) were seen as belonging to the

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[33] In her analysis of the ways authorities selected the methods of training and recruiting of interpreters, Cáceres-Würsig focusses on Venice, France, Austria and Spain.

'enemy' community, to 'them' instead of 'us'. By 2006, the US military had replaced most Iraqi interpreters working in the Green Zone with Jordanians. By starting to invest in training citizens of the Republic of Georgia to take over in order to avoid relying on Iraqi interpreters, one could argue they shifted from a heteronomous system of interpreting to an autonomous one (Packer 2007, as cited in Baker, 2010:198). The switch was deeply unpopular with the remaining Iraqis, who "understood that it involved the fundamental issue of trust" (Packer 2007, as cited in Baker, 2010:199).

Loyalty of the interpreter towards the client

Because of trust bestowed on the interpreter, the interpreter feels loyalty towards the clients. Sztompka (1999:5) defines loyalty as "the obligation to refrain from breaching the trust that others have bestowed upon us and to fulfil duties taken upon ourselves by accepting somebody's trust." Although he does not mention interpreters, Sztompka (1999) states that when the client docilely puts his or her fate into the hands of the professional this may evoke a response that considerably heightens the chances of a favourable outcome. He goes on to say that "[t]he feeling of complete responsibility, as complete as that of parent for child, can spur the professional on and inspire a dogged determination to avoid breaching the client's trust at all costs" (Merton et al., 1983:22, as cited in Sztompka, 1999:37). This is not unproblematic. Since interpreters necessarily work with at least two parties, the loyalty towards one client may conflict with loyalty towards another client. Furthermore, the two clients might have completely different views of the responsibility of the interpreter. Whereas one might expect the interpreter to provide 'literal translations', the other might expect the interpreter to be a guide and an advocate. In healthcare interpreting, both the patient and the clinician can simultaneously 'pull' the interpreter to be on their 'side': the patient by virtue of kinship-type links and the clinician by virtue of shared professional belonging (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). I would like to add here that although the example is given in this format by Robb and Greenhalgh, I do not see why this would not work similarly the other way around.

2.5 Trust based on shared social categories

At the borderline between interpersonal trust and social trust (as mentioned in 2.3) there are social categories (understood as pluralities of persons sharing certain

common traits). Examples are gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion and wealth (Sztompka, 1999). This form of trust is often pervaded with stereotypes and prejudices. According to Witte (2000:67, as cited in Bahadir, 2004:809), these prejudices can be both positive and negative ones and occur on at least three levels: prejudices about their own culture, about the Other, and about what one thinks the Other thinks of one's own culture. The reason for these prejudices is often that the community of people trusted in this case is made up of people who have never directly encountered one another. Rather, these groups are constructed only in our imagination and can therefore be called 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006).

Users of interpreting services may extend voluntary trust on the basis of shared identity (Greener, 2003). This can be linked to a shared language, shared gender, shared nationality or some other perception of commonality and reciprocity (Rob and Greenhalgh, 2006:436). The same holds the other way around; the absence of common identities can cause a lack of trust. Below I will explore some of the key components of interpreter identity that contribute to the interpreter's position in a trust relationship, starting with national identity.

National identity

I am interested in how the nation, in this case Russia, has been (re)created and (re)presented by interpreters on a personal, everyday level. The idea of thinking about the nation as a set of practices is, amongst others, used by Pechurina (2015:23), who writes that a nation can be defined not as a collective of people but as "a practice realised by people who 'imagine' themselves as a collective." One of the key practices associated with national identity is speaking a particular language. The reason for this, according to Bellos (2011:63), is the history of the European nation state founded on linguistic uniformity. This has resulted in "a fairly profound confusion of language and nationality." Wadensjö (1998) also points towards this myth of 'one nation – one language'. In most part of the Western world, monolingualism has been seen as 'the normal', despite the fact that simple observation reveals widespread multilingualism (Wadensjö, 1998:10). Since interpreters bring this mark of national prestige to the international arena, they are often perceived as 'the stranger' and confronted with the mistrust this entails. Mairs (2011:70) found several occurrences of this in ancient history. She gives some examples where identity and language are intertwined to such

an extent that interpretation and translation are framed as 'linguistic prostitution', treating language as a 'commodity' and translation as 'betrayal'. Ruth Roland gives the example of Bismarck, who once commented that "no Englishman who was fluent in French could be trusted" (Roland, 1999). Cicero's paternal grandfather was said to have commented that a man who knew Greek well was generally a knave. In his 1992 study, Vermeer concludes that even the Greeks and Persians each brought their own interpreter to negotiations (as cited in Delisle, 2012). It is likely that issues of trust played a role here too.

A second component related to nationality is the identity of the migrant. In theory, most interpreters have the opportunity to work and live in a foreign country of which they already speak the language and encounter its people. Young interpreters in particular tend to be exceptionally mobile (Baker, 2012). Interpreters frequently volunteer their services to community members. Especially when living and working abroad, volunteer interpretation provides an opportunity to connect with local social networks (Ellis, 2011). Frequently, the interpreter and the migrant client share a similar migration background. When the interpreters themselves are also part of the migrant community, questions of loyalty arise. The migrant community, including other interpreters belonging to this community, might expect them to take sides with their fellow members (Bischoff et al, 2012). However, research on interpreters as migrants themselves is rare. Most work that combines migration and translation focusses on interpreters assisting migrants, especially in healthcare (for example: Anderson, 2008; Ditton, 2010; Hadziabdic and Hjelm, 2013; Hadziabdic et al, 2009; Maryns, 2004) or during asylum hearings (Inghilleri, 2005, 2006; Keselman et al., 2010; Merlini, 2009; Pöllabauer, 2004). Furthermore, there is literature on interpreters and translators working in international organisations (for example: Dam and Zethsen, 2012; Koskinen, 2014; Koskinen, 2001) and international news agencies (for example: Bielsa, 2007; Bielsa and Bassnett, 2008; Holland, 2006; Palmer, 2007; Tsai, 2005). The interpreter is often a 'prodigal figure', one who leaves (voluntarily or forced) his or her native place, learns the language of another, and returns to their place of origin (Cronin, 2006). One therefore repeatedly encounters interpreters in literature on return migration (for example: Baláž and Williams, 2004; De Bree et al, 2010; Klagge et al, 2010; Williams and Baláž, 2005).

Gender

According to Singy and Guex (2015:170), the gendered character of the interpreting profession has not received much attention in IS to date, and also in sociolinguistic approaches efforts at theorizing gender issues are still the exception. Besides some studies on gender in conference interpreting (e.g., Magnifico and Defrancq, 2016; Magnifico and Defrancq, 2017; Ryan, 2015), the topic is rarely studied in face-to-face interpreting. One of the few studies in this field is Mason's (2008) research on gender differences in courtroom Interpreting. Although most criminal defendants are male, most courtroom interpreters are female. As turn length increases, women tend to add politeness markers (such as 'please'), whereas men tend to omit them. The author points to the socialisation of women to act out solidarity and empathy in the courtroom, despite the fact that they are framed as 'errors' (Mason, 2008:92). This can be linked to gendered communicative styles and corresponding language practices. Masculine style is associated with assertiveness, competitiveness or directivity, reflected in discourse as interruptions, verbal dominance or transgression of etiquette. Feminine style, by contrast, exhibits qualities such as empathy, cooperation and avoidance of conflict, and is linked to pragmatic strategies such as hedges, indirect questions or euphemisms (Singy and Guex, 2015:169-170). Talbot (2010) notes that these gender differences are not to be understood in absolute terms, since both men and women can follow the conventions of both masculine and feminine style. Finally, there are several publications that mention gender-related issues in passing. Bischoff et al (2012) touches on gender-related conflicts in interpreting (a man not accepting a female interpreter, for example). Clifford (2004) makes note of the power difference between a female interpreter and a male doctor.

(False) expectations

These commonalities can also lead to tensions complicating interpreter-mediated conversations (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006:441). Expectations of interpreter loyalty based on the commonalities illustrated above can lead to disappointment (Merlini, 2009; Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). When users of interpreting services extend their voluntary trust to the interpreter on the basis of, for example, a common ethnic background or gender, they often expect the interpreter to act as an ally. This involves

advocating their interests as opposed to those of the institution and taking their side in a power struggle. The clients interviewed by Edwards et al (2005) preferred proactive interpreters who pleaded their case and gave advice. Not fulfilling these expectations puts the interpreter in an uncomfortable situation, with either of the two parties resenting the 'betrayal' (Merlini, 2009:59). It is important to add that the expectations of clients strongly differ, depending on the type of interpreted encounter. Whereas impartiality is stressed in, for example, legal contexts, more community-based practices require support and solidarity (Inghilleri, 2005).

Reconsidering 'role'

In the introduction to this chapter, I discussed the ways in which the normative role of the interpreter - a set of expectations society has of individuals in a given social position or status - has evolved through time. Thanks to IS 'going social', conceptions of role are increasingly seen not as static and absolute, but as related to the different viewpoints of the various participants involved. In contrast to the static and formal view that individuals follow scripted roles, the sociologist Goffman (1981) saw roles as evolving through social interaction. He therefore proposed an alternative term: 'footing'. According to Goffman, a change of footing "implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981:128). This is an analytical concept for the study of situated social interaction: participants adopt different - and constantly shifting - attitudes vis-à-vis each other and in relation to what is uttered in interaction (Wadensjö, 2004). Wadensjö's (1992, 1998) studies are examples of applying the concept of footing to interpreting research. She used Goffman's topology of 'hearers' and 'speakers' and added a breakdown of the hearer's 'reception format' into three modes of listening: as reporter, recapitulator, and responder.

Davies and Harré (1990) criticise Goffman by stating that he assumes that alignments are the choice of an individual speaker that exist prior to speaking. Instead, they draw attention to the dynamic aspects of encounters, by explaining that alignments are jointly produced in the very act of conversing (Davies and Harré, 1990:55). Instead of the often-used term 'role', or the less common 'footing', the authors prefer 'positioning', defined as "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines."

Positioning can be interactive (what one person says can position another) and reflexive (one can position oneself), intentional or unintentional. Mason (2009) applies this concept of 'positioning' to IS.[34] Central to positioning in IS is the continuously changing nature of interaction among the participants in interpreter-mediated communication. Drawing on research conducted at immigration interviews, Mason (2009:62) explains how positioning can switch several times during the course of one migration interview. Zorzi (2012:247) makes a similar argument, by explaining that interpreters move between different provisional 'identities' or roles[35] within one single event, which are co-constructed among all participants according to the relevant conversational tasks at stake in each moment.

In line with Mason (2009) and Zorzi (2012), I believe that in order to investigate the way interpreters contribute to the building and continuation of trust relationships, not only their prescribed 'professional' or 'normative' role should be taken into account. I also agree with Davies and Harré (1990) that the interpreter's role is dynamic: it changes in the interaction with others. In the following chapters, I will therefore specify which part of an interpreter's identity is drawn upon in relation to which role, or combination of roles, to the extent relevant for trust-building (e.g., 'gender role', 'normative role', 'social role'). This means that, although I stick to the term 'role' for the sake of its performative connotations relevant to this study, as well as its widespread use by other authors whose work I rely on, I make use of the literature on positioning by stressing the reflexive and interactive use of different roles, as well as their intersections.

2.6 Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, I noted the prevalence of written translation within the academic discipline of TS. Research on translation in specifically Soviet Russia and post-Soviet Russia is no exception: here oral translation is also an underrepresented field. On top of the fact that interpreting is studied less, compared to

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[34] Positioning has a second meaning, referring to the physical position of the interpreter in face-to-face encounters. This is particularly relevant in relation to eye contact and sign-language interpreting.
[35] She uses 'roles' and 'provisional identities' interchangeably.

written translation, interpretation studies has long been characterised by a bias toward prestigious forms of interpreting practiced in developed countries (mainly Western Europe) (Cronin, 2002). In this regard, my research explores a field that only recently started to receive scholarly attention: face-to-face interpreting by Russian professionals.

Section 2.2 listed the different ways in which the paradoxes inherent to the interpreter's role have led to similar ambivalence in the academic literature on interpreting. On the one hand, the view of the interpreter as a conduit implies that any deviation between the source language and the target language is a threat to neutrality, framed as a failure (Raymond, 2014:44). In this view, the interpreter's negotiation of trust is associated with too much involvement, with unprofessionalism. Despite the fact that this concept has been discredited by more recent studies, this 'invisible' role of the interpreter still constitutes 'the professional ideal' amongst both users and providers of interpreting services. Most research supporting this view is based on rather abstract ideas about normativity, not so much on how the interpreter's social role is carried out in practice (Wadensjö, 2017). Practice-oriented research paints a completely different picture: it acknowledges time-pressure, and that there is no 'perfect' translation. By pointing out the visibility and audibility of the interpreter, it problematises neutrality. Greenhalgh et al. (2006) even argue that communicative action is hardly the norm, and that complex social relations promote strategic action instead (section 2.3). As a result of this visibility-invisibility paradox, expectations of both interpreters and their clients of who the interpreter is and what he or she is supposed to do diverge.

In order to investigates the ways in which the above-mentioned paradoxes shape interpreting practices, my first research question aims to explore these 'zones of uncertainty'. The acknowledgement and discussion of these tensions are one of the reasons why trust is the topic I chose to investigate. In which situations do interpreters particularly feel that the normative model of the interpreter as a conduit is somehow insufficient, and the need for trust negotiation eminent? When do they feel friction between neutrality and loyalty/empathy, and towards whom or what?

A result of these paradoxical expectations surrounding the interpreting profession, interpreters do not always agree on what to do in the above-mentioned situations, what

constitutes a 'professional' response in their field (Viazoo and Lynch, 2002:441; Wadensjö et al., 2007, as cited in Stolze, 2010:141). Whereas one interpreter might view his or her role as a provider of 'subtitles', others place the giving of cultural explanations among their professional responsibilities (Palazhchenko, 1997) (see 2.2). The interpreters' personal view of their professional role, as well as their work experience, shape their judgements on what to do in the situations outlined in the previous paragraph. My second research question is aimed at getting a picture of the available tactics accessible to interpreters in such situations. Especially since most students of interpreting have not been taught these skills during their training at university, these tactics are varied and highly personal (see chapter 1).

In section 2.3, I presented research framing the interpreted encounter as a 'zone of uncertainty in social space', one where a problematic gap emerges between individual expectations and actual experience. In such a zone of uncertainty, trust is particularly relevant: since there is no 'total control' in interpreted encounters, trust comes to our aid and forms the only basis for a durable interpersonal relationship. The negotiation of trust between parties is potentially where the gap between theory and practice outlined above is most pronounced (Martínez-Gómez, 2015). The few studies that combine interpreting and trust research reviewed in this section confirm the importance of trust in interpreted encounters. Trust repeatedly surfaces as key to both users and providers of interpreting services. However, despite the importance of trust as pointed out by the discussed authors in this section, trust as a concept is rarely discussed in detail. In most cases, the term 'trust' is mentioned by respondents but not subjected to further theoretical scrutiny by the authors. This is particularly remarkable since the past decades have witnessed an increased interest in trust research, generating a wide range of insights highly applicable to interpreting. In this thesis, I draw on the findings of trust literature to develop an analytical framework tailored for the analysis of interpreting (introduced in chapter 4). In the subsequent chapters (5 and 6), I use this framework to analyse interpreting practices, thereby bringing these two bodies of literature together.

In the next section of this literature review (2.4), I provided a brief overview of trust research to the extent relevant for the study of interpreted encounters. In 2.4 I introduced different levels of trust. The concept of 'trust' in the social sciences is mainly

used in reports of quantitative survey studies of generalised trust in different entities (Broch-Due and Ystanes, 2016). These surveys primarily deal with social or macro trust (Sztompka, 1999). In contract, this thesis takes a qualitative approach, intended to discover trust-building practices on the ground. Answering Broch-Due's and Ystanes' (2006) call, I aim to gather insights into the performativity of 'trusting'.

Interpreters are often studied as having rather one-dimensional, professional identities. However, this 'positional trust' associated with their professional role is just one element of their identity that influences the trust relationships in which they engage. Acknowledging interpreting as a situated practice and the interpreter as a co-constructor of dialogue implies that he or she is, just like other participants, influenced by social roles and conventions that extend beyond their professional identities (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf, 2014; Wadensjö, 1998). Instead of treating their professional title as the only relevant identity, I pay attention to interpreters' multi-dimensional identities that can potentially form the basis for trust. In accordance with the cultural and social turn in interpreting, I aim to investigate the way in which social categories such as gender and nationality, dealt with briefly in section 2.5 of this chapter, influence the interpreters' role as a trust mediator (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). What interpreters strive to accomplish in their work is similarly motivated by choices not limited to what their restricted professional roles dictate. I would even argue that separating interpreters' motivations into 'professional' and 'personal' is artificial: the two spheres are interlinked (as will be further explored in chapter 6). That is why my third and final research question incorporates interpreters' motivations in the broadest sense of the word: Why do interpreters do what they do? What do they aim to achieve? What are their strategies?

Finally, this study hopes to offer a fresh contribution both to the literature on trust and on interpreting in terms of perspective. It allows interpreters themselves to be the starting point for the study of trust in interpreter-client relations. The perspective of the interpreter, the 'stranger' or 'trustor' is an unusual one in IS, where scholars rarely consider how interpreters themselves view their profession (Angelelli, 2004b:22). Additionally, in the existing body of literature on trust the perspective of the 'stranger' is not a common starting point. Usually, the phenomenon is studied from the viewpoint of 'the host' (Pitt-Rivers, 1977). This means I do not so much focus on the perspective

of the 'trustor' (trusting actor, in this case the interpreter's clients) but from the trustee (trusted actor, in this case the interpreter). However, as will be shown later in this thesis, these two roles are not as separate as one might think.

Placing the interpreters and their practices at the heart of this study implies a use of different data as well. Whereas research in conference interpreting is often based on comparisons of (written) speech in the source language with speech in the target language, I focus on interpreting as a process. The fact that I am interested in contemporary practices also limits my sources. Interpreting in Russia is usually discussed in an historical context (see 1.4). In order to study the wider social context in which the interpreted encounter is embedded, as well as the motives, feelings and identities of the individual interpreters, ethnographic research is the only available tool. This research strategy is relatively new to the discipline of IS. In the following chapter, I will elaborate on this question of methodology.

Chapter 3. Methods

3.1 Introduction

My approach can be described as both modern and conventional. On the one hand, I took a classic anthropological approach, very much corresponding to what Faubion (2007, as cited in Marcus and Okely, 2007:354) describes as 'the conventional approach to an anthropological project':

> [O]ne roughly year-long, more or less continuous encampment at a primary physical site, a few satellite trips here and there, and probably a two- or three-month mop-up before the dissertation or monograph is complete.

After a pilot study of two months, I spent the required time 'in the field' (approximately two years, 2018-2020), living and working in St Petersburg, Russia. I gained friends and colleagues through 'deep hanging out' at the faculty of foreign languages of St Petersburg State University and other foreign academic institutes (e.g., Dutch Institute, French Institute) (Forsey, 2010). These relationships stayed with me also after 'leaving the field'. I conducted interviews and participant observation. I had similarly planned a 'two- or three-month mop-up', but due to travel restrictions to prevent the spreading of COVID-19 (see section 3.10), I was not able to travel.

On the other hand, my approach can be framed as more 'hybrid'. In recent decades, many anthropologists have come to accept that the 'field' can be the place where you are located in your normal life, and is not necessarily a place you go specially to do your research. Multi-sited ethnographies have questioned the notion of 'field' as necessarily attached to a fixed place; native or indigenous ethnographies challenged the fear of 'going native' (Scott, 2013:193). I had already lived in Russia for two years prior to the start of this project. Separating (cultural) knowledge gained during these years from observations gathered later would be artificial. Furthermore, when 'in the field' I was far from a fulltime researcher: I worked as a lecturer, went on holidays within Russia, met with friends. I regularly travelled back home to the Netherlands to apply for a new visa and visited my supervisors and fellow PhD researchers at University College London approximately twice each year. Some of the interviews with mobile and migrating interpreters were conducted during these trips, directing attention away

from classical anthropology's 'bounded fields' towards 'shifting locations' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). The fact that I was in touch with both supervisors and research participants by email and social media means that our contact was not limited to the times we were in the same country.

In this chapter, I discus the methodological dilemmas of studying trust in interpreting and outline the approach I took in this study. First, I outline my methodology, the theoretical framework of ethnography and the way this supports the methods chosen. The next part reflects on my own positionality within this study. By referring to literature on the reflexive turn in anthropology, I reflect on my position as both an insider and outsider in relation to the participants of this study. This is followed by accounts of how, where and when I conducted my fieldwork, including remarks on the arbitrary geographical and temporal limits of the period of 'data collection'. In the fifth section, I provide details about how I approached and recruited participants, illustrated by a diagram (figure 3). Subsequently, section 3.6 gives a detailed account of my methods, the specific approach I used to collect data. I explain how the pilot study helped me define the key themes for thematic analysis. The approach of 'grounded theorizing' used to analyse the data is outlined next. Section 3.8 forms a reflection on some of the ethical aspects of my fieldwork, such as consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, I will elaborate on my commitment to an open research approach, including sharing results with the research participants and open-access publications.

3.2 Methodology: Ethnography

Why ethnography

This research project aims to investigate the ways in which Russian interpreters working in both Western Europe and Russia negotiate trust on an everyday basis. Ethnographic research is the only available approach that allows for an in-depth insight into interpreters' motivations and experiences. This has been pointed out by several authors in both IS and anthropological writings. Inghilleri (2006:58), for example, states that only ethnographic approaches can develop "a descriptive language of interpreted events which is capable of comprehending participants' embeddedness in social and political processes and capturing the wider implications of particular moves within interpreted interactions." Another group of authors underscores the importance of

ethnographic methods in the post-Soviet region in particular. The friction in the region between, on one hand, marketised styles of exchange and newly legal profit-making practices and, on the other, longer-established norms governing social relations are, according to Patico (2009) best researched using ethnographic methods. Humphrey and Mandel (2002:12) also state that the key to understanding post-Soviet markets lies with the everyday practices of ordinary people, best studied through ethnographic methods. In the Introduction to this thesis, I cited Broch-Due and Ystanes' (2016) book, in which the authors argue for a shift from a representational stance on 'trust' to a performativity of 'trusting'. In a response to large-scale reports of quantitative survey studies of generalised trust in different entities, the authors propose to study trust in practices, doings and actions through ethnographic fieldwork. This is what I have done in this study. Trust negotiation has been successfully studied within an 'ethnographic imaginary' in the past (Forsey, 2010). In his monograph on trust, Sztompka (1999), for example, similarly relies on ethnographic research. Chapter 4 provides more background information on existing ethnographies of trust.

Defining ethnography

The precise definition of ethnography is subject to extensive scholarly debates across various disciplines. Ethnography is not only central to anthropology: in the second half of the twentieth century, it spread to disciplines ranging from sociology and cultural studies to psychology and human geography. As the term travelled across traditionally disciplinary dividing lines and even beyond the academy, it has changed in big and small ways (Jackson, 2012). Some even argue that the term was "swallowed up in a general, multidisciplinary, movement promoting qualitative approaches" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:2). According to Ingold (2014), this diversity of applications and definitions of the term 'ethnography' have resulted in a profound confusion over its meaning. Fundamental to the discussions about the term is the difference between:

1. Ethnography as a recognizable literary genre within the social sciences (writings that attempt holistically to capture people's cultural beliefs/practices), and
2. Ethnography as a brand of qualitative fieldwork that produces such social scientific accounts (the collecting of sociocultural data based on long-term, face-to-face interactions) (Jackson, 2012).

The first definition focusses on the end product: a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice that grants ethnography its name: *ethno* = people, *graphy* = writing. The second definition focusses on the process itself. The discussion below revolves around these two sides of the concept. Whereas some define ethnography as a method, a means to an end (e.g., Howell, 2018), others defend ethnography as a worthy end in itself, explicitly stating that it is *not* a method (e.g., Ingold, 2014). A third group defines ethnography as an approach, an 'ontological commitment' that can take different forms, thereby joining the two definitions mentioned above. This third approach forms a useful starting point for this study, describing ethnography as "the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution" (Simpson and Coleman, 2017, as cited in Howell, 2018). In line with Forsey (2010:567), the aim of my study was to 'listen deeply' and to observe as closely as possible the beliefs, the values, the material conditions and structural forces that underwrite the socially patterned behaviours of people (in this case: interpreters) and the meanings they attach to these conditions and forces, making use of a range of ethnographic techniques.

Interpretivist foundation

My approach is grounded in the belief that the social world cannot be understood in terms of simple causal relationships or universal laws. Instead, I believe that human actions are influenced by social or cultural meanings: by intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, discourses, and values (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:7). Clifford Geertz, one of the most well-known advocates of interpretivism, argues that the task of interpretivist anthropology is "fundamentally about getting some idea of how people conceptualise, understand their world, what they are doing, how they are going about doing it, to get an idea of their world" (as cited in Panourgiá, 2012). This is done through the analysis of 'thick descriptions', viewing culture as a complex assemblage of texts that constitutes a web of meanings (Geertz, 1973). The fact that Geertz points out the analogy between the task of the anthropologist and the interpreter of a text is an interesting parallel between the interpreter and the anthropologist running as a red thread through this thesis (see 1.3). In his (1993) article, Martin, by offering a critique

of Geertz, takes this parallel between two 'interpreters' – the 'social scientist' and the 'reader' in this fragment - even further:

> A reader of a text might well ask not only what the text means but also why the text was produced in the first place, why it takes this form rather than that, what functions it has, what psychological effects a given interpretation has on readers who accept it. Just as a reader might want to know how a text developed, a social scientist might want to know how a culture developed. Just as he or she might wonder why one text has a particular form while a similar text has a different one, a social scientist might wonder why a culture has a particular form while another culture has a different one. Just as a reader might be interested in what function a certain part of a text has (given a certain interpretation), a social scientist might be interested in what function a social practice of a culture has (given a certain interpretation). Just as a reader desires to find out what psychological effects an interpretation has on someone who accepts it, a social scientist might desire to find out what psychological effects a social practice (interpreted in a certain way) has on a social actor who participates in it (Martin, 1993:276).

The citation above highlights the common goal of the anthropologist and the interpreter: discovering meaning in different forms of 'cultural texts'. In this study, I seek to uncover the meanings that interpreters give to their actions, as well as the way in which they construct their own social worlds and account for them (Scott, 2013:184). I am not looking for *the* answer to my research questions. Instead, through long term fieldwork I gain many possible answers, which form insights into the way trust is negotiated on an everyday basis.

This is reflected in my approach to data collection and analysis. I analyse narratives: I look for the meaning the interpreter gives to the events described through the story being told (Muller, 1999). More specifically, I am interested in the narrative mechanisms by which concepts like trust, loyalty, neutrality and perfection are displayed and responded to by various participants in the interpreted encounter (Bernard, 2006). By focussing on the interpreters' stories, I am not so much aiming for the representation of an objective reality, an ultimate 'truth'. The collected narratives must not be uncritically equated with what 'really happened', but instead analysed within the context in which they were generated. This balancing of individual stories and generalisations by the anthropologist, the writing down of representations of representations of social facts, is speculative and subject to scholarly debate (Rabinow, 1986). I recognise that this social knowledge is inherently dialogical,

cocreated and recreated in the course of the interaction (be it an interview or participant observation). This knowledge is therefore essentially partial and continuously negotiable (Noy, 2008:332). Instead of Ingold's (2017) idea that ethnographers are solely concerned with description and 'have nothing to say for themselves', I believe that through my analysis of qualitative data obtained at the local level I can provide insights into the role of interpreters and interlinguistic communication in a much wider setting. By showing in what ways my view is partial and embodied, I 'situate' this study's main findings, creating a foundation for the discussion of my findings within anthropology and other disciplines.

3.3 Positionality

Views from *somewhere*

With the breakdown of the colonial world, anthropology – described as 'the academic, legitimizing arm of the colonialist enterprise' - had to critically rethink its purpose. (Sturge, 1997). This crisis took off in the 1960s and 1970s, when anthropology took a 'reflexive turn'. This movement concerned the recognition of anthropology's origins in colonial history, as well as the discipline's continuing role in the maintenance of inequality structures that exoticized and orientalised the foreign 'other' (e.g., Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Feminist anthropologists were key drivers behind this turn, drawing attention to the ways in which the person of the anthropologist – usually white and male – shapes the ethnographies they write (Howell, 2018). By the 1990s, most elements of the reflexive critique had been incorporated into the mainstream of social and cultural anthropology.

In the introduction of this thesis, I referred to Labov's (1972) 'observer's paradox': a researcher can never observe everyday life as it would occur without his or her presence. However, the different ways in which researchers' personalities and backgrounds shape their observations and subsequent findings are much more complex. It is therefore not only important to comment on what anthropologists look *at*, but also on the positions *from which they look* (James at al., 1997:117, my italics). Haraway (1988:592) refers to knowledge as situated and embodied. Instead of the 'view from above', from a detached researcher with a supposedly 'objective' view, she argues for the need to join partial views and halt voices "into a collective subject

position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions of views *from somewhere.*" Building on Haraway's article, Marcus (1998) defines positioning as the "situatedness and partiality of all claims to knowledge" (Marcus, 1998:198). As a reflexive practice, it revolves around the explicit acknowledgment of the ethnographer's position in relation to his or her interlocutors, creating grounded, situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988:581). The feminist theory on positionality has interesting parallels with 'positioning' as described by Davies and Harré (1990) and later applied to interpreting by Mason (2009). I will further elaborate on this parallel in section 4.4, and again in section 8.4 of the Conclusion.

Building rapport: On insiders and outsiders

According to Marcus (1998:106), the concept of 'rapport' refers to the threshold level of relations between the anthropologist and the 'fieldwork subjects' necessary for those subjects to act effectively as informants. Once that rapport is established, anthropologists can start to pursue their scientific, 'outsider' inquiries on the 'inside'. Just like the interpreter, the anthropologist is a 'temporary guest' (Angelelli, 2000:585) or a 'professional stranger' (Agar, 1996). For both, a certain level of trust is crucial to enter interactions into which an outsider would not usually be allowed (Angelelli, 2004b). In the following paragraphs, I reflect on the ways in which my own positionality influenced the relationship with participants. Different aspects of my identity come with certain associations. I identify as a woman, as an anthropologist and as a foreigner. I study in London, speak Russian and taught at St Petersburg State University.[36] Similarly, the participants of this study are not interpreters only: they also have various identities, associating themselves with different social groups. These social factors mentioned above resulted in commonalities and differences between me and the research participants, making my role continuously shift from outsider to insider, and back. Below I will highlight three of these identity markers: foreignness, gender and, in the next section, shared professional experience.

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[36] I taught at St Petersburg State University during the academic year 2018-2019.

First of all, I am a foreigner in Russia and inevitably carry the label of 'outsider' wherever people notice my accent. I do not look much different from other people on the street in Pskov, St Petersburg or Moscow. As long as I remain silent, I can cross the city relatively 'anonymous'.[37] However, my name is directly associated with foreignness.[38] This foreignness is, however, far from stable. Close friends, as well as some of the participants in this study, did not hesitate to directly confront me with my fluctuating foreignness on the basis of my behaviour. When I forgot the entry code for the fence to our courtyard and therefore climbed over it, my landlady (*khoziaika*) called me well-integrated and clearly '*nash chelovek*', an insider. When I didn't realise why someone got upset because of a drug search in the train (the police were searching with their own hands, instead of asking the owners to open their luggage themselves; I later learned that this way, the police can put compromising material in the bags themselves and then fine the owner), I was told that 'this is Russia, baby' (*Eto Rossiia, detka*). This is a phrase used in relation to 'naïve foreigners' unfamiliar with the hard reality of Russia. Finally, my foreign status also contributed to this study, since experiencing a feeling of 'foreignness' is something the participants and I have in common. Just like me, interpreters work with people from different linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds on a daily basis. Although not all interpreters are familiar with anthropological jargon, 'establishing rapport' takes up a prominent place in their professional skillset (see 5.4). This contributed to mutual understanding. The link between a shared linguistic or cultural background and 'insider status' should not be overestimated. Pechurina (2015:75) explains how, particularly in the case of participants from a post-socialist background, a presumed insider status can be problematic and work against the establishment of a relationship of trust, since they increase the mutual awareness of social divisions that can transform an 'insider' into an 'outsider'.

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[37] Unfortunately, this is not the case for all: discrimination and racism are common, and rarely the subject of public debates. In the spring of 2020, linked to the Black Lives Matter movement, some stories of people of colour were published in popular media, addressing the prejudice they experience in their everyday lives in Russia (e.g. Zatari, 2020).
[38] When joining a Telegram channel of Russians in the Netherlands, I was labelled a 'bot' solely on the basis of my name not sounding 'Russian' enough.

Secondly, being a woman and having conversations with primarily female interpreters (the majority of Russian interpreters are women as well[39]) enables sharing common experiences and this way contributed to a relaxed atmosphere during our meetings. When working at the foreign language faculty, with an overwhelming female majority of teaching staff, this helped me to move around the building and engage in small talk without standing out. However, Malyutina (2014) warns that although shared femininity can promote rapport, relying on shared gender as a universally helpful attribute can be deceiving. Instead, she states that it is the intersectionality of various categories of difference - age, level of education, being or not being a mother, occupation, religious practices - that influences the aspects of power and rapport within relationships, rather than the separate categories. My age, level of education and occupation, for example, similarly made it easier for me to feel at home at the foreign language faculty.

Personal interpreting experience

The term 'participant observation' might give the impression that I extensively worked as an interpreter myself as part of this study, which is not the case. The reason for this is that the main aim of my research is to learn from experienced professionals. My ethnographic fieldwork was in the first place 'a *practice* of education' (Ingold, 2014). Since the face-to-face interpreters who participated in this study mostly work as 'lone wolves' rather than in (institutional) collectives, there would be no way for me to observe, listen and learn from them if I would be working as an interpreter myself. Given the fact that I had met some participants during training events for interpreters in the past, the role of 'apprentice interpreter' came quite naturally.

Still, my own limited experience as a volunteer interpreter contributed to this study. Although I never received a formal diploma of interpreting, I did attend two interpreting courses at the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg: one aimed at Dutch interpreters, one aimed at their Russian colleagues. By working as a volunteer interpreter myself, I experienced the need for 'softening and smoothening' first hand. The stress that comes

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[39] Besides several websites presenting research outcomes without mentioning the source, indicating an overwhelming female majority working as translators/interpreters (an estimated 70-75 per cent), I did not manage to find data of the percentage of men and women working as interpreters. This is further complicated by the fact that written and oral translators have the same title: *perevodchik.*

with interpreting was also something I could relate to: during a one-week visit of my Russian friends to the Netherlands, I noticed that I even continued to interpret in my dreams. When later, out of curiosity, I asked interpreters if they had ever interpreted in their dreams, this opened up an entire new theme of perfectionism and stress that I had not touched upon before.

My modest interpreting experience, combined with my student status and teaching, made me much more of a 'active member researcher' than I had initially expected. This category, introduced by Adler and Adler (1987, as cited in Dwyer and Buckle, 2009:55), refers to researchers who become involved with the central activities of the group without fully committing themselves to the members' values and goals. This is in contrast to peripheral member researchers, who do not participate in the core activities of group member, and complete member researchers, who are already members of the group or who become fully affiliated during the course of the research. Tiselius (2019) draws attention to the fact that much research on interpreting has been published by scholars with years of experience as certified interpreters themselves and investigates the ethical implications of this 'complete member' status. Examples of complete member researchers in IS are Birgit Strolz, Ingrid Kurz and Franz Pöchhacker (as listed in Snell-Hornby, 2006:116-116).

Embodied vs detached writing

As Simpson and Coleman's (2017) definition of ethnography cited earlier states, the goal of the ethnographer is to provide a 'written account'. Most anthropological works reach their audience in written form. For a long time, the anthropologist's goal was to wipe out any trace of his or her personality in published ethnographies. These texts are therefore often characterised by a rather detached form of writing, making extensive use of the passive voice (Bahadir, 2004). Haraway (1988) argues that this gives readers the impression that things happened without human involvement, without the presence of the researcher (she terms this 'the God trick'). Both authors make the point that anthropological writings are not neutral or objective descriptions and analyses of customs and cultural systems. Instead, they are shaped by each author's biography, literary style and rhetoric, as well as by the historical period in which they were written. With this thesis, I aim to present an 'embodied' form of ethnography. Throughout this text, I do not attempt to hide my own voice by refraining

from, for example, the use of the first person. Additionally, I included my name and phrases in the excerpts from interviews. My own clear presence in the empirical chapters, combined with a reflexive presentation of my methodology in this one, helps the reader to situate the knowledge presented in the thesis.

3.4 Fieldwork

After the 19th century characterised by 'armchair ethnology', ethnography emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as an academic discipline with its own methods (e.g., Malinowski, 1922). Fieldwork lies at the heart of anthropological research; it is what makes one a 'real anthropologist' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:1; Salzman, 1986). Several anthropology textbooks, for example Kottak (2010:1), emphasise the duration of fieldwork, usually lasting a year or more. It is often presented as "a rite of passage required for entry to the 'tribe' of anthropologists" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:1). This approach has been challenged in the past decades. In their article *How short can fieldwork be?* Marcus and Okely (2007:357) point out that anthropology has "inherited an idealised, caricatured model [of field practice], rarely lived." Even Malinowski, one of the discipline's founding fathers, did not match the mythical image of the lone anthropologist, fixed in one locality for years on end. In this section, I will, in line with Marcus and Okely (2007), problematise the transformative 'one-year fieldwork' discourse and show how in my case (and many others), defining the beginning and end of fieldwork is far from straightforward.

Preparation

After two short fieldwork trips to Pskov, Russia, during my MSc degree in Russian and East European Studies, I moved to Pskov in the summer of 2015. I subsequently spent two years in Russia: one year in the provincial centre of Pskov, one year in the metropole of St Petersburg. At the time, I clearly framed these years as the 'preparatory phase' of my PhD project. My reasoning was that, before embarking on the PhD journey, I needed to not only write a research proposal, but first and foremost had to find out if I was capable of conducting long-term fieldwork in Russia. I had to improve my (at that time barely existing) knowledge of Russian, get used to keeping a field diary and familiarise myself with everyday life in this foreign country. During my MSc research I had asked Russian foreign language students why they had decided to

study a particular language, unaware that students are often appointed a particular language, instead of choosing one. This points to a certain emphasis on meritocracy from my side, on active choice (Mao and Feldman, 2019). I therefore knew that, in order to conduct interviews, I needed to become 'streetwise', but I did not quite know what this would entail. This uncertainty is nicely expressed by Marcus and Okely (2007:359) in the following citation: "Preparing a research application, the anthropologist is unlikely to reveal that s/he may have to learn to milk cows, climb trees, use a blow pipe, pound millet, ride camels or appear as character witness in the Old Bailey for someone charged with attempted murder." Although I did not milk cows, or ride camels during my fieldwork, I did experience life in a *Khrushchevka* [40] and student residence, watched Soviet films, taught at Pskov State University and crossed the city on a daily basis as a private tutor to supplement my university salary. These experiences constituted 'cultural capital' which contributed to building relationships of trust and intimacy with interpreters later on in my project. My knowledge of everyday life turned out to be particularly relevant given the fact that every interpreter who participated in this study referred to specific cultural 'untranslatables' (although not using this particular term). These could be related to popular culture (references to films and music) and everyday life, such as the language of 'getting things done' through 'connections'. This is also important given the element of translation at the very heart of this study:

> (T)he anthropologist's translation is not merely a matter of matching sentences in the abstract, but of *learning to live another form of life* and to speak another kind of language. Which contexts are relevant in different discursive events is something one learns in the course of living, and even though it is often very difficult to verbalise that knowledge, it is still knowledge about something "in the nature of society," about some aspect of living, that indicates (although it does not "dictate") just how much context is relevant to any given utterance (Asad, 2010:149).

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[40] *Khrushchevka* is a popular term referring to an apartment building erected during Khrushchev's administration. These residential housing blocks were built in the Soviet Union's big cities in the late 1950s and early 1960s in an effort to ease the housing crisis and move people out of communal apartments.

Place

After having embarked on my PhD at University College London, I moved to St Petersburg to conduct fieldwork. In the academic year 2018-2019, when most of the interviews and participant observation took place, I worked as a lecturer of Dutch language and culture at St Petersburg State University, initially mainly for financial reasons. This job turned out to be highly relevant to my PhD research. First of all, the faculty of foreign languages provided me with an excellent starting point to not only meet interpreters, but also to informally chat with them on a daily basis. These short conversations, also termed 'ethnographic interviewing' by Bernard (2006), helped me contextualise my study and gain a deeper understanding of the everyday lives of the many interpreters who combine their freelance work with a job at a university. Secondly, and most importantly, being familiar with the daily routines of a Russian university came in handy in every single interview and allowed for a form of 'deep participation' (Geertz, 1973, as cited in Panourgiá, 2016). The fact that, besides my work in St Petersburg, I had also worked in a provincial centre gave interpreters from smaller cities the feeling that I could more or less picture the context in which they received their secondary education and made the first steps of their interpreting career.

