Importance and Effects of Multimodal Communication on Interactional Behaviour and Outcome in Public Service Interpreting

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ABSTRACT: *This paper investigates how public service interpreting (PSI) purposes and interactions are affected by either overlooking, ignoring or concealing some communication modalities. Empirical data were collected from 28 interpreters via a questionnaire comprising closed and open questions. After a brief review of the PSI settings and the theoretical basis for understanding different communicative modalities, the paper uses thematic analysis to depict the importance and effects of multimodal communication on interactional behaviour and outcome in interpreter-mediated encounters. The findings reveal that there are many important signs, signals and their symbolic values that are not given necessary consideration. It concludes that the relevance of communication modalities, including silences and those associated with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and their effects on interactional behaviour depend on both PSI settings and the expected outcome of communication. It suggests some transformative approaches that can be used to maximise and manage the effectiveness of the interpreter-mediated communication modalities.*

KEYWORDS: Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC); equity, equality, diversity, inclusion; interpreter-mediated communication; multimodal communication; public service interpreting; symbolic values.

INTRODUCTION

A substantial amount of literature relating to conceptual, theoretical, and empirical studies concerning communication processes, practices and encounters in Public Service Interpreting (PSI) has continued to flourish in recent years (Moratto and Li, 2021; Pöllabauer and Topolovec, 2020); Angelelli, 2020a; Angelelli, 2020b; Angelelli, 2020c; Angelelli, 2019; Phelan, 2019; Schuster and Baixauli-Olmos, 2018; Colina and Angelelli, (Eds.), 2017; Munyangeyo et al. (eds., 2016). Interpreters and researchers assert that PSI takes place in a variety of contexts and settings. Even though interpreting is a very complex activity, it is yet vital for ensuring full, fair and equitable access to multilingual services. The complexity of settings raises some important questions: how do participants in interpreting encounters see the environment and settings? What are

their expectations? How do they negotiate the message transfer? What is on their minds during interpreting activities? How do they see their experiences and the possible impact of communicative interactional choices on the communication outcome?

The available literature indicates that PSI studies have mainly focused on language in use, plurilingualism, language service access, language policies and rights, interpreter's training needs, linguistic, cultural and cognitive skills. Such a focus has created imbalances between multiple communication modalities in relation to their relevance to the construction of the meaning and the interpretation of the symbolic values of signs, their effect on interactional behaviour and their impact on interpreter-mediated communication outcomes.

One can argue that generally speaking, the researchers' objectives have largely been the explanation of the complexity and the remits of the interpreter's role, the differences between the contexts and settings of the interpreting activity, the attitude of the interpreting service providers, the process of conveying the meaning, the characteristics of the effectiveness and quality of interpretation, the recruitment and expectations of interpreters, the note-taking techniques as a tool that facilitates the communication process, as well as the theoretical frameworks and research paradigms within the public service interpreting domain.

Some researchers in interpreting modalities have focused on face-to-face, telephone and video remote communication channels (Ozolins, 2011; Braun, 2013; Braun and Taylor, Eds, 2014). Others have explored the challenges related to the theoretical perspectives, the practices and training needs (Munyangeyo et al., 2016; Moratto and Li, 2021). Others have explored the differences in demands in relation to simultaneous, consecutive and whispering interpreting (Seeber, 2013; Orlando and Hlavac, 2020). However, there is a clear gap in literature regarding the ways settings and communication aims drive the communicative modalities and the interactional behaviour that influence interpreting the outcome.

The aim of this study is neither to analyse aspects of cognitive skills involved in interpreting, nor to examine the linguistic needs and required key language competencies for an effective meaning transfer in interpreting. It is rather to get an insight into the public service interpreting contexts, practices and settings; explore different communicative multimodalities and analyse the extent of their importance in influencing interactional behaviour and outcome in interpreter-mediated communication.

To achieve this, it is necessary to reviews the PSI settings and spatial arrangements; the management of triadic interventions as well as the factors that contribute to it; the cases of ethics that underpin the equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in a professional context; the role of multimodality approach to the management of intercultural communication; the needs, means and strategies required to better professionalise interpreting in public services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study does not intend to revisit the terminology used around the concepts of Public Service Interpreting (PSI). Many studies have extensively referenced that issue. Whilst some researchers use the terminology of community interpreting (Roy, 1993; Gentile et al., 1996; Mikkelson, 1996; Niska, 1998; Roberts et al., 2000; Rudvin, 2002; Hale, 2007; Kainz et al., 2011), others (Skaaden and Wattne, 2009; Munyangeyo et al., 2016; Angellili et al., 2020; Angelelli, 2020a) refer to public service interpreting (PSI) for activities of interpreter-mediated communication taking place in communities, education, social services, police stations, health and legal contexts. Therefore, in this study the terminology of Public Service Interpreting is used to include all communicative encounters we are analysing.

However, in order to better understand the level of organisation, the process, the methods of communication that are at stake, as well as their impact on the dynamics and the outcome of triadic interactions, it is important to revisit the context and settings in which interpreting activities take place.

Social, educational and various community settings
Both Dialogue Interpreting (Tipton and Furmanek, 2016) and the Interpreting in the Community and Workplace (Rudvin and Tomassini, 2011) explore some key aspects of and skills for managing dialogic interactions and intercultural Communication in the community interpreting. Other researchers (Valero-Garcés and Tipton, 2017, eds.) examine some ideological, practical and ethical issues that arise from the community interpreting.

If interpreting in the public services has often been associated with the absence of regulation, patchy standardisation initiatives and lack of robustness in the professionalisation of the practice, the interpreter-mediated communication that takes place in the social environment, such as schools and other various social services, should be expected to be faced with a lack of interest among the academic and research bodies. Yet, this type of interpreting is a key service for the promotion of social justice in today's societies that are increasingly and unprecedently becoming multiculturally diverse.

Indeed, the community offers a variety of socio-professional contexts that exhibit the intercultural and interlingual communication challenges. If the implementation and success of social policies and projects require the creation of converging social and institutional interactions and behaviours that result from cultural, educational, social and economic differences; the promotion of communication mechanisms, including interpretation in the community, is paramount.

Beyond the technical or ethical issues focused strictly on the level of professionalism, it seems worthwhile to look into the negotiation component that is at stake in the process

of the recruitment of interpreters and in the communication process. This makes it possible to grasp the intersection of feelings and emotions that emerge during interpreting and can influence the process and the outcome of the communication.

