BUSINESS INTERPRETING:
A WORLD OF DIALOGUE
BETWEEN CONFERENCES AND COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: The present article looks at definitions of "business interpreting", contrasting them with "community interpreting", "conference interpreting" and "dialogue interpreting", with a brief focus on the *status quo* in Polish sources. A preliminary comparison leads to the conclusion that "business interpreting" does not share two of the most important and distinctive characteristics of community interpreting, namely: the institutional setting and languages of the minority and the majority, along with the unequal relationship it implies. The paper goes on to discuss "dialogue interpreting" (DI) and claims that business interpreting can be seen as DI, with some features of both conference and community interpreting. The article also argues for "business interpreting" to be regarded as a separate, independent type of interpreting.

Business interpreting is "one of the vaguer genre labels used in classifications of interpreting" [Setton, Dawrant 2016, 24]. It does not appear often in papers or books on interpreting and translation[1]. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* does not provide a definition at all, while other publications, e.g., *The Routledge Encyclopedia on Interpreting* mentions it only very briefly [see: Takimoto 2015].

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A recently published comprehensive course on conference interpreting by Setton and Dawrant dedicates only a few paragraphs to so-called "business interpreting", suggesting the following definition:

> The prototype event would be a discussion between potential partners in a business project or parties to a deal (…) typically representing private-sector entities. 'Business interpreting' may be performed by either in-house or freelance personnel; the former may have more knowledge relevant to their organization, but freelancers may have a higher level of interpreting skills (…). 'In-house' interpreters are typically in the full-time employ of an organization, private or public (…). They may also have other job duties and broader responsibilities beyond interpreting [Setton, Dawrant 2016, 24].

According to the definition above, "business interpreting" would include interpreting:
• typically done in private (as opposed to public) sector;
• involving parties in a business deal;
• performed by both freelance or in-house interpreters.

While it can be safely stated that the first part of the term – *interpreting* – is well-defined thanks to a vast body of research, there remains some definitional problems concerning the latter part – *business*. Stereotypically, this is associated with white-collar representatives of private companies working in offices. However, it should not come as a surprise that business can be done in various other settings: in a forest between professional hunters, at a construction site between blue and white collar staff, or in various SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) producing anything from nuts and bolts, to spare parts of all sorts, to printed circuit boards. Moreover, one could also argue that parties to each interpreting event (e.g., in conference, public-service, or other settings) have some kind of a "business" they want to achieve in their talks (not to mention that interpreting itself is a business). Moreover, the term "business interpreting" is also used in the literature to designate interpreting in its historic perspective as a way to facilitate communication between parties doing their business; a "primeval" way of interpreting [Pöchhacker 2004, 15]. Whatever way we put it, it seems that *business interpreting* as a term is not precise or clear-cut enough. The present article therefore aims to discuss "business interpreting" in the context of the interpreting types it is aligned with or compared to in literature, in an attempt to find more clarity in how this interpreting type is understood.

Understanding the term *business interpreting* becomes even more difficult when one examines sources available in Polish. In the comprehensive work by Małgorzata Tryuk [2006], the term *interpreting in business* interestingly appears in the context of community interpreting (also known as public service interpreting), rather than conference interpreting (which was the case with Setton and Dawrant). According to Tryuk:

Interpreting in business settings is a different way of interpreting, which is used in meetings between businesspeople, but also in tourism, sport, and in the area of culture and art. It is most often used in negotiations. In this interpreting type, inequalities between parties are not as important as in other interpreting contexts[2]. The competences, knowledge, rights, and obligations of interlocutors are equal, too. This interpreting type requires a thorough preparation of terminology, as well as the knowledge of different styles and registers. The interpreter can take part in a regular conversation, sightseeing in tourist areas or factories, in business negotiations, or an official dinner [Tryuk 2006, 152].[3]

The definition above puts an emphasis on the multitude of contexts in which business interpreting can be performed, with a particular focus on thorough preparation. However, this can be true of other types of interpreting too, e.g., conference interpreting on the private market. While it is true that the issue of "equality" is not important in this case, this is also true of any interpreting outside of community interpreting realm. It seems that the only distinctive feature of business interpreting given by Tryuk is the setting in which it can take place (sightseeing, negotiations or conversations, dinner). It seems, though, that this characteristic is not enough to put together a complete definition.