Throughout the main fieldwork period, I was based in St Petersburg. I made several trips of multiple days to Moscow (three trips) and Pskov (two trips). Because of my continuous presence in the country, conducting interviews and participant observation with Russian interpreters living and working in this part of Russia was relatively easy. I met several interpreters from this city more than once. Some interpreters were my colleagues, others became friends. With these interpreters, I discussed my findings as my research progressed. However, I was not able to build these types of relationships with interpreters living in other places. The interpreters and I have busy schedules, which often complicated meeting more than once or twice with those interpreters not living in St Petersburg. The interviews took place in very different settings: some at the home of the participants, some in public spaces or the workplace. Conducting participant observation with the group of interpreters living and working outside of Russia unfortunately proved too much of a challenge. Coordinating my own and the interpreter's planning did not work out as well as I had hoped. As a result, my observations of eleven interpreters at work, on eleven different days, all took place in

St Petersburg. Besides being multilingual, the participants in this study are also very mobile. I therefore had the chance to interview some of the Russian interpreters who live and work abroad while they were on holiday in their home country. Others I managed to interview during my stays in the Netherlands and the UK. After a meeting in St Petersburg with an interpreter based in that city, for example, we met again in London, simply because we happened to be in the same city at the same time.

Language

All interviews were conducted in Russian, with the exception of one.[41] Later, in the analysis phase, working with (almost) exclusively Russian language transcripts turned out to have a practical advantage: it was easier to look for patterns in the data across transcripts in Russian. During participant observation with interpreters at work, I mostly remained silent. Short conversations before work commenced, as well as more reflexive remarks afterwards were usually in Russian. This was a result of the preceding interview: in most cases the participant observation took place after the interview, during which we spoke Russian. Although my current level of Russian is sufficient to conduct ethnographic interviews,[42] I am not a native speaker. This could limit the depth of the interviews and subsequent analysis. I believe that often it was not so much my knowledge of the Russian language and culture that made interpreters talk freely, but rather the *impression* that I was knowledgeable. Especially during the analysis, going back to the recordings and transcripts, I noticed that at several instances the interpreters *assumed* my knowledge of cultural references, without necessarily seeing this confirmed in my speech. Instead of first explaining cultural realities to me, interpreters continued their story without hesitation. I therefore do not see my level of Russian as an obstacle to reaching my research goals. In a way, it also adds to the relaxed atmosphere during the interview. Interpreters know, possibly better than anyone else, the difficulty of mastering another language.

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[41] I left the choice of language during the interview up to the interpreter. There was only one interview where the interpreter insisted on using a language other than Russian.
[42] I completed the course 'Russian (Advanced Superior)' at University College London with distinction in 2018.

3.5 Approaching and recruiting participants

Participants: Different types of interpreting – different types of interpreters?

All interpreters who participated in this study, with one exception, had completed university degrees in languages and/or interpreting and several years of uninterrupted interpreting experience. They can therefore be called professional interpreters, even though professionalism is not always easily defined (see 1.4). Out of the 41 interpreters who participated in this study, 34 were living in Russia at the time of the interview, while 7 worked and lived abroad in Western Europe. The majority had worked both in Russia as well as abroad during their careers. The participants' age ranged from interpreters in their late 20s to those with several decades of experience, including one pensioner. Since the dynamics of personal contact during interpreted encounters are essential to this research project, I focus on what I have termed 'face-to-face' interpreters. It is in this 'contact zone' that 'cultures meet and horizons fuse' (Hastrup, 1997, as cited in Forsey, 2010). This means I include interpreters working in different settings like community interpreting, interpreting for business executives, diplomats or delegates attending international meetings. They mainly work consecutively but can also use 'chuchotage'. I exclude interpreters working in booths at the back of conference halls or other forms of distance interpreting. It is important to point out here that the above-mentioned specialisations are not always clear cut: although not all consecutive interpreters have experience with simultaneous interpretation, most of those practising simultaneous interpretation tend to have consecutive interpreting experience as well. For financial reasons, many interpreters do both oral and written translation work.[43]

Class and power

Despite a commitment to inclusiveness, works by anthropologists studying the everyday often reflect a class bias: rarely are the routine lives of the elite, such as diplomats, subjected to such analysis (Shevchenko, 2009:5). Instead, Kottak (2010:13)

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[43] The Soviet model of the professional translator suggested that a person with this profession translates both written and oral language (Garbovsky, 2015). In both secondary school and higher education, written and oral translation are still usually offered combined (Garbovsky, 2013; Burlyay et al., 2015).

describes the groups that anthropologists traditionally study as "relatively poor and powerless." Sztompka (1999) cites Gans, who defines ethnography as "being with and talking to people, *especially* those whose activities are not newsworthy, asking them thoughtful and empathic questions, and analysing the resulting data" (Sztompka, 1999:12, my italics). Anthropologist Olga Shevchenko (2008:52) makes a similar point with regards to the study of the everyday, which usually focusses on "the powerless."

In this light, interpreters form an interesting group: whereas some of them work in close collaboration with elites, and sometimes become part of the close inner circle of businessmen or heads of state, others work with relatively powerless migrants unable to communicate with the institutions of their host country. This wide range of backgrounds often coincide within one person. The interpreters who participated in this study who interpreted at high-level meetings of heads of state simultaneously work or have worked for 'ordinary' people such as tourists with visa problems, small businesses or migrants. Studying a foreign language is seen as a profession that will always be in demand. Elena,[44] one of the participants of this study, remembered how her mother kept telling her that with her profession, 'she would always have something to eat'. Despite interpreters agreeing that interpreting is better than teaching, or even (the more lucrative) private tutoring, the wide range of career options makes studying a foreign language attractive to people (mostly women)[45] with different financial backgrounds. The interpreters who participated in this study similarly have varied backgrounds: ranging from those with well-off families (e.g., those who had the option to study abroad), to one interpreter who started working when she was 13 to supplement her mother's income. It is important to point to the difference between state universities and specialised interpreting schools in terms of tuition-free places (*biudzhetnye mesta*). Whereas at state universities they generally make up over half of all the places available per year, the SCIT, for example, does not offer any (Vysshaia shkola ekonomiki, & Iandeks, 2019) (see 1.4).

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[44] For the sake of anonymity, all participants' names are pseudonyms and not linked to a particular foreign language or a number in figure 3.
[45] The extent to which the financial prospects of foreign language graduates are just as attractive for women as for men is another question worth researching separately.

On snowball sampling

I recruited participants by means of snowball sampling, also referred to as 'chain sampling'. It is a form of non-probability sampling especially appropriate for labour-intensive, in-depth studies of fewer than 50 cases, in which cases are selected on purpose instead of randomly (Bernhard, 2006). In this technique, the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants (Noy, 2008:330). Gaining access to new interpreters was relatively straightforward: the fact that interpreters are used to working with foreigners possibly contributed to this openness. Since there is no repository of certified Russian interpreters, there is no sample frame for this study, excluding forms of random probability sampling (Elliot et al, 2016). Initially, I got in touch with interpreters on the basis of my contacts obtained through my work at Pskov State University, the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg (NIP), the Dutch Consulate-General in St Petersburg and St Petersburg State University. Some of them I had known for years. The group of interpreters I met this way, with either Dutch or English as their second language, formed a so called 'convenience sample of initial subjects' (Heckathorn and Cameron, 2017:104). In figure 3, a diagram commonly referred to as a 'sampling tree' or 'stemma', these participants are indicated as black rectangles with a thick outline. Their colour indicates location (see legend), whereas their numbers indicate their place in the overall sequence of interviews. The numbers 19, 20 and 28 appear more than once. The reason for this is that the 19th, 20th and 28th interview were conducted with more than 1 participant. The two participants in the 19th interview, for example, are numbered 19 (1) and 19 (2) in the diagram. Interpreters at these four institutions helped me to reach out to other interpreters (indicated by arrows in figure 3).

Snowball sampling is often disdainfully presented as an 'informal' procedure. Contrasting it with statistically valid forms, it is framed as a form of 'non-statistically valid convenience sampling' (Heckathorn and Cameron, 2017:102). The technique indeed necessarily contains a certain bias, which ought to be documented. As the diagram illustrates, my 'snowballs' all started around me (black circle in the middle of figure 3), resulting in an overrepresentation of St Petersburg-based interpreters (17, as opposed to 9 from Moscow, 8 from Pskov and 7 from Western Europe). The 'rolling' of the snowball is also a factor. First because people who are well known have a better

chance of being named in a snowball procedure than are people who are less well known (Bernhard, 2006). The more 'visible' interpreters who, for example, frequent informal interpreter gatherings or are active on (social) media had a higher chance of being included in this study. The quality of the referring process is also naturally related to the quality of the interaction: "if the informant leaves the interview meeting feeling discontented, or if the researcher did not win the informant's trust and sympathy, the chances the latter will supply the former referrals decrease (and vice versa)" (Noy, 2008:334).

However, its strength also lies precisely in this 'informal' character. According to Noy (2008:332), snowball sampling is not just an instrument that enables access to knowledge, but entails knowledge in and of itself. It is essentially social because it both uses and activates existing social networks.[46] However, since mapping social networks and communities is not the main goal of this study, analysing which interpreters referred to others and which interpreters did not is beyond the scope of this research. For this reason, the handful of interpreters who initially indicated (either to me or to another interpreter) that they were interested in participating in this study but with whom I did not manage to meet are not represented in the diagram. Furthermore, first interviewing interpreters whom I had known for years gave me a chance to familiarise myself with the key themes and grow into my role as a researcher. This later allowed me to 'dig' quite 'deep' even during conversations with interpreters I had not met before.

I tried to mitigate the technique's inevitable sampling bias through the diverse starting points of sampling. The four institutions mentioned above formed the start of four different 'snowballs', whose trajectories brought me in touch with quite different groups of interpreters. Despite slight overlap between the interpreters in St Petersburg, Moscow and Western Europe, my contacts in Pskov, for example, formed an entirely

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[46] Interpreters who had already participated recruited new informants for me through posts or messages in closed groups on WhatsApp or social networks. I found out about this unexpectedly. At the end of an interview, a participant from St Petersburg recommended me "to get in touch with a girl in Moscow conducting a very similar type of research", only to realise later that this 'girl' was in fact me.

separate 'snowball' (see figure 3). This reflects my aim to gain diverse insights, not requiring a sample to be representative as is the case in quantitative approaches.
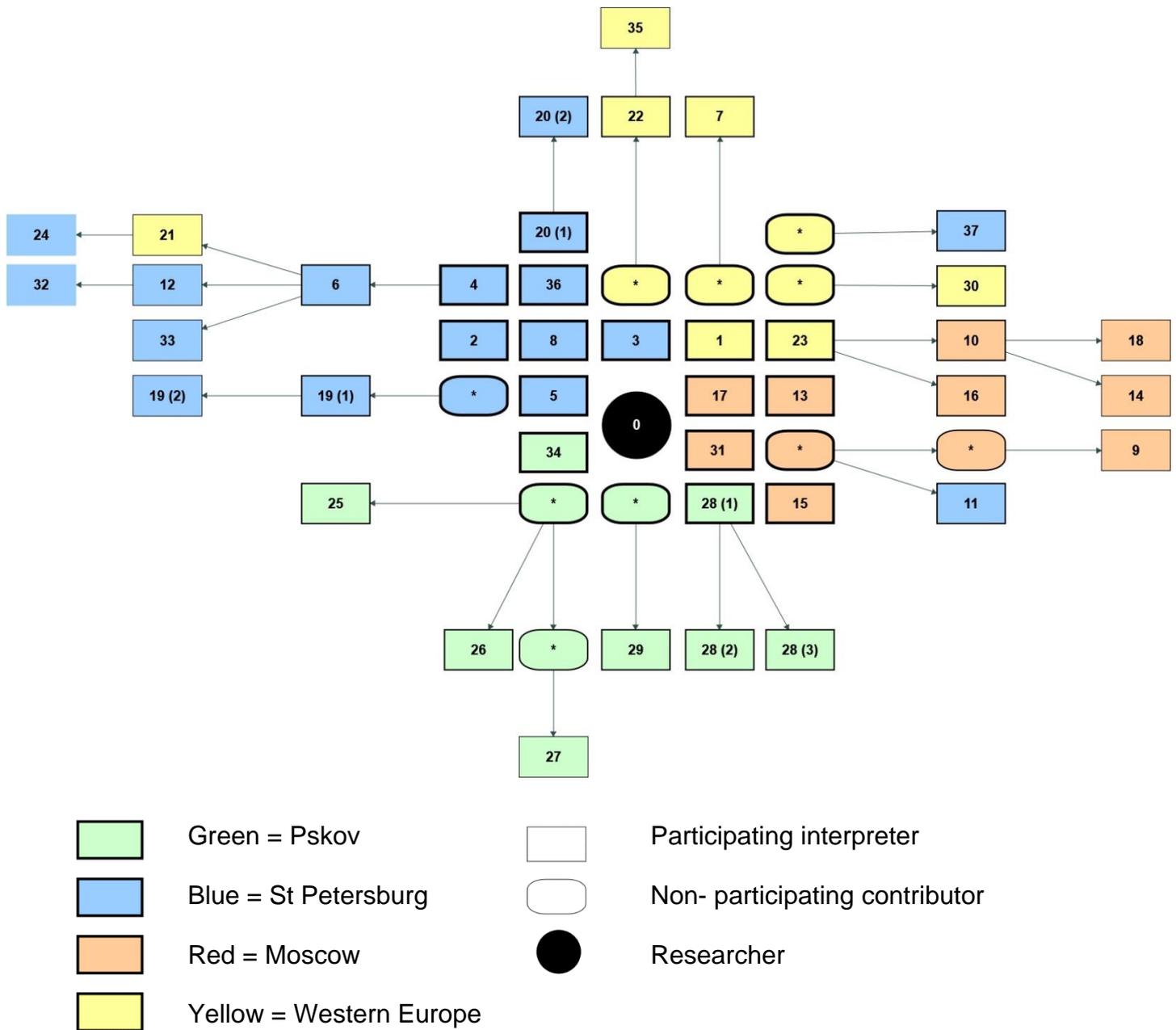

Figure 3: Snowball sampling diagram

The 'point of (theoretical) saturation'

The 'point of (theoretical) saturation' in ethnographic fieldwork is a stage in the research at which the researcher stops discovering new categories or relations among categories. This is when the researcher traditionally starts rounding off the fieldwork

and moves to analysis. Usually, some additional time is spent in the field in order to confirm this presumed saturation. Similar to the one-year fieldwork line discussed earlier, also the point of saturation has an almost magical aura of anthropologic myth around it. Hard to pinpoint, it was introduced to me during my BA in a way falling in love is often described: 'you don't know it until you feel it'. After around twenty in-depth interviews, I started to notice that new interviews hardly added to the current research findings. That is to say that, although I think follow-up interviews could have deepened the knowledge presented here, simply including more participants would result in rather repetitive results revolving around the same themes. Nevertheless, I would like to point out here that this is highly speculative and far from certain. I cannot exclude the possibility that I suffered from 'fieldwork fatigue', as described by Everhart (1977), in Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:91):

> (S)aturation, fieldwork fatigue, and just plain fitting in too well culminated, toward the end of the second year, in a diminishing of my critical perspective. I began to notice that events were escaping me, the significance of which I did not realise until later. For example, previously I had recorded in minute detail the discussions teachers had on categorizing students and those conversations students had on labelling other students. While these discussions continued and were especially rich because of the factors that caused these perspectives to shift, I found myself, toward the end of the study, tuning out of such discussions because I felt I had heard them all before when, actually, many dealt with dimensions I had never considered.

Finally, Bernhard (2006:193) describes 'saturation of a sampling frame' as the point at which "no new names are offered." Since I did not aim for an exhaustive sampling frame, I did not reach this point and do not consider this problematic. Although the population of interpreters in a relatively small one, the 41 people who participated in this study are just a fraction of all active interpreters.

3.6 Methods: Interviews and participant observation

Foreshadowed problems: The pilot study (spring 2018)

I carried out a pilot study in St Petersburg from 4th April to 23rd May 2018. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five female Russian interpreters. This included both Russian interpreters who migrated to Western Europe (1) as well as those who stayed in Western Russia (4). They all work with the Russian language. Their second or even third language can be any Western European language. I had met all of these

interpreters earlier. The interviews took place at the home of the participants (2) and in public spaces (3), lasted approximately one hour each and were recorded upon consent of the participant. Participant observation was not part of the pilot study.

The interviews were open ended and covered a range of initial themes, reflecting what Malinowski refers to as the 'foreshadowed problem' of a study (in Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I mainly aimed to gather interpreters' thoughts on their education and career so far, on how they view their role as an interpreter and on collecting examples of how concepts such as loyalty and neutrality play out in practice. The guide I used for these interviews can be found in Appendix (2). This guide included a written prompt, aimed as a conversation starter. The themes discussed during the interviews were partially based on my literature review and partly on the input of the interpreters themselves, in line with Miles and Huberman's strategy (1994, as cited in Bernard, 2006). The set-up of the interviews was semi-structured, almost unstructured, on purpose. This way I hoped to generate themes that would give direction to the main phase of ethnographic fieldwork to be conducted afterwards.

Using colour coding by highlighting the transcripts, I conducted thematic analysis on the first 5 interview transcripts. The key theme that emerged was trust. The pilot study showed that other themes, which I had not come across in the literature, were relevant to the interpreters and their negotiation of trust. Examples are the role of gender, representation beyond the nation, 'smoothening and softening', loyalty, professionalism and the social status of the interpreter in present-day Russia. These are all topics I picked up in the next stage, as shown in the empirical chapters of this thesis. In the following sections, I will move on from the pilot study and describe the collection and analysis on the main body of data.

The main interview phase (2018-2019)

In total, I conducted 37 semi-structured in-depth interviews with 41 Russian interpreters. The interviews lasted from a little less than an hour to three hours, with an average of approximately one and a half hours each. This time is not more than a rough indication: many conversations started before the 'official' interview started (me turning on the recorder) and continued while walking or riding home, after we had 'officially' finished (me switching off the recorder). I conducted interviews with an

'ethnographic imaginary', asking questions beyond the immediate concerns of the research question (Forsey, 2010). I did not want to have a list of questions and read from paper, since this would limit the space for the interpreters' own input and artificially fix the flow of the conversation. I therefore prepared a list of themes I planned to cover. The main aim of these themes was to help myself visualise the topics that would be covered, not to give a blueprint for the flow of the conversation. Since I was interviewing in Russian, it also allowed me to practise specific professional vocabulary. However, during my participation in the anthropology cluster (*antropologicheskii kruzhok*) of the St Petersburg Higher School of Economics, fellow anthropologists told me that not having such a list could result in doubts regarding my competence as a researcher. Initially, during the pilot study and the first interviews that followed, I therefore carried a full list of questions with me (Appendix 2). However, as I gathered experience, I gained a clearer picture of the themes relevant for interpreters 'on the ground' and became more confident in my role. After the pilot study, I no longer referred to the list of questions or the written prompt but instead carried a list of themes with me in my notebook. This list continued the following themes:

- Personal introduction: education and career
- Success and failure
- Misunderstanding and explanation
- Omission and addition
- The role of the interpreter: in the past, now and future
- Non-verbal communication and intonation
- The interpreter as a representative
- Travel and cultural knowledge
- Relationship with clients
- Gender roles
- Stress

Additionally, at the start of the interview, I asked the participant to talk about him or herself for a couple of minutes, focussing on education and professional career. This helped to put the interviewee at her ease and suggested clues for me to follow up later. It also gave me some sense of what the interviewee was like and how exactly to frame

the questions during the rest of the interview. The order of the themes differed for each participant, depending on the flow of the conversation.

As mentioned in the literature review, trust is not a natural given but a willed action; it can rise and drop during the course of a conversation. While talking to interpreters, I noticed this dynamic as well, primarily linked to my level of 'foreignness'. Whenever I used an uncommon Russian idiom or slang correctly, the interpreters were often pleasantly surprised, creating an informal and relaxed atmosphere. However, when I accidentally referred to the *Alexander theatre* instead of the *Alexandrinsky theatre*, the suddenly widening gap between me and the interpreter was almost tangible. In the next chapter (section 4.2), I will refer to these moments of abrupt rise or fall of trust as 'Geertzian moments' (inspired by Geertz, 1973)

During the pilot study, I had noticed that the participants spoke about their professional experience in the form of short stories. Often this narrative form was used to make meaning of the events in the interpreters' lives; this is how their experience seemed to be stored in their memory. Interpreters repeatedly introduced their experiences to me as 'good stories', and urged me to talk to some of their colleagues who had 'even better stories'. In order to make use of this eagerness to share experiences, I often asked interpreters to describe an interpreted encounter that, for either positive or negative reasons, stuck with them. As a result, much of my qualitative data take a narrative form (e.g., as an account from the narrator's perspective of how events and actions unfolded over time) (Rob and Greenhalgh et al., 2006). Subsequently, I encouraged them to reflect on these events and their positionality. This narrative form also has its limitations: interpreters talking about their experiences in the form of 'stories' focus on the extremes, the special cases and rarely on the mundane. Although I do not think we should underestimate the explanatory power of such exceptional stories, I tried to mitigate this pitfall by conducting complementary participant observation, which I will discuss below.

Participant observation
Next to the semi-structured interviewing mentioned above, I conducted participant observation. The reason for this is that the way in which people represent themselves or their world views and what they do in the face of everyday contingencies are not

always in harmony (Bourdieu, 1977, as cited in James et al., 1997:4). It is therefore interesting to see how the actual performance of the interpreter matches up with his or her own narrative. Besides, participant observation offers me a chance to see how other people react to the interpreter, to study the interpreted encounter as a social act (Wadensjö, 1998).

According to Hosking (2014:25), *some* monitoring of a trust relationship is essential in order to study trust. This is a delicate task, for "obtrusive monitoring itself undermines trust." The same held true for this project. In order to join an interpreter at work, I relied on an invitation. I contacted the interpreters whom I had interviewed, some by email, some when we happened to meet in person, and asked them if I could join them at work. Although most interpreters agreed to contact me 'as soon as a suitable opportunity popped up', I was also warned that these opportunities were scarce. Whereas I can relatively anonymously observe interpreters at work during lectures and speeches, my attendance at smaller meetings between diplomats or businessmen is immediately noticed. This also made me realise that I was unlikely to be invited to an interpreted encounter where interpreters fundamentally lack trust. Only in cases where there is a high level of trust between the client and the interpreter, the interpreter can convince the client to agree to the presence of a researcher. Mistrust, an essential element of my research, immediately results in a rejection of my presence.

Despite the above, I once joined such an encounter characterised by mutual mistrust. When I coincidentally found out about a meeting during which Anna (one of the interpreters whom I had spoken to earlier) would interpret, I immediately called her. By doing this, I 'invited myself' to a meeting at the migration office the next morning at 09:00. When we arrived, Anna was asked who this 'second interpreter' was. She justified my presence by stating that I was there 'for educational purposes', keeping both of us out of trouble. Although the notes I took during the encounter turned out to be a valuable resource, and everything ended well, I realised I had put Anna in a difficult position that could harm her professional reputation. After this incident, I decided that this was not how I wanted to conduct fieldwork. As a result, the participant observation made up a significantly smaller part of my study, compared to the interviews. In this sense, my research deviates from the definition of ethnography mentioned earlier, as "the recording and analysis of a culture or society, *usually based*

on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution" (Simpson and Coleman, 2017, as cited in Howell, 2018, my italics). Despite the status of participant observation as a 'holy grail in anthropology' and *the* ethnographic method, it took on a more complementary character in my study. This corresponds to Forsey's (2010:570) article, in which he argues that participant observation should not define ethnography as such and instead be "pushed back into the ethnographic toolbox." Despite their limited number, the cases of participant observation were valuable in the sense that my findings did not contradict the interviews but instead confirmed them. What is, however, a valid point of critique is that I did not join an interpreter to work during more than one occasion. This means that the interpreter did not have that much time to get used to my presence. What did help in this regard was the fact that the participant observation in most cases took place after the interview, so the interpreter and I had already met before.

3.7 Analysis

Recording and transcription

Upon permission of the participant, I recorded all interviews using my Olympus VP-10 digital recorder.[47] Just like in the pilot study, I stored the recording on the UCL server immediately after the interview and deleted the original. Data were stored and processed in a confidential way, only accessible with a password. During the interviews themselves I made written notes. These helped me to later add depth to the transcripts. All interviews, with the exception of the interview of which I lost the recording and two interviews that I transcribed only partially due to their length, were fully transcribed. The transcription stage proved to be one of the most challenging periods of the entire PhD project.[48] After having received permission from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, I therefore asked for the help of two native Russian transcription assistants. To ensure confidentiality, they signed a document, which can be found in

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[47] I refrained from using the WavePad App of my iPad after I had lost one interview recording due to complications with this application. The recorder proved to be more trustworthy. Nevertheless, I always took my tablet with me as a back-up.
[48] Having little experience with working on a Cyrillic keyboard before, I spent several weeks on the first couple of interviews. Despite the fact that my typing speed increased over time, further facilitated by a foot pedal, it still took up much more time than usual. This dawned on me when I transcribed the only non-Russian interview in half the time I needed for a Russian one.

Appendix (3). The fact that my research did not demand extensively annotated transcripts, common in, for example, linguistics, made it easier to partly outsource this task. In the end, I transcribed a little over half of the transcripts myself; the assistants did the other half.

Grounded theorizing

The approach to thematic analyses I will outline below is a form of grounded theorizing. It is an activity, a way of working with data in order to generate and develop ideas. Although often referred to as simply 'grounded theory', strictly speaking this term refers not to the activity itself, but to its product. Grounded theorizing is a set of techniques for:

1. Identifying categories and concepts that emerge from text, and
2. Linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories.

It is widely used to analyse ethnographic interview data (Bernard, 2006:492). The process is iterative; through various circles of reading, re-reading and interpreting the analyst becomes more and more 'grounded' in the data. During the process, the researcher develops an understanding of how the social practices under investigation really work. The approach was originally developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967). Instead of applying a pre-existing theory to a certain dataset (quantitative or qualitative), the authors advocated an inductive approach allowing for an appreciation of the complexity of social life (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:166). Grounded theory as a methodology has been widely debated. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) illustrate, even the two core theorists Glaser and Strauss did not entirely agree on the form and aims of this approach. Whereas Glaser wanted to use the strategy to produce generic concepts that were independent of the contexts of their discovery, or of the agents who produced them (the researchers), Strauss typically stressed that theory is always grounded in the work of the analysts themselves and does not simply reside 'in the data' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:167). Rather than a 'single orthodoxy' that can be applied mechanically, I therefore use grounded theorizing as a flexible heuristic.

Analysis

After transcription of the recorded interviews, I carried out analysis along the lines of Muller's (1999) five overlapping stages of narrative analysis:

- Entering the text (reading and preliminary coding to gain familiarity)
- Interpreting (finding connections in the data through successive readings and reflection)
- Verifying (searching the text and other sources for alternative explanations and confirmatory and disconfirming data)
- Representing (writing up an account of what has been learned)
- Illustrating (selecting representative quotes)

As mentioned in 3.6, the pilot study provided me with an initial set of themes. The themes I focussed on in writing up the results of my pilot study – smoothing and softening – indicate my preference for 'inductive' or 'open' coding. I had no codes ready before starting the analysis. Instead, I used a technique called in vivo coding, which refers to a process in which the researcher uses actual phrases of their text—the words of real people—to name themes. It is important to point out here that data collection and analysis were not strictly separated in this study but overlapped instead. The above-mentioned circles of reading, re-reading and interpreting started as I was still in the process of gathering data. In-depth analysis of the 5 transcripts of the pilot study overlapped with the data collection of the main body of data, and the first transcriptions and reading of the data gathered in the first months overlapped with data collection as well. Bernard (2006:16) refers to the overlap between coding and analysis by suggesting that "by the time you identify the themes and refine them to the point where they can be applied to an entire corpus of texts, a lot of interpretive analysis has already been done." In this sense "coding is analysis" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:56, as cited in Bernard, 2006:495). As I proceeded, my list of themes gradually grew. This shows how grounded theory, although inductive in principle, has deductive elements as well. Once I had a general idea of some of the big themes, I remained 'in discovery mode' as new themes emerged from the texts (Bernard, 2006:494).

During the pilot study, I used colour coding, highlighting the transcripts. However, as the volume of gathered data increased, I decided to use software referred to as

CAQDAS (Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) to make the process more manageable. I used NVivo software for both the transcription and the coding process in a rather restricted way: marking segments of data with codes, and then using the capacity of the software to rapidly search the data sets for all segments tagged with the same code. In this way, instances in the data could be collated and aggregated under thematic, analytic headings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:154). I did not make use of the other extensive features that NVivo offers. This was partly because I used an analytic approach that takes the story as a whole, rather than segments of text, as its main unit of analysis. I wanted to avoid an overemphasis on decontextualised instances. Besides, most of the program's features did not work with Cyrillic writing of my interview transcripts (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). Unfortunately, I only realised this at a relatively advanced stage of my research, so switching to another type of software was not worth the effort.

3.8 Ethics[49]

Consent

I gave all participants a written version of the participant information sheet at the start of the interview (Appendix 1). Since it has been argued that even signed consent is not always fully 'informed', I tried to make the participant information sheet as straightforward and concise as possible and sent it to the participants by email before our first meeting (Mason, 2002). In addition to the fact that the participants information sheet noted that I studied at a university in the UK, I always told the interpreters that I was originally from the Netherlands. Instead of a written consent form, opt-in consent was recorded in oral form, roughly using the following procedure:

> Today is (date) and I am having a conversation with (name). From the information sheet and our conversation up to this point, do you: Understand that your data will be stored and processed anonymously? Understand that you can withdraw your data for up to 4 weeks after today? Understand that this recording will be destroyed after the end of the study, and that the anonymised transcript will be securely stored? Do you agree to take part in this study?

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[49] This study received ethical approval from the University College London Research Ethics Committee in February 2018. Local ethics approval was provided by Dr Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, St Petersburg Higher School of Economics in May of that same year.

Initially, I intended to collect written consent using a consent form. However, during my participation in the anthropology cluster of the St Petersburg Higher School of Economics, fellow anthropologists warned me that too much paperwork could 'scare people off' or even 'spoil the field'. In consultation with my supervisor, opt-in consent was recorded in oral form.

Sensitivity

Based on previous research with participants with similar occupations from this region, I did not expect my questions to touch on overly sensitive topics (Helmer, 2017). This did not mean that topics could not be classified as 'personal' or 'sensitive' to a lesser extent. Lee and Renzetti (1990) define sensitive topics as those that have potential negative consequences for the participants, for example in the form of unpleasant feelings. I based my decision to not organise focus groups on Lee and Renzetti's (1990) typology of sensitive topics:

- Personal experiences, feelings, and attitudes
- Socially controversial attitudes or behaviours
- Issues related to power and privilege
- Sacred or religious beliefs

According to Kruger et al. (2019), exploring these topics works better using individual interviews. Nevertheless, three interviews were conducted in small groups of two, two and three interpreters. This was not initiated by me but suggested by the interpreters themselves. Even though these small groups consisted of close friends, certain topics were avoided. In two cases, a female and a male participant had a different take on the role of gender in their profession. Avoiding a heated discussion, this topic was quickly dropped by those involved. One can speculate that in an individual interview, I might have had the chance to have a 'deeper' conversation. Another reason for using individual interviews instead of focus groups was the size of the interpreting community. Particularly in the case of rare languages, groups of interpreters are small. Focus groups would therefore compromise anonymity.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of key importance when interviewing interpreters. When in the early 1950s André Kaminker (chief interpreter of the Council of Europe and the United Nations, founding father of the AIIC) was asked to draft the first code of ethics for conference interpreters he answered: "It is very simple. Three articles suffice. Article 1: Members are bound by the utmost secrecy. Article 2: Members are bound by the utmost secrecy. Article 3: Members are bound by the utmost secrecy" (Thiery, 2007). Interpreters are professionally obliged to keep the content of interpreted encounters secret. In Russia, this could mean signing an NDS (Non-Disclosure Agreement). Another example comes from Dutch courts, where interpreters have to swear the following oath before they start:

> "I hereby swear/promise that I will perform my work as a sworn interpreter honestly, accurately and impartially and that, while carrying out these activities, I will act in the way expected of a sworn interpreter. I swear/promise that I will observe secrecy with regard to confidential information that I encounter through my work." (Wet beëdigde tolken en vertalers, Article 13) (my translation)

In order to respect the professional secrecy of interpreters during my research, I explained clearly that I was not interested in names or dates, but primarily in their professional experiences and strategies. Especially for interpreters who have had previous (bad) media experience, and whose personal trust history (see 4.2) therefore made them unlikely to trust a journalist, it proved key to emphasise that I am an anthropologist. I also made clear that all participants would be anonymised in any publication or presentation following from this research. What further complicates issues of confidentiality is the relatively small size of the total population of Russian interpreters dealing with a rare language such as, for example, Dutch. This means that even after all participants have been given pseudonyms, it might be possible to identify them by other means. In order to mitigate this risk, I left out most personal information regarding the speaker in the empirical chapters, for example not including their working languages. Finally, the ambiguous attitude towards interpreting *po-chelovecheski* (described in 5.2) means that although some interpreters speak about their practices with pride, others feel uncomfortable sharing stories of what they see as practices conflicting with the professional ideal. Some interpreters might not share these stories at all, or at least not with a foreign researcher whom they have known for a relatively

short time. While conducting the interviews, I did notice for example that I had more open conversations with those interpreters whom I had known for a longer period.

'Spy fever'

One of the shared issues complicating the work of both anthropologists and interpreters is spy fever. Especially in times of political tensions, researchers are frequently approached as political representatives and held accountable for the acts of their government. Jeremy Morris (2016:114) introduces the concept of 'political testing' of the researcher, a way in which Russian informants seek to uncover "to what extent the foreign researcher agrees with the big, hypocritical truth of the West." This 'testing' is deemed necessary because the foreign researcher is perceived as 'tricky', as a potential spy. The standard methods of espionage overlap with some of the key characteristics of anthropological fieldwork, such as participant observation, extended co-residence, acquisition of the local language and 'culture', ideally by a lone 'fieldworker' (Marcus and Okely, 2007:359). The first statement on ethics by the American Anthropological Association was produced in 1967 was drafted for precisely this reason – to reject the use of the word 'anthropology' as a disguise for spying (Fluehr-Lobban, 1998:175, as cited in Bernard, 2006:74). The fact that I was a foreign researcher studying Russian interpreters in times of political tensions sometimes caused suspicion. What added to this was the topic of my research. One might easily think that I was a researcher looking for 'interpreter errors', for this type of source-text/target-text comparison has dominated interpreting research for decades (Olohan, 2017). During the pilot interview, one of the participants indeed asked me if I was a spy, pointing to the logo of University College London on the participant information sheet.[50] The pilot study helped me realise that the only way to find out how to introduce my research carefully and make sure the participants felt comfortable talking to me was through extensive practice (Bernard, 2006).

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[50] The first solution I came up with was to arrange co-supervision with a Russian University, The Higher School of Economics in St Petersburg. Unfortunately, University College London and the Higher School of Economics in St Petersburg do not have a formal cooperation agreement, so this solution was not feasible.

An open approach

As pointed out in Marcus and Okely's (2006) paper, today's interconnected world and cheap travel made it possible for anthropologists to meet with colleagues around the world. Anthropologists travelling abroad share their 'fields' with local/native anthropologists, as well as with researchers from other disciplines operating in the same region, positivists and interpretivists alike. One of the themes that came up in a discussion with several local anthropologists revolved around the idea of your writings being read by the research's participants. Especially in cases of sensitive topics, scholars consider publishing research in a way that is inaccessible to your participants, for example by publishing in academic journals that require subscriptions, as well as publishing in a language your participants do not understand. I quickly realised that this second option was not only impossible in my case (the participants of my study speak a much wider range of languages than I ever will and are perfectly capable of reading and understanding academic texts) but also undesirable. I did not want to "go to the world for my material, and then turn my back on it in working this material into the finely crafted, peer-reviewed artifacts that we recognise as books and articles" (paraphrased from Ingold, 2014).

The confrontation of research participants with my findings is not easy for a couple of reasons. First of all, the participants are professionals in a field that is relatively new to me and frequently gave me advice on how and what to write. They are eager to talk because they feel their profession is misunderstood; some have even expressed hope that my study will contribute to putting this right. Fulfilling these expectations does not always match my anthropological approach, in which I voice their concerns, but refrain from an overly activist stance myself. The interpreters are looking forward to reading my work, which could result in disappointing people who helped me a lot. This is further complicated by the fact that my encouraging nodding and the 'mm-mm' sounds I make when interpreters share their experiences are often interpreted as if I agree with the speaker, even though this is not necessarily the case. Nevertheless, I think that sharing my writings with those who contributed so much to their realization is an integral part of anthropology in today's interconnected world. As participants read what anthropologists produce, they add new dimensions of responsibility and authority (Agar, 2008).

A first modest step took the form of publishing about my research in open access publications. My first paper, published in 2017, is in an open access journal with an executive summary in Russian. This was a conscious choice. My aim is to do the same with the result of this study. So far, this research has resulted in two publications, both freely accessible online:

- Helmer, E. (2019a). *Interpreting po-chelovecheski (Russia)*. Global Encyclopeadia of Informality. Retrieved from http://www.in-formality.com/wiki/Interpreting_po-chelovecheski_(Russia)
- Helmer, E. (2019b). Smoothening and softening: The interpreter as an everyday diplomat. *CGES Working Papers*, *5*, 1–21.

While working on my Encyclopaedia entry, I sent a draft version to three interpreters whom I know well and who had all participated in my study. From one of them I received a positive written response.[51] Finally, on 24th June 2020, I presented my research in an online seminar organised by the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg. Since the seminar was in Dutch, it was not accessible to all interpreters who had participated in my research. I personally invited all interpreters who understand Dutch to the seminar and encouraged them to share their impressions afterwards. Some indeed wrote me an email later, mainly commenting that they considered my talk interesting and even gained some new insights. This was encouraging, since I had not expected my lecture to contain much new information for interpreters themselves.

3.9 Conclusion

Methodology

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodology and methods of this qualitative study. My methodology is ethnography, the only available approach that allows for an in-depth insight into interpreters' motivations and experiences. Grounded in an

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[51] The response: "Thank you very much for sending me the text, I really appreciate it! It seemed to me that it is a very complete and coherent reflection, and I really liked your way of studying interpreting from the point of view of *chelovechnost*, I never thought about it that way. And I agree with all the statements about the Russian market, that's really how it is." (personal correspondence, translated from Russian)

interpretivist epistemology, I seek to uncover the meanings that interpreters give to their actions, to gather a rich understanding of the interpreters' own representations of reality. I am not looking for *the* answer to my research questions but hope to gain many possible answers, which will form insights into the way trust is negotiated on an everyday basis. I have touched upon the common goal of the anthropologist and the interpreter: to discover meaning in different forms of 'cultural texts'. In contrast to the tendency to downplay the interpreter's 'fieldwork' and the anthropologist's 'translation' (see section 1.3), my interdisciplinary focus on trust-building shows how both fields have a range of practices in common, and how these distinct bodies of literature can be combined to gain an understanding of interpreting as a process in all its complexity. In order to situate the 'many possible answers' presented in this thesis, I have attempted to be reflexive about my approach. I have paid attention to positionality: both to how my positionality makes my research possible, as well as how it might limit my findings. I highlighted three identity markers: foreignness, gender and shared professional experience and illustrated how each of them can make me an insider to some, but an outsider to others. This way, I aim to present an 'embodied' form of ethnography.

Methods

The key methods I chose to gain answers to my research questions are interviews and participant observation. In this chapter, I have provided background information on who the participants of my study are and how I went about approaching and recruiting them, critically evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of snowball sampling. Furthermore, I explained how I went about my fieldwork, problematising the artificial 'start' and 'end' of such a process. In this chapter, I paid attention to trust-building during the interview process and participant observation, noting parallels between the way both the interpreter and the anthropological researcher need trust. I similarly addressed the limitations of this study. While conducting participant observation, I soon realised that I was unlikely to be invited to an interpreted encounter where interpreters fundamentally lack trust. Only in cases where there is a high level of trust between the client and the interpreter can the interpreter convince the client to agree to the presence of a researcher. As a result, participant observation was limited to just eleven occasions. Despite their limited number, the cases of participant observation were

valuable and confirmed the findings from the interviews. Finally, this chapter has described the analytical phase of my research project. The analysis of the data gathered during the pilot study formed the first rough framework of themes that I later used as the basis for the coding of the main body of data in NVivo.