On the linguistic side, it can be pointed out that, unlike some other areas where interpretation is done through the main languages, languages used in the community can often be minority languages. This justifies the use of family members, including children, to facilitate communication and related needs. In this case, the interpretation can be based on a process of communicational mediation, which is created by the interpreter's collusive attitude and behaviour, with the aim of seeking to respond and satisfy relational or family needs. In this regard, interpretation modalities follow the perspectives of associative activity or community solidarity.

There are cases where social workers regularly work with interpreters in different settings, including nursing homes, schools and the community at large. The interpreters used in these settings do not necessarily have the required interpreting skills and ethical values. The main recruitment criterion is bilingualism which, in many cases, implies a very basic linguistic level. This often makes interpreting communication an informal interaction. Some of the interpreters even manage to participate in the design and evaluation of interactional activities as active stakeholders. A research paper by Dubus (2015) provides insights into Cambodian interpreters facilitating communication between Cambodian refugee elder women and social services providers. Not only the interpreters had a language brokering role, but they were also cofacilitators and actively assisting the qualified social worker in assessing the group interactions, interventions and outcomes.

Through the ethnographic data, this study intends to assess the interpreting practices, the processes and the behavioural situations that are underpinned by interpreters' stance as part of the community. This allows to analyse how the circumstances of interpretation create a dynamic of communication based on relations, whether social, family or interpersonal ones. It will then be possible to examine the extent of the ability to use multiple modalities in communication.

Health sector (hospitals and clinics)
The collective work edited by Raval and Tribe (2010) and the textbook by Bancroft et al. (2015) focus on a specific medical area of interpreting in mental health clinical settings. But there are other various studies that were conducted on medical consultation encounters in general (Davidson, 2000; Angelelli, 2004; Merlini, 2009; Bancroft, et al., 2016; Reiss-Končar, 2017; Angelelli, 2019; Souza et al., 2019; Angelelli, 2020b; Angelelli, 2020c). They all show how the context itself contributes to or drives the choice of communication strategies.

Fox and Pollard Jr (2019) explore the importance of the patient's preferred language and culture during the Mental Status Examination (MSE). They argue that the clinician's ability to interpret clinical results depends heavily on the patient' level of understanding questions and providing related answers. Interpreters' role is therefore

paramount because the linguistic and cultural elements are in dynamic relations with cognitive assessments. Tiselius' study (2019) provides an overview of the main interpreters' concerns when experiencing distressing situations in the interpreting. It also analyses the ways and implications of handling ethically difficult situations in healthcare interpreting vis-à-vis the varying level of distress from one situation to another. Souza (2019) discusses the interpreting interactions and the role of contextual perspectives in defining the communication intent. It is those interactions that facilitate behaviours and relatedness that the author calls 'therapeutic rapport'. Hofer's study (2019) examines the interpreter's impact on the patient's emotionally charged expressions of complaints of pain, and the subsequent response by the care providers in clinical settings. The study explores how multimodal communications, such as gazing, using gestures and other body language features, can have a significant impact on interpreting interactions.

Given the complex nature of the medical field and the way it plays an important role in determining the modalities of communication, it should be noted that the interactional dynamic is based on both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects.

On one hand, interpreting may involve dialogic communication. On the other hand, it may also consist of sight translation of basic information intended for patients in general. However, if the medical field is generally known for its own language, which is full of very technical terminology, one can understand or at least guess the challenges that interpreters expect to face. This is mainly due to the fact the quality of health interventions and other services to patients may depend on the quality of communication. In this case the accuracy of any word, any utterance and any statement determine the extent of interventions. However, due to the lack of trained interpreters in the public services in general, it happens that interpreter-mediated communication is provided by someone who has neither language skills in medical terminology nor the ability to use different communication modalities. It is therefore not unusual to have family members, friends or medical staff engaged in interpreting, on the basis of their bilingual skills.

The biggest issue is that any error in medical interactions can lead to a double risk: the patient may receive a false diagnosis and, consequently, inadequate or wrong treatment; or miscommunications can increase the liability of healthcare providers at both individual and institutional levels. Outside this context of the lack or shortage of interpreters, one can consider the situations in which the interpreters have the required qualifications but work where the interpretation has an important role in the power balance. The quality of the health services can contribute to either life or death. There are hence many questions that need answers in relation to planning, designing and implementing interpreting activities and strategies. Empirical data provided in this study can help with answering such questions.

Immigration offices

While interpretation in the immigration offices can take place for a variety of reasons, including those relating to visas applications, the area of interest in this study is the interpreter-mediated communication involving asylum seekers.

The decision and the process of seeking asylum is often the result of tragic events affecting communities or individuals. One of the major challenges that asylum seekers face is the trauma of leaving their homes in generally stressful conditions, the anxiety of heading to unknown horizons, and the social stigmatisation of migrants. Added to all this are the difficulties associated with the asylum application processes, such as self-disclosure by telling personal and often traumatic stories, not with the aim of sharing or informing, but rather of persuading and convincing at all costs to save their life. In his study on the "Sociopolitical Construction of Interviews between Gatekeepers and the Powerless", Monnier (1995) criticises the asylum seeker interviews in Geneva where migrants have to take an oath before facing tough questions about their personal lives, their political engagements and the reasons they left their homeland. He concludes that the asylum interviews lack rigour as they follow the ritual patterns to legitimate the process. In such conditions, asylum seekers face multiple challenges, including the limitations of communicating through an intermediary, the (in)ability to remember and recall recent painful events and the courage to provide in the interviews emotionally charged testimonials whose factual credibility is potentially susceptible to further investigation. Looking into the interpreting in asylum hearings, Pöllabauer (2004) investigated the "Issues of role, responsibility and power" in interpreting and highlighted the discrepant roles of interpreters which are often determined by the perceived expectations of the immigration officers.

If the interpreter-mediated communication must therefore take into account some elements related to the language barriers where the choice of language may be motivated by the constraints of proving identity, the use of evidence to support testimonies, the importance attached to the detailed account of the events; it is clear that misinterpretations and miscommunications are foreseeable. Napier (2004) discussed the "Interpreting omissions" under the hypothesis that "interpreters would make recourse to omissions both consciously and unconsciously, depending on their familiarity with the discourse environment and the subject matter" (p.117). Although seeking asylum is a human right, and both migrants and immigration officers are aware of the legal United Nation's principle of not returning people by force to a country where their lives or well-being remain likely to be threatened, the process is subjected to power dynamics that are often underpinned by diverging expected outcomes. When the interpreter-mediated communication becomes the only tool to bridge the gap between expectations, the interpreter's role remains a very strategic means of mediating interactions.