Before going on to discuss possible ways of understanding business interpreting, it seems to be justified to first investigate the juxtaposition of business and community interpreting. Since the above definition by Tryuk was published in a handbook on community interpreting, we might assume that business interpreting could be classified as another kind of public service, or community interpreting.[4] In order to better understand this classification, it is thus worth to briefly consider the term "community interpreting" or "public-service interpreting", and the place of business interpreting in this realm.

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[2] In the original quote, Tryuk uses the word "środowisko" here, which also has other meanings, discussed in more depth in this article. However, I chose the word "context", since it seemed to be the best choice to keep the sense of the original.

[3] My translation, the original text in Polish is as follows: "Tłumaczenie w biznesie to odmienny sposób tłumaczenia, który jest stosowany w spotkaniach między biznesmenami, także w turystyce, sporcie, w kontaktach w sferze kultury i sztuki (…). Tłumacz może uczestniczyć w zwykłej rozmowie, zwiedzaniu obiektów turystycznych lub fabryki, w negocjacjach biznesowych lub oficjalnej kolacji" [Tryuk 2006].

[4] There is also a number of other questions related to business interpreting discussed by Tryuk, most notably that of the role of the interpreter which, although a topic of upmost importance, but will not be tackled here, as role and ethics will be discussed in depth in another paper foreseen by the present author.

Community interpreting

Community interpreting appeared in the 1980s and 1990s and grew out of the need for managing communication issues in public institutions (such as asylum offices or hospitals) in the face of a larger number immigrants who did not speak the native language [Pöchhacker 2004, 15].

In the simplest terms, according to Cecilia Wadensjö's definition in the *Routledge Encyclopedia* [2009, 43], community interpreting (also known as public service interpreting) refers to acts of interpretation that fulfil the conditions below:
- it takes place in the public service domain,
- its aim is to facilitate communication between officials and lay people, or representatives of the linguistic, or social, majority vs. minority [Hale 2008],
- different modes of interpreting can be used, mostly consecutive but also chuchotage,
- different settings can be involved: face-to-face or phone interpreting.

The definition above is further complemented by additional characteristics of community interpreting - a description of conditions in which this type of interpreting is performed, rather than a *sine qua non* condition inherent to the definition thereof:
- it used to be performed by non-professionals and slowly developed into a profession, though is still often performed by 'natural translators' [Harris 1990] as quoted by Wadensjö 1998) or 'untrained individuals' [Wadensjö 1998],
- there are different types of community interpreting, e.g. 'healthcare interpreting', 'mental health interpreting', etc.,
- it has been changing with increased levels of migration across the world,
- there are professional organisations and associations that set standards for this profession,
- for reasons of fluctuation, non-professional involvement, and limited supply, these standards are respected with great difficulty,
- the level of funding for employing or training professionals is dependent upon the unstable conditions above.

   The above implies that:
- public service interpreters deal with more real-time dialogue, and with many unpredictable and spontaneous exchanges,
- the issue of 'involvement vs. detachment' and of the role of the interpreter is present and much-debated,
- interpreters often work in difficult conditions, e.g. they deal with racial or ethnic minority issues,
- public service interpreting tends to be perceived as a low-status profession and is not remunerated adequately.

The definition of *community interpreting* coined in Polish by Tryuk is similar to the one in the *Routledge Encyclopedia*. According to this definition,

community interpreting refers to all types of interpreting that make it possible to communicate between non-speakers of the official language of a country and representatives of public institutions providing services of all kinds in order to ensure full and equitable access to legal, educational, medical, social, and other services [Tryuk 2006].

All the definitions of *community interpreting* above point to several of its inherent features: involvement of a public institution (representatives speaking the official language) on the one hand and of ordinary people, non-speakers of the official language, on the other, as well as the question of access to public service institutions (in the domains of education, health, legal rights, etc.). Business interpreting does not fulfil any of these definition criteria.