A surplus of ideas

The overlapping 'world of data' and 'world of theory' contributed to my commitment to publish the results of my research in open-access journals. However, not all of my observations and fieldnotes found their way to these publications. Anthropology produces a large surplus of ideas to be mined decades later (Strathern, 2004, as cited in Marcus and Okely, 2007:365). Distinguishing an encounter that is ethnographic from one that is not is difficult, and, according to Ingold (2004), even impossible. During the course of my fieldwork I was constantly observing, and kept fieldnotes even when I was not among interpreters but, for example, on my way to work. A selection of these writings (which I have started to call 'collateral observations') have been published on the website of Dutch literary journal *Tirade*[52] and currently form the basis for a book to be published in the spring of 2021 with the Dutch publishing house Prometheus.

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[52] The literary journal *Tirade* is published by the Dutch publishing house Van Oorschot. My blogs have been published on the blog of this journal.

Chapter 4. Framework of analysis: Trust, defensive arrangements and the interpreter

4.1 Introduction

Despite the fact that trust repeatedly surfaces as key to both users and providers of interpreting services, the literature review (chapter 2) demonstrated that IS literature rarely discusses trust as a concept in detail. This is particularly remarkable since the past decades have witnessed an increased interest in trust research, generating a wide range of insights highly applicable to interpreting. Viewing the interpreted encounter as a 'situated practice' and the interpreter as a co-constructor of dialogue has implications for the way trust is conceptualised (Wadensjö, 1998). It means that the interpreter is, just like other participants, influenced by social roles and conventions that extend beyond their professional identities (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf, 2014; Wadensjö, 1998). A similar tendency can be found in trust research, where 'positional trust' related to the professional role of interpreter is just one form of trust among many (see 2.4 and 2.5). Instead of treating their professional title as the only relevant one, this chapter draws attention to interpreters' multi-dimensional identities that can potentially form the basis for trust. Drawing on the findings of trust literature, I develop an analytical framework tailored to the analysis of trust in interpreted encounters.

This chapter further unpacks the concept of trust as introduced in the literature review (chapter 2). The first section is devoted to different definitions of trust, linked to trust scholars' range of methodological approaches. What these approaches have in common is the idea that both trust and mistrust are particularly relevant in conditions of uncertainty with respect to unknown or unknowable actions of others. Figure 4 provides a summary of different definitions of trust, indicating when it is most relevant to speak about trust. In order to draw attention to the complexities of trust in practice, I introduce three concepts: a 'personal trust history', 'Geertzian moments' and 'defensive arrangements'. All three concepts are based on existing trust theory, although only the third one has been recognised and named as such. Figure 5 presents the basic trust relationship between trustor and trustee as described in trust theory, so

without the involvement of the interpreter. After a brief exploration of analytical categories used to study interpersonal trust, I will subsequently elaborate on figure 5 to incorporate the interpreter. Step by step, I create a model that helps to understand the interpreter's role as a negotiator of trust. The chapter closes with a look at the Russian interpreter in particular. Using the concepts introduced earlier, I sketch the unique regional dynamics of his or her role.

4.2 What is trust?

Defining trust

One of the first scholars to critically examine the notion of trust was the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel (1858 – 1918). His theory of trust, spelled out over just ten pages across different publications, provides a theoretical framework for analysing personal as well as generalised (or impersonal) trust. Möllering's 2001 article titled 'The nature of trust: From Georg Simmel to a theory of expectation, interpretation and suspension', puts together a Simmelian notion of trust and traces its influence on later trust research. The last decennia of the previous century witnessed a growing interest in the study of trust between people and between people and organisations. Most of the key monographs on trust appeared in this period, such as Luhmann's *Trust and power* (1979), Lewis and Weigert's *Trust as a social reality* (1985), Gambetta's *Trust: making and breaking cooperative relations* (1990a) and *Trust: A sociological theory* by Sztompka (1999).[53]

More recently, several authors have published responses to these works, drawing on ethnographic studies. These recent publications have focussed on dis- or mistrust instead. Before discussing them in more detail, I would first like to devote a couple of lines to the two concepts – mistrust and distrust – and their definitions. On the one hand, Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms (1984:263) states that the two terms are used interchangeably in quotidian usage. The online dictionary 'Grammarist' agrees that distrust and mistrust are roughly the same. Both refer to (1) lack of trust, and (2) to

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[53] I am not including work on trust in objects or technologies here, although the personal relations people develop with technology is an interesting case. Recent studies in the field of Science and Technology studies draws on theories of interpersonal trust to describe cases in which people feel 'betrayed' by their broken phone, as if a close friend let them down (e.g. Nickel et al., 2010).

regard without trust. Muhlfried (2018) also believes that in the logic of practices, they are interwoven into one fabric. Although Carey (2017) first notes that the two concepts are very close in meaning, he subsequently points out a slight difference between them. Distrust is more likely to be based on a specific past experience (or reliable information), whereas mistrust describes a general sense of the unreliability of a person or thing, often a "general sense of unease toward someone or something" (Grammarist site). In my own analysis, I will differentiate mistrust and distrust according to these definitions above. However, not all cited authors make the same distinctions. Hosking (2014), for example, describes late Soviet Russia as a society characterised by 'generalised social distrust', which according to the distinction above might as well be characterised as 'mistrust'.

Many of the recent publications on trust have been written by Scandinavian scholars. The book *Anthropology and philosophy: dialogues on trust and hope* by Liisberg et al. (2015) challenges the proposition originally made by the Danish philosopher Knud E. Løgstrup in his book *The Ethical Demand* (Løgstrup, 1956) that humans are born with a natural disposition to trust others that only falters in extreme circumstances.[54] In contrast, the anthropological research in this volume views trust as a social achievement. Meinert (2015:119), for example, describes trust as "a tricky social achievement that people may encourage themselves and each other to work toward, even while reminding themselves that there is great instability and unpredictability in who and what can actually be trusted, and under which circumstances." Two years later, in 2017, Matthew Carey published his book *Mistrust - an ethnographic theory*, in which he also questions the self-evident nature of trust. A year later the book *Mistrust: ethnographic approximations* appeared (Mühlfried, 2018). Responding to what he terms a 'fetishization of social cohesion' in anthropology,[55] Mühlfried sets out to explore mistrust not as merely the photographic negative of trust and a sign of social failure, but as an interesting and occasionally admirable social phenomenon in its own right,

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[54] This position is shared by, amongst others, Hosking (2014:43), who believes trust is "the default position of most human beings."
[55] According to Pijpers' (2019) review of this book, Mühlfried's claim overlooks the substantial body of anthropological work on, for example, secrecy, deceit, witchcraft and corruption, which often deals with forms of mistrust and its productive qualities.

producing its own specific ways of relating to the world. Below, I will draw both on studies of trust and subsequent responses on mistrust to provide a working definition of the concept.

The (mis)trust continuum

The field in which (mis)trust operates can be roughly put along a line in terms of control and predictability, bounded on both ends (figure 4). At one end of this continuum is complete control and predictability. If one were omniscient, actions could be undertaken with complete certainty, leaving no need, or even possibility, for (mis)trust to develop (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Muhlfried, 2018). Giddens (2008:89) makes the link to ignorance, or 'partial understanding', here. He argues that trust is "only demanded where there is ignorance either of the knowledge claims of technical experts or of the thoughts and intentions of intimates upon whom a person relies." This is related to control: when there is total control, there is no ignorance regarding knowledge claims, but all-knowingness instead. For (mis)trust to be relevant, other actors must at least have a certain degree of freedom to disappoint our expectations, to betray. Trust has therefore also been described as a device for coping with the freedom of others (Gambetta, 1990b:219). On the other end of the continuum is complete unpredictability and an entire lack of control. In this case there can also be no reason to (mis)trust. Lewis and Weigert (1985) state that, when faced by the totally unknown, all one can do is gamble. Pederson (2015) gives a similar explanation of this 'gambling', but explaining it using 'hope'. Although hope is, just like trust, an outlook on the future that one wishes to be possible, one may have a troublesome feeling that it may not be realised.

Drawing on both functionalist and rational choice theory, Hardin (2006) states that trust can be described as a three-part relation: A trusts B to do X. This means that when a person says 'I trust you', this usually implies 'to do X'. Only in cases of complete devotion and dependence (Hardin mentions a small child or followers of a charismatic leader) a person might be able to say 'I trust you' without adding a concrete expectation. In my definition, these would be cases not so much of trust, but of hope. Gambetta (1990b:218) places trust on a line as well, a probabilistic distribution of more general expectations. In this view, trust is a threshold-point between complete distrust (0) and complete trust (1). It is in the mid-point of uncertainty, at 0.50. Sztompka's

definition mentioned earlier also refers to this idea of probability and gambling, characterising trust as "a bet about the future contingent actions of others" (1999:26). Distrust is also a bet, but a negative one, involving negative expectations. It involves negative, defensive commitment such as avoiding, escaping, distancing oneself, refusing actions, taking protective measures against the people that are distrusted (Sztompka, 1999:26). Pedersen (2015:108) elaborates on this by specifically looking at this middle area of the continuum spanned by trust. In order to explain trust actions, attitudes, and beliefs as unfolding in a continuum, the author distinguishes between two types of trust that each form one end of the continuum. One end is taken up by 'prima-facie trust/distrust' - the reliance upon simple routines of everyday life, the 'immediate trust reaction'. At the other end is 'reflective trust', the "willed engagement of trust in others where the agent is acutely aware of the risk he takes by involving himself in a trust relationship" (Pedersen, 2015:108).

What these approaches have in common is the idea that both trust and mistrust are particularly relevant in conditions of uncertainty with respect to unknown or unknowable actions of others (see also 2.3). In the conclusion of his book *Trust: Making and Breaking cooperative relations,* Gambetta (1990b:219) nicely sums up the above as he arrives at the following comprehensive definition:

> Trusting a person means believing that when offered the chance, he or she is not likely to behave in a way that is damaging to us, and trust will *typically* be relevant when at least one party in free to disappoint the other, free enough to avoid a risky relationship, *and* constrained enough to consider that relationship an attractive option. In short, trust is implicated in most human experience, if of course to widely different degrees (italics by the author)

The view that mistrust and trust are often viewed as opposites reflects the value-loaded element of both terms. As Kipnis (1996:40) points out, most of 'us' (referring to his English-speaking readers) have been socialised to value autonomy. He therefore concludes that for most people, being trusted is experienced as pleasant whereas having to trust others is viewed as bothersome. Trust is associated with *good, virtuous* and *moral*, whereas violations of trust are linked to *suspicion, evil* and *immoral.* However, ethnographies in Muhlfried (2018) point out the possible coexistence of trust and mistrust. Building on Gambetta's definition mentioned above, I would therefore like to add that mistrust operates in the same place along the certainty – uncertainty

continuum. Both trust and mistrust are 'attitudes of engagement', ways of responding to a similar uncertainty (Muhlfried, 2018:11). The opposite of trust is therefore not mistrust, but rather a complete absence of this engagement. Figure 4 below illustrates the place of both trust and mistrust, as attitudes of engagement, on a continuum of (un)certainty. This forms the basis of the definition of trust used in this chapter.
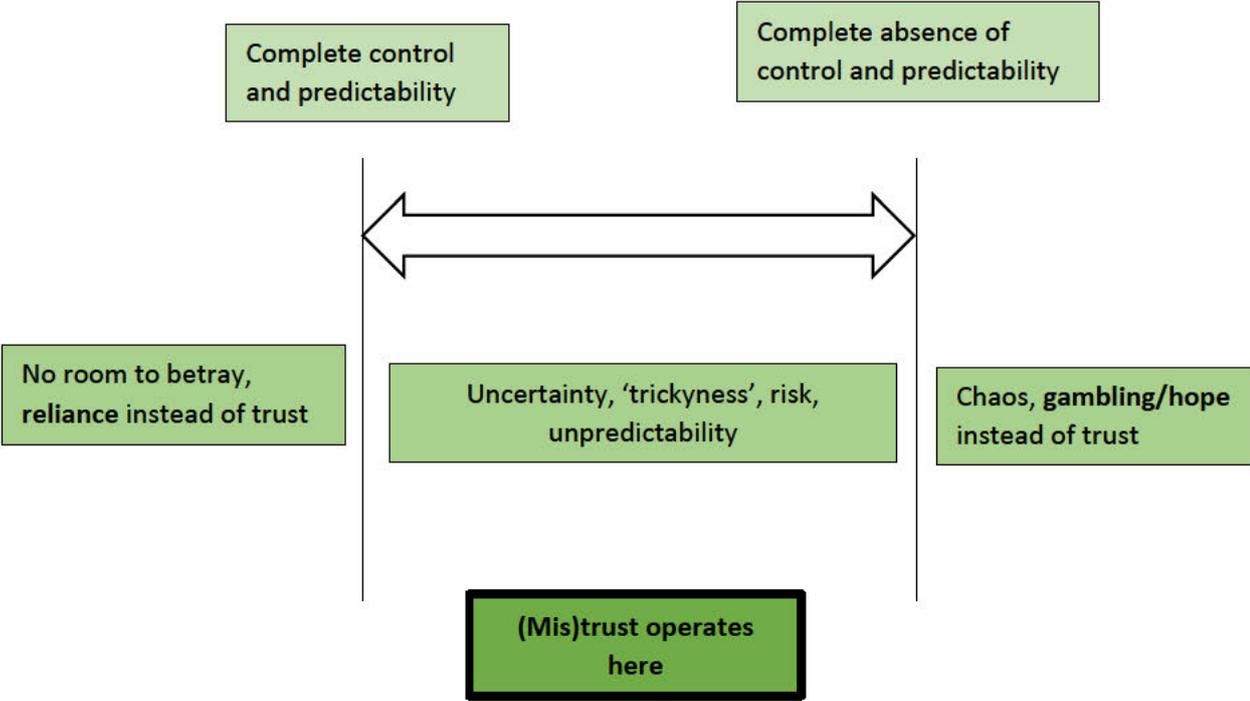
Figure 4: Boundaries of the certainty – uncertainty continuum

A personal trust history

Trust is not a goal that once achieved becomes permanent, but instead a process that is tested and shaped, a constant balancing act between two or more parties. It should therefore be seen as the result, rather than the precondition of cooperation (Gambetta, 1990b:213). Since the emergence of trust cannot be controlled singlehandedly by anyone, both the trustor and trustee have to work and keep working to build and sustain it (Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). These 'trust relationships' are the result of the social cooperation between two or more agents in a concrete social reality (Pedersen, 2015:105). Both trust and mistrust have a way of reinforcing themselves. Trust-implying actions help to establish or reinforce the emotional sentiment of trust, just as negative affect arises among those who betray or act distrustfully toward each other.

Trust relationships are dynamic and culturally embedded. Whether a person is trustful or not in a particular situation therefore depends on experiences extending way beyond the social encounter itself. Trust is usually the result of past cooperation and typically the precondition for attempting future cooperation (Hardin, 2006, 31). A person's trust or distrust toward others relies to a considerable degree on social conditioning stemming from upbringing and social experiences (Pederson, 2015). Giddens (2008:90) makes a similar point, when stating that attitudes of trust, or lack of trust, toward specific abstract systems are strongly influenced by experiences at access points (see 2.4). Whether trusting or mistrusting behaviour is rewarded or punished in the society where a person grew up matters. So do other social experiences: a person whose trust has been violated in the past might have difficulty trusting again. Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016:1) incorporates this, what I term a 'personal trust history' in her definition of trust, which she defines as "a social orientation towards the future nurtured by the *gradual accumulation of positive experience* and sometimes revealed in a leap of faith" (my italics).

After having explored this 'gradual accumulation of positive experience', the 'leap of faith' will be explored next. Although scholars differ on their views regarding bases for trust, what they have in common is the idea that trust is considered to be based on a mix of calculative and more intuitive motivations. Although several authors have attempted to structure the calculative motivations for trust, this second reason is rarely explored in detail. Simmel (1990:179, as cited in Möllering, 2001:405), for example, refers to trust as "a weak form of inductive knowledge" combined with "a mysterious further element, a kind of faith, suspension, that is required to explain trust and to grasp its unique nature." Möllering (2001:407) summarises Simmel's argument by concisely defining trust as "a thread spun of weak inductive knowledge and faith." Lewis and Weigert (1985:972) refer to trust as a mix of rational thinking and feeling or emotion.

'Geertzian moments'

The previous paragraphs explained that trust is a dynamic concept subject to continuous re-evaluation. However, despite the fact that trust needs time to develop, there are moments when trust seems to emerge out of nowhere, when suddenly the social relationship seems to cross an invisible line, into trust. These moments are rarely

explored in trust theory, where the focus seems to be more on the gradual accumulation of trust in contrast to sudden eruptions of distrust. Greenhalgh et al. (2006:1177) note a similar observation. Although trust is generally earned through repeated encounters over months or years, "it can easily be lost through a perception, even a misinterpreted one, that the other party lacks interest, commitment or skill." The reason for this, according to Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016), is that trust seldomly surfaces in the mind of subjects as a distinct feeling. Rather, it tends to surface into consciousness as *an absence* precisely in those moments when trust is in doubt. In his book *Trust: A History,* Hosking (2014:22) similarly emphasises that distrust is much easier to identify than trust, since we often "trust unconsciously and distrust consciously." Despite the limited attention paid to eruptions of trust in trust theory, they are nevertheless widely discussed in anthropological writings. Many fieldworkers can point to a particular moment or event during which the groundwork for the development of true rapport and participation was established (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2010:45). Although at such a moment, the level of trust takes a sudden leap, this leap is relative. Indeed, by pointing to establishing 'a groundwork for the development of true rapport', Dewalt and Dewalt (2010) point to the fact that the obtained trust was not more than a beginning. In this case, more collaboration is needed for this first trust to develop into a level needed for further fieldwork. Probably the most well-known example of such an event is described in Geertz's (1973) article on Balinese cockfights. In this text, he describes how, together with his wife, he fled from the police. Fleeing together with the local people, instead of making use of their privileged status as foreigners, changed his relationship with the community completely:

> The next morning the village was a completely different world for us. Not only were we no longer invisible, we were suddenly the center of all attention, the object of a great outpouring of warmth, interest, and, most especially, amusement. Everyone in the village knew we had fled like everyone else (Geertz, 1973:3)

These moments are described as 'tipping points' or 'threshold points' in trust-building during ethnographic fieldwork, a moment after which the enculturation process takes flight and the anthropologists becomes less of an outsider and is more considered as 'one of us'. Remarkably, these moments often occur when the anthropologist acts out

of the ordinary. Anthropologist Bree Blakeman (2016) describes these 'Geertzian moments' as follows on her blog:

> These moments are often a moment of losing oneself and behaving in a way that one wouldn't have expected or couldn't anticipate, and it's not until afterwards when you pause and reflect that you realise what has just occurred. It is in that moment of reflection that the ethnographer realises they've reached some *tipping point* of enculturation (my italics).

It is important to note that these rather dramatic examples of 'break-through' moments do not exclude the theory of trust developing over time mentioned earlier. 'Geertzian moments' cannot be seen independently from the encounters that occurred before and after, and the social factors that shape them. As mentioned above, these moments are relative to the starting point in terms of trust. Rather, they should be seen as a particular narrative structure. Scholars working on conversational narrative point out that talk about non-normative practices or rupture reflect a common part of human interaction and of storytelling in particular (Goebel, 2010). Interestingly enough, this talking about uncommonness, unusualness, strangeness and deviance help reproduce ideas of what is normal. The fact that people seem inclined to structure their tales of trust relationships this way, pointing out particular moments when trust emerged (or failed, in the case of what I will refer to as 'reversed Geertzian moments'), provides insights into tensions between the normative and actual trust relationship at large. This will be elaborated on in chapter 5 and 6, illustrated with ethnographic examples.

Defensive arrangements

Luhman, a German sociologist, describes trust in a functionalist way; trust is functional in dealing with the world's complexity. In his view, the mistrustful person is one who, befallen by a 'paralysing horror', avoids interaction with the world and might not even dare get up in the morning. Hardin (as cited in Hosking, 2014) similarly states that distrust is characterised by a decision *not* interact with the people in question, and discover little about their actual trustworthiness as a result. Ethnographic work on mistrust has revealed that, although unable to eliminate complexity, the mistrustful person acknowledges it and acts accordingly by making so called 'defensive arrangements', actions grounded in scepticism (see figure 5). Just like trusting, it is an 'attitude of engagement' (Muhlfried, 2018:11). Instead of falling prey to the paralysing sense of dread mentioned earlier, mistrust generates particular behaviours, practices

and relations. Hauschild (2008, 2003, as cited in Muhlfried 2018) states that the mistrustful person entering social interactions 'holds back', he or she never enters at full stake so as to not commit oneself completely. Giddens (2008) similarly explains how 'ignorance' (see p. 113) always provides grounds for scepticism or at least caution. These 'defensive arrangements' allow for a 'tempering' or 'domestication' of unknown forces (Luhmann, 2014:1, as cited in Mühlfried, 2018:11). As a result, since the mistrustful person does not know whether the effects of an encounter will be good or bad, one could even argue that a mistrustful person is more prepared for unknown outcomes than the one who trusts.

Figure 5: The trustor, defensive arrangements and the trustee

4.3 Approaches to interpersonal trust

A thick-relationship theory of trust

Interpersonal trust is usually operationalised as a response to the question "Would you say that most people can be trusted?" (e.g., by Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2017). One could indeed argue, as Sztompka (1999) does, that all trust is interpersonal trust. Behind all social objects, such as organisations or government institutions, stand people. It is those people whom we ultimately endow with what Sztompka (1999) calls our 'primordial form of trust' – trust in people, and their actions. A question as posed by those questionnaires would incorporate all those people. However, it makes sense to further differentiate interpersonal trust into positional and institutional trust because different incentives might be at work. There is a fundamental difference in terms of incentives to trust when it comes to people we know personally and those whom we have never met. Hardin (2006) therefore introduced the 'thick-relationship theory of trust', arguing that there is only a small circle of people among whom a person knows whom he or she can trust for what. Hosking (2014:47) uses the term 'thick trust' in a similar way, while also defining its 'thin' counterpart. According to his definition, "'[t]hick' trust rests on extensive knowledge, resulting from frequent or close contact with the

person or institution one trusts." 'Thin trust', in contrast, is based on slight knowledge, on infrequent or superficial contact. Figure 6 shows how the thick relationship theory of trust could operate, as well as demonstrating where it starts and ends. As examples Hardin (2006) mentions family (high intimacy), friends, neighbours, co-workers (considerable intimacy), inhabitants of our village, employees, professors at our university (indirect familiarity) and ethnic group, gender, religion and generation ('absent others'). These examples reflect a widespread approach amongst anthropologists of general modelling bent towards the 'idyllic small-scale' of localised kinship relations. According to Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016:23), anthropological models have for a long time assumed that trust is most intense in the safe haven of family, kin group or community. It is highest at home and diminishes gradually the further out in the social network you get. However, several ethnographic studies mentioned in their volume point out the limitations of this model.

Radius of high intimacy

Radius of considerable intimacy/closeness

Radius of indirect familiarity/'familiar faces'

Radius of 'absent others' whom we have never met but with whom we believe to have something in common
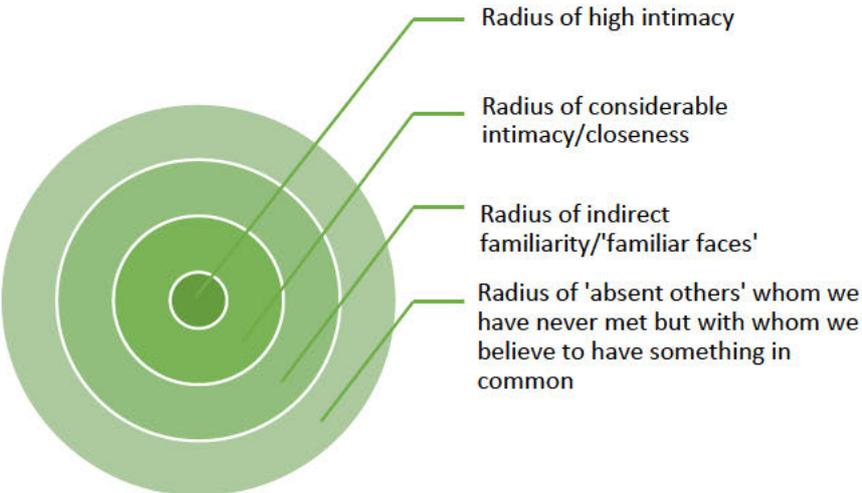
Figure 6: Interpersonal - social trust radius (Based on Hardin, 2006; Fukuyama, 1996; Sztompka, 1999)

The different radiuses can coexist: when your neighbour is also your doctor, your incentives to (mis)trust this person can be a mix of thick relationship and positional trust. It therefore makes sense to view a thick interpersonal relationship as just *one* possible source of knowledge for the trustor about the trustworthiness of the trustee and *one* possible incentive for the trustee to act in a trustworthy way. We might expect

certain actions from a particular partner whom we know personally (thick-relationship trust). Similarly, we might expect certain actions from people beyond institutions (institutional trust) or with certain social roles (positional trust) whom we do not know personally. This means that in addition to a thick relationship, other incentives exist and coexist. These will be explored below.

Positional trust: The social role of the trustee

The radius-diagram in figure 6 could be extended. The next radius to follow after the imagined radius of 'absent others' would be the radius of social roles. The more clearly defined the social role, understood as ways of acting typical for specific positions, the less one needs to rely on trust. As mentioned earlier, trust can be described as a three-part relation (Hardin, 2006). The better 'X' is socially defined, the easier it would be to trust, the closer this trust would be to 'reliance'. Tradition replaces trust with the sanction of ancient and eternal routine, reducing uncertainty. It thereby even removes the preconditions for the salience of trust (Sztompka, 1999). Or, as Carey (2017:7) states: "[i]n contexts where behaviour is not chosen, but determined by one's social role (e.g., in traditional societies), there is supposedly little place or need for trust." In the excerpt below, Simmel explains how also in a bureaucracy clearly defined social roles reduce the need to rely on trust:

> The traditions and institutions, the power of public opinion and the definition of the position which inescapably stamps the individual, have become so solid and reliable that one has to know only certain external facts about the other person in order to have the confidence required for the common action. The question is no longer some foundation of personal qualities on which (at least in principle) a modification of behaviour within the relation might be based: motivation and regulation of this behaviour have become so objectified that confidence no longer needs any properly personal knowledge (Simmel, 1950:319).

Furthermore, as mentioned in section 2.4, certain social roles evoke *prima facie* trust, whereas others are associated with suspicion. This trustworthiness of a social role may vary across different societies and in different historical moments (Sztompka, 1999:43). In the next section I will focus more on the specific trustworthiness of the social role of the interpreter, followed by an exploration of the interpreter's trustworthiness in Russia.

4.4 Trust in interpreted encounters

The interpreted encounter as an uncertain social event

To date, little has been published on trust in interpreted encounters. In section 2.3, I have given a brief overview of existing research. Furthermore, I have shown how several authors agree that trust is most relevant in situations of limited control (Carey, 2017; Muhlfried, 2018; Sztompka, 1999). Trust needs this 'element of risk', a 'margin of uncertainty' to be relevant (see 2.3). The interpreted encounter is a clear example of such an unpredictable social event, and therefore a situation par excellence to study trust (Bachmann, 1999, as cited in Möllering, 2001). The client has limited control over the interpretation itself. As mentioned earlier in this thesis (section 2.2.), there is no such thing as 'the perfect translation', and even if there were, there is no way for the client to adequately judge the interpreter's performance. In this climate, all the client (trustor) can do is (mis)trust the interpreter (trustee).
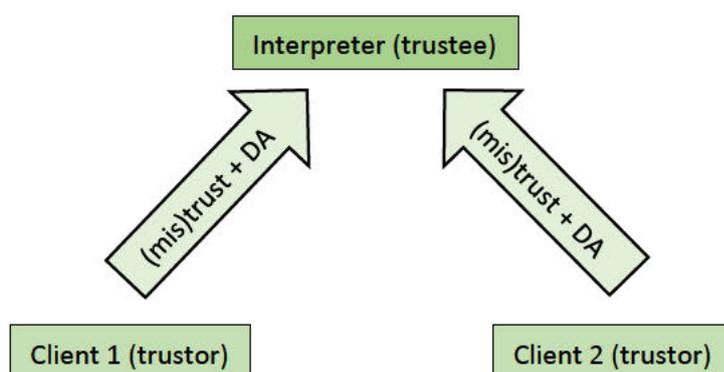
Figure 7: Trustor and trustee in the interpreted encounter

Trust in the interpreted encounter should therefore be understood primarily as an interactional achievement that is subject to (re-)negotiation between interlocutors and in which interpreters play an active part (Tipton, 2015:427). Taking figure 5 as a starting point, their trust relationship can be elaborated, as shown in figure 7 (DA = defensive arrangements):[56]

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[56] Although I have included only two clients in figure 7 (as well as in subsequent diagrams elaborating on this figure), the number of clients can vary. For the sake of clarity, I have included the minimum number of clients in this simplified diagram.

Positional trust of the interpreter

In order to understand a particular social role, we first need to look at the normative expectations associated with it (Roy, 2000). In the case of interpreting, this normative role refers to what "interpreters in principle think they are doing or ought to be doing when they do a good job" (Wadensjö, 1998:8). Without these rough outlines, clients would not have a clue what to expect of an interpreter's service. In such a situation of total chaos, we would speak about 'gambling' or 'hope', rather than trust (see 4.2 and figure 4). On the other hand, the interpreter's role is an uncertain one. In Hardin's (2006) terms – trust is when A trusts B to do X - it is unclear what this X refers to. Inghilleri (2005) describes the role of the interpreter as one with unclear expectations. The interpreter's role is therefore far from that of the bureaucrat described by Simmel (1950) above, a position of complete predictability that would also decrease the need to rely on (interpersonal) trust (see figure 4).

The normative role of interpreters revolves around the 'conduit model' of communication, a concept introduced by the philosopher Reddy (1979, in Wadensjö, 1998). It is based on the idea that human interaction is a "unidirectional process of transfer from one person to another, taking place in a social vacuum" (Reddy, 1979, in Wadensjö, 1998:7). It portrays interpreting as an exercise carried out on linguistic forms, one in which even the smallest changes in perspective are not permitted (Clifford, 2004). Professionalism is therefore defined in terms of neutrality, detachment and impartiality (Wadensjö, 1998:240). Scholars refer to this model as the 'traditional perception in interpreting' (Metzger, 1999:1), its 'central perspective' (Dysart-Gale, 2005:92, as cited in Clifford, 2004:92), and even its 'ideal' (Angelelli, 2004b:2, Rudvin, 2006). It is what constitutes the 'frontstage' of the interpreter's performance. Drawing on Goffman's (1956) concepts of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' performances, Giddens (2008) explains how control of the threshold between these two is part of the essence of trust in professionalism. Particularly at access points (see 4.2), where interpersonal and systemic trust interact, a strict division between front- and backstage is made. Here the link between control and imperfection can be pointed out: a lack of control is associated with 'the imperfect', whereas control presents the 'perfect' ideal (Rutten,

forthcoming). Elements of hazard or luck, as well as imperfect skills and human fallibility are not strangers to the expert. Still, they presume that lay individuals are more likely to trust them if they are not able to observe how frequently these elements enter into expert performance (Giddens, 2008:87).

Research on interpreters' activity of translating is often normative due to the simple fact that when something is identified as non-translating, it is by definition against the norm stating that interpreters *should just translate*. It is pushed to the 'backstage', to speak in Goffman's (1956) terms. Non-translating is therefore described as individual deficiencies or failures (Wadensjö, 2017). Since the ideal interpreter-conduit is supposed to be invisible, this resulted in a common assumption that the degree of visibility of the interpreter is inversely related to his or her degree of professionalism. An example of striving towards this invisibility can be found in a statement by Roy (2000), claiming that interpreters should never ask direct questions themselves, referring to 'interpreting ideology'. This invisibility is directly linked to a specific, distanced form of trust. Edwards (2005) sums it up in the following citation: "The professional interpreter's role […] is based on an impersonal form of trust. Their obligation to adhere to good standards of practice, expert knowledge and competence, lack of personal or institutional bias, and maintenance of confidentiality, form the basis for this trust." This concerns the 'frontstage' of the interpreter's professionalism. Martínez-Gómez (2015) explains the importance of this idea of trust by relating it to the juvenility of interpreting as a profession. According to her, being invisible was necessary as a professional standard in order to earn trust in a profession in the early stages of its making (Martínez-Gómez, 2015). In sum, the highly influential 'interpreter as conduit model' promotes the idea that invisibility earns trust (Angelelli, 2004b).

The interactionist approach in IS

The simple fact that the interpreter present in the room can (and, according to some, should) not be invisible is inherent to the fundamental paradox of translation: an expectation of 'similarity' and inescapable 'difference' (Pöchhacker, 2008:15) (see 2.2). Several books on these discrepancies between theory and practice appeared around 2000. These studies examining the role of the interpreter, mostly in community settings (see 2.1), point to the position of the interpreter as a co-participant and co-constructor of meaning in the interpreter-mediated encounter (Martínez-Gómez, 2015:176). One

of the most influential works is Wadensjö's (1998) *Interpreting as interaction,* in which she describes interpreting as a '*pas de trois*', thereby recognising the interpreter as a full participant of the conversation. Drawing on Bakhtin, she makes the fundamental distinction between a monological and a dialogical approach to community interpreting. The first approach is characterised by the belief that words and expressions have fixed meanings that can be translated neutrally (without distortions) into the other language. A second approach emphasises that meanings are embedded in interaction and context. This includes factors that are not connected to the interpreter's ability to memorise vocabulary or apply grammatical rules (Leanza, 2010). Roy (2000) also admits that the reality of practice does not conform to the ideology. A third work of importance is Angelelli's (2004b) *Revisiting the interpreter's role: a study of conference, court, and medical interpreters in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.* In this study, for which she surveyed conference, court, medical/community and over-the-telephone interpreters, she found that interpreters did not consider their role to be invisible in any of the settings. Furthermore, they felt they played a role in building trust, facilitating mutual respect, communicating affect as well as message, explaining cultural gaps, controlling the communication flow and aligning with one of the parties in interactions.

These studies opened up IS to a more interactionist approach and can be seen in relation to the 'social turn' in TS (section 2.1). Both the larger 'turn' in the discipline and the more specific 'approach' consider language as a historical and social phenomenon, continuously reproduced and recreated by being used (Wadensjö, 2017; Wolf, 2014). The use of language is regarded as a social activity connected to different genres and layers of contexts. In contrast to the transfer/conduit model, the social interactionist model is dialogical. According to this model, meaning is conceptualised as co-constructed between speaker and hearer(s) in interaction. This implies that meanings can thus not be described entirely in terms of individuals' intentions.

4.5 Trust in Russia and the Russian interpreter

Systemic trust in Russia

In Russia, systemic trust is relatively low. The 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer places Russia in the group of the 'distrusters' (Acumen Republic, 2017). The Trust Index is an

average of a country's trust in the institutions of government, business, media and NGOs. Russia has a score of just 45, whereas the world's average index indicates 60. Compared to the results of the same study in 2016, systemic trust in Russia has gone down. Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) state that people from countries with a history of political and social conflict and/or repressive political regimes, over time generate a deep mistrust in the system in general. The turbulent history of Russia in the last decades could explain the low levels of systemic trust in the country. In the first chapter of his book *Trust: A History,* Hosking (2014) traces the origins of the rampant distrust of Soviet society in the 1930s. He states that universal distrust was the *modus operandi* of this 'land of maximum distrust'. Simultaneously, all its leading actors were "under an inner compulsion to declare total trust in the party," because without that they would become superfluous 'enemies' (Hosking, 2014:17). According to Hosking, this generalised social distrust does not disperse easily. The question of whom one could trust and whom one should distrust remained paramount in the lives of most Soviet citizens, and even today's post-Soviet Russia is characterised by the limited radius of trust (Hosking, 2014). Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) state that people from countries with a history of political and social conflict and/or repressive political regimes over time generate a deep mistrust in the system in general. In such societies there is often little trust in governments and social institutions. Social institutions included in the measurement of indicators of systemic trust show that these include institutions where users of interpreting services encounter interpreters, such as the judiciary and healthcare or education systems. A lack of systemic trust could therefore impact on the trust of interpreters as well. Low levels of trust in state institutions shift the burden onto interpersonal trust (Ledeneva, 2018c:43).

Interpersonal trust in Russia

Although interpersonal trust in Russia dropped in the 1990s (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2017), it has been on the rise in recent years (Levada Center, 2013, 2018). With 27.74 per cent of the respondents agreeing with the statement 'most people can be trusted', interpersonal trust in Russia is not exceptional compared to the rest of the world. Russia is at a much lower level than China, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Germany. However, it is similar to the level of interpersonal trust in the UK and higher than the level in France (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2017).

Interpersonal trust in Russia is therefore not much lower than in other countries with a relatively high level of systemic trust (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2017).

Nonetheless, research on the prevalence of informal economies of favour in Russia points towards the key role interpersonal trust plays. Russian society tends to encourage values often referred to as collectivistic. According to Jurcik et al (2013), Russian collectivism is unique due to its emphasis of pragmatically based unsolicited support and its extensive utilization of informal networks for individualistic gains. The particularist relations characterising the Russian economy mean that a relationship of trust should be established with another person before any business can be done. Through this relationship the other is adopted into one's in-group. Hofstede et al. (2010:123) explains how, with a 'thick-relation' as the basis for trust, the other becomes entitled to preferential treatment.[57] Here the historical background is also relevant: the ongoing threat of persecution by the state during the Soviet era probably resulted in a tendency to be cautious with unfamiliar people and institutions (Shlapentokh, 2006, as cited in Jurcik et al, 2013). This cultural context contributes to the personal trust history of people who grew up in (post)Soviet Russia (see 4.2). This also relates back to low systemic trust, since in a collectivist society, only natural persons are worthy of trust, and via these persons their friends and colleagues become worthy. Impersonal legal entities such as a company are not worthy. The personal relationship prevails over the task, whereas in the individualist society, the task is supposed to prevail over any personal relationships (Hofstede et al., 2010:123).

Although these authors consider the Russian case to be exceptional, others point to the generalisability of this argument. Hosking (2014:48), for example, mentions that also in Western society, when contacting a large, impersonal organization, one usually prefers to know an individual within it whom one can contact with any queries. According to him, trust in large and impersonal institutions is still best mediated by a personal trust relationship. In the second volume of *The Global Encyclopaedia of Informality*, Barsukova and Ledeneva (2018) cite Shanin (1999) and Barsukova and

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[57] See Jones (2007) for an analysis of the credibility of Hofstede et al.'s (2010) work on culture. After weighing arguments in favour and against, he concludes that there is more evidence that supports Hofstede than exists which dispute his work.

Radaev (2012), who state that informal practices in Russia are particularly important, compared to the rest of the world. Although they do not completely agree, Barsukova and Ledeneva (2018:487) do note that "[t]he embeddedness of informality in Russia means that there is no clearly defined gap between formal rules and informal practices." In chapter 7, I will return to this topic of informality, presenting the lens of care as an alternative allowing for an analysis beyond the formal – informal divide.

Positional trust of the Russian interpreter

Positional trust refers to social roles, understood as ways of acting typical for specific positions (see 2.4). After having discussed this concept related to interpreters more generally, I will now turn to the positional trust of the interpreter in Russia specifically. In the Soviet Union, individuals who, through the knowledge of foreign languages, had access to foreigners and foreign travel, were often mistrusted by the mainstream population and considered to be KGB agents and collaborators. Although Pavlenko (2003:32) mentions interpreters and tour guides as particularly suspicious, little has been published on this first group. In her memoirs, first published in 1937, Tamara Solonevich describes suspicion directed towards her from Soviet factory workers when she was interpreting for a group of English workers in the 1930s. The following citation shows the way the Soviet workers associated her with 'the system':

> – Could the interpreter[58] be lying?
> Indeed, for many this is the first time that they [the Soviet factory worker] got to see real English workers with their own eyes. Is that how they imagined them? Are they really workers? Is the Soviet government not deceiving them?

Besides being mistrusted by their own fellow countrymen, interpreters were mistrusted by their foreign clients, who had their own views on people from behind the Iron Curtain. Chabe (1969) describes the *Intourist* interpreter/guide as follows:

> Generally, her personality is flat and boorish, seeming to lack necessary human experiences for full and wholesome individual development. The individual spirit evidently has been subjugated to the collective will. These escorts, in responding to a tourist's question, operate as "memory machines" rather than as objective, truthful, and rational interpreters of their society. Objectivity,

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[58] Here the female form of the Russian word for interpreter is used, *perevodchitsa.*

rationality, and truthfulness have been superseded by Communist dogma to a point of idiocy.

