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Remote community interpreting—perception and challenges

Zdalne tłumaczenia środowiskowe — percepcja i wyzwania

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Streszczenie

Zdalne tłumaczenia środowiskowe (RCI) należą do stosunkowo młodej dziedziny w obrębie szerszej domeny tłumaczeń ustnych, lecz z punktu widzenia firm tłumaczeniowych stanowią prężnie rozwijający się biznes na całym świecie, zwłaszcza w świetle pandemii koronawirusa. Część teoretyczna niniejszej dysertacji umiejscawia RCI na tle innych aktywności w domenie tłumaczeń ustnych oraz opisuje je pod kątem powstania, rozwoju i wymagań technologicznych. Ponieważ RCI stanowi dziedzinę tłumaczeń ustnych, w dysertacji dokonano przeglądu kluczowych pojęć istotnych dla komunikacji werbalnej, takich jak teoria dyskursu, a dokładniej kontekst pragmatyczny, akty mowy, implikatury oraz fenomen grzeczności. W dalszej części pracy omówiono podstawowe kwestie etyczne dotyczące tłumaczeń ustnych, rolę tłumacza, oczekiwania uczestników interakcji tłumaczeniowej oraz mity na temat bezstronności tłumacza wraz z ich implikacjami w domenie RCI. Następnie poruszono kwestie dotyczące specyfiki komunikacji telefonicznej (pozbawionej kanału wizualnego), w tym intencje rozmówców, koordynację rozmowy oraz kolejność zabierania głosu (ang. turn-taking). Część praktyczna dysertacji obejmuje dwa aspekty badania. Intencją autora było przeanalizowanie nagrań interakcji tłumaczeniowych w celu wyodrębnienia informacji metajęzykowych, które pomogą tłumaczowi przeprowadzić prawidłowy proces tłumaczenia bez uprzedniej znajomości kontekstu. Pierwsza część przedstawia analizę statystyczną interakcji tłumaczeniowych pod kątem konkretnych obszarów, wykorzystania technologii, metod połączeń oraz czasu trwania interakcji. Druga część badania przedstawia metajęzykową analizę treści 10 interakcji tłumaczeniowych zarejestrowanych przez autora, pod kątem potencjalnych rozwiązań sytuacji problematycznych, które miały miejsce podczas tłumaczeń zdalnych. Obie części badania zostały zakończone podsumowaniem w postaci wniosków.

Abstract

Remote community interpreting (RCI) is a relatively young field within the broader domain of interpreting. However, from the perspective of interpreting companies, it has become a thriving business, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic, on a global scale. The theoretical part of this dissertation situates RCI within the broader interpreting domain and describes its origin, evolution, and technological requirements. As RCI falls within the domain of interpreting, the dissertation reviews key concepts and notions relevant to verbal communication, including discourse theory and, more specifically, context, speech acts, implicatures, and the phenomenon of politeness. The dissertation then discusses fundamental ethical issues in interpreting, the roles of the interpreter, the expectations of participants in interpreting interactions, and myths about interpreter impartiality, including their implications for the RCI domain. This is followed by a discussion of issues related to communication by telephone (lacking a visual channel), including the intentions of the interlocutors, conversation coordination, and the concept of turn-taking. The practical part of the dissertation encompasses two aspects of the study. The author's intention was to analyse recordings of interpreted interactions to extract meta-linguistic information that could help a remote interpreter carry out an accurate interpreting process without prior knowledge of the context. The first part of the study presents a statistical analysis of interpreted interactions, focusing on specific sectors, technology usage, connection methods, and interaction duration. The second part of the study presents a metalinguistic analysis of the content of 10 interpreted interactions recorded by the author, focusing on potential solutions to problematic situations occurring during remote interactions. Both parts of the study conclude with a summary in the form of conclusions.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation Behind the Research

In the contemporary world, multilingualism and interlingual communication are commonplace, occurring daily through both face-to-face interactions and various online or telephonic channels. Nonetheless, there remains a significant need for interpreting services to facilitate effective communication for those who do not speak the primary language of the interaction. While business environments and multilingual conferences often benefit from the expertise of highly regarded professional conference interpreters, those requiring daily interpreting assistance in less prestigious, though still important, matters face more challenging circumstances. Additionally, the very interpreters working in community settings, in contrast, typically do not enjoy the same level of professional recognition or respect as their colleagues employed in the field of conference interpreting. This status quo can be partly attributed to the absence of universally recognised or accepted protocols or frameworks.

The absence of these standardised guidelines means that community interpreters often work in less structured environments, which may undermine their professional standing and the perceived quality of their work. Without clear, universally accepted practices, the field of community interpreting remains fragmented, leading to inconsistencies in service delivery and potential challenges in maintaining high standards of practice.

With the development of technology, and the evolution of remote interpreting, specifically remote community interpreting, remote interpreters continue to encounter the same challenges they have faced, but now they must navigate these challenges within virtual environments. While the shift to digital platforms introduces additional issues, such as managing the lack of visual cues and dealing with technical difficulties, remote interpreters are required to adapt quickly and find new strategies to ensure faithful interpreting.

Many of these challenges touch on ethical considerations, particularly in relation to the concepts of impartiality and interpreter's objectivity, which have traditionally defined ideal interpreters and remote interpreters. There is also another, practical challenge, as the information remote interpreters receive lacks any visual component. Consequently, remote community interpreters who work via telephonic link are expected to process messages delivered exclusively in the auditory channel, which may pose additional problems.

In addition to the lack of a common framework to govern the profession of remote community interpreting, there is also a significant absence of academic training in Poland,

specifically regarding remote interpreting. This gap in formal education leaves many linguists without the necessary theoretical grounding or practical skills required by the unique demands of remote community interpreting. Consequently, interpreters must frequently rely on their own experiences and ad-hoc strategies, which may not always result in the most optimal solutions.

Furthermore, there is no tradition of education or training for remote interpreters in Poland. One reason for this could be that Poland is a relatively homogeneous country, where the demand for remote community interpreting has historically been minimal or non-existent. However, Polish (and Poland-based) remote community interpreters do exist and play a crucial role in serving the underprivileged Polish expatriates in the United Kingdom or the United States. This is a primary reason for the concept and development of this dissertation, which aims to address the gap in research and training related to remote community interpreting, particularly in the context of Polish-English interactions, with a specific focus on exploring ethical and pragmatic considerations within this field. This research aims to address these considerations, which are critical to the understanding and improving the practice in this context.

1.2 Assumptions

Given the nature of remote community interpreting interactions, which occur with the assistance of a remote interpreter and are devoid of visual cues, thus relying exclusively on auditory information, the author seeks to explore key ethical and pragmatic concepts that may support remote interpreters in their efforts to deliver accurate and faithful interpretation via telephonic communication. The author carries out an analysis of theoretical considerations in relation to recorded samples of interpreted interactions to determine whether the awareness of pragmatic approach to discourse effectively addresses the challenges encountered in remote community interpreting.

Furthermore, the author discusses popular view on objectivity and neutrality—terms which depict an ideal interpreter. Through the analysis of actual interpreted interactions, the author aims to demonstrate that a remote interpreter acts as an active participant in the conversation rather than merely serving as a transparent conduit. This approach challenges the traditional view held by many scholars and professionals in the field of interpreting, highlighting that remote interpreters, in reality, engage dynamically with the conversation at the level of pragmatic understanding of the discourse (via the hermeneutical processing of information), and consequently interpreting of utterances. Through this analysis, the author attempts to provide a more nuanced understanding of the remote interpreter's roles, and to advocate for a

more realistic perspective on what it means to be an objective remote interpreter.

1.3 Structure

In the Introduction of this dissertation, the author discussed the global issues which pertain to the profession of remote community interpreting, and which consequently affect the remote interpreters, and their performance. The author focused on the absence of comprehensive guidelines or regulatory frameworks governing the profession, which can present significant challenges for remote interpreters. Consequently, there are no established protocols or standards to ensure consistency, quality, and ethical practices in remote interpreting. This lack of formalised guidance can lead to inconsistent practices, performance, and potential misunderstandings.

The second chapter of the dissertation delves into the background of community remote interpreting within the broader context of Translation Studies. It traces the history of translation and interpreting, highlighting the shift in focus from the product to the process, which has elevated the status of the interpreter. The chapter acknowledges the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the development and implementation of remote infrastructure to address the increasing demand for interpreters. Furthermore, the author introduces a taxonomy of remote interpreting, detailing the various modes of communication, the environments in which remote interpreting occurs, and an examination of the different working modes used by remote interpreters. A special focus is placed on telephonic community interpreting, and the chapter explores methods for establishing connections, common configurations, and the associated advantages and disadvantages.

The third chapter presents a theoretical analysis of discourse theories and concepts relevant to remote interpreting. The author introduces and examines key elements which govern discourse, such as speech act theory, pragmatic context, conversational structure, and politeness theory. These concepts are crucial to understand how communication functions and how meaning is generated, and they provide a theoretical framework to guide remote interpreters in their practice. The author attempts to equip remote interpreters with a deeper understanding of how to analyse utterances, and to consequently have a better chance of interpreting those in remote settings.

In the fourth chapter, the author introduces key ethical considerations relevant to remote community interpreting. This chapter presents the complex ethical landscape faced by remote interpreters, underlining issues such as objectivity, impartiality, expectations of the clients and

LEP individuals, and the active role of remote interpreters in shaping interactions. The author rejects the traditional concept of impartiality, stating that it can be detrimental to remote interpreters who are actively involved in conversations, in which they are conversational parties. The chapter examines the ethical implications of various roles that remote interpreters assume and proposes a nuanced understanding of their responsibilities, aiming to draw parallels between the practical realities of remote interpreting with ethical standards. Furthermore, the author presents compensations plans and discusses the remuneration of remote interpreters offered in the Polish market.

The fifth chapter presents a theoretical discussion on telephone communications. The author examines the fundamental principles of telephone-based interactions, including the mechanics of turn-taking, the absence of visual cues, and the intentions and behaviour of conversational parties in diverse settings. The chapter then explores the implications of this theoretical framework on the practice of remote community interpreting, highlighting how these principles impact the effectiveness and challenges of interpreting over telephone link.

The sixth chapter constitutes a practical investigation into the nature of remote community interpreting calls. The research is divided into two parts, in which separate aspects of interpreted interactions have been presented. The statistical part investigates the parameters, such as the nature of the calls, their method of connection, sectoral distribution and their duration. The qualitative part examines transcripts of ten interpreted interactions. Using the theoretical framework introduced in previous chapters, it draws conclusions about how these interactions were managed and handled. The chapter finishes with a summary of findings, in which conclusions were stipulated.

The research methods and sample used in both analyses are not fully representative of real-world scenarios. However, they offer some insights into the complexities faced by remote interpreters, and the author hopes that these findings will stimulate further scholarly exploration of the field.

2 Putting Remote Community Interpreting into Context

The following chapter introduces Remote Interpreting (RI) and Remote Community Interpreting (RCI) and places both within the taxonomy of Translation Studies. A brief history of these concepts is provided to contextualise their evolution and the factors that have shaped their development over time, along with a categorisation of various modes and methods and environments used to facilitate communication between parties. As the main theme of this dissertation is the concept of telephone remote interpreting, working modes typical of the field will be presented and analysed.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the increased interest in RI and RCI during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, tackling the reasons and possible consequences of adopting such solutions.

Additionally, the chapter delves into the nature of the clients and users who utilise remote interpreting services and it examines how organisations, governments, and individuals turned to RI and RCI to maintain communication in various sectors, including healthcare, legal, educational, and business settings.

2.1 Interpreting within the Domain of Translation

Interpreting is considered a branch of Translation Studies and a translational activity in its broadest sense. It is a craft as ancient as humanity itself as it predates the concept of written translation and writing in general. The English term “interpreter” can be traced back to Latin “*interpres*”, the meaning of which is “expounder” or “explaining the meaning” (Pöchhacker, 2004).

However, in alignment with the above, interpreting is most of all a translational activity — a specific form of translation. To better comprehend the concept of interpreting and the roles an interpreter plays in the process of interpreting, one must explore the complexities of its parent category—translation—as its definition is not as clear-cut as it may appear. The reason for this is that different scholars define “translation” through the prism of their own interests and experiences, leading to a variety of statements and characterisations. The question “What is translation?” generates disparate responses. Pöchhacker (2004) conducted a synthesis and analysis of four definitions of translation based on the perspectives provided by four different scholars and the outcome is as follows:

Translation is:

(1) a process by which a spoken or written utterance takes place in one language which is intended or presumed to convey the same meaning as a previously existing utterance in another language (Rabin)

(2) the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form or whether one or both languages are based on signs (Brislin)

(3) a situation-related and function-oriented complex series of acts for the production of a target text, intended for addressees in another culture/language, on the basis of a given source text (Salevsky)

(4) any utterance which is presented or regarded as a 'translation' within a culture, on no matter what grounds (Toury)

(Pöchhacker, 2004)

Pöchhacker aptly draws the following conclusions:

1) Definition 1 focuses on the establishment of a relationship between the source and target languages or utterances and it highlights the element of the "same meaning" as a vital component of the process. The same meaning "intended" and "presumed" implies expectations and intention, which in turn, implicitly suggest a human factor.

2) Definition 2 depicts the process of translation in the form of a transfer of "ideas" via the "language" as a carrier or medium.

3) Definition 3 introduces a variety of factors, namely "situation", "culture" and it highlights the concept of a "production of a target text".

4) Definition 4 further stresses the essence of the target culture, stating that anything regarded as translation may be accepted as such within the target culture.

All the tenants presented by the four definitions within their proper dimensions, such as culture, ideas, transfer, intensions, same meaning can be applied to define interpreting as well and Pöchhacker further summarised the above-mentioned notions into his own characterisation of the process of translation:

- an activity consisting (mainly) in
- the production of utterances (texts) which are
- presumed to have a similar meaning and/or effect
- as previously existing utterances
- in another language and culture.

(Pöchhacker, 2004)

The above characterisation of the process of translation and interpreting neatly depicts the process of remote interpreting and remote community interpreting (as a form of translation) as well: remote interpreting and remote community interpreting consist predominantly (if not exclusively) of spoken utterances of the source language to be rendered (interpreted) into messages of similar effect and meaning in the target language within the target culture. Therefore the above characterisation has been adopted by the author in this dissertation as a scaffolding to be used to conduct further research and analysis.

Upon the definition of translation and therefore interpreting, one may still require to conceptualise the differences between the two domains, as the pure categorisation into the rendering of written utterances for translation and oral utterances for interpreting is not sufficiently specific, as there are subdomains within the field of interpreting, such as sight translation (or a *vista* interpreting) which would not fit into such categories. As a consequence of this imprecise division and following Kade (1968), Pöchhacker (2004) provides the property of “immediacy” as the feature which distinguishes interpreting from translation. Additionally, based on Kade’s analysis of interpreting interactions, Pöchhacker stipulates the following characterisation to differentiate the two activities:

Interpreting is a form of Translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language.

(Pöchhacker, 2004)

The same definition aptly describes remote interpreting and remote community interpreting—interpreters engage in a series of cognitive activities, including listening, understanding the source message, and mental processing before subsequently rendering it in the target language and culture based on a one-time presentation.

In order to retain precision of expression, professionals distinguish between translators, who work with written utterances, and interpreters, who specialise in interpreting spoken utterances. This distinction functions in the English language and it is maintained in the professional sphere, such as in translation agencies or by interpreters themselves. However, in more common usage, the term “translator” is often used to refer to both translators and interpreters. Similarly, in Polish, the term “tłumacz” (translator) is generally used for both professions. To add

precision, the adjectives “pisemny” (written) and “ustny” (oral) may be added in postposition to refer to a translator and an interpreter, respectively.

However, interpreting is not a one-size-fits-all operation; rather, it serves as an umbrella term for a range of interpreting activities which depend on the context, location or the method of delivery.

2.2 What is Remote Community Interpreting?

Remote Interpreting (RI), and more specifically, Remote Community Interpreting (RCI) fall into the realm of interpreting and they represent a contemporary, versatile, and revolutionary alternative to traditional forms of interpreting. To quote Braun (2015), RI “refers to the use of communication technologies to gain access to an interpreter in another room, building, town, city or country”, and it has gained substantial momentum in recent times. Its surge can be attributed to the escalating demand for multilingual communication across multiple sectors and the progress in communication technology.

Remote Community Interpreting operates as a form of community interpreting, wherein the interpreter and the client are not physically situated in the same place; instead, they interact through technological platforms such as video or telephone infrastructure (Mouzourakis, 2006). Mikkelsen (1996) defines community interpreters as those who “provide services for residents of a community, as opposed to diplomats, conference delegates, or professionals travelling abroad to conduct business.” Remote Community Interpreting (RCI) represents a constellation of technological solutions that enable these services to be provided from home. Therefore, interpreters who operate within this framework can be regarded as remote community interpreters.

At the core, RCI is centred around technology employed to serve as a conduit between parties speaking disparate languages and of remote locations. The utilisation of technological solutions liberates interpreters from the constraints of physical locations, allowing them to service a diverse array of languages and time zones via specialised software, platforms and equipment supporting real-time audio and video transmission. The result is a virtual meeting space where participants who speak different languages can interact and communicate effectively (Braun, 2015).

In praxis, the job requires remote community interpreters to be situated (in a remote environment) between (usually) two conversational parties who speak disparate languages. A remote interpreter listens to an utterance of party 1 in language A and renders it into language B.

Then a remote interpreter listens to a response (reaction) of party 2 in language B and renders it into language A. Unlike traditional simultaneous or consecutive interpreters, remote community interpreters operate (both listening and speaking) into two working languages via the platform or a remote environment. Regardless of the implemented technological solutions, RCI is centred around the concept of conversation rather than presentation. In other words, the employment of technology facilitates a dyadic or a triadic interaction (bilateral or dialogue interpreting) between the client (doctor, clerk, policeman, to name a few) and the Limited Proficiency Speaker (LPS) of the target language. A more detailed analysis of the connection methods, with a specific focus on the field of telephone community interpreting will be presented in the following subchapters to better understand the challenges and opportunities that RCI brings.

2.3 Genesis and Evolution of RI and RCI

The introduction of technology into the field of interpreting began years ago with the utilisation of audio transmission systems for simultaneous interpreting. The Nuremberg trials, held between 1945 and 1946, witnessed the first implementation of technical solutions used for simultaneous interpreting (Gaiba, 1998). The driving factor behind the implementation of audio equipment implemented on both the interpreter's and the participants' ends was simple — the goal was to allow parties to avoid the confusion of overlapping source and target languages in the auditory channel — in short, participants heard only the language they were interested in (Pöchhacker, 2004). Consequently, the process of simultaneous interpreting became more straightforward with the ever-increasing complexities of the technological solutions applied.

The further development of technological solutions within the field of interpreting was propelled by the interaction between technology, human communication needs, and ongoing transformations within societies and cultures. In global communities, communication methods evolved beyond traditional face-to-face interactions as the introduction of the telephone initiated a significant shift, which revolutionised the landscape of communication. Soon it became apparent that the use of telephone communication could bridge linguistic gaps between communities, marking the emergence of the concept of Remote Interpreting.

The development of telephone interpreting, in a field traditionally perceived as requiring in-person interaction, represented a dramatic shift that brought about a new era of long-distance communication (Kelly, 2007). The precursor to modern remote community interpreting can be linked to telephone interpretation services provided by non-professional ad-hoc speakers

proficient in multiple languages. These services addressed immediate needs such as medical emergencies for vulnerable individuals, including immigrants, refugees, or people with limited proficiency in the local language. These early instances laid the groundwork for a paradigm shift in language services and the telephone, a device meant to connect people across distances, connected individuals across languages and over geographical boundaries.

Professionally, telephone interpreting was officially introduced in Australia in 1973 (Amato et al., 2018) as a toll free service in response to the growing number of immigrants in the country. Initially, the service was established and operated in Sydney and Melbourne as an emergency point-of-contact, however, with time it became available on more general basis nationwide.

In the United States telephone interpreting was initially offered in 1981 and its introduction is credited to a team of two professionals (a police officer and a Defence Language Institute employee) who established the company Language Line Services as a charity organisation to bridge language barriers which the police faced at that time. The company quickly outgrew its original mission, however, and turned into a for-profit organisation servicing a great number of clients and spanning different fields, such as telecommunications and healthcare. Language Line Services is often considered one of the pioneering organisations that initiated the systematic and widespread provision of telephone interpreting services in a number of settings (Kelly, 2007).

The development of telephone interpreting marked a significant shift from the traditional, in-person model of interpretation and paved the way for the broader evolution of remote interpreting. Initially RCI was seen as a supplementary service, often used in emergency situations where an in-person interpreter could not be quickly deployed (Ko, 2021).

The subsequent decades witnessed advancements in technology, which further propelled remote interpreting into new dimensions. With the rise of the Internet, digital communication and globalisation, remote interpreting grew beyond the limitations of the telephone infrastructure which allowed for more features and solutions to be implemented.

The late 20th century saw the introduction of video remote interpreting (VRI), which added a visual element to the interpreting process. This advancement enabled interpreters to be able to decode and react to non-verbal cues, facial expressions, and body language, which were previously imperceptible via a telephone connection. This transformation laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive and context-rich interpreting experience. As a result, remote interpreting platforms flourished, offering customisable video layouts, language-specific channels, and interactive features that enhance the interpretation process. Such platforms allow

interpreters and participants to engage in interactions, eliminating the disadvantages of purely telephonic communication (such as the lack of the visual channel).

On a larger scale, unprecedented globalisation gave rise to the realisation that the recognition of the languages spoken by other people is very important. Connell (2006) notes that, in light of the extensive movement of people beyond their national borders, countries received communities without any historical ties and thus lacking established linguistic support systems. Consequently, government bodies and international organisations began experimenting with the implementation of RI to connect with interpreters of languages not available locally. Despite its current perception as a novel concept, significant attempts were conducted already in the 1970s, such as the Paris-Nairobi experiment by UNESCO in 1976 and the New York-Buenos Aires experiment by the United Nations in 1978. In the subsequent years, various organisations delved into remote interpreting experiments. The European Commission carried out tests in 1995 and investigated the capabilities of the ISDN video telephony for conference interpreters in 1993. Further tests were conducted by different entities, including the European Commission in 1997 and 2000, the European Parliament in 2001, and the United Nations in 1999 and 2001. In recent times, video-conferencing technology has been sporadically employed for small-scale meetings involving a limited number of participants in a point-to-point video-conferencing setup (Moser-Mercer, 2003).

The evolution of remote interpreting in community settings has also been influenced by economic factors. The cost-effectiveness of RCI, specifically in terms of reducing travel time and expenses for interpreters, makes it an attractive option for service providers whose interpreters are recruited from among freelance linguist (Gilbert et al., 2021). The removal of the physical aspect is particularly beneficial in the case of rare-language interpreters who might not be readily available to accept assignments or it might be simply too far away for them to travel to location where their assistance is required.

Currently RCI is a growing business worldwide and it has been propelled both by the human need to communicate and, naturally, by profits which the business generates. The principle behind the operation of interpreting companies is to introduce a wide array of interpreting services along with a network of interpreters to serve as many languages as possible. For example, in the United States the company Language Line Services currently offers over 200 languages. Already in 2011 in the United Kingdom, the Department for Work and Pensions offered interpreting services to facilitate communication in 140 languages. Presently the British Government cooperates with the company DA Languages (among others) which boasts its short waiting time for a remote connections (only 35 seconds), 23,000 remote interpreting bookings

per month and over 450 working languages and dialects (Internet source 1).

Nevertheless, in-person interpreting has historically been viewed more favourably and is often regarded as more professional. In the past, concerns about technical glitches, reduced visual and non-verbal cues, potential distractions and the necessity for interpreters to be IT literate led to reservations about remote interpreting. Professionals argued that these factors could hinder the interpreter's ability to provide accurate interpretation, which would in turn impact the overall quality of communication (Braun and Taylor, 2011; Pastor & Gaber, 2000). Additionally, the absence of immediate physical presence was thought to create challenges in establishing rapport and trust between the interpreter and the participants which would in turn affect the dynamics of the interaction and decrease the quality of interpreting. Wadensjö (1999) mentions a research participant who expressed the fear of being identified by an “invisible” remote interpreter as a factor deciding against the use of remote interpreting. Kelly (2007) explains that interpreting providers might have little concern for quality or might not have sufficient training or skills, however, she also adds that it is a general problem related to many fields of interpreting in the United States, not necessarily to remote interpreting. On the other hand, Donovan (2023) talks about the feelings of distancing expressed by interpreters towards a transition into the virtual environment. Additionally, scholars focus on telephone and video interpreting to better understand perceptions of their users vis-à-vis traditional form of interpreting (Fiedler, J., Pruskil, S., Wiessner, C. et al., 2022).

Over the years remote interpreting has seen substantial advancements in high-quality video, audio technology, and software reliability. Those advancements along with research on remote interpreting helped to mitigate many of the challenges initially faced by interpreters. Additionally, the global pandemic which broke out in 2019 dramatically expedited the implementation of remote interpreting beyond any expectations. This issue will be discussed in the following subchapter.

Remote community interpreting has now become a lucrative business. Despite its evolution from a niche service to a mainstream one, its core value remains rooted in its original principle: it still centres around underprivileged groups of people or individuals in predominantly intimate and private situations.

The following chapter will examine the impact of COVID-19 global pandemic on the development and adoption of RI with a particular focus on RCI.

2.4 COVID-19

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic acted as a major driving force that expedited the widespread adoption of remote interpreting to an unparalleled degree. It brought about unexpected challenges across various sectors, and impacted the way societies, communities, and businesses interacted.

With lockdowns and travel restrictions in place, the traditional model of in-person interpreting became increasingly untenable. The events industry frequently serviced by interpreters suffered a severe blow due to the pandemic, with large gatherings, shows, and conferences coming to a halt. As events, conferences and meetings cancelled or shifted to a virtual reality, a transition of simultaneous interpreters into the Internet reality occurred. In the three-year period of restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 (2020-2022), the global events industry generated a total estimated loss of USD1.9 trillion and cost the jobs of more than 16 million people worldwide (Internet source 2).

Przepiórkowska carried out a study to investigate the number of in-person interpreters who experienced a major change in the way they worked and a shift to the new reality of work (Przepiórkowska, 2021). The following visual presents a breakdown of interpreters who had worked from home before the pandemic started.

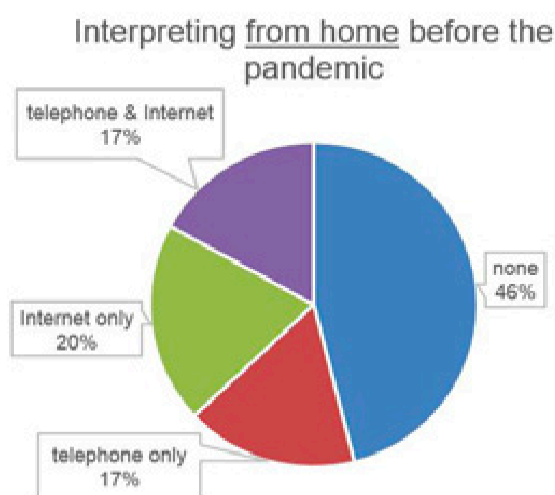


Figure 1. Interpreting from home before the pandemic

In her target group consisting of 132 interpreters the percentage of interpreters who did not work in the virtual environment before the pandemic broke out reached 46%. Over a half of the respondents did have a certain experience working remotely. The below visual provides a breakdown of the responses to evaluate the change in the working model after the pandemic

started.

Change in simultaneous interpreting caused by the pandemic

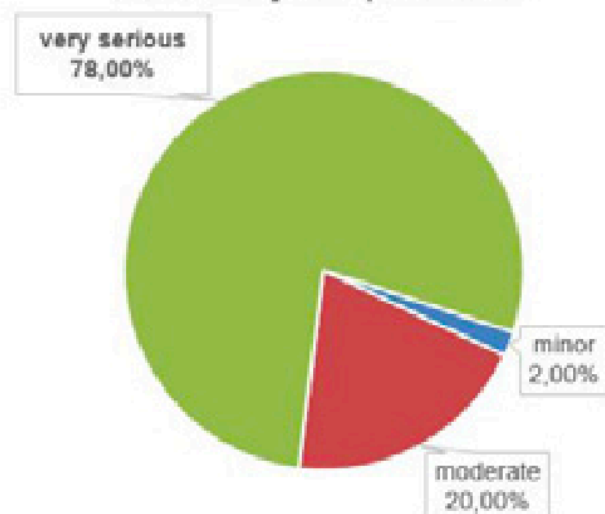


Figure 2. Change in simultaneous interpreting caused by the pandemic

As can be seen from the above graph, 78% of the respondents reported that the changes brought by the pandemic were very serious. Only 2% of interpreters indicated that the change in their working style was minor. Yet, an interesting conclusion can be drawn from another question in the study conducted by Przepiórkowska, where interpreters expressed their views on the future of remote interpreting.

Opinions on the future of RSI in respondents' professional practice

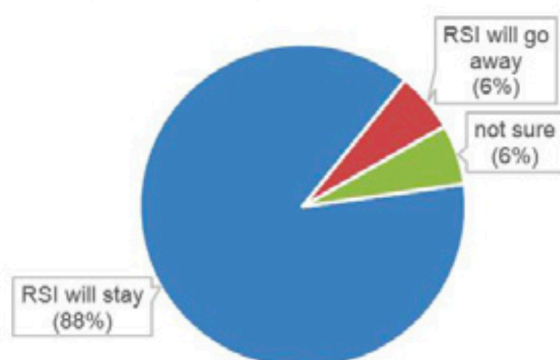


Figure 3. Opinions on the future of RSI in respondents' professional practice

A staggering 88% agreed that remote interpreting would become part of the new post-pandemic reality, while only 6% claimed that it would not become an established standard of

work.