Police stations

Interpreting practices in police investigations has attracted the researchers' attention (Cotterill,2000; Mason, 2006; Böser, 2013; Hale, 2013; Lai & Mulayim, 2014; Nakane,

2014). In general, the police interviews display strong power relations. As investigating officer represent the public power, the suspects often feel the power imbalance and most of attempts to influence the interview outcome are driven by a whole series of distrustful behaviours. It should be noted that one of the aims of police investigations is to obtain accurate and reliable information. The police interrogations are based on the fundamental principle of the presumption of innocence instead of wanting to confirm the accuser's version of events or to compel the suspect to confess. The success of the police investigation process then depends on the ability of the investigator to communicate with the subject. In this context where the interactions facilitate the collection of information that makes it possible to avoid false confessions or wrongful convictions, the interpreters must ensure that the language barrier does not constitute a communication obstacle for the suspects, victims, witnesses and even experts. The quality of communicative interactions and the correct transfer of information depends on the level of the interpreters' competence, not only in relation to the linguistic ability guaranteeing the knowledge of terminology in criminal case contexts, but also their capacity to warrant the ethical positioning in managing exchanges. The challenge is that police interviews are part of social and communicative interactions in the discourse communities and hence occur in different situations where the quality of interpreting is not always guaranteed.

Courts
Under the inclusive conceptualisation of PSI, it should be noted that the context is far from providing homogeneous settings. Of course interpreting in the courts or in legal contexts in general remains the most professionalised service compared to other settings. This vetting of interprets is often associated with the foreseeable implications of misinterpretations. This area has attracted researchers (Edwards, 1995; Russell & Hale, 2012; Mikkelson, 2017; Ng, 2020; Kadrić, 2021) from different angles of interpreter-mediated communication. It must be recognised that court interpreters have indeed crucial duties and heavy responsibilities on their shoulders. These burdens relate to the expectations and requirements of making an interpreted communication so accurate that there is no room for doubts or omissions. The accurate communication facilitates reasoned argumentation and hence influences the decision of the judge and other stakeholders in the court activities. It is undoubtedly essential that the interpreter transmits the interactions accurately at both questions and answers levels. It is in this regard that legal interpreters are generally sworn.

Nevertheless, various cases of complexity in legal interpretation should not be overlooked, including the training and the availability of interpreters possessing multiple communication skills. Since the truthfulness of oral statements is often assessed through the multiple communication cues, such as gestures, hesitations, resorting to repetitions, silences, or gazes directed at a specific location or audience, one could wonder to what extent the interpreters are able to identify and interpret without error or omission all the communicative modalities.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the data encompassing the experiences and opinions of interpreters about their professional activities and practices. Although the research design has allowed the collection of some data providing statistical information on demographic insights, preferences and options using the Likert scale, the qualitative method was the main research instrument used. Since the qualitative method aims to understand personal experiences and explain certain social aspects, including community services, this approach is particularly appropriate for the analysis of the data collected for this particular study.

Qualitative data provide insights into the social reality rather than relying on simplistic trends to formulate hypothesises. "Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible […]. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.3). If qualitative data collection techniques have their strengths and weaknesses that should be considered when choosing a particular approach, interviews, questionnaires, documents and observations are among the most used modes, regardless of the theoretical framework. The qualitative approach makes it possible to understand the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of the participants. As Creswell (2013) says, "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices […]. We conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (p. 48). Mays and Pope (1995) also argue that "the goal of qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of all the participants" (p. 43).

Under the umbrella of qualitative method, this study will use the narrative inquiry which, according to theorists (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Clandinin, 2007; Creswell, 2013) uses stories and experiences to understand some patterns of social practices. Stories and self-reported experiences from the participants were gathered and coded using only the letters and numbers as part of the research ethics compliance that ensures anonymity is safeguarded. The settings and codes were as follow: Courts (IA-IE), health (IF-IJ), Immigration (IK-IN), police (IO-IS) and social contexts (IT-IZ). For instance, Participant 1 in the legal context was identified as Interpreter A (IA), their first story was recorded as IA1. Stories and experiences were analysed thematically. According to Creswell (2013), in thematic analysis, "the researcher identifies the themes 'told' by participants" (p.72). The thematic analysis aim was to highlight what was said or not said, to examine how it was said, to demonstrate why it was said or not said and to assess the impact on interactional behaviours and outcomes of communication encounters.

RESULTS

As it was mentioned in the methodology, the research data were collected from public service interpreter's self-reported experiences of working in courts, health sector, immigration interviews and various community-based services. The length of the interpreters' experience was captured. The data related to the settings, the languages in use, the relevance of communication modalities and the factors that influence the interpreting planning and practice have been recorded. For open questions and those that required the justification of the participants' preferences, only responses that were provided focussing fully on the scope of analysis were coded and referred to.

Questionnaire results summary
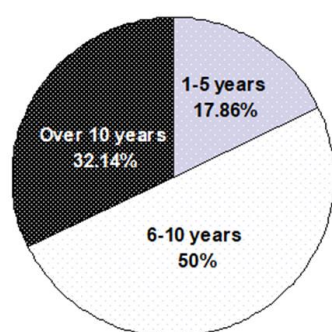**Q1.** How long have you been involved in public Service Interpreting?

Fig.1: Participants' self-reported experience in years

As it is the case with other jobs and professional assignments, work experience is associated with the ability for better performance. However, in a context where the shortage of qualified people in an industry allows flexibility in recruitment, the supply and demand dynamics are not influenced by the competition factors. This is the case of the PSI which, not only is confronted with the shortage of qualified interpreters but also and above all relies heavily on the freelance mode. It is true that this type of service provision is not driven by the competitive recruitment formalities. Nevertheless, the work experience remains an essential element in the evaluation of the quality of performance. The question of knowing the length in years of interpreting practice was therefore relevant. It aimed at providing an insight into the relationship between the time spent in interpreting practices and the interpreters' perceptions. The results show that 50% of the participants worked as interpreters for more than 10 years, and overall 82.14% of them had at least 6 years of interpreting experience. This lends credibility to the responses provided, even though the three categories of work experience were not analysed as key variables for specific responses.