Tryuk provides a table in which she contrasts community and conference interpreting [Tryuk 2006, 32] in order to better illustrate that the two are different and independent types of interpretation (Table 1).[5]

Table 1. Comparison of features of community and conference interpreting

No.		Conference interpreting	Public service interpreting (community interpreting)
1	Context	Anonymous, open, public	Personal, closed, confidential
2	Status of interlocutors	Equal	Unequal
3	Directionality	One direction	Both directions
4	Physical presence of the interpreter	Distance	Proximity
5	Length of text	Several-minute long speeches, entire utterances	Sentences or parts thereof
6	Type of texts	Monologue	Dialogue
7	Interpreter's engagement	Invisible interpreter, not involved in the talks	visible interpreter, involved in the talks
8	Note-taking	A special note-taking system	None
9	Interpreter	Professional, highly qualified	Professional or natural
10	Languages	Literary national language	Different languages, dialects and registers
11	History	Created in the 20th century	The oldest type of interpreting

Source: Tryuk 2006, 32

Tryuk explains that community interpreting is mainly done in small, intimate configurations, with interpreters placed physically very close to their interlocutors. Instead of working on long speeches, the interpreter relays short parts of the dialogue in both directions, often without using any notes, and can perform other tasks, apart from just interpreting. Parties of

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[5] The original table was published in Tryuk 2006 in Polish, the table below was translated by myself.

a conversation (e.g. a state official and an immigrant) do not share an equal status so in order for both of them to fully understand the message with all its cultural and situational specificity, the interpreter needs to perform a number of additional roles (such as advocate or cultural mediator) to ensure smooth communication.

The comparison provided by Tryuk clearly shows that a line can be drawn between community and conference interpreting, which implies that the two are quite distinct interpreting types. This is a conclusion that was drawn by many other researchers in the second half of the 20th century, opening a new path for researchers and practitioners in the domain, or, to use Pöchhacker's words, marking a new paradigm or a new turn in interpreting research [Pöchhacker 2006, 228]. The result, apart from an ever growing pool of research data in community interpreting, is that at present, there is hardly anyone to question whether community interpreting is a legitimate profession.

When discussing community interpreting though, perhaps it is still worth mentioning a certain confusion in how the terms *community interpreting, public service interpreting;* or *dialogue interpreting* and *liaison interpreting*[6] are used in various books and papers [e.g., Wadensjö 1998; Tryuk 2006] and in the everyday work of interpreters. The reasons for this might be what Wadensjö refers to as "each term tending to emphasise a specific characteristic of the same activity – the communicative format (…) and the social setting (…)" [Wadensjö 1998]. It might be, then, that the terms are used somewhat loosely, and probably wrongly, as synonyms, since they stem from a general common denominator but differ on a more detailed level.

The word *community* itself is a very misleading term too. It is used in a number of contexts, including sociology, the environment, religion and international affairs. The Polish term form community interpreting (*tłumaczenie środowiskowe)* is equally misleading. The word *środowisko,* from which the term derives, has several meanings as well – according to *The New Kosciuszko Foundation Dictionary* [2003] it can mean:

1. circle, group (of people), community, e.g. academic community.
2. *biol.* environment; habitat, e.g. natural environment
3. *chem., phys..* medium.

In this sense, even conference interpreting can be done in a community – e.g., an international community of specialists in a given domain or the academic community. This could lead to the conclusion that the term "community interpreting" is perhaps not precise enough. Obviously, at this stage of development of academic research on *community interpreting* (or *tłumaczenie środowiskowe*, in Polish), one could hardly argue that the names chosen at some point in time many years ago be abandoned altogether and changed

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[6] Liaison interpreting is understood as synonymous to dialogue interpreting [Pöchhacker 2004, 16].

to something better. However, what could be achieved is a preference for the term "public service interpreting" over "community interpreting", at least in English. Whether this can be achieved in Polish or other languages is a question that requires further discussion and cannot be easily solved. What seems necessary though is that researchers should provide very clear definitions of their terms and use them consistently in their research.