On the other hand, businesses and organisations were forced to close physical locations and they began switching to the online mode and to service claimants on the phone. The integration of RCI into public and emergency services was equally crucial during the pandemic. As medical professionals began booking and having appointments on the phone, arrangements had to be made in order to accommodate patients who do not speak the local language. In response, organisations like Language Line Services, Language Line Solutions, Propio, Jenny and many others in the USA swiftly responded to the escalating demand for remote language assistance. Across the pond, companies such as The BigWord and DA Languages have emerged as crucial players in the landscape of remote interpreting services, connecting underprivileged communities to medical professionals. The pandemic highlighted the significance of RCI within legal and immigration settings as well. Courts and legal establishments embraced remote interpreting solutions to ensure the right to fair representation.

As the global community moves past the pandemic, the insights gained from incorporating telephone interpreting within communities are expected to influence the future of language services. Controversy and counter-intuitively, American Immigration Lawyers Association (Internet source 3) reports that in September 2023 the Government of the United States lifted temporary arrangements related to contracted telephone interpreters who are now *not* allowed to interpret for immigrants seeking asylum. As a consequence asylum-seekers are encouraged to come to their scheduled appointments with in-person interpreters.

In conclusion, RCI played an essential role in the COVID-19 pandemic, as it served as a crucial means of communication for linguistically underrepresented communities across many different sectors. The flexibility of remote interpreting platforms and a wide pool of interpreters worldwide allowed institutions to sustain essential connections with their clients, patients, students, and claimants, even in the face of social distancing challenges.

The following subchapter will present a taxonomy of RI, highlighting the variety of settings, tools and technological solutions that enable interpreting over distance.

2.5 Taxonomy of Remote Interpreting

Regardless of its relatively short tenure within the domain of Translation Studies, RI has undoubtedly established itself as an integral branch of interpreting. However, rather than attempting to categorise Remote Interpreting (RI) as a distinct subdomain within the taxonomy of interpreting, one must understand that RI is not merely a separate branch but rather an aspect

or reflection of existing categories within the main classification. RI complements the taxonomy of activities by offering an alternative to the well-established subdomains of interpreting, and so simultaneous, consecutive, liaison interpreting (and so on) become remote simultaneous, remote consecutive and remote liaison interpreting. In other words, RI should be perceived as a supplementary version of each and every subdomain within the interpreting realm.

However, to be precise and in an effort to apply a proper nomenclature within the field of RI, the taxonomy can be analysed from the point of view of the three overarching dimensions, namely: modalities, environments, and modes. An analysis of this division, presented in the following subchapter, unveils the parameters that constitute the field and helps understand the many applications and implications introduced by remote solutions. It should be noted, however, that this taxonomy is not a static framework; rather, it is a dynamic realisation of dimensions that adapt to the various contexts and needs of participants in an interpreting interaction and the available technology.

The following subchapters present the parameters which help navigate the fields of RI and RCI. The choice of modality is dictated by the nature of the interaction, the degree of non-verbal communication required, and the technological resources available. The environment plays a vital role in determining the scope of application, whether it's the intricacies of a medical diagnosis, the gravity of legal proceedings, or the global stage of a business conference, while the working mode is somewhat forced by the environment and the needs of the participants. The final subchapter will focus specifically on telephone RCI and an analysis of different modes of connection practised in telephone interpreting will be presented to better understand and contextualise the challenges typical of the process.

The provided taxonomy serves as a compass only and it offers guidance through the multifaceted realm of languages, communication, and interactions in the virtual world. However, as remote interpreting continues to evolve, especially with the onset of Artificial Intelligence (AI), more advanced technology may alter the parameters of the services mentioned. Therefore, the taxonomy should not be considered exhaustive, but rather as an indication of possible contexts.

2.5.1 Modality

Remote interpreting encompasses various modalities, each designed to facilitate communication between individuals speaking different languages and it can be sub-divided into three primary types: telephone remote interpreting (OPI), video remote interpreting (VRI) and

web-based remote interpreting (WBI). These modalities address the needs and requirements of their users, providing flexibility and accessibility in various interpreting scenarios. Their adoption and application also depend on other factors, such as the available conditions and infrastructure or the cost of implementation and they range from OPI being the easiest to implement and VRI along with WBI being more challenging.

1. **Telephone interpreting** is the simplest modality in which interpreting services are provided over the telephone (this can be both traditional phone lines as well as VOIP-based connections). OPI is by far the quickest and the least sophisticated method and it enables rapid connections between interpreters and clients via telephone link. It still remains a popular choice due to its simplicity of implementation (a regular phone line and a telephone constitute the bare minimum) and ease of use, making it suitable for various situations, including emergency calls, customer service, and telephonic medical consultations (Kelly, 2007). The simplicity and convenience of fast connections between clients and interpreters comes at a cost though, as in this case interpreting is rendered via the auditory channel only and interpreters are deprived of a great number of cues which are naturally available to interpreters who work on face-to-face basis. However, there might be situations where immediate access to an interpreter is crucial but the visual context is not necessarily required, such as emergency dispatch services or customer service queries).

2. **Video Remote Interpreting** utilises video conferencing technology to connect interpreters and participants in real-time and it allows for visual cues, facial expressions, and body language to enhance communication, making it particularly valuable in contexts where non-verbal signals are essential, such as medical consultations and legal proceedings (Braun, 2013). However, the implementation of the visual channel requires the use of a more complex infrastructure which usually consists of a computer or a terminal with a camera and a broadband Internet connection capable of supporting video conversations in real time. Hardware used for this purpose can span from simple tablets, such as the ones used by the Florida Hospital or more advanced stations with a camera, such as those used by Language Line Solutions in the United States.



Figure 4. Remote interpreting at a hospital (source: Internet)



Figure 5. Mobile interpreter (source: Internet)



Figure 6. Medical visit with a remote interpreter (source: Internet)

The employment of the video channel requires the use of a camera also on the part of the interpreter along with a presentable screen or a backdrop and a professional headset (which are usually the requirements presented to interpreters-candidates at the stage of an interview and provided free of charge by the company, however, this is not a rule). Visual channel requires the interpreter to adopt a certain dress code and follow a more standardised or ritualised set of rules (such as, for example, no typing while video interpreting or drinking water is allowed).

3. **Web-Based Interpreting Platforms** have emerged as a versatile modality of remote interpreting. There is a number of platforms (such as MS Teams, Zoom, KUDO, Interprefy, Boostlingo, Webex, Interaction) which operate via the Internet, connecting interpreters and clients to offer real-time interpreting services with additional features such as document sharing, chat options, collaborative tools, shared whiteboard, research options and resources. Web-based remote interpreting is customisable and adaptable to specific user requirements, making it suitable for a wide range of applications, from 1-to-1 meetings to large conferences. These platforms allow meeting participants to connect to a number of interpreters serving different languages via separate channels and they are usually proprietary payable platforms. This category also involves mobile applications. With the proliferation of smartphones and tablets, mobile apps have emerged as a convenient way to access remote interpreting services on-the-go (for example Jenny Interpreting). These apps and platforms provide flexibility and accessibility for both interpreters and participants.

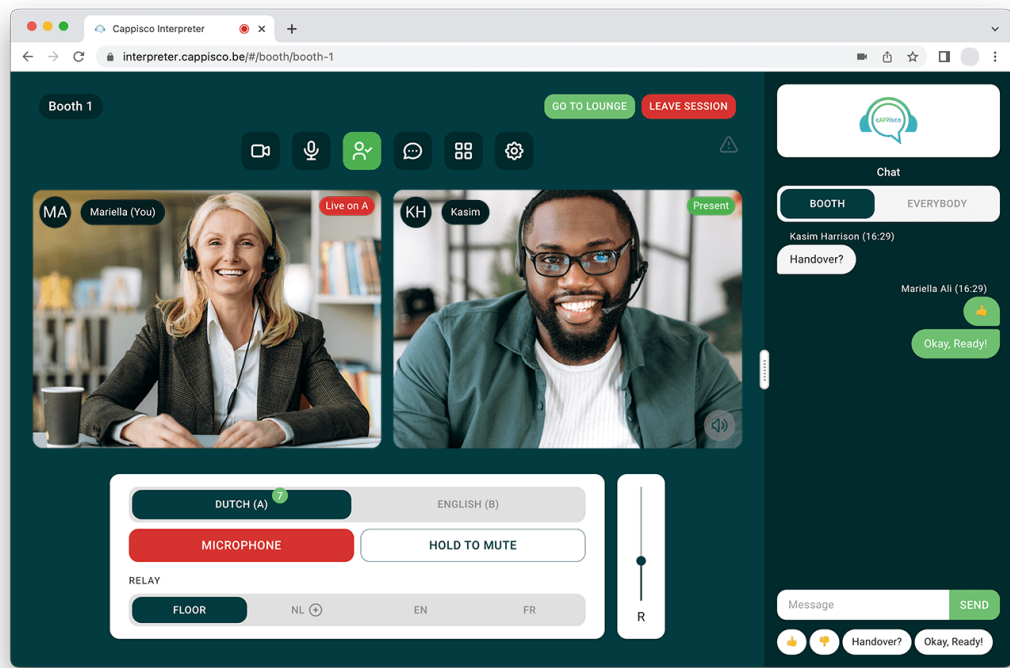


Figure 7. Remote interpreting platform

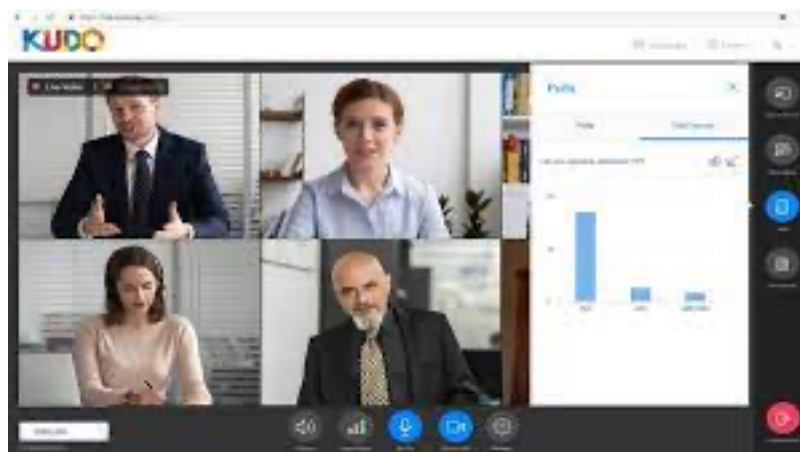


Figure 8. KUDO—remote interpreting platform

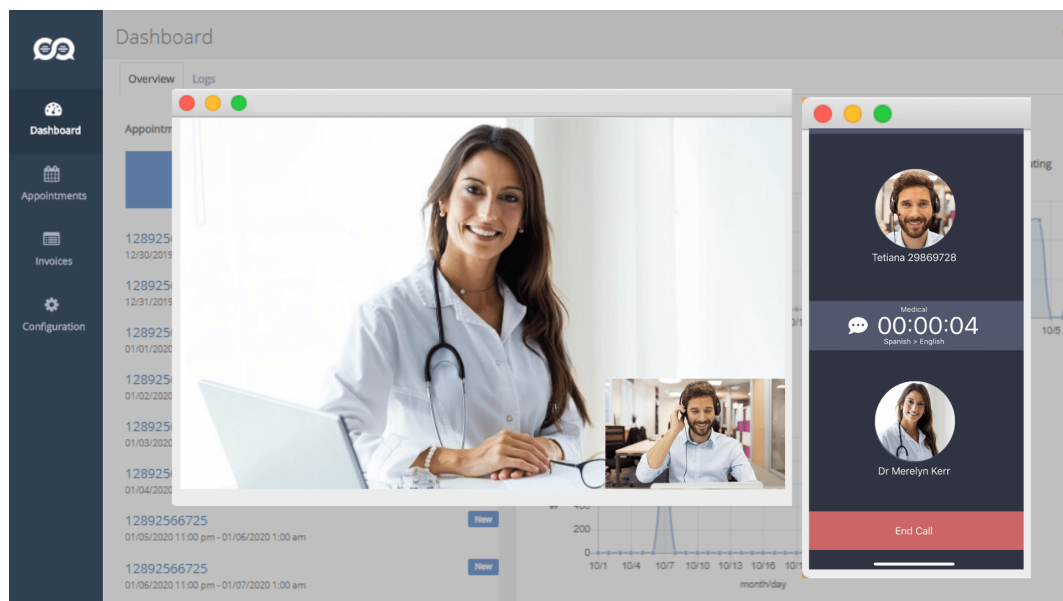


Figure 9. Remote interpreting platform



Figure 10. Jenny Interpreting—remote interpreting platform

Initially, the choice of the desired platform seems to be of the obvious nature. VRI and WBI offer unparalleled advantages and could seemingly be applied in every situation. However, more complex solutions are prone to technical glitches and connectivity issues which can cast temporary disruptions during remote interpreting sessions, potentially affecting the flow of communication which can have bitter consequences in specific settings or contexts.

2.5.2 Environment

Presently, RI is a solution adopted across a great number of settings which traditionally used to be the domains of in-person interpreting. One can assume that currently, RI is present within the same environments in which the traditional in-person interpreting was rendered, offering a number of advantages (such as availability of interpreters, reduced cost etc.) which traditional interpreting failed to deliver. A suggested breakdown into domains or sectors is relevant in countries with a large number of immigrants (such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada to name a few) but it is also becoming a factor to consider in Poland where a stable influx of immigrants has been observed over the years. A general division of the sectors where remote interpreting has been historically popular include:

1. **Healthcare sector** has been traditionally one of the most prominent domains serviced by interpreters. Nowadays RI is frequently used in hospitals, clinics, primary care surgeries, and in emergency dispatch services to facilitate communication between healthcare professionals and patients from diverse linguistic backgrounds, specifically in countries with a high number of immigrants. Interpreters facilitate communication in a wide range of medical contexts, including diagnoses, treatments, discussions, real-time procedures, psychological evaluations, and informed consent appointments, to name a few. The exact scope of these contexts is nearly impossible to define, as they vary as widely as the conditions of the patients who require interpreters. Research conducted in the United States shows that lack of linguistic support in healthcare can generate additional costs as it leads to misdiagnoses and inadequate or improper service (Masland et al., 2010).

2. **Legal sector** constitutes a plethora of settings and situations in which RI and RCI have been used, spanning from interpreting for immigrants during proceedings and hearings in courts, preliminary proceedings in countries with large diasporas of immigrants, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia to commercial transactions rendered via the assistance of a civil law notary. In the European Union the use of remote solutions (in legal proceedings) is established by the European Directive 64/2010 (Internet source 4) which sets forth the principles of interpreting in criminal proceedings across the Member States, naming remote interpreting as one of the possible choices. For instance, in Poland legal proceedings can be held online and serviced by sworn translators/interpreters at the discretion of a Judge.

3. **Business** is a domain where RI became really successful as its underpinning features, namely the ability to facilitate real-time, on-demand language support (one or multiple

languages) usually via the employment of website platforms and telephone infrastructure, were in great demand. Companies are no longer required to book interpreters or to face costs related to travelling as they can now rely on the remote solutions. RI has been also adopted by private companies in order to help their employees answer customers' queries — for instance American mobile network AT&T employ OPIs to handle calls in languages other than English, commercial banks (such as Citibank in the United States or Barclays in the United Kingdom) communicate with their clients through phone interpreters and insurance companies rely on RI in matters related to claims and accidents.

4. **Conferences and meetings** organisers use RI platforms or web-based applications which allow remote interpreters to connect to virtually any meeting, conference or webinar to facilitate real-time interpreting from anywhere in the world, provided that a venue has access to the Internet. This naturally lowers the cost of service as it eliminates travel expenses and the requirement to install expensive infrastructure (interpreting booths, audio systems). It also allows the organisers to select from among the most qualified interpreters globally without being limited to the local pool of talents. Modern interpreting solutions require no more than a headsets and a laptop on the part of the participants and a laptop on the part of the interpreter. Additionally, web-based platforms and interpreting solutions offer Artificial Intelligence capabilities which assist interpreters, analysing the spoken content and providing information in real time.

5. **Police and immigration services** have also incorporated RI solutions within their workflow. In the United Kingdom police officers use contracted OPIs on ad-hoc basis to communicate with non-English people via their mobile phone loudspeakers from locations such as streets, residential buildings or police stations. Immigration officers handle immigration hearings at the airports by means of OPI whose task is to facilitate communication between an officer and a visitor.

6. **Government bodies and social services** were one of the early adopters of RI solutions. This category includes services for benefit-seekers, disability allowances, retirement pension issues, homelessness as well as council services, VA issues, matters related to Medicaid and Medicare, IRS and HMRS to name a few. Social services are able to quickly reach an interpreter while intervening on the location without having to book one in advance. Home visits are usually handled by remote interpreters via the loudspeaker of a mobile device of a social services agent. Government bodies were instrumental in the propagation of RI services, and they were somewhat propelled to do so due to sanitary reasons during the pandemic. Presently, in the post-pandemic era, RI is still widely used by government agencies as there are simply

not enough local interpreters who could take over and satisfy the growing demand globally.

7. The above list is not exhaustive; however, it does provide a clear indication of the versatility of RI and RCI solutions. On many fronts remote interpreting offers a number of advantages which outweigh its drawbacks, specifically, the availability of remote interpreters, low cost of implementation, portability and the possibility of reaching interpreters on an ad-hoc basis.

2.5.3 Working Mode

In the field of interpreting, linguists traditionally categorise the activity into various working modes, such as consecutive, simultaneous, chuchotage, sight translation/interpreting, retour, relay interpreting and many other depending on very specific parameters. Each of these modes has distinct organisational requirements or constraints and the choice of a specific method typically depends on multiple factors such as the type of the event, nature of the content to be interpreted, location of speakers/participants (Phelan, 2001).

RI is a reflection of traditional interpreting practices and incorporates a range of modes, including the two most popular: simultaneous and consecutive modes. However, other working modes, such as liaison, relay interpreting, a vista interpreting etc. are naturally possible. While retaining the foundational principles of traditional interpreting, RI utilises advanced technology to expand its capabilities, providing participants with the possibility of utilising multiple language channels via online platforms, recording of sessions, joining channels, using additional services of a chat or file transfers etc). Many RI platforms offer data tracking and analytics, providing insights into usage patterns, interpreter performance, and audience engagement, which can inform future planning and decision-making process. RI utilises cloud-based infrastructure, allowing services to scale up or down depending on the number of participants and languages required on one hand, eliminating the necessity to install expensive interpreting equipment (such as consoles for simultaneous interpreting) on the other.

Most importantly, the greatest advantage of RI is the elimination of logistical planning required to coordinate interpreters, which is otherwise necessary for traditional interpreting.

On the other hand, given the nature of interpreting encounters, RCI focuses predominantly on consecutive interpreting, especially in OPI and VRI contexts. Consecutive interpreting helps to emphasise dialogues between participants in both dyadic and triadic interactions. This approach fosters a more natural flow of conversations between parties, contrasting with the structured presentation format typical of simultaneous interpreting. A key advantage of RCI lies in the interpreters' ability to work from their preferred locations, such as home offices,

reducing the stress and cost typically associated with the interpreting process (Fantinuoli, 2018).

The following subchapter examines connection methods typically employed within the field of telephone RCI to better understand the challenges underpinning the profession.

2.5.4 Mode of Connection in Telephone RCI

The following subchapter will analyse diverse methods of establishing interpreting connections within the realm of telephone community interpreting. Understanding various practices and applied solutions is crucial, as each alternative presents its own drawbacks and difficulties, which impose specific working conditions on a remote interpreter.

One of the most popular methods (based on the practical investigation presented in the following chapters) is a 3-way connection, most probably due to the ease of implementation of the applied solution. This method involves the remote interpreter, the client, and the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) speaker all being in separate locations. A typical example of this configuration could be a remote medical consultation. For instance, a General Practitioner (GP) might dial an interpreting service to establish a connection with a remote interpreter. Subsequently, the GP dials the patient, who could be located at home, thereby creating a three-way conference connection. A visual representation is presented below.

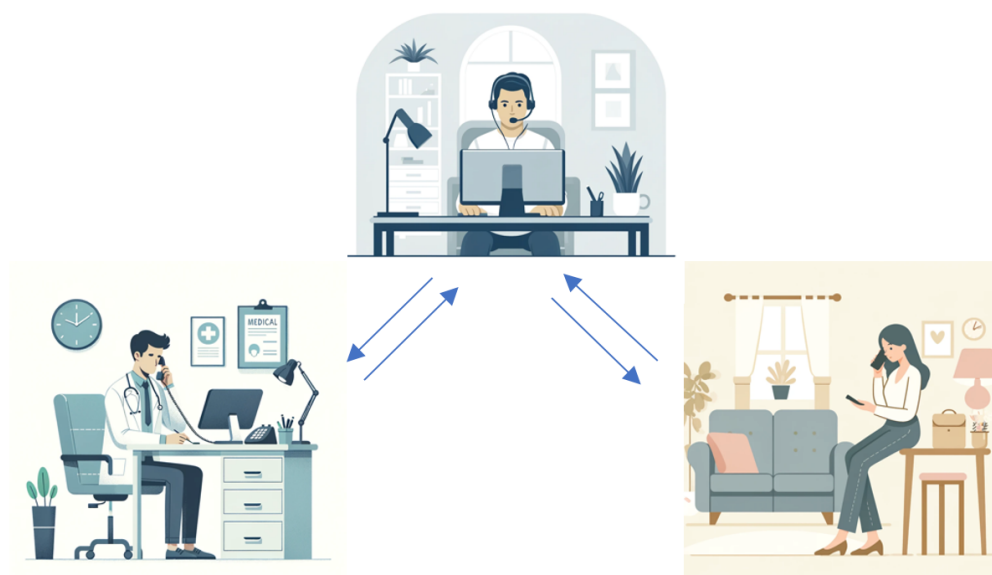


Figure 11. Typical scenario involving the use of a 3-way conference connection — all parties are located in separate places.
Image generated by AI with prompts supplied by the author

Apart from the obvious advantages of remote interpreting, an interaction via this medium

can be beneficial for a number of reasons for all parties. Specifically, the lack of specialised equipment, as both parties (medical professional as well as the LEP patient) use a fixed or a mobile telephone. No specialised training is required, as communication is conducted over regular telephone lines using standard handset devices that are already used in everyday situations. Another advantage is the cost of implementation, or rather lack thereof. There is no requirement for any software of application to use and communication is rendered over existing infrastructure. However, there are multiple disadvantages to using such a method, quality of the call being the most significant one. Regular phone lines can often suffer from poor audio quality, which includes issues like static, echoes, and cross-talk. Such problems can have severe consequences, such as:

- Difficulty in understanding speech: static and cross-talk can make it challenging to discern what is being said, particularly for interpreters who rely on clear audio to accurately interpret speech. This can lead to frequent requests for repetition, slowing down the conversation, disrupting the turn-taking sequencing and the flow of the interaction. It may be frustrating for both the client and the LEP individual to repeat the same piece of information to a remote interpreter.

- Fatigue and strain: poor audio quality, especially echoes and overlapping voices, can cause significant listener fatigue. Interpreters may experience increased cognitive strain as they attempt to focus and decipher spoken words, potentially reducing the overall effectiveness of the interpreting session.

- Increased chances of errors: with compromised audio clarity, the risk of misinterpretation rises. Important details may be lost or misunderstood, which could lead to errors in interpreting, potentially resulting in miscommunication or incorrect information being conveyed.

- Impacts on confidentiality: there is no control over how the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) individual uses their device, particularly whether a loudspeaker is in use. Since the parties are not in the same location, this setup poses a risk in sensitive settings such as legal or medical environments. The use of a loudspeaker could lead to sensitive information being overheard by third parties, potentially breaching confidentiality. This lack of control over the communication environment can significantly compromise the integrity and privacy of the interpreted information.

- Additionally, conference calls over regular phone lines are susceptible to drops in connection due to multiple reasons (for instance, battery or service signal on the part of the LEP

individual) Disconnections can disrupt the flow of interpretation and require time to re-establish connections, potentially leading to lost context. Delays can sometimes hinder the clarity and flow of interpretation. Since all parties are connected via telephone, a drop in connection on the remote interpreter's end can leave the client and the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) individual unable to communicate with each other. Such a scenario would necessitate finding a new remote interpreter, potentially causing delays and disrupting the flow of communication.

The second most popular method employs a loudspeaker. A typical scenario would involve two separate locations: the first being the site of the remote interpreter and the second, the location of the client, such as a doctor's office. Such a typical scenario has been presented on the illustration below.

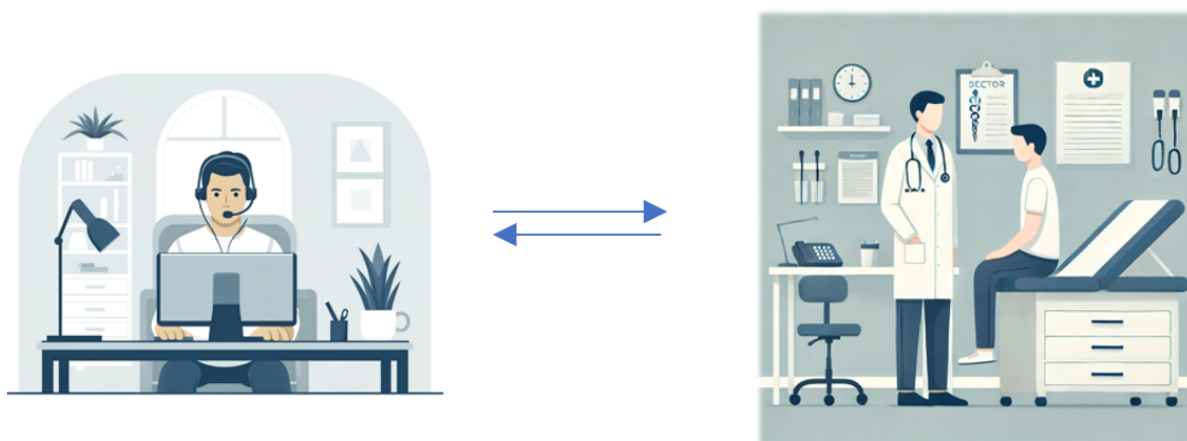


Figure 12. Typical scenario involving a medical professional and an LEP patient using a loudspeaker — remote interpreter is at a separate location. Image generated by AI with prompts supplied by the author

This setup enables the interpreter to broadcast their voice through the loudspeaker, which allows all parties present at the client's location to hear the interpreting without the need for additional equipment. This method is particularly beneficial in settings where multiple listeners are involved and where direct, person-to-person communication is essential for the context of the discussion (for instance, a panel of doctors or social workers). It can also promote a more natural interaction as the client and the LEP individual are in the same location. However, there are multiple drawbacks to such a configuration:

- **Confidentiality:** the confidentiality of the conversation may be compromised as the broadcast nature of a loudspeaker allows anyone within earshot to overhear the discussion. This can be particularly problematic in sensitive environments such as medical consultations or benefit-related meetings, where privacy is crucial. Another point to consider is the control over the environment — a remote interpreter has no means of finding out who is within listening range of the loudspeaker.

- Audio quality: depending on the acoustics of the location and the quality of the loudspeaker, there may be challenges in ensuring that the audio is clear and intelligible for everyone involved. Background noise, echoes, or poor sound projection can affect the clarity of the interpreting, which may result in misunderstandings or the need for frequent repetitions. Speakers at a distance may also experience issues related to poor quality or low volume as usually speakerphone systems have limited range of volume, specifically, if a plexiglass has been used between a claimant and a clerk or GP (a practice common during the COVID-19 pandemic).

- Interaction with the loudspeaker: while a loudspeaker usefully facilitates one-way transfer of voice, it may not support bidirectional communication as effectively. For instance, in scenarios where patients are positioned at a distance from the loudspeaker, an interpreter may encounter difficulties understanding their responses. Loudspeakers generally have limited capabilities in picking up voices from afar. This limitation can significantly hinder the flow of conversation, especially in interactive or dynamic discussions where quick and clear responses are crucial.

Regardless of its drawbacks, a loudspeaker is widely used in remote interpreting applications as it creates a notion of a natural interaction, in which a client and an LEP individual are located in the same place and seemingly enjoy a regular face-to-face conversation.

The third method is a “3-way personal call”, a designation coined by the author to an interaction in which a remote interpreter is present at one location, while the client and the LEP individual are both present at another, yet they both use their handheld devices to communicate. A visual representation of such a scenario is presented by the following illustration.

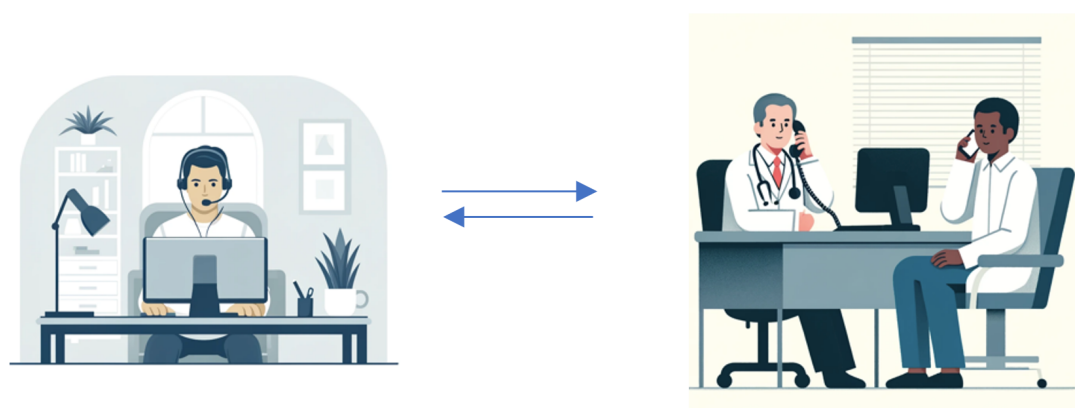


Figure 13. Typical scenario involving a 3-way conference in which an LEP patient and a medical professional are at the same location. Image generated by AI with prompts supplied by the author

This setup is commonly used in environments like Job Centres and provides several benefits. Specifically, this arrangement facilitates a more natural, face-to-face conversation as the parties can maintain eye contact while the interpreter is not physically present in the room. Additionally, unlike a loudspeaker system, this method ensures privacy for both parties. The use of handheld devices guarantees that each message is delivered to the intended recipient and that no unauthorised parties will intercept the message. However this configuration has a number of disadvantages:

- Requirement to have a mobile phone: an LEP individual must possess an operational mobile device with a charged battery which a client can call at a scheduled appointment time.
- Service signal: appointments may occur in areas or buildings with poor reception, potentially challenging remote interpreters who might not hear the LEP individual clearly.
- Echo: Proximity of two receivers/transmitters (the client's and the LEP individual's devices) may cause interference. A remote interpreter could hear the client's voice through the LEP individual's receiver in the form of an echo.