Later in this thesis I will return to this remark, thereby contrasting it to the interpreter's view. Looking at the positional trust of comparable social roles, such as those of the doctor and teacher, reflects a larger mistrust in 'the system'. Both education and medicine have traditionally been arenas for *blat* (the attainment of public goods through personal contacts[59]) and bribes (Salmi, 2003:122). Discussing healthcare with teachers in St Petersburg, Salmi (2003) writes about how her interviewees' (all female patients) stated that one cannot trust physicians. The author notes that this distrust was perhaps not mainly directed towards physicians' professional competence *per se* but rather characterised a disbelief in the commitment of unknown doctors who were associated with what Russians call 'our system': they were considered not only cold, rude, and inattentive, but even "inherently suspect and potentially dangerous" (Rivkin-Fish, 1997:281, as citred in Salmi, 2003:113). Several authors have written about the positional trust of the teacher in Russian society. Ilina et al (2016), for example, mentions the fall in professional status of the teacher of the past decades, from 'one of the most honourable' professions in the Soviet Union to a role characterised by financial insecurity. Patico (2005) also mentions the 'erosion of the social recognition and respect' of the teaching profession.

Second-hand cues

In the literature review, I have outlined how people's decision to trust or not trust another person can rely on second-hand cues. Particularly freelance interpreters find new clients through word of mouth and informal networks. In these cases, secondary trust (in the person who recommended the interpreter) forms a foundation for primary trust (in the interpreter). Spânu (2011) describes how for Romanian interpreters, informal networking is seen as the only efficient strategy to find new clients. Although I did not come across research like Spânu's on informal networking on the Russian interpreting market, there are several publications focussing on second-hand cues in other sectors in Russia. Salmi (2003), for example, points to the importance of connections in an article about healthcare in St Petersburg. She explains how one of

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[59] See Ledeneva (1998) for a more detailed definition of *blat*.

the ways to build trust is the use of acquaintance networks, or links to physicians through personal connections (Brown and Rusinova, 1997; Rivkin-Fish, 1997, as cited in Salmi, 2003). Rivkin-Fish's respondents stated that a link through acquaintances provided what was otherwise essentially lacking: trust, 'good care', proper medicine, and comfort (Salmi, 2003:113). Hosking (2014:20) makes a similar point in his study on trust in Russia, albeit formulating it is slightly different terms. According to him, "[t]rust is highly contagious: the spectacle of others reposing total confidence in a belief system and prepared to sacrifice themselves for it draws others towards it." In chapter 7, I will devote more attention to these networks of interpreters and clients.

4.6 Conclusion

Two main bodies of literature this study is drawing from and adding to are trust literature and IS. IS lacks the acknowledgement of negotiation of trust by the interpreter. Trust literature offers a theoretical framework to unpack these relationships. However, this focus on theory in trust research has a downside. Meyer et al. (2008) note how theoretical concepts from this field are rarely applied in practice. My study provides such a 'performativity of trusting', an in-depth study of how trust is negotiated on the ground. It presents insight into different steps in the interpreted encounter at which this trust-building is crucial, on an everyday basis.

From the next chapter onwards, the theoretical framework of trust in interpreting discussed above will be used as a starting point to explain insights from practice. According to Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016), contemporary trust research's search for 'conceptual clarity' guides the investigations. This type of investigation, in their view, produces reductionist analyses of this multifaceted phenomenon. Hosking (2014) also believes that contemporary trust research tries to produce a theory applicable to all societies, thereby overlooking specific historical circumstances and the social background of trust. Due to the social character of trust and its variations across different contexts, the general theory discussed above is therefore not more than a starting point. Research on trust in interpreting and in a Russian context is limited and hardly builds on the concepts from general trust theory. Although my analysis is based on individual decisions – both conscious and unconscious - about whom to trust, the fact that we are all social beings means that those decisions are deeply influenced by

the norms and expectations of the society in which we live. According to Hosking (2014), these social determinants of trust are crucial, but not always obvious. Instead of framing the empirical findings according to the theoretical framework, I therefore take a more open and exploratory approach to allow empirical findings to guide the search for definitions.

Chapter 5. Trust in interpreted encounters

5.1 Introduction

In their paper '"You have to cover up the words of the doctor": The mediation of trust in interpreted consultations in primary care', Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) demonstrate the overarching importance of trust in the triadic dynamic of the patient-interpreter-clinician consultation. Paying attention to different forms of trust (interpersonal as well as systemic), they demonstrate that the interpreter's role as a trust mediator is inherent to the interpreter's position. Their conclusions have implications beyond the healthcare setting: all interpreters need trust and authority to perform their roles. They need to actively build trust both between self and client, as well as between clients. As this chapter will demonstrate, trust is a tricky concept, a willed action rather than a natural given (Meinert, 2015). It can only be understood by studying practices and processes of trust-building, trust-continuation and trust-losing in an anthropological way. To date, only a few authors have touched on this topic of interpreting and trust; the above-mentioned article by Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) is an example (see 2.3 for an overview of other research on interpreting and trust). Drawing on the framework of analysis introduced in the previous chapter, this empirical chapter aims to provide insights into the ways in which interpreters experience the need for trust and actively try to build it. Throughout this chapter, I will use the diagram created in the previous chapter (figure 7) to explore each trust relation separately.

This chapter explores a form of interpreting that I refer to as 'interpreting '*po-chelovecheski*', where trust is not based on invisibility but on closeness (see 1.1). This approached can be described using the Russian term *podoiti po-chelovecheski* (lit. 'to approach someone in a human way'), which refers to exercising empathy and a willingness to be flexible in relations with others (Helmer, 2019). Hendley describes behaving *po-chelovecheski* as 'conduct[ing] oneself in a civilised manner' with 'a commitment to fairness' (2017:59). It is 'a way of working out problems on an interpersonal level without involving [outsiders]' (p. 83)'. The opposite of treating someone *po-chelovecheski* (lit. *chelovek* is a human) is the performance of a machine or robot, associated with a 'dehumanised' bureaucracy, where the relationship

between parties is impersonal and based on objectivity, compliance with formal rules, and distance (Weber, 2009:216). According to Barsukova, it directly opposes formal ways of problem-solving, since 'language-wise, in Russia one can either act according to the law, or *po-chelovecheski*' (Moskalenko, 2016). The impartiality associated with 'professionalism' and formal relations more generally is often viewed as a characteristic of good governance (Rothstein, 2011:24). In practice, however, practices of building selective, particularistic, delicate relationships in order to help others can be seen as right. This approach can be analysed in the context of the interpreting market. Its largely unregulated character, driven by personal client-interpreter relations (analysed in more detail in chapter 7), results in practices deviating from the formal protocol of oral translation.

This chapter presents the findings of ethnographic fieldwork. I start with an exploration of the interpreter as conduit model. Even though recent scholarly research has pointed to the shortcomings of this model, it is still highly influential among both interpreters and their clients. That is why deviation from this model is often still viewed as 'breaking the rules'. I will pay specific attention to controversies regarding neutrality. The subsequent section focusses on the mutual dependency of interpreter and client. Instead of a tendency to downplay the client's control and overestimate the control of the interpreter over the course of the interpreted encounter, I demonstrate how the two influence each other. First, I outline the client's 'defensive arrangements', his or her means of control in the interpreted encounter. Next, I will explain how interpreters respond to these arrangements by actively 'performing trustworthiness'.

5.2 The long arm of the conduit model

The conduit model in the interpreters' and clients' views

> The most important, the best compliment an interpreter can get is when people are under the impression that there was no interpreter at all.[60] (Mariia)

The idea that Mariia expressed above - complete invisibility as the ultimate goal of the interpreter - is a recurring one. Wadensjö (2017) found that users of interpreting

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[60] All translations, unless indicated differently, are my own.

services but also interpreters' typical self-image is deeply influenced by this normative role. Interpreters tend to idealise conversational behaviour, even though their personal experience violates both their notions of relaying messages and of the way conversations should occur (Roy, 2000). As a result of the prevalence of the distant, cold, robot-like ideal of the interpreting profession, interpreters often describe their role as 'the person in the middle' by using a technical metaphor which conveys the image or impression that they serve as a bridge or channel through which communication happens (Roy, 2000). This channel is supposed to relay a message from one speaker to another faithfully, accurately, and without personal or emotional bias. Examples are a copying machine, telephone, channel, bridge, window and instrument (Roy, 2000; Wadensjö, 2017).

In my study, interpreters similarly used primarily technical metaphors to describe their profession. Examples are an 'apparatus, 'translation machine', 'communication instrument', 'telephone' and a 'technical tap that can be turned on and off'. Emphasis is put on the fact this this is how they were trained, and therefore represents the ideal of the profession when interpreters start their career. Or, as Evgeniia explained:

> An interpreter doesn't have the right to show emotions [..] That is why we always teach [students of interpreting] that they need to relate to the material as if it were a text. It's just a text, just words. It's not emotions, [..] I just transfer a text, and that's it. (Evgeniia)

The discourse of interpreters' invisibility is not restricted to academic and professional circles, but also permeates society at large (Martínez-Gómez, 2015). Users of interpreting services frequently stress their need for an interpreter who 'just translates'. Morris (1999, as cited in Mikkelson, 2008:84) mentions how legal professionals in the courtroom consider the interpreter to be 'a reluctantly accepted practical necessity' who should fade into the background and allow the parties to conduct their business undisturbed. Singy and Guex (2015) found that also clinicians see the interpreter as an instrument. The role of a machine capable of translating word for word is preferred over recognising the interpreter as a full-fledged participant.

Ambiguity of 'breaking the rules'

The interpreter's attitude towards interpreting *po-chelovecheski* is ambiguous. One interpreter remarked that "you are a professional, you are an interpreter, but you are

also human." She saw this as a source of pride, linking it to her successful practices of interpreting *po-chelovecheski*. However, not all interpreters share this view. Others see such a deviation from their 'professional ideology' as a problematic shortcoming (Wadensjö, 2004). In this section, I will paint a picture of this ambiguous attitude towards the interpreters' inevitable 'imperfections' (see 1.1).

> [The interpreter] hears the speech and at that very same moment lets it pass through himself. Like a coffeemaker: letting coffee through and serving out an espresso, right? (Roman)

This quotation, in which Roman compares his role to a coffeemaker, points out the limitations of the interpreter-as-a-machine model outlined in the previous paragraphs. The interpreter's comprehension is cognitively mediated: he lets one language through and 'serves out' another, to stick to the coffee metaphor. One could even argue that understanding is itself a matter of translation: the object understood is translated into some variety of interpretant or representation on the part of the understander (Hanks and Severi, 2014:2). Inevitably, a translated text therefore reflects the translator's reading. As a result, criteria of the professional ideal such as faithful transmission and neutral messaging are an impossibility, given the inevitably personal cognitive mediation of what the interpreter needs to understand and make understood (Pöchhacker, 2008).

Interpreters are aware that they are unable to fully comply with the professional ideals taught at university (heavily influenced by conference interpreting, see 2.1). This is a source of stress in itself. According to Wadensjö (2017:116), interpreters "constantly and knowingly break the rules, and constantly experience a need to legitimate their rule-violating behaviour." Witter-Merithew (1999:56-57) has commented on the guilt that interpreters may feel when they move beyond the narrow and rigid definition of role and responsibility of the interpreter as conduit model, even though they feel it is the right thing to do at the time because of their duty to interpret faithfully. Stepping outside the bounds of an established pattern of behaviour is always frightening, and most interpreters feel safer in the dispassionate and unbiased role they have been trained to fulfil (Mikkelsen, 2008).

Another reason why interpreters feel more comfortable in this role is that it is a way to protect themselves by keeping their personal involvement artificially out of the conversation:

> The interpreter first and foremost protects him or herself. You should always keep in mind that these are not your words. You don't know why this person is saying what he says […] If the speaker does not have his own internal censor, if he doesn't control himself, that doesn't mean we should perform this function for him. (Andrei)

Andrei's words correspond to one of the key arguments of famous interpreter and interpreter-trainer Andrei Falaleev, who interpreted for several heads of state of both the United States and the Russian Federation. In his lecture 'Interpreting as a martial art' (25 December 2019, St Petersburg State University) he made exactly this point: that the interpreter should primarily protect him or herself. However, this idea is very much based on simultaneous conference interpreting. Consecutive interpreting, especially in cases of long-term cooperation, paints a different picture. Later in our conversation, Andrei mentioned the following:

> This [the self-defence logic] concerns freelance interpreters. Of course, people who work in certain companies for a long time know, maybe, some specifics of the behaviour of their superiors, people who work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They might get some preliminary briefing about what to soften or not soften. (Andrei)

He then continued with an example of how he himself noticed this difference between working freelance and allowing himself more freedom during long-term cooperation. In face-to-face interpreting, practices associated with interpreting *po-chelovecheski* and thus deviating from the conduit model might even be considered as 'self-protection' and avoiding blame (as I will show in section 6.3).

This interpreting *po-chelovecheski* is morally ambiguous, since it is not what interpreters were taught, nor what they are 'supposed to do'. Although some interpreters are proud of their skills, many tell their stories of 'smoothening' and 'softening' in an apologetic manner. A feeling of regret that you, as a professional interpreter, were not able to remain neutral, professional and/or emotionless characterises many of the interpreters' stories. Despite the apologetic tone, Roy (2000) mentions how, during his study, interpreters confess to 'breaking the rules' in private

conversations, while also admitting that their rule-breaking behaviour was successful. In my research, statements of the kind 'I don't have the right…' were also often followed by a '*but…*', justifying their decision, ranging from 'I am not perfect' (Renata) to 'it was the only right option in this particular case' (Lidiia).

> You are not a participant in the process, you just translate. You can't just say 'please wait, I want to explain something'. That's not allowed there. But I, for example, always participate when I see that someone doesn't understand what's being said. (Renata)

> [The court is a complicated system, there's a lot of waiting] And you sit in this special little room with your witnesses. Well I, of course, chat with them. I am just curious to find out more about them. And I, well, nevertheless give them some advice. Basically, you're not supposed to do it. They believe it should all be very, very formal. And… well, no advice, no personal views on the case. Off course that's not allowed. But some things just need to be explained, and I believe that by doing this I am helping the court, and not the other way around. (Lidiia)

One can even say that in interpreting, the 'Geertzian moments' discussed earlier (section 4.2) occur precisely when the interpreter acts out of the ordinary – by approaching their job *po-chelovecheskii* instead of viewing it through the usual lens of the invisible ideal. Evgeniia's example below illustrates how a single step out of line by the interpreter can turn into a tipping point in the trust relation with the client.

> It was a high-level meeting, very serious. [My client] is annoyed, she is tired […] and several other interpreters had already told me: I can't, it's impossible with her, because she keeps correcting you […] She was ready to just kill everyone there. And I had to go there and interpret. At some point, I understood that she had been sitting here since nine in the morning, and it was around two in the afternoon already. […] And I don't know why, but I intuitively… I had a candy in my handbag. I just reached out for her under the table, offering her this candy. Later, after the negotiations had ended, she came up to me and said: "Thank you so much, you were the only person, who just saw me as a fellow human being. I was so tired of them, I was so hungry, and there was your candy." […] I am not saying that you have to become friends for life, but… it immediately puts you on a slightly different level. Because aren't we all just humans in the end? (Evgeniia)

It is important to realise that not all of the interpreter's trust negotiation is conscious. All interpreters are 'coffeemakers' whose comprehension is cognitively mediated. Even those interpreters who are convinced that they interpret 'word for word' engage in practices of trust-building due to the inherent element of conscious and unconscious

choice in the translation process. This is due to the fact that much 'trusting' is unconscious, as pointed out in 4.2. Hosking (2014) notes that social scientists deal mainly with reflective and conscious trust - cases where an individual has to make a conscious choice about whether to trust a particular individual or institution. In line with his argument, I argue that so called 'unreflective trust' is just as important in shaping the way interpreted encounters function. This is nicely illustrated by the following interview excerpt, in which Liudmila unconsciously uses a technique often used for smoothening: switching from first to third person. I will come back to this technique in section 6.3.

> Liudmila: In general, I think that the task of the interpreter is basically to translate what is being said, and that's it. If Ivan Ivanovich said that there are three green crocodiles sitting over there in the corner and I don't see them, then I should say: Ivan Ivanovich believes that there are three green crocodiles sitting over there in the corner. And, well, there's no need to be… That is, I always regarded that as my precise task: to interpret correctly […]
> Eline: I understand. And you mention, that 'Ivan Ivanovich believes', do you usually interpret in third person?
> Liudmila: No, no, no. That's only when I don't see three green crocodiles, and he believes… When there's a difficult situation.

When discussing the two roles of oral translator and mediator in community interpreting, Pöchhacker (2008b) states that these two roles can coexist in a constructive, complementary relationship, and even in the same person, provided that the dually qualified professional and his or her clients are aware that the service provided in a given interaction is either interpreting or mediation. I argue that due to the unconscious 'softening' and 'smoothening' mentioned above, these roles coexist by default. Although the extent of mediation might vary substantially, separating interpreting and mediation might be productive in theory, but impossible in practice (Wadensjö, 2017). I will return to the interpreter's role as a mediator in the next chapter.

Implications for neutrality, impartiality and loyalty

Interpreters are supposed to be neutral: neutrality is one of the key foundations of most professional codes of ethics. Nevertheless, what this neutrality entails and whether it is achievable at all is subject to debate (Rudvin, 2007; Wadensjö, 2008). Some authors state that neutrality is unachievable (Metzger, 1995), others (for example Brodskii, 2012:161) state that the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the interpreter should be

slightly *more* neutral than that of the client, characterised by a more restrained tone and gesture. The fact that, for example, each side brings their own interpreter to diplomatic negotiations (figure 8) demonstrates doubts regarding neutrality. Understanding utterances depends on contextual disambiguation, which implies that interpreters cannot construe meaning in a vacuum and are therefore subject to the influence of their own background (Prunč and Setton, 2015:273). This can be explained using the 'theory of conversational implicature' developed by Grice (1975). As soon as one moves beyond extremely straightforward exchanges of information, words fail to have any clear and stable meaning independent of context.[61] Speakers and listeners therefore have to respectively generate and infer meaning from context. This way we work towards the common goal of mutual comprehension.

Figure 8: Diplomatic interpreting, when each side brings their own interpreter (Source: Pablo Martinez Monsivais/The Associated Press, as cited in Cochrane, 2018)

What further complicates things are the unclear definitions of the concepts of neutrality and impartiality, and their interchangeable use in the scholarly literature on interpreting. One definition of neutrality, arguably the most common one, revolves around the idea that the interpreter should not let his or her own views, prejudices or interests colour the translation. The fact that interpreters should not take sides is often added to this

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[61] Consider, for example, the thought experiment Chau (2014:141) starts his paper with: "How would you translate the word "menu" (i.e., restaurant menu) into the native language of an (imaginary) tribal people (with no writing and no restaurants)?"

definition. However, another view defines neutrality as offering equal service to all parties. Gile (2009a:34) refers to the shifting loyalties of interpreters using the term 'rotating side-taking'. Kristina's remark illustrates this dilemma between the different forms of neutrality:

> He [the client] says one thing, and this phrase has a certain undertone, and I see that he wants this underlying message to be heard. And it's very difficult to withstand this temptation: I am very tempted to pass it on just like that, naïvely, with a straight face. Because then, as it were, the undertone won't be noticed, well, you know what I mean? The insinuation will not pass, as it were. This is very common. (Kristina)

In this case, the speaker expects the interpreter to infer meaning from context. In order to reach the common goal of mutual comprehension mentioned earlier, a 'naïve' interpretation will not do. However, in the above-mentioned case the interpreter was tempted to not pass on the undertone for two reasons: she disagreed with the speaker and he was not her primary client. This begs the question whether an interpreter can do a good job if he or she fundamentally disagrees with the client. An interpreter always brings his or her entire person to work: they are "persons embedded in a society that possesses its own values, cultural norms, and societal blueprints" and therefore, like any other human being, "perceive reality through their own social lenses" (Angelelli, 2004b:2). The question here is therefore not as much about whether an interpreter can do the job – he or she most definitely can – the question is whether the interpreter can do a *good* job. Or, in Renata's words:

> As an interpreter you need to have the strength to speak up when you can't interpret something. Because if you really don't like a person and you don't like his worldview, then I think you can't be a good interpreter. Because it just doesn't work that way, that here you are, for example, completely Eline, and there you are an interpreter. You always take yourself [your own personality] with you. (Renata)

Pochacker (2015) points out that survey studies mostly show that interpreters typically do not see advocacy as part of their role. As argued earlier, this might be due to the prevalence of the 'interpreter as conduit model'. This study, based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, paints a slightly different picture. Roy (2000:107) already pointed out that users of interpreting services act and react to interpreters as potential conversational partners, thereby 'breaking the rules' of the

distant objective professional. To them, "it seem[s] natural, even ordinary, to interact with interpreters as capable human beings who can answer and ask questions." This is illustrated with the following example from Liudmila, in which the head of the art academy was faced by the difficult task of explaining to foreign artists that their paintings had not been approved by the commission:

> "Liudmila…" He was an older, serious person, I was a student. "Liudmila…, we are facing a very difficult task together. We need to somehow explain to them that we cannot exhibit these paintings." The head of our art academy was the most important person there, he was the one who had to explain. He told me: "Liudmila: that is *our* task. Still, *he* had to explain, not I.

What is also interesting to point out here is the different view on neutrality across the profession.[62] Whereas the strictest impartiality rules are found in codes governing legal interpreting, a more 'activist' approach is most common in healthcare and social service settings, where a proactive role for the interpreter can compensate for power imbalances. Edward's (2005) study, for example, shows how users of interpreting services prefer acquaintances or relatives over professional interpreters. Professionals are seen as cold and do not match the personal basis for trust that people who need interpreters value. The clients of interpreter services interviewed in Edward's (2005) study preferred the interpreter to be proactive on their behalf, like a family member with whom they already have a 'thick relationship of trust' (Hale, 2007, see 4.3). By expecting the interpreter to take their side, clients expect a non-neutral approach. To extent to which the interpreter agrees to or hesitates to perform this role differs from person to person.

When asked what kind of day makes them satisfied as an interpreter, many interpreters who participated in this study mentioned the signing of a contract. Although this example is (mostly) relevant in business, this is not the only case in which the interpreter's goal coincides with the goal of the client. Another example mentioned was

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[62] Although conference interpreting is not part of this study, it is interesting to note that in this sector neutrality is taken for granted to such an extent that the concept is mostly absent from codes of ethics, for example in the case of the AIIC (Pochhacker, 2015:274). Since some participants of this study combine face-to-face work with conference interpreting, their view on neutrality might be influenced by this mixed experience.

good results after an interpreted training session. Being someone's voice makes you assume their role and experience a sense of shared responsibility, as the following quotation illustrates (note again the apologetic formulation):

> Unfortunately, probably, and not the way it should be, but probably this is the case: it's a certain attachment, and getting used to each other, and you really begin to, well, associate yourself with this person, because you are this person's voice. (Mariia)

I will come back to the implications of this feeling of shared responsibility in section 6.3. In some cases, rotating side-taking may also be psychologically difficult to achieve: interpreters do belong to social groups and have their own moral, political, and religious convictions as well as personal interests against which it may be difficult for them to speak (Edwards, 2005:35). Despite the fact that the large majority of the participants in this study claimed to first and foremost strive for neutrality, they all mentioned cases when this was either impossible or undesirable. Renata's story shows how she struggled with neutrality:

> You somehow have to switch off this *chelovecheskoe*, of course. But sometimes, often actually, I really feel compassion for a client. Because, you know, I get these clients, women who have been abused by their husbands, for example. And I really feel for them, because often these are very frightened women, afraid to say something. And sometimes, when the official part is over, when the client wants to stay with me, I leave the building, the client runs after me, starts to ask me something. In theory, we as interpreters should not give any information, we are not legal professionals in the end. But sometimes you would just really like her to cheer up, even if only a little, allow her to spread her wings. That is why I sometimes tell this type of clients "let's walk to the station together," to let them know that I am on their side… (Renata)

When explicitly asked to take sides, most interpreters tend to choose the person who paid, their client. In the words of one interpreter: "You arrived with them, so you are their person. That's it. Period." This contrasts with the participants in Foley's (2006) study, who denied having a relation with a 'client' as such. Instead, they claimed neither party owed their primary duty. Due to the time spend with the client before, during and after translation, the interpreter and the client engage in a specific trust relationship:

> As I am telling you this story, I suddenly realise that I still have more of a connection with the person who actually took me there […] usually you meet

before the interpreting anyway, talk a little, maybe sit down together, drink tea, have lunch, talk about what will be discussed later on. It rarely happens that you arrive, see the people and start your work straight away. (Tatiana)

The interpreters who participated in my study mentioned a wide variety of cases when their neutrality is put to the test. Some of these cases are rather dramatic, while others are absolutely ordinary and very common. An example:

I travelled to America with a group from Moscow. They held high positions, by the way. It used to work like this: whenever a Russian person would travel abroad, like a business trip, he had to indicate the dates of departure and return. His expenses will be paid for those days. So they asked me, those people who have a lot of money, asked: Marina, ask those Americans to change those dates of departure and return, to stamp those documents, so as to increase the number of days, so they will pay more money. These kind of moments, you see? So I went to those Americans with these documents. The Americans didn't even care. But it was very unpleasant, why would you do that? But I didn't refuse. (Marina)

5.3 The client's defensive arrangements

A lack of control

Interpreters are often labelled the only ones who are completely in control of the interpreted encounter. Coercive trust as introduced by Robb and Greenhalgh (2006:436) refers to situations in which a client has no alternative but to trust the interpreter (see 2.3). The inherent lack of mutual linguistic accessibility means that interpreters are the only ones present who are linguistically able to understand both sides. Clients are often explicitly made aware of this lack of control and their dependence on the interpreter when they are confronted with a document asking them to confirm that the interpreter did a good job. Especially in certain state institutions, such as in legal interpreting, clients are asked to sign such a form. This makes clients realise that the interpreter presents, in Anna's words, "an additional loophole" to them. When I joined Anna during an assignment at the migration office in August 2019, this is exactly what happened. The foreign client was asked to write and sign a declaration on a blank piece of paper.

Migration officer: He needs to write down that his words have been interpreted correctly and word-for-word. Something like 'my words have been interpreted correctly' and then he has to sign this.

Anna: 'How can you expect him to sign a document, stating that I interpreted correctly? After all, there is no way he can check this?

However, the fact that the client is unable to control the interpreter's performance does not mean he or she cannot try. The client therefore makes 'defensive arrangements'. This concept, introduced in section 2.4, allows for a 'tempering' or 'domestication' of unknown forces (Luhmann, 2014:1, as cited in Mühlfried, 2018:11). Giddens (2008), describing a similar reaction, refers to 'scepticism' or 'caution'. This way, the client can check if this trust is appropriate, if the interpreter does not violate it. It helps the client to circumvent Lumann's (1979) 'chaos and paralysing fear' that would come with a total lack of trust and instead work with an interpreter despite limited trust or outright distrust.

Martínez-Gómez's (2015) terms 'opaque visibility' and 'transparent visibility' introduced in 2.3 are useful here. Whenever the interpreter deviates in one way or another from the 'word for word' translation ideal, this can potentially be noticed by the client, but might not. When the interpreter's assumption of a primary participant role is obvious, Martínez-Gómez (2015) speaks of 'transparent visibility'. Opaque visibility is relevant in cases of not so obvious interventions. These interventions take place at the expected turn of talk for the interpreter and do not differ notably in length from the original utterance. However, as I will demonstrate below, length and turn of talk together explain only part of the client's defensive arrangements. In addition, also familiar sounding words, intonation and 'the visual picture' should be considered.
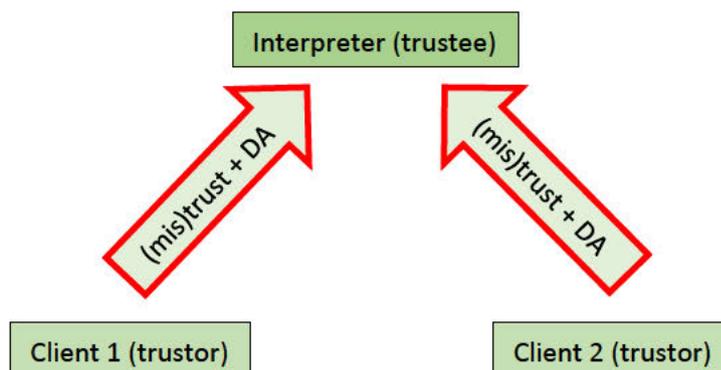

Figure 9: Focus on the client's defensive arrangements

The results of my fieldwork provide insights into the limited but nevertheless existing control of the client over the course of the interpreted encounter. There are several ways in which the client, even when he or she does not understand the language, can understand what is being said and thereby control the interpreter's performance. This section will describe the clients' practices aimed at the interpreter (highlighted in red in figure 9).

When the interpreter's words are checked

First and foremost, the language knowledge of the involved parties has an impact on the extent to which an interpreter is in the position to mediate trust. When none of the parties speak both languages, the interpreter's smoothening and softening go unnoticed. However, this idea of the interpreter as the only one speaking both languages is increasingly challenged. Besides high-level meetings where each side brings their own interpreters crosschecking each other's translation, interpreters of more widespread languages, particularly English, can hardly ever be sure that no one in the audience is tracking their translation.[63] This feeling of being 'checked upon' leads not only to more stress but also to a limited toolbox when it comes to trust negotiation. As an interpreter, you have less freedom to act as you seem fit:

> When there are people sitting there who know both languages, you have less freedom, because you need to interpret more accurately. And you worry more, more stress, of course. (Anastasiia)

Even when the client/audience does not know both languages, the mere fact that certain words sound the same in both languages may give them a (false) feeling of control. An example given by Svetlana concerned a meeting between a Russian professor and a German colleague, during which she provided Russian - English translation. While making an, in the eyes of the interpreter, inappropriate joke, the Russian professor used the word 'racist'. This word has a similar sound in both Russian and English, which meant that, even though she would have rather avoided this word in her translation, her interruption might not go unnoticed.

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[63] Both Nixon and Kissinger, for example, frequently refused to take a state interpreter with them during negotiations with the Soviet Union, relying solely on Soviet interpreters. However, as Baigorri-Jalón (2010:6) illustrates, Kissinger also noted that this was not as risky as it might seemed, since other members present, both from his and Brezhnev's side, spoke Russian and English.

The 'rhythm' of a correct translation

Another way in which the client might control the interpreter concerns the length of the provided translation. As soon as the translation deviates too much from the original utterance in the eyes of the client, this causes suspicion. In such a situation the client may doubt the interpreter's skills, and ask:

> [Imitating client's voice] Listen, why is your translation so short? He talked for so long, and you said so little. What's the problem? Did you not understand what he said? (Roman)

> When negotiations take the format of: spoke a sentence – interpreted a sentence - spoke a sentence – interpreted a sentence,[64] then as soon as you interpret more than one sentence, the other side watches and thinks that you are definitely somehow… Clearly you are agreeing on something, you are somehow conspiring. (Tatiana)

According to Andrei Falaleev, interpreter and interpreter-trainer (see 5.2), the ideal consecutive interpreter's translation is slightly shorter than the original (interpreter 1 in figure 10). When the translation is much longer (interpreter 2 in figure 10) or shorter (interpreter 3 in figure 10) than the original, this sparks suspicion. During the duration of this difference, (indicated by the black arrows in figure 10), suspicion rises. The longer this difference lasts, the more suspicious the client will feel.

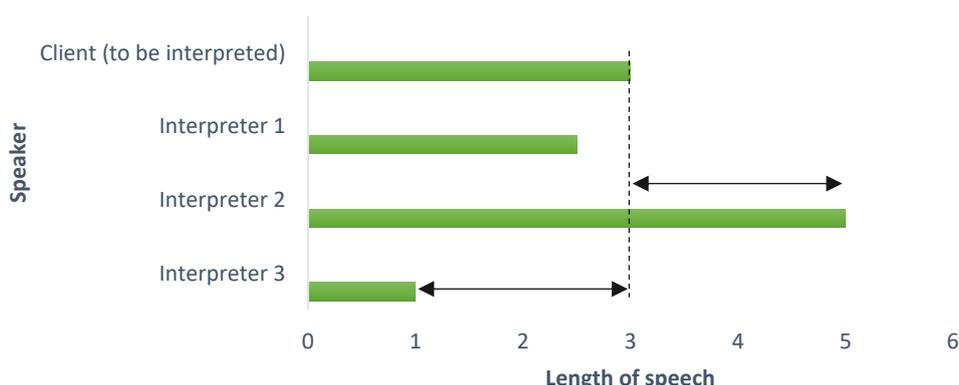**Length of interpretation in relation to the client's original speech**

Figure 10: Length of interpretation in relation to the original speech (Falaleev, 2019)

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[64] Although also practiced in other places, this way of interpreting is particularly popular in the Russian school of interpreting, as explained in section 1.2.

Another way in which the client, despite not understanding both languages, can exercise control is by comparing the extent to which the utterances of both parties relate to one another. The most obvious example in this case would be a question and answer; whenever a client receives an answer that somehow does not relate to his or her question, this sparks suspicion. Cases in which speech is followed up by action is another example. Aleksei, who has experience working for military engineers, explains how his translations were immediately verified by actions:

> Aleksei: They [the clients] can't [control], but we had machines [...] I would immediately be found out if I did not interpret something correctly.
> Eline: Why?
> Aleksei: Because they explain, how it works properly, and from the Indian side the crew must check it immediately [65]
> Eline: And if something doesn't work…
> Aleksei: Yes, then it's my fault, the fault of the interpreter.

As pointed out by Martínez-Gómez (2015), general turn taking should also be taken into account. If the interpreter repeatedly speaks up without directly following a client's utterances, this might be considered suspicious. An example here would be the interpreter asking for clarification. This will be noticed by the client, even when the question is not directed towards him or her, simply because it interferes with the expected rhythm of the translation. Since these brief conversations between interpreter and the other client are rarely interpreted back to the other client, this person might feel excluded. It goes without saying that when the question is directly aimed at the client, the client notices the question. As a result, the client might question the interpreter's language knowledge. Interpreters widely differ in their opinions concerning this practice of 'asking again' *(peresprashivat').* Should this be encouraged, since no interpreter can be all-knowing, one should not feel afraid to show his or her weaknesses and because a 'fake it until you make it' approach can get you into much more trouble? Or should it be avoided, as for example Palazhchenko mentioned in his lecture at St Petersburg State University (Palazhchenko, 2019), since it might harm the interpreter's professional reputation? Or, as Antonina formulated:

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[65]This part of the sentence, 'how it works properly, and from the Indian side the crew must check it immediately', was said in English.

You can never ask for clarification. Not that it's not allowed, but it is not desirable. You ask for clarification once, you ask twice, [which makes the client think:] Do you know anything at all? What are you doing here? (Antonina)

This shows how ethical dilemmas demand a decision from the interpreter based not only on the loss or gain of information or the loss or gain of the speaker's intentions. In real-life situations, decisions are also weighed according to the expected impact on the interpreters themselves. An interpreter might prefer not to ask for clarification for fear of damaging the relationship with the client that could result in losing an interpreting job. Ethically, such considerations might be seen as are unjustified, but in real life, they are not infrequent (Gile, 2009a). Recognising that an interpreter cannot be all-knowing could, however, also lead to increased trust. The response by Palazhchenko and the interpreter cited above contrasts with, for example, Rutten (2020) who states that acknowledging one's imperfection is what builds trust.

Figure 11: An interpreter copying gestures (from personal correspondence with participant)

"The client gets the visual image anyway"

Whether the interpreter's gestures should match those of the speaker or not is a question of debate. On the one hand, it could be argued that 'translating' another culture, is not always done best through language, as pointed out by Assad (2010). Writing about the representational discourse of ethnography, he states that under certain conditions a dramatic performance, dance or music might be a better match.

The more because these would all be *productions* of the original and not mere interpretations. Several interpreters mentioned that the synchronising of gestures and facial expressions goes automatically, that you are 'infected by the speaker's mood, whether you like it or not' (figure 11, from personal correspondence).

Another topic of discussion is whether the interpreter should interpret gestures by explaining them in words. An explanation might be relevant when, despite the visibility of the gesture, the client is unable to correctly interpret it due to a difference in cultural background. In this research project, this did not come up often, since Western European and Russian gestures do not differ that much (Hollan and Throop, 2011:4). However, the fact that the client can see and understand this 'visual image' without assistance of the interpreter also means that this limits the freedom of the interpreter to negotiate trust as he or she seems fit. When the interpreter does this anyway, this might result in suspicion. This becomes clear in the following excerpt:

> Yes, he bangs his fist on the table, yes, and then somehow... [the interpreter] translates this in a laid-back way. That's also not the right thing to do. [In the voice of the client]: "Come on, what did he say there? Come on, go ahead, speak up. What's he on about? [laughs] What's he not happy with?" [...] some sharp corners, in written translations you can, well, get around them. But in oral translation you can't because you look at a person, yes. And these emotions are reflected on this person's face, and you surely can't fool them either? (Antonina)

Client can hear and interpret intonation

Since the intonation of the speaker is audible to the client even without the work of an interpreter, a difference in intonation might lead to suspicion.

> [The clients] often get the impression that the interpreter deceives them. Because they can hear the intonation anyway, right? […] So he [the speaker] is all like [enthusiastic intonation, waves hands] and then there's he [the interpreter] [monotone, doesn't move hands]. And I know, that this often leads to people complaining that … Well, it makes them feel like they are listening to two people. (Kristina)

However, copying the intonation of the speaker might not always be possible, or desirable. In the case of aggressive intonation, for example, most interpreters are reluctant to adapt their own intonation to this tone. This discrepancy also causes suspicion. Nadezhda mentioned how she worked with a Russian oligarch for an

extended period of time. His way of speaking was so much intertwined with his personality that it was impossible for her to stay close to the original. Instead, after his emotional utterance, she would interpret quietly, thereby making the difference so big that it simply had to be noticed by the other party. Or, as she said, "it turned into a show":

> Later that just became a kind of game. We often performed together, like a pair of clowns, you know, the one big, old and chubby, the other one small and timid.
> [with loud, angry, masculine voice] "Say it just the way I said it!"
> [with her own voice] "No, I won't say it that way, because that's not the way they would say it [here]"
> [again with the voice of the client] "I'm the one here who decides how things are said, say it!"
> We would quarrel, sometimes people just died of laughter. (Nadezhda)

Views differ on the extent to which the expected neutrality of an interpreter relates to the above-mentioned issues. Does a neutral interpreter copy intonation, gestures, timbre etc. of the speaker? Or does he or she take a step back and should always be a little 'more neutral' then the speaker? In the next part of this chapter, where I discuss the interpreter's response to the client's 'defensive arrangements', this will be discussed in more detail.

5.4 Performing trustworthiness: Responses to defensive arrangements

The role of the stranger

> You need to know what kind of people you are working with. If you manage to guess this right, within five minutes you are completely one of them [*svoi chelovek*] (paraphrased) (Tamara)

As mentioned in the introduction, the interpreter can be described as a 'professional stranger' who engages with people from a different speech community on a daily basis. Just like the anthropologist (see methods chapter), the interpreter needs to establish rapport (Lai and Mulayim, 2014). In order to enter interactions into which strangers would not usually be allowed, the interpreter needs to gain the trust of the other participants (Angelelli, 2004b), or become *svoi*, as Tamara's quotation above illustrates. *Svoi* connotates belonging, it can be viewed as the very opposite of the 'stranger', 'foreigner' or 'outsider' (called '*chuzhoi*' in Russian). In their entry on '*Nash chelovek*' in the *Global Encyclopeadia of Informality*, Grødeland and Holmes (2018)

dive into the connotations of the term *svoi* and conclude that it is a highly ambiguous term. The authors state that this ambiguity is an essential feature of the sense of belonging. Belonging is defined by context and hard to pin down in a general way. What is important to note here is that *svoi* does not necessarily concern national or political boundaries. Instead of 'the common people' vs 'the state', it refers to a sociality of 'us', of 'normal people' (Yurchak, 2005:103). Pesmen (2000:165) links this sociality to speech, by describing *svoi* as someone with whom you can talk freely, without worrying that your words might be used against you. Yurchak (2005:111) similarly refers to the importance of speaking 'in a friendly manner' (*po-druzheski*) to be recognised as *svoi,* highlighting the concept's performative aspect. This performance of *svoi* overlaps with the performance of trustworthiness as described in trust research, which I will turn to next.

Interpreters aim to become *svoi* through the active 'performance of trustworthiness' – a striving towards opaque visibility and avoiding interventions that would fall within the category of transparent visibility. These behavioural displays of trust implying actions help to create the cognitive platform of trust: both Luhmann (In Lewis and Weigert, 1985) and Gambetta (1990a) explain how we, when we see others acting in ways that imply that they trust us, become more disposed to reciprocate by trusting in them more. This is due to the self-reinforcing nature of both trust and distrust: trust usually generates trust in those who interact with us, just like distrust tends to provoke reciprocal distrust (Hosking, 2014). Interpreters performing their trust in the client have the minimal expectation that this client does not violate their trust (giving the interpreter a hard time by, for example, speaking fast, without breaks, etc.[66]), but also the maximum expectation that the client will trust the interpreter in return. In this way, 'performing trustworthiness' is linked to the client's 'defensive arrangements' described earlier (figure 12).