Interestingly, if we try to trace the origins of the term *tłumaczenie środowiskowe (Eng. community interpreting)* in Polish, we need to go back to 2000 and the *Small encyclopaedia of translation and interpreting (Pol. Mała encyklopedia przekładoznawstwa)* edited by Urszula Dąmbska-Prokop, which provides the following definition of community interpreting[7]:

> Bilateral interpreting, sentence-by-sentence interpreting, interpreting without notes, e.g. at meetings in a multilingual situation, in negotiations, when the interpreter not only communicates the content of the speech, but can also intervene (e.g. express his or her own opinion or use modifications, e.g. abbreviations or change of the register) [Dąmbska-Prokop 2000, 261].[8]

This definition of *community interpreting* does not touch upon any of the features that have been indicated above, namely involvement in the public sector, presence of an institution, etc.. This creates a situation in which, at least in Polish, the term *tłumaczenie środowiskowe* has two different definitions in literature, where the latter seems to be more in line with what is known in the literature as *dialogue interpreting*. Before considering what implications the above might have, it would perhaps be worth having a brief look at what can be said about dialogue interpreting to complete the theoretical picture.

Dialogue interpreting

The name *dialogue interpreting* (DI) appears in the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* in 1999. The definition [2009] in its second edition states the many important characteristics of DI. According to the definition, DI, unlike conference or community interpreting, is a term focusing more on the "mode of interaction (…) in diverse socio-professional contexts", rather than "a particular setting". The definition then lists four main characteristics of DI:

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[7] The definition provided in Dąbska-Prokop is based on *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training* by Daniel Gile [1995].

[8] My translation, the original text in Polish is as follows: "tłumaczenie środowiskowe, tłumaczenie bilateralne, zdanie po zdaniu, bez notatek, np. na zebraniach w sytuacji wielojęzyczności, w negocjacjach, gdy tłumacz nie tylko przekazuje treść wypowiedzi, ale także może w tę wypowiedź interweniować (wypowiadać własne zdanie czy stosować modyfikacje, np. skróty, lub zmianę rejestru)".

1. it involves dialogue (rather than monologue),
2. it is mostly used with spontaneous speech (and occasionally a-vista interpreting),
3. it is conducted face-to-face, which requires the interpreters to manage the exchange and 'co-ordinate' [Wadensjö 1998],
4. the chosen mode of interpreting is mostly consecutive.

In his very brief definition, DI would be any interpreting conducted face-to-face, with coordination often provided by the interpreter. This definition indeed encompasses a very broad spectrum of interpreting activities. It is true that when it first appeared over 20 years ago [Wadensjö 1998], dialogue interpreting was used interchangeably with community interpreting. However, it is worth noticing that the terms might not have been understood equally by all researchers, might have been used to point to some particular characteristics of the interpreting performance or might have been used in an entirely different sense. As Wadensjö puts it: "my use of 'dialogue interpreting' [Wadensjö 1992, 1995, as quoted by Wadensjö 1998] has indeed been to stress the defining primacy of the *setting* (the communicative exchange) in which the interpreting under investigation takes place. Also, 'community interpreting' foregrounds, if you wish, the setting (the community at large), rather than single individuals" [Wadensjö 1998, 50].

A more recent perspective gives us more insight into the nature of dialogue interpreting. Setting out a detailed categorisation of interpreting in the *Intepreting Studies Reader,* Pöchhacker states that dialogue interpreting can be practised in a number of different intra-social settings, such as business, diplomacy, military, courtroom, education, public services including medical or the media [Pöchhacker 2004, 13-17]. Interpreting in general can also be categorised from the point of view of the situational context of interaction (see Table 2). It provides a very interesting perspective on business interpreting, perceived as dialogue interpreting in the business setting.