Q2. In the following Public Service areas, please indicate the setting(s) of your interpreting experience:
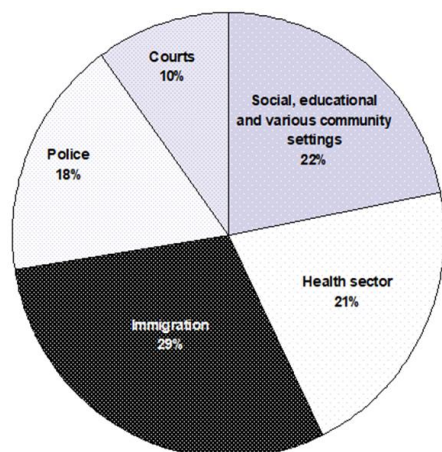
Fig.2: Settings of interpreting assignments

If the aim of the PSI is to enable individuals or multilingual communities to access the services provided by the central or local government in the official language, it is understandable that the contexts and especially the interpreter-mediated settings reflect a variety of contexts. These contexts can include social services such as welfare, housing, employment or education; as well as medical, hospital and judicial settings, including prisons, police stations, probation offices or courts (Pöchhacker, 1999; Wadensjö, 2007; Corsellis, 2008; Garcés & Martin, 2008; Hale, 2009; Munyangeyo, 2016). The interpreting practice takes its form of liaison, consecutive or simultaneous depending on the context and setting. The objective of this question is not to identify the modes of interpretation, or the strategies employed to distinguish the contexts of interpretation. It is instead to provide information on the interpreters' representativeness within the settings. Since it is these same settings that influence spatial configuration, interactions, communication behaviours, the degree of operational and communicative formality; this question made it possible to collect information relating to the link between the contexts of practice and the rigor attached to professionalism. In general, the results show a balanced participation across the settings. Nevertheless, on one hand the area having less involvement of participants is the judiciary in the courtrooms. This seems to indicate that the degree of professionalisation and standardisation of the field requires sworn interpreters and hence limits cases of voluntarism in interpreting. On the other hand, the immigration setting remains the area that attracts the most participants. This could be justified by the fact this field provides communication services as the first point of contact prior to other community-based services. The setting seems to be underfunded and outsourced (Munyangeyo, 2016) and the interpreting often becomes a dialogic tool used to carry out the triage operations.

Q3. Which language(s) do you mainly work from into English?

List of languages: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Croatian, Bosnian, Farsi, French, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Swahili, Turkish.

PSI concerns individuals or small groups in the western communities that are part of the various global migration phenomena. The labels of migrant language are commonly

used in this context. In the absence of native speakers of the local or official language, public service interpreters are generally the product of the same channels of community constituencies as the product of immigration. This is what justifies the use of untrained and volunteering interpreters, often acting as supportive mechanisms to help families, familiar faces and acquaintances. The results of this question confirm that the languages used are mainly those associated with ethnic and cultural minorities. They indicate the potential sources of migrants. What could be a surprise here is the inclusion of French and Portuguese, two of the main European widely taught and spoken languages. This could indicate that the two languages might be spoken by migrants from former colonies of Belgium, France and Portugal. This raises the fundamental question of the language choice for interpreting and its impact on the communication and outcome. Some migrants may feel obliged to use their second language due to the lack of interpreters in their mother tongue or the need to prove their identity in the absence of proper documents.

Q4 In the following factors, which one is taken into consideration when planning and conducting interpreter-mediated communication? Please rate your perceptions from 1 to 5, 1 being least and 5 being most relevant:
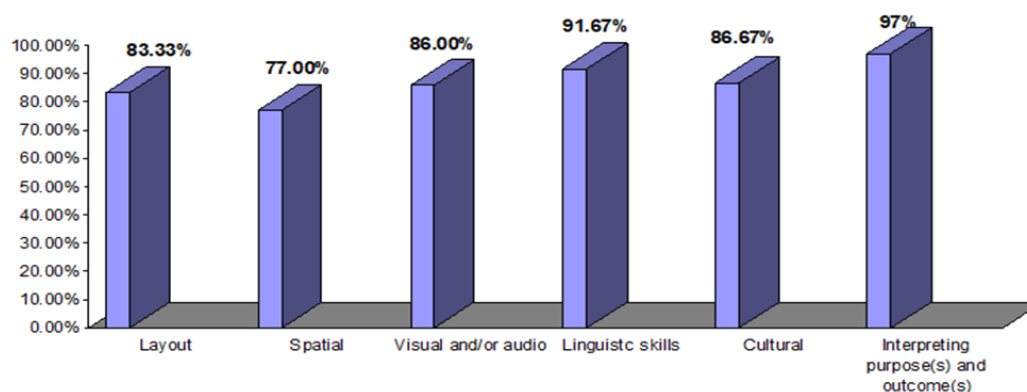

Fig.3: Factors to consider when planning and conducting interpreter-mediated communication

As an activity that entails communicative interactions, the interpretating assignment must be planned. Throughout the planning process, there are many elements that should be taken into account, including the objective, the space, the layout, the channels, the participants, the factors and the general environment of the communication. If the objective, the settings of the interpretation as well as the participants are determined by the type of services to be provided; the spatial configuration should also respond to functional and organisational factors. To this end, the different interpreting settings respond differently to the planning requirements. The purpose of this question is to capture the dimensions of the prioritisation of the components of the interpretation planning. What emerges from the results is that the purpose and outcome of the interpretation top the interpreters' priority preferences, followed by linguistic skills and cross-cultural competences. However, the spatial configuration (proximity, visibility and accessibility) comes at the bottom of the list. This seems to indicate that since the

legal context has a standardised spatial setup, the other settings share the large percentage that reflects the lack of interest in the concept of space in the planning of the interpreting activity. The question that arises therein is the extent of impact of the lack of interest in spatial organisation on interactions, the accuracy of the interpretation of extra-linguistic features, the effective use of various communicative modalities and the interpreting outcome.

Q5. In the following communication modalities, which one is seen as relevant by interpreters and service providers? Please rate your perceptions from 1 to 5, 1 being least and 5 being most relevant and justify your opinion.