In his work on hospitality, Pitt-Rivers (1977) describes how the entry of an outsider into any group is commonly the occasion for 'an ordeal of some sort'. Based on experiences of the anthropologist Franz Boas, Pitt-Rivers explains how this ordeal can be seen as

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[66] Here the difference in consecutive interpreting styles mentioned in 1.2 could also play a role.

a type of initiation rite. The stranger is evaluated against the standards of the community. To a certain extent, the defensive arrangements described above fulfil a similar function: they are most prevalent when the relationship is characterised by mistrust and fade into the background once trust prevails. According to Pitt-Rivers (1977), the initiation rites are followed by a decision by the host community on the extent to which the stranger possesses the necessary knowledge of the culture in order to behave correctly and make evaluations of conduct by their standards. These practices of hospitality serve to neutralise the radical otherness of the stranger and thus help to manage the common distrust of outsiders (Carey, 2017). In order to 'pass' such an 'initiation', one needs some knowledge of face-work and some experience in its use. In our society, this kind of capacity is sometimes called tact, savoir-faire, diplomacy, or social skill. Russian has adopted the cognate *nou-khau* (*ноу-хау*, from the English 'know-how'). In the next sections, I will demonstrate how knowledge of the social and cultural components of a clients' personal trust history (see 4.2) help the interpreter to 'perform trustworthiness' in a context-appropriate way.
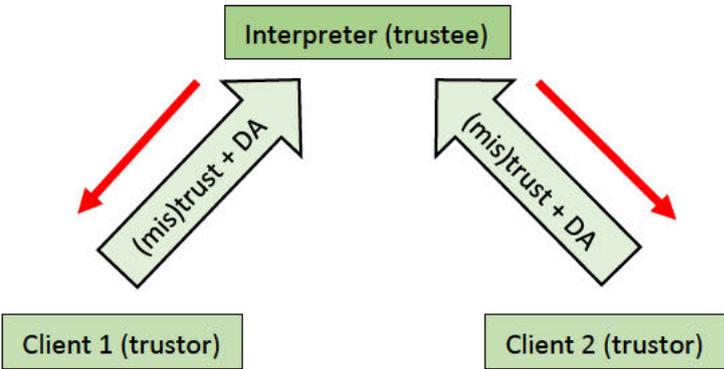
Figure 12: Performing trustworthiness as a response to the clients' defensive arrangements

It is important to note here that although the concept of the stranger is a productive one for the purpose of analysis, the focus should be on 'strangeness' and the way this is negotiated by interpreters. Although George Simmel (1950:407) starts with the characteristics of the "the potential wanderer" the most important concept of his work is "strangeness' . Emphasis is placed not so much on a person but instead on a social phenomenon, a process taking place in a social, cultural and communicational context. Giddens (2008) explains how, with the coming of modernity, the term 'stranger' takes

on new meanings. Instead of the practices studies by Boas and analysed by Pitt-Rivers mentioned above, in modern urban life people continuously interact with others who are strangers to them. This links back to Simmel's (1950) comments on a reduced need for trust in developed bureaucracies, cited in section 4.3. Additionally, 'the stranger' is not always a person from a complete other community or country, as in Pitt-Rivers' example. According to Carey (2017), "a trace of strangeness […] easily enters into even the most intimate relationships" (Simmel, 1950:406, as cited in Carey, 2017).

Although in anthropology encounters with 'strangeness' have been described in a holistic way, incorporating both verbal and nonverbal communication, this has not always been the case in studies of speech across other disciplines. According to Zagar Galvão and Galhano Rodrigues (2015), speech research in the 1950s and 1960s was characterised by a sharp separation between the verbal and the nonverbal channel. These channels were seen as fulfilling different functions: whereas the verbal one would be responsible for conveying referential content, the nonverbal one was believed to communicate affective and social aspects. Following specific studies on gesture, the last decades of the 20th century witnessed the growth of a new holistic, multimodal paradigm, which regarded speech and body movements as manifestations of the same underlying system. According to Zagar Galvão and Galhano Rodrigues (2015:280), one of the first to recognise the multimodality of speech and applying this to interpreting was Fernando Poyatos, who defined the concept of speech as a "triple audio-visual reality made up of verbal language, paralanguage and kinesics." 'Paralanguage' refers to vocal elements such as intonation, voice frequency, pauses, stress and rhythm (Poyatos, 1997:249, as cited in Zagar Galvão and Galhano Rodrigues, 2015:280). Since then, several studies have pointed to the importance of visual access between interpreters and speakers. An example is Bühler's (1985:53, as cited in Zagar Galvão and Galhano Rodrigues, 2015:281) research finding that the visual connection helped interpreters to not feel like "mere translation machines" working "in a vacuum." However, the majority of these studies are based on simultaneous interpreting. Zagar Galvão and Galhano Rodrigues (2015:281) mention that nonverbal modalities in what he terms 'dialogue interpreting', the main focus of this study, have only recently become an object of systematic study.

For some interpreters, being mistaken for someone specifically educated and/or employed in their client's field is one of the best compliments they can receive. Getting asked "For how long have you been working for Chanel?" or being told that "You must have a degree in engineering, we immediately noticed the difference" was seen as the ultimate success by several participants. In this section, I will look at practices of interpreters who, in their role of professional strangers, actively try to get rid of their 'strangeness'. These practices cover a wide range in which the verbal and non-verbal are intertwined. How does the interpreter, in the role of trustee, encourages the trustor to trust him or her? In other words: how does he or she establish, maintain and restore trust in himself/herself?

Encapsulated interest

In his (2005) article, Hardin introduces the phenomenon of 'encapsulated interest'. Grounded in an assumption that the potentially trusted person has an interest in maintaining a relationship with the trustor, he sees trust as an extension or indirect manifestation of one's own self-interest. Shared interests mean that when the trustee acts in his or her own interest, he or she serves the interest of the trustor as well (Hardin, 2006:17). He summarises it as follows:

> I trust you because I think it is in your interest to take my interests seriously … You value the continuation of our relationship, and you therefore have your own interest in taking my interests into account. That is, you encapsulate my interests in your own interests (Hardin, as cited in Hosking, 2014:34).

Interpreters act in specific ways to demonstrate/perform this shared interest. Sometimes this means a direct expression of interest:

> People really like it when the interpreter shows an interest in their theme. That is, if you tell the organisers something like, 'Don't you think so-and-so gave a very interesting presentation today?' Look, that will build trust. (Ekaterina)

However, much more common are indirect ways of demonstrating interest and commitment. Together, these practices can be referred to as 'performing trustworthiness'. Below I will explore the most widespread ones.

"You need to speak *their* language"

First and foremost, interpreters overwhelmingly stated that their language is what allows them to become 'one of us' in the eyes of their clients. The following quotation illustrates this:

> They [the clients] believe that we somehow want to help them. They assume that since we know the language, we, maybe, are on their side. (Marina)

A lot has been written on the role of language as a key part of national identity (e.g., Bellos, 2011). Pitt-Rivers(1977) notes that the speaking of a foreign language is what classifies 'strangeness'. However, in the case of interpreting not just any language will do. Frequently a specific language is required so as to not be 'found out', in which case a 'reverse Geertzian moment' (see 4.2) is assumed to cause a dramatic drop in trust. In his (2009a) research, Gile mentions in passing that the using of correct terminology inspires confidence, whereas incorrect terminology breeds distrust in the interpreter's expertise and reliability. The interpreters who participated in my study mentioned over and over again that "you need to speak *their* language," referring to a constant drive to master professional jargon in order to be trusted by their clients.

> It's a kind of professional jargon, and if you speak it, they [the clients] get the impression that this interpreter is *svoi.* (Irina)

Andrei provided two examples of such Geertzian moments in two of the fields in which he works: oil and gas as well as hairdressing. He explained how knowing the professional jargon for the word 'baby hair' (*vual'* in Russian) immediately makes you *svoi*, implying a sudden increase in trust. On the other hand, during his work for oil and gas companies, Andrei noted that the professional jargon required a particular stress on the words 'to spill oil', different from what is common in Russian (they say ***roz****liv nefti*, instead of the common Russian *roz**liv ne**fti*, bold font indicating stress). Although not placing the stress the right way does not hamper understanding in any way, still the interpreter immediately marks him or herself as a stranger, thereby compromising trust. Additionally, interpreters commented that also class register plays a key role in gaining trust. Whenever clients would hear the class-appropriate form of 'enjoy your meal' this reinforces trust, the feeling of being 'amongst one's own people'. Although hearing 'authentic Russian speech' was several times stressed as more trustworthy than hearing that same language with an accent, also the type of foreign language

matters. One interpreter mentioned, for example, the importance of speaking with the appropriate Flemish accent (instead of a Dutch one) when working in Flanders and vice versa. Finally, several interpreters pointed to a Russian preference for British English over American English.

Duration of cooperation

Putnam (1995:665, as cited in Sztompka, 1999) states that the more we connect with other people, the more we trust them, and vice versa (see 2.4). The gradual accumulation of positive trusting experience of the parties involved shapes their personal trust histories, making them more likely to trust in the future (4.2). Over time, interpreters can develop a 'thick-relationship' with their client, allowing the interpreter to enter the small circle of people among whom a person knows whom he or she can trust for what (figure 6). The longer the working relationship, the better the interpreter gets a picture of the goals of the client and his or her own role in reaching them. The client, in turn, tends increasingly to involve the interpreter in the process over time. Contrary to common belief (even among interpreters), this happens at all levels of the interpreting profession. Even at high level diplomatic meetings, where everything is 'very official', leaving the interpreter hardly any room for manoeuvre, interpreters engage in thick relationships (see 4.3). Evidence can be found in the biographies of famous interpreters, who worked with the same heads of state for years. Brezhnev's words were 'softened and covered [...] in fog' by his interpreter Sukhodrev (Sukhodrev, 2008:332) and interpreter Min'iar-Beloruchev 'smoothened' Khrushchev's (Min'iar-Beloruchev, 1999:86). Relationships between the interpreter and the client, ranging from formal and distanced to long term friendships characterised by mutual intimacy, will be explored in the next chapter.

The 'packaging': Intonation and voice

As noted in the previous section on the client's 'defensive arrangements', the client can hear and interpret intonation. How the interpreter should deal with this level of control in order to 'perform trustworthiness' turned out to be a rather controversial topic during the interviews. The reason for this relates to the vague understanding of what neutrality means in practice. Is a 'neutral intonation' a monotonous one? Or would neutrality here mean a translation produced with an intonation mimicking that of the

speaker? And if the interpreter interprets negotiations between two speakers with strongly diverging intonations, should he or she switch back and forth, almost as if the interpreter were a true voice actor? These questions of neutrality resemble the larger debate on neutrality presented in section 5.2: does neutrality mean that the interpreter should not let his or her own views, prejudices or interests colour the translation, or is this no problem as long as it exercised equally in relation to both participants?

One day I joined Kristina for a day at work. She interpreted for a group of psychologists attending a training session taught by a charismatic foreign lecturer. During the break, one of the participants approached me. He told me that an interpreter needs to be familiar with his work as a psychologist (*v teme*) in order to interpret their training. However, he stressed, "the interpreter should not be *too* professional." When I asked what he meant by this, he clarified this as follows: (paraphrased)

> Before Kristina, we had a very professional interpreter. But I did not like her way of working at all. She interpreted like a robot. The interpreter should interpret at the same level as the speaker, these two people are like actors in a show who need to be tuned to one another. That is much easier for the listeners. The previous interpreter was like a tree. As a listener, you had to keep switching: tree – actor – tree – actor. Very tiring, very difficult. When the speaker talks like a tree, that would be fine, in that case it fits. When the speaker's a tree [clasps hands to hips, makes monotone sound: blah blah blah] and the interpreter is a tree [repeats move], that's ok. It's the switching that's exhausting.

This illustrates that 'listening to two people' is considered undesirable. The ideal of the 'invisible' interpreter resonates here in an unexpected way: invisibility (or rather inaudibility here) means a close copy of the speaker's intonation, not so much a 'neutral' one. The following remark was made by an interpreter who is fond of the 'interpreter-as-machine' approach, but has a view of neutrality corresponding to the one of the people cited above:

> My interpreting behaviour is that I want to interpret as literally as possible. This goes as far as that I unconsciously imitate the intonation and the… well, the timbre or something, so a certain… the same tone, pace and hardness. (Vladimir)

According to Gile (2009a) the 'packaging' can have much weight in the assessment of interpreting quality. Clients often assess an interpreter's performance as 'very good' in spite of the fact that a colleague interpreter noticed various, even major, mistakes. This

is because the interpreter's voice and self-assured delivery have a confidence-inspiring effect. The same holds the other way around: beginning interpreters with a somewhat hesitant voice are often mistrusted by delegates notwithstanding the faithful, clear and terminologically correct content of their speech (Giles, 2009a:39). The relation between trust and the 'packaging' becomes especially critical in court interpreting, where tone of voice can substantially affect the proceedings. Intentionality and blame are attributed not only by what is been said in court, but by the ways in which things are said. Powerful vs. powerless speech styles in the courtroom affect the way in which speakers are perceived in terms of honesty and credibility. This 'pragmatic intent of an utterance' can be altered by the interpreter, who can render powerful speech with powerless speech and vice versa (Gaida, 1999:18).

Finally, several interpreters mentioned that low pitched voices are seen as more trustworthy by their clients. Or, in the words of a young female interpreter, "[w]henever I speak with a lower timbre, there're less suspicious looks." Schlesifer (2020), writing about her own experiences as a conference interpreter, similarly makes the link between a low-pitched voice and trust. She notes how, during her studies, she was warned that interpretations rendered in a high-pitched voice are less trustworthy to many listeners than words spoken in a lower voice. In her article, Schlesinger connects this desirable low-pitched voice to older age. Instead of the link to age, some participants of this study saw a low-pitched voice as masculine, and therefore more trustworthy than female voices. The role of gender and age in the everyday life of interpreters will be subject to more detailed analysis in chapter 7.

The interpreter's uniform

> Whether people trust or distrust you can be determined the very moment you walk into the room. (Tatiana)

This 'trust at first sight', or '*prima facie* trust' - the immediate position (at first sight) of either trust or distrust that an individual agent expresses in the actual meeting with others - is key (Pedersen, 2015). The majority of participants in this study stressed the important role clothes play in their professional life. They recall that during their studies, they were told that the interpreter should be dressed based on the 'interpreter as a machine' model.

> Textbooks all wrote that the interpreter is a machine. You should be invisible. […] You should always be dressed in a suit, preferably of black, grey or blue colour. (Ekaterina)

The ideal of the robot-interpreter in a suit is frequently the prevailing one for clients as well. Ekaterina, who also teaches interpreting at university, told me how she warns her students to be careful when asking their employer for instructions on what to wear. The employer might simply answer that you should appear in a suit, since that is what is generally considered 'the right answer'. Even when, according to Ekaterina, "He doesn't need you in a suit." As soon as interpreters left the university, they quickly realised that although a suit can open doors, for example in diplomatic interpreting, it closes others. Ekaterina's (paraphrased) story illustrates this.

> When I arrived at the seminar for social workers, I was wearing a suit, like a machine [laughs], the person 'who isn't there'. This is very uncomfortable. You're at this seminar about social work, where difficult situations are being discussed, such as sexual violence. The social workers are women in their 50s and the trainer is a young American. Everyone is feeling highly uncomfortable. The last thing they need in this room is a person in a suit, who is allegedly 'not there'. As I am interpreting, I start to realise that it just doesn't work, that nothing is working at all. I interpret the text correctly, but they do not understand. The trainer doesn't get the response he wants, and they [the women] do not even understand what I am saying. And somewhere in this process, I suddenly realised that I am behaving as if I were interpreting for the Russian Federal Council, while there's no Council at all. So during the break I took off my suit jacket. This alone caused some modest improvement [laughs]. The next day I arrived in jeans with a hole in them, and everything just started to work out wonderfully.

What this story illustrates, is the need to 'fit in'. There are no strict rules, dressing 'correctly' means something different every time. This idea that the interpreter needs to do everything in order to be perfect for a particular interpreting job goes to extremes. Nikolai explained how he had a period during which he went to work with a shaved head. He quickly realised that this, in his words, "scared people," so he grew his hair back to make his clients feel more comfortable. Other interpreters stressed the importance of smell: especially in the case of chuchotage (whispered interpreting), the interpreter gets physically close to the client. During our conversations, interpreters gave advice ranging from 'always take toothbrush and toothpaste with you' and when to wash your hair in order to avoid strong shampoo smalls, to long lists of what to eat

and not eat before and during interpreting. As these examples illustrate, this preoccupation with looks can border on obsession, affecting both the interpreter as well as clients:

> I was working […] for a translation agency that send me a memo on the way I should look, what is and isn't allowed. A list of around half an A4 page: skin coloured tights, heels no higher than 3 centimetres, transparent nail polish, modest make-up… At some point one might get angry: maybe I can decide this for myself? But on the other hand, I understand that this actually is important. Because you are a professional and you should look accordingly. Nobody [at university] ever talked about these things at all. (Tatiana)

But it does not end here; accessorises may also spark suspicion and can either build trust or reveal a lack of knowledge of cultural norms of behaviour. In the following fragment, Galina talks about these cultural sensitivities in relation to one of her colleagues:

> She [the colleague] came to work with her handbag and a plastic bag […] and on the fourth day the [foreigners] asked me, 'why does she always walk around with that plastic bag?' Turned out that she gave them a really strange impression, as if she was going to the supermarket. These things sometimes happen... and you understand that for her this [carrying a plastic bag to work] is normal, to put away your umbrella or something, I mean in Russia this is normal. And those [foreigners] did not understand this at all. Why would you arrive with a plastic bag, you're working after all? (Galina)

What it boils down to, is that building trust means doing more than expected. Once you make that extra effort, it makes the future collaboration more pleasant. Being trusted by his or her clients gives the interpreter a certain freedom:

> When they scan you and identify you as a completely adequate person – it's much easier for you to work. The client is relaxed. (Tamara)

5.5 Conclusion

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with Russian interpreters, I have shown how the control of the interpreter is more limited than usually assumed. On the other hand, the control of the client is not absent: the client has (mostly non-linguistic) means to check the interpreter. As a result, dependency during the interpreted encounter is mutual, which makes trust key. Next, the interpreter is aware of the ways that his or her work is being checked by the client. The interpreter therefore actively tries to build trust and

avoids sparking mistrust, practices I referred to as 'performing trustworthiness'. This 'performance' differs according to social and cultural context: a sensitivity towards a person's personal trust history determines which language, accent, intonation, clothes etc. are likely to contribute to building a trust relationship. Once interpreters gain the trust of their clients, it is much easier for them to work, as Tamara's quotation above illustrates. This gives the interpreter the freedom to 'smoothen and soften' as he or she deems fit. Or, in Roman's words, you then are 'the king of the conference'. This link between gaining trust and subsequent mediation is also illustrated by an excerpt from Angelelli's (2004a:109) ethnographic study, carried out with interpreters working in a US hospital. In the following lines, the author describes Annette, one of the participating interpreters:

> [Annette] does a lot of editing, because she considers this to be her responsibility. She can do this because of trust. But trust is not merely given to her; she works for it, actively seeking it.

After this this chapter has shown what this 'working for trust' and 'seeking trust' means in practice, the next chapter will focus on practices of smoothening and softening (partly corresponding to the 'editing' in the quotation above). It explores the interpreter's role as a mediator, on the interpreter's abilities to influence the trust relationship between clients.

Chapter 6. The interpreter as mediator

6.1 Introduction

> My task is to make them 'fall in love'. Because if they fall in love, […] if those relationships emerge, that harmony, then it works. And then everything else will follow automatically from there. (Valentina)

The Latin origins of the word 'interpreter'[67], '*inter-pres*', point to the interpreter's role as an intermediary. They have been associated with '*inter partes*', designating the human mediator positioned between two sides or parties (Pöchhacker, 2008b). The role of such an intermediary has been studied under different labels. Examples mentioned by Wadensjö (1998:62–68) and Roberts (1997:13–14, as cited in Pöchhacker, 2008b:13) are the 'middleman', 'broker', 'go-between', 'gatekeeper', 'facilitator', 'agent', 'advocate' or 'conciliator'. Several authors have classified these different kinds of intermediaries along a continuum of active involvement and intervention, ranging from the least involved, such as a neutral messenger, to the most involved, such as a negotiator (Pöchhacker, 2008b).

For an interpreter, this role of the intermediary is unavoidable. First of all because, as Simmel (1964, cited in Wadensjö, 1998:11) points out, whenever three elements interact, each element operates as an intermediary between the other two. This intermediary simultaneously unites and separates. In the case of the interpreter, their unavoidable role as a mediator also takes a second form: the form of the cultural mediator. It is impossible and usually even undesirable to translate word-for-word. Instead, interpreters are instructed to interpret 'ideas', 'convey meaning' between two 'speech communities' (Angelelli, 2000; Roy, 2000). The term 'speech community', coined by Hymes, is a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of a least one linguistic variety. Interpreters therefore must be members of at least the two speech communities represented by the primary participants, although the degree of fluency of the interpreter as a speaker

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[67] As in many other (Romance) languages.

of a particular speech community might vary, depending on experience (Angelelli, 2000). This implies that the interpreter should be aware that not every aspect of a community's cultural assumptions and beliefs are necessarily shared by all members; some might not be aware of what acting appropriately means in the other speech community (Roy, 2000).

Simmel (1950:311-312) states that everything that we communicate to another individual by means of words or perhaps in another fashion, even the most subjective, impulsive, intimate matters, is just a selection from the 'psychological-real whole'. We hardly ever say directly what we mean, because such an absolutely exact report (absolutely exact in terms of content and sequence) would "drive everybody into the insane asylum" (Simmel, 1950:312). Therefore, 'softening and smoothening' are key elements of communication. According to Nagel (2002:6) this is not dishonest, because "the conventions that govern them are generally known." However, conventions expected and understood well in one milieu need not have the same implications in another (Hardin, 2006). Instead of referring to conventions, Hardin (2006) refers to 'the niceties which we use to cover our true feelings'. Despite the slightly dishonest nature of these 'niceties' they are 'civilizing' - they invite others to take us to be civil and quite likely cooperative. Hardin (2002:95) links this directly to trust: "[Y]our willingness to say polite things to me, whom you may dislike or otherwise harshly judge, may be a clue to how committed you are likely to be to fulfilling some agreement we make. By covering your feelings, you focus on the benefits from dealing with me, and you give yourself reason for trustworthiness in our dealings." The interpreter is aware of these 'niceties' in two different cultural and linguistic contexts and navigates between these two worlds.

After having explored the relationship between the client and the interpreter in the previous chapter, this chapter concentrates on the way the interpreter can facilitate trust between clients. I focus on the interpreter's practices meant to, in interpreters' own words, 'smoothen and soften' communication in order to increase trust between their clients (red line in figure 13). Generally, 'smoothening' is used to find a way out of a tense situation, while 'softening' refers to softening a particular sentence or gesture in translation (although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably). In this chapter, I provide answers to three of my research questions: (1) In which situations

do interpreters feel friction between neutrality and loyalty/empathy? (2) What kinds of tactics are accessible to interpreters in such situations? (3) And why do interpreters do what they do? (see 1.3 for the full research questions). The conclusion summarises the key findings of this chapter and forms a bridge to the next.

6.2 What and when to smoothen and soften?

Below, I will outline the situations in which interpreters feel the need to 'soften' or 'smoothen'. During both interviews and participant observation, interpreters provided me with a rich collection of situations in which a 'word-for-word' translation was not only (nearly) impossible, but even undesirable. There has been extensive research on the translation of proverbs, citations from the Bible, films, poetry and other 'cultural untranslatables' (see Bellos, 2011 for an overview). The participants in this study had plenty of examples in which they referred to this almost impossible side of their job. Whereas the translator of a written text can take the time to come up with a suitable equivalent, the interpreter has to improvise on the spot. This results in stress, anxiety and unavoidable blunders. However, this thesis is not so much concerned with the (un)translatability of cultural realities as such, but with the implications of mediation for the trust relations of the interpreted encounter instead. That has been used as a guide when structuring the text below. The situations discussed below are all cases that were described with explicit use of the words 'smoothen' and/or 'soften'. These situations were grouped and linked to other parts of the fieldwork related to comparable situations.

In the literature on interpreting, a certain 'fuzziness' can be noted when one tries to understand the trust relation between the interpreter and his or her clients. The participants in this study similarly referred to the intuitive aspect of their profession. Depending on the context of the meeting and the participants, interpreters 'feel' how much softening and smoothening is required from their side. When asked how they know when to soften, when to smoothen, several interpreters answered that:

> I was led by some kind of inner intuition, telling me what should be softened and what shouldn't. (Anna)

In one of the main monographs published on interpreting, Roy (2000:44) also refers to intuition by stating that "(i)nterpreters *instinctively* mould their behaviour and the nature of their participation around [the] dimensions of interaction [ranging from dialogues to monologues] between and among participants." Whether to 'smoothen' or 'soften' is often up to the interpreter (or client, see 6.3); it is context-specific and personal to such an extent that it is difficult to make generalisations. Certain factors that influence interpreters' decisions can nevertheless be identified. These will be dealt with in more detail in this section.

Interpreter (trustee)

(mis)trust + DA

(mis)trust + DA

Client 1 (trustor)   Client 2 (trustor)
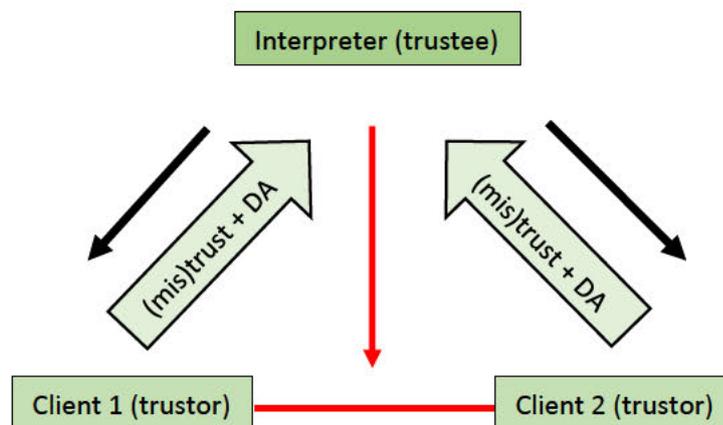
Figure 13: The interpreter can influence the trust relation between clients

Type of interpreting

When trying to grasp the range of cases in which an interpreter experienced the conscious or unconscious need to 'smoothen' or 'soften', one should first consider the type of interpreting. Due to the direct personal contact, interpreting *po-chelovecheski* happens more during 'face-to-face interpreting' and less during simultaneous conference interpreting (Wadensjö, 1998). In face-to-face interpreting, the contact between the client and the interpreter is rarely limited to the interpreted encounter itself. Usually people meet beforehand, during the breaks and afterwards. Especially when the interpreter and the client travel together, a lot of time is spent on the road. As a result, trust-building between the two is partly established before, during and after the interpreted speech. The interpreter's influence on the trust between clients similarly extends beyond the formal negotiations. Even when room for trust-building is restricted during the interpreting itself (for example in court), interpreters can nevertheless find a way to establish trust before or after the events, or during breaks.

The case from the UK below provides a telling example. Lidiia told me how she interpreted for a woman in court. This woman had suffered from domestic violence from her former partner and was now about to lose her only child due to concerns for the child's safety. Although Lidiia could not do much for this woman during the court proceedings, she built a trust relationship with her afterwards:

> First of all, I found her an agency. I was very satisfied with myself. I found a shelter for her, where she moved to in the end. I drove her to this refuge in my own car. It was just such a poignant case. They wanted to take away that girl, an 8-year-old girl, so far away from home! (*v chuzhoi strane!*) Guys, come on! Think about it! What are you doing? I mean, they don't want to, they just want the best for them. But they want it by the letter of the law (*po bukve zakona*). This child is in danger, that means we take the child from her parents and give her to an unfamiliar foster family. The child doesn't speak English! She came here three months ago with that mother. She loves her mother, you, well, think again! What are you doing? And you know how this is done? A whole group meets: people from healthcare, the police, the school, a psychologist, the social service. Around ten people are sitting around this table. And then there's this mother. And they tell her: 'Well, we accuse you of neglect. Of not taking care of your child'. At the time, there was a wonderful headteacher of the school that the girl attended. She said: 'Nothing of the kind. This child is always dressed, clean, well taken care of, happy. How can you speak of neglect?' It's just that they don't have another category. They've got the category 'neglect', so they write down 'neglect'. And I just couldn't. I have to admit, I was just horrified, so I of course, well, what I did it is completely prohibited. I mean, keeping in touch with her afterwards… it's just that she didn't live far from here. And somehow, I, well, as I said, I just really helped her. That was absolutely beyond my authority. Just because I was furious the way it was done. (Lidiia)

Furthermore, this example gives insights into interpreter's influence on the power relationship between the different parties involved. In contrast to more conventional views on neutrality, Prunč and Setton (2015) note that several authors in the field of community interpreting have asserted that, when personal and immediate medical, legal or humanitarian interests are at stake for a witness, a suspect, a defendant or an applicant for asylum who may not know the conventions, or who has much less information than their interlocutors, the interpreter can take on a more proactive role. In these cases, "some degree of intervention and/or advocacy on the part of the interpreter may be ethically warranted as the best way of ensuring transparent, effective communication" (Angelelli, 2003; Barsky, 1996, in Prunč and Setton, 2015:275).

Additionally, the overall predictability of the event influences the approach to trust taken by the interpreter. Pederson (2015) attempts to explain trust actions, attitudes, and beliefs as unfolding in a continuum that stretches from the conditioned reliance in the routines of everyday life to the willed engagement of trust in others where the agent is very much aware of the risks involved. The agent's attitude of *prima facie* trust/distrust toward others may therefore vary greatly depending on whether he or she interacts in a familiar social setting with likeminded people or when he or she is placed in an unfamiliar setting and required to interact with people with different mindsets (Pedersen, 2015). The following excerpt, from personal correspondence, demonstrates how Alina strives for invisibility during highly regulated 'protocol' events:

> Emotions or real conflicts rarely occur at those type of events, they have a very clear structure, which is in some way easier than more informal events, when you don't know what to expect […] During those [formal] meetings I just try to behave as professional as possible, not to get in anyone's way. I sit on the right side of the person for whom I interpret and try to become as invisible as possible. (Alina)

When speech content and form can compromise trust

One of the first type of situations requiring intervention from the side of the interpreter, brought up by the vast majority of participants, were jokes (in Russian: *shutka, anekdot*). The joke is a clear example of a case during which suspicion directed towards the interpreter can easily emerge. An intervention from the interpreter's side runs the risk of compromising 'transparent visibility' (Martínez-Gómez, 2015). As discussed in the previous section, the client expects a certain response from the other party. In the case of a joke, he or she expects a laugh (see 5.3). In order to avoid suspicion, the other party *has* to laugh. Not translating is therefore not an option. The combination of creative translation on the spot and the fact that the audience *has* to show a matching response turns a joke into dangerous territory for the interpreter.

The joke presents a critical point in the development of a trust relation between clients. A well-placed joke can be a real accelerator of a trust relationship (a 'Geertzian moment'), whereas a wrong choice can mean the immediate end of cooperation. Humour can only do its bonding work when the speaker's intent and the listeners uptake match. The linguistic and cultural barriers in an interpreted encounter complicate this match. What makes is difficult for the interpreter is that often jokes seen

as accelerating trust by the client are not viewed by the interpreter as such. Quite the opposite: the interpreter might realise that this joke can ruin the cooperation:

> I understand that it's better not to tell this person this [joke]. So I reconsider, reformulate. Find a similar joke, make one up. I don't know, maybe something else. I somehow try to… […] keep this balance. So as to not shatter the negotiations. Because shattering them could happen just like that. (Roman)

According to several interpreters, a Russian client, predominantly in business, predominantly male, tends to see joking as a way to establish a 'brotherly connection' (*bratskoe otnoshenie*) with his potential partners. This finding is supported by research that focusses on humour's interpersonal aspects. Besides humour's function to entertain others and create a positive self-image of the person joking, humour can contribute to the construction and maintaining of group cohesion and identity. Shardakova (2013:209) refers to this type of humour as 'bonding humour', which "fosters transitions from 'I' to 'we'." Interpreters explained to me how their clients consider joking as part of a specific Russian form of doing business. Particularly during the more informal parts of business trips, such as lunches or dinners, telling jokes is a way of demonstrating that one feels comfortable and trusts the other party. In the words of one interpreter, it is a way of indicating that 'I am among one's own people' (*ia so svoimi*, from the word *svoi*). Interpreters in my study stressed the adverse effect of what they consider 'specifically Russian jokes' and the discomfort they feel when the joke could be seen as sexist, racist, antisemitic or simply not funny for other reasons. The quotation below illustrates this feeling of responsibility, of protecting your client against an awkward situation and judging glances:

> Because I know that this old man is a good person. It's just his way of joking! And, understandably, I correct this. All his jokes (*shutki*), about nurses who used to wear short uniforms making patients recover quicker, with so much beauty around… Here I also had to somehow generalise, because if I translate this directly, they will think that he is some kind of a crazy person. Especially if you're talking about Europe, where these relations are much more strictly regulated. (Svetlana)

Politically incorrect speech might also be considered unfit by the interpreter in normal conversation, not only in jokes. Interpreters mentioned cases when a client starts a conversation on a theme of which the interpreter knows that it will be a sensitive topic

for the other party. Examples mentioned were, amongst others, money, religion, homosexuality and the current role of Russia in Ukraine.

Another situation in which speech might be considered as compromising trust by the interpreter is rude language, swearing, or other forms of inappropriate register. Even the interpreters who at first claimed to always interpret word for word hesitate when it comes to this part of their work:

> The way I was raised doesn't allow me to repeat certain words [laughs]. I had to smoothen it a little. (Alina)

It is also interesting to note that the only two interpreters who claimed to translate swearing in the source language with cursing in the target language were both men. Whether they would actually do this at work or if they were mainly boasting is hard to tell: all participant observation was conducted with female interpreters. A final situation that puts the interpreter in doubt as to whether to translate or not is when the client makes a mistake, leaving the interpreter a choice. On the one hand the speaker could be 'checking if the others are still paying attention', or playing 'a diplomatic game' – which would turn the interpreter into a 'blameable party' if he or she were to intervene. On the other hand, if the interpreter is absolutely sure that this was indeed a mistake, he or she can decide to correct, or, if still in doubt, check with the speaker if this was indeed what was meant (Gile, 2009a:216).

Undesirable behaviour

Next to content deemed unfit, the behaviour of a client might also be considered undesirable by the interpreter. Here the friction does not result from a hesitation on the part of the interpreter, but from the risk of compromising 'transparent visibility' (Martínez-Gómez, 2015). The undesired behaviour is visible anyway, and although 'correcting' the client's behaviour might not be considered part of the interpreter's professional responsibilities, this is often what happens. Below is an excerpt from my fieldnotes taken during participant observation. In this case, a foreigner faced deportation from Russia due to an expired visa.

> Tense atmosphere. [Foreign] person wants to sit down on the windowsill. Anna tries to quickly tell him that he should take a chair, but he does not notice her and the migration officer already enters the room. The officer orders him to sit

down on a chair. After the event, Anna tells me that she was shocked by the fact that he sat down on the windowsill, that is very unusual, the officer was already in a bad mood, she could have got angry, and in such a place you need to do everything to please these people.

In the following situation, the feeling of shared responsibility, that I will return to in the next section, becomes especially clear:

She [the client] was not in the mood to smile. I mean, she really was furious. And I realistically judged the situation, what do I have to do to make sure she keeps her mouth shut? [laughs] On the other hand, someone from the Russian side had to smile, right? And then I decided that, ok, I will smile, and let my client keep quiet [laughs]. (Ekaterina)

These instances, in which the interpreter, in the words of Alina, 'educate' their clients on how to behave properly in a given situation, are often referred to as a way of sharing cultural knowledge. This knowledge, obtained through study abroad or extensive experience with clients with a similar cultural background results in a 'feeling', 'intuition' for what is acceptable and what is not in another country. Interpreters explain what is conventional (*priniato*) and unconventional (*ne priniato*) in a certain situation.

We were shooting a film, a documentary […] We were in a house of Russian people, who had showed us something. The crew had just finished their shots, when suddenly: "That's it!" said the producer, "Quickly get your stuff together everyone, thank you, goodbye." And we left. And that woman, our hostess, a Russian woman, she had obviously taken out all her pickles, as one should. Set the table… And she is like: "Where are they all going?" And off course, what should I do as an interpreter in such a situation? Grab this producer by his coat and tell him: "Take off your shoes and sit down at the table. Because otherwise we'll be in trouble. And because you will just leave an ugly impression." "Ah, ok then." He didn't want to offend anyone. But there you go: a difference in culture. (Evgeniia)

6.3 Why soften and smoothen?

Shared responsibility

As mentioned in the section on the implications for neutrality, impartiality and loyalty (5.2), being someone's voice results in a diffused sense of responsibility. First of all, it makes people relate to the interpreter as the author of speech. Due to the social status of the interpreter, the role of the stranger/outsider, the interpreter easily gets blamed for any misunderstanding. Wadensjö (1998:19) explains how, when a primary interlocutor experiences being misunderstood, a shadow may easily fall on the

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interpreter. It is much easier to blame the interpreter for getting things wrong than to assume the other party speaks nonsense or suspect oneself of being unclear. Softening and smoothening practices therefore might serve the purpose of protecting the interpreter from being blamed for actions of their client. In the excerpt below, Liudmila talks about interpreting for a very famous person during a banquet in Russia:

> He started a speech, but didn't know what he wanted to say. Well, that was hard. […] He lost his train of thought… and then it turns out that it's the interpreter's fault. […] because I'm the one who seems to say these strange things. All right, if he is giving a speech, that means I should explain what is happening. But I can't say "you know, he's drunk, so his speech isn't going well." You still try to smoothen it a little. (Liudmila)

Second, also the interpreter tends to experience a sense of shared responsibility. Although the role of the interpreter as a representative will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, it is important to note here that this shared sense of responsibility by the interpreter can lead to softening and smoothening practices. In these cases, this is not only a form of the protection of one's own professional status, but of the status of the client and interpreter together as a team, a tandem. Below is an excerpt from an interview with Svetlana. She explains how she interpreted a politically incorrect joke. Note how she refers to 'we':

> It is a form of generalisation, of passing on a joke that will be funny for everyone. It is an attempt to ease tensions. Because not everyone will understand that sharpness [of the original joke]. And if they understand it, then, excuse me, they will think that *we* are crazy (*nenormal'nye*). Most of the time I do this for the client. (Svetlana, my italics)

When explicitly asked by the client

According to Roy (2000), interpreters are frequently called on by those who use their services to be 'flexible'. I even came across these practices in the memoirs from Tamara Solonevich (2016), who interpreted in the 1930s and was told the following:

> You know, our people [*nashi tovarishchi*] sometimes express themselves not very politically precisely, so could you, in your translation, please… give their words a literary finish.

In this case, the interpreter is explicitly asked to smoothen or soften. A similar situation was described by Svetlana. In her story, it was not her main client who asked her to smoothen, but his personal assistant:

> Well, our people, Russians, are more inclined to formulate their thoughts freely. They can joke, but in an unfortunate way. In a word-for-word translation it would sound unethical. So you have to correct it somehow. A recent example […] An absolutely wonderful person, a man of age […] his jokes (*podkoly*) are sometimes on the verge. Without particular intentions, just a person with a stressful job, of an older generation, and it's just his way of amusing the public, not even himself. Once you know this, it's easier for you to understand how to work with him. He has an assistant, a very strict woman, and sometimes she's just shocked of the things he can say. And in those moments, she looks at the interpreter, hopeful. A way of asking us to correct his speech during translation. (Svetlana)

Judging from the interviews for this study, as well as existing literature, interpreters receiving instructions or 'preliminary briefings' (as discussed in 5.2) is not uncommon. Especially when interpreters work with the same client for a longer period of time, these clients (or the client's personal assistant, as in the second quotation above), relate to the interpreter in a human way. Instead of trust based on impartiality, the interpreter is trusted as a partner instead. This is not always unproblematic and can lead to situations in which the compromised neutrality of the interpreter becomes rather transparent, leading to a triangular power play between the interpreter and his or her clients.

Countering stereotypes

A final reason to 'soften' or 'smoothen' that came up during the interviews is the desire to counter stereotypes. It links back to the interpreter's shared responsibility and the desire to create a favourable atmosphere for reaching the client's goals mentioned above. However, instead of framing this motivation as client-oriented, interpreters presented this as a purely personal drive. That is why it is worthwhile noting this separately. Below I present two interview excerpts reflecting this motivation:

> My mission really is to bring this [Russian] culture to people, because the further away the country, the higher the chances that people don't really know what this culture is and where it comes from. […] So I take those chances, those moments, to tell them that it's not that scary and bad in our country. That we

more or less live, that our country exists, that nobody there wants to kill you, or blow you up… I don't know. I am always this *likbez*.[68] (Tatiana)

Very often our task is not just to interpret, even 'guide' doesn't quite cover it. You emotionally bring people together […] They, [the foreigners] start to think about Russians in a different way after such an experience. […] For example, a Russian person at a drinking party starts to talk about how he goes to the forest to pick mushrooms. When you master this vocabulary, when you manage to pass on the story as lively as he does, [the foreigner] thinks "wow, that's how Russians live, cool!" And after that, they leave and tell everyone: "I have such great Russian friends!" (Tamara)

The desire to counter stereotypes is closely linked to interpreting as a politicised practice mentioned in the Introduction (1.2). Tatiana, cited first, later indicated that questions such as "What do you think of Crimea?" really tire her. Her strategy of coping with this is pretending she knows nothing about politics in order to avoid awkward situations.