Table 2. Conceptual spectrum of interpreting

International		Intra-social/COMMUNITY
CONFERENCE		LIAISON/DIALOGUE
INTERPRETING		
Multilateral	Bilateral	
Professional roles	Professional roles	Individual vs. prof.
Comparable status	Comparable status	Power differential
One-to-many	Face-to-face	
Monologic	Dialogic	

Source: Pöchhacker 2004, 17

If we considered the above, we could say that public service interpreting as defined in the present article could be perceived as a type of dialogue interpreting that has grown out into a fully-fledged interpreting type, with the accompanying growing body of research. Simultaneously, dialogue interpreting (DI) per se has also been the topic of a growing number of publications devoted to DI outside of the public service/medical context and concentrating more on DI outside of the public service setting such as healthcare, court or education [e.g. Cirillo, Niemants 2017], with some attention in publications devoted strictly to community interpreting [e.g. Valero-Garcés, Martin 2008].

Whatever conclusion will ultimately be drawn though, it needs to be clearly stated that the terms "dialogue interpreting", "community / public service interpreting", and "business interpreting" or "interpreting in business settings" should not be used synonymously, at least in the present paper. Even though there are many common features of the interpreting types mentioned above, public service interpreting requires the occurrence of very specific conditions and settings (such as difference in status or minority/majority issues) and it seems justified to claim that not all dialogue interpreting is public service interpreting.

Back to business

All the considerations above still do not provide an explicit and precise answer as to what is actually understood by "business interpreting". In order to further discuss the possible place of "business interpreting" in the typology, we could attempt to place it in the middle of the spectrum of domains and dimensions of interpreting theory introduced by Pöchhacker [2004, 24]. Seen from this perspective, "business interpreting" would undoubtedly still remain interpretation performed by a human being. It could be carried out in many settings, from international (large, multinational companies) to intra-social (small, family companies or individual business). It can potentially involve all modes of interpreting, from simultaneous (there are many private companies that provide interpreting booths in their headquarters) to liaison. As for languages spoken – while the official language will be mainly used among professionals, there are many cases in which the register can suddenly change (e.g. swear words or colloquialisms, in some extreme cases) or local linguistic varieties might be used (e.g. in the case of business involving low-skilled jobs or blue collar workers). It can involve all kinds of discourse, not just face-to-face communication (e.g. any meeting with a slideshow presentation of some kind will involve a typical, conference-like speech). As for the participants – insofar as there is no inequality in terms of rights or status (which is the case of community interpreting), they can be placed on an unequal footing

in different, more economics-based terms, which would, for example, be the case for a large, multinational company with small, local subcontractors, where the former has more power and influence. Finally, coming to the interpreters themselves and the broad question of professionalisation, business interpreters can potentially come from different backgrounds and interpreting schools, or might not be trained at all.

The latest definition of "Business interpreting" available in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies* [Takimoto 2015, 38] briefly mentions many of the characteristics of this kind of interpreting, namely: the diversity of settings and modes, scarcity of research and the topic of role that is influenced by a multitude of factors. Takimoto also states that "business interpreting in conference-like settings, in consecutive or simultaneous mode, is not considered to be much different form conference interpreting in other settings. By contrast, in face-to-face dialogue situations interpreters often play a crucial role for the purpose of liaison between the two parties who do not share the same language" [Takimoto 2015, 39]. Therefore, it might be interesting

Table 3. Comparison of features of community, conference interpreting, and "business interpreting"

No.		Conference interpreting	"Business interpreting"	Public service interpreting (community interpreting)
1	Context	Anonymous, open, public	**BOTH / EITHER**	Personal, closed, confidential
2	Status of interlocutors	Equal	**BOTH / EITHER**	Unequal
3	Directionality	One direction*	**BOTH / EITHER**	Both directions
4	Physical presence of the interpreter	Distance	**BOTH / EITHER**	Proximity
5	Length of text	Several-minute long speeches, entire utterances	**BOTH / EITHER**	Sentences or parts thereof
6	Type of texts	Monologue	**BOTH / EITHER**	Dialogue
7	Interpreter's engagement	Invisible interpreter, not involved in the talks	**BOTH / EITHER**	visible interpreter, involved in the talks
8	Note-taking	A special note-taking system	**BOTH / EITHER**	None
9	Interpreter	Professional, highly qualified	**BOTH / EITHER**	Professional or natural
10	Languages	Literary national language	**BOTH / EITHER**	Different languages, dialects and registers
11	History	Created in the 20th century	**BOTH / EITHER**	The oldest type of interpreting