This mode of communication may seem straightforward, given the widespread ownership of mobile devices today. However, it might feel unnatural to conduct a face-to-face appointment where communication occurs through a telephone.

A far less popular arrangement is a 4-way call — a conference connection in which there are three parties and a remote interpreter. A typical scenario is presented in the illustration below.

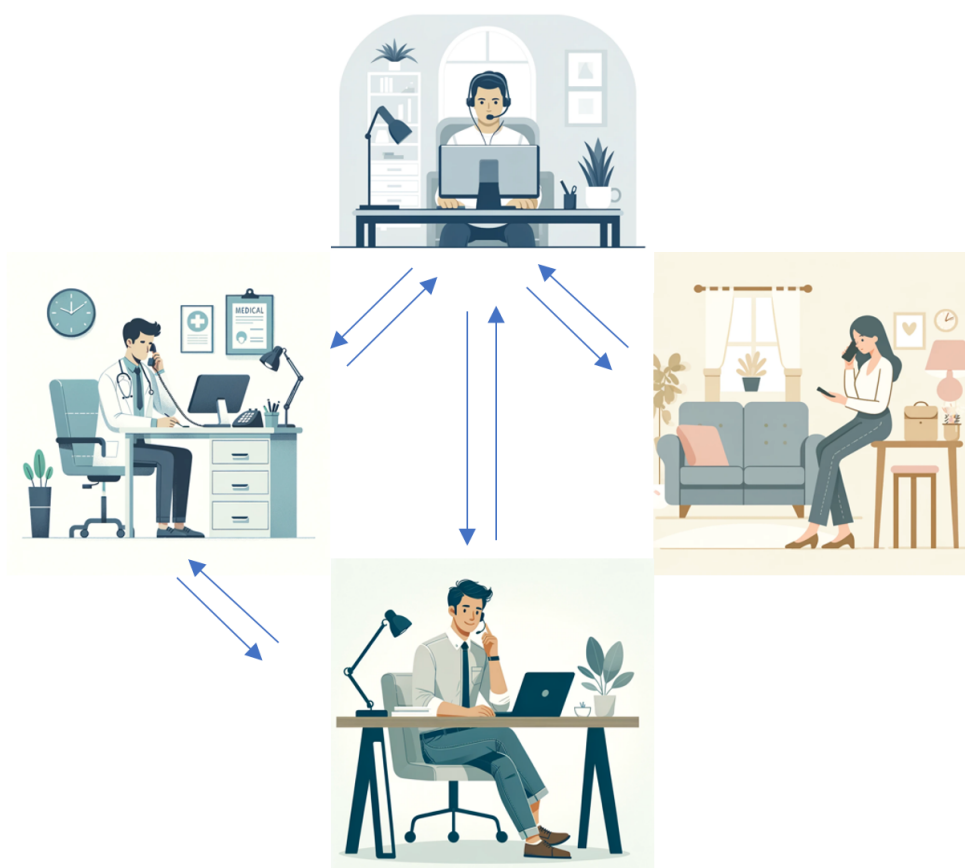


Figure 14. Typical scenario involving a 4-way conference where an LEP individual is connected to two other professionals (two distinct clients) at different locations and a remote interpreter. Image generated by AI with prompts supplied by the author

In this scenario, one client initiates a call to the interpreter, while another client (possibly from a different agency or representing a separate office) is also involved. Both speak to an LEP individual through a remote interpreter. This arrangement requires strong management and monitoring of turn-taking by a remote interpreter, as it can be confusing for an LEP individual to determine who is speaking and when. This is especially true in situations where two clients converse directly with each other without involving the remote interpreter. Also such system may pose a challenge to a remote interpreter as the focus on the management of the flow of interaction might be strenuous — a remote interpreter must juggle multiple speakers whose speech might be overlapping to ensure that misunderstandings are minimised. This requires high levels of concentration and adaptability, potentially leading to interpreter fatigue if not properly managed.

The following method is a popular choice in locations without a loudspeaker or in situations where interpreting was not arranged prior to an appointment and it involves passing the telephone receiver between parties. Such a scenario is presented on the illustration below.

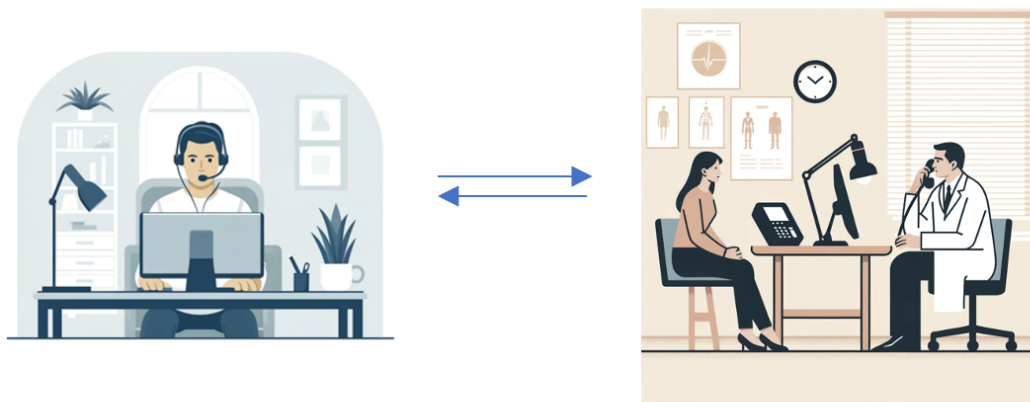


Figure 15. A typical scenario which involves a remote interpreter connecting with a client and an LEP individual, where both parties interact individually through the same telephone receiver, which is handed back and forth. Image generated by AI with prompts supplied by the author.

This method allows each party to speak directly into the telephone, thereby eliminating the necessity to utilise any type of sophisticated equipment and the risk of any third party overhearing the conversation. However, it also presents challenges, as it can disrupt the flow of communication and extend the duration of the meeting. Specifically, the constant passing of the receiver may lead to confusion and make it difficult for the interpreter to maintain a consistent thread of dialogue. Specifically, such a model would impose an artificial pause required by the act of passing of the receiver, which in turn would disrupt the natural flow of a conversation. A remote interpreter (who works from a separate location) may not know when the handheld receiver has been passed and might inadvertently address comments to the wrong person or miss key information during transitions. To mitigate these issues, it is essential that clear communication protocols of turn-taking be established, particularly, to ensure that each party verbally confirms when they have received the receiver and are ready to speak. Such a technique would help a remote interpreter understand who is taking a turn at each moment, but it would certainly alter the perception of having a natural conversation.

In summary, the choice of connection method in telephone interpreting scenarios plays a crucial role in determining the efficiency and quality of communication. Each method has its inherent advantages and limitations, which must be carefully analysed and taken into account to optimise the interpreting experience for all parties involved, especially for a remote interpreter. In the author's opinion, a 3-way call often represents the most efficient arrangement in terms of privacy and sound quality, provided that face-to-face appointments are not necessary.

The following chapter will examine the various sources of financing for RCI to better

understand the different models of service provision to its end users—underprivileged individuals.

2.6 Who Pays for the Service

The extensive integration of RCI services has transformed access to public services and facilitated communication in the face of linguistic differences. It is important to understand, however, that such services are not free of charge, as they require a robust telecommunications infrastructure in place. There must be entities that cover the cost of the technology and operations involved, as the final recipients of the service are often groups of people who are unable to pay for it themselves. These entities can include profit and non-profit companies or many other different business models that recognise the importance of providing accessible communication to underserved communities. By subsidising interpreting services, they ensure that essential interpreting support is available to those who need it most, promoting inclusivity and equitable access to information across various sectors.

In this chapter, an investigation has been conducted into the entities responsible for financing RCI, as well as the diverse financial models utilised to sustain the service:

1. **Government agencies:** public institutions, healthcare facilities, legal systems, and social services, often allocate funds for remote interpreting services to adhere to legal obligations. For instance, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act in the United States mandates language access for limited-English proficient individuals, prompting government grants and subsidies to support remote interpreting initiatives in these sectors (Internet source 5). In the United Kingdom, public services such as His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions (which governs benefits and operates a network of benefit-related offices nationwide), and local councils have an obligation to provide their claimants with a remote interpreter.

2. **Private enterprises:** multinational corporations, businesses operating globally, customer-centric companies, and most notably, interpreting agencies, operating both nationally and internationally, invest in remote interpreting services to facilitate communication among members of different language groups. These entities frequently invest in technological solutions, such as interpreting platforms or telephonic infrastructure and outsource their services to other companies or governmental services.

3. **Healthcare institutions:** hospitals, clinics, GP surgeries and other medical facilities invest in remote interpreting to bridge language gaps between healthcare providers and patients. In the United States costs are often covered by private companies, such as Language Line

Solutions, Propio, LifeLine Languages and many others or directly by healthcare facilities (for example Massachusetts General Hospital, Los Angeles Hospital), especially in regions with a substantial linguistically diverse patient population. Alternatively, they can be financed by the National Health Service (in the United Kingdom) via many local private businesses (translation/interpreting agencies) who provide and service the necessary equipment and infrastructure. The allocation of interpreting contracts to providers of interpreting services is based on a public tender in the United Kingdom. The recent tenders for the provision of translation and interpreting services for the National Health Service and the Department of Work and Pensions was won by a Manchester-based company DA Languages.

4. **Legal systems:** courts, law enforcement agencies, and legal aid organisations allocate resources for remote interpreting to safeguard the rights of individuals with limited proficiency of the local language. Legal budgets and government funding are channelled to ensure interpreters are available during legal proceedings, ensuring fair representation. In the European Union the European Directive 64/2010 stipulates that the member states should cover the cost of interpreting. In Poland, parties who require interpreting during court sessions are allocated a sworn translator/interpreter, and the cost is covered by the State Treasury.

As it can be observed, the financing of RCI involves an array of entities and in a great number of cases RCI is offered to underprivileged individuals at no cost. However, there are settings where it is not always available and the inability to communicate verbally in an efficient manner poses a series of threats and risks, placing such individuals at a disadvantage and keeping them disconnected from the public services. Alternative solutions involve a contracted in-person interpreter who can assist a member of such a community in order to facilitate communication. The cost of such service renders it unrealistic in many cases and varies among companies. In the United Kingdom an hour of a contracted on-site interpreter can oscillate around 40–50 GBP or even more. Another solution is to request assistance from a friend or a family member who speaks the local language. Studies have shown that language brokering is very popular among friends, family members and among children, who speak the local language (Nielsen et al., 2020). Although patients are usually satisfied with the performance of their family members due to factors such as trust and relationship (Hilder et al., 2017), there is evidence that burdening child language brokers with matters of such complexity might be detrimental to their cognitive and emotional development (Kim et al., 2017; Kam & Lazarevic, 2014). Based on limited number of encounters, Rosenberg et al., (2008) concluded that professional interpreters facilitate information transfer, whereas family members often assume the role of a third conversational participant, expressing their views instead of those of the

patient or the doctor. Additionally, the assistance of untrained family members or friends or unfamiliar with the art of interpreting may lead to mistranslations. However, Harris and Sherwood (1978) postulate that no specific training is required and all bilinguals have some level of translation competence. They promote the idea of “natural translation”, stating that “translating is coextensive with bilingualism”. On the other hand, there are scholars who claim family members who act as language brokers can have a positive impact on the quality of communication, provided all the parties of an interaction are aware of the risks (Ho, 2008 and Hilder et al., 2017). Yet, this territory is somewhat uncharted, as little research has been conducted in the field, and definitely more interest should be devoted to this area. RCI is one of the ways to address these issues by providing professional interpreting services rendered by a wide (even international) pool of interpreters to ensure accurate communication.

However, RCI is a business where one party pays and the other benefits. Although the service is offered without charge to underprivileged individuals and it is centred around helping vulnerable people, it remains a commercial enterprise driven by financial gains. A report released in 2023 (Hickey & Hynes, 2023) shows the earnings of the top 34 global providers of interpreting services (mostly remotely but also onsite and remotely) for 2022 calculated in millions of USD. The following is an extract of the report, showing the top ten performers.

Rank	Company Name	Country of HQ	2022 Interpreting Revenue (USD million)	% of Overall Revenue in 2022	Core Interpreting Business	Main Sectors
1	LanguageLine Solutions	United States	778.6	86	remote	healthcare, government, banking, insurance, hospitality
2	Sorenson Communications	United States	453.8	55	remote and onsite	sign language, VRS, public sector
3	AMN Language Services	United States	213	98,6	remote	healthcare
4	CyraCom International	United States	172.1	97	remote	healthcare, public sector

5	Propio Language Services	United States	73.7	76,6	remote	healthcare, government
6	thebigword	United Kingdom	63.3	75	onsite and remote	public sector
7	UpHealth-Martti	United States	60.5	97	remote	healthcare
8	Certified Languages International	United States	54.2	98	remote	healthcare, insurance, call centre, banking & finance
9	Global Talk	Netherlands	52.3	100	remote	public sector, healthcare
10	United Language Group	United States	47	49	remote	healthcare, insurance, utilities

Table 1. Interpreting providers—revenue in 2022 (Nimdzi report)

As it can be inferred from the above chart, the revenue generated by global providers of interpreting services is very high. The top ten earners work in the public and healthcare sectors, which attests to the fact that providing remote interpreting platforms and solutions for community interpreting is a lucrative business. It is very probable that this trend will continue.

Another point to consider is the payment for remote interpreters, as they generally do not work on a volunteer basis. A more detailed investigation into this matter will be presented in the subchapter devoted to ethical considerations.

2.7 Conclusion

Remote interpreting, and its subbranch remote community interpreting, are relatively young branches of the field of interpreting, yet they have gained increasing popularity over the years. The advancements in technology have played a significant role in this growth, as they provide interpreters with platforms and tools to offer their services in real-time. The versatility and applicability of RI turned it into a viable alternative to traditional methods of interpreting.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote interpreting solutions and helped to reshape the way it is perceived by both the professionals and potential clients. Consequently, RI has transitioned from a niche service to a mainstream solution, embraced by

both public institutions and private enterprises.

Nowadays, RI enjoys a wide range of clients, spanning from businesses and institutions to underprivileged individuals. Businesses and multinational corporations leverage remote interpreting solutions to facilitate communication and enhance customer satisfaction. Public institutions, such as government agencies and healthcare providers, use remote interpreting to ensure effective service delivery to non-native speakers, who, most probably, might not be able to afford other types of linguistic assistance.

However, despite its many benefits, RI and RCI are not without challenges. Among significant concerns are ensuring the reliability of technological solutions and maintaining high-quality interpreting without in-person interaction. Technical glitches, reduced visual and non-verbal cues, and potential distractions can affect both the remote interpreter and the process of interpreting remote interpreting sessions. As the field continues to evolve, it is crucial to address these issues through ongoing research to establish best practices, and to ensure that remote interpreting is a reliable tool. Typical concerns related to remote community interpreting, as presented both in theory and practice, will be discussed in the following parts of this dissertation.

The following chapters will focus exclusively on remote community interpreting (RCI) as it is the main topic of this dissertation. The next section will explore vital elements that come into play in RCI, such as the pragmatic considerations of interpreting deprived of the visual channel and the phenomenon of politeness. These aspects will be examined to better understand the unique implications and requirements imposed on remote interpreters who work in this field.

3 Discourse Theory

In linguistics, broadly speaking, the term “discourse” refers to more than just individual utterances. It investigates how such utterances come together in a given context in real-world scenarios. Discourse analysis goes beyond the superficial structure of a language and its intrinsic elements, such as syntax, morphology or semantics. It considers the setting in which spoken and written messages unfold (Schiffrin, 1994). It, therefore, looks at language in texts and conversations, focusing on its role in various contexts to convey meanings and achieve communication objectives (Gee, 2014). The pragmatic approach provides a perspective on communication and it investigates how language is used across situations. It also helps us understand how meanings are produced in specific contexts.

From the point of view of interpreting, and specifically, RCI, the analysis of discourse plays an essential role in understanding the actual meaning behind spoken messages rendered by parties in a conversation or an interpreting interaction. As utterances produced by interpreters or interpreted parties do not exist in a void, proper understanding of the theory of discourse and their implications can provide remote interpreters with vital tools to ensure successful communication between parties.

The author claims that telephone interpreters must possess a deep understanding of both the linguistic nuances and cultural contexts of the source and target languages. This expertise is crucial, particularly given the constraints typical of telephone interpreting, such as the absence of visual cues, limited metalinguistic information, and often minimal to no context or briefing about the nature of an interaction. Only equipped with this knowledge can interpreters effectively and accurately convey the intended meaning of the utterances within these interactions.

This chapter aims to explore the intricate relationship between discourse, culture, context and politeness. A study of these elements can lead to a better understanding of how they affect and shape the meaning within English and Polish telephone interpreting interactions, where communication occurs without the benefit of the visual channel.

3.1 Theories of Discourse

The analysis of discourse is a relatively new approach to linguistic research and multiple theories have been established to explain it or to give it a formal framework. In the following chapters, selected aspects directly relevant to remote interpreting interactions will be examined to better understand the challenges that telephone interpreters may encounter.

Discourse theories stipulate that language is not merely a vessel to convey information, but rather it constructs social realities and identities. As discourse refers to a unit of language greater than a single sentence or an utterance, it investigates how such units are used in communicative scenarios. To that end, the study of discourse extends beyond traditional approaches of grammatical, syntactical or semantical research and it explores the domains of context, meaning, social interaction and culture. It is a methodological approach which provides a set of tools to examine language in use and reveals how linguistic forms contribute to the construction of meaning within a particular context. In other words, discourse analysis looks at the language in actual texts or conversations and it is centred around how languages function in different settings to produce meaning and render communication possible (Gee, 2014).

The analysis encompasses a set of approaches and methodologies whose aim is to understand how language functions in social interactions, how it is used to convey, construct, and negotiate meanings, and how it relates to the social identities and relationships of the speakers (Schiffrin, 1994). Central to discourse analysis is the concept of “discourse” itself, which refers not just to spoken or written language, but to the broader social practices and structures that language both shapes and is shaped by (Fairclough, 1992). This includes the examination of language at various levels — from phonetics, syntax, and semantics to the pragmatics of language use in context (Yule, 1996).

One key area within discourse analysis is the study of conversation, where linguists examine structures and patterns of spoken utterances. This includes the analysis of turn-taking, topic management, and the use of discourse markers (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Another important area is critical discourse analysis (CDA), initially developed by Fairclough (1995), which seeks to understand how discourse is used to exert power and control and to maintain those, and it often focuses on political or media utterances or linguistic samples (Van Dijk, 1993). CDA investigates how language choices can reflect and perpetuate social inequalities and ideologies (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Discourse analysis, therefore, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language is used within a particular context. It offers insights into not only what is said but also how it is said, and the broader social and cultural contexts. By examining language in use, from a practical or pragmatic point of view, remote interpreters can investigate the speakers, their underlying intentions, and they can offer explanations for the success or failure of a communicative interaction from a pragmatic standpoint. The following chapter sheds more light on the significance of pragmatics within the realm of remote interactions.

3.2 Pragmatic Approach to Discourse

As already established in the previous chapter, a pragmatic analysis of discourse (both written and spoken) can deepen our comprehension of the way a language is used and why it is used. From the perspective of telephone interpreters, it offers linguists a chance to explore the way a language operates in everyday life, its effectiveness in achieving communication goals and the management of personal relationships within social interactions (Verschueren, 1999).

This practical approach does not focus exclusively on the spoken or written utterances; it also considers the unspoken elements, the manner of expression, and the possible impact these have on the speakers, whether they are listeners or readers or participants to an interpreting interaction. This is where pragmatics differs from semantics, which focuses on the meaning of sentences or utterances without their reference to the context in which they have been produced. Pragmatics can be juxtaposed with sociolinguistics, however the latter deals with a language and a society, while the former investigates contexts (Jakubowska, 1999).

The pragmatic perspective on discourse analysis presents a framework which can be utilised to grasp the complexities of the way that languages are used in actual communicative situations. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of fundamental principles of pragmatics, including speech acts, conversational implicatures, and the roles of context, culture, and politeness, is crucial for telephone interpreters. These elements serve as essential tools that assist them in the process of generating meaning and navigating the complexities of remote interactions. They will be presented in detail in the following chapters.

3.2.1 Implicatures

Implicatures play a significant role in the effective understanding of utterances as they involve inferences that listeners make based on what is said and the context in which it is said (Grice, 1975). This idea is especially relevant in RCI, where meaning is very often suggested and not directly expressed. Put simply, implicatures rely on the shared assumption between speakers and listeners that their understanding extends beyond the literal meanings or their utterances. Grice introduced the Cooperative Principle, which states that speakers typically aim to be informative, truthful, relevant, and clear in their communication. However, frequently, the rules of the Cooperative Principle are violated and the intended or implied meaning differs from their explicit words, giving rise to implicatures and very often to misunderstandings.

Grice distinguishes between two types of implicatures: conversational and conventional. Conversational implicatures are not part of the literal meaning of the utterance but are derived

from the context and the assumption that the speaker is following the Cooperative Principle. Conventional implicatures, on the other hand, are tied to specific words or phrases and are part of the meaning of these expressions (Levinson, 1983).

In RCI, an interpreter is often forced to rely on the implied meanings of what is said, not just on the literal words from the spoken utterance. The understanding and a subsequent rendition of the utterance into another language accurately in real time is dependent on the interpreter's ability to detect such implicatures. This task is ever so challenging given the absence of visual cues and the necessity to rely on verbal communication alone. Telephone interpreters are unable to see the facial expression to infer any hidden meaning or feel the tension in the room as the interaction is taking place in a remote environment. The reliance on implicatures, and the ability to recognise those is essential because a great portion of communication is conveyed implicitly (Wadensjö, 1998).

Given that implicatures are often shaped by cultural and language norms, an interpreter's failure to recognise those can result in cultural misinterpretations. This is especially vital in cross-cultural communication, as what is implied in one culture may not hold the same meaning in another (Clyne, 1995). Another essential aspect to consider, specifically from the point of view of telephone interpreters is that implicatures can vary between languages. In other words, what is literal and self-explanatory in one language may as well be implied or left unsaid in another language. This is why it is essential for remote interpreters to be sensitive to and aware of the nuances of both the languages and cultures they work with, and to understand the extent to which implicatures are shared between conversational parties. Failure to achieve those goals might lead to misunderstandings, especially in contexts where unspoken assumptions are crucial for understanding the complete message.

Another important aspect to consider in the context of RCI is that failing to recognise implicatures, or simply overlooking them, can heighten the cognitive burden and stress for the interpreter. This is because they may find it challenging to comprehend conversations that rely heavily on meanings implied rather than on what is explicitly stated (Roziner & Shlesinger, 2010).

The following subchapter will investigate the concept of pragmatic context and the constraints it imposes on remote telephone interpreters.

3.2.2 Pragmatic Perspective on Context

The significance of context in pragmatics and, most importantly, in conversational and translation/interpreting practice cannot be overstated. Pragmatic context is made up of an entire

collection of factors to consider, from the most tangible ones, such as the immediate physical setting and participants in a conversation to broader and more abstract elements, such as the social and cultural backgrounds of the speakers. Context shapes the way that utterances are produced and interpreted, making it a key consideration in the study of pragmatics. Gumperz (1982) highlighted the critical role of contextualisation cues, including intonation, gestures, and language choice, in guiding the interpretation of utterances. Building on this, Tannen (1989) studied the variations in conversational styles across different cultures, examining how elements like indirectness, formality, and the use of silence can differ and affect understanding.

However, from a pragmatic perspective, the concept of context involves not only the words and their usage but also the situation, cultural background, and social factors that significantly affect how we understand and interpret language. All of these factors contribute to or create the cultural and the linguistic backdrop of an interaction. Sensitivity to these aspects is an indispensable trait for successful telephone interpreting interactions. The absence of visual context, body language, or environmental cues requires remote interpreters to rely heavily on the pragmatic context surrounding actual utterances produced by the parties involved. The understanding of the cultural and social background of the speakers can help them comprehend an interaction and interpret it properly (Wadensjö, 1998). This is so, because each culture has its own style of expression, and what's seen as polite or straightforward in one culture might come across simply differently in another. For example, it is common knowledge that British people are less direct and more polite. This must be taken into consideration while interpreting into Polish which requires a more direct approach. Remote interpreters need to be aware of such cultural differences to ensure their communication fits culturally to be accurate (Clyne, 1995).

During an interpreting interaction, it is the role of a telephone interpreter to pick up on subtle linguistic nuances and variations in speech that may indicate sarcasm, politeness, urgency, or other contextual clues which underpin an utterance (Pöchhacker, 2004). The challenge is further increased as remote interpreters frequently operate in high-pressure situations like legal, medical, or emergency contexts, where any miscommunication can lead to significant repercussions. In these environments, grasping the pragmatic context is crucial not only for clear communication but also to ensure precision and to trigger a suitable reaction in the listener.

The following subchapter will investigate speech acts, another key element of pragmatics, essential for the successful understanding of utterances, particularly in telephone-interpreted interactions.

3.2.3 Speech Acts

One of the instrumental aspects of pragmatics which underpins the analysis of discourse is the interpretation and the application of speech acts. Speech acts are a consequence of the human quest to discover the true functions of the human language, and they were initially developed by Austin (1962) and then further elaborated by Searle (1969). It is essential for interpreters, specifically remote interpreters to become aware of the speech acts as they classify the way in which a language is used from a pragmatic point of view, detached from the sheer notion of semantics or syntax. Speech acts present us with a concept in which the utterances and their constituent words become much bigger than simply utterances. They are actions that perform acts like assert, question, request, command, demand or apologise to name a few. This realisation is vital as in a great number of cultures, speakers tend to hint at what they mean instead of saying it openly, which can make it tricky for interpreters to understand properly the meaning or the intention of an utterance (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Initially, Austin (1962) classified speech acts into three distinct categories:

1. **Locutionary Acts** involve the fundamental act of speaking, which includes producing sounds, words, and sentences that hold meaning in a structured linguistic utterance. This kind of speech act primarily deals with the literal meaning produced within an utterance. It presents a linguistic unit (such as a sentence) with a specific focus on the essence and structure of what is said.

2. **Illocutionary Acts** are a central focus in the study of speech acts. They deal with the speakers' intention and the purpose the speakers aim to achieve through their utterance. Searle (1969) expanded on the proposed framework, with a particular emphasis on the nuances of illocutionary acts with the following five distinct categories:

- a) **assertives**: commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g., stating, claiming, reporting.
- b) **directives**: aim to get the hearer to do something, e.g., requests, commands, advice.
- c) **commissives**: commit the speaker to some future action, e.g., promises, vows.
- d) **expressives**: express the speaker's psychological state, e.g., thanking, apologising, congratulating.
- e) **declarations**: bring about a change in the external situation, e.g., resigning, baptising, declaring war.

3. **Perlocutionary Acts** refer to the effect or the impact the utterance has on the listener, such as persuading, deterring, or inspiring. However, these effects are not always under the

direct control of the speaker and depend on the listener's interpretation of the utterance.

The interaction between these speech acts is a complex process and at times, an utterance can simultaneously consist of a locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary act, depending on its function, effect in a given context, the intention of the speakers (Bach & Harnish, 1979) or the mastery of a given language or languages. Additionally, Searle draws our attention to the significance of what he calls “indirect speech acts” in which one illocutionary act is generated indirectly through the performance of another act (Searle, 1979).

The accurate interpretation of speech acts is crucial for effective cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication (Wadensjö, 1998). For remote telephone interpreters, a thorough understanding of speech acts is not just beneficial but essential as it allows them to understand how language is used in various social interactions and contexts. However, RCI presents unique challenges in conveying and becoming aware of speech acts, as communication occurs via audio channel only. The lack of physical presence and non-verbal cues can lead to misunderstandings, and so interpreters must compensate for this by paying close attention to linguistic nuances from a pragmatic point of view and seeking clarification when necessary. As a result, telephone interpreters must be attuned to these subtleties, understanding the implied meaning behind a speaker's utterances and accurately conveying it to the other party. For instance, a request might be made indirectly to preserve politeness, and interpreters must recognise the subtleties of such requests to maintain the intended politeness level in the interpreted message. On the other hand, there might be situations where speakers express a lack of politeness or sarcasm and it falls upon the interpreter to recognise those instances in a less than perfect setting (e.g. without the visual channel). Additionally, the technological aspect, such as the quality of the connection over a telephone link can affect the way a remote interpreter understands the message.

Therefore, for telephone remote interpreters, a proficiency in the foreign language as well as the native tongue is essential. Additionally, remote interpreters must be sensitive to the differences in cultures and communication patterns, as without it, they may struggle to deliver interpreting that aligns with the speaker's intentions, potentially leading to misunderstandings or miscommunication. Consequently, rigorous training and expertise in both working languages are imperative to achieving effective communication between the conversational parties.

The following chapter will investigate a set of key parameters within pragmatics that directly govern the structure of conversations to gain a deeper understanding of how interpreted interactions should be organised to ensure mutual understanding within an interpreted interaction.

3.2.4 Conversational Structure

Conversational structure is a collective term pertaining to the organisation and management strategies, patterns, and overall dynamics which govern or affect interactions between participants of conversational activities. The term depicts the progression of interaction via appropriate phases, the orchestration of turn-taking, and the diverse elements (such as adjacency pairs) the role of which is to ensure a cohesive and natural flow of an interaction. Telephone interpreters face a unique challenge: in addition to participating in the conversation, they are also expected to act as conversation managers. This division of roles requires a solid understanding of the pragmatic cues in both their working languages and cultures.