Fig.4: The level of relevance of specific communicative modalities
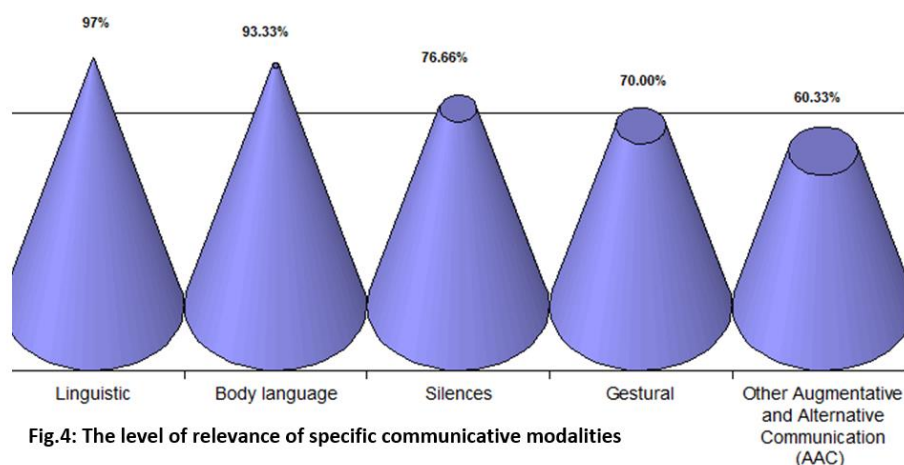
The essence of communication is sharing information. The information exchange through interactions determines the magnitude of power dynamics in communication. Thus, studying the process of the interpretation activity must consider not only the diversity of the PSI contexts and settings, but also the power relations between the participants in a triadic communication. The weight of the communication modalities and the extent of their impact on the interpreting intent also require an appropriate consideration. Among the different modes of communication, there are linguistic aspects, gestural, visual, aural, spatial positions and other means of communication, including written statements, signs, symbols and intercultural features.

The answers to the question relating to the spatial configuration confirmed that the planning of the interpreting activity does not give priority to the proximity as well as to the visibility which, however, can influence the interlocutors' behaviour. One could then wonder whether the hierarchy of communication modalities does not follow the same order of factors that are taken into account at the planning stage. The responses to this question that was asking participants to rate their communication modalities preferences have revealed that the linguistic features and body language are overwhelmingly the key communication modes, compared with alternative modalities that were scored low. The assumption could be that the statistical data were confirming

that silences or other modalities are not important in the eyes of interpreters, given the approval rating in percentages of aural communication and body language. However, the comments provided show that there is a correlation between these answers and the demographic data. Many interpreters work in immigration settings were, they argue, the interpreting focus is on the stories, which gives a priority to verbal communication. The justification provided by participants is in the appendices.

Q6. In which public service setting(s) the above communication modalities (linguistic, body language, silences, gestural and AAC) are considered important? Please rate your perceptions from 1 to 5, 1 being least and 5 being most relevant and justify your judgement.
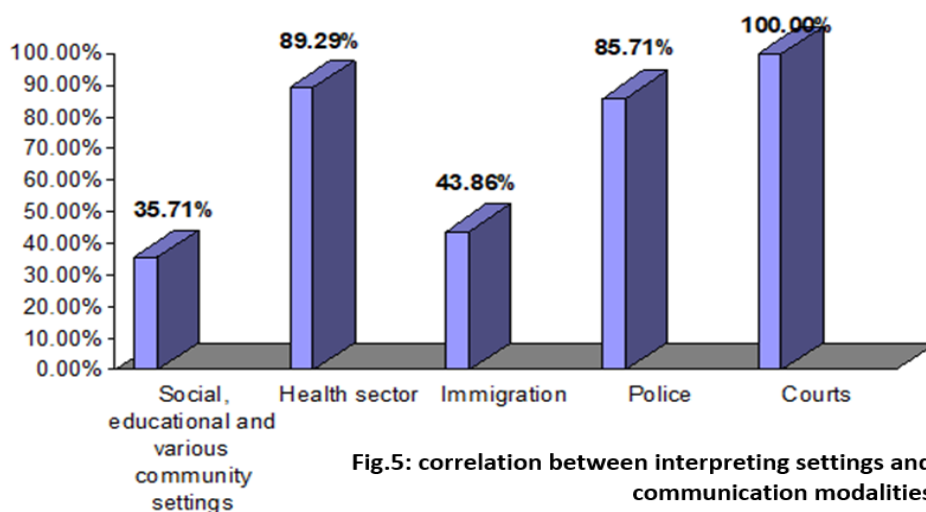

Fig.5: correlation between interpreting settings and communication modalities

DISCUSSION

For the great semiologists (Barthes, 1997; Saussure, 1995; Umberto, 1984), the embodiment of communication passes through the interpretation of signs and symbols through different filters and modalities. In the general context, the communication modalities revolve around aural, gestural, linguistic, spatial and visual modes. From linguistic tools (speech and systemic signs) to non-linguistic paths (contextual, spatial, body language) or symbolic values (cultural, rituals), any communication encounter involves more than one modality at a time. The communication modalities are therefore in dynamic relations, either in interdependence or in complementarity. More modalities in use enable the communication process to fill the meaning transfer gaps.

Modalities for interpreting silences
In their study on "Silence: a modality of its own", Adler and Kohn (2021) argue that "Silence is not a mere absence of sound or text. Insofar as the communicative dimension is concerned, scholars have proven that silence carries illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect, thus considering silence as a means of communication within human interaction." Many specialists of the mindfulness argue that being silent can be

the best way of channelling own energies that are required to face challenges and uncertainty. In the daily life, there are indeed many silence attributes. Silence can symbolise tiredness (burnout), indicate the lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, inability to engage, refusal to communicate, meditation, time for reflection meditation, cultural or strategic communicative modality. There are many books under the title of "The Power of Silence" (Turner, 2012; Sarah, & Diat, 2017; Richards, 2017; Kenny, 2018). In PSI, how silences are considered as part of the communication process? When do silences usually take place? What role do silences play in communicative interactions? What kind of communication modality the silences encapsulate? In this study, the participants' self-reported experiences from the interpreting assignments have demonstrated that in triadic interactions, all participants use silences for different reasons.

Firstly, in immigration interviews, an interpreter has described how the asylum seeker used silences as a precursor to revolt, an expression of frustration, an unconscious refusal to communicate verbally, a communicative numbness vis-à-vis the power imbalances within triadic interactions.