* More than ten years after the quoted publication, it seems that criteria require further debate.
Source: own, based on Tryuk 2006, 32

to contrast "business interpreting" with conference and community interpreting in a table (see: Table 1, above and Table 2, below) in order to show that it can have features of both conference and community interpreting, depending on a specific situation.

If we wanted to take into consideration "the prototype event" in business setting, as quoted above [Setton, Dawrant, 2016, 24], we could put forward the example of large, international, private companies vs. a small, local SME doing business with its partners abroad. A freelance interpreter employed by one of these companies to work at a single event would be a professional, expected to work simultaneously on speeches by CEOs or consecutively during a meeting of the board. In this sense, they would be an impersonation of a conference interpreter working outside of a typical conference. On the other hand, we could consider the example of the same two companies employing an in-house interpreter-assistant. The latter could be expected to work on confidential meetings between a handful of company employees in a classic bilateral setting in short consecutive or liaison mode, and fully involved in other company business. If we go further and take the example of a random assistant asked to play the part of the interpreter thanks to his or her linguistic skills, we get a "natural". We could even involve dialects and register, if the deal is done between white and blue collar workers (e.g. in a factory, in a field, at a construction site, etc.). In other words, business interpreting, dialogue interpreting in business settings, or whatever name we prefer to use, has many features in common with both community interpreting (as understood according to the definitions quoted in the present paper) and conference interpreting, depending on the situation. The author of this article would like to argue, however, that while business interpreting shares certain features with conference interpreting or public service interpreting, it is not necessarily a type of conference interpreting (even though it is discussed in a handbook on conference interpreting by Setton and Dawrant), nor a type of community interpreting (even though is discussed in a handbook on community interpreting by Tryuk).

All the theoretical considerations above should also be complemented by what has been said about business interpreting in *Liaison interpreting. A handbook* [Gentile 1996]. According to the handbook, business interpreting should be understood "in the broadest possible sense, to include all interpreting situations which are outside the welfare/medical/legal rubric. We do not include relationships characterised by a marked differential in power or status within a given society" [Ko 1996, 116]. Such a definition is indeed much wider, and provides an understanding that business interpreting is not done exclusively during typical business meetings between parties to a business deal. Thus defined, business interpreting could be done in various settings, from "arts, sport, tourism and recreation to patent negotiations or government-to-government meetings and delegations. This categorisation

is not absolute and practitioners in different parts of the world may call this setting commercial, trade or diplomatic" [Ko 1996, 116]. The chapter also discusses aspects such as the variety of physical environments and the resulting variety of interpreting modes used and roles played, including that of an assistant, moderator, cultural bridge or logistics manager, with frequent code- and task-switching involved. It also touches upon subject matter and working teams and highlights that negotiations are the "central objective" of a business meeting, where it is important for the interpreter to properly follow the rules involved and adhere to the business culture in a given setting. What is also discussed is the very particular relationship between the interpreter and the client, with the interpreter acting as her client's "agent" and the resulting ethical questions, such as loyalty, impartiality, accuracy vs. moderating, especially in extreme situations. It seems that this definition, dating back more than 20 years, set a very stable footing for the understanding of business interpreting, albeit from the point of view of what it is not, rather than what it is.

When it comes to practical research into business interpreting and the topics discussed in it, it is unfortunately not very abundant [Takimoto, Koshiba 2009, 15]. Topics most often discussed in research on business interpreting practise are communication patterns and communication flow, interpreter's role, as well as business and national culture. Below, a brief summary of some papers on the topic is presented, in order to provide an overview of what research in the filed consists in.