The following subchapters present essential aspects of conversations that telephone interpreters should be well-versed in, as they contribute to a successful interaction between parties.

3.2.4.1 Phases

A natural conversation (without the participation of an interpreter) is a highly structured interaction, and it can be viewed in terms of encounters which, in turn, can be analysed as a transactional activity (Jakubowska, 1999). In other words, a conversation should have a purpose, and usually parties expect an outcome. Specifically, the goal of a conversational encounter is to either exchange information between parties of the interaction, or to achieve or maintain a relationship between conversational participants (*ibid.*).

Each encounter or a conversational interaction between parties follows a structured progression and it usually consists of phases through which speakers transition naturally, namely:

- The initiation of a conversation, often referred to as the “opening phase” sets the tone of an interaction and establishes the roles of participants. This phase often consists of greetings, acknowledgments of presence, and sometimes small talk, which contributes to the establishment of a comfortable communicative environment.
- Central phase which is the very body of a conversation during which the main affair is discussed. Here, the participants introduce and elaborate on the main topics of conversation and this is where the majority of the information exchange occurs. Participants negotiate the flow of conversation, often at an implicit level, to ensure that each speaker has the opportunity to contribute.
- The closing phase which is the final part of an interaction, during which the speakers

collaboratively bring the interaction to a close, through a series of closing cues like summarising statements, final questions, or parting wishes. This last phase is important as it helps to end the conversation on a mutually agreeable note, respecting social etiquette.

Jakubowska mentions that the first and the final phases, namely the opening phase and the closing phase, follow a highly conventionalised or structured pattern. They are always of an interactional nature and they consist of at least two exchanges, namely head exchanges, and pre- and post-exchanges. It is important to point out that none of the above phases or exchanges exist in vacuum. All interactions between speakers take place within a culture and its acknowledgment is vital to the proper understanding of conversations.

The theoretical distribution of phases within an interpreted interaction follows a similar set of patterns. In other words, although the involvement of an additional party (a remote interpreter) inherently alters the dynamics of the interaction, the organisation of these phases remains consistent with that of a typical interaction without an interpreter. Consequently, three phases of an interpreted interaction can be distinguished: the opening phase, during which parties exchange pleasantries and introductions; the central phase, where they discuss the issue; and the closing phase, which concludes the interaction. Each of these phases is facilitated through the remote interpreter.

However, as an interaction with an interpreter involves two languages and therefore two cultures, activities or expectations within each phase may differ from those present in a regular conversational interaction. For example, within the English-speaking cultures, speakers generally prefer small talk, whereas in the Polish-speaking culture small talk is not as popular. Another set of challenges pose the expectation of politeness in both languages — through her research, Jakubowska (1999) established that certain English and Polish ritualised polite expressions (formulae) are only partially equivalent, whereas others are not equivalent at all. The challenge that remote interpreters face is the need to navigate and mediate between distinct linguistic and cultural frameworks in order to align potentially mismatched expectations of the conversational parties. Another aspect to consider is the use of linguistic expressions employed by remote interpreters to fulfil specific roles, such as requests for clarification or repetition. These expressions can alter the course of interactions, introducing additional steps within each phase.

The following subchapter will explore the significance of the turn-taking process to better understand why it is relevant within the scope of telephone interpreting.

3.2.4.2 Turn-taking

Another important aspect which governs the way that conversations are handled is the concept of “turn-taking”. It is a crucial component of pragmatic conversational structure, and the phenomenon was first studied by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), who noted how people naturally take turns in conversation without much overlap or unpleasant silence. The turn-taking process is a key component of conversations structure, which facilitates seamless and logical engagement.

Turn-taking in a conversational encounter works like a mechanism which allows speakers to exchange utterances without interruptions or overlapping speech. Speakers change their roles while interacting which Jakubowska (1999) calls “making their moves”. Turn-taking in action consists of a smooth back-and-forth flow between speakers, mostly on a subconscious level — speakers do it without even allocating it much cognitive process.

However, the process is not always seamless. At times, conversational parties may interrupt each other, or there may be pauses or gaps in the conversation. Such moments can say a lot about the dynamics of a conversation and reveal aspects, such as who is eager to speak or who is holding back. In different cultures, the rules of turn-taking can vary considerably. In some places, it's normal to have lots of overlapping talk (for instance USA), while in others, people might wait for a clear pause (Japan) before speaking, out of respect for the speaker. Understanding these subtle differences is key, especially in situations like negotiations or meetings where effective communication is of utmost importance.

A conversational activity involving an interpreter naturally follows a unique pattern of turn-taking. Since the two parties do not understand each other, they must rely on the interpreter to appropriately signal their turn, as they are unable to detect it on their own. In such an interaction, it is the interpreter who must manage the flow of the conversation to ensure that the dialogue progresses smoothly and that each participant's contributions are accurately conveyed. Naturally, interactions facilitated by remote interpreters tend to last longer than regular conversations because the turn-taking mechanism must accommodate the additional time needed for interpreting. In the event that accidental utterances occur from either of the conversational parties while the remote interpreter is delivering an interpreted utterance, this may disrupt the turn-taking process. Consequently, the remote interpreter may need to assume the role of an interaction coordinator to reestablish the proper sequencing of the conversation.

The effective management of the turn-taking process requires a remote interpreter to be well-versed in both the languages and cultures of the conversational parties. This expertise

enables a remote interpreter to understand and navigate transitions between phases and utterances, ensuring that the interaction remains logical and culturally appropriate.

The following subchapter will look at yet another crucial aspect of conversational structure, namely the adjacency pairs, which are an inherent element of spoken interactions.

3.2.4.3 Adjacency Pairs

Another component required in the analysis of discourse from a pragmatic point of view are the adjacency pairs. These are naturally arranged and connected pairs of utterances expressed by both speakers in a conversation setting. In a remote interpreting interaction, in which a conversation is, naturally, handled in more than one language, interpreters have to be aware of their occurrence and they have to recognise whether the conversational parties respond appropriately to such gambits or signals originating in the realm of a particular language. This will ensure successful communication between the parties.

An adjacency pair consists of two parts: the first part (initiation) and the second part (response) and common examples include question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance or refusal, and invitation-acceptance or refusal. These pairs are responsible for the flow and coherence of conversation, as the first party naturally anticipates a specific type of response. When a speaker produces the first part of an adjacency pair, it creates an expectation for the second part which should be produced by the interlocutor. If the expected response is not forthcoming, it can lead to a sense of incompleteness or a conversational breakdown (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974). This movement illustrates that a conversational interaction is of highly ritualised nature.

However, adjacency pairs are context-sensitive and can vary across different cultures and, most importantly, languages. For instance, the way offers or greetings are made and responded to can differ significantly between disparate linguistic communities, and the understanding of the sociocultural context is essential for a proper comprehension of an interpreting interaction or a successful participation therein. A typical example would be the English gambit “How are you?” expressed as a greeting. Such a signal requires a specific response that may not align with the expectations of Polish speakers who are unacquainted with the nuances of English-speaking culture or the English language. The lack of understanding of the nature of such a question may lead to a misunderstanding, and therefore, remote interpreters must be experts at recognising expectations and requirements of their working languages, as well as the conversational norms that affect how parties from disparate linguistic and cultural communities engage in an interaction.

The following chapter will focus on the definition of politeness and its role within the practical analysis of discourse relevant from the point of view of remote interpreters.

3.2.5 Politeness

There are multiple theories and approaches to politeness, however, the term has no universal definition and linguists along with philosophers have struggled to classify it properly, referring to it as a social phenomenon (Jakubowska, 1999).

Phenomenon or not, politeness constitutes a set of principles, strategies and tools, and it plays an essential role in daily communication of individuals in many different cultures and languages. It helps to smooth out problematic or tense situations via the application of language-specific devices.

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a politeness theory, which suggests that in a conversational interaction, speakers often seek to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) — or in other words, actions (both linguistic and non-linguistic) which might challenge the speaker sense of self-esteem or autonomy. They suggest strategies such as positive politeness (seeking to establish a positive relationship), negative politeness (respecting the listener's desire not to be imposed upon), and off-record indirectness (being vague or ambiguous), all of which vary significantly across different cultures, social contexts, and, most importantly, languages. Regardless of the theory applied, one must recognise that conversational politeness is often merely a device employed to achieve a goal, and it frequently involves a degree of insincerity. Simply put, it often happens that we do not feel a particular need to be polite, however, we do produce polite expressions as they help us fulfil a particular objective in an interaction. A mismatch between the intention and a linguistic utterance occurs.

Politeness is a crucial pragmatic concept in spoken language and has been extensively explored by linguists. As such, it is crucial for remote interpreters to be proficient in the recognition of its occurrence or the necessity for its presence within utterances generated by participants of disparate linguistic systems.

The following subchapters present the fundamental aspects pertaining to the concept of politeness relevant to RCI interactions.

3.2.5.1 Formulaic Expressions

Most polite expressions are highly ritualised as they are somewhat conditioned by conventions specific to a particular language. They constitute routine formulae — fixed expressions, used in situations such as, for example, greetings, apologies, small talk, farewells and interjections. Fixed conventional gambits perform a specific pragmatic effect (sometimes more than one) and these effects are generally not shared across languages as they are essentially metaphoric. Therefore, they are only shared by a particular linguistic community and their interpretation must be performed within a specific context and culture of that given community.

These expressions constitute fixed routine phrases, their conventions (steps) within a particular interaction have to be followed in order for an interaction to be successful. In other words, the adherence to the convention decides on the presence of meaning or the loss thereof. In a situation in which a conversational party shows ignorance or no adherence to the expected convention, they can be perceived “not only as lacking in politeness and sophistication but also as incompletely socialised” (Loveday, 1982).

As mentioned previously, in her research of the framework of politeness in English and Polish, Jakubowska (1999) established that there are differences in how formulaic expressions work in the languages in question. The concluded analysis of her research allows us to determine that there are some formulaic expressions which are equivalent between the two languages, those which are partially equivalent, and those which are not equivalent at all. The difference in equivalence may relate to a semantic difference, a difference in the potential of the illocutionary force or a difference of context. The difference in the illocutionary force of such expressions is particularly interesting, as it deals with the intention of the speaker. Remote interpreters must be sensitive to such difference to convey the intended meaning properly. Differences of context and semantic differences are also vital and remote interpreters have to “expert communicators” to calibrate the requirements of the source and the target utterances.

Such requirements pose a challenge to remote interpreters as must be aware of and sensitive to the existence and instances of such phrases within their working languages and adhere to their respective conventions with subtlety in order to ensure successful communication. A potential failure to recognise formulaic expressions may result in a mismatch of messages and lead to an interference in communication.

3.2.5.2 Concept of “Face”

One of the principal elements in the theory of politeness is the notion of “face” being the public, projected image of speakers. Although the origins of the concept can be traced back to Chinese culture, it is a fairly common idea present in both English and Polish. The following fixed expressions in English “*losing face*” and “*saving face*” and in Polish “*stracić twarz*” and “*zachować twarz*” respectively convey a very specific piece of information. The concept of “face” revolves around losing one’s social value or respect in the case of the former expression and retaining the principles and beliefs one claims for themselves in the case of the latter. Jakubowska mentions that face is a value that can be saved, lost or threatened and an individual can employ a selection of linguistic actions within an interaction in order to either avoid face-threatening situations or to attempt to remedy a situation once the face has been lost. Remote interpreters should be able to understand such actions within one language and accurately render those in the target language.

These attempts or efforts on the part of the conversational parties require a certain level of sensitivity and experience from a remote interpreter. In an environment devoid of the visual channel, failure to observe such efforts can lead to a distortion in an interpreted utterance. In other words, to efficiently interpret the utterances of their conversational parties, remote interpreters must be able to “read the room” accurately, which may be a challenging task, given that their only tools are the voices and utterances of the parties involved.

The following subchapter will investigate the role of addressing conversational parties of an interaction, as it is another key element in managing effective communication and maintaining appropriate social dynamics.

3.2.5.3 Form of Address

Apart from the concept of “face”, addressing individuals is one of the most vital aspects of polite behaviour within a conversational or interpreting interaction, and it is culture- and language-specific. In most European languages two specific forms have evolved, namely:

- the T form, which is the intimate, friendly, direct pronoun (the origin of which is the Latin pronoun *tu*);
- the V form, being the indirect, more distant, formal and polite pronoun (stemming from the Latin pronoun *vos*).

The choice of a particular pronoun can determine a specific approach adopted within an interaction between conversational parties, and it can reflect or establish their relationship.

Brown and Gilman (1968) distinguish between two types of approaches (semantics), namely the one of “power” and the one of “solidarity”.

In the former (semantics of power) one conversational participant uses the T pronoun to refer to the other party but receives the V pronoun. It is an interaction in which the relationship is of superior–inferior and it is a one-way approach. In other words the relationship cannot be reversed and it is generally determined by social status, age, wealth or it is otherwise institutionalised or conditioned.

The latter — semantics of solidarity is a two-way relationship which is not conditional on the difference of power, or simply put there may be no difference at all. Conversational parties decide on the proper pronoun — either both of them use T or both of them use V. In the latter, they may transition from using one pronoun to the other by mutual agreement (Jakubowska, 1999).

As Jakubowska points out, politeness is universally known in every culture, however, the act of being polite may differ dramatically across communities and languages and it cannot be detected simply by looking at grammatical layer of an utterance.

This is where the challenge for a remote interpreter arises, as disparate language systems may employ differing approaches. Interpreters must recognise the dynamics of situations and adjust their interpretations to meet the requirements of the conversational parties. A typical situation in an interpreting interaction involves the English pronoun “you” the translation of which can be both the T or the V pronoun in Polish depending on a great number of factors. A challenging situation for a remote interpreter arises when the English-speaking party uses the T form, which may come across as too direct or even impolite in Polish. As a consequence, a remote interpreter would need to make a decision in alignment with the assumed role to either maintain the contextual and social expectations of the Polish-speaking conversational party or to deviate from them, which may introduce an element of misunderstanding or miscommunication.

As discussed, politeness is generally metaphoric in nature and highly dependent on context and language. In the field of remote community interpreting, it falls upon the interpreter to recognise and interpret politeness through its contextual and cultural nuances transmitted through the voice and utterances of the speakers.

3.3 Conclusion

The theories of discourse, and specifically, the domain of pragmatics help understand

conversational interactions by providing valuable instruments to analyse utterances within their context. By looking into the underpinning mechanisms of contextualised interactions remote interpreters are able to draw conclusions and understand processes which govern their comprehension of utterances provided by the other conversational parties.

This chapter provided an introduction to the pragmatic approach to discourse, conversational structure elements, and politeness to highlight the essential tools which remote interpreters should be versed in to investigate and generate meaning within context. In an environment where visual cues are absent, a pragmatic analysis of the discourse from the point of view of speech acts, the pragmatic context, implicatures, conversational structure elements, and the understanding of the importance of theory of politeness are vital to navigate the social dynamics of conversations and provide accurate interpreting into two languages.

However misinterpretations or misunderstandings may arise if the contextual and cultural nuances of utterances are not fully grasped. It is, therefore, imperative for telephone remote interpreters to be “expert communicators” with a high degree of proficiency in their working languages which extends beyond the syntactical and grammatical structures, and the cultures they reflect. Only then will they be able to appropriately detect and decode utterances in the less-than-perfect environment.

The following chapters will investigate ethical considerations in the realm of RCI from the point of view of relevant ethical and philosophical theories, remote interpreter’s roles and expectations as well as the concept of impartiality to explore the possible challenges facing remote interpreters and the complexity of their professions.

4 Ethical Considerations in the Realm of RCI

The significance of ethical considerations in the context of RCI cannot be overstated, as they directly affect the quality, the process of communication rendered via the assistance of an interpreter and its outcome.

In principle, the concept of ethics in interpreting refers to a set of norms and standards that guide the conduct and behaviour of remote interpreters in their professional practice while interpreting, and also in their day-to-day activities and preparations for remote interpreting assignments.

This chapter first explores the notion of ethics from a general perspective and then examines the application of selected ethical theories and strategies relevant to the field of remote community interpreting. It considers these theories from multiple perspectives, with a particular emphasis on the actual performance of remote interpreters.

4.1 Ethics—a General Approach

In a general sense, ethics refers to the moral principles and values which guide human behaviour and the decision-making process. The word “ethics” comes from the Ancient Greek term “*êthos*” which signifies “things pertaining to *ethos*, i.e. to character”, and it has been primarily used in three separate, yet related ways (Luce, 1992):

- to talk about a code of rules or principles of moral nature the purpose of which is to instruct individuals on how to act;
- to refer to any theory or system of beliefs related to moral principles;
- to denote philosophical research and investigations related to moral decisions of what is wrong and right.

Initially the ethical considerations and the establishment of first ethical codes were inspired and linked to religion. However, presently, and for the purpose of this dissertation, the term “ethics” can be simplified to a question of “What is right and what is wrong about what I am doing?”, and the meaning behind it is very often interconnected with that of morality (Koskinen, K., & Pokorn, N. K., 2021).

Ethics provides a framework which allows individuals to distinguish between right and wrong about their behaviour, and influences their actions and interactions within a society, a community or with other individuals (Rachels & Rachels, 2019). Such frameworks are rooted in well-established ethical theories which help build norms required to evaluate the morality of specific actions (Shafer-Landau, 2018).

As it can be deduced from its definition, ethics does not apply, however, to a single domain of human activity but rather, ethical considerations are relevant in a great number of actions and activities typical of human beings. One may risk saying that any single activity performed by humans can be analysed from an ethical or moral point of view and evaluated in many different ways pertaining to specific ethical theories. Therefore, the very notion of an ethical conduct has been one of the focal points of human's quest for self-discovery, and the investigation into the meaning of human life for millennia.

This chapter will introduce a selected number of theories and concepts which relate directly to the process of RCI, a remote interpreter, and the parties to an interpreted interaction.

4.2 Ethics within the Realm of RCI

As discussed previously, ethics applies to most, if not all, human activities, and ethical questions have been discussed and investigated by humans for a long time. However, the domain of Translation Studies has yet to witness extensive exploration of ethical dimensions, despite the pivotal role ethical deliberations play in the context of translation and interpreting. This might be attributed, partly, to a relatively recent transition in scholarly focus from the translation product (translated text) to the agent (translator or interpreter).

In praxis, remote interpreters heavily rely on their best judgment to navigate the complexities of the decision-making processes in real-time and they frequently struggle to answer the question of what is the right thing to do in a particular situation. The breadth of problems which have ethical implications in the domain of interpreting, and more precisely in RCI, is staggering.

Contrary to the common stereotype shared by many that an interpreter is bound by the principle “interpret everything I say”, the real life scenarios introduce a more nuanced realisation or understanding of the seemingly straightforward instruction. Simply put, the problematic situations which require ethical or moral decisions can range from seemingly trivial dilemmas, such as which term to use in the target language in a particular context (e.g., the previously discussed issue of address — English “you” versus Polish “ty” or “Pan/Pani”) to more complex problems, for instance, in a situation, where the interpreter needs to make a quick decision of whether to interpret faithfully, risking a misunderstanding or to adjust the utterance of the source party to make it more understandable to the target party. A very good example of a challenge is a particularly popular phrase used by telephonic agents who are required to ask verifying questions to LEP individuals in order to confirm their identity (in the cases of Job

Centre, other benefits, or matters related to the Department of Work and Pensions) — “Are you happy to continue?”. This simple question presents remote interpreters with three problems, namely:

1. Is “you” the T or the V you in Polish? The answer to this question depends on the distribution of power between the conversational parties and the approach applied to the process of interpreting, as
2. the phrase has to be paraphrased, as a direct and literal translation would simply make no sense in Polish. An equivalent expression should be used, with “Czy możemy kontynuować?” being the most natural option,
3. however, while the phrase is appropriate in the target language, it omits the word “happy,” thereby losing some of the nuance, even though the original phrase does not pertain to the LEP individual's state of happiness at all.

The supporters of the “interpret everything I say” dogma might question the decision to apply a more idiomatic expression in the target language, as it clearly deviates from the quoted principle, however, one can claim that the ability to communicate and the quest for understanding are the ultimate goals of remote community interactions and such interference on the part of the interpreter constitutes an ethical choice in the right direction. Yet, the flawed principle constitutes guidance for many remote interpreters and employers. Naturally, the example above is not a complex challenge. It does, however, illustrate a problem of ethical nature.

In the real-life scenarios a myriad of factors come into force in a dynamic environment of interpreting, such as the complexity of the message, cultural and linguistic disparities between interpreted parties, their educational level, constraints of interpreter’s memory, and mental capacity and challenges introduced by technology or communication medium, which prompts interpreters to question the established principle.

Regrettably, there is no universal framework of principles applicable to all contexts or situations which could serve as a baseline for remote interpreters to follow in the time of doubt. Although translation and interpreting agencies do publish their own codes of conducts intended to clarify ethical doubts, not all interpreters adopt those (Boczarski, 2023). Therefore, lacking a singular binding reference point to guide them through intricate and challenging real-life scenarios, remote interpreters frequently find themselves contemplating a series of questions, such as (for example):

- should I be faithful to the author of the source utterance?
- should I ensure that the target party understands the message?

- should I follow my internal set of principles while interpreting?
- do I follow the principles of my religion or political beliefs?
- whose expectations should I attempt to meet?
- am I bound to the rules of the entity that employs me?

These questions pose a series of challenges and there is no one appropriate response which would provide a set of unambiguous indications. Clearly, the ubiquitous principle of “interpret everything I say” fails to apply in most, if not all, situations, and the author believes that in order for the principle to work, a modification should be applied. The proposed instruction is “interpret what I say, based on your understanding of it, into a suitable equivalent in the target language”. However, such a principle would most likely seem unpopular for the reasons explained in the subsequent chapters, which present specific ethical considerations aimed at aiding remote interpreters in navigating ethical dilemmas, and challenges they might encounter.

4.2.1 Rhetoric and Ethics

Ancient Greeks discussed the implications of human actions with a particular interest in their moral outcome, a particular emphasis on the art of rhetoric, and the moral implications of the art of argumentation.

Aristotle questioned the teachings of the practical Sophists who were the “ruthless” teachers of successful art of persuasion. Their teachings focused on the idea that the truth and moral values were subjective and therefore a skilled adept in rhetoric could easily manipulate individuals through the proper use of stylistic devices and arguments. In his work “Rhetoric”, Aristotle, on the other hand, introduced an alternative approach to a successful, and above all, moral art of argumentation. Aristotle believed that a persuasive argument should ideally incorporate the following elements of persuasion:

- ethos: the credibility, ethical nature and the authority of the speaker;
- pathos: appeal to the emotions and the feelings of the interlocutor or the audience; and
- logos: appeal to logical element and reason

The skilled rhetorician, according to Aristotle, balances ethos, pathos, and logos to effectively engage and persuade the speaker (Fortenbaugh, 2007). This triad can be perceived as a timeless guideline for understanding how communication can be powerful, persuasive, and, above all, ethically grounded.

Practically speaking, the art of rhetoric plays a twofold role in the context of RCI . On the one hand, it is an essential skill to have in order for a remote interpreter to recognise instances

in which rhetorical devices are employed, and to understand their role within an utterance. In an environment devoid of the physical aspect, the only medium of comprehension is the auditory channel, therefore remote interpreters should become sensitive to nuanced speech and specific tools which might underpin the already discussed speech acts.

On the other hand, however, a mere recognition of rhetorical devices and a sensitivity to their application is not sufficient. A remote interpreter should possess a mastery of their working languages (both the mother tongue as well as the acquired languages) in order to faithfully render the utterance into the target language. Via the use of specific rhetorical devices remote interpreters have a chance to render the utterance faithfully. In other words, ideally and theoretically, a remote interpreter should be able to match the emotional or rational strata of the source utterance and render it while attempting to generate an identical or a similar emotional or rational effect on the target party—interpreted utterances should not be more persuasive, or powerful. They should not be any less persuasive or powerful either. A good example, illustrating the complexity of interpreting from a rhetorical perspective, are telephone appointments between psychological support personnel and patients, during which a British medical professional evaluates a Polish patient with the assistance of a remote interpreter. Medical professionals in psychology often utilise a wide range of rhetorical expressions for various purposes, such as encouraging patients to articulate their thoughts, motivating them to speak, promoting adherence to agreed and discussed treatment plans, or, in the extreme cases, to give immediate assistance to people who express suicidal thoughts. A remote interpreter must mirror this level of rhetorical expression in the target language, employing similar linguistic tools to elicit the desired response from the patient. This task is particularly challenging because rhetoric is typically not a focus in interpreting courses or programmes. Nevertheless, a thorough understanding of linguistic devices and the ability to use equivalent expressions to achieve a comparable effect is crucial for remote interpreters.

Another point to consider is the awareness of remote interpreters about the complexity of such appointments and the role language and utterances play in the assessment of patients. Very often a practical approach is to shorten repeated utterances of an LEP individual as they may seem irrelevant or unnecessary to a remote interpreters. From a logical perspective, this may be the case, however, medical professionals, specifically in the psychological field, are trained to evaluate every bit of utterances which may carry a meaning beyond remote interpreter's comprehension. Therefore, omitting or altering these repetitions can result in the loss of critical information, potentially compromising the effectiveness of the evaluation and treatment process. It is imperative that remote interpreters become sensitive to such nuances and relay

those in the target language.

In the light of discrete nature of languages which function as separate linguistic systems, it is fairly common for specific rhetorical devices to exist in one system while being absent in another. A potential mismatch of rhetorical tools across languages necessitates remote interpreters to engage in a dynamic analysis and self-reflection of utterances in order to match the emotional or logical dimension of an utterance. This approach promotes a “thought for thought” strategy which, consequently, introduces a necessity to paraphrase statements, which increases the complexity of the task, and the cognitive burden on the part of remote interpreters.

The following subchapters will explore a number of selected ethical concepts which look at the process of remote community interpreting from different perspectives in order to better understand the ethical obligations and considerations which bind remote interpreters.

4.2.2 Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism, as a philosophical concept, originates from the works of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the 18th and 19th centuries. Jeremy Bentham laid the foundation for utilitarian ethics and introduced the principle of utility (Bentham, 1789). Bentham's idea stipulated that the morality of an action is determined by its ability to promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. In other words, his utilitarian philosophy is based around the idea that individuals naturally seek pleasure and avoid pain.

His work was further developed by John Stuart Mill, who refined and popularised utilitarianism. He introduced qualitative distinctions in pleasures and pains. Mill argued that not all pleasures are equal and that higher, intellectual pleasures should be given more consideration (Crisp, 1998). In his opinion, the main idea behind utilitarianism is the principle of utility. Simply put, the concept of Utilitarianism can be explained as an approach in which a positive and a useful outcome is preferable.

While the foundational principles of utilitarianism established by Bentham and Mill were considered in a broader ethical context, its tenets can be successfully incorporated to serve in the area of remote interpreting. Given the absence or perhaps the inadequacy of internationally (or even nationally) accepted codes of conduct, remote interpreters may look for other ways of justifying their interpreting choices or strategies or solving their moral and practical problems. In interpreting, Utilitarianism can be applied in the context of making appropriate decisions which promote positive outcomes and ensure success in an interaction between parties of disparate linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In other words, remote interpreters may seek practical and straightforward techniques to navigate morally or ethically challenging

interactions — such as stepping beyond their traditional roles during interpreting, crossing established boundaries to advocate for the LEP or the client or refraining from seeking confirmation or clarification when in doubt to economise time. It can be perceived as a modern approach and effort to manage ethical considerations in response to the evolution of technology and contemporary means of interactions between conversational parties in an interpreting interaction.

The application of Utilitarianistic strategies may seem beneficial in establishing positive cooperation between a remote interpreter and its employer. It can also help remote interpreters manage problematic situations in a timely manner under the slogan “efficient communication”. The common saying goes “Time is money” and the same principle applies to the realm of remote interpreting. As it was already mentioned in the preceding chapter, remote interpreters are usually compensated on per minute basis. The shorter the remote interpreter deals with a client the less a company has to pay for their service, which may be an incentive for the employer to promote the idea of shorter conversations. For example, certain companies instruct remote interpreters not to wait for more than 3 minutes while on hold. This approach may require an LEP or a client to dial again.

However, while utilitarian strategies may promote efficiency and align with business interests, they also introduce ethical dilemmas. Remote interpreters are tasked with facilitating clear and accurate communication, a task that demands a commitment to the linguistic and cultural integrity of the conversation. If pressured to prioritise speed over thoroughness, interpreters may face conflicts between their professional responsibilities and the expectations imposed by their employers.

Ultimately, interactions with the assistance of a remote interpreter in the community setting should not be driven by the needs of the business, but rather the needs of underprivileged individuals whose right to fully express themselves should be honoured. While efficiency is valuable, it should not come at the expense of ethical integrity. The challenge for remote interpreters lies in balancing these competing demands — ensuring that they remain true to the ethical standards of the profession while also meeting the practical needs of the service. Navigating this balance requires a deep understanding of the ethical implications of their decisions and also the courage to advocate for practices that support both effective and ethically sound communication. Therefore, it is vital for remote interpreters to continually reflect on their performance from an ethical standpoint and to critically assess their own decisions.

The following subchapter will present the concept an opposing concept of deontology, relevant from the point of view of remote interpreting.

4.2.3 Deontology

The word deontology comes from the Greek words “δέον” which means “obligation, duty” and “λόγος”, the meaning of which is “study”, and from a philosophical perspective, deontology states that the morality of an action should be based on the action itself and not on the consequences it may cause. To put simply, deontology highlights the imperative for individuals to adhere to principles, irrespective of contextual requirements or potential consequences of actions. In other words, deontology stipulates that the end does not justify the means and that what is of utmost significance are moral duties and acting in accordance with universal principles.

The theory of ethical conduct introduced by Immanuel Kant and inspired by deontology involves the following two principles:

- individuals must act out of duty;
- consequences of actions cannot justify the morality of actions. What determines whether an action is right or wrong are the motives of an individual who performs it.