"I was given an interpreting assignment for an asylum seeker interview. As the client was talking painfully about how she had been raped by a local police officer, the immigration officer asked her why she did not report the incident to the local authority for investigation or if she did, why she had to flee if the case was still pending. The asylum seeker broke down and kept quiet. There was a moment of silence and then she left the interview room in tears. I was asked to run after her and find out what had gone wrong" (IM1).

Breaking down and keeping quiet were ignored or at least lost in translation, which led to the communication breakdown. It seems clear that whilst emotions can easily be translated through behaviours driven by perlocutionary forces or multiple forms of the non-verbal communication, it is often easy to translate emotions through silence. Alongside these internal feelings, there are those driven by what Hall (1976) calls "deep culture". This is the case of admiration, pride, remorse or shame. There are some emotions that can be outwardly translatable through the human communication senses, including anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, shock or surprise. In this particular case, the asylum claimant has acted upon all of the above, expect the joy.

Secondly, the research data have shown that the use of silence in communication is shared among all parties involved in interpreting. One interpreter shared the following experience:

 "I was once interpreting for an asylum seeker. For some reasons, she was not comfortable with answering questions about her family and the officer was pressing on asking the question, assuming she had something to hide. The asylum claimant asked for a piece of paper and wrote down: "my parents were murdered while I was watching." I read it and couldn't find words to say it" (IN1).

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In the above cases, one can notice a form of inability to describe or to report on events that are directly related to emotions. Either due to painful individual memories or by empathy, the verbal description of emotionally charged situations is often taken over by silence.

Thirdly, in another encounter, "An asylum seeker was talking about how he fled his hometown during the civil war. He was talking about how hard and far it was to reach and cross the border to the neighbouring country. The immigration officer looked at the map in silence and took notes without saying a word." (IK2). The immigration officer's silence was not related to any interactional strategy. It was instead a result of unconscious behaviour that was driven by the communication purposes. In this case, it could be suggested that the corroboration of information in a contrastive manner was not the priority of the interaction. Collecting any data that could lead to the officer's main communication outcome, such as finding anything that could work against the claim, was the priority.

Interpreting purpose and diverging expectations as part of communicative modalities underpinning interactions
Interpreting arrangements are dictated by the communication purposes. Such purposes influence the choice of communicative modalities and the design of interactional tools and settings. To illustrate that, one can safely assert that there is no doubt the spatial configuration is part of communication in general. It is hence not surprising that setting arrangements are and should be part of the interpreter-mediated communication planning. However, the data in this study suggest that in considering the factors that are taken into consideration when planning and conducting interpreter-mediated communication, the layout and space get the lowest score while the importance of interpreting purposes are rated 97%.

To understand the significance of interpreting intent and the outcome, we should first of all look at how in communicative interactions, participants represent the world around them (Kress, and Van Leeuwen, 1996). By seeking to understand how people communicate using a variety of means in particular social settings, we can agree with Halliday (1978) that communication can be and is a social practice. This Social Semiotic Approach (SSA) applied to communicative modalities was echoed by Teubert (2010) who argued that "Our intentionality, our consciousness, comes into existence by being a part of society, a member of a discourse community. We develop thoughts, feelings, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in collaboration with others. Our intentionality is part of the collective intentionality of the discourse community to which we belong. Our mind is part of a collective mind." Since participants to interpreting encounters have different and often diverging purposes, the chosen modalities, including the linguistic and the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) ones, revolve around specific purposes that depend on the will of powerful participants. "We can say that power in discourse is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants" (Fairclough, 2001, p.38-39).

Predominance of linguistic modalities as a hinderance to communication
According to the anonymised participant IK1, "there is no doubt the knowledge of the language pair and cultural differences is the sine qua non of the credibility to act as an interpreter in public services." The rationale behind such an assumption is that "communication has always been associated with languages and cultures" (IL2) and by default "in the public eyes, speaking two or more languages makes you de facto an interpreter" (IN2). However, the findings from this study indicate that there were many encounters of silences that have not been considered as part of communication and yet had a significant impact on interactional attitudes and behaviours.

The point made here is that "even though silences can be part of communication strategies and patterns, they can nevertheless convey a negative perception of indecision, unawareness, mistrust or refusal to communicate" (**IA1**). It was clear that the positionality as an interpreting power relation driver can be the epicentre of communicative modality choices. This is what Wadensjö (1998) once referred to when he argued that "there is a reason to believe that interactions involving three or more individuals have a complexity which is not comparable to interaction in dyads. The interpreter-mediated conversation is a special case. It is obvious that the communicative activities involved in this kind of encounter are in some senses dyadic, in other respects triadic, and the active subjects may fluctuate in their attitudes concerning which of these constellations takes priority" (p.11).
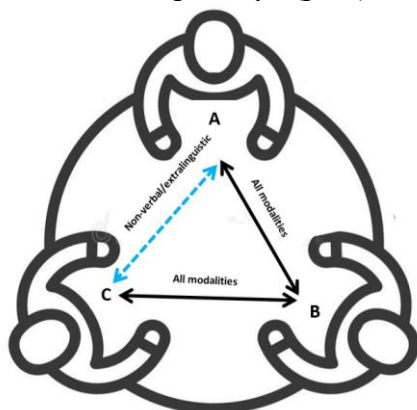

Fig.6: Triadic communicative settings turning into dyadic interpreting encounters

This priority is associated with the communication intent. Hence, it does influence the choice of specific communication modalities and does drive the interactional behaviour.

Modalities for interpreting in emotionally charged situations
Different communication settings and purposes impose their own atmosphere on interactions. If each context creates its parameters likely to trigger specific behaviours, one can imagine situations in which the participants must create or improvise communication strategies to respond to new realities of interpreting encounters. In this kind of communication, each step forward helps to know the other better and is likely to improve communicative interactions. In some situations, the interpreter can provide the supplementary information to shed more light on phenomena and situations that some participants do not fully grasp. In his interpreting assignment, the participant IO1

recalls a situation "when a police officer was interrogating a suspect for Actual Bodily Harm (ABH). At the beginning, the suspect was eloquently claiming innocence. Then the police officer said: "look at this picture and then look into my eyes and tell me the truth. Why did you do it?". The defendant started stuttering. I could see in the police officer's eyes that for few minutes he believed the stammering was a true confession of guilt." Only the interpreter's supplementary information about stammering can alleviate the risk of misinterpretation and communication breakdown.