One study by Takimoto [Takimoto, Koshiba 2009] analyses interpreter-mediated interactions in a business meeting and the problems that occur with the use of the theory of frame and schema. It concentrates on the communication flow. Another study by the same author concentrates on the interpreter's role [Takimoto 2006]. It investigates interpreter role perceptions through Chesterman's translation norm theory [Chesterman 1993, 1997, as cited in Takimoto 2006, 49] and Goffman's concept of role [as cited in Takimoto 2006, 50] in the Japanese-Australian English context. It contrasts the prescriptive approach set out in official Code of Conduct by AUSIT (The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators) with interpreters' opinions on matters such as "impartiality" or "accuracy", proving that there is no consensus among interpreters in this matter.[9] It also explains how interpreter undertake a number of adjustment activities, understood as "efforts by the interpreter in response to expectations by clients with regard to her role" [Takimoto 2006, 54].

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[9] To give only a few examples, some of the interpreters that participate in the study claim that it is not possible to maintain neutrality because relations become personal, while others say that their neutrality depends on the party that employs them [Takimoto 2006, 53]. When it comes to "accuracy", some interpreters report that they work to achieve communication efficiency rather than accuracy, with one interpreter even stating that her clients' request go before the Code [Takimoto 2006, 53-54].

Interpreters in the study report that they need to make considerable effort to win their client's trust at the beginning of each task and that they are ready to play various roles, according to the needs of the client. The paper investigates a number of such roles. As pointed out by the author, "the study implies that there is a potential clash between the authority-validated professional norms and existence-validated professional norms… [there is] a more flexible understanding of the concept of the role of interpreters is necessary for business settings" [Takimoto 2006, 56].

Another study by Takimoto [2009] is an analysis of multiparty interpreting situation with the use of Goffman's footing concept [Goffman 1981, as cited in Takimoto 2009, 34].

It explains how not all participants are equal in terms of footing in a multi-part interaction and how interpreting adds another complexity to the model. It also describes interpretation and communication dynamics between participants of a business meeting, with an interpreter and a CEO among them. One of its aims is to analyse instances of discourse that is not interpreted, e.g. in a situation when two participants' command of English allows them to communicate, however, it could (or not) be interpreted in form of a short summary to non-English speaking participants [Takimoto 2009, 36-37]. The study also presents many instances of timing difficulties and management of information caused by conversations between speakers of the same language, where the interpreter is unable to cut the conversation short [Takimoto 2009, 37]. As Takimoto again finds out, the interpreter in a multi-party meeting is expected to play various roles, such as a reporter (e.g. when explaining the gist of an exchange between two participants), a speaker / an author (e.g. when she synthesises utterances to a participant arriving late) with shifts in her footing visible e.g. in the use of third person pronoun.

The issue of culture and its implications in business interpreting is also examined by Sheer [2003]. The study defines cultural specificities and business negotiations and studies how and why culture affects business in Chinese-English context (giving reasons such as political consideration, power and status or technical complexity). It unequivocally states that "professional culture and negotiators' national culture affect international business negotiations" [Sheer 2003, 52].

Culture is also the topic of a paper by Dodds [2011][10]. It deals with a number of practical problems in the way this profession is perceived by the interpreting community and how it is taught at interpreting schools. It presents many interesting characteristics of business interpreters: they

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[10] Among other terminological considerations, it seems to equalise liaison interpreting and community interpreting, while highlighting that the latter has created misunderstandings [Dodds 2011, 4].

are often translators-as-interpreters, do not belong to associations and are therefore not protected by standards regarding role, pay or other aspects, and are therefore easier to control, and they often have more knowledge of the enterprise and its needs, having made some translations for the company before. According to the study, translators-as-interpreters, apart from not imposing standards resulting from professional codes of ethics, are also more often ready to apply reduction strategies for better time efficiency, as well as take on other roles, such as that of the moderator. This requires the interpreter to shoulder responsibility for the message, which is impossible without knowing the context and needs of a particular client. The skills described above are usually learned on the job, rather than at schools of conference interpreting, and provides many practical insights, such as that companies and business people would generally employ the services of translators rather than conference interpreters, because "firstly, companies do not generally need experts in Eurospeak, but rather in business talk. Secondly, translators would usually like doing liaison work because they always need the money, they do not look down on this form of interpreting because it does not pay well, they do not mind the longer hours (more money), nor do they mind working alone" [Dodds 2011, 6]. It also stresses the important gap between what interpreters are expected to do by their clients and professional standards.