6.4 How to smoothen and soften?

Interpreters both consciously and unconsciously use certain tactics to soften and smoothen situations perceived as somehow sensitive (described above). These tactics, discussed in more detail below, by no means exclude one another. Instead, they can be used simultaneously, both consciously and unconsciously.

Switching from first to third person

The most frequently mentioned tactic is distancing by switching from first person interpreting (or direct speech) to third person interpreting (or reported speech). This tactic is also one of the few that interpreters might have heard of during their studies. Some participants mentioned that their lecturers, who were practising interpreters themselves, shared this 'trick' with their students, as a 'last resort' in extreme circumstances. It effectively underscores who made a certain comment and thereby distances the interpreter from the speaker and his or her words. This is not always a conscious choice, as the 'crocodile episode' earlier in this chapter illustrates. Switching

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[68] A direct translation of *likvidatsiia bezgramotnosti* would be the 'elimination of illiteracy'. It refers to a campaign of eradication of illiteracy in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. In this context, the interpreter refers to answers to common questions.

from first to third person is a popular means of distancing since its use is rather 'opaque': it is unlikely that the primary participants understand whether the interpreter uses the first or third person in the 'other' language and the interpreter's intervention will usually go unnoticed.

By using the third person form, the interpreter refrains from directly addressing and therefore sounds less confrontational. Writing about judicial interpreting in Hong Kong, Ng (2018) explains how this tactic is used to neutralise and legitimise aggressive and challenging questions. For this reason, switching from first to third person in court interpreting can have serious consequences and is therefore very much seen as a last resort. If, for example, an account of physical abuse is interpreted in a more distanced, third person narrative, this could contribute to a lighter sentence for the perpetrator.

A switch of pronoun by the interpreter can also be seen as a change of 'footing', a concept introduced by the sociologist Erving Goffman (1981) for the study of 'participation' in general interaction, not focussed on interpreter mediated talk per se (see 2.5). Switching from first to third person can be regarded as an indicator of the interpreter's shifting alignment with one party or another (e.g., Keselman et al. 2010; Merlini, 2009, as cited in Wadensjö, 2015:167). In this sense, rather than building trust between clients, this tactic can also strengthen trust between the interpreter and the client, rather than between clients. This is in cases when the interpreter, through a change of footing, signals that one party is not to be trusted or taken seriously, as Svetlana's example illustrates:

> If the person is really weird (*nenormal'nyi*), then interpretation is in third person, and we say "well, mister (*tovarishch*) so-and-so says this and that. For example, he says that Kiev is the capital of Russia. This means he either deliberately talks nonsense, or he provokes a conflict. In this case the interpreter distances him or herself, takes him or herself away from this conflict. (Svetlana)

Ng (2018) argues that also this second motivation for switching from directed to reported speech can have undesirable side-effects. By, for example, interpreting lay participants' speech in the first person and utterances produced by legal professionals in the third person, the interpreter seems to align him/herself with the participant but to distance or alienate him/herself from the legal professionals. This inevitably compromises the interpreter's impartiality in court.

Body language, gestures and facial expressions

The following excerpt from my fieldnotes was taken in May 2019, during an excursion in the winter palace of Peter the Great with an English-speaking group of specialists from a conference. The interpreter translated Russian to English.

> The guide walks from object to object, does not wait for the group to arrive but immediately starts talking. The interpreter, in contrasts, waits for the group before she starts speaking. The guide does not smile, the interpreter smiles continuously. The guide regularly turns her back towards the group while speaking, the interpreter always faces the group. The group gets bored, but since the guide directs her speech directly towards the interpreter, the interpreter acts as the 'ideal listener': active listening, nodding, closely following the guide. Later, when we walk towards the metro, the interpreter explains how she felt obliged to compensate for, what she viewed as the bad presentation skills of the guide, so the group would be interested and not so bored.

Krystallidou's (2016:194) research demonstrates the key role of non-verbal aspects for trust-building. By using non-verbal resources, interpreters working in healthcare settings seem to "facilitate, complement or even take over the doctor's task of including the patient's perspective in the dialogue." She highlights the doctor's tendency to bypass the patient and talk to the interpreter instead. It is precisely the interpreters' use of non-verbal resources that favour the patient's inclusion in the interaction and allow their voice to be heard. In terms of opaqueness, subtlety is the key: as long as the difference in body language, gestures and facial expressions should not differ too much from the original speaker. Or, as noted by Antonina in 5.3, "these emotions are reflected on this person's face, and you surely can't fool them either?"

Choosing 'softer' synonyms

Another common way of softening communication is through the use of euphemisms, adding 'softening' explanation or words such as 'a little bit', 'just' etc. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes comes from a session of participant observation, when a foreign person faced deportation from Russia due to an expired visa.

> Tense atmosphere, migration officer is in a bad mood.
> Migration officer: 'You will have to await deportation at the centre'.
> Anna: You wait at the centre until they will be able to help you further'
> Anna avoids the word 'deportation' (risk: sounds the same in Russian as in the foreign language).

In this case, the softening of the migration officer's words by the interpreter is substantial, leaving the client misinformed. The client gets the image that the centre is not a bad place: by leaving out 'you have to' it sounds like going there is voluntary, and by adding that people there 'will help you further' the interpreter makes it seem a regular service. Although the interpreter told the client afterwards that the deportation centre was not a place one would want to end up in, this remained unclear during the conversation at the migration office itself. Here the cultural context matters as well. Several interpreters mentioned the different level in directness between, for example, Russian and British businessmen, with the Russian side being more direct. In order to soften this directness, the interpreter might decide to 'add softness' to the translation:

> Russian communication has this tendency to be more direct, a little less polished, we are very straightforward. And therefore, often when translating, especially during the part of the meeting when people get to know each other, when they say goodbye, I rather add softness to the Russian text, because otherwise it might sound very rude in English. And when I translate into Russian, I do not remove this softness. And gradually, people adapt, they begin to speak gentler Russian. (Margarita)

What is interesting here is the way the interpreter influences the overall tone of the conversation. By gradually adding softer nodes, this interpreter takes down existing tension of the conversation. The behaviour and speech of the interpreter influences the overall atmosphere of the meeting. Below another example of how the voice of an interpreter can calm down the emotions of the speakers:

> He was very polite, very calm, and very neutral. That is, she began to jump around that cage[69] like a monkey, loudly screaming something. He [the interpreter, calm voice] then says: "Mrs [name accused] would like to inform you that she is extremely dissatisfied with the bla-bla-bla." And she suddenly sits down, thinking. You see? We can indirectly force a person speak to speak louder and slower, this is also all in our power, yes, or softer and faster. We can influence all this without being noticed. This way, with our calmness, we can pass on our emotional state to others. (Evgeniia)

Although Singy and Guex (2015:169-170) state that this tactic of euphemisms and hedges is associated with female gender (see 2.5), I did not find evidence of this tactic belonging to a particular repertoire of female interpreting tactics. The example

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[69] The interpreter uses the word 'cage' here but refers to the cage-like dock in Russian courtrooms.

mentioned above, for example, demonstrates a male interpreter using similar tactics. However, what could potentially play a role here is that, due to its association with a 'feminine style' of interpreting, male interpreters are less likely to mention their use of this tactic in interviews. The example mentioned above was similarly not told to me by the male interpreter in question, but by Evgeniia who had watched the trial. Here I should highlight that although this research project did show the popularity of these practices amongst interpreters, particularly during participant observation, text-based analysis of transcripts might provide a more effective method when it comes to the use of euphemisms and hedges (see for example Magnifico and Defrancq 2016, 2017). Only through the meticulous comparison of source and target language can one can investigate these interventions comprehensively.

Leaving out phrases and adding explanations

Both leaving out phrases or adding explanations are effective ways of 'smoothening and softening'. However, they are simultaneously transparent and therefore risky. Here the main 'defensive arrangement' that the interpreter keeps in mind is the one regarding the corresponding length of the translation (see 5.3). Several interpreters explained how it is a real art to leave out undesirable parts of a client's speech or add explanations, while still producing a translation of the acceptable length. Below I will explore the practice of adding explanations in more depth.

During the pilot study for this project, I noticed that when asking interpreters if they ever add something to the speaker's words, their first answer was often 'no, never'. However, when later in the conversation we would speak about the experience of working with foreigners, of studying abroad and travelling, all interpreters agreed that this helped them become a better interpreter. When the interpreter's second cultural background, acquired next to their own primary one, coincides with the cultural background of one of the speakers, this allows the interpreter to estimate the amount and type of additional explanation needed to make sure that 'communication was accomplished' (*kommunikatsiia sostoialas'*). This is mostly the case when interpreters work with less common languages, such as Dutch or German. They are often able to apply their cultural knowledge in their everyday work. In contrast, interpreters working with the language pair Russian-English make less use of cultural softening and smoothening through explanations. Since English is used as a lingua franca of

international business, the interpreters' clients have various cultural backgrounds. The interpreter, on the other hand, has studied English in direct relation to a country where English is the official language, usually in the UK or USA. Therefore, the interpreters do not have the cultural competence to provide this additional service.

Cultural explanations take different forms. One of the most common ones is dealing with culture-specific terms, of which the interpreter cannot find a direct equivalent (on the spot). In these cases, the interpreter adds, in just a couple of words, an explanation in order to reach the desired effect:

> It can be a situation when the speaker used some colourful idiom, or used some culture-specific concept, which the Russian side per definition won't understand, because we simply do not have such phenomena. And if I manage to transfer that situation in for the Russian listeners comprehensible terms, then that's good. The same mental and psychological effect that the speaker was counting on. To make it funny, or touching, or exciting, or inspiring. (Viktoriia)

These explanations cannot be too long: an interpretation taking up much more time than the original can spark suspicion, as noted earlier (5.3). However, often the client him or herself asks the interpreter to provide an explanation. They ask the interpreter to "Tell them," "Explain to them" etc. Below a reaction of a Russian official to the proposal of a Dutch delegation to organise a gay parade in Moscow on Paratroopers' Day [70]:

> How can we organise a parade on Paratroopers' Day? We can't combine the two. And they… well, Nataliia, explain it to them! (laughs) (Nataliia)

Providing cultural explanations is not confined to the actual interpreted encounter. The following interview excerpt is from an interview with Margarita. She is talking about a business trip to Turkey with a small delegation of Russian businessmen:

> We were invited to dinner and the Russian person who was with me started to decline invitations. That is extremely impolite, you can't do that. And I see that those Turkish people are already like… [worried expression] Because you can't

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[70] Military national holiday, celebrated on the 2nd of August each year. Along with fairs, concerts and military shows, it is also characterised by heavy drinking, riots and general disruptions to public order. The holiday is seen as a demonstration of traditional military masculinity.

refuse, they've organised, planned everything. So, in short, he refused once, the Turkish people repeated their invitation, and I say:

"You know, it's not really appropriate to refuse again, because that's extremely impolite, would you like to continue the dialogue?"

He says: "yes."

"Then accept the invitation."

So they agreed, and I explained to those Turkish people, while we were on the road:

"You know, here in Russia it is not common (*ne priniato*) to accept an invitation straight away, because that might give the impression… "

That's what I said while we were driving, on the road. There I could interfere, and I sort of smoothened that moment, that we just have that kind of culture, we don't agree straight away, because we are afraid that maybe, you invite us just out of politeness, and not because you really want to. (Margarita)

This excerpt shows the continuous process of balancing trust. After the Russian client declined the invitations, Marina thought this might inhibit further negotiations. Trust between the two parties was at risk ("And I see that those Turkish people are already like…"), but after Marina's advice to accept the invitation in order to continue cooperation ("that's extremely impolite, would you like to continue the dialogue?"), the balance was restored. On the way back Marina took the initiative to further smoothen this situation by providing a cultural explanation for her client's behaviour: "we just have that kind of culture; we don't agree straight away."

When the interpreter 'takes the fire'

As mentioned in section 6.3, due to the social status of interpreters and their role of the stranger/outsider, the interpreter easily gets blamed for any misunderstanding. The people whose words are interpreted generally possess socially and culturally significant forms of capital which guarantee them greater prestige and authority in the social/interactional space of the interpreted encounter. Interpreters tend to be less socially anchored within this space due to the contingent nature of their role. As a result, they may have less of a 'feel for the game', less tacit knowledge and control of this space (Inghilleri, 2006:61). This potential weakness can similarly be turned into a tactic. In order to protect the client from losing face, the interpreter can jump in. One possibility, mentioned by Evgeniia, was forcing a break by behaving clumsy on purpose, thereby diverting attention in a tense situation:

It is not easy at all, but when you feel that the situation is about to get out of hand, you can break something, not understand something, or force a break in

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another way. Spill water, for example. They tell you 'how can you be so clumsy!', but while they get you a towel, they calm down. Those are little psychological things…

Margarita similarly mentioned a difference in status. Comparing her own position to the one of her clients, she pointed out not to be afraid of losing face: "This person [her client] can lose his authority, not I. For me it doesn't matter." Several other interpreters mentioned cases in which they themselves compensated in one way or another for what they deemed inappropriate behaviour or speech of their client. When the client makes a mistake, for example, the interpreter can take the blame, or the 'fire', as they say in Russian. This means that, instead of ignoring or correcting the mistake unnoticed, the interpreter excuses him or herself and says it was his or her fault in the first place.

Softening and smoothening by mere presence

During the interviews, many participants mentioned cases when they had been hired to work at a particular event, only to find out after arrival that everyone present shared a common language. There are various reasons why people hire an interpreter in these situations. In these cases, it is not so much the interpretation of the interpreters that matters, but their presence as such. Firstly, the presence of the interpreter increases the status of the speaker:

> Whenever a [foreign] businessman arrives, and he meets his interpreter – a beautiful girl, on heels, pretty, dressed in a very attractive way, then this [foreign] businessman thinks: "that girl is with me, I'm such a cool guy." For them, this is important. They understand that this works in their favour, because they can make a good impression, with such an interpreter. (Galina)

Furthermore, inviting women to male-dominated spheres is sometimes considered an appropriate way of 'balancing'. Most interpreters who participated in this study learn from practice that gender matters to particular clients, even though this is not always made explicit. According to Elena, certain clients deliberately hire "pleasant, beautiful women with good looks [...] capable of smoothening any sharp edges during business negotiations." In the next chapter more attention will be paid to the role of gender in the interpreting profession.

Finally, interpreters lengthen the duration of the meeting, giving the speaker more time to think. A well-known example is Göring's use of an interpreter's service during the Nuremberg trials, despite knowing both English and German. The American Prosecutor Justice Jackson was eager to blame simultaneous interpretation for his failure in cross-examining Hermann Göring, by complaining that:

> [Göring] could always get time to get his speech ready. You couldn't stop him. He knew English, could understand the question, and while they were interpreting it for him he already had the question from me, and was getting his answer ready (Gerhardt, 1958:397, as cited in Gaiba 1999:17).

6.5 Conclusion

In chapters 5 and 6, I have aimed to answer the three sub-questions of research project: When do interpreters negotiate trust? What are the tools interpreters can use in order to accomplish this? And finally, why do interpreters do what they do? What motivates them to negotiate trust and do more than 'just translate? (see 1.3). Building on existing trust theory, I drafted an analytical framework (chapter 4) that I subsequently used to answer the questions above. This chapter has provided a detailed account of 'smoothening' and 'softening', building on concrete examples. Together, the client's 'defensive arrangements', the interpreter's response of 'performing trustworthiness' in a context-specific way sensitive to people's personal trust histories, as well as the practising of smoothening and softening make up a performativity of trusting, of trust constructed through interpreting *po-chelovecheski*. I have shown how theoretical concepts rarely applied in practice can be used to gain an understanding of trust negotiation in everyday life (Meyer et al., 2008).

A closer look at oral translation practices in present-day Russia demonstrates that trust in interpreter-mediated encounters is often based not on a formal and distant, but on a *chelovecheskii* approach of the interpreter, who skilfully navigates across the shifting borders between *svoi* and *chuzhoi chelovek*. Interpreters share stories demonstrating how their *chelovecheskii* approach can form an essential contribution towards, for example, companies signing contracts or diplomats reaching agreements. However, since this approach rarely constitutes the professional ideal of the client, nor of the interpreters themselves, most users of interpreting services remain unaware of the conflicts they avoided thanks to their 'invisible' companions.

Chapter 7. Interpreting as a caring profession

7.1 Introduction: A caring profession

In her 2019 lecture at the third Cosines Pi Conference,[71] interpreter and lecturer at Moscow State Linguistic University Irina Vladimirovna Zubanova called interpreting 'a caring profession'.[72] This term, referring to jobs that involve looking after other people, is usually associated with nursing, teaching, or social work. Zubanova's extension of this label to include interpreting is an interesting move.[73] Instead of viewing of the interpreter as an unbiased conduit who merely repeats the words of others, as common in traditional scholarship on interpreting as well as amongst users of interpreting services, becoming 'someone's voice' presents a specific form of a caring relationship requiring empathy and intimacy (De V. Souza and Fragkou, 2019). Given that the interpreter is supposed to recognise and convey the speaker's affect, s/he must listen empathically (Shlesinger, 2015:434). This 'empathic listening' differs from mere listening or 'witnessing' in the sense that it involves caring *for* and *about* somebody. Labelling interpreting 'a caring profession' opens the door to a more relational understanding of the interpreter's role.

This humanizing approach, stressing the relational aspects of care, is often presented as opposing the marketisation of care as a quantifiable, sellable product (Radziwinowiczówna et al., 2018). Rothstein (2011) describes this as a conflict between 'professional impartiality' and 'professionally distributed care'. Fowler (1997:196, as cited in Mikkelson, 2008:83) similarly highlights the conflicting expectations imposed on interpreters, who are instructed to remain impartial but are also envisaged as having a "warm" and "helping" relationship with their clients (see 2.2. for related paradoxes). When a patient or client pays for a service, be it medical

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[71] An international contest of simultaneous interpreters annually held in Moscow on the premises of Moscow State University.
[72] She uses this term in English.
[73] Zubanova is one of the few, but not the only one making this comparison. The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT, as cited in NSW Health Care Interpreter Services, 2014), for example, mentions the 'duty of care' in their professional guidelines. This is commonly understood as "a moral or legal obligation to ensure that other people are safe from physical or mental harm" (Duty of care, 2020).

care or interpreting, it often remains unarticulated what this service constitutes in practice (Berger, 2019). In the case of medical care: is it the small talk before an operation to calm down a nervous patient? Holding his hand when he is in pain? Or it is 'just' the medication, the operation, the machines? In the case of interpreting a similar case can be made. Do clients pay for a caring companion, who helps them find their way in a foreign country? One who makes sure they do not end up in embarrassing situations? Or do they hire a 'translation machine' who is supposedly 'not there' and whose service might soon be replaced by a robot?

Sometimes medical care and interpreting directly overlap: when an interpreter is required to enable conversations between doctors and patients, for example. A wide range of academic studies has been published on the social role of the interpreter in healthcare.[74] Although this chapter draws on findings in this field, its aim is not to discuss medical interpreting as such but to examine the full range of face-to-face interpreting practices through the lens of care. It thereby provides an alternative angle to the analysis of professional relations, extending beyond individual cost-benefit calculations and the artificial personal-professional divide.

In my analysis presented below, I am referring to the 'ethnomorality of care' as introduced by Radziwinowiczówna et al. (2018). Based on the findings of multi-sited research carried out in Poland and the UK, the authors explore the complex negotiations of moral and practical issues faced by transnational families with ageing relatives abroad. Their approach includes a sensitivity for the ways in which national, regional, and local contexts, economic inequalities, gender, care and migration regimes shape the experience of care. It is precisely this approach to care research that I take in this study, paying attention to the specific Russian ethnomorality of care. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of post-socialist scholarship on the friction between, on one hand, marketised styles of exchange and newly legal profit-making practices and, on the other, longer-established norms governing social relations (Patico, 2009). Anderson (1976:209, as cited in Roy, 2000:24) notes how

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[74] A selection includes Anderson (2008); Bischoff et al (2012); Clifford (2004); Hadziabdic et al (2009, 2013), Hsieh (2008), Jezewksi (1990), Raval (2003) and Robb and Greenhalgh (2006).

understanding the role of interpreters enlightens our understanding of interaction between people of different statuses and backgrounds. Studying interpreting in the specific Russian context therefore not only teaches us something about interpreters and their clients. It also allows for a better understanding of professional relationships in present-day Russia at large.

In the next section I present an overview of published literature that helps to contextualise interpreting as a caring profession in Russia today. After this exploration on marketisation, caring professions and interpreting in general, I will move on to the main body: four aspects that help understand interpreting as a caring profession and contribute to a Russian ethnomorality of care. These four aspects have been split up for analytical purposes only: I frequently refer to their interrelatedness and overlap. I will start with a discussion of the Soviet idea of 'protecting the helpless foreigner' that continues to shape interpreting today. Within this framework, the client is viewed as completely dependent, very much like a patient. The second aspect centres on personalised relations with colleagues and clients. Both the care provider and the interpreter are professions of a relational character, characterised by close physical proximity. This intimacy leads to a preference for a family-like relation with professionals. The third aspect relates to gender. Both care and interpreting have a comparable gender dynamic. Whereas the everyday part of the job is often regarded as a woman's task, its high-end side is viewed as men's work. I will show how gender shapes the interpreting market and the interpreter's self-perception in Russia. The fourth and final aspect revolves around the emotional load of care work.

7.2 The interdisciplinary lens of care on/in the Post-Soviet region

Defining care

The concept of care is a fluid and unsettled one: any attempt to define it will be exceeded by its multivocality in everyday and scholarly use (Martin, Myers and Viseau, 2015:625 – 26, as cited in Gelsthorpe, 2020:3). It describes social relations characterised by looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of other persons (Martin, 2013, in Khlinovskaya Rockhill, 2020). Research on the anthropology of kinship provides an even wider understanding of the

concept of care, defining it as a mode of social belonging. Care practices are seen as essential for the making and maintaining of kinship.

Interpreters' practises are not the usual subject of care research. Instead, health care, family care, caring for elderly people and other vulnerable populations are at the core of most debates associated with caring. The recently published volume *Spaces of Care* (2020) by Gelsthorpe et al. aims to enlarge the usual subjects of care research and forms a suitable starting point to open up the study of care to interpreting. Their volume considers care as a way of building relationships and points to its often-reciprocal nature. They include, amongst others, 'professional care contexts' and 'care by strangers'. Their unifying argument is that care transforms the relational sphere and confounds distinctions between the apparently 'public' and 'private', 'personal' and 'professional' (Gelsthorpe et al, 2016:6). By exploring the caring practices of interpreters, my study fits within this line of argument.

'Providing care' vs 'caring'

In a study on the recently privatised probation service in England and Wales, Dominey and Gelsthorpe (2020:39) note how one criticism of private sector provision is that it "puts profit before people." They pose the questions whether 'providing care' is necessarily the same as 'caring'. When care work becomes commercialised, the affective relationship of compassion shifts to a structural relationship (Caldwell, 2017). This is often believed to lead inevitably to a poor quality of practice in which traditional values such as care are put at risk. Although these concerns have been the topic of public debate across the world, they became particularly relevant and gained an interesting ethnic dimension in public debates on privatisation in Russia in the first decade of the post-Soviet transition.

Since perestroika and the advent of a capitalist-style consumer market in the 1990s, Russia's economic landscape has been radically transformed. Based on her ethnographic work in the 1990s, Caldwell (2017:176) writes how a sharp distinction was perceived between business and traditional compassion, perceived as essentially *Russian*. Increased business logic raised concerns that "intrinsic qualities of Russianness" were under threat and disappearing (Caldwell, 2017:176). Pesmen (2000), writing about the same period, notes that speaking of money in friendly

relations was experienced as shameful by many due to a similar clash with Russian values: money-based, utilitarian transactions conflict with the Russian ideology of *pomoshch'* (assistance) that characterises relations of social intimacy. Even today, when Russia's new capitalist economy has become normalised, the question whether patients ought to be thought of as customers is still a contested issue in Russia's public sphere (Chudakova, 2017). A sense that business and the new cult of money have displaced the more familiar and morally superior intimacies and contingencies of social relations remains (Caldwell, 2017:176).

Not all caring relations are reducible to seeking economic advantage

These qualitative studies on the tension between the heartless market on the one hand, and more traditional, local and shared moral codes on the other, have led to diverging views on the marketisation of social relations in the specific Russian context. Some emphasise their ability to circumvent the market for individual benefits. According to Jurcik et al (2013), mentioned earlier in 4.5, the extensive utilization of informal networks for individualistic gains is a characteristic of Russian collectivism. In one of her earlier works, Caldwell (2004:52) describes how friends *veil* offers in terms of mutual beneficial "exchange," avoiding the language of selling and buying (my italics). Ledeneva (1998) similarly speaks of a form of *obscuring* the circumvention of formal distribution rules through informal social relationships with the rhetoric of friendship (my italics). On the other hand, not all social connections and experiences are reducible to seeking economic advantage. Especially in healthcare, it is not inconceivable for a health professional to be motivated by altruism and not simply by how to maximise utility (Fotaki, 2009:655). Cherkaev (2018) similarly demonstrates how the stressing of social details of exchanges in participants' stories, instead of the cost-benefit calculation, points to a different reality. Morris (2013) explains how Russian workers' participation in networks extends beyond the basic 'necessities' of domestic life to include 'internal goods'. He describes how participants gain satisfaction in mutual recognition as resourceful and practically-skilled people.

7.3 Protecting the helpless foreigner

Studying 'Haligali'

The Russian interpreting tradition provides a context quite different from the European one. In order to contextualise the interpreters' stories that will be discussed in this chapter, it is important to realise this distinct tradition developed largely in isolation. Although from the 1950s onward there was a "basic mutual awareness" of what each side was doing, this was framed in the antagonistic terms of the Cold War (Ayvasyan and Pym, 2017:233-234). For decades, students were not allowed to go abroad to practise their skills and also practising interpreters did not always get the chance to travel.

> I graduated in 1980, but the first time I travelled to [foreign country] was only in 1984. I am like one of Aksyonov's[75] main characters, from *Overstocked Packaging Barrels*, I believe. There was this one character: a specialist of the country 'Haligali'. A made-up country. He was fluent in the language of Haligali, kept correspondences with half of its inhabitants, but had never been to the country itself. Well, that really characterised us. We had never been there either. They wouldn't let us. (Liudmila)

This quotation, in which Liudmila compares the foreign language she learned at university to the made-up language from a fantasy book, underscores the imagined aura of foreign language learning in a country with closed borders. The same hold for teachers of foreign languages: in my earlier paper (2017) I described the story of Ivan Poda, a currently retired foreign language teacher from Pskov. He has extensive knowledge of multiple foreign languages, but besides one trip to the GDR he never left the former Soviet Union. Native speakers from abroad were rarely allowed to teach local students.

Despite the extensive free travel of the last years,[76] there is still a large group of interpreters that lacks the opportunities to travel to countries where their professional working language is spoken. This difference mainly revolves around the enormous gap between on the one hand Moscow and St Petersburg, and the rest of the country on

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[75] Vasilii Pavlovich Aksёnov (1932 – 2009) was a Soviet and Russian novelist. The novel referred to here was published in 1968 as *Zatovarennaia bochkotara.*
[76] As I am writing this, borders are again closed due to measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

the other. Russia is extremely centralised with 2/3 of all foreign investments going to Moscow, where also 80 per cent of all financial potential is concentrated (Hofstede et al., 2010). Some of the other provinces are practically 'closed', to this day, as Dariia (in her 20s), talking about her time at a university in one of Russia's urban centres in the regions, illustrates:

> Talking about this Soviet closedness: we also didn't have any form of exchange. I studied 2007-2012, and we didn't have any opportunities for internships abroad, there wasn't a single foreigner at our university […] Even all our textbooks were Soviet, or printed and published in Russia. We watched TV series in the original language, educational, British ones, that's all. So, to be honest, the system hasn't particularly changed. It was still like this when I graduated, and I am sure it's like that today: very much closed, not aimed at live communication with foreigners at all, or practice, but instead aimed at drilling, at theory… (Dariia)

Accompanying an *inostranets*

The word 'foreigner' (*inostranets*) still has connotations quite different from its English equivalent: an *inostranets* is understood not just as a representative of another country, but of a completely different world (Federova, 2002).[77] In the Soviet Union and immediate post-Soviet years, the interpreters' task was either to accompany an *inostranets* or their compatriots abroad. Both were viewed as 'helpless' and 'lost' in an alien environment. Within this framework, the client is viewed as completely dependent, very much like a patient.[78] The only organisation allowed to accommodate foreign tourists in the Soviet Union was *Intourist* (from the word *inostranets* and *turist)*. In her book *Notes of a Soviet Translator* (2016)*,* Tamara Solonevich describes the complete dependency of foreigners on their *Intourist* guides in the early Soviet years, always located within 'their power'. Although this power of *Intourist* declined and eventually faded completely, the role of the interpreter as the experienced traveller responsible for their client remained. The following description of the 'nanny-interpreter' in a Russian interpreting textbook from 1999 is telling:

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[77] As Fedorova wrote in 2002, citizens of foreign Soviet republics are for example still not considered fully 'foreign'.
[78] Medical professionals interviewed by Chudakova (2017) even question whether patients are rational consumers in the first place.

An ordinary interpreter is a nanny-interpreter who has to take care of his or her pupils who find themselves in an unfamiliar language environment. Such an interpreter starts serving the foreign guest or his or her compatriot in a foreign country at the moment when he or she wants to wake up and is able to formulate his or her first wish. The interpreter can only leave his or her 'master' after his or her last wish of the day, related to the foreign language, is fulfilled (Min'iar-Beloruchev, 1999:38).

The view of the helpless foreigner is still very much alive today. Several interpreting textbooks describe the foreigner as someone who needs to be *helped* and the idea of the 'lost', 'scared', and 'helpless' foreigner repeatedly emerged during the interviews. Due to this 'helplessness' of the client, interpreters often feel uneasy framing their work in terms of market relations. 'Just translating' in such a situation would not be sufficient since, in the words of Mark, "you're their father, and mother, and nanny, and ... you're their teacher." The following two interview excerpts illustrate this view: the first is on the Soviet Union/Russia as a 'wild country' in the 1990s-early 2000s, the second one describes a more recent situation:

Back then, a foreigner would be lost without a personal interpreter, because there were no mobile maps, no Uber, in the subway none of the signs were in English, there were no supermarkets. There was nothing. You [the foreigner] came to a wild country. (Elena)

The thing is, that person, he also came to an alien country, and you are his only point of reference in that country, that's why, well, building such a 'professional wall' around myself, like "I'm done interpreting, time's up, I'm off," that somehow doesn't feel right. (Evgeniia)

When accompanying Russians abroad, the Russian client is the 'helpless foreigner'. When the interpreter permanently works and lives abroad, he or she is both a migrant and an interpreter, a 'translated being' (Cronin, 2006; Polezzi, 2012). Below, Lidiia, a court interpreter working in the UK, describes how she, having grown up in the Soviet Union herself, understands her Russian speaking clients' fear of appearing in court (a cultural part of their personal trust history). She sees it as her task to comfort them and offer emotional assistance:

People often start crying, when a woman, you know, when they tell her "that didn't happen." You know, that's really awful. That means you're lying? And this happens despite the fact that I always repeatedly tell them, "it's nothing personal, it's his [lawyer] work, you just need to calmly say "no, it happened

exactly as I told you! That's it." But people are nervous. Especially people from the former Soviet Union, because a lawsuit, that's a very nervous affair! (Lidiia)

Later on in the interview the same interpreter underscored that only she is able to understand these foreigners, for growing up in the Soviet Union provided her with the necessary context. Below Olga, who also lives and works in the UK, describes how her own Soviet childhood fundamentally distinguishes her from interpreters without this background, leading to a deeper level of understanding:

> My advantage is that I grew up in this system. I am a Soviet person. Those people for whom I interpret these days, even the younger generation, are all people who grew up in this system. I understand what they mean. You don't need to explain anything to me. (Olga)

7.4 Personalised relations with colleagues and clients

> For a short period of time, you really, really need each other. You can compare interpreting to a family, like a metaphor. It's a short form of family life. (Valentina)

Robb and Greenhalgh (2006:436) characterise the interpreted encounter as one of 'enforced dependency'. This dependency is only partially unpacked in existing interpreting research, where the focus is on the dependency of the client on the interpreter. In community and legal interpreting, for example, dependency is often framed as the dependency of the minority client on the interpreter. Additionally, Wadensjö (1998:13) points out that the representatives of the majority (lawyers, doctors, police etc) are just as much dependent on the interpreter. The fact that being forced to rely on an interpreter may reverse existing hierarchies of age, gender and social class has also been highlighted by Baigorri-Jalon (2010:187).

The examples mentioned above nevertheless focus on the dependency of the client on the interpreter. In contrast, I would like to provide insights into the *mutual* dependency of the interpreter-client relation, including the dependency of the interpreter on the client (as explained in chapter 5). As pointed out by the quotation at the start of this section, client and interpreter need *each other*. They are, in Mark's words, "each other's hostages" for the duration of their cooperation. On the one hand, the client depends on the interpreter: the client relies on the interpreter for communication and support in a range of situations, from every-day small talk to life threatening operations. On the other hand, the interpreter depends on the client:

> [Y]ou work, well, often without a safety net. You can't read his mind, of your client. You don't know what he has in store. What he's going to say next. Maybe some things you won't understand. (Nadezhda)

As in other relations of care, this mutual dependency leads to a preference for intimate relationships, for a family-like relation with professionals, as the metaphor of interpreting as a short form of family life at the start of this section illustrates (Radziwinowiczówna et al., 2018). Several scholars have touched upon the intimate character of the interpreter-client relationship. When asked about three basic abilities that interpreters should have, participants of Garcés and Gutiérrez's (2016) study prioritised 'empathy'. Edwards (2005) found that users of interpreting services consider professional interpreters as cold, "not a complete match with the personal basis for trust." Participants preferred informal interpreters instead who are proactive on their behalf and especially valued their personal character, attitude and trustworthiness. The mutual dependency between interpreter and client results in a preference for intimate trust relations between client and interpreter, but also between interpreters. It is this second type of relationship that I would like to start with.

Personal relations between interpreters

Barsukova and Ledeneva (2018:487) note that "[t]he embeddedness of informality in Russia means that there is no clearly defined gap between formal rules and informal practices" (as mentioned in 4.5). As a result, relationships are crucial in obtaining information, getting introduced or successful negotiations. In such cases, a formal and distant attitude, although considered a sign of respect, also indicates that you see the other person as a stranger (Hofstede Insights). Relations need to be personal, authentic and trustful before one can focus on tasks and built on a careful, rather implicit communication style (Hofstede et al., 2010). As a result, the boundaries between informal friendship and formal connections are not always clear-cut.

Comparing ethical principles of interpreting in Russia and Europe, Blokh (2018:183) points out how in Europe more attention is paid to the regulation of relationships, both between interpreters as between the interpreter and the client. Working conditions (additional information, remuneration), deadlines, competences copyright etc. are also more frequently fixed in a written agreement, whereas in Russia this is usually based

on an oral agreement lacking standardisation. Although there are professional codes fixing ethical principles, they are often advisory rather than regulatory in force (Frankel, 1989:110–111, as cited in Drugan, 2017:127).[79]

Spânu (2011) describes a similarly unregulated interpreting market in Romania, where informal networking is seen as the main way to find new clients. My research paints a similar picture of the Russian market, with interpreters relying on second-hand cues (see 2.4 and 4.5). Since many interpreters work on a freelance basis, they need to find and keep their own clients. Personal networks are key, as Andrei illustrates:

> The Russian translation market is anarchy. Every man for himself. There is no code of ethics, there is no professional standard for written translation, not for oral translation, not for anything. There is no document regulating the market. It is a complete Wild West situation. Seriously. It all depends on personal networks between interpreters. Only on that. (Andrei)

These networks could be referred to as 'trust networks', a concept introduced by Hosking (2014:45). Trust networks "arise where people peacefully interact regularly or work together to achieve some common purpose that requires mutual trust." They exist in every society and can range from extended families to professional associations. In this case, these networks are made up of interpreters who pass assignments on to their colleagues through closed groups and chats on online social networks such as VK and Facebook. Often university cohorts form the basis of these networks.

Another factor that contributes to the solidarity among colleagues is a lack of professional standards related to the costs of interpreter's services (see also 1.4). During the first interpreter workshop I attended at the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg in 2016, I was impressed by the serious tone with which the lecturer instructed the participants to *never* agree to work for less than a certain sum of money: "Because even if that sounds fair to you, and you really need the money, be aware that you are

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[79] A recent initiative is the Ethical Codex of the Interpreter (*Eticheskii kodeks perevodchika*). Set up in 2012, it opened up the discussion on the teaching of ethics as part of interpreter training. However, according to Nechaeva and Stepanova's (2017) article, since representatives of academic interpreting schools did not participate in the setting up of this codex, most of the lecturers teaching interpreting are still unaware of its existence. The Facebook page of the initiative is nevertheless home to lively discussions between interpreters.

spoiling the market for everyone else." This feeling of responsibility, that it is up to you and your fellow interpreters to keep up the standard of the profession and not accept offers below a certain standard, also repeatedly came up during the interviews.

Personal relations between interpreter and client

I started this section with a quotation of an interpreter who compared the interpreter-client relation to 'a short type of family life'. Not only interpreters who participated in this study compared interpreting to family life; other authors also came across similar metaphors. Participants of Edwards' (2005) study preferred a familiar and proactive interpreter, 'like a family member', to interpret for them. Robert and Greenhalgh (2005) also found that satisfied service users often referred to the interpreter as 'my interpreter' and described this person 'in family-related terms', granting the interpreter what the authors call 'honorary family member' status (see 2.4)[80].

As client-interpreter cooperation lasts, their relationship intensifies. As explained in section 5.4, a lasting trust relationship has an impact on the personal trust history of all parties involves, making them even more likely to continue trusting in the future. The longer the working relationship, the better the interpreter gets a picture of the goals of the client and his or her own role in reaching them. The client, in turn, increasingly involves the interpreter in the process, as mentioned earlier, asking questions ranging from 'Do you think our partner is lying?' to asking for personal advice on whether or not to adopt a child. Indeed, once the client and the interpreter have become a 'tandem', changing to another interpreter means starting to build a trust relation all over again, from scratch. Or, as Viktoriia aptly phrased it:

> Changing from one interpreter to another, especially when you have worked together for a long time, can be quite problematic. Because it is like a new pair of shoes: they pinch in some places, you need to break in a little. (Viktoriia)

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[80] Whereas these studies describe clients' preferences for interpreters who are like family members to them, there is extensive additional literature on interpreting by actual family members (e.g. Angelelli, 2016; Hlavac, 2017; Robb and Greenhalgh, 2006). Besides the label 'family interpreting', this topic is described in studies referring to ad hoc interpreting, informal interpreting, language brokering, lay interpreting, and natural interpreting. These studies are often concerned with non-professional interpreting, often performed by children, sometimes comparing this to professional services. Due to this study's focus on professional interpreters, I concentrate on family-like relations with professionals, instead of on relations between actual family members.

These long-lasting professional relationships often extend beyond the purely professional connection. The phrase 'we are still friends' (*my do sikh por druzhim*) was often mentioned in connection to some special clients. Some exchange post cards, visit one another with their families or even go on short weekend trips together.

A slippery slope: When the client comes too close

It is in the interpreter's direct interest to ensure the satisfaction of the client, so that he or she will contact them again next time. As an interpreter, you need a certain level of financial security to risk losing a client. This financial security depends on, amongst other things, a solid reputation, reliable clients and/or a permanent position. Most experienced interpreters whom I spoke to recalled their first years in the profession, when they had to "take on everything" and could not afford losing a potential client. Only at a more advanced stage in their career they could afford to be picky.