Immigration interviews have been presented as particularly affected by emotional reactions, mainly because asylum seekers are often illegal migrants and foreign nationals fleeing violent and totalitarian regimes. Many of them are struggling with traumatic events, such as civil wars. It seems true that individuals interacting in social and political environments can display different social behaviours. These can be motivated - beyond the ethical norms – by the collusive or tacit sympathy (compassion) or antipathy (stigma) towards the foreigner, depending on the degree of divergence and convergence of expectations and outcomes.

Outside the situations of asylum interviews where the asylum seekers have displayed reactional behaviours induced by emotionally charged situations, the medical field is the other main area where communicative modalities need to be diversified. "All the modalities are relevant to maximise the opportunities to interpret with accuracy even though all of them do not seem to have equal weight in practice" (IT1). Interpreting in the public services requires a sustained effort to overcome communication breakdown caused by unexpected behaviours that result from emotional and cultural reactions.

The role of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in PSI
There is an assumption that the courtroom is where all modalities have to be considered. "Because of the legal implications of miscommunication, every modality has to be considered to provide a certain level of assurance that all conditions are fulfilled to guarantee a fair trial" (IA2); while the police investigations focus on linguistic performances through statements.

Throughout the study, it was argued that the intended outcome of interactions determines the design and the implementation of communication modalities and strategies. In clinical settings, communication can serve two purposes, such as determining the state of the patient health and the information sharing for appropriate medical intervention. "I think the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) elements are only considered in health contexts where you find many cases of different forms of disability or impairments that require adjustments for communication" (IH). In the following interpreting encounter, the assignment ended before it started because both illocutionary and perlocutionary acts were performed before the locutionary one: "I once went to interpret in a hospital between a doctor and a family member who was visiting a patient in coma. When the family member started asking the doctor whether a recovery was actually possible, the patient's fingers moved, and the doctor was so excited that he immediately ordered us to go out and leave him

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with his patient. That was the end of my interpreting assignment" (IG1). The interpreter rightly concludes that "In the doctor's eyes, I suppose the aim of interpreting was not really communication between him and the family member but instead his patient's prognosis; and the movement of fingers ended the story. There is a variety of communication modalities in clinical settings and language skills may not be needed" (IG1). Interpreters and service providers need to consider all possible modalities that human interactions can offer in a variety of settings.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that generally speaking, the communication modalities revolve around aural, gestural, linguistic, spatial and visual modes. However, there are many pragmatic and social semiotic messages that are lost due to the choice people make in designing the communication purposes and processes. Some modalities are given a priority over others. What is often forgotten or deliberately ignored is that communication modalities are always in dynamic relations, and function either in interdependence or in complementarity. When more modalities are used in communicative encounters, they enable the communication process to fill the communication gaps that linguistic, paralinguistic and cultural differences can create. To this end, "Interpreter trainings should provide opportunities to reflect on many interpreting scenarios and case studies that involve various communication modalities and challenges" (IG2). To accommodate all modalities, "I think there must be a clear shift from linguistic to multimodal training for interpreters, focussing on case studies and individual reflections" (IT3).

Ultimately, public service interpreting highlights the discrepancies within the traditional communication models engaging dynamically the sender and the receiver of the message. If the interpretations are often in triads, they are nevertheless in reality in dyads since the interpreter remains the key filter capable of influencing the interactions and the communication process. Nevertheless, the interpreter often loses the powers of choosing modalities when diverging intentions and communication purposes intersect and when each participant becomes aware of belonging to a different discourse community from the others. To make interpreting interactions more successful, it is necessary to create communication models and frameworks that can establish closer links between interlocuters with the sole purpose: facilitating interpreting exchanges and interactions.

Contribution to the body of knowledge and future research
The aim of this study was to get insight into the PSI settings and practices; and identify different communicative multimodalities and analyse the ways such modalities may influence interactional behaviour and drive interpreter-mediated communication outcomes. The findings have allowed to highlight the correlation between the interpreting intent, the choice of communicative modalities and the dynamics of interactional behaviours. To this end, it is now clear that in order to maximise and

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manage the effectiveness of the interpreter-mediated communication, it is important to explore ways of putting all communicative modalities at an equal footing.

Fig.7: Framework for communicative modalities and meaning transfer in PSI; inspired by multimodal communication assumptions by Jewitt, C. (2009). *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*. London: Routledge.
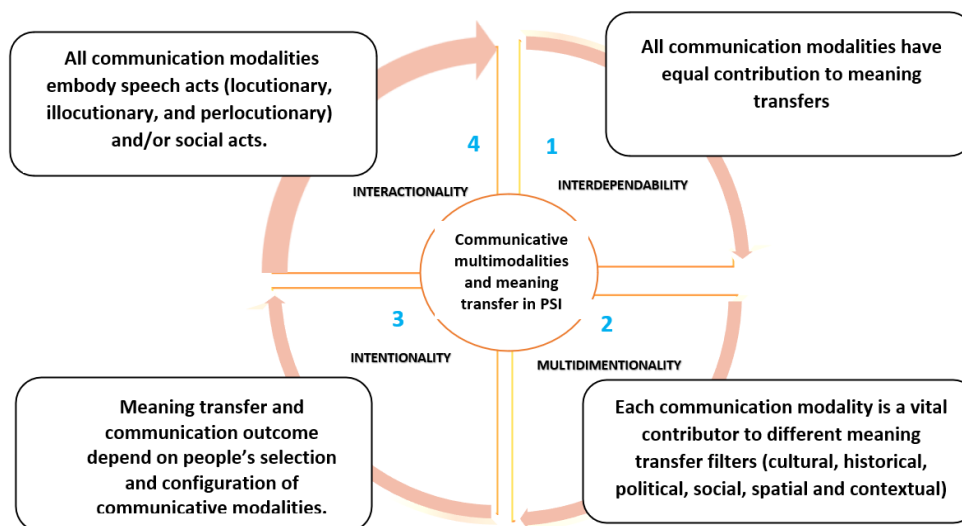
Recent studies in PSI (Munyangeyo et al., 2016) have focussed on the standardisation of the practice through the training and the establishment of the codes of practice. They have also examined the language skills needed for a better meaning transfer in interpreting. However, the factors that contribute to the interpreting decisions vis-à-vis the communicative modalities and their potential impact on the communication process and outcome have not attracted the necessary attention among researchers. One of the contributions of this study is that the framework (fig.7) considers and suggests some transformative approaches in multimodal meaning transfer in interpreting encounters. As one participant pointed out, we have to acknowledge that "Public service interpreting is still an unregulated market. Because there aren't enough interpreters for some languages that migrants speak, many untrained and therefore unqualified interpreters are used" (IZ). The debate around the appropriate training that goes beyond interpreters in interviews to develop the interviewers' awareness of communicative multimodalities and their impact on interactional behaviour is needed.