Role and culture is also the topic of a paper by Spencer-Oatey [2009], who examines how culture has an impact on interpreters behaviour in different settings, including business interpreting and states without much hesitation that interpreters are more involved in less controlled and less formal settings (other than conference), where cultural aspects affect the way interpreters perform [Spencer-Oatey 2009, 1].

Conclusions

All the deliberations above lead us to the conclusion that what is understood as "business interpreting" or "dialogue interpreting in business settings" should be taken out of the context of both conference interpreting and public service interpreting, and be set apart, as an independent kind of interpreting, with its own specificities. This would open up a range of research topics, some of which have been already looked into by business interpreting researches quoted above, most notably in topics such as ethics and the changing role [e.g. Biagini 2017], professional vs. non-professional interpreters, impact of business culture, quality, communication flows and many more, such as teaching business interpreting. Just as the increasing movement of migrants around the world led to the advent of community interpreting, the current constant movement of employees, products, and businesses could become

the founding idea behind business interpreting as a profession. Finally, the question of professional organisations or associations, which do not exist as of now, could also be raised, in order to give interpreters in this profession more guidance and legitimacy. Furthermore, an interesting attempt could be also made at analysing business interpreting from a pedagogical perspective: what is the status quo of teaching and what can be offered in the curricula [e.g. Xiangdong 2019]. Business interpreting examined from various national perspectives could also give many interesting perspectives, since, just like dialogue interpreting, it "varies greatly at national and geographical level, being subject to local as well as international factors" [Dal Fovo, Niemants, 2015].

If we wanted to play devil's advocate for a moment, we might advance an argument that is sometimes supported by colleagues and companies alike, one that questions the legitimacy of discussing business interpreting as a profession that could be somehow regulated or controlled by means of codes of conduct, professional associations or any other form of professional standards. It can largely be summed up in the following way: since business interpreting is mainly provided on the private market, the interpreter's job is to satisfy her client's needs, in line with the mindset according to which "the client knows best", leaving little room for any professional organisations or research. Obviously, however, this statement would be too reckless, as clients can potentially have many controversial wishes that go beyond what is allowed for under professional…? The pecuniary argument itself does not win every battle. If anything, interpreters for private clients are more like historical dragomans, "serving as local intermediaries in a variety of roles (including those of guide, adviser, trader, messenger, spy or negotiator" [Pöchhacker 2004, 28], which still allows for an analysis of their roles and status. Moreover, in a growing market, there will be more and more jobs and assignments for interpreters, whether trained or not, experienced or inexperienced.

This notwithstanding, it must be pointed out that as much as I would wish to argue for "business interpreting" or "interpreting in business settings" to be treated as an independent type of interpreting, the tools to research this domain must continue to be adopted from the wide body of community and dialogue interpreting research, as well as other disciplines. This view can be supported by what is said in the *Routledge Encyclopedia*:

> Interpreter-mediated business encounters, although not institutionally within the domain of community interpreting, belong to a similar interactional framework and are amenable to the same methods and techniques of investigation. Indeed, conference interpreters, when they leave the booth to facilitate face-to-face *ad hoc* meetings, find themselves facing many of the interactional issues that are familiar within DI: they temporarily become dialogue interpreters [Mason 2009, 81].

There is a plethora of research issues in different interpreting settings that can be examined in the context of business interpreting, in search of similarities

and differences. If we look at the most topical issues and debates referred to in *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting* [2018], such as "Ethics and the role of the interpreter" by Uldis Ozolins or "Non-professional interpreters" by Aída Martinez-Gómez, we will soon come to the conclusion that there are no ready answers to these questions in the field of business interpreting either.

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