In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant establishes the concept of Categorical Imperative, which is a central tenet used to evaluate motivation of actions. Kant introduces three formulations to be applied by individuals:

1. Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.
2. Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.
3. Thus the third practical principle follows (from the first two) as the ultimate condition of their harmony with practical reason: the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislating will (Korsgaard, 2012)

In the context of remote interpreting, the three formulations of the Categorical Imperative offer ethical guidance to navigate the complexities of the profession.

The first formulation, which requires for actions to be universalisable, aligns with the remote interpreter's responsibility to uphold consistent and impartial standards in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. It can mean the adherence to principles that could be applied universally without contradiction to ensure reliability and transparency in interpreting, promoting trust among parties and towards the interpreter.

The second formulation emphasises the intrinsic value of individuals and it resonates with

remote interpreter's duty to treat all parties involved with respect and dignity, avoiding manipulation of instrumentalisation. This is particularly crucial in remote interactions where all interactions are handled via the application of technology with the visual channel removed.

Lastly, the third formulation encourages remote interpreters to act as if they are promoting universal laws and in order to contribute to the ethical standards of their profession in a positive manner.

In praxis, the application of Kantian deontological formulations can help to guide remote interpreters in fostering effective communication, upholding the dignity of conversational parties in a remote setting, and maintaining accuracy and confidentiality, regardless of potential consequences. There are numerous situations where the concept of deontology can assist interpreters in upholding professionalism. For example, remote interpreters often find themselves in situations where an LEP individual attempts to bond with them, as they share the same language and likely the same culture. However, remote interpreters should refrain from this practice, as it may lead to a breach of their professional role and compromise their objectivity. Another situation might involve a client insisting that a remote interpreter provide an opinion on the LEP individual. However, the remote interpreter's task is strictly to interpret what the LEP individual has expressed verbally, without adding personal opinions or interpretations. Yet another example might involve a remote interpreter attempting to excessively summarise an LEP's utterance because it seems too long or complex. While this might be done with the intention of streamlining communication, it can lead to vital nuances being lost or misrepresented, even if they seem irrelevant to a remote interpreter.

A natural extension to the above-mentioned approach is the establishment of the, so-called, Codes of Conduct, which are sets of principles imposed on interpreters by their employers or clients. The following subchapter will examine the common features found in the Codes of Conducts available worldwide.

4.2.4 Codes of Conduct

Codes of Conduct are sets of guidelines and rules, the aim of which is to assist interpreters or translators whenever moral, formal or otherwise problematic situations occur.

It is crucial to mention that in Poland there is no official code of ethics or conduct for interpreters apart from the one issued by TEPIS (Polish Society of Sworn and Specialised Translators). Their publication, namely Professional Code of a Sworn Translator, by its very designation, should theoretically apply to certified translators and interpreters. Additionally, the Code does not mention anything about remote settings or rendering services via the application

of technology. In other words, remote interpreters located in Poland do not have any form of a universal document which could help them manage ethical or otherwise problematic situations. This is not surprising, as translation as well as interpreting belong to “unregulated” professions for which no licence or even proper education is required.

The current state-of-the-art abroad is not very favourable either from the point of view of remote interpreters. In general, there is a handful of documents or checklists of issued by interpreting agencies or private companies.

Most publications, however, deal with traditional interpreting (mostly community interpreting) or translation and they are centred around a deontological idea of principles or guidelines. Some of them are very general and relate to the requirement to interpret/translate faithfully and accurately, and some are very specific, for instance, they instruct interpreters not to swivel on a chair or even drink water while attending a meeting in a remote environment. Lambert (2018) synthesised the most prominent codes to establish the underlying tenets, and the conclusion is that regardless of the differences in challenges, the analysed codes share common concepts, which include the interpreter/translator's (or more broadly the language professionals) role, competence, impartiality, neutrality, completeness and accuracy, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and continuing professional development.

On the other hand, Lamber highlights the discrepancies, inconsistencies and contradictions between the analysed documents and their shortcomings in terms of the efficiency to encompass all potential situations, therefore being inadequate to equip interpreters or translators with practical tools required to deal with a plethora of dilemmas.

In fact, based on his research, there is a paradox or a phenomenon between different codes or even between the provisions within one single code. Namely, the requirement to interpret/translate a message faithfully, as an invisible interpreter, without resorting to adding or omitting any piece of information, on the one hand, and the requirement to mediate or interfere, making necessary comments or taking steps to ensure successful communication where necessary, hence assuming the role of an active agent in an interaction, on the other hand. The concept of neutrality or impartiality (promoted heavily in the Codes Lambert analysed) fails to work here as the line between impartiality and interfering is very thin. The line may not exist at all.

The evidence and research quoted in his work goes to say that language professionals' ethics are context-dependent and should be examined in more details. As a consequence, one of the conclusions in Lamber's paper is the need for a more sophisticated approach to ethical training and education for translation students in order to effectively navigate complex ethical

landscape. Another significant aspect arising from his research is the dichotomy between the concept of a code of ethics, specifically between deontological assumptions (ethics) and the utilitarian approach (business).

The following subchapter will investigate yet another approach to ethics which will throw a different light on the manner in which remote community interpreters operate.

4.2.5 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word “ἑρμηνεύω” which means “to interpret”, “to translate” and the meaning was initially exclusive to the interpretation of Holy Scriptures. With time, the meaning evolved and in the context of interpreting and translation, hermeneutics refers to a theory which investigates the process of interpretation of the source discourse. This approach, albeit designed with the process of translation in mind, can be adopted for the purpose of interpreting.

The theory was initially established by Schleiermacher (1813) and further developed by Gadamer (1982) and it emphasises the role of the agent (in this case a remote interpreter) who performs a cognitive activity on the message — a remote interpreter engages in a process of an actual interpretation of the source utterance before interpreting it into the target language. This process inherently involves the task of comprehension. Through the operation of articulation of the content understood from the source message, a remote interpreter becomes a co-author for the target message.

However, before commencing the process of articulation or rendition of the target message, a remote interpreter must fully comprehend the received source message. The process of comprehension involves interpreter’s knowledge of languages, cultures, technical as well as rhetorical complexities and the competence in interpreting, which all together constitute a subjective phenomenon. In fact, hermeneutical approach assumes that comprehension in the process of interpreting is not a mere transfer of information between languages but rather it involves the merging of the interpreter's pre-understanding with that of the text or context being interpreted. To some extent, the tenets of the philosophy align with the concepts of cognitive linguistics, specifically the cognitive processing underpinning the mechanism of generating meaning, which is not a property of an utterance, but rather of the mind (of a remote interpreter).

A key assumption is that pure understanding does not occur, as it is affected by external factors. Moreover, tradition and culture play a pivotal role in shaping comprehension. It is also assumed that individuals are embedded within a historical and cultural context, and their perspectives are affected by the traditions in which they are situated (Gadamer, 1982). In short,

interpretation involves a dynamic interplay of remote interpreter's existing knowledge, and preconceptions, tradition and the context. All these elements are integral to the process of interpreting.

From an ethical point of view, hermeneutics is a controversial approach. A popular stereotype is that interpreters (regardless of the mode of operation) should remain impartial and detached from the messages they render. This attitude seems the accepted ethical standard. A question arises then, how can an interpreter be impartial if the very process of comprehension is "contaminated" with the factors, such as the culture, history, or preconceived notions of a remote interpreter? How can a remote interpreter provide a faithful interpreting in the light of the above?

An answer to these questions may lie in the best judgment of remote community interpreters along with their rational approach, sensitivity to the cultures of the conversational parties, awareness of the challenges underpinning the process, and of the flaws of human perception. Through recognising their own biases, remote interpreters can strive to uphold ethical principles by, for example, declining interpreting tasks that involve subjects to which they are particularly sensitive, such as abortion, suicidal or homelessness, to name a few. Practising sound judgement, however, requires a continuous process of self-reflection, self-evaluation and professional development to understand that impartiality is just a convenient term.

The following chapter will investigate the issue of impartiality from multiple angles, as observed in the field of remote community interpreting.

4.2.6 Illusion of Impartiality

As discussed in the previous chapters, a common belief is that a role of a remote interpreter is the one of an invisible agent, an impartial actor, completely imperceptible party subject to the original message in an interaction. A common synonym of a remote interpreter is a conduit or a bridge, operating to facilitate communication between conversational parties. These terms define an ideal remote interpreter, totally devoid of real-life problems or context in which an interpreting interaction takes place.

The following subchapter will investigate the origin of this status quo and its evolution, present a breakdown of the roles of a remote interpreter within the context of remote community interpreting and will attempt to refute the popular myth that a remote interpreter is an impartial or a neutral conduit, responsible for "just" transmitting information in two directions through the complexities of language and culture.

4.2.6.1 Myths and Stereotypes

Historically, translation studies as a discipline emerged from contrastive linguistics and traditionally centred on the analysis of source and target texts. A central focus of this analysis was the problem of equivalence—that is, the differences and similarities between the input and output texts. The role of the translator as an agent did not constitute an area of interest,

The importance of the product (translation), rather than the actor (translator), dominated the scholarly focus until 1990s. Social and cultural changes affected the way the process of translation was perceived, however, and a turn from the product to the agent took place which brought along a significant change of perspective. Translation was no longer perceived as a comparison between two static texts; instead, it was analysed through the lens of social, cultural, and linguistic contexts. From this moment onwards scholars were no longer exclusively interested in the outcome of the process but, rather, they focused on the active party — the translator. Anthony Pym was one of the leaders and proponents of this movement and his concept to “humanise” translation resulted in a more translator-oriented approach in which cognitive and cultural factors played a vital role in the shaping of the product (Pym, 2009).

This new approach situates the translator in a real world shaped by social, cultural, economic, and linguistic dimensions. A translator is now a member of a society, plays an active role in the process of creation, and is affected by the social, economic, cultural, ethical, and linguistic reality as much as the world around him. Translator’s (interpreter’s) actions give rise to social consequences and shape the reality. Interpreters begin to be perceived as human beings (Tryuk, 2012).

The previous model of translation did not take into consideration any of the above-mentioned parameters, such as the social or cultural factors. Simply put, the product was generated by an invisible actor, an imperceptible agent which produced a faithful copy of the original but in another language, which would exist in a vacuum, completely detached from the reality of the translator or the real world. This is where the notion of a perfect translator originates — an objective translator whose role is to render faithfully the source document, subdued by the text and its author. A machine for one job which works on the basis of a specific set of instructions and protocols, and whose aim is to generate a ready product. It is also invisible, because the only elements that matter in this relationship are the source and the target documents or utterances (ibid.).

This concept of an imperceptible interpreter has been the prevalent approach perpetuated by modern linguists, and the most desirable quality of an interpreter, particularly impartiality,

is highly promoted in the fields of simultaneous and community interpreting. The notion that a linguist can detach their identity or persona from the process is also appealing to employers. Would a linguist who advocates for self-consciousness and awareness of any potential interference be in demand? Or rather, would a client prefer an interpreter who is neutral? The answer to the former is most probably “no”, as the properties of impartiality and detachment reinforce the perception of an interpreter-conduit whose sole role is to transmit messages, simultaneously promoting a sense of trust among the parties. In other words, conversational parties find comfort in knowing that there is a voice that will convey exactly what they say, without adding or removing any element, even at a subconscious level.

This reduction in functions or simplification of the process to a mechanical level, where an interpreter is literally minimised to the idea of a bridge, strips away the complexity of the process. It is harmful to the linguist, as it detaches the remote interpreter from the active, central role they play in an interaction. In this model, the only instruction given to the interpreter is “Just interpret what I say”, however, the process of interpreting, specifically, in community contexts requires many more operations, and it involves a great number of factors (both internal and external to a remote interpreter) which, collectively, fall under the umbrella term of interpreting. Most importantly, remote interpreters require a clear definition of how to navigate intricate real-life problems, and a recognition that the very process of remote interpreting constitutes a set of sub-roles and activities.

The existence of the many different considerations in the previously discussed codes of conduct and even the necessity to have a code of ethics (as expressed by interpreters and employers) of any sort is a clear indication that there are essential aspects to be considered in the process of interpreting which affect the way remote interpreters operate.

The factors which define the way remote interpreters operate require some form of a regulation or definition and those will be discussed in the following subchapter.

4.2.6.2 Roles of Remote Interpreters

As discussed in the previous chapters, remote community interpreting is an activity in which a remote interpreter performs the activities of listening and speaking in two working languages within one interpreting interaction.

Goffman (1981) explains that during the process of speaking and listening, our approach towards the conversational party or parties changes dynamically, and by the concept of roles, Goffman understands the ever-changing attitudes within an interaction towards parties. In other words, roles are modes in which we change our way of acting towards our interlocutors based

on a number of factors (for example, conversational topics, specific conversational gambits or social factors and conditions, etc.). Cecilia Wadensjö (1998) claims that a specific role is adopted by conversational parties every single time a new utterance has been produced and so parties continuously adopt certain roles while listening and speaking, independently. However, these roles are not just of a listener and a speaker. During an interaction, the role a listener (receptive mode with a subsequent reaction or attitude towards a received utterance) can be further divided into three constituents:

- *reporter-listener* who repeats mechanically the received utterance without bearing the responsibility for the words or the meaning of the utterance
- *responder-listener* who repeats the received utterance, adding, removing or otherwise altering its elements, elaborating on the utterance
- *recapitulator-listener* who summarises or in other way paraphrases (with a goal to shorten) the received utterance.

When it comes to underlying aspects of the role of a speaker, however, Goffman defines these (applying the production mode in the sense of expressing opinions of oneself or others) in the following way:

- *animator* who says the utterances of the original speaker in a restricted way, mechanically, animating them
- *author* who repeats the utterance not a machine, but rather giving them a meaning and somewhat bearing the responsibility
- *principal* who is the main speaker with a position of authority and who expresses their own point of view.

Goffman says that the adoption of specific roles is performed on a dynamic basis upon evaluation on the part of the speakers (in this case remote interpreters). Wadensjö claims that the primary speakers (those who require the services of a remote interpreter) should naturally assume the role of principals, and consequently interpreters should adopt the role of animators and authors. However, in the real life scenarios the division of roles is not as clear-cut.

The respective roles (of a speaker and a listener) are set in motion via the application of specific syntactic structures, forms of address, personal pronouns and reported speech. In the field of interpreting, Tryuk (2012) provides a very comprehensive breakdown of the possible renditions which overlap and extend beyond the previously mentioned roles of a speaker, which can be distinguished through the application of reported or indirect speech:

1. speaker and interpreter use 1st person singular “I”

2. speaker says “I”, interpreter says “We”
3. speaker says “I”, interpreter says “He/Mr”
4. speaker says “I”, interpreter uses direct reported speech: “He/Mr said “I...”
5. speaker says “I”, interpreter uses indirect reported speech: “He/Mr said that...”

Traditionally and historically, stemming from the field of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, remote interpreters have used the first form (direct address), which helps push the interpreter to the background and establishes the client and the LEP as the two main parties in an interpreting activity. This approach helps refocus attention on the conversational parties, yet it simultaneously reinforces the stereotype of the interpreter's invisibility. The remaining forms are not as common, however, they are applied in very specific situations. In an initial study leading to this dissertation, Boczarski (2023) surveyed a group of interpreters who expressed a varied approach to using specific forms depending on the number of conversational parties, participants' education, the complexity of the task at hand, and the context. In the study, some interpreters claim that using the first person (recommended approach) might seem confusing and unnatural to conversational parties, specifically those, who are inexperienced as far as communicating through an interpreter is concerned. Others claim that using the third person (indirect address) allowed them to detach themselves from the message and assume the status of a messenger. It should be pointed out that most (if not all) university-level programmes teach interpreting using the direct address and condone the application of the other methods. In the professional field the use of the indirect methods has been traditionally considered bad practice, typical of non-professional interpreters (Pöchhacker, 2004). There must be a reason, however, why some interpreters resort to using methods which are not the “golden standard” of the industry.

The explanation is directly linked to the attitudes towards the conversational parties which a remote interpreter assumes. The modern concept of remote interpreting which focuses on the interpreter as the central actor of an interaction, looks at a remote interpreter through the lens of the cultural, sociological and ethical factors and conditions in which they operate, instead of just considering interpreters to be a linguistic device, rendering messages bidirectionally in a mechanical way. The above-mentioned factors stem from the actual types of assignments and requirements posed by the context and the attitudes towards the conversational parties. And so, from a theoretical point of view and in alignment with the cultural and linguistic requirements, apart from the roles of speakers and listeners, Hale distinguishes the following approaches which interpreters adopt while interpreting:

- an advocate for the interpreted party,

- an advocate for the service provider (employer or client),
- a gatekeeper who controls and manages the flow of an interaction,
- a facilitator who ensures the success of interaction between parties, and
- a faithful conduit transmitting utterances in both directions.

Tryuk (2006 and 2012) further develops the list, adding the following responsibilities and roles:

- meeting organizer
- interaction coordinator
- assistant
- cultural mediator
- advocate
- referee
- censor
- confidant
- guide
- traitor

Biernacka (2010) complements the list with the following role:

- scapegoat (the one to blame for a failure in communication)

And the author wishes to add three more:

- IT expert
- evaluator (an always-present judge of what is happening within an interpreting interaction)
- “non-ally” (a role assumed dynamically to defend oneself from the pseudo-camaraderie established between a remote community interpreter and a conversational party of the same native tongue).

The above division of roles brings in the element of culture, language, technology, and social aspects into the realm of interpreting, while also taking into account the functions which facilitate the flow of a conversation between the parties.

Given this multifaceted approach, reconciling all the above roles with the common myth that an interpreter should be transparent and impartial is challenging, especially since this stereotype is perpetuated by the interpreters and translators themselves (Tryuk, 2012). As discussed previously, interpreters who promote their transparency, impartiality, and neutrality are those professionals who secure employment as these qualities are perceived as ideal in the

market. The paradox is that the market often fails to recognise that true neutrality or impartiality in interpreting is unattainable, as the process of understanding (a key step in interpreting) is influenced by numerous factors.

The following subchapter will examine the above-mentioned roles in greater detail, considering the perspectives of both the client and the LEP, while accounting for the diversity of topics and contexts within a remote environment.

4.2.6.3 Expectations: Client vs LEP

As discussed in the preceding chapters, a remote interpreter is expected to be a conduit or a voice, and to render each and every utterance in a faithful and impartial manner. Scholars agree, however, that the process of community interpreting is more complex, and that it involves a certain number of roles adopted dynamically within an interpreting interaction. In other words, the diverse roles of remote interpreters are reflections of an interplay of linguistic, cultural, ethical, sociological and technological skills, underpinning the ever-changing nature of an interpreted conversation. Baker agrees that the idea of a romantic and idealistic interpreter who builds bridges does not exist. She claims that interpreters are not always able to control the narrative, but they are able to control the discourse through the adoption of different roles (Baker, 2008). On the other hand, the stereotype of a (remote) community interpreter as a transparent entity or a mere bridge highlights the fact that conversational parties often lack awareness of the complexities involved in the interpreting process.

The following chart presents a breakdown of the respective roles established by Tryuk (2012), Biernacka (2010), and further supplemented by the author along with a description of their properties from the point of view of the client and the LEP. It also shows the expectations of each party towards a remote community interpreter.

Role	Description
Meeting organizer	On the one hand, a meeting organizer's primary responsibility is to render the act of communication between parties possible. On the other hand, however, a meeting organizer undertakes the task of orchestrating the logistical part of a linguistic exchange within a remote environment. A meeting organizer can initiate a remote connection between parties through the platform, bring another participant into a call (based on the instructions presented by the client) or to perform the rituals of introduction of the LEP

	<p>to the client or vice versa (again, based on the instructions issued by the client). It is a conversational participant who speaks the languages of the other parties which allows him to ensure an expected flow of communication. In summary, a meeting organizer creates an environment in which communication between conversational parties is possible and carries out logistical tasks in order to facilitate the flow of a conversation to an expected level.</p>
Interaction coordinator	<p>An interpreter is an integral part to the interaction, an active participant and a third conversational party who takes turns listening and speaking and who has the power to decide the order or sequence of the production of utterances. Through the process of interpreting, an interaction coordinator listens and speaks, interprets, paraphrases, shortens, adds, clarifies, and summarises information. An interaction coordinator can speak on their own behalf whenever deemed necessary in order to flag possible communication issues or to interrupt the other party. On the other hand, an interaction coordinator can give the floor to any conversational party in specific situations based on their own judgment, e.g. to clarify or to ask for repetitions. There are also instances, in which an interpreter voices their lack of understanding, therefore changing the direction of the interaction. An interpreter can also omit information deliberately or simply because they missed or forgot a specific piece, thereby redirecting the conversation. Wadensjö (1998) explains that there are two particular approaches to the process of coordinating an interaction: an implicit approach and an explicit approach. The former is implemented via interpreting strategies, such as paraphrases, shortening or omitting information, while the latter is an external approach in which an interaction coordinator reaches out directly to the previous conversational party to repair their utterance (e.g. to clarify the utterance), reaches out to the other party to clarify/explain an utterance or introduces a meta-commentary to provide an explanation in the case of an misunderstanding or a particular behaviour of any party. In other words, an interaction coordinator can change the flow of the conversation or force it to take a particular route. Tryuk (2006) explains that an interpreter has a very special status within a conversational interaction, and in this particular role,</p>

	<p>an interpreter becomes an animator, who reproduces mechanically the sounds and words of the party, an author, who is responsible for the production of meaning, and a principal, who takes into consideration the other party to ensure a meaningful interaction.</p>
Evaluator	<p>The evaluator constantly monitors and assesses the dynamics within an interpreting interaction, and specifically the performance of the conversational parties. This role interconnects closely with the one of Interaction coordinator and it involves the remote interpreter paying attention not only to the utterance but also meticulously analysing it from the point of view of speech acts, possible misunderstanding, cultural or social aspects which might be incomprehensible to the other party based on the judgment of a remote interpreter. In other words, an evaluator monitors the completeness of conversational parties. This role is dependent on the internal voice, or a good judgment of a remote interpreter, heightened by their experience or skills. An evaluator works constantly in the background on the verge of languages, cultures, social or economic similarities or differences between the conversational parties, flags any possible points of friction and decides on the subsequent plan of actions.</p>
Assistant	<p>The role of an assistant is the one where a remote interpreter gives a helpful hand to the conversational parties on multiple levels. Perhaps the most significant aspect is the provision of psychological comfort, as simply the service of interpreting removes a certain burden or stress from conversational parties who would be unable to communicate otherwise, without the assistance of a remote interpreter. Another aspect is the possibility of using one's native language to communicate — a comfort which would not be possible without a remote interpreter. An assistant helps in the formulation of ideas in another language and simply gives a voice to the party who needs to speak up in a language and culture unknown to them.</p>
Cultural mediator	<p>A distinguishing property of remote community interpreting compared to conference interpreting is the distribution of power. Whereas in conference interpreting there is no difference of power as speakers and the audience usually share the same status, in RCI interpreters participate in conversations in which the balance of power is frequently shifted to one particular side.</p>

	<p>Regardless of whether it is a medical appointment, an appointment to discuss benefits or housing situation, immigration or police appointment the interaction involves one party who is a requestor and another who is a grantor, in other words, one who wants and the other who gives, therefore creating an imbalance of power. The nature of RCI is a complex one, however, as on top of the imbalance of power stemming from the different interests of the parties involved, there is another imbalance related to the lack of the common language or culture. A typical scenario of an RCI interaction is one, in which a member of the minority (e.g. an immigrant, a member of an unprivileged community) does not share the same language and culture with a member of the majority (e.g. police or immigration services, official bodies of the target country). A cultural mediator is able to identify challenges resulting from the mismatch of cultures or take preventive actions within a conversational interaction. Tryuk (2006) says that the concept of cultural mediation is synonymous with the actions, such as explanation, clarification and expression of the mechanisms of the other culture which are unknown to the LEP or to the client.</p>
Advocate	<p>An advocate is an intermediary who supports both parties of the conversational interaction, and such support is usually expected by both. The client and the LEP expect and require a remote interpreter to identify possible issues and provide them with guidance within an interpreting interaction, giving clear information on the nature of a problem and providing them with solutions. A more extreme approach adopted by non-professional interpreters involves advocating for the LEP, advising and counselling on the best course of actions (activities which extend beyond the notion of community interpreting).</p>
Referee	<p>A referee is a mediator who is able to navigate through a tense situation between the parties of a conversational interaction. Although mediation is not the primary role of an interpreter, a certain level of paraphrasing and smoothing out of utterances in social situations can help a referee-interpreter manage tense moments between parties whose language systems or politeness patterns might not align, thereby ensuring a successful interaction</p>
Censor	<p>Although the role of a censor does not seem appropriate as a remote</p>

	<p>interpreter should attempt to render all messages faithfully and refrain from withholding information. A lot of interpreters believe that they should paraphrase utterances which are vulgar in nature or omit the swear words altogether. Tryuk (2006) says that non-professional interpreters find this aspect very challenging. A good practise is to advise the client that a phrase to be interpreted contains expletives and let the client decide how to proceed. However, Tryuk provides examples of statements of interpreters who refuse to interpret expletives or refuse to interpret at all due to the vulgarity of the language (ibid.).</p>
Confidant	<p>Remote community interpreters find themselves working in a great number of disparate contexts where members of the language minority seek linguistic assistance. Very often, however, the assistance sought goes beyond the mere rendering of utterances in a language foreign to the LEP and a camaraderie is formed, specifically if a remote interpreter and an LEP share the same cultural background. This bond helps to establish a relationship of trust as an LEP speaker finds solace in a remote interpreter who speaks the same language and who is likely to relate to the problems, challenges and, very often, traumatic events experienced by the speaker, particularly, if the LEP is removed from an environment in which their native tongue is spoken. An interpreter-confidant can be perceived as a last resort, someone who, based on the LEP's expectations, should understand them and be on their side. This role involves providing emotional support to LEPs, but it can also become emotionally taxing for a remote interpreter, especially in difficult or traumatic situations. While it is a natural human reaction to want to help others, particularly those who belong to the same culture or who are similar, interpreters should avoid assuming this role as the line is very thin, and doing so can compromise their objectivity.</p>
Guide	<p>A remote community interpreter can also perform the role of a guide who helps the LEP find themselves in a foreign reality of their residence. A guide can also explain the reason for which certain utterances were interpreted in a particular way (e.g. a LEP asks why the number 1500 was interpreted as “fifteen hundred” and not as “one thousand five hundred”). Other instances may involve an LEP asking a remote interpreter about the nuances of their</p>

	<p>job. Such interactions are quite common, specifically, during the waiting time, when both a remote interpreter and the LEP are placed on hold in a telephonic interaction. A more literal adoption of the role occurs when a remote interpreters needs to actually assist an LEP through the voice-recorded menu while waiting for a connection with an agent.</p>
Traitor	<p>As discussed previously, a remote community interpreter is generally an employee or an agent of the client. In this relationship, by definition, there is an imbalance of power in which an LEP confides to remote interpreter working “for the other side”. This can be perceived as a treacherous relationship in which a remote interpreter, the traitor, works against the LEP. If the interaction does not succeed or is unfavourable to the LEP, a remote interpreter may be accused of misleading, misinterpreting, or incorrectly rendering the utterance. A reversed situation may also occur. As the client does not understand the language shared between the remote community interpreter and the other party, the remote interpreter might be accused of a collusion with the LEP. When one party does not understand the language used by the other two parties involved, it leaves room for potential accusations, especially in emotionally charged interactions. Naturally, this role is not assumed consciously by remote interpreters, but rather, it is assigned to them by conversational parties.</p>
Scapegoat	<p>A remote community interpreter’s task is to ensure a successful communication between the parties in a remote environment. However, as discussed previously, a setting in which both parties have to rely on the skills and experience of a remote interpreter is one built on trust and goodwill established between the remote interpreter and the involved parties. If a communicative goal is not met or an interaction is unsuccessful, this delicate trust can quickly erode. In such situations, it is easy to point fingers at a remote interpreter, attributing mistakes and assigning blame for any less-than-ideal outcome in the interpreting process. For example, an LEP who has a certain level of the proficiency of the target language might accuse a remote interpreter of misunderstanding their statement or providing incomplete interpreting based. On the other hand, a client who doesn't share the same language as the other party, can only assess the remote interpreter's</p>

	performance by assessing the proficiency of the working language, as they lack the ability to evaluate the other code. Nevertheless, this limited perspective is often sufficient to attribute blame for a failure to achieve the expected outcome.
IT expert	The dynamic nature of technology demands that remote community interpreters stay informed about the latest advancements in remote communication tools. From a practical point of view, interpreters who work remotely (usually from home) receive interpreting assignments with no prior knowledge of their nature. In other words, they never know what next call or assignment brings. This the reason for which they should be able to navigate effortlessly between multiple systems, websites and resources, such as online dictionaries, own glossaries, reference sites, client's resource base to look for specific terminology or information while, simultaneously, participating in an ongoing interaction. At times, remote interpreters are requested to bring the LEP into a call, dial national or international numbers, mute specific participants or all at once, disconnect participants or operate a voice-recorded menu. All of these activities are performed in real life and remote interpreters should be well versed in operating multiple platforms and tools simultaneously.
Non-ally	A non-ally role is one inspired by praxis and proposed by the author. It involves situations in which a certain bond or, as mentioned previously, camaraderie has been established between an LEP individual and a remote community interpreter. A non-ally interpreter actively monitors the development of a potential bond and maintains distance when necessary. In other words, a non-ally-interpreter keeps a delicate balance, remaining sensitive to the relational dynamics, yet intervening when necessary to maintain a professional distance. The non-ally role, therefore, encompasses a nuanced understanding of when to foster connection and when to uphold the necessary boundaries in order to ensure the integrity of the interpreting process.

Table 2. Remote interpreter's roles and external expectations

In this multidimensional field of remote community interpreting, the roles assumed by remote interpreters extend beyond the task of interpreting of utterances between languages.