> Two or three times in my life, I could tell a client that I do not want to work with him. And he was simply shocked. Every time. Those were always Russian clients, and they were always shocked. They couldn't understand, how come I dare to say such things? And I kept telling them: "Well, you know, I am not your personal interpreter. I don't work for you. I am a free interpreter, and I decide with whom I work. And I don't want to work with you." They were just really mad from powerlessness, because they couldn't do anything about it […] [smiles] But that was very nice. Nice because it was not them, who fired me, but me who fired them. (Olga)

This sense of triumph and satisfaction when describing an exceptional case in which Olga had the power to say 'no' says a lot about the non-exceptional practices in this sector. Market dynamics form a financial incentive to allow undesired behaviour in order to please and keep a client (Suchland, 2008). Additionally, power discrepancies are a significant predictor of sexual harassment, particularly for sexual harassment against women (Knapp, 2019:2057). During my research, I came across several cases when interpreters told me that clients, (especially after having drunk alcohol), harassed them while they were at work. Additionally, interpreters shared stories of how their colleagues also suffered from sexual harassment. Examples later on in this chapter are Ekaterina's story about the *bania* (p. 213) and Oksana's remarks on a client's

request to spend the night with her colleague (p. 214).[81] When talking about intimidating behaviour by men, two interpreters mentioned a similar situation, when a client touches the interpreter in an inappropriate way when helping her in her coat:

> There were some unpleasant situations in the 90s, then that sort of passed. [...] For example, when they help to put on a coat and lay a hand on the interpreter's shoulder…
> Eline: What do you mean, why?
> Ekaterina: Aaaa [sound expressing *everyone* knows]. I don't know why they do it [...] So we and those foreigners are getting ready to leave, and the gallant one, a Russian official [...] helps me into my coat. So, I say 'thank you', and he puts his two hands on my shoulders and does this (massages my shoulders with her hands). You see? That's unpleasant, because here you can't do anything, in fact. I mean, if I hadn't been at work, I would have done something. But since you are at work, you…here…it's as if… [...] My personal, my participation isn't included in… The extent to which something is pleasant or unpleasant to me is not part of their communicative event. So, if I start to defend my rights here, my right not to be touched by strangers, that immediately casts a shadow on their negotiations, and here, well… It's not really clear what to do, actually.

> Some situations are very awkward and strange. But in general, I take a client-oriented approach [*klientoorientirovannost'*] in my work. I believe that if their negotiations can benefit from one of them helping me into my coat right now – go ahead. There's nothing bad about that. I think that maybe someone could get offended, react in some way. But I am ready to team up and play along. It's no big deal for me, and pleasant for them. (Tatiana)

Whereas Spânu's (2011) study is very much focussed on the interpreter's dependency and powerlessness, the remarks above also show that interpreters are well aware of their place in the market and the way their gender is part of this position. Knapp et al. (2019) note how in Russia, gender differences are often framed as assets, a potential source of romance and career gains. This is not unproblematic: although this self-awareness demonstrates power, it can similarly result in a higher tolerance for sexual harassment. Spânu's (2011) research is the only publication I came across bringing up the issue of harassment in interpreting. In her research, none of the interpreters reported these incidents. The cases brought up by interpreters in this study were also not reported. They were seen as an unpleasant part of the job, rather than an offence. A country's legal landscape combined with cultural values and norms influence how

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[81] It is important to note here that due to the sensitivity of this topic, participants might hide or play down their experiences.

severity of sexual harassment is perceived. Suchland (2008:339-340) explains how, in contemporary Russia, the terms of this debate are informed by the complex post-socialist context. This includes contemporary resistance to old Soviet ideals such as sex equality, the influence of neoliberal ideology on economic and political reform, and the breakdown of the state's social safety net. In contrast to Suchland's first point, Knapp et al. (2019) point to continuity of historical gender norms instead: patriarchal norms that were relevant throughout the Soviet period still appear to be shared by both women and men in Russia today. Due to social stigma and lack of governmental support, Russian women rarely report sexual violence. According to Knapp et al. (2009), the few cases that get reported[82] face serious obstacles at the reporting level, at the level of physical evidence, and at the prosecutorial level.

7.5 Challenging a disembodied conception of interpreting

Features such as nationality, gender and class link and divide people in social life in general - interpreting is no exception. However, the common emphasis on a person's linguistic belonging in translation theory hides affiliations to all other categories that shape social life (Wadensjö, 1998). This is particularly remarkable when it comes to gender, given the clearly gendered character of the profession, carried out predominantly by women. White (2005), for example, notes how careers in languages have typically been feminised in (Soviet) Russia. Just like in Spânu's (2011) research in Romania, also in the stories analysed in my study clients are mainly male, whereas interpreters are predominantly female. Singy and Guex (2015:170) state that efforts at theorizing gender issues are still the exception in IS (see 2.5). Instead, a disembodied conception of interpreting prevails, one that does not make allowance for such aspects of the interpreter's identity such as gender.

One of the possible explanations for the gender imbalance in interpreting is precisely the 'caring' element in interpreting, often referred to as the need to *'ukhazhivat''* in Russian. Bradley and Healy (2008) point out that women have always been clustered in jobs which involve an element of care work or customer service. Women are still

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[82] According to Knapp et al. (2019), authorities in Russia successfully prosecuted only two cases of sexual harassment, one in 1993 and another in 1997.

seen as 'naturally' equipped for these tasks. In an article on the website of the AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters), Ryan (2015) cites participants indicating that women's sense of service could explain the gender imbalance within the profession.[83]. Writing about the specific Russian context and care, Rockhill (2020) points to the 'maternal instinct' as the basis of care, which is seen as a woman's inherent trait and not a learned skill. Although I question the extent to which these traits are a matter of biological instincts, these constructs influence the definition of gender roles in Russia today, as they do in many other societies. Women are viewed as attentive and caring, as mothers, whereas men are seen as strict and distant (White, 2004; 2005). Still, women can be 'distant', 'cold' or 'neutral'. The extent to which this forms part of their professional role depends, amongst other things, on the form of interpreting. Especially those women focussing on conference interpreting are used to a less 'embodied' type of interpreting. The majority of participants in this study, including those with extensive experience in conference interpreting, indicate that face-to-face interpreting is a different story, where general social factors such as gender come into play. Gender is the third aspect that I would like to address next.

Gendered career paths in the Soviet Union

Interpreting in Russia today is mainly studied and practised by women (e.g., Timarová, 2015; Shlesinger and Voinova 2012). Over the past years, my own observations confirmed this. My students at foreign language faculties (Pskov State University, St Petersburg State University) were overwhelmingly female. Most of the participants of this study were women and have degrees from similar faculties. Pictures on social media posted by interpreters taken during their work, at training sessions or informal meetings, similarly picture women. Nevertheless, I was repeatedly told that in Russia, "interpreting has always been considered a male profession" during my fieldwork. In an online article, Ivanchenko (2017) similarly notes how especially clients who grew up in the Soviet Union see conference interpreters are men. In order to understand this claim made today, I will look at the gendered career paths of interpreters in the past.

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[83] The participant whom she cited stated the following: "One of the reasons […] why more women are in our profession […] is that interpretation involves an element of service – this is a talent women are definitely better at than men. Women serve their children, their parents, etc."

The following quotation, in which Evgeniia describes the situation in the late 1980s, illustrates this:

> [W]e [the girls] were supposed to graduate as 'guide interpreters'. The boys graduated as 'interpreter-referent', so that means you work for the government, for some organisations, at a serious level. And the girls were supposed to work as guides, so accompanying tourists.

This gender division across the profession raises issues of social status: the connotation of the boys finding work 'at a serious level', for the government, suggests that guide interpreters were not perceived with similar awe. These two roles, the interpreter-guide and the diplomatic interpreter, will be discussed in more detail below.

The diplomatic interpreter

Diplomacy has long been regarded a male-dominated sphere. The only female account of diplomatic interpreting in the Soviet years that I came across I found in Ford's (1989) book *Our Man in Moscow - A Diplomat's Reflections on the Soviet Union.* In this book, he describes a case involving a female interpreter working for the KGB whose feminine looks are used as strategy for blackmail. Diplomatic interpreters were mainly men whose position as full members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought them significant social status. This has been stressed by, amongst others, Sukhodrev in his memoirs (2008), where he explains how interpreters were treated with the same respect as other employees of the Ministry of Foreign affairs. Miram (1999:3) presents a contrasting view. He remembers coming across a report stating that "[c]urrently, the Office of the Economic Adviser of the Embassy of the USSR lists 15 people and two translators," suggesting that those translators were not full members of the team.

Although proportionally, diplomatic interpreters are the exception instead of the rule, they are much more visible in the public sphere than their colleagues working in other sectors. Some diplomatic interpreters even became 'media personalities', others published books about their eventful careers (see 1.2). The TV show *Cosines Pi,* an annual competition for conference interpreters broadcasted since 2017, invites diplomatic interpreters to give lectures, which can later be viewed on YouTube. Dmitri Petrov, who has interpreted for Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin, even hosts a reality show titled '*Polyglot*' on the state *Kultura* (Culture) channel. Since 2019, a prize exists for those interpreters/translators who have made a significant contribution to the

development of the translation profession in Russia, called the Translators of Russia National Prize. The prize, awarded on the 'Day of the Interpreter/translator' (30 September), was first awarded to Pavel Palazhchenko.

The classic notions of 'conducting diplomacy' and 'a diplomat' evoke associations of men in suits negotiating deals behind closed doors, and continue to shape diplomacy and diplomatic interpreting today. Still, most diplomatic interpreting in Russian diplomacy seems to be conducted by men. This does not mean that women do not interpret from Russian: several of the female respondents in this study have interpreted high level Russian diplomats and/or the president, but they were hired by the foreign party. Another example is the case of interpreter Marina Gross (see 2.3).

The interpreter-guide

In his article 'Soviet tourism: An open door to a closed society', Chabe (1969) mentions that *Intourist* guide-interpreters were usually female. Caldwell (2004:51), describing Muscovites piecing together several jobs to make a living around the turn of the century, also mentions that those who spoke English, particularly attractive young women, could often find additional work as translators, guides, and escorts for visiting businesspeople and tourists. This role was far from easy. Interpreters were the representative 'face' of the Soviet Union (see 1.2). Larisa, who has worked as an interpreter-guide at *Intourist* for years, described how this was a representative role. When a meeting organised by *Intourist* turned out ineffective, because the person who was supposed to tell foreigners about everyday life in the Soviet Union did not answer their questions, the tourists directed their attention to her:

> So he says: "I wake up at eight in the morning, and well, leave for work." And then he says: "Did you know that our government guarantees our freedom? We can do whatever we please in our free time."
> [The foreign tourists ask] "Ok, but please tell us, do you go to the store? Do you exercise? Those things?"
> "Yes, I go to the store. But I would like to stress again, Larisa, please tell them that our government guarantees our freedom."
> […] So the conversation didn't work out, that's obvious. That's why, in the end, the interview was only with me. In the end, they all crowded around me and started asking me questions. (Larisa)

During my fieldwork, I had the chance to listen to the stories of *Intourist* interpreters themselves, who are described as 'underdeveloped memory machines' by Chabe

(1969, section 4.5). These women were very well aware of the 'flat and boorish' side to the role they, to a certain extent, had been taught to play. Antonina's citation below touches on the reality of her work for *Intourist*, on the difference between what she was supposed to say, and how she felt this prevented her from making real connections with her foreign clients:

> You are the one with whom they [foreign tourists] can talk, talk all day. It was like this: you can go there, but you can't go there, for example. Here you can guide them [the foreign tourists], here you can't. […] It's shabby there, it's dirty there, there are rundown walls and all that. […] So, we would talk about successes, for example of the Soviet Union, right? And you get told by those Germans: "But you can't even feed yourself, right? Because the Soviet Union buys wheat." And I am standing there, and some things I didn't know, but I somehow always enthusiastically… spoke out in defence. In defence of the country, so to speak. Those kinds of things. And now I am thinking: what would they have thought of me? They probably thought that I was some sort of… [laughs] well, really politicised, well, her… They told her what to say, intoxicated her with propaganda. Probably, probably. I think that it is very likely that that is what they thought. […] I even thought how interesting it would be to meet those people, see how we would get along now. I think that we would understand each other, I'm sure. […] And back then, yes, that politization was there, really. You can't deny it. We were raised that way. Interpreters, people who... well... talked [to foreigners], they were the same, parts of the country as it were, yes. We were just like all the others. We were raised like that, in our families, in school, at university. This is just who we were. We were those people. (Antonina)

Preferences for male or female interpreters

Several interpreters mentioned that a low pitched, masculine timbre is often perceived as more trustworthy by their clients (see 5.4). However, tone of voice is not the only factor that clients consider when they decide which interpreter to hire for the job. In this section I will discuss other factors that, in the eyes of interpreters themselves, influence the clients' preference for working with an interpreter of a certain gender. They stand in sharp contrast the results of Angelelli's (2004b:68) research on the impact of gender, socio-economic status and level of education on interpreters' self-perception in terms of the continuum of visibility/invisibility across their different work settings. She concludes that "male and female interpreters do not perceive their role differently." Participants in this study *do* experience the influence of their gender during face-to-face interpreting, reflecting larger tendencies in Russian society at large. Women as caring and sensitive versus men as mechanical, to the point, and pragmatic was a recurring theme in the interviews. The following citation is indicative:

Women are probably easier to get along with… softer, probably… […] Traditionally, somehow a man [...] is more often trusted somehow, there's immediately this respect, yes. Men are quite serious. (Antonina)

In terms of professionalism, perceived male and female characteristics can be framed in both a positive and a negative way. On the one hand, women were described as 'too emotional', 'too nervous' for such a 'nerve-racking profession'. In these conversations, it was often the masculine approach, described as 'serious', 'indifferent', and 'confident' that was seen as professional. Men were compared to machines: "he is just like a steam locomotive." On the other hand, there are plenty of examples in which (perceived) emotional intelligence associated with women contributed to understanding. This becomes clear especially in medical examinations relating to physical and psychological abuse and intimacy (Hadziabdic and Hjelm, 2013). My research confirms the findings of these authors. Below a quotation from Renata, describing how the association of women with emotions can lead to a preference for a female interpreter. In this example, she talks about men who have been sexually assaulted:

That is why they often ask: to whom would you like to talk about this? And, of course, if you give them the opportunity to speak to a male interpreter and, for example, a male psychologist, they will never say a word. Only in the case when there's a woman, then, maybe, they will say something. (Renata)

One of Raval's (2003) participants stated that for cultural reasons, women are not able to talk about sexual issues in front of men. In other cultures, this works both ways, with men preferring a male- and women a female interpreter. Binder et al. (2012), for example, demonstrate that in healthcare interpreting, patients prefer working with an interpreter of the same gender. Despite their different findings, these studies' have a clear preference for a certain gender in common, instead of indifference. This is another example of an element of a personal trust history (4.2): people who have been betrayed by either men or women might have difficulty trusting people from that same gender again.

Another often-mentioned reason for hiring a female interpreter is for the sake of 'psychological balance' in almost exclusively male environments. Other interpreters mentioned how, when on a business trip, men often ask their opinion when buying

souvenirs for their wives and children. Below an example from Ekaterina. She had been hired by a Russian businessman who considered buying Western style clothes for the Russian market. The clothes were full of multi-coloured spots, as if someone had used them while painting. Unsure of his own taste, he asked the interpreter – the only woman present in the room - for advice:

> They had brought really fashionable western clothes with them, and then our businessman walked in [...] As you know, in Russia women love this smart style, to always look like at formal dinners, as in the theatre. So he was looking, looking, and then he looked at me, scanned me from head to toes, and said: "Would you ever wear such a thing?!" [laughs] (Ekaterina)

Cultural factors shaping Russian society today similarly influence the interpreting profession. Since technical and physically demanding work is seen as men's work, so is interpreting in such a context. Interpreting at construction sites was a recurrent example of a typical job for male interpreters. Although the women who touched on this topic seemed to be glad that their male colleagues would take on assignments in such settings, this was not the case when technical interpreting was discussed. For example, during a small focus-group type of interview with two women and one man, the women shared their frustration of not being taken seriously during technical interpreting, despite their qualifications. Or, as Alina phrased it:

> Especially when you work with technology. Because people think that you don't understand. Even when I really don't understand, that doesn't mean you can talk to me that way, as if I don't understand. I'm still there as a professional (*spetsialist*). (Alina)

Other examples are typical meetings of 'brothers' networks' in business or diplomacy. They are seen as masculine environments, demanding a certain type of interpreter willing to engage in the rituals of cooperation, including trips to the Russian sauna, or *bania,* as Nikolai, describing this macho-type of environment, illustrates:

> It's this type of masculine organisation. […] And after we were done, the negotiations had lasted several days straight, they told me: "So now tell our guest, our friend from Western Europe, that we'll go to the *bania*. There'll be girls waiting for us there. There'll be drinks waiting for us. Everything will be fine." He looks at me, and says: "Yes Nikolai, you should come too!" They didn't need an interpreter there. (Nikolai)

This becomes especially clear when you contrast it to the experience of Ekaterina in a similar setting:

> Ekaterina: In the 1990s, it happened very often, in business, very often they took their foreign guest to the *bania* to sign the contract. [...] One of my classmates went interpreting in a *bania*, where she was sitting in her full suit (laughs), wearing her jacket and in heels.
> Eline: Surrounded by men in towels?
> Ekaterina: Surrounded by men in towels, and they, when they realised, that she will just sit there and interpret, friendly and benevolent, they apologised and told her that they understood, that this was all nonsense.[84]

Going to the *bania* is usually an entirely separate affair: public *bania*s have special sections for their male and female customers. Only when visiting a (private) *bania* with close friends or family, people enjoy this tradition in a mixed form. Inviting a professional female interpreter to a *bania* visit with a group of businessmen is therefore not only unusual, but also places the interpreter in a very vulnerable position.

"It is not bad to be a woman, it is bad to be a girl"

> In this field, it is bad to be a girl. It is not bad to be a woman, but really bad to be a girl. Because that usually means that they will interrupt you, they will tell you that you do not interpret correctly. They will laugh, touch your shoulders…That's what I mean. (Ekaterina)

Spânu (2011) mentions how female interpreters, regardless of age, are referred to as 'girls'. The same pejorative was pointed out by interpreters who participated in my study, many of them who mentioned the unpleasant feeling of being called a girl (*devushka*) and addressed as '*ty*' instead of the formal '*Vy*'. Writing about her own interpreting experience, Schelsiger (2020) writes that she is often by far the youngest person in the room, which often leads to her clients doubting her experience, even assuming that this is one of the first times that she was professionally interpreting at all. She similarly notes that does not only concern truly young interpreters, but also for those who simply look very young. The following joke painfully touches on the problem outlined in the heading: "Company is looking for an interpreter.[85] Job requirements:

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[84] She used this last word in English.
[85] Note: the word *perevodchitsa* is used here, referring to a female interpreting specifically.

long legs, knowledge of foreign language is optional." Writing about gender inequality in post-Soviet Russia, Knapp et al. (2019) similarly notes that advertisements for secretarial positions might include requirements such as a particular desired physical appearance. I came across a very similar case in one of the interviews:

> [M]y collegues from Moscow were not pleased at all, when they were asked to find a tall and beautiful blonde for an interpreting job. Those were the kind of criteria […] it was for business, I think. They didn't care about qualifications, just about her looks. (Liudmila)

The following dialogue illustrates a similar case in which not language knowledge, but looks were the main motivation of a client to hire a certain female interpreter. The fact that Oksana considers herself lucky to have never encountered such a situation points to her suspicion that this situation was by no means unique:

> Oksana: I've had clients who quite openly confused the interpreter's profession with another one […] (grins). A very old one as well, very old (laughs).
> Eline: What do you do in such situations?
> Oksana: Well, I try to politely explain that our profession is an old one, but not the oldest. That my fees do not include additional services. And… that I hope that my refusal does not hamper a further fruitful business relationship. But I've been very lucky. My colleagues told me about clients who simply said what 'vital statistics' [*parametry*][86] they needed. They said that they would pay ... they really wrote that they would pay for both the interpreting and the night. [But that never happened to me] I have just been very lucky in life. (Oksana)

The above-mentioned sexism and ageism operate on top of the already compromised social status of the interpreter. Whereas their linguistical knowledge grants them a place amongst the intelligentsia, it is often not regarded as a 'real job' (see 2.2). Mariia's quotation below, who is a proud interpreter, describes how she encounters remarks stating that the role of interpreter is somehow 'not enough':

> I always write down on my business card that I am an interpreter, just like that 'Mariia - interpreter'. I am very proud of my work. But whenever my colleagues would introduce me, and I would say that I am an interpreter-translator, they

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[86] '*Parametry*' = body measurements. I must admit that when the interpreter mentioned the word 'parameters' during the interview, I did not pay much attention to this particular phrase. However, later on, while transcribing and analysing, I came across an online article with the following phrase: "Most employers first ask for your age, bust, waist and hip measurements, and only after that will they ask what language you know" (Bashkov, 1999). It was only then that I realised what the interpreter had hinted at during the interview itself.

would immediately add "Not only interpreter-translator!" As if 'interpreter-translator' is something .... pffff [noise refers to low standard]. Off course, only with good intentions, they wanted to support me. But I never shared these feelings of insecurity or inferiority at all. (Mariia)

7.6 The emotional impact of care

This is the fourth and final aspect that I would like to highlight is the emotional impact of care. The empathic listening is an integral element of the interpreter's task: he or she is supposed to recognise and convey the speaker's affect.[87] It is therefore inevitable that the interpreter will be affected by the experience of interpreting about violence, abuse, loss and the like (Harvey, 2003). Still, very limited research has been conducted on the emotional toll of interpreting. Both Shlesinger (2015:434) and De V. Souza and Fragkou (2019:245) point out that this is most likely a result of the traditional view of the interpreter as a neutral part of the interpreted interaction (see 5.2). What makes interpreting emotionally loaded is a combination of working alone, confidentiality, dealing with difficult topics and letting language 'pass through your own body' when interpreting in the first-person.

The emotional side of interpreting

Face-to-face interpreters, who are the main focus of this study, usually work alone. This is unlike simultaneous interpreters, who mostly work in pairs. De V. Souza and Fragkou (2019:245) point out that especially in emotionally demanding settings such as medical and trauma interpreting, the majority of interpreters work freelance. The agencies distributing the work are often not aware of how often each individual interpreter is exposed to suffering patients and traumatised victims. This, in combination with the key ethical principle of confidentiality, means that interpreters have very limited opportunities to talk about what happened at work. Wadensjö (1998:54) points out how this isolation makes it hard for interpreters to deal with the emotional load of their work.

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[87] I use affect here as a broad term, sometimes called 'core affect'. Affect refers to feelings more generally and encompasses moods (usually seen as long-term, diffuse and not so intense) and emotions (with a shorter duration, clear focus and intense) (Ekkekakis and Russell, 2013).

This becomes especially difficult when the topic of the interpreted talk is one that has an emotional impact on the interpreter. Medical 'bad news consultations' are an example, of which Butow et al. (2012) researched the heavy emotional impact on interpreters. Shlesinger (2015:434) refers to vicarious traumatization (VT) among interpreters, "a transformation in the self that results from a professional helper's empathic engagement with survivors of traumatic experiences." Wadensjö (1998:54) also mentions how working with victims of violent crime may result in interpreters suffering from a burn out. The use of the first person amplifies the effect on the interpreter and significantly increases the risk of VT (Bontempo and Malcolm, 2012, as cited in Riccardi, 2015). For this reason, switching from first to third person (see 6.4) is one of the most common softening strategies. Below a citation from Oksana, who mentions the emotional impact of interpreting from first person:

> Oksana: I had this job, when I had to explain for half an hour about how I had been violated. That was very unpleasant. Afterwards, when I left, I called my mother and told her that I felt as if… well, not as if I had been violated myself, but it was repulsive. I came home, took a hot shower for half an hour, in order to wash it all off. I hid under my blanket and pretended to… as if I was not there. […] A colleague told me that when she was seven months pregnant, she interpreted about how a man struck a woman in her stomach […] She translated it and her child started to restlessly move around. And she had to terminate her translation a couple of hours early. Because she really wasn't well. […] [Interpreters] process a lot through themselves. It is just that when something is being interpreted in the first person, it sounds like that. For you.
> Eline: Can you switch to third person in these cases?
> Oksana: No.

This also shows the extent to which making the switch from first to third person is seen as a last resort; it can have major consequences and is therefore avoided as much as possible (see 6.4). During an informal conversation with a befriended Dutch interpreter, he told me how precisely this emotional aspect of the profession made him change his career. Interpreting in court hearings took too much of a toll on him.

A specific *Russian* element

Often, the Russian interpreters contrasted their desire to help with the much more 'distanced' but also more 'professional' practices. This is illustrated by the following quotation:

> Maybe, the interpreter's task is to arrive, interpret and leave. But for some reason I'm always a bit of a cultural interpreter as well. That is why I always try to care (*pozabotit'sia*) (Tatiana)

What is interesting, is that the 'arrive, interpret and leave' – approach was often framed as non-Russian, mainly associated with Western European colleagues. Pechurina (2015) also points to 'cold' and 'distant' Western relations that are perceived as opposing a 'Russian soul' (see 6.2). This idea of professionalism versus providing support was similarly brought up by interpreters participating in Butow et al.'s study (2012), who stressed that the 'professional', 'cold' and 'Western' relationship with a client does not feel right to them. Pesmen (2000:280) explains how participants regularly framed the Russian 'imperfections' as positively valued aspects of national character. I would add that, although many interpreters frame their 'warm' approach as a good thing in everyday life, the fact that it clashes with professional interpreting 'ideology' (Wadensjö, 2004) means these 'imperfections' are not unanimously seen as positive. I would rather refer to the interpreters' attitude towards imperfection as ambiguous (see 5.2). I will illustrate this with a few ethnographic examples. The following paraphrased story shows the contrasting Western European and Russian approach in practice:

> I was there with a German colleague; the banquet was almost over. And suddenly someone from the delegation stands up to make a toast. So I jump up, ready to hurry towards him. And my German colleague asks me: "Where are you going? Did they call you? Did they ask you to interpret? Is 'interpreting toasts' included in your contract? Or toasts of this particular person? No? Then sit down and stay there." (Evgeniia talks about Mark)

Mark's desire to 'jump up' and help is contrasted with his German colleagues' rather cold business approach, referring to formal rules in the contract. A more 'human' and 'warm' approach is seen as specifically Russian:

> I think you're [referring to me as a Dutch or Western European person] better at becoming this unnoticeable, invisible voice. You're better at doing this than our interpreters. […] Your task is to interpret. Our task is, but that's our mentality, we also rush to help. (Valentina)

This provides an excellent example of the familiar critique that fits with long-standing historical and literary renditions of the Russian people's or 'Russian soul's' hostility to the coldly calculating, impersonal world of money that I touched upon earlier in this

chapter (Patico, 2009). By describing the European 'other' as opposing 'our' style of interpreting, the Russian interpreters supporting this opposition construct their own self-image. The quotations above also link back to the discussion on imperfection mentioned in the introduction of this thesis (section 1.1). In an article from 2017, Rutten describes how the myth of Russians as raw but sincere people, in contrast to artificial Europeans, has coloured writings of both Russian and Western European intellectuals. When it comes to care and help, Jurcik et al (2013) argues that caring and communal bonding in Russia are unique in the sense that they are characterised by a pragmatic 'in your face' type of social support (Jurcik, 2013). Comparing Russians to European Americans, Chentsova-Dutton (2012) makes a similar point, suggesting that the former tend to receive more 'imposed social support' than the latter. In interpreting, 'in your face' social support was described as follows:

> The task [...] of a Russian [...] interpreter is to turn this helpfulness down a little. Because otherwise we will feed everyone, love everyone and interpret everyone, we will explain everything to everyone, we will teach everyone how to live. (Valentina)

Several other interpreters similarly referred to the specifically Russian element of 'care' in their profession. Developing a personal relation with professional contacts instead of treating them as is something they consider polite, and above all a specific *Russian* feature:

> It's just that at some point, you know, those very-very sensitive things, maybe our *Russian chelovechnost'* helps us, at some point you just need to look at your client as a human. (Evgeniia)

> If you're sitting in a car with your client, driving to work, what should your small talk[88] be about? That's also, today it might be better, but back in the 90s an average 20-year-old person did not know how to do this. He only knew it the Russian way: personal and from the heart right away (*srazu o sebe i srazu pro dushu*). (laughs) [He didn't know] that you shouldn't answer immediately, that you shouldn't give away personal information, or think that this is your best friend. (Ekaterina)

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[88] The interpreter used this word in English.

Exhaustion

The factors mentioned in the previous sections all result in a more holistic approach to interpreting that extends way beyond the interpreted encounter and linguistic translation as such. It includes elements of care, friendship and 'assistance' in the broadest sense of the word. This approach to interpreting comes at a cost. Firstly, exhaustion as a theme in interpreting research is mentioned in relation to the unclear expectations from clients and employers. Especially when they are not used to working with an interpreter, they are not familiar with the need for breaks or addressing the client directly, instead of through the interpreter (Brodskii, 2012:157). Secondly, exhaustion as a theme in interpreting research is mentioned in relation to the interpreters themselves. Baigorri-Jalón (2010), for example, mentions the 'limitless working hours' of Cold War interpreters in China and the Soviet Union. Spânu (2011) similarly notes that due to a lack of clearly stated working conditions interpreters are expected to be available at all times and provide their employers with extra services that have nothing to do with interpreting. As a result, they risk complete exhaustion:

> You wake up before anyone else. Yes, if you're somewhere with a delegation, nobody cares if you've got a headache, if you got enough sleep or not. You're on your feet the whole day. Because at the very moment that one person decides to rest, another one urgently needs you. During the break someone from the delegation comes up to you and says "I ripped my tights, let's go buy tights with me." You see? Or "I have a problem with my visa, go and talk to them." You don't get that break. And in the evening, they decide to go dancing to three o'clock at night, and you need to be there as well. Somehow. The next day they will sleep through the business part, or take a nap on the bus. And you need to get to work again at seven in the morning. They never taught us how to defend our rights, your time, to say "I have the right to a half an hour break now, I need to be silent, because my voice is my instrument." We never… I never dared to speak up this way. (Evgeniia)

This exhaustion is links back to issues related to gender and age mentioned earlier. Particularly women are expected to 'care' for their client due to the feminised character of (emotional) care, and particularly young people tend to work overtime for financial reasons.

By pointing out that "They never taught us how to defend our rights," Evgeniia touches on the potential role of education in tackling (part of) the double disadvantage of being a woman and young. Indeed, several interpreters mentioned a feeling of not quite

knowing their rights as an interpreter or feeling unable to defend them in professional negotiations. Their clients, especially those not used to working with an interpreter, are also frequently unaware of, for example, the interpreters' need for breaks (Brodskii, 2012:157). Interpreters have responded to this in several ways. On the one hand, several participants of this study actively work towards a better understanding of their profession among the general public. Some do this through social media accounts or other online channels, such as Telegram. Others try to raise awareness through teaching. At least three of the interpreters who participated in this study are teachers of specialist courses for both students and practising interpreters. The huge popularity of these courses and the widespread feedback along the lines of "I am so glad we finally got to discuss this, nobody ever talked about this at university" reflect the demand for this type of practical knowledge. Hopefully, this chapter can form a modest contribution to this continuing dialogue.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter forms a response to Gelsthorpe et al's (2020) call to enlarge the usual subjects of care research. I have analysed how becoming 'someone's voice' presents a specific form of a caring relationship, requiring empathy and intimacy. Based on existing research in the field of interpreting and care, I have identified four care aspects that help us understand interpreting as a caring profession and contribute to a Russian ethnomorality of care.

Firstly, the Soviet idea of 'protecting the helpless foreigner' continues to shape interpreter – client relations today. The view of the client as dependent and lost, very much like a patient, makes interpreters reluctant to frame their work in terms of market relations. Secondly, I explained how the dependency mentioned in the first aspect is in fact mutual, and leads to a preference for a family-like relation with professionals. This has advantages, such as long-lasting friendship growing out of working relations, but also disadvantages, since a combination of friendly relations and market dynamics can lead to a financial (and social) incentive to allow undesired behaviour. The third aspect focusses on the comparable gender dynamic of care and interpreting. Just like in many other countries, caring is seen as a naturally female task in Russia. This association, combined with ageism, can lead to hiring or rejecting an interpreter based

on gender instead of professional skills. The fourth and final aspect revolves around the emotional impact of care work. A combination of working alone, confidentiality, dealing with difficult topics and letting language 'pass through your own body' when interpreting in the first-person can make interpreting an emotionally difficult task. Unfortunately, due to the traditional view of the interpreter as a conduit, this side of the job is rarely recognised. An understanding of the emotional and physical consequences of interpreters' empathic listening contributes to self-awareness of interpreters and the expectations of their clients, potentially providing a basis for reducing stress and exhaustion. I finished this fourth aspect with a note on the perceived Russianness of caring, linking back to literature on the distinction between business and traditional compassion, the latter being perceived as essentially *Russian* (Caldwell (2017:176).

Whereas the traditional view of the interpreter as a neutral 'conduit' hides the interpreter's affiliations to all categories shaping social life except for linguistic belonging, the lens of 'care' allows us to explore how interpreter-client interaction is, just like other social relations, shaped by factors including national, regional, and local contexts, economic inequalities and gender. By looking at face-to-face interpreting in Russia through the interdisciplinary lens of care, this chapter forms a starting point for a relational and embodied understanding of the profession, recognising its essential social character.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research project was to gain an understanding of the interpreter's ability to negotiate trust. This topic is intimately linked to questions of professionalism, neutrality and loyalty: is a professional interpreter one who builds trust based on detachment, objectivity and distance, or one who practices empathic listening and is sensitive to the 'human' factors of communication?

In academic linguistic contexts, trust is often regarded as based on impartiality: the more objective and invisible the interpreter, the better and more professional he or she will be. In this thesis, I show that, in practice, this approach is not always possible, or desirable. The trust relationship between client and interpreter can also be based on closeness and personal interdependence. Interpreting *po-chelovecheski* (lit. 'approaching someone in a humane way') is a colloquial way for Russian interpreters to describe this approach to interpreting based on exercising empathy and a willingness to be flexible in relations with others. It consists of practices of smoothening and softening (verb infinitives: *sgladit'* and *smiagchit'*) aimed at encouraging trust between interlocutors. Generally, the first is used to refer to finding a way out of a tense situation, the second to refer to softening a particular sentence or gesture in translation (although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably).

Main findings

This chapter will provide a detailed overview of the main findings of this study, which can be divided into two parts. The first revolves around three sub-questions: When do interpreters negotiate trust? What are the tools interpreters can use to accomplish this? And finally, why do interpreters do what they do? What motivates them to negotiate trust and do more than 'just translate? My answer to this research question is a 'performativity of trusting', of trust obtained by interpreting *po-chelovecheski*. Building on existing trust theory, I drafted an analytical framework (chapter 4) that I subsequently used to answer the questions above.

The second part covering this study's main findings take the interdisciplinary lens of care as a starting point. Instead of separating the professional from the personal, regarding them as binary opposites, recent research on care shows their interrelatedness. My analyses of interpreting as a caring profession is split into four key aspects connecting interpreting and care: protecting the helpless foreigner (almost as if he or she were a patient), personalised relations with colleagues and clients, challenging a 'disembodied' conception of interpreting and care, and finally the emotional impact of care.

Original research angle

In order to understand the origin of the influential ideal of the interpreter who builds trust through distance and invisibility mentioned above, I looked at the influence of written translation on standards of interpreting (see 2.1). A review of existing literature in the field of TS shows that most research in this discipline concentrates on written translation. Russia-specific research is no exception: research on translation in this region by both local and foreign scholars similarly revolves around translations that sooner or later find their way to the (digital) page (see 2.1). Interpreting, or oral translation, is an understudied topic in TS.

Studies that *do* focus on interpreting have predominantly taken conference interpreting as their topic for decades. The face-to-face interpreting practices at the heart of this study remained under-researched within the field of IS. Still, conference interpreting's ideal conditions for comparing input and output continues to influence research in IS today. The predominantly positivist trend in this field, as well as the distance between interpreter and client, both strengthen the already influential model of the interpreter as someone who 'just translates' (Cronin, 2002:51). The fact that conference interpreting as a profession is also particularly well-organised, largely due to the international association of conference interpreting AIIC, resulted in the application of conference interpreting standards to other forms of interpreting. In the literature review, I have shown that this is problematic, because face-to-face contact shapes communication in a way that distance interpreting from a booth at the back of a conference hall never can.

Another result of the original bias towards conference interpreting is geographical: most conference interpreting takes place in a Western European context. My study on face-to-face interpreting is based on fieldwork with Russian interpreters. The region in which the large majority of participating interpreters obtained their professional degrees, Western Russia, is particularly relevant when it comes to studying trust. Russia is a country with relatively low systemic trust, which refers to trust at a rather abstract level, directed towards organizations or institutions, instead of to individuals. Several authors (e.g., Ledeneva, 2018c) have argued that in a country of low systemic trust, interpersonal trust, negotiated between individuals, is particularly relevant.

The brief historical overview of interpreting in Russia with which I started this thesis (1.2), as well as the future of interpreting discussed below (see 8.7), show that certain themes surrounding the interpreter seem timeless. In their role as a bridge between 'us' and 'them', they become responsible for much more than 'mere translation'. Throughout the history of interpreting, the interpreter's role is politicised as their loyalty to the client plays a key role. The interpreter's ability to bridge difference between people from entirely different linguistic and cultural backgrounds becomes particularly challenging as the gap between interlocutors widens because of worsening international relations. In this thesis, particularly in section 1.2, I show how during the current tensions between Russia and Western Europe on both a political and public level, the interpreters' experiences 'on the ground' provides insights into the way trust is created on an everyday basis.

Content of this chapter

In this 8th and final chapter, I will present the main findings of this study in two parts. The first part answers the three sub-questions mentioned above: When, what and how does the interpreter 'smoothen' or 'soften'? The second part of the main findings revolves around the negotiation of trust beyond the professional-personal divide, taking the view that interpreting is a caring profession as a starting point. Subsequently, I will outline how this study contributes to three bodies of academic literature: IS, an anthropology of interpreting, and trust theory. Next, I will point out some new questions that arise from this study and show how these can form the basis for further research. In 8.6, I reflect on the past three years that I have been working on this project, paying particular attention to the effect the outbreak of COVID-19 has had on the final phase

of my research process. The final section provides some of the participants' and my own speculations concerning the future of interpreting.

8.2 Main findings 1: When, what and how do interpreters negotiate trust?

Which situations require smoothening and softening?

Answering the first sub-question of this study ("In which situations do interpreters feel friction between neutrality and loyalty/empathy?") is complex: providing a typology of situations is impossible. In this thesis, predominantly in chapter 5, I have provided several reasons why. The first one is that interpreting *po-chelovecheski* happens not only consciously, but also unconsciously. The example with the three green crocodiles illustrated this (see 5.2). This means that, relying primarily on interviews, identifying situations in which softening and smoothening occur is far from straightforward. Extensive participant observation could be a useful method here, a topic which I will get back to in the paragraph on directions for further research below (8.5). Second, interpreting *po-chelovecheski* is morally ambiguous, since it is not what interpreters are taught, nor what they are 'supposed to do'. The quotation from one participant that "you are a professional, you are an interpreter, but you are also human" is a source of pride for some, but a problematic shortcoming for others. Although some interpreters are proud of their skills, others tell their stories of 'smoothening' and 'softening' in an apologetic manner (see 5.2). Some might not share them at all. Thirdly, because the interlocutors are by definition limited in understanding what is going on due to a lack of language knowledge, the informal practices that emerge due to discretion on the part of the interpreter, and characterise interpreting *po-chelovecheski* remain unknown to clients. Whether to 'smoothen' or 'soften' is entirely up to the interpreter; it is context-specific and personal to such an extent that it is difficult to make generalisations. Certain factors that influence interpreters' decisions, and therefore the conditions of 'smoothing' and 'softening', can nevertheless be identified.

First of all, the type of interpreting is relevant. Due to the direct personal contact, interpreting *po-chelovecheski* happens more during 'face-to-face interpreting' and less during simultaneous conference interpreting (Wadensjö, 1998). An 'activist' approach is more common in community interpreting than in, for example, court interpreting. Second, the duration of the working relationship matters: the longer the working

relationship, the better the interpreter gets a picture of the client's personal trust history (see 4.2, 7.4), of the goals of the client, and of his or her own role in reaching them. The client, in turn, tends increasingly to involve the interpreter in the process over time. Third, the language knowledge of the involved parties has an impact. When none of the parties speaks both languages, the interpreter's smoothening and softening go unnoticed. This is in contrast to high-level meetings where each side brings their own interpreters, who crosscheck each other's translation. It follows that interpreters working with English can seldom be sure that none of the speakers understands English. Interpreters of more rarely spoken languages do not feel this pressure of being checked upon as much. Fourth, the cultural background of the interpreter plays a role. Next to their own culture, interpreters have developed an awareness of another one, including an understanding of the cultural component of a client's personal trust history. If this second cultural background coincides with the cultural background of one of the speakers, the interpreter is able to add cultural explanations of words and behaviour, of which section 6.4 provided several examples.

What kinds of tactics are accessible to interpreters in such situations?

Besides discussing *when* interpreters experience the need to soften and smoothen, and providing some specific examples of behaviour and speech that interpreters 'soften' or 'smoothen' due to its undesirable character, I paid attention to the interpreter's toolbox. What tactics are accessible to interpreters in the earlier mentioned situations? What does 'smoothening' and 'softening' consist of? The applicability of a certain tactic is related to the tactic's visibility. The interpreter's assumption of a primary participant role can happen in both a visible and invisible way. Martínez - Gómez (2015) refers to this difference in terms of 'opaqueness' (the interpreter's assumption of a primary participant role is invisible) or 'transparency' (the interpreter's assumption of a primary participant role is visible). Below I will address the different tactics in this order, first focussing on opaque tactics, then on the more transparent ones.