Finally, this study has focused on the validity of self-reported experiences in interpreting through the length and settings of interpreting. Demographic data related to the type and quality of training have not been captured. It would be interesting to evaluate the correlation between the quality of training and the choice of specific communication modalities.

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Appendix: data collected from open questions.

Q5. In the following communication modalities, which one is seen as relevant by interpreters and service providers? Please rate your perceptions from 1 to 5, 1 being least and 5 being most relevant and justify your opinion.

Justification:
- **IK1**: "There is no doubt the knowledge of the language pair and cultural differences is the sine qua non of the credibility to act as an interpreter in public services."
- **IT1**: "I believe all the modalities are relevant to maximise the opportunities to interpret with accuracy even though all of them do not seem to have equal weight in practice."
- **IA1**: "Even though silences can be part of communication strategies and patterns, they can nevertheless convey a negative perception of indecision, unawareness, mistrust or refusal to communicate."
- **IL1**: "In immigration offices, it is all about speaking because immigration officers are sometimes busy taking notes when they are at the same time listening to the asylum claimant talking."
- **IF** "In hospitals, all communication modalities are equally considered because each of them may give different clues about the patient recovery progress."
- **IG1** "I once went to interpret in a hospital between a doctor and a family member who was visiting a patient in coma. When the family member started asking the doctor whether a recovery was actually possible, the patient's fingers moved, and the doctor was so excited that he immediately ordered us to go out and leave him with his patient. That was the end of my interpreting assignment. In the doctor's eyes, I suppose the aim of interpreting was not really communication between him and the family member but instead his patient's prognosis; and the movement of fingers ended the story. There is a variety of communication modalities in clinical settings and language skills may not be needed."

- IM1 "I was given an interpreting assignment for an asylum seeker interview. As the client was talking painfully about how she had been raped by a local police officer, the immigration officer asked her why she did not report the incident to the local authority for investigation or if she did, why she had to flee if the case was still pending. The asylum seeker broke down and kept quiet. There was a moment of silence and then she left the interview room in tears. I was asked to run after her and find out what had gone wrong. Her answer was: "what's the point, he doesn't understand what I went through, and he doesn't believe any word I am saying. It's clear he didn't bother reading my statement. He is the police too, just like them; I better go back home".

- IO1 "I still remember a case when a police officer was interrogating a suspect for Actual Bodily Harm (ABH). At the beginning, the suspect was eloquently claiming innocence. Then the police officer said: "look at this picture and then look into my eyes and tell me the truth. Why did you do it?". The defendant started stuttering. I could see in the police officer's eyes that for few minutes he believed the stammering was a true confession of guilt."

Q6. In which public service setting(s) the above communication modalities (linguistic, body language, silences, gestural and AAC) are considered important? Please rate your perceptions from 1 to 5, 1 being least and 5 being most relevant and justify your judgement.

Justification:
- IA2 "My interpreting work is mainly based in the courtrooms. Because of the legal implications of miscommunication, every modality has to be considered to provide a certain level of assurance that all conditions are fulfilled to guarantee a fair trial."

- IH "I think the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) elements are only considered in health contexts where you find many cases of different forms of disability or impairments that require adjustments for communication."

- IO2 "In police stations, all modalities are important, but the linguistic ones are more important because the written and verbal communication is the main source of statement that needs to be recorded for future references."

- IK2 "An asylum seeker was talking about how he fled his hometown during the civil war. He was talking about how hard and far it was to reach and cross the border to the neighbouring country. The immigration officer looked at the map in silence and took notes without saying a word. Few months later, I met the asylum seeker who told me that his application had been rejected on the basis of lying in the interview because he didn't know how far his hometown was vis-à-vis the neighbouring country".

- IN1 "I was once interpreting for an asylum seeker. For some reasons, she was not comfortable with answering questions about her family and the officer was pressing on asking the question, assuming her hesitations and silence had something to hide. The asylum claimant asked for a piece of paper and she wrote down: "my parents were murdered while I was watching." I read it and couldn't find words to say it. The immigration officer said: "What is it?" I gave him the piece of paper with words he couldn't even read.

Q7. Why do you think the studies and training programmes in PSI have mainly focused on the code of conduct, language policies and rights, training needs, linguistic, cultural and cognitive skills?

- IL2 "Because communication has always been associated with languages and cultures."

- IT2 "Interpreting relates to multilingualism and multiculturalism. Because multicultural societies have to safeguard mutual respect, access to interpreting has been linked with language policies and the promotion of the interpreting quality through training."

- IN2 "It is simply because in the public eyes, speaking two or more languages makes you de facto an interpreter."

- IH "It's because interpreting is a mode of communication, and many researchers are interested in the process of transferring messages between two different languages. It means cognitive skills are part of that process."

- IM2 "Interpreters have the power of facilitating communication between people speaking different languages. Without the code of conduct to enforce accountability, interpreters could be rogues."

Q8. Do you have any suggestion on how multimodal communication can better inform the interpreter-mediated encounters so that interactional behaviour can lead to intended outcomes in Public Service Interpreting?

- IG2 "Interpreter trainings should provide opportunities to reflect on many interpreting scenarios and case studies that involve various communication modalities and challenges"

- IL3 "Before completing this questionnaire, I haven't thought about how important different communication modalities can be. Now I wonder how effective the telephone interpreting can be since some modalities can be missing from interpretation."

- IT3 "I think there must be a clear shift from linguistic to multimodal training for interpreters, focussing on case studies and individual reflections."

- IZ "Public service interpreting is still an unregulated market. Because there aren't enough interpreters for some languages that migrants speak, many untrained and therefore unqualified interpreters are used. Even though they could do a good job, they nevertheless damage the reputation of this interpreting sector."

- ID "Language agencies should be funded to train well interpreters and mirror the standards of those who work in legal settings."