Each remote interpreter is a multifaceted persona, navigating the challenges of communication across linguistic, cultural, economic and social strata. The concept of roles aligns with the expectations of both the client and the LEP individual, and serves to establish boundaries, albeit delicate, demonstrating that the objectivity of remote interpreters can be easily swayed in either direction. However, the above list might not be exhaustive. As remote community interpreters work with LEP individuals who experience real-life and often serious problems, there are many disparate settings in which such interpreting takes place, and it is next to impossible to predict all situations or requirements which might affect the manner in which a remote interpreter reacts.

From a practical standpoint, to it is not necessary for remote interpreters to overanalyse the utterances or behaviour of any party in an attempt to determine their role at any given moment as this will pose a significant cognitive burden, possibly leading to lower quality of interpreting. However, it is crucial to be aware that remote community interpreting involves a set of activities that, whether consciously or subconsciously, shape their interaction with the conversational parties. The quoted and proposed roles can serve as guidance to remote interpreters, who should remain sensitive to their own behaviour and reactions during interpreting, and practise self-reflection in order to grow professionally.

The following chapter will look at the idea of neutrality from a practical point of view. As discussed previously, remote community interpreting is a lucrative business, however, a crucial element that remains to be discussed are the employment arrangements of the very remote community interpreters.

4.2.6.4 Who Pays the Remote Interpreter

The following subchapter will look into the employment arrangements between clients and remote community interpreters, providing a detailed analysis of the compensation models commonly offered to remote interpreters in Poland between 2021 and 2024.

During and post Covid-19 pandemic, given the discussed limitations imposed by governments and business, the most typical arrangement between Polish remote community interpreters and their employers was a freelance agreement, in which a remote interpreter commits for a specific number of hours. Presently, in Poland, very few companies employ remote community interpreters on per hour basis, however, it is important to mention that there have been no Polish companies employing remote interpreters in this capacity in the indicated timeframe. Companies that do employ Polish remote interpreters are typically international firms based abroad, however, there are international agencies operating in Poland through their

subsidiaries, which are established specifically to hire Polish-speaking remote interpreters on the Polish market. These entities primarily cater to Polish-speaking expatriates living in English-speaking countries, mainly the UK or the USA. As of 2024, there are no companies dedicated to serving linguistic minorities located within Poland itself.

Under the freelance arrangement (most popular) remote interpreters are usually self-employed and responsible for the payment of their own taxes locally. This also means that they are able to work from their desired locations. Within the freelance system, the two following models of compensation have emerged:

1. **Payment per hour (shift work).** In this model a remote interpreter works on a shift basis with a prescheduled rota. Depending on the business needs, and the working time-zones, remote interpreters are given slots in which they need to declare their availability (usually in blocks of 4 hours), usually a month in advance. For example, if a company services calls from the USA, remote interpreters located in Poland are usually given afternoon or late night slots to accommodate for the time difference. Companies which service UK calls require that Polish interpreters be available between 10 AM and 6 PM Polish time. In this model remote interpreters are contracted on “per hour” basis and they are paid as such. This means that they are compensated regardless of the number of calls they service. It is important to mention that there are times when there are no calls to interpret. In this particular system remote interpreters know how much they have earned in a given month as this is dependent on the prescheduled time. Unfortunately, very few companies offer this type of employment in the market.

2. **Payment per minute (or second).** This is the most popular model, virtually adopted by most companies (based on private research conducted on LinkedIn), in which remote interpreters are required to log in to the remote interpreting platform for a number of hours they desire. There is no requirement as to the actual number of hours on the part of the client and remote interpreters are free to log out anytime they decide so. The benefits, however, come at a disadvantage as interpreters are only paid for the minutes (or seconds) they actually work. In other words, they only receive payment once the calls come in. Outside of that time they are on what remote interpreters call, “stand-by time” for which they do not get any compensation.

The actual salary the remote interpreters in the Polish-English language pair can count on depends on the company. Based on the private correspondence received by the author in 2023 and 2024, the compensation range for remote community interpreters appears to vary significantly. The rates mentioned in the correspondence presented below range from as low as USD 5 per hour to as high as EUR 18 per hour and USD 0.55 per minute (amounting to USD 33 per hour), reflecting the diverse payment structures, and market conditions within the

industry. The following extracts present the differences in the proposed compensation.

Salary: 35 PLN gross/hour as a translator and **30 PLN gross/hour - first month** – (training period)
Additionally you get **50 zloty** for using a private phone and **50 zloty** for Internet extra.

Extract 1 (private correspondence)

Dear Przemek,

Thank you very much for your answer and for all the file provided. Besides the Criminal Record, please note that we will also need your ID card or Passport, a proof of address (utility bill, local tax council bill or a bank statement) and a recommendation letter from one of your previous employers or clients referring to your experience as an interpreter for English language, if possible.

In what concerns your questions, yes, the rate is of 18 euros/hour, and it's paid monthly based on your invoice and according to the number of hours you worked. Besides your smart phone and a quiet environment, you won't be needing any other software. You may find useful though a computer or laptop where to search for terminology, in case you will need to :)

Extract 2 (private correspondence)

Hello Przemek,

It was really nice talking to you, thanks for reaching out and showing interest in joining Future Group family, we would like to offer you below opportunity

- Job Title : OPI/VRI interpreter
- Working days : 5 days per week (Thu-Mon)
- Working time : 9 hours a day that fall within time window 09:00 am and 18:00 pm US Eastern Standard Time
- Payment : Monthly payment by the 15th of the month for the production of previous month
- Rate : \$0.25 per interpreting minute OR \$6 per login hour depending on availability

Extract 3 (private correspondence)

Let me tell you all details about vacancy;
It will be a full time job 5 days per week 8 hours per day
This is for a project launched in US which your part will be interpreting between Polish and English.
Our working hours will be according to EST. We pay per each logged hour 5\$ (which means 40\$ per day and monthly salary between 850 to 950\$); however, this is during the probation period only. Once passed this period which is for 3 months, salary will be raised.

Extract 4 (private correspondence)

Dear Przemek,

Congratulations! You have passed the Polish language assessment and we are eager to get your onboarding started.

Please read the information below as it is pertinent to this position.

You have been offered a position for the following language(s) and rate(s):

- Language: Polish
 - Rate: \$0.55/min

To accept this offer, please fill in the below:

Extract 5 (private correspondence)

Dear Przemek,

Kindly find the actual information below:

Job description:

Providing **Interpreting Services** between speakers of POLISH and ENGLISH. The calls can involve simple or more complex subjects in the following fields: **Healthcare, Financial, Government, Immigration and Social Services.**

We cooperate with **HM Revenue & Customs UK, National Health Service UK, The Department of Work, UK Visas and Immigration and Pension UK.**

The scheme that is currently available is so called PSN (Preferred Supplier Network).

There are working times available:

Full time - Monday-Friday - 8am - 4pm UK time (8hours)

You are entitled to 48-minute paid break which you can split into couple of smaller breaks anytime between the prebooked working hours

Part time - Monday-Friday - 10am - 12pm UK time (2 hours)

You are entitled to 12-minute paid break which you can split into couple of smaller breaks anytime between the prebooked working hours.

Part time - Monday-Friday - 2pm - 4pm UK time (2 hours)

guaranteed income: 6 Eur/hour

Extract 6 (private correspondence)

The range of proposed wages per hour and the discussed responsibilities differ considerably for what is considered to be a very demanding job. The lowest paying offer (Extract 4) pays less than the minimum salary in Poland introduced by the government. Extract 3 presents an offer with a compensation of USD 6 per hour which also covers VRI.

At the end of each month remote interpreters receive a breakdown of the service minutes or the total number of active hours. In some cases they need to produce a fiscal invoice and send it to the employer, and in others no invoice is required. The total amount of earnings is usually wired to remote interpreters in the following month by the employer via bank transfer or PayPal.

As discussed previously, remote interpreters are primarily employed by the client (an interpreting agency, an official body, a hospital, etc.) to serve the underprivileged members of a linguistic minority. In other words, a remote community interpreter renders services (upon the completion of which a compensation is paid) to an entity which indirectly constitutes a conversational party. This creates an ethical dilemma, as usually a relationship of employer-employee (regardless of the type of a contract between the parties) involves a certain number of rules and obligations to be honoured by the employee. From an ethical point of view, this changes the balance of power as remote community interpreters work for the “other side” and not for the underprivileged party and therefore their impartiality could be contested (which would assign a Traitor role to a remote interpreter).

4.2.6.5 Defying the Impartiality and Neutrality

The previous chapters explain that the popular instruction “Just interpret what I say” is a multifaceted one and not as straightforward as it may seem. The perception of a remote

interpreter's task appears to be flawed and the complexities of the process of interpreting are not as clearly defined or explained even to the very interpreters.

The common knowledge or understanding in the field is that a remote interpreter should be imperceptible, invisible and neutral. At the same time, both the client and the LEP expect for the remote interpreter to be an expert in the field, and to have a broad understanding of their cultural and linguistic nuances in order to provide accurate and correct interpreting, the ultimate aim of which is successful communication, without adding, omitting or changing anything.

The most important realisation that one needs to make is that a remote community interaction is not a natural process per se. Conversational parties would not, normally, need an intermediary, whose aim is to help communicate, if they shared a linguistic background. In other words, a "natural" conversation, in which both parties speak the same language would not require an extra element in the form of a remote interpreter. We may assume, therefore, that a remotely interpreted interaction is an "artificial environment" which would not normally exist. It *does* exist, however, and a remote interpreter *is* a part of it, if not its most central element, as it is the very reason why an interaction has a chance of success. That is where a paradox occurs as the expectation of the client or the employer, sometimes even of the very interpreter, is that an interpreter should be made of glass, should be an outsider, when in fact, he is an insider, or rather he has to be there in order to facilitate understanding. This is what Bahadir (2010) calls a "schizophrenic situation" in which an interpreter is expected to be there and not to be there at the same time. Given the nature of an interpreted interaction, it is safe to say that an interpreter *is* a conversational party in an interpreted interaction with everything that it entails.

The presence of an interpreter whose task is to listen to utterances, process them, and render them in another language involves a set of sub-processes and cognitive activities. The hermeneutical approach states that a text (or utterance) is a dynamic entity and its interpretation heavily depends on the listener (or a remote interpreter in this case). Therefore, it is impossible to expect a remote interpreter to render utterances mechanically, as the process of interpretation and rendering meaning involves a number of cycles of mental reconceptualisation of an utterance (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2010). The fruit of the process of reconceptualisation is a target utterance, being a blend of past experiences, remote interpreter's knowledge and the source utterance. In other words, meaning is not a property of the message but rather of the human mind (Hejwowski, 2012).

Another point to consider are the remote interpreter's roles, and expectations of the conversational parties within an interpreting interaction. The recognition and distinction of specific roles by scholars underscore the complexity of remote community interpreting and

highlight the challenges in clearly defining the process. The roles present a set of disparate modes or approaches within the process of interpreting, and they give evidence to the fact that a remote interpreter adopts attitudes and reacts dynamically in a great number of ways, depending on the outcome of the interaction. The reaction translates directly into an intervention or interference on the part of a remote interpreter. For example, adopting a cultural mediator role requires for a remote interpreter to leave the “impartiality and neutrality zone” and express the remote interpreter’s point of view based on the understanding of the situation. Constant assessing the performance of conversational parties and the analysis of their utterances (for example, in respect of the speech acts, even if done at a subconscious level) means that a remote interpreter works in the evaluator mode. Another example involves having to explain linguistic intricacies, if they occur. In such a situation a remote interpreter explains the issue to the parties, thereby affecting the outcome of an interaction, which might be perceived by the other party as treacherous (the role of a traitor).

The above serves as evidence to show that remote interpreters do occupy a certain position in an interaction, swaying it and affecting whenever a need arises, even if they are not physically present in the same room as the conversational parties or visible in any other way. This idea must not be comforting to the conversational parties, as it places a remote interpreter in a unique position and grants him a special status, one of more control, or perhaps *all* the control over the interaction. It is safe to state, then, that the position is central in nature and of utmost importance, even if the concept is difficult to accept.

The question of whether a remote community interpreter can be impartial within an interpreting situation is a wrong question. The author believes that the proposed concept is unrealistic, as it is idealistic, and propelled by an old-fashioned perception of who or what an interpreter is. A remote community interpreter (or any interpreter, in fact) is, fundamentally, a human being, with all the limitations and challenges it entails. The author claims that a professional, well-trained remote community interpreter can go above and beyond these limitations, not by trying to eradicate them, but rather by retaining a rational, open-minded approach and a level of awareness of the shortcomings of a human mind and of the complexities of an interpreting activity in an effort to maintain objectivity.

4.3 Conclusion

The issue of ethics within the field of remote community interaction is a complex problem. Regardless of the existence of multiple codes of ethics and policies describing strategies

available to remote interpreters, there remains a plethora of ethical considerations that they struggle with on a daily basis.

This chapter investigated a selection of relevant philosophical strategies in order to explain, or at least, throw more light on the process of decision-making in ethical dilemmas, which might explain or outline the reason remote interpreters make specific choices. It is crucial to highlight that remote interpreters should continuously conduct a process of self-reflection to critically evaluate their own choices and decisions. This way, they will remain vigilant, aware and more prepared for future tasks.

The chapter presented an approach to the translation/interpreting art, which shifted from focusing on the process to acknowledge the actor, eventually giving rise to the concept of interpreter's roles within an interpreting interaction. The chapter also discussed the expectations of clients vs LSP, the models of contracting remote interpreters, and payment plans.

Finally, based on the understanding and the application of the roles, the chapter raised the issue of the neutrality and impartiality of interpreters, and questioned the common stereotype prevailing in the interpreting industry.

The following chapter will look at the nature of telephonic communication, its participants, technology, challenges and contexts to explore the intricacies of the process in order to contextualise the procedural complexity of telephone community interpreting.

5 Theoretical Mapping of Telephone Conversations

Telephone conversations are a well-established form of interactions which represent a distinct form of communication, marked by the absence of non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions or body language. This absence generates the need for a greater reliance on verbal cues and the tone of voice to convey emotions, attitudes, and nuances of meaning (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). The dynamics of telephone conversations are, therefore, partly shaped by the need to compensate for the lack of visual information, which can lead to misunderstandings or require additional verbal clarification.

Telephone has been widely used in multiple industries, and contexts, and has not been pushed out by the onset of the Internet or the “text culture”. It is not a surprise, therefore, that it has made its way to the realm of Translation Studies, specifically, the dimension of remote community interpreting. As presented in the previous chapters, telephone interpreting is a growing business, inspired by the necessity to help others, and propelled by its lucrative nature.

This chapter will map the most significant concepts within telephone communications, such as the notion of turn-taking, lack of visual channel and intentions of conversational parties, and it will subsequently explore their relevance to the field of remote telephone community interpreting.

5.1 What Makes the Telephone Popular

Telephone has been a mode of communication for over a century, as it enables voice-based interaction between individuals in real-time. The reasons people make telephone calls are multifaceted and they encompass social, psychological, and practical dimensions. The popularity of the telephone as a communication tool can be attributed to several key factors that align with human social needs, technological advancements, and the demands and trends of modern life. These factors have been undergoing a constant process of change since the invention of the telephone in the late 19th century, in step with the changes which occur within societies. The following properties have promoted and accelerated the implementation, and development of telephone technology:

- immediate and direct communication
- versatility
- convenience
- emotional and social connection
- accessibility

Undoubtedly, the human need for interaction constitutes the core of telephone communication, and telephone calls provide a platform for individuals to maintain personal relationships, which in turn offers a sense of intimacy and immediacy that text-based communication often lacks (Baym, 2010). The voice transmitted through the telephone, similarly to face-to-face encounters, can convey emotions, and specifically, meaning, which facilitates a deeper connection between people than computer mediated communication (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008).

In professional contexts, telephone interactions ensure an efficient manner of communication (Hopper, 1992). The ability to ask and answer questions in real-time significantly enhances productivity and collaboration. Telephone has the power to connect people who would be unable to interact personally due to a number of reasons, such as health impairments, social and economic factors or simply the distance. Additionally, it is economical in terms of its cost and the technological infrastructure is not complex.

The following subchapter will explore the intentions of telephone callers categorised into personal, professional and emergency calls with a particular emphasis on their underpinning factors.

5.2 Intentions behind Telephonic Interactions

The purpose of a call determines the structure, tone, and content of the interaction and it greatly affects the dynamics of telephone conversations. In other words, different objectives of callers shape telephone communication and each interaction.

For example, emergency calls constitute a category, where the primary purpose of a caller is to convey urgent information or request immediate help. Such calls are marked by a high level of urgency, because conversational parties are focused on exchanging critical information as quickly and clearly as possible. Regular or typical conversational phases, as discussed previously, are skipped, and such interactions are questionnaire-based, which means that one conversational party (usually an emergency dispatcher) asks a series of questions to the caller, and expects clear and concise answers. The effectiveness of the process can cause dramatic real-world implications.

Another type of calls are personal interactions, which have a more flexible structure, as they are propelled by a genuine human need for social interaction. Tannen (1984) discusses how personal conversations often focus on sharing experiences, offering support and expressing emotions. Such calls often have a social-bonding role, and they allow for more digressions and

a less formal turn-taking system, which consequently reflects the relational rather than transactional nature of the interaction. Such interactions are more emotional and they follow an informal, conversational pace and tone. It is essential to mention that different cultures and languages may involve disparate systems of pace and tone, they may also involve different patterns of rituals or interaction gambits. Scholars have also identified discrepancies in the way native and non-native participants communicate within a telephone interaction (Taleghani-Nikazm, C., 2002).

On the other hand, in professional contexts, the purpose of a telephone call often revolves around achieving specific business objectives, such as decision-making, problem-solving, or information exchange. Boden (1994) highlights how business calls are structured to facilitate such goals, with the application of clear openings, agendas, and closings, which are focused on the achievement of the objective of the conversation. What matters in a professional setting is efficiency and the result, and so such a structured approach ensures these goals.

Professional contexts also involve a more “mundane” stratum, in which regular people — claimants — initiate calls to local government offices, financial institutions or businesses, to name a few, with a particular goal to address issues or clarify discrepancies. Such interactions are formal in nature and follow a “client-vendor” pattern, where one party (the claimant) expresses a particular need, usually to sort out a problem, and relies on the cooperation of the other party (the institution). Another, yet similar, type of interactions involves institutions or government offices making telephonic calls to the claimants. Such calls are, generally, of inquisitive nature, for instance, revenue services, benefit services, bank calls are all made in order to seek information from individual calls. The purpose of such interactions is, generally, to obtain a particular piece of information or clarifications from the claimant. These two types of interactions follow very distinct patterns of communications.

When claimants initiate calls to institutions, they often do so with specific expectations and demands. They seek resolution, information, or assistance. On the other hand, when institutions initiate calls to claimants, the recipients are required to respond to specific questions, which may cause the claimants to adopt a more defensive attitude, given the element of a surprise, a privacy concern or uncertainty about the purpose of the call. This shift in behaviour can be attributed to the following factors:

1. **Power Dynamics:** the concept of power dynamics helps to understand why claimants may be more demanding when they initiate calls and it may be connected to the idea of “losing face” or “saving face” discussed previously. Callers often feel empowered to express their demands and expectations in a more assertive manner when they initiate the interaction, as they

are actively seeking a resolution to their problem. This empowerment stems from the caller's perception of their role as a customer or client with certain rights and expectations from the institution. In other words, claimants have an issue and they need to have it solved — a scenario similar to a client-business relationship.

2. **Psychological Reactance:** psychological reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) suggests that individuals experience discomfort and resistance when they perceive a threat to or a restriction of their freedom. In a situation where a call has been initiated by institutions, the claimants may perceive the interaction as an intrusion into their personal space or an attempt to control the narrative of the conversation. This in turn triggers a defensive response (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Such a defensive attitude is a psychological mechanism to regain control and protect the autonomy and the face of the claimant.

3. **Context of Interaction:** the context in which the communication occurs affects the behaviour of the claimant. When claimants call institutions, they are typically prepared for the interaction as they know what to say and what to expect. They have specific goals in mind, and therefore, they are more demanding in their attempts to seek outcomes which are favourable to them. On the other hand, when institutions call the claimants, the lack of preparation, a surprising nature of a call or even a physical location of the claimant can lead to the adoption of a defensive attitude as a protective measure against unexpected demands or information (Goffman, 1959). The presented change of the approach can also be explained by the Communication Accommodation Theory, which suggests that individuals adjust their communication style based on the social context and their goals — when claimants initiate calls, they may adopt a more assertive or demanding communication style to achieve their objectives, however, when claimants receive calls initiated by institutions, the unexpected element of the interaction may lead them to assume a more defensive approach with a goal to protect their own interests and to navigate successfully an unpredictable situation (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991).

The above-mentioned factors refer to an “ideal” conversation or interactions and do not take into consideration settings or contexts in which conversational parties belong to disparate cultural and linguistic groups. As discussed previously, conversational encounters with the assistance of a remote interpreters are not “natural” interactions as the presence of an interpreter poses additional challenges. In order to navigate those, remote interpreters must have a thorough understanding of the concept of the speech act and the differences stemming from the dissonance of cultural elements of the conversational parties. A thorough knowledge of the working languages, sensitivity to the cultural and sociological aspects, and attentiveness to a

great number of nuances allow remote interpreters to identify subtleness within the utterances of the conversational parties and react appropriately (when possible). Additionally, an awareness of the power distribution patterns, the context, and different communication styles of conversational parties in interpreted encounters may help remote interpreters recognise properly their intentions, which in turn will help remote interpreters with the interpreting process.

However, even with theoretical knowledge, telephone interpreting presents inherent challenges due to the absence of visual cues. The following subchapter will explore the specific difficulties that arise from the lack of a visual channel in telephone interpreted interactions.

5.3 Lack of Visual Channel

In regular face-to-face interactions the conversational parties can support their understating of verbal utterances with the non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and body language. However, in the absence of a visual channel, which is typical for telephone conversations, the dynamics of communications are significantly affected and reshaped. Speakers can no longer rely on what they see or notice in order to navigate the interaction and they are forced to adapt the way they send and interpret messages. The lack of visual cues impacts both the way emotional nuances are perceived, and the flow of a conversation. Conversational parties are required to heighten their sense of hearing and focus on auditory hints to be able to successfully manage an interaction.

These hints take various forms, including tone of voice, laughter, sighs, vocal cues, changes in pitch and tone, pauses, and speech patterns. These become primary tools to express emotions, attitudes, and subtleties, on the one hand, and to perceive the utterances and meaning presented by the other caller, on the other. Scholars emphasise the importance of the non-verbal communication, particularly, the tone of voice in conveying emotions. However, the lack of a visual channel and the sole reliance on audible cues may sometimes lead to misinterpretations or a lack of understanding, as the emotional nuances are more challenging to convey and interpret (Mehrabian, 1971).

As discussed, the absence of visual feedback can lead to challenges in accurately interpreting the other person's reactions or level of engagement. Misunderstandings or misinterpretations that might be quickly eliminated in face-to-face interactions through immediate visual feedback can persist longer in telephone conversations and they may require more elaborate verbal clarification (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008).

It is essential to understand, however, that different languages do not share the same mechanisms and therefore there is no universal guideline to be followed. Differences may occur at the syntactical level or be expressed through the use of certain sounds, which are not present in the other language. A mismatch of expectations can occur, in which one party who speaks language A will await a signal or a set of signals from the speaker of the language B. A failure to deliver a specific signal may cause a disruption in the process of communication.

In response to the lack of the visual channel, the management of turn-taking and conversational flow has to be adapted as well. Speakers have to adopt a system of knowing when to speak based on cues to indicate that a speaker has finished their utterance. The following subchapter will explore the turn-taking techniques employed in phone conversations.

5.4 Turn-taking in Telephone Communication

Turn-taking in phone conversations constitutes a crucial aspect, which contributes to, or ensures successful communications. It allows the conversational parties to exchange information in a structured manner. Unlike face-to-face interactions, in which visual cues play a significant role in letting participants know that one person has finished speaking and another can begin, telephone conversations depend heavily on auditory cues to navigate the process of turn-taking. As mentioned previously, however, the reliance on auditory gambits introduces a number of challenges and requires certain strategies to manage turn-taking process.

As discussed previously, the framework to understand the dynamics behind the turn-taking process was laid out by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974). They identified a set of rules that govern turn-taking in conversational interactions, and determine the following categories of cues, governing the turn-taking mechanism, and their theoretical tenets can be translated onto the realm of telephone interactions, in which certain strategies, and parameters have to be implemented to account for the absence of visual cues, namely:

1. **Voice Patterns:** the way conversational parties change the pitch, tone, and speed of voice provide valuable clues about whether they are finishing their utterance or still have more to say. If the voice goes up, it might be a hint for the other party to start their turn, but if it goes down, it might be indicative of a final thought.

2. **Choice of Words:** conversational parties often use certain words or phrases as a gentle nudge for the other person to take their turn. For example, ending a sentence with “you know?” or “right?” in English or an affirmative “tak” and “prawda” in Polish can constitute an invitation for the other party to take their turn.

3. **Pauses:** when a speaking party takes a moment to pause, it often creates an open invitation for the other party to contribute. The length of the pause is crucial, as a quick pause might not be indicative of an invitation. On the other hand, a longer break usually signals that the party is ready to give the floor to the other speaker.

4. **Management of overlaps and interruptions:** it is very common for conversational parties to exchange their thoughts at the same time during phone calls, usually because of wrong timing. In such situations, one party must stop talking to let the other party continue (Schegloff, 2000). The choice of the party to resume speaking may also depend on the distribution of power. For example, during a telephonic medical appointment, if an overlap of utterances occurs between a patient and a doctor, the patient may choose to let the doctor speak out of respect.

5. **Corrective actions:** in the case of a misunderstanding or a failure to hear properly the utterance, conversational parties find ways to clarify the shortcomings, which may involve a change in the speaking party. For example, one party might paraphrase their last point to ensure that they are understood, and then let the other party respond.

To summarise, pauses, change in tone, pitch, and volume, certain discourse markers, such as “uh-huh” or “I see”, “well”, “so” or Polish “no tak”, “no no”, and many others constitute critical gambits employed by conversational parties to signal the end of a turn or the willingness to give the floor to the other speaker. On the other hand, vocal fillers “you know,” and explicit verbal cues may indicate agreement, understanding, or the desire to contribute and take over the process of speaking. Such cues include specific linguistic markers, for example filled pauses (e.g., “um”, “uh”, “erm”, “yyy”), discourse markers (e.g., “so”, “well”), and explicit verbal cues indicating the end of a turn or inviting the other person to speak (Schegloff, 1982). All of these gambits are verbal cues and they require a heightened sense of auditory sensitivity and the ability to interpret subtle changes in tone and attitude of the speakers (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Another factor to consider is the purpose and context of a telephonic interaction which can significantly affect the turn-taking mechanisms. In professional settings, for example, the structure of the conversation may be more ritualised and be filled with formulaic expressions, with clear expectations regarding who speaks when and for how long. This can lead to more structured turn-taking patterns. Another factor to take into consideration is the hierarchical status of the participants or the specific goals of the interaction (Boden, 1994). In such a scenario, a speaker whose position within the hierarchy is higher will give clear indication when the other party may take their turn. Such situations can disrupt the natural or expected flow of turn-taking. Additionally, speakers may employ requests for repetition or clarification to ensure

mutual understanding, which also contribute to a change in the turn-taking mechanism of their interaction (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1974).

5.5 Preference: Telephone vs Face-to-face

As mentioned already, the intentions and the context of a telephonic conversation may sway the interaction into a particular direction or shape its course. Another point to consider is the preference, or rather the preferences, of callers for communication via telephone over face-to-face interactions. Such preferences are usually determined by personal factors or by the reason underlying the necessity to start a communicational interaction. The reasons can range from convenience and time-saving to emotional comfort and the nature of the relationship between the conversational parties. The following list presents possible reasons for which phone conversations might be preferred:

- **distance:** phone calls provide a crucial method for communication even over large distance, which might be problematic to conversational parties to traverse;
- **urgency:** phone calls offer a direct and quick manner of communication, eliminating the delays related to face-to-face appointments;
- **time efficiency:** phone calls can be more time-efficient, which enables conversational parties to obtain required information without the need to travel;
- **multitasking:** phone conversations allow speakers to engage in other activities simultaneously, such as household chores (Ling, 2004);
- **anonymity:** the absence of face-to-face contact can provide a sense of anonymity, which can facilitate communication for some conversational parties, specifically in emotionally-difficult or sensitive situations;
- **control over emotional expression:** without the visual cues present in a regular, face-to-face interaction, conversational parties might feel they have more control over their emotional expression, choosing how much of their feelings to reveal through their voice. As a result, they may act in ways they normally wouldn't during face-to-face interactions. Suler (2004) conducted a study of remote communication, introducing the concept of the “online disinhibition effect,” where the lack of physical presence reduces the perceived immediacy and consequences of one's actions, resulting in behaviour that might be more impulsive (Suler, 2004);
- **social anxiety:** in alignment with the tenets of the previous point, conversational parties with social anxiety or discomfort in social settings may find phone calls less intimidating than

face-to-face interactions, as they remove the stress of physical presence and non-verbal cues (Turkle, 2011). On the other hand, some people may experience a various degree of anxiety faced with a necessity to answer their telephone and have a telephone conversation (Fielding, 1990). One major factor contributing to telephone anxiety is the absence of non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions or body language, which are crucial in other forms of communication. This absence can make phone conversations feel more challenging and increase the pressure to respond correctly and quickly, particularly in professional settings where the fear or worry of making mistakes or being judged is heightened (Kim et al., 2023). Telephone conversations constitute contexts where the sole elements are the voices of the participants. The focused auditory environment draws undivided attention to each speaker, underlying the significance of their verbal input. As a result, speakers become acutely aware of the impact of their words, facing the immediate consequences of their expressions without the mitigating influence of non-verbal cues, which might otherwise distract participants during regular face-to-face interactions. Consequently, the fear or worry of answering a telephone call may lead to physical symptoms such as shortness of breath or nausea, consequently resulting in poorer performance (Internet source 6).