One of the most common tactics is switching from first to third person (6.4). Although interpreting from the first person is the norm in interpreting, exceptional situations might force the interpreter to take a step back from a sensitive situation or conflict. It is a popular means of distancing since its use is rather 'opaque': it is unlikely that the

primary participants understand whether the interpreter uses the first or third person in the 'other' language and the interpreter's intervention will usually go unnoticed. Another opaque softening tactic is the use of euphemisms, or adding a 'softening' explanation and/or hedges such as 'a little bit' or 'just'.

Subsequently, I provided examples of more 'transparent' tactics, through the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions, or by leaving out phrases and adding explanations. In these cases, subtlety is important: once the gap between the original and the translation is too wide, this might have the opposite effect and spark suspicion rather than build trust, or result in a 'show of clowns' (see 5.3). Finally, the interpreter can intentionally take the blame for what is deemed a mistake by his or her client. Ironically, the interpreter's status makes this relatively straightforward: it is much easier to blame the interpreter for getting things wrong than to assume the other party is speaking nonsense or suspect oneself of being unclear (see 6.3). I closed this section by referring to the 'smoothening' and 'softening' effects of the mere presence of the interpreter. Besides the fact that the interpreter's translations grant both parties more time to think while waiting for the translation, several participants mentioned the perceived 'balancing' qualities of female interpreters in predominantly male environments such as business or diplomacy.

Why do interpreters do what they do?
This thesis has similarly provided productive insights concerning the third sub-question. Why do interpreters do what they do? What do they aim to achieve? As mentioned in the section on the implications for neutrality, impartiality and loyalty (5.2), being someone's voice results in a diffused sense of responsibility. It not only makes clients relate to the interpreter as the author of speech; interpreters also associate themselves with the translations they produce. This causes a shared feeling of responsibility, of a feeling of 'us' against 'them' and a desire to reach the client's goals. Additionally, interpreters can also explicitly be asked to smoothen or soften by their client before, during or after a meeting. Despite the professional ideology of the interpreter as neutral, users of their services often act and react to interpreters as potential conversational partners, thereby 'breaking the rules' of the distant objective professional. To them, "it seem(s) natural, even ordinary, to interact with interpreters as capable human beings who can answer and ask questions" (Roy, 2000:107) (see

section 5.2). The relational dimension to trust-building in interpreting underlying the motivations mentioned in this paragraph is discussed separately in chapter 7. I will turn to an evaluation of this chapter's findings next.

8.3 Main findings 2: Negotiating trust beyond the professional - personal divide

Interpreting as a caring profession

After having gained several answers to this thesis' three sub-questions, chapter 7 takes a step back from the empirical findings and proposes a different approach to looking at interpreting. I argue that, instead of comparing the interpreters' day-to-day work to idealistic codes of ethics, or comparing their 'professional practise' to their 'professional ideology', in the words of Wadensjö (2004), it is productive to take a radically different look at the profession. In order to understand interpreting *po-chelovecheski* and the feeling of shared responsibility mentioned in the previous paragraph, we need to dive deeper into the relational element of interpreting: what does it mean to become someone's voice? The concept of care, inspired by recent studies exploring this concept (Gelsthorpe, 2020; Radziwinowiczówna et al., 2018), provides a lens that goes beyond professional - personal, or individual - collective divides. Inclusive research on 'care' reveals the gendered character of care, applicable to interpreting. I made this argument by analysing four interconnected aspects connecting interpreting and care.

1. Protecting the helpless foreigner

The first aspect that I identified compares certain elements of the client - interpreter relationship to the caring relation between a carer and a patient. In the Soviet period and immediate post-Soviet years, the interpreters' task was either to accompany a foreigner (*inostranets)* visiting the USSR, or their compatriots abroad. Both were viewed as 'helpless' and 'lost' in an alien environment. This view of the foreigner as someone who needs to be helped and the idea of the 'lost', 'scared', and 'helpless' foreigner is still very much alive today and repeatedly emerged during the interviews. Due to this 'helplessness' of the client, interpreters often feel uneasy framing their work in terms of market relations. This is characteristic of other caring relationships, which are rarely experienced as solely economically advantageous. Instead, Fotaki

(2009:655) explains how health professionals are often motivated by altruism, not just by how to maximise utility.

2. Personalised relations with clients and colleagues

As demonstrated in chapter 5, the client and interpreter depend on one another. They are, in the words of Mark, an interpreter who participated in this study, "each other's hostages" for the duration of their cooperation. As in other relations of care, this mutual dependency leads to a preference for intimate relationships, for a family-like relation with professionals. This is the second aspect that I discuss. Especially long cooperation, when the interpreter and the client become a 'tandem', can lead to long lasting friendships. However, mutual dependence and intimacy have another side. Interpreters experience the need for a certain level of financial security in order to be able to refuse a client. In the first years of an interpreter's professional career, financial incentives might cause him or her to allow the client to come closer than they would prefer in a non-professional setting (see 7.4). Power discrepancies, often a significant predictor of sexual harassment against women, characterise face-to-face interpreting as well (Knapp, 2019:2057). Similar to Spânu's (2011) findings, also participants of this study have encountered sexual harassment at work, or heard of it from their colleagues. However, these cases are not always recognised as such, let alone reported (7.4, 7.5). Besides close relations between the interpreter and client, I briefly examined the 'trust networks' through which interpreters pass on interpreting assignments to each other. These networks are especially relevant due to the unregulated character of the Russian translation market (see 1.5).

3. Challenging the disembodied conception of interpreting

The fact that caring is traditionally associated with 'feminine' sectors of the economy forms the third aspect I discuss. Careers in languages have typically been feminised in (Soviet) Russia (White, 2005). Interpreting work is also predominantly carried out by women. I argue that the caring element of interpreting contributes to this imbalance. In order to better understand the gendered character of interpreting in Russia today, I have outlined the gendered career paths of interpreters in the Soviet Union. Whereas diplomatic interpreting was seen as male, interpreter-guides were women. The first type is most visible in the public sphere: diplomatic interpreters publish memoirs, give

open lectures and their work is broadcast on television. Interpreter-guides or those practising other forms of community interpreting hardly ever receive this amount of public attention. The definition of professionalism associated with the conduit model is associated with male characteristics. The idea that women are 'caring', 'sensitive' and 'emotional' versus men as 'mechanical', 'rational' and 'serious' recurrently came up during the interviews. In these conversations, it was often the masculine approach that was seen as professional. On the other hand, participants gave plenty of examples in which characteristics traditionally associated with women contributed to understanding. Finally, several interpreters pointed to the intersectionality of ageism and sexism in their profession. Being young and female results in a much lower social status than interpreters from other social categories, independent of their qualifications. An example is the shared frustration of young female interpreters at not being taken seriously during technical interpreting, despite their qualifications.

4. The emotional impact of care

Empathic listening is an integral element of the interpreter's task: he or she is supposed to recognise and convey the speaker's affect. It is therefore inevitable that the interpreter will be emotionally affected by the form and content of speech that he or she translates. In the fourth and final aspect I have provided a combination of different factors that make interpreting a particularly emotionally loaded practice. Unlike simultaneous interpreters, face-to-face interpreters usually work alone. This, in combination with the key ethical principle of confidentiality, means that interpreter have very limited opportunities to talk about what happened at work. This can include difficult topics: examples are interpreters working with severely ill people in medical settings, or with victims of violent crime in court. Interpreting in the first person, letting language 'pass through your own body', strengthens the interpreter's association with the utterance. In order to diminish the emotional impact, interpreters have several distancing tactics at their disposal, such as limited contact with the speaker before and after an interpreted event. What is interesting is that the 'arrive, interpret and leave' – approach was often framed as non-Russian, mainly associated with Western European colleagues. In contrast, the caring element of interpreting was seen as particularly Russian. This approach to interpreting comes at a cost: exhaustion is one of the themes that frequently came up during the interviews. Through social media and

teaching, interpreters aim to spread knowledge about the day-to-day practices of their profession, so as to inform clients and interpreting students on how to protect themselves and other interpreters from potential burn out.

In sum: Questioning the back- and frontstage of interpreting

Drawing on Goffman's (1956) concepts of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' performances, Giddens (2008) explains how control of the threshold between these two is part of the essence of professionalism. Particularly at access points, where interpersonal and systemic trust interact, a strict division between front- and backstage is made. Elements of hazard or luck, as well as imperfect skills and human fallibility, are hidden; they are part of the 'backstage'. Experts assume that lay individuals are more likely to trust them if they are not able to observe how frequently 'imperfect elements' enter into expert performance (Giddens, 2008:87). In this study, I have argued that what is considered 'professional' in interpreting is first of all not always possible, and secondly not always desirable. Interpreters struggle with an unattainable ideal that pushes their qualities as negotiators of trust to the 'backstage'. My research demonstrates that in fact these qualities are often valued by their clients, as they allow interpreters to avoid tension and find a way out if this tension occurs. Returning to Rutten's (2020) statement in the introduction (see 1.1.) to this thesis shows that acknowledging one's imperfection can indeed build trust (see 5.3). However, the 'imperfection as an asset' rhetoric described by Rutten (forthcoming) does not fully fit this study as such, since interpreters do not embrace 'the imperfect'. Instead, I question the front- and backstage of interpreting in relation to trust, and demonstrate how questions of what we consider ideal and what we consider failure in interpreting depend on specific situations and the relationships of those involved.

8.4 Contributions

This study contributes to three distinct areas of academic literature. The results are relevant to the field of IS, as well as to anthropology and the interdisciplinary study of trust. The first field, IS, can benefit from the original angle of this study. As mentioned in section 8.1, I focus on an understudied field in an understudied region, namely face-to-face interpreting in Russia. Furthermore, my application of existing trust theory to a study of the interpreted encounter allows me to make original connections between

these bodies of literature. Although trust frequently comes up in interpreting research, its discussion seldomly draws on trust theory. Terms such as 'interpreting *po-chelovecheski*', 'smoothening' and 'softening' are my contributions to studying interpreting as a situated practice. The second field of research to which this study contributes is the anthropology of interpreting. I combine different bodies of literature to understand the phenomenon of trust-building, which is key to both the profession of the anthropologist and the interpreter. I have split up this analysis into three sections: 'Struggling with invisibility', 'Positioning – positionality' and 'Building rapport and becoming *svoi*'. The final body of literature to which this study contributes is trust theory. By concentrating on the process of trust-building I show what trust *does;* I provide an ethnographically grounded 'performativity' of trusting. Terms such as 'personal trust history' and 'Geertzian moments' are my own contributions to the trust theorist's toolkit. Finally, I study trust from the perspective of the 'trustee' (the trusted person), instead of the person trusting, who is usually at the centre of trust research.

Contributions to IS

After a brief overview of the few existing studies combining the concept of trust with research on interpreting in section 2.3, I conclude that these authors hardly engage with the concept as such. The majority of these studies look at trust as a variable but fail to account for the complexity of trust as a process (Meyer et al., 2008). In fact, as far as I am aware, Robb and Greenhalgh (2006) are the only authors who directly refer to trust theories in relation to interpreting. This is unfortunate, since the existing literature exploring theories of trust is both rich and detailed. Theoretical concepts such as 'zones of uncertainty', 'interpersonal trust', 'positional trust', 'systemic trust' and 'defensive arrangements' resonate with existing studies of interpreting. Since no theory combining interpreting and trust theory for the analysis of ethnographic data exists, drafting this analytical framework became one of the first steps of my research process and, when finished, a contribution to IS literature.

Research in IS often overestimates the control of the interpreter, while downplaying or outright ignoring the control of the client. However, trust is precisely relevant because this control is not complete, or completely absent. This is what makes the interpreted encounter a 'zone of uncertainty'. I start by placing the apparently 'complete control' of the interpreter in perspective using the concept of 'defensive arrangements' in relation

to the interpreter's client. This concept, originally used in trust theory, refers to arrangements made by a mistrustful or suspicious person to engage with the world. In order to deal with the world's complexity and unpredictability, defensive arrangements are ways to exercise control, no matter how limited. These practices, grounded in scepticism or at least caution, allow for a 'tempering' or 'domestication' of unknown forces (Luhmann, 2014:1, as cited in Mühlfried, 2018:11). I demonstrate how length and turn of talk, mentioned by Martínez-Gómez (2015), account for only part of the client's defensive arrangements. In addition, familiar sounding words, intonation and 'the visual picture' (gestures and facial expressions) should be considered.

Second, I question the complete control of the interpreter. In response to the client's defensive arrangements, interpreters 'perform trustworthiness'. The interpreter is a 'professional stranger' who, in order to enter interactions into which strangers would not usually be allowed, needs to gain the trust of the other participants. This process, similar to 'establishing rapport' in anthropology, is referred to as becoming *svoi* by the participating interpreters. It includes a wide range of practices all aimed at emphasising the common (or 'encapsulated') interests of the interpreter and the client (Hardin, 2005). Interpreters actively use the particular jargon and register of the client, as well as the 'packaging' (Gile, 2009a) and clothing that fit a particular client. This way, the interpreter makes it easier for this client to view him or her as *svoi*, as 'one of us'. Interpreters performing trustworthiness have the minimal expectation that this client will not violate their trust. The client can do this by, for example, giving the interpreter a hard time by speaking fast or without breaks. These are factors outside the interpreter's control, underpinning the claim mentioned earlier that the interpreter's control is far from all-encompassing. By performing trustworthiness, the interpreter has the expectation that the client will trust the interpreter in return and try to help them by speaking slowly, with regular pauses, giving the interpreter time to translate.

Interpreting *po-chelovecheski* is a colloquial way for Russian interpreters to describe the approach to interpreting based on exercising empathy and a willingness to be flexible in relations with others. The opposite of treating someone *po-chelovecheski* (*chelovek* literally means 'human') is the performance of a machine or robot, associated with a 'dehumanised' bureaucracy, where the relationship between parties is impersonal and based on objectivity, compliance with formal rules, and distance

(Weber, 2013:216). Instead of discussing practices of trust-building as deviations from the professional ideal (e.g., as informal or unprofessional), the term 'interpreting *po-chelovecheski*' points directly at what *is*, instead of what is *not*. As an umbrella term, it incorporates practices such as 'smoothening' and 'softening'. That is why I used this term in my own research and consider it to be a valuable tool to study what is *gained* in translation, instead of the customary focus on what is *lost*.

Contributions to an anthropology of interpreting

IS and anthropology could benefit from one another's accumulated research. The aim of this study is to contribute to this cross-learning by exploring how ethnographic fieldwork can contribute to IS and how insights from IS can in turn enrich the anthropology of trust-building across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The topic of trust is a connecting factor: both the interpreter and the anthropologist can be termed 'professional strangers', who need trust to carry out their work. In contrast to the tendency to downplay the interpreter's 'fieldwork' and the anthropologist's 'translation' (see section 1.3), my interdisciplinary focus on trust-building shows how both fields have a range of practices in common, and how these distinct bodies of literature can be used in combination to gain an understanding of interpreting as a process in all its complexity. Throughout this study, I have pointed out parallels between the interpreter's and the anthropologist's work, as well as highlighted the different terminology in the different fields used to study these parallels. In the following paragraphs, I will provide an overview of this second theoretical contribution of this thesis, to the development of an anthropology of interpreting

The first example is a shared struggle with a professional ideal of 'invisibility'. The reflexive turn in anthropology, as well as the social and cultural turn in IS (Cronin, 2002; Wolf, 2014) call for a move away from positivism, and addressing questions of power in knowledge production. Instead of viewing the researcher's personality as an 'imperfection' kept out of ethnographic writings, these authors argued for an embodied approach. In IS, authors such as Wadensjö (1998), Cronin (2002), and Pöchhacker (2015) similarly demonstrated the visibility of the interpreter. They argued for a form of research acknowledging the person of the interpreter and his or her social and cultural background. Cronin (2002) even notes that the presence of the interpreter, the emergence of language mediation, is a crucial moment in the shift from the positivistic

object to the human subject in anthropology. Through this ability to communicate via translation, the anthropologist is no longer an observer but part of what is being observed. Although I would argue that the researcher's presence is part of who and what is being observed regardless of translation, my research has similarly shown that direct contact fundamentally changes the way of dealing with or describing the 'other'. The client's view of the interpreter changes from a conduit to a partner, and the interpreter in turn feels a shared responsibility for the client and his or her work. This relational change results in a change in practices towards interpreting *po-chelovecheski.*

A second link, closely related to the previous one, relates to how to practise this reflection. Can we agree on a description of the professional role of the interpreter or the anthropologist, when this role is constantly subject to social factors shaping interpersonal contact? Research on both the anthropologist and the interpreter has reflected on their 'positionality' (anthropology) and 'positioning' or 'role' (IS). In this thesis, I have looked at this using the term 'positionality' in the Methods chapter (section 3.3), in which I reflect on my own role as a researcher and the way my own cultural background 'situates' the knowledge presented in this thesis (Haraway, 1988). In IS, several authors have similarly argued for reflexive research on the position of the interpreter, especially in relation to questions of power (e.g., Angelelli, 2004b; Cronin, 2002) (see 2.5). Instead of using the anthropological term 'positionality', Mason (2009) draws on Davies and Harré's (1990:48) work on 'positioning', defined as "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines." Central to positioning in IS is the continuously changing nature of interaction among the participants in interpreter-mediated communication. In this research I have provided a range of examples demonstrating this positioning, both conscious and unconscious, at work. I have paid attention to the relatively recent recognition of multiple identities (e.g., gender) influencing interpreting.

A third and final example is my exploration of 'becoming '*svoi*' in interpreting. *Svoi* connotates belonging; it can be viewed as the very opposite of the 'stranger', 'foreigner' or 'outsider' (called '*chuzhoi*' in Russian). *Svoi* refers to a person who is 'one of us', with whom you can speak freely and on friendly terms. A similar process of gaining

trust has been referred to by anthropologists in literature on the concept of 'building rapport' (see 4.2). Rapport describes the relationship between the anthropologist and the 'fieldwork subjects' necessary for the former to not only gain 'outsider', but also 'insider' insights. Both concepts – becoming *svoi* or building rapport – have an elaborate history within anthropological discussions, but not in IS. Although 'rapport' figures in interpreting research (e.g., Pöchhacker, 2015; Tebble, 1999), these authors do not refer to findings in anthropology. This while the so called 'Geertzian moments' that I refer to in relation to trust research, for example, are moments when trust suddenly takes flight, or alternatively drops. These moments characterise narratives of trust-building by both the interpreter and the anthropologist. An example of the former can be found in section 7.4, an example of the latter in section 3.5.

Contributions to trust theory

This thesis responds to Broch-Due and Ystanes's (2016) call for a shift from a representational stance on 'trust' to a performativity of 'trusting'; of practices, doings and actions. Corsín Jiménez (2011) similarly argues that more research is necessary not so much on what trust *is*, but what trust *does*. This thesis provides such a 'performativity of trusting', grounded in ethnographic fieldwork. The clients suspicious 'defensive arrangements', the interpreter's response of 'performing trustworthiness', as well as the practising of 'smoothening' and 'softening' together make up this performativity of trusting. I have shown how theoretical concepts rarely applied in practice can be used to gain an understanding of trust negotiation as a process in everyday life (Meyer et al., 2008).

Additionally, taking into account a person's 'personal trust history' and 'Geertzian moments' are my own contributions to trust theory, whose relevance I demonstrate in the empirical chapters. I introduced the first term, a 'personal trust history', in order to operationalise Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016:1) definition of trust. They define trust as "a social orientation towards the future nurtured by the *gradual accumulation of positive experience* and sometimes revealed in a leap of faith" (my italics). This definition hints at the importance of a person's previous experience with trusting, but exclusively highlights the positive experiences. I argue that negative experiences also matter. Trust relationships are dynamic and culturally embedded: whether trusting or mistrusting behaviour is rewarded or punished in the society where a person grew up

matters. Other social experiences matter, too: a person whose trust has been violated in the past might have difficulty trusting again. The concept of 'personal trust history' allows us to take both rewarding and disappointing trust experiences into account.

Geertzian moments refer to instances to when trust seems to emerge out of nowhere, when suddenly the social relationship seems to cross an invisible line, into trust. These moments are rarely explored in trust theory, where the focus seems to be more on the gradual accumulation of trust in contrast to sudden eruptions of distrust. However, these eruptions of trust are widely discussed in anthropological writings. Many fieldworkers can point to a particular moment or event during which the groundwork for the development of true rapport and participation was established (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2010:45). I named this concept after probably the best-known example of such an event, described by Clifford Geertz (1973) in relation to Balinese cockfights. In this thesis, I have given examples of Geertzian moments from interpreter's experiences (e.g., 5.2), and examined the narrative power of this phenomenon (4.2).

Finally, this study literally adds a new perspective to the study of trust: the perspective of the trustee. The trustee is the trusted person. Usually, the trusting person is at the centre of trust research. Both Luhmann (In Lewis and Weigert, 1985) and Gambetta (1990a), for example, explain how people, when they see others acting in ways that imply that they trust us, become more disposed to reciprocate by trusting in them more. This observation is centred on the trusting person's viewpoint. In contrast, my study looks at the perspective of the interpreter, a 'stranger' who needs trust in order to carry out his or her job. Whereas incorporating both verbal and nonverbal communication is not common in IS, anthropological studies have traditionally described encounters with 'strangeness' in a holistic way. That is why I draw on anthropologists' findings to gain an understanding of the interpreter's role as a trustee.

8.5 Directions for further research

In this thesis, the 'translation' of culture and language by the anthropologist received less attention than the 'fieldwork' of the interpreter. I mentioned the anthropologist's role as an interpreter, the central place of translation within the discipline and I reflected on my own role as both an anthropologist and a translator. However, the interpreter

remained my primary focus. In order not to fall into Agar's (2008) trap of placing the anthropologist at the centre (see 1.3), I consciously placed the interpreter centre stage. My fieldwork has been with interpreters, not with anthropologists: the day-to-day practices of 41 interpreters, their 'fieldwork', form the main focus of this study. Further research could shed more light on the 'translation' of culture and language by the anthropologist. The 2014 volume of the *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 'Translating worlds: The epistemological space of translation', from which the article by Hanks and Severi (2014) was particularly useful to my work, could form a starting point of such an exploration.

In this thesis, particularly in section 5.2, I have stressed the importance of unconscious softening and smoothening. Although the crocodile excerpt in this section provided 'evidence' of the unintentionality of these practices, extensive participant observation could shed light on this element in a way a largely interview-based study like this one never can. This is important particularly when it comes to the work of interpreters at 'high level' meetings. I believe that the idea that smoothening and softening are solely reserved for 'lower' forms of interpreting (community interpreting) is a misconception that deserves further attention. As I noted in 5.4, interpreters who worked with heads of state similarly softened and smoothened their client's words. Unfortunately, I was unable to carry out participant observation in such a diplomatic setting.

Negotiation of trust is particularly important when trust is lacking. Interpreting in conflict zones is an example of such a field. Several authors (e.g., Baigorri-Jalon, 2010; Baker, 2006; Salama-Carr, 2007) have stressed the importance of trust for interpreters working in conflict zones. Unfortunately, they do not define trust as a concept or refer to existing trust theory. Carrying out fieldwork is highly complex in cases where trust is lacking and there is a direct link to nationality or other forms of group identity. Nina, a retired interpreter, told me that she has worked as a military interpreter for years, and that she swore never to pass on a word about this to a foreigner. Another participant noted her experience as a lecturer for aspiring military interpreters. She similarly apologised for not being allowed to speak about this work. Although I was unable to discuss interpreting in conflict settings, studies by the above-mentioned authors (Baigorri-Jalon, 2010; Baker, 2006; Salama-Carr, 2007) show that this is not impossible. I believe that the combination of fieldwork in conflict settings with a focus

on the application of trust theory could lead to a better understanding of the practices of trust-building, both in conflict and peaceful settings.

Initially, I planned to pay more attention to the physical location of interpreters and the link between a sense of place and neutrality. When, early on in this project, I realised the importance of trust and the lack of existing research thoroughly unpacking this topic, this quickly captured my interest. As a result, the theoretical discussion of trust became a chapter of its own in the form of the analytical framework (chapter 4). However, this also meant that the influence of emplacement on the interpreter's identity and practices ended up in the background. Emplacement refers to the concrete and important relationships that people form with certain places through routines of daily life and community formation (Hammond, 2004). Place in this regard is not viewed as a passive background for people to act within, but as a fundamental building block of both individual and collective identity that gets re-worked, interpreted and understood in relation to changing social and political agendas (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Massey, 1999; Proshansky et al, 1983; Tilley, 2006). Although I devoted some attention to the interpreter's identity as a migrant (See 2.2) and provided examples of solidarity between the interpreter working abroad and clients from his or her homeland (see, for example, 7.3), the role of emplacement and the shifting identities of interpreters moving abroad ended up in the background of this study. In a way, this is a shame. Comparing the practices of interpreters working in Russia with those who migrated abroad, as well as those working in different places within Russia (for example Moscow vs Pskov) could be an interesting angle for further study. Questions of nationality, but also of interpreter training (given the differences between the Russian and Western school of interpreting) could form productive avenues for further study. The topic of interpreters countering stereotypes (section 6.3) similarly deserves more attention.

Although low systemic trust arguably increases the need for interpersonal trust (Ledeneva, 2018c), interpreters need trust in countries with high systemic trust as well. I hope that, by focussing on Russian interpreters, I do not seem to present an 'orientalist' view of the 'exotic' other. There are multiple studies highlighting Russia as particularly 'informal' (e.g., Shanin, 1999 and Barsukova and Radaev, 2012, as cited by Barsukova and Ledeneva, 2018). This study does not aspire to prove this point. Quite the contrary: by paying elaborate attention to an analytical framework based on

trust research from both English and Russian language sources, I have tried to point out commonalities in this field.

My final suggestion for further research concerns the domain of education, of interpreter training. Instead of explaining what interpreters can or should do, or where or how flexibility should be exercised, many textbooks extensively, sometimes exhaustively, list what interpreters should avoid (Roy, 2000). A telling example is the title of the recent publication of the textbook *How not to translate* (*Kak ne nado perevodit'*) (2017) by Nikolai Tolmachov, published by the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). In contrast to these sources, this study takes practices as a starting point and shows the wide range of what interpreters in fact *can* do. Nearly all participants in this study stressed the importance of contact with practising interpreters during their time at university. Some even labelled this sharing of knowledge by experienced interpreters the most informative component of their training as interpreters. However, not all young interpreters get this opportunity at an early stage in their career (7.3), and if they do this usually concerns the experience of just one or two professionals. This study brings together the experience of 41 interpreters particularly on themes rarely discussed at universities. This makes it an interesting read for aspiring interpreters, but even more so I hope it will encourage other authors to gather lived, practical knowledge in a more accessible form than a scholarly thesis.

8.6 Reflections on the research process

A first reflection concerns the language shaping my academic career. I have attended university education in the Netherlands (BA at University College Utrecht, part of Utrecht University) and the United Kingdom (MSC at the University of Oxford, PhD at University College London). The focus of these institutions on the British anthropological tradition, with exclusively English language readings, inevitably shapes my approach to research and academic writing. I have actively tried to compensate for this limited view by discussing my research in Russian with colleagues based in Russia, mostly during regular meetings of anthropologists at the Higher School of Economics and the European University in St Petersburg. In particular Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov's early comments on my research proposal helped me shape

my research questions. Following my presentations at conferences such as 'Post-Soviet Multilingualism and Language Attitudes' at the University of Edinburgh, as well as the summer school 'Reassembling Anthropology' in Tyumen, I similarly received helpful feedback from regional specialists. However, despite this 'balancing' of the Russian and British approaches to research in an oral way, through conversations, the written part of my research is less balanced. Despite my efforts to include academic literature in Russian, I must admit that mostly English-based sources found their way to my literature review and bibliography. However, this does of course not mean I did not read work from local anthropologists, who publish in English too.

Second, I would like to reflect on the anthropological idea of 'leaving the field'. After having lived in Russia for over two years for this study, I 'left the field' in early January of 2020. My plan was to return in April, to carry out small focus-group like evaluation sessions with research participants in which I would present my findings. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 borders closed and I was unable to travel to Russia. Most of the face-to-face work of the interpreters who had participated in my research turned into online distance interpreting in a matter of weeks. An unexpected side effect of the measures preventing the spread of the virus was the continuation of my life in St Petersburg online. The seminars at the European University and the Higher School of Economics that I had attended before had all moved online by the end of March. In August, I gave three lectures for the summer school of the Dutch Institute in St Petersburg. Even the ballet classes that I had attended three times a week in a studio about 500 meters from the Hermitage were now streamed through Zoom. As a result, it strangely felt as if I had never really 'left the field' at all.

A final reflection concerns the interaction with colleagues in the writing phase, particularly the influence of COVID- 19 on this period of my study. During my short visits to London throughout my fieldwork period, I had noticed how meeting fellow PhD students in the hallways of the SSEES building provided a welcome exchange of thoughts with people working on similar subjects. After months of discussing my research online, talking to Professor Anne White (primary supervisor) in person enhanced my motivation again and again. Since the last phase of a PhD project, the writing phase, is notorious for its lonely nature, I had carefully planned regular and longer stays in London during this period. For this reason, I also applied for a job as a

postgraduate teaching assistant and rented a room in London starting from approximately February 2020. Frequent meetings with Anne, informal conversations with fellow PhD students and teaching colleagues, as well as chatting with BA students interested in my research gave my writing a boost. Getting together with other researchers in the Writing Centre's biweekly writing lab helped me to stick to a schedule of daily writing sessions. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent closure of the SSEES building in the second week of March, this all came to an abrupt end. Besides the informal chatting with colleagues, I had been looking forward to so much, the BASEES (British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies) conference was cancelled and teaching as a PGTA moved online. As a result, despite the fact that, in a way, I 'saw it coming', the final months of long writing days without leaving home due to COVID-19 ended up being lonely anyway. I am nevertheless very grateful that I was lucky enough to have completed my fieldwork before the outbreak of this virus. Participant observation would have been impossible without travelling, and interviewing online would have meant that certain participants would have been difficult to reach out to.

8.7 The future of interpreting

A real concern of Russian interpreters today is a sharp decrease in the need for their services. More and more Russians speak English, including for example tour guides. Additionally, fewer and fewer foreigners travel to Russia as a result of decreasing international cooperation that characterised the previous decades (see 1.2). Simultaneously, interpreters notice a rise in distance interpreting (phone, digital conferences). Especially after the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, this has become a topic of real concern. Several studies report a spike in interpreter injuries (acoustic shock, tinnitus, headaches, nausea, sleeplessness, mental fog and inability to concentrate) due to the insufficient quality of equipment and spotty connectivity (Wright Allen, 2020).

The interpreters who participated in this study recall the 'explosion' of interpreting in the late 1980s, that continued into the 1990s and even early 2000s. During my work at the foreign language faculty, I had a conversation with two other lecturers, both with extensive experience as interpreters. They recalled how the 'wild capitalism' of

the 1990s was also a period of hope with plenty of opportunities for interpreters. Clients paid in foreign currency (*valiuta*), which could be profitably exchanged for roubles. Another interpreter, who teaches interpreting at one of St Petersburg's universities, explained how she learned a lot from the interpreting jobs her teacher gave her while she was still a student. Unfortunately, there is so little work today that she cannot afford to pass on work to her students. She regrets not being able to give them this type of 'baptism by fire' experience from which she herself learned so much.

> I think that we were just lucky, my group specifically, as well as those who graduated three years before or after us, because at that moment, there was a lot of work [...] Only now I understand how much work was actually available, given the fact that they [her lecturers at university] already started to pass on jobs to us in our third year. I have nothing to offer my students now. (Kristina)

Although the lack of clients is a real concern for interpreters, the most-oft-cited threat to their profession is partial or even total replacement by machines/robots. Due to this topic's wide presence in discussions on (digital) media, interpreters are confronted with similar predictions on a regular basis. As for now, those who participated in this study do not seem to be concerned about potentially losing their job to a robot. Many interpreters see their role as trust builders as a defining feature of their profession, precisely the type of responsibility that cannot be taken over by a robot or machine. In this sense, their views echo Rutten's (Rutten, forthcoming) remarks on humanness in the face of technological advancement and digital standardization. This thesis has given plenty of reasons why interpreters' skills are not easily replaced.

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Appendix 1: Participant information sheet (Russian and English)

Информационный лист о исследовательском проекте

«Такт в устном переводе»

Исследователь: Элине Хелмер, eline.helmer.17@ucl.ac.uk
Руководитель: Профессор Энн Уайт, anne.white@ucl.ac.uk
Идентификационный номер комитета по этике UCL: 12691/001

Исследовательский проект «Такт в устном переводе»

Меня зовут Элине Хелмер, я аспирантка Лондонского университета (UCL). Я работаю над исследовательским проектом о российских устных переводчиках. Меня интересует не столько то, что теряется при переводе, сколько то, что приобретается. Как устные переводчики выступают в качестве посредников, способствуя укреплению доверия между людьми из разных языковых и культурных традиций? Какие тактики и стратегии они используют для достижения взаимопонимания? Чтобы ответить на эти вопросы, я собираюсь взять интервью у 50 российских устных переводчиков, работающих как в России, так и за рубежом, которые готовы поделиться мыслями о своей профессии.

Участие в проекте

Вся информация, которую я собираю о Вас, будет полностью конфиденциальной. Вы не сможете быть идентифицированы ни в каких отчетах или публикациях, связанных с этим проектом. Результат исследования будет изложен в докторской диссертации. Части исследования могут быть также опубликованы отдельно в виде академических статей. При Вашем желании я дам Вам знать об этих публикациях по электронной почте. Никто вне проекта не будет иметь доступа к исходным записям или стенограммам. Данные будут храниться в зашифрованном файле на сервере Университетского Колледжа Лондона.

Ваши персональные данные будут обрабатываться до тех пор, пока это необходимо для данного исследовательского проекта. Все данные собираются и хранятся в соответствии с европейским законом о защите данных 2018 года.

Контактные данные

Если Вас беспокоит какой-либо аспект этого проекта, пожалуйста, поговорите с Элине Хелмер ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮) или с её научным руководителем - профессором Энн Уайт (▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮). Если Вы захотите подать официальную жалобу, обратитесь к председателю комитета по этике исследований в Университетском Колледже Лондона по адресу ethics@ucl.ac.uk. Если Вас беспокоит то, как обрабатываются Ваши персональные данные, обратитесь в Университетский Колледж Лондона по адресу data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. Контактная информация и подробности о правах субъекта данных доступны на веб-сайте Офиса Комиссара по Информации (ICO) по адресу: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/

Спасибо за то, что Вы прочитали этот информационный лист

Participant information sheet for the Research Project

"Tact in Translation"

Researcher: Eline Helmer, eline.helmer.17@ucl.ac.uk
Supervisor: Prof Anne White, anne.white@ucl.ac.uk
UCL Research Ethics Committee ID: 12691/001

Research project 'Tact in translation'

My name is Eline Helmer, I am a PhD researcher at University College London (UCL). I am working on a research project about Russian interpreters. I am not only interested in what is *lost* in translation, but also in what is *gained*. How do interpreters act as mediators, how do they help build trust between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds? Which tactics and strategies do they use to reach mutual understanding? In order to answer these questions, I am planning to interview around 50 Russian interpreters, working in Russia or abroad, who are willing to share their thoughts on their profession.

Participation in the project

In this study I will ask you to talk with me about your experiences working as an interpreter. We will meet at a place convenient for you. You can stop the interview at any point, or completely withdraw. In this case, I will ask you what you wish to happen to the information you have provided up that point.

All the information that I collect about you will be completely confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications based on this project. The research will be written up as a PhD dissertation. Parts of the research might also be published separately as articles. If you wish, I will notify you of these publications by email. No one outside the project will have access to the original recordings or transcripts. The data will be stored in a password-protected file on the UCL server.

The legal basis for the processing of your personal data is your recorded oral consent. Your personal data will be processed as long as it is required for the research project. The audio files will be deleted afterwards, and the anonymised transcripts will be saved. Data will be collected and stored in accordance with the New Data Protection Legislation, 2018.

Contact information

If you have a question about any aspect of this project, please speak to Eline Helmer (███████████) or to her supervisor Prof Anne White (███████████). If you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the chair of the Research Ethics Committee at University College London at ethics@ucl.ac.uk. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact UCL at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. Contact details and details of data subject rights, are available on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protectionreform/overviewofthegdpr/individuals-rights/

Thank you for reading this information sheet

Appendix 2: Questions for pilot study

The interpreter as an everyday diplomat

Overview questions for semi-structured interviews with Russian 'face-to-face' interpreters

CONTACT DETAILS
- Phone:
- Email:

GENERAL INFO
- Name:
- Age:
- Training (where and when):
- Place of birth:
- Place of birth parents:
- Job parents:
- Current job:
- Working languages:

Introduction

TRAINING
- Why did you decide to become an interpreter?
- What were your motivations for picking these languages?
- What were your career plans when you started your studies? Have they changed?
- Do you think your studies sufficiently prepared you for the job of an interpreter? If not, what could be improved/which elements are missing?
- Have you spent time abroad? How has this changed your work as an interpreter?

General view on the role of the interpreter

SUCCES / FAILURE
- What do you personally consider as success in your job? Why? Which socio-cultural factors influence this? Can you give an example?
- What do you consider as failure in your job? Why? Which socio-cultural factors influence this? Can you give an example?

MISUNDERSTANDING
- Have you encountered misunderstandings? Can you give an example?
- Are certain misunderstandings more common than others?
- Where do you think such misunderstandings come from?
- How do you view your role in such a situation?
- Which factors influence the way in which you take action?

LOYALTY CONFLICT
Story from a female East-European interpreter, currently living in the United Kingdom:

"A foreign academic visited my home town for a conference. I accompanied him on his way to the place where the conference was held. While we were in the taxi, we crossed a bridge. This bridge is an object of strategic military significance. You are not allowed to stop on this bridge and what the military actually does there is a secret. The foreign academic asked the taxi driver a question about the bridge. I interpreted this question. The taxi driver stopped the car in the middle of the bridge and started telling the foreign academic everything, all kind of secret information. I had no idea what to do. I was wondering, should I interpret this or not?"

- Does this seem like a familiar situation? Have you encountered similar situations? Can you give an example? How have you solved it?
- Have you encountered situations in which your role as a cultural mediator/local knowledge of two cultures was needed? Situations in which, for example, the standing of yourself or of one of the participants was threatened? What is the role of an interpreter in such a situation?
- Have you ever hesitated if you should interpret something at all? Can you give an example and the reason why/how you have solved it?
- Who do you regard as your main client? Is this always clear?
- Do you ever feel as if you are representing an entire people? If so, in what kind of situation?
- Are there situations in which you feel more 'Russian' or more 'foreign' during your work? Can you give an example and the reason why?
- Have you ever had experiences in which the duties of your job conflicted with your personal values or personal life? Can you give an example and the reason why/how you have solved it?
- Do you ever act as a mediator outside of work hours? Why? Do you feel this is your duty?

RUSSIA / RUSSIANS
- What makes working with Russian(s) and foreigners special?
- Could you say something about your relations with foreigners/ Russians at large? How do you view them and how do they look at you? Has this changed?

Perspective

DEVELOPMENT
- Has your job changed over the past years, during your work as an interpreter? If so, how?
- What are the innovations in the job of interpreter you foresee in the coming decennia? And why?
- What would you advise/recommend future interpreters to do to be optimally prepared for their job? And why?

Appendix 3: Transcriber confidentiality agreement

Tact in Translation

Negotiating trust by the Russian interpreter, at home and abroad

This research is being undertaken by Eline Helmer, PhD candidate at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College London (UCL). The purpose of the research is to explore the ways in which Russian interpreters negotiate trust on an everyday basis as everyday diplomats.

As a transcriber of this research, I understand that I will be hearing recordings of confidential interviews. The information on these recordings has been revealed by interviewees who agreed to participate in this research on the condition that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honour this confidentially agreement.

I agree not to share any information on these recordings, about any party, with anyone except the researcher of this project. Any violation of this and the terms detailed below would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards and I confirm that I will adhere to the agreement in full.

I, _____ agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the content of the interviews in any form or format with anyone other than the researcher.

2. Keep all research information in any form or format secure while it is in my possession.

3. Return all research information in any form or format to the researcher when I have completed the transcription tasks.

4. After consulting with the researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the researcher.

Transcriber: _____ _____
(print name) (signature) (date)

Researcher: _____ _____
(print name) (signature) (date)

This study has received ethical approval of the UCL Research Ethics Committee.
UCL Research Ethics Committee ID: 12691/001
UCL Data Protection Registration Reference: Z6364106/2018/02/37
Adapted from: http://data-archive.ac.uk/media/285636/ukda-transcriber-confidentiality-agreement.pdf