The preference for phone conversations over face-to-face appointments can be propelled by a complex set of factors and it may affect the outcome of a telephonic interaction. As mentioned previously, some speakers may feel threatened or uncomfortable on the phone (specifically when they are not the ones who initiate the call) which may in turn lower their performance, outcome or the effectiveness of their communicative skills.

The following subchapter will examine the factors affecting telephonic communication, with particular emphasis on their relevance in remote community interpreting interactions.

5.6 Implications on RCI

The realm of telephone community interpreting needs to be analysed through the lens of a telephonic interaction, which means that all the related challenges of telephone communication discussed in this chapter should be taken into consideration. Such interactions, like any other phone conversations, occur entirely within a dimension where the parties communicate exclusively through the auditory channel. The difference, however, between a regular two-way phone conversation and interpreted phone interactions, which require a remote interpreter to be successful, are presented below:

- As discussed, remote community interpreting delivered over the telephonic link is

inherently deprived of the visual channel. In other words, remote interpreters have no way of looking at the conversational parties, analyse their facial expressions, or observe the dynamics that unfolds between them. This lack of visual information can affect the interpreter's ability to fully grasp and convey the nuances of the interaction, specifically, in demanding contexts, such as emergency calls, psychological evaluations or other stressful or intimate encounters. To mitigate these challenges, interpreters must rely more heavily on vocal cues, pragmatic metainformation they infer from the utterances, and context, and develop heightened listening skills to ensure accurate communication despite the absence of visual information.

- Interactions involve, generally, three conversational parties, one caller, one recipient and one remote interpreter. As already discussed, the interpreter is not a transparent bridge, but rather a third conversational party, an actual participant in a conversation. There are interactions, however, in which more participants interact, as presented in a preceding chapter. The participation of three conversational parties involves a complex set of turn-taking techniques, and the adoption of specific roles on the part of the interpreter. Remote interpreters must be experts in the prosody of their working languages and familiar with cultural expectations of conversational parties to appropriately manage the turn-taking mechanism. Additionally, remote interpreters must consider their own cognitive skills and note-taking abilities and establish a policy, in which utterances do not exceed a certain length parameter, as the longer an utterance is, the more challenging it is to interpret it.

- Interactions are handled in two languages, which poses an additional layer of challenges onto the interpreter who needs to be attentive not only to the linguistic aspect of both but also to the non-verbal gambits expressed in two disparate linguistic systems. The development of a heightened auditory sensitivity to nuances in vocal tone and rhythm is crucial to compensate for the lack of visual information. This is where a remote community interpreter plays a crucial role, ensuring that both the implicit and explicit cues expected by both parties are appropriately conveyed, even when they are not immediately apparent due to language or cultural mismatch. By interpreting not only the spoken words but also the underlying intentions and contextual signals, interpreters help prevent misunderstandings and maintain the flow of communication. This is a challenging task, however, which requires an experienced remote interpreter who is proficient in both working languages.

- The existence of two separate languages involves two disparate cultures, customs and rules of politeness. Interpreters must be experts in perceiving and “catching” such differences in real time which occur in the auditory channel in order to relay messages (both verbal and non-verbal) to the representatives of disparate cultures and languages.

- Interpreted telephonic interactions are not scheduled, which means that they are unexpected and cannot be planned on the part of the interpreter. In other words, a remote interpreter does not know, what type of an interaction they are going to have to interpret (whether it is a medical emergency, a call from the revenue department or a police intervention). This poses a significant challenge on a remote interpreter, as they are unable to prepare for a particular interaction, they are unable to speak to the other parties prior to the interaction to become familiar with their manner of speaking or even understand the context, which might hinder the quality of the interpreting. Another issue to consider is that remote interpreters may not feel comfortable having to interpret delicate matters (such as abortions, murder investigations, rape, child abuse). On the other hand, claimants are not always aware of an incoming call either, which affects the way they perform on the call, specifically, if the matter to be discussed is not favourable to them, potentially affecting their behaviour, and consequently, shaping an interaction.

- Interactions which take place over telephonic link may not be ideal in respect of the quality of the connection due to technological factors, which can affect the quality of sound, and consequently lower the performance of the interpreter. As the claimants are, generally, unaware of incoming calls, they might not be physically located in the most desirable environment, which can also contribute adversely to the overall success of the interaction.

The dynamics of an interpreted telephone interactions involve a multitude of factors external and internal to the interpreter and other conversational parties. The process is marked by the existence of challenges related to telephone communication, individual properties and preferences of the callers and further aggravated by the coexistence of conversational parties who are trying to accomplish a communicative objective in a limited dimension of a telephone call.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a theoretical breakdown of considerations relevant from the point of view of telephone community interpreters. The multitude of such factors and conditions which come into play in the context of telephonic communication present significant challenges to telephone community interpreters. Solid understanding of such challenges, such as the lack of the visual channel, sensitivity to cultural differences, awareness of the power distribution dynamics, the strategies of turn-taking, and the realisation of interaction goals during an interaction will help remote interpreters navigate the intricacies of remote interpreting

conducted via the telephonic channel.

The following chapter will explore the practical implications behind the art of telephone community interpreting and analyse those against the theoretical concepts presented in the preceding parts in order to investigate the actual, real-world scenarios which may be problematic from the perspective of telephone community interpreters.

6 RCI in praxis—Practical Investigation

Remote community interpreting constitutes an interplay of a great number of factors and elements, such as technology, context, conversational parties, and a remote interpreter who, in fact, is the binding block, rendering the interaction possible. On the other hand, in accordance with the information presented in the prior chapters, there is a multitude of underpinning definitions and conditions, such as the pragmatic approach to discourse with its speech acts, politeness, turn-taking, to name a few, a solid understanding of which can contribute to the success of such interactions.

This chapter will present an analytical and pragmatical breakdown of RCI interactions registered by the author in the period from 2023 and 2024 to establish common elements, definitions and limitations to the process. This breakdown will investigate the interactions as a whole, drawing conclusions and analysing those through the lens of the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapters against the most significant factor, namely the lack of visual context. An analysis of the recordings of actual interpreted interactions will be provided from the point of view of all conversational parties.

6.1 Methodology behind the Research

The purpose of the research conducted was to specify the origin and types of challenges related to remote community interpreting in the telephonic channel in order to provide a structural underpinning of problematic scenarios which a remote interpreter needs to navigate to ensure a successful interaction. The collected data was used to create an initial framework—a template of factors and conditions which affect the interpreter as well as the other conversational parties within a remote call. The research was divided in two parts, the purpose of which was to analyse disparate elements of an interpreting interaction in the remote environment from multiple standpoints.

The first part of the research is a quantitative analysis of two hundred and fifty phone calls received by the author in the period of 2023 and 2024, which represent a plethora of contexts, such as healthcare, administration, welfare, police, immigration. The number of calls was determined purposefully as it ensures a representative distribution across different service sectors. Data captured in this part was annotated in an Excel document which would allow a transparent presentation of results. The quantitative aspect of the research aimed to explore the statistical and objective results behind the calls pertaining to factors, such as the number of connections pertaining to a particular domain, the duration of interactions, topics within a

particular domain, introductory information, the equipment used to conduct a call, as well as the occurrence or absence of technical challenges. Data does not contain any personal information and no conversational party can be traced back. Information regarding each call was annotated in the Excel document while the call was in progress or shortly after. A visual representation of the collected data in the form of charts and graphs will be presented in order to recognise the most popular trends.

The second part of the research constitutes a set of ten randomly selected, recorded and anonymised calls across various community services, including healthcare, administration, and welfare, collected to understand the complexities and challenges typical of the telephone interpreting domain. This analysis approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the interactional dynamics, and the impact of the factors discussed in the previous chapters on the quality on the final outcome (effective communication). Each of the 10 calls was transcribed, and the transcription of the content of the calls included all parties. Following the transcription process, each call underwent a detailed content analysis, involving the categorisation of the collected data into themes related to interpreting challenges which may result from the introductory step, the employed technological solution, the length of utterances and the effectiveness of interpreter interventions. To this end a breakdown will be presented in which problematic aspects were classified into categories, such as: introduction-based problems, context-based problems, message-based problems, instruction based problems and technology-based problems. Key themes were identified through a colour-coding process, where segments of text were labelled according to their content. This thematic analysis will highlight recurring patterns and unique instances of interpreting practice, providing insights into the multifaceted roles of a remote interpreter through which a remote interpreter shapes the interactions.

The research did not attempt to evaluate the quality of the interpreter, but rather, by combining detailed transcription analysis with thematic analysis, and quantitative methods, the study sought to provide a holistic view on the challenges and strategies within remote telephone interpreting.

6.2 Statistical Analysis

6.2.1 Objectives

Within the United Kingdom, which boasts a diverse populace including a substantial number of Polish expatriates, effective communication in Polish-English interpreting calls across various sectors is indispensable. This statistical analysis aims to delve deeply into the

complexities of community interpreting calls between UK institutions and Polish expats residing in the UK, and through the examination of factors such as call duration, frequency across different sectors, technical considerations, and the quality of introductions, it attempts to offer some insight into the dynamics of these interactions, and to pinpoint areas for improvement.

The dataset of conversational interactions consists of 250 interpreted situations registered in the period of 2023-2024, in which a LEP individuals—Polish nationals residing in the United Kingdom received or initiated a telephonic connection. The other party on the call are British institutions, such as Job Centre, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue and Customs, social services agencies, local schools, GP surgeries, hospitals, Personal Independence Payment offices, and other services. This dataset offers a critical snapshot of the linguistic and communicative challenges faced by the Polish nationals residing in the United Kingdom, and their struggles while interfacing with key public services.

This statistical analysis aims to explore various dimensions of remote community interpreting calls between UK institutions and Polish expatriates. The specific objectives delineated below outline the areas under investigation:

1. **Sectoral Distribution:** the purpose of the analysis is to ascertain the distribution of interpreting calls across diverse sectors, encompassing benefits, welfare, social services, police, and medical institutions. Understanding the trends in each sector can highlight areas of heightened demand for interpreting services and potential avenues for resource allocation.

2. **Mode of connection:** communication mode, such as calls via loudspeaker, three-way calls or calls rendered through a handset, significantly influences the dynamics of interpreted interactions and can alter the tone and nature of delivery for both the interpreter and the client/LEP individual. For instance, loudspeaker calls might reduce the perceived privacy of the conversation, potentially making parties less willing to disclose sensitive information or contribute to a loss of quality (given the background noise). The study will look at each mode and draw conclusions to better understand advantages and disadvantages of each method.

3. **Technology behind RCI:** technical factors and technical challenges (e.g., background noise, soft speech, voicemail) significantly affect the process of interpreting or render it impossible. Through the assessment of these aspects, the study aims to identify common hurdles and opportunities for enhancement in the technical framework of remote interpreting calls.

4. **Quality of introduction step:** the introductory phase sets the tone for interactions and significantly affects communication quality in a realm in which remote interpreters are not informed of the nature of the connection prior to its initiation. A comprehensive introduction

can be a valid and rich source of information for the interpreter. This objective entails evaluating the clarity and comprehensiveness of introductions extended to interpreters, with a view to discerning best practices and areas for potential refinement.

5. **Duration of connection:** the analysis of the duration of interactions can provide insightful data on the complexity and scope of the services required by LEP individuals. Generally, longer interactions may indicate more complex cases that involve detailed discussions, negotiations, or explanations. These could include legal proceedings, medical consultations, or intricate social service negotiations, where detailed communication is crucial to ensure understanding and accuracy. On the other hand, shorter interactions might suggest more straightforward information exchanges, such as appointment scheduling, brief inquiries, or quick updates. Understanding these distinctions can help agencies and service providers assess the effectiveness and efficiency of interpreting services.

In summary, the outlined statistical objectives collectively aim to establish patterns visible in remote community interpreting within the context of Polish-English communication in the UK. By addressing these objectives, this analysis attempts to provide insight into the realm of language services, which may be used for a more detailed investigation into the realm of telephone community interpreting.

6.2.2 Introduction into a Remote Community Interaction

Remote telephone interpreting consists of interactions, which like regular conversations, follow a certain number of routine actions and rituals. From the point of view of a remote interpreter, who is, usually, unaware of the type of an encounter, one of the most important factors is the introductory step.

In a call initiated by a client, introduction is the first and vital source of information about the nature of the interaction. This introduction typically includes crucial contextual details such as the names of the parties involved, the purpose of the call, and any specific information that a remote interpreter may require to be aware of to effectively service the conversation. This step is crucial as in the absence of the visual channel, the information provided by the client helps to create a setting, a mental frame for the interpreter. In other words it allows for a remote interpreter to enter a particular mindset in order to anticipate the incoming message.

Based on the pool of recorded interactions (250 telephonic sessions), the following chart and the visual below were generated. They present the types of introduction implemented by the client after a remote interpreter answered a call.

	Instructions Given	Frequency	% of Total
1	no introduction given	76	30.4
2	basic introduction (client)	68	27.2
3	basic introduction (client, reason)	34	13.6
4	basic introduction (client, LEP)	32	12.8
5	limited introduction (client, LEP, reason)	13	5.2
6	basic introduction (client, location)	9	3.6
7	limited introduction (client, location, reason)	6	2.4
8	full introduction (client, LEP, location, reason)	6	2.4
9	basic introduction (LEP)	3	1.2
10	limited introduction (client, LEP, location)	2	0.8
11	basic introduction (client, method of connection)	1	0.4

Table 3. Introduction given by the client

As it can be seen from the chart, there were 11 categories, which include a variety of introductory scenarios, ranging from “No introduction given” to “Full Introduction” with a combination of different options in-between. The graph below presents the results for easier interpretation.

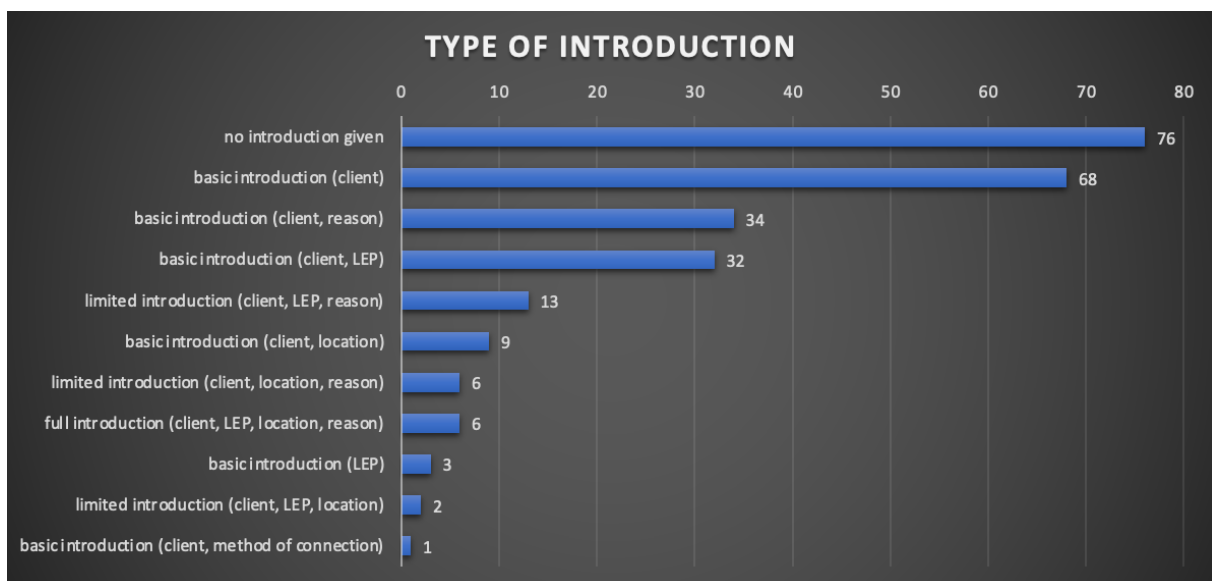


Figure 16. Type of introduction

As previously mentioned, the introductions were classified into 11 subtypes, and their frequency and distribution is as follows:

1. **No Introduction Given:** the most common occurrence was when no introduction was provided to the remote interpreter (which accounts for 76 instances and represents 30.4% of total number of calls). This suggests that in a significant number of calls, no information about the nature of the call or the LEP individual was received from the client. This is the least optimal situation for an obvious reason—a remote interpreter does not have any contextual information

prior to the interpreting session. There may be different reasons for such a scenario, however, and those will be discussed in the qualitative part of the research.

2. **Basic Introduction (Client):** the second most frequent instruction type was a basic introduction, in which a client's name or role (job) was mentioned (or both). Such scenario has 68 instances (which correspond to 27.2% of the total number of calls). Such a minimal introduction may be insufficient to prepare a remote interpreter for the inbound call. It may, however, provide a certain number of suggestions to direct the attention of a remote interpreter or at least create a particular mindset (and perhaps to prepare required resources, such as online dictionaries).

3. **Basic Introduction (Client, Reason):** in 34 cases (corresponding to 13.6% of the total number of calls), the basic introduction included both the client and the reason for the call. This approach provides more contextual information and helps a remote interpreter understand the nature of the interpreting situation to be had.

4. **Basic Introduction (Client, LEP):** there were 32 instances (which correspond to 12.8%) where the introduction included the client and the LEP individual. Including information about the LEP in the introduction helps clarify who requires language assistance. However, in this scenario, it does not provide the reason for the interaction or its context, leaving the remote interpreter without crucial background information.

5. **Limited Introduction (Client, LEP, Reason):** this scenario, which scored 13 interactions (corresponding to 5.2% of the total number of calls) provides a remote interpreter with a certain amount of information pertaining to the client, the LEP individual, and the reason for the call. Although not an optimal scenario, it may prepare a remote interpreter mentally for an incoming interaction.

6. **Basic Introduction (Client, Location):** in 9 cases (which correspond to 3.6% of the total number of calls), the basic introduction given to a remote interpreter included the client and the location. This scenario is not optimal, however, the "location" bit of information may give a remote interpreter an additional advantage, as it can narrow a number of possible interactions and suggest potential topics.

7. **Limited Introduction (Client, Location, Reason):** this scenario scored 6 interactions and corresponds to 2.4% of the total number of calls. This is a very useful and desired introduction as it provides a remote interpreter with virtually the most essential information pertaining to a call.

8. **Full Introduction (client, LEP, location, reason):** this is the most optimal outcome, which provides a remote interpreter with all the required and essential information. Such

introduction may contribute to a successful interaction between a remote interpreter and the conversational parties. However, this scenario was employed in only 6 remote connections, which correspond to 2.4% of all the analysed interactions.

9. **Basic Introduction (LEP)**: this type of full introduction was given in 3 instances (corresponding to 1.2% of all the calls). Such a limited amount of information may not help a remote interpreter in the process of interpreting as it leaves all the vital elements, such as the context and the reason unknown.

10. **Limited Introduction (Client, LEP, Location)**: this scenario occurred 2 times (which correspond to 0.8% of the total number of calls), and although it is not the most optimal introduction, it provides a remote interpreter with very important pieces of information, which may contribute to a successful interpreting encounter.

11. **Basic Introduction (Client, Method of Connection)**: this scenario was used once, which corresponds to 0.4% of all the calls. The identification of the method of connection (for instance, a loudspeaker) may help a remote interpreter, however all the other essential information, such as the reason for a call or its location, is missing, which may pose a challenge and hinder the process of interpreting.

The analysis of the data reveals a clear trend towards minimal or no introductions, with “Basic Introduction (Client)” and “No Introduction Given” being the most common. More detailed introductions that include the LEP individual, location, or reason are less frequent, which suggests a potential area where practices related to the interaction with a remote interpreter may be improved. Understanding these patterns can help to standardise training programs and practices to ensure that remote interpreters receive consistent and comprehensive introductions, which may help contextualise information, and thereby improve the overall quality of interpreted calls.

6.2.3 Sector of Interpreting

The pool of RCI calls rendered in the period of May 2023 to March 2024, with a sample size of 250 calls, yields the following results in regard to the distribution of sectors.

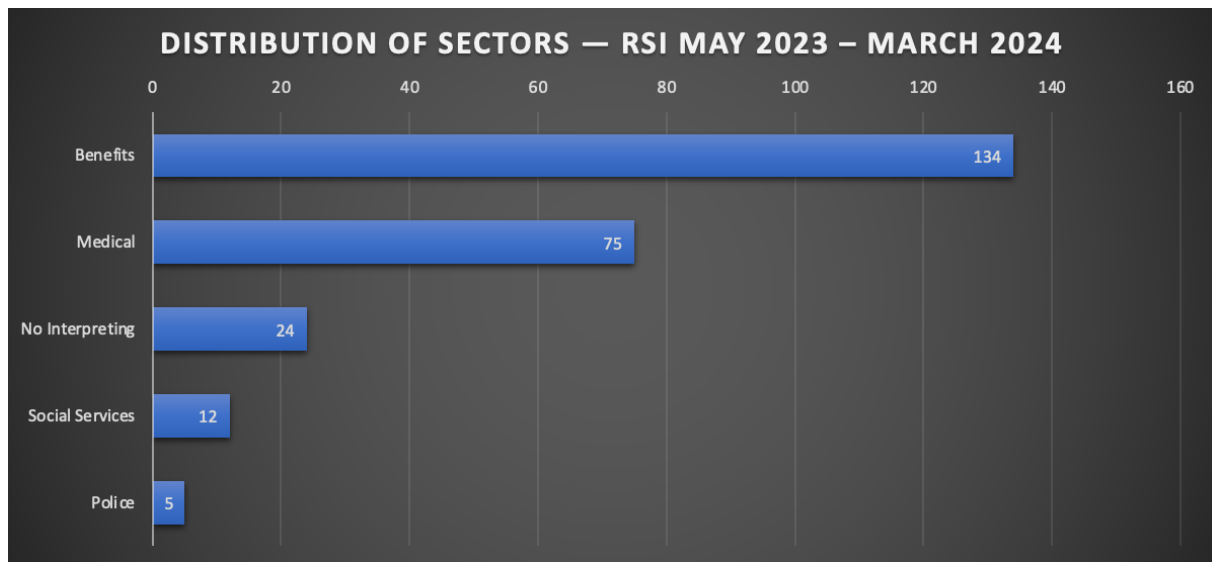


Figure 17. Distribution of Sectors

The results presented above correspond to the four essential sectors where LEP speakers seek assistance from remote interpreters, namely Benefits, Medical, Social Services, Police, and No Interpreting. A detailed analysis follows below.

1. The “**Benefits**” sector constitutes the largest proportion of calls, with 134 occurrences. This represents 53.6% of the total sample, indicating that the majority of remote community interpreting services are utilised for benefit-related enquiries.

2. The “**Medical**” sector accounts for 75 of the calls, translating to 30% of the sample. It is a substantial percentage reflects the significant demand for medical interpreting services.

3. Interpreting for “**Social Services**” is less frequent, comprising 12 calls and making up 4.8% of the total number of interactions. This suggests a lower yet specific need for interpreting services in this sector.

4. The “**Police**” sector, with 5 calls, constitutes 2.0% of the total number of interactions. This is a relatively small proportion, however, it emphasises the essential role of interpreting in legal and safety-related contexts.

5. There are 24 instances in the category “**No Interpreting**”, equalling 9.6% of the calls, where no interpreting was rendered for various reasons.

The distribution reflects the demand for remote community interpreting calls by sector based on the pool of 250 remote connections.

From these figures, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The proportionally high demand in the Benefits and Medical sectors may reflect the complexities and necessities of these settings and their encompassing services, which stresses the necessity for remote interpreters who are often the only factors enabling the provision of

such services.

- The relatively lower percentages in Social Services and Police sectors suggest that while the need is less frequent or pressing, the presence of interpreting services and remote interpreters in such sensitive situations remains vital.

- The “No Interpreting” category, while not large, is significant enough to propel further investigation. There are multiple reasons for which interpreting interactions were not successful and those will be discussed in the following subchapters.

In conclusion, the data presents a clear dominance of interpreting services required for “Benefits” and “Medical” sectors within RSI settings. The relatively smaller values for “Social Services” and “Police” indicate slightly lower-demand areas where such services are critical but less frequently requested based on the analysed pool. The figure for “No Interpreting” is representative of technical or human errors which will be discussed at a later stage.

These findings can be vital from the perspective of resource allocation and training for remote interpreters to better serve the predominant sectors while also acknowledging the importance of availability across all areas. A detailed analysis of the above categories will be presented in the following subchapters.

6.2.3.1 Benefits

As discussed previously, the category Benefits is the most populous, comprising 136 remote community interactions (out of the pool of 250 calls) rendered via the assistance of a remote interpreter. The underpinning reasons vary according to the necessity and they are presented in the following table along with their percentage values.

	Main topic	Benefits	% in Benefits	% of Total
1	Universal Credit review of circumstances	54	40.3	21.6
2	Universal Credit application	15	11.2	6.0
3	Universal Credit health matters	14	10.4	5.6
4	Universal Credit account management	9	6.7	3.6
5	Universal Credit payment issue	9	6.7	3.6
6	Universal Credit unemployment programme	8	6.0	3.2
7	Universal Credit self-employment appointment	7	5.2	2.8
8	PIP disability benefit	5	3.7	2.0
9	Universal Credit account suspended	4	3.0	1.6
10	Universal Credit advance payment application	4	3.0	1.6
11	Universal Credit housing matters	2	1.5	0.8
12	Carer's allowance application	1	0.7	0.4

13	Pension application	1	0.7	0.4
14	Pension credit pension application	1	0.7	0.4

Table 4. Main reason for interaction within category Benefits

The table presented above shows that, among 250 documented interactions, those concerning Universal Credit constituted the majority of remote sessions. Specifically, Universal Credit issues accounted for 94% of calls within the Benefits category and 50.4% of all interactions. This indicates that Universal Credit is statistically the most demanded service in interpreted interactions. A chart visualising this data is provided below.

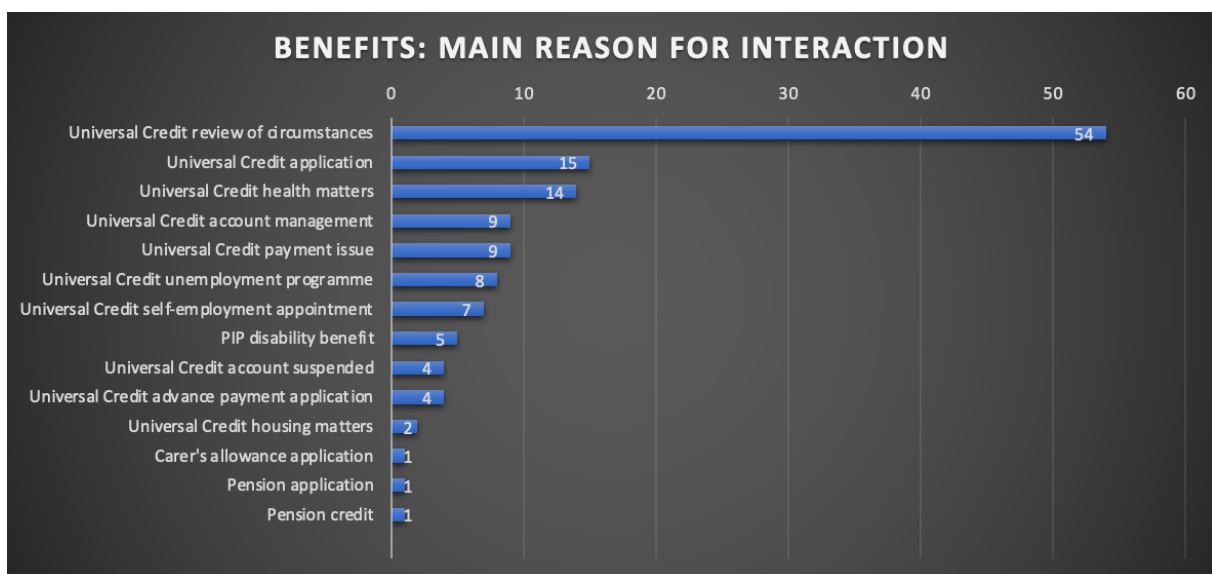


Figure 18. Benefits: main reason for interaction

As it can be inferred from the above chart, the highest number of interactions are associated with Universal Credit—a comprehensive benefit scheme rolled out in 2013 in the United Kingdom. The benefit replaced a number of other (separate) programmes as a single payment plan available to claimants who are out of work. It currently helps eligible clients to cover housing costs, child support expenses and disability allowances. As a benefit it is available to British and non-British citizens. In the latter case, an individual has to have obtained a settled status (via EU Settlement Scheme) or be a refugee. Typically, Polish nationals residing in the UK for a specified duration are often eligible for settled status and consequently qualify for Universal Credit benefits. The programme is available exclusively in English and a participation requires eligible individuals to have an intermediate level of English in order to interact with the Universal Credit agents (telephonically, in-person, or via online platform).

The remaining reasons are related to other benefits, such as PIP—Personal Independence

Payment, which is a programme designed to help people with disabilities or long-term illnesses; pension applications and related matters.

The distribution of the presented reasons provides a better understanding of the areas within the category “Benefits” where LEP speakers most frequently sought remote interpreting services. Specific reasons are discussed below:

1. **Universal Credit review of circumstances:** with 54 instances this subcategory represents 40.3% of the total number of the interpreted calls under the category Benefits and 21.6% of all the calls in the pool. This particular subcategory encompasses a various number of interactions between UK officers (remote interpreter’s clients)—Job Centre employees and Polish expatriates, the main purpose of which is to discuss the current situation of Universal Credit claimants to verify whether they are still eligible for the benefit or able to undertake work activities. Such appointments are usually held weekly either in-person or on-the-phone in form of an interview during which a certain number of open-ended questions is asked. Questions may vary from claimant to claimant and they are dependent on their actual financial and personal situations. As conversations revolve around public finances, questions asked are usually detailed and require to-the-point responses. The high demand for interpretive support during interviews could result from the complexity of questions. Examples of these questions, such as “have you been looking for work?”, “has anything changed?”, “what have you been up to recently?”, “what have you done work-wise since our last appointment” etc. require a certain level of proficiency in English, both, from the point of view of understanding and expressions. Responses vary from simple “Nothing” or “Not much” to longer utterances in which specific situation of individuals are expressed.

2. **Universal Credit application:** there are 15 calls related to this subcategory, representing 11.2% of the total number of interactions within the Benefits category and 6% of all the calls in the pool, the purpose of which is to gather data required to determine eligibility to open a Universal Credit account. Interactions which fall under this subcategory encompass a very high number of questions asked in English, pertaining to the personal situation of candidates. Specific and specialised vocabulary from different areas is used, such as finances, immigration status, health matters, housing, relationship and family. And specific responses (a mixture of open-ended and yes/no nature) are requested. Another factor to be taken into consideration is that the application process is of utmost importance to the benefit-seekers as it determines whether a candidate is going to receive financial support or not. The necessity to answer such questions in English might be somewhat intimidating from a linguistic point view, hence necessitating the assistance of a remote interpreter.

3. **Universal Credit health matters:** with 14 instances the subcategory corresponds to 10.4% of the total number of interactions within this category and 5.6% of all the calls in the pool. This indicates that a fair number of individuals require interpreting services to manage health-related issues within the context of Universal Credit. Such interactions involve the necessity to discuss a particular condition from a medical point of view during appointments, which might be relevant to a Job Centre officer, explain the inability to work given a health condition, upload a fit-note. A very prominent number of calls within this category (9 interactions) was related to the so-called Health Journey, which constitutes a work capability assessment. The purpose of this procedure is to obtain as much relevant medical information about a claimant in order to evaluate their health. The questions asked are very specific and their responses are assessed by independent professionals who make decisions whether a claimant is eligible for an increase in the amount of the received benefit. Such calls are relatively long (around 1 hour) and they require proficiency in English as a lot of matters are discussed (from both medical and day-to-day life points of view). The majority of calls related to health matters require a certain level of language precision, which might be a decisive factor, why some LEP speakers seek a remote interpreter's assistance.

4. **Universal Credit account management:** there are 9 calls which represent 6.7% of total calls within the category Benefits and 3.6% of all the calls in the pool. These interactions cover a great variety of matters of administrative nature, from simple issues, such as change of address, telephone number or account to more demanding (from a linguistic point of view) modifications, such as adding a child to one's claim, changing records in relation to the work contract. Remote interpreters help claimants explain the reasons behind the changes, which requires proficiency in English.

5. **The Universal Credit payment issue** subcategory, accounting for 9 occurrences, constitutes 6.7% of the total calls within this category and 3.6% of all the calls in the pool. Claimants often necessitate interpreter assistance during these calls due to discrepancies in payment calculations, resulting in the receipt of incorrect payment amounts. These interactions typically evoke stress and tension, as claimants struggle to resolve payment-related concerns. They involve the exchange of statements and clarifications encompassing numerical data, dates, and financial figures. The intricacies of English explanations may pose challenges for LEP speakers, thereby requiring the solicitation of interpreter support.

6. **Universal Credit unemployment programme** subcategory, comprising 8 instances, constitutes 6.0% of all calls within the category and 3.2% of all the calls in the pool. Universal Credit implemented a program known as Restart, aimed at assisting unemployment claimants

in securing employment opportunities or engaging in work-related activities, such as curriculum vitae creation, language proficiency courses and interview preparations. The initial call, often referred to as a handover call is an example of a triadic interaction wherein significant details are gathered from the program-operating entity. Nevertheless, a plethora of questions, spanning financial and medical circumstances, professional interests, and prior experience, is asked during this phase. These queries may pose challenges for individuals with limited proficiency in English. Specific questions are tailored to ensure the provision of optimal solutions and the alignment of claimants with suitable advisors. Interpreter assistance is crucial in facilitating the transmission of comprehensive information, particularly for LEP speakers. Additionally, such interactions might be intimidating due to their triadic nature, as claimants are required to interact with two separate professionals.

7. **Universal Credit self-employment appointment:** there are 7 instances of interactions for this subcategory which represent 5.2% of the total calls within the category and 2.8% of all the calls in the pool. This relatively modest frequency of engagements may suggest underlying challenges encountered by self-employed individuals navigating the Universal Credit system. Self-employment presents a unique set of circumstances within the realm of Universal Credit benefits, particularly when it comes to eligibility criteria, income assessment and reporting as well as compliance with ongoing requirements. Unlike traditional employment, where income is typically received automatically and electronically through HMRC, self-employed Universal Credit clients are required to report it on a regular basis through the self-service portal available in English. Self-employed claimants may face challenges in understanding and adhering to the reporting requirements imposed by Universal Credit, particularly if they lack familiarity with the intricacies of the system or the language proficiency to operate it. On the other hand, telephonic interactions with Universal Credit work coaches involve a series of very specific questions pertaining to accounting and financial matters. The outcomes of such appointments may hold profound ramifications for claimants, such as reductions in benefit allocation, obligations to secure contractual employment, or necessity to increase weekly working hours. These appointments can evoke intimidation for various reasons, including linguistic barriers, underscoring the necessity for interpreter assistance.

8. **PIP disability benefit:** the subcategory comprises of 5 interactions which represent 3.7% of the total number of interactions in the category and 2.0% of all the calls in the pool. The PIP, or Personal Independence Payment, is a benefit awarded to people with long-term conditions or disabilities who require assistance in the daily activities. The process of applying for the benefit is a strenuous one as candidates are typically required to initiate contact via a

designated English-language phone line and navigate a series of specific questions in English. Typical telephonic interactions last for around 60 minutes and during an initial conversation candidates are required to provide their responses on a wide array of topics, including medical history, financial circumstances, and personal situations. Questions are scripted and relayed to an interpreter in very long chunks (including a personal data disclaimer), which poses a difficulty for the interpreter. Given the detailed nature of these inquiries, candidates may find the process overwhelming without interpreter's support.

9. **Universal Credit account suspended:** there are 4 interactions in this subcategory, which corresponds to 3.0% of all the calls within the category and 1.6% of all the calls in the pool. Account suspension within the Universal Credit system can have significant implications for claimants, ranging from temporary disruptions in benefit payments to potential challenges in accessing essential financial support. These suspensions may occur due to various reasons, such as failure to meet eligibility criteria, incomplete documentation, or discrepancies in reported information. Interactions may involve discussions around the reasons for the suspension, steps required for resolution, and potential implications for ongoing benefit entitlements. Given the potentially complex and distressing nature of these discussions, interpreter support may be crucial in facilitating effective communication and ensuring claimants' understanding of the situation and their rights.

10. **Universal Credit advance payment application:** this subcategory has 4 intersections which represents 3.0% of total calls within this category and 1.6% of all the calls in the pool. Advance payments serve as an ad-hoc financial assistance for individuals experiencing urgent monetary needs while awaiting their regular Universal Credit payments. These payments provide claimants with an amount calculated based on their individual situation, enabling them to meet essential expenses such as food. The awarded amount of additional support is repaid interest-free in monthly instalments. Interactions within the Universal Credit advance payment team may involve discussions surrounding the eligibility criteria for the loan, the application process, and the calculation of monthly instalments.

11. **Universal Credit housing matters:** this category is comprised of 2 interactions (constituting 1.5% of all the calls within the category Benefits and 0.8% of all the calls in the pool). Based on the analysed pool of remote interactions is not as much in-demand as others within the group of Benefits, yet it constitutes an important element of the Universal Credit support system, which may explain the reason for which interpreting services are sought by the claimants. The reasons for this requirement are manifold and they can be related to a change of address, a termination of tenancy agreement, eviction, increase of rent or an application for

accommodation element (an additional portion of financing). Such topics involve longer conversations between claimants and clients during which specific details and accommodation information is discussed. It can be inferred that in order to facilitate a smooth exchange on information, LEP claimants count on the assistance of remote interpreters to achieve their goals.

12. Carer's allowance application: this category includes 1 interaction (which represents 0.7% of all interactions within the category and 0.4% of all the calls in the pool). Although it is a relatively low value vis-a vis the total number of remote sessions within the category, carer's allowance application may constitute a vital reason for a LEP claimant to seek interpreter's assistance. Carer's allowance is a type of a benefit which is awarded to individuals who, simply put, care for another individual (due to e.g. medical reasons). During such calls clients request a great amount of information which might pose challenge to applicants who do not speak English to a degree which would allow for a seamless interaction.

13. Pension application and Pension credit are categories related to a retirement pension and they each have 1 interaction (which represents 0.7% of the total number of calls each in the category and 0.4% of all the calls in the pool). Remote sessions within these two groups involve an interview type of interactions, during which questions are asked related to personal finances and individual's work experience. As very specific questions are asked (concerning financial information, dates and names of employment) and succinct and exact responses are expected, it may be assumed that LEP claimants count on the presence of interpreters to assist them in the process, relaying the information accurately.

From this data, we can deduce that the majority of interpreting service demand within the Benefits category revolves around Universal Credit, with a particular emphasis on reviews of circumstances, applications, and health matters. These areas represent 57.5% of the total calls within the Benefits category (30.8% of all the calls in the pool) and they pertain to more common, day-to-day, frequent operations or activities involving the management of the Universal Credit account.

A good understanding of the areas in which LEP speakers may require assistance is vital, as it can constitute a baseline for potential training of interpreters from multiple perspectives (for example vocabulary-wise) and resource allocation.

The lower frequency of interactions for pension-related matters might suggest either a lower demand for interpreting services in that respect or possibly a higher level of self-sufficiency or alternative support in these areas (for example family interpreters).

It is vital, nonetheless, to obtain a clear picture of what services are required and where potential gaps exist to ensure that all LEP individuals have equal access to necessary support.

This can be achieved through comprehensive needs assessments and ongoing evaluation of service utilisation patterns. Additionally, establishing partnerships with community organisations and leveraging technological advancements could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of interpreting services, ultimately improving outcomes for LEP individuals across diverse settings and situations.

The following subchapter will present findings pertaining to the Medical category.

6.2.3.2 Medical

The category Medical is the second most numerous group and it consists of 74 interactions out of the pool of 250 remote sessions, which corresponds to 30.4% of the total number of interactions. The following dataset illustrates the prevalence of each type of medical interaction and its proportion within the overall medical group and in the total pool of sessions.

	Main topic	Medical	% in medical	% of Total
1	GP general appointment	41	54.7	16.4
2	Appointment with a consultant	16	21.3	6.4
3	Physical therapy	8	10.7	3.2
4	Psychological consultation	5	6.7	2.0
5	Pre-surgery	3	4.0	1.2
6	Emergency Services	1	1.3	0.4
7	Hospital discharge	1	1.3	0.4

Table 5. Main reason for interaction within category Medical

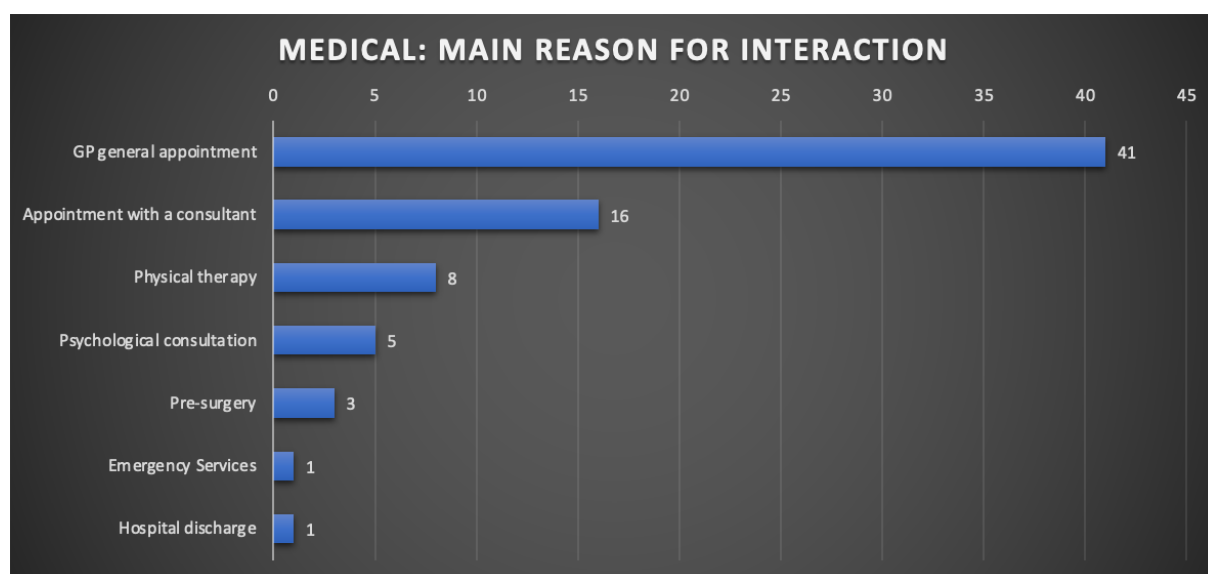


Figure 19. Medical: main reason for interaction

The dataset presented above underscores the varied and specialised nature of medical needs catered to by interpreters during remote sessions. The high proportion of GP appointments highlights the vital role of general practice in remote healthcare. The range from general practice to specialised consultations illustrates the broad spectrum of medical services available remotely, tailored to patient across different medical spectrums. This distribution also mirrors typical healthcare usage patterns, where general medical issues are most common, followed by specialised and acute care needs. A detailed description of the reasons LEP patients seek interpreter's assistance along with remote interpreters' tasks are specified below:

1. **GP general appointment:** this category is the one with the highest number of interactions in the group, consisting of 41 interactions (which corresponds to 54.7% of total number of remote calls within the Medical category). The role of an interpreter in medical settings, particularly during GP appointments, involves several complex challenges, which are heightened due to the broad spectrum of medical issues which may be discussed, from diagnostics to chronic disease management. As it was mentioned in an earlier chapter, remote interpreters do not receive prior information regarding the type of an interactions, and so they are expected not only master extensive medical terminology to cover a great variety of possible scenarios but also adapt to different consultation types, remain sensitive to cultural nuances, and maintain confidentiality. Descriptions of conditions or underlying problems vary from patient to patient and can be very lengthy, which requires an efficient and retentive short-term memory and recollection skills as well as a solid command of note-taking. On the other hand, remote interpreters work from home, which gives them a unique opportunity to research unfamiliar terms while interpreting. This requires a certain level of multitasking and attention divisibility, which in turns makes the interaction ever more strenuous.

2. **Appointment with a consultant** is the second most numerous category, yet it encompasses significantly fewer interactions, with 16 recorded sessions (which corresponds to 21.3% of the total calls within the Medical category). Such appointments pose a great number of challenges to remote interpreters stemming from the fact that they are not informed of the nature of the interaction before it happens. Again, they are expected to render such conversations in an efficient manner. Interactions which belong to this subcategory can vary from a cardiological, neurological, paediatric, allergy, palliative consultations or any other, and the range of topics covers diagnosis, treatment options, diseases and symptoms as well as recommendations.

3. **Physical therapy:** this is a relatively infrequent reason as it comprises 8 calls (which corresponds to 10.7% of the total number of class within the Medical category). This

subcategory presents unique challenges as it involves the interpreter conveying specific instructions from the medical professional to the LEP patient. The challenge stems from the lack of the visual challenge and interpreter's inability to see whether the LEP patient understands the instructions or acts accordingly. The reason for which LEP patients seek remote interpreters' assistance is that during such interactions there are a lot of medical information and instruction exchanged between the parties which requires a solid command of English.

4. **Psychological consultation:** this is a subgroup which constitutes 5 calls (corresponding to 6.7% of the total number of remote sessions) and poses very unique challenges to remote interpreters. Such sessions are usually very long and they are centred around an interview during which a medical professional asks specific questions. This format and specific nature of such interactions requires interpreters to accurately convey not only the content but also the tone of voice, non-linguistic cues and nuance of both the questions and the LEP patient's responses. The sensitivity of psychological topics also demands a high level of empathy from remote interpreters, who must navigate complex emotional dynamics while ensuring clear communication. This can be particularly demanding in a remote setting, where non-verbal cues are not available. Another challenge lies in the fact that a psychological interaction usually has a therapeutical foundation which might be difficult to interpret via auditory channel. Topics which are discussed range from medical vocabulary to the description of mundane activities and may seem out of context to interpreters, yet, the nature of the interaction requires for utmost precision and faithfulness.

5. **Pre-surgery:** this is a relatively infrequent subcategory, comprising only 3 calls, or 4.0% of the total number of remote sessions within the Medical category. Pre-surgery appointments are remote sessions conducted prior to a surgical procedure, aimed at informing the patient about the necessary preparations and requirements before the appointment. These procedures can range from simple to complex, depending on the nature of the surgery and they are crucial as they often include detailed instructions on pre-surgery fasting, medication adjustments, and what to expect on the day of the operation. As remote interpreters receive no prior notice of the type of a procedure, they need to be prepared to interpret on a wide number of topics, spanning specialised and jargon vocabulary, as ensuring that patients fully understand these instructions is vital for their safety and the success of the procedure. This is the main reason for which remote interpreters are employed for this assignment, yet the ability to convey such important information effectively is even more challenging in a remote setting, where visual cues are limited and clarity of communication must be maintained and any doubts on the part of the LEP patient answered.

6. **Emergency Services** is a subgroup with only 1 remote session recorded, accounting for 1.3% of all calls within the Medical category. These calls are initiated by an emergency dispatcher who relies on a remote interpreter to convey crucial information, providing assistance to an LEP patient. The nature of these calls is highly dynamic, requiring interpreters to handle questions and responses quickly and efficiently, which can be a highly stressful experience due to the urgent and critical context of the interactions. This high-pressure environment demands that remote interpreters not only interpret accurately but also manage the rapid pace of communication effectively — they are in fact the only party that can communicate with both parties to an interaction. Interpreters must quickly grasp and relay critical details such as symptoms, location, and medical history while ensuring that both the emergency dispatcher and the LEP patient understand each other clearly. The interpreter's ability to perform under such stress is essential to the emergency response process, as any delay or miscommunication could potentially impact the outcome of the emergency situation. Therefore, interpreters in this setting must possess not only linguistic skills but also the ability to remain calm and focused during intense and potentially life-threatening scenarios.

7. **Hospital discharge** is a subcategory with 1 recorded remote session, which corresponds to 1.3% of the total number of calls within the Medical category. This type of session typically involves providing the patient with important post-care instructions and ensuring they understand the follow-up steps for recovery after leaving the medical facility. Remote interpreters play a crucial role as they convey discharge instructions, medication details, and any specific patient care information given by healthcare professionals. This requires familiarity with a wide range of medical and non-medical vocabulary that remote interpreters must master. Additionally, remote interpreters need to be sensitive enough to detect any doubts or uncertainties an LEP patient might express through verbal cues, and effectively communicate these concerns to the medical professional.

The above dataset clearly presents the most frequent reasons for which LEP patients seek remote interpreters' assistance and several conclusions can be drawn about the demands placed on remote interpreting services.

Based on the analysed pool of interactions, these services predominantly facilitate communication for LEP patients in scenarios such as GP general appointments, consultations with specialists, physical therapy sessions, psychological consultations, pre-surgery briefings, emergency services, and hospital discharges. Each of these requires medical interpreters to possess a thorough understanding of specific medical terminology and procedures along with the ability to effectively communicate sensitive information.

The “high demand areas”, specifically, GP general appointments and consultations with specialists likely represent the bulk of the interpreting demand, which suggests that a significant portion of LEP patients require assistance with routine and specialised medical care. This indicates a growing need for interpreters who are not only fluent in the relevant languages but also have a robust understanding of general and specialised medical knowledge. On the other hand, services like physical therapy, psychological consultations, and pre-surgery appointments require interpreters who are trained in the vocabulary specific to those interaction. For example, psychological consultations may require understanding of mental health terminology, awareness of what a psychological interview entails and sensitivity to the patient's emotional state (all handled in an auditory channel), while pre-surgery briefings demand precise communication of medical procedures and patient instructions. The role of interpreters in emergency services and hospital discharges cannot be underestimated either, as these scenarios often involve urgent communication where the accuracy and speed of interpretation can have significant consequences on the outcomes for the patient.

In summary, there is a clear need for specialised training programs for remote community interpreters that not only focus on medical terminology across various fields but also equip them with the skills to handle high-pressure and dynamic situations while relying on the auditory stimuli alone. Understanding the above distribution of demand across different medical services allows for better resource allocation, such as general medical appointments and specialist consultations.

An analysis of interactions within the Social Services category will be presented in the following subchapter.

6.2.3.3 Social Services

The category Social Services is the third most numerous group with a number of 12 remote interactions, which corresponds to 4.8% of the total number of interpreting sessions. The table and the visual below present reasons for interaction with their respective percentage value:

	Main topic	Social Services	% in Social Services	% of Total
1	Child support services	8	66.7	3.2
2	Social Housing	4	33.3	1.6

Table 6. Main reason for interaction within category Social Services

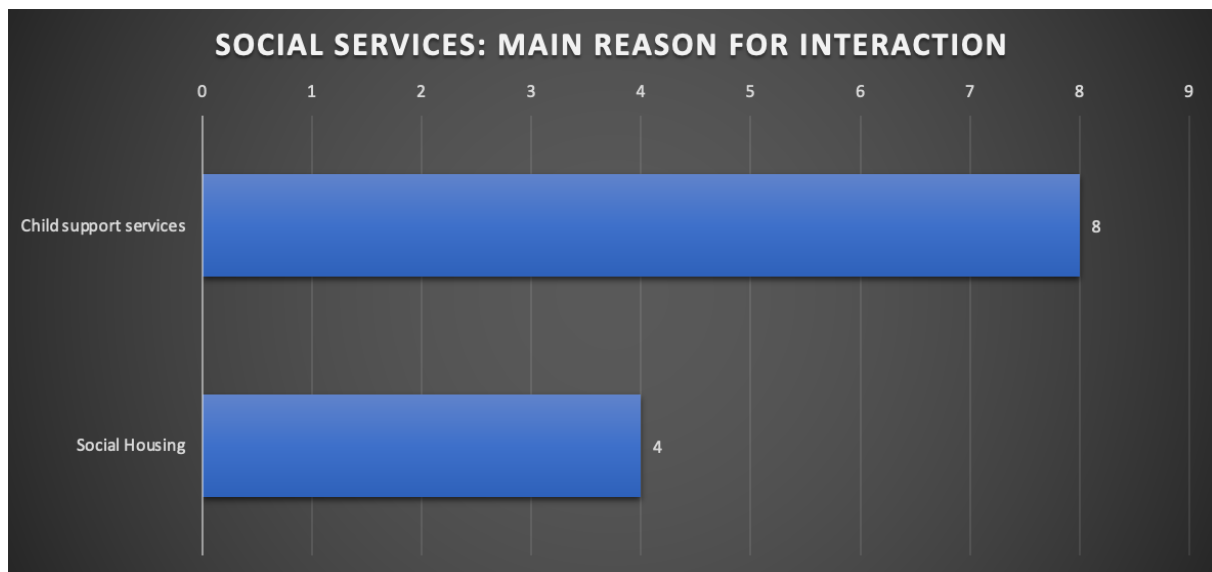


Figure 20. Benefits: main reason for interaction

An analysis of the reasons presented on the above visual provides an understanding of the areas within the category Social Services where LEP speakers sought remote interpreting services most frequently, namely:

1. **Child support services:** with 8 interactions which correspond to 66.7% of remote sessions within this category and 3.2% of the total number of calls is the predominant reason within this category, yet it encompasses a number of topics. Calls within this category can vary from Social Services agents who arrive with an intervention at a location of an LEP individual to follow-up calls initiated by Social Services agents to check on the welfare of children or discuss ongoing cases. Each interaction may cover various aspects such as custody arrangements, financial support negotiations, or legal advice and the complexity of these situations often requires not “just” interpreting but also cultural sensitivity.

2. **Social Housing:** there are 4 remote interactions, representing 33.3% of the calls within the subcategory of Social Services and 1.6% of the total number of remote interpreting sessions. These interactions cover a broad range of issues, including interviews or eligibility assessments for housing assistance, discussions about housing benefits, and eviction notices. They often involve sensitive and private information, encompassing financial details, work experience, and specific personal circumstances. The complexity and sensitivity of these topics may push LEP individuals to seek linguistic assistance, as conversations of this nature may necessitate mastery in English.

Although not numerous, the remote interactions recorded under the subcategory of Social Service demonstrate that remote interpreters may be tasked with interpreting of such nature.

This highlights the critical role of remote interpreters in ensuring that communication barriers do not impede access to essential services for LEP individuals. Effective interpreting is vital not only to convey information accurately but also to ensure that LEP individuals can effectively navigate the legal and procedural aspects of their lives abroad. As such, interpreters must be adept at managing a wide range of topics, from legal terminology to personal and sensitive content to terms related to daily lives, which underscores the importance of specialised training and expertise in the field of social service.

The following subchapter will look at interactions within Police category.

6.2.3.4 Police

In the analysed pool of remote interactions the category Police scored 5 calls, which correspond to 2% of the total pool of 250 remote sessions. The following chart and the visual present the underpinning reasons for which the assistance of a remote interpreter was required during these interactions:

	Main topic	Police	% in Police	% of Total
1	Arrest	3	60.0	1.2
2	Domestic abuse	2	40.0	0.8

Table 7. Main reason for interaction within category Police

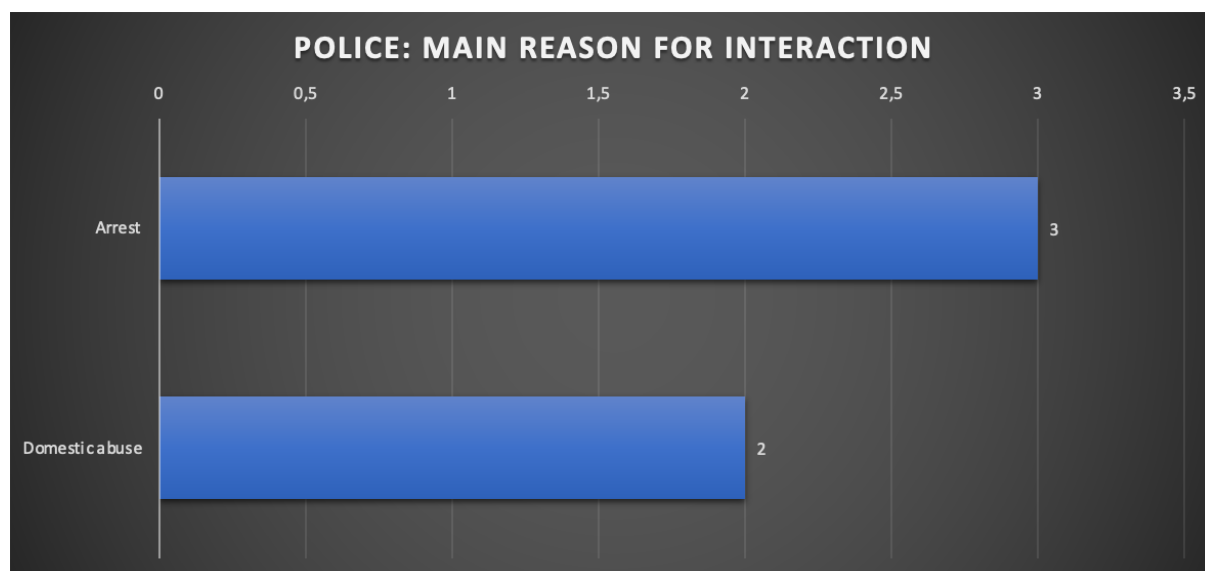


Figure 21. Police: main reason for interaction

The dataset presented above gives an overview of the 5 recorded interactions and their detailed description follows below to better understand the nature of LEP individuals' needs,

tasks and challenges posed to interpreters:

1. **Arrest:** with three instances, this subcategory accounts for 60% of the total interactions within the Police category and 1.2% of all calls recorded in the dataset. Although a small number overall, the significance of these interactions should not be underestimated due to the unique challenges they present to all involved parties. In arrest situations where a remote interpreter is needed, legal rights and procedures must be communicated and interpreted with the utmost accuracy. Omissions or misinterpreting of any form can lead to misunderstandings about legal rights, the nature of charges, or the details of the legal process, which in turn can potentially impact the legal outcome for the LEP individual involved. A particular challenge arises in how police officers communicate information through a remote interpreter—often, their statements include legal quotations and references to specific acts or laws. If these are not delivered in manageable segments, accurately interpreting them can be very difficult. Therefore, interpreters should be able to guide police officers to break their statements into smaller parts. Additionally, arrests can occur under less than ideal conditions, such as on a busy street, where remote interpreters may face challenges due to background noise. Another factor is the human element — the LEP individual may be under the influence of a substance, which can significantly impair the clarity and coherence of their speech. In such cases, remote interpreters must employ strategies to work effectively with police officers, ensuring that their interpretations accurately represent the individual's statements and do not inadvertently convey false information.

2. **Domestic abuse** is a category which constitutes 2 remote interactions (corresponding to 40% of the calls within the Police category and 0.8% of all the calls in the pool). These interactions are particularly challenging to interpret as they typically occur in remote locations and are conducted through the loudspeaker of a mobile device. The technical aspects of such interactions will be explored in the following chapter. Domestic abuse interventions typically involve long calls during which statements from all parties involved are collected and interpreted. These statements often consist of lengthy descriptions of events, which can cover many threads and matters critical to the investigation. This means that remote interpreters should excel in the art of note-taking to ensure accuracy of such long utterances. The role of a faithful interpreting is of utmost importance as police officers are trained to catch any potential discrepancy or inconsistency in the statement, yet in an interpreted interaction they have to rely on the remote interpreters' outcome. Another aspect to consider is the emotional impact on remote interpreters, as they can be exposed to the stress and distress of such situations, which are typically unpleasant for all parties involved. Walczyński (Herring & Walczyński, 2024)

observed that the emotional aspects of interpreting have not been given significant attention in the training of translators or interpreters. Additionally, freelance remote interpreters are, by the very definition, self-employed and so they have no resources to fall back upon (Boczarski, 2023).

Although the Police category comprises only 5 recorded calls, the level of preparation required of remote interpreters should not be underestimated. These calls often involve complex legal terminology, sensitive situations, and potential crises that demand a high degree of accuracy and emotional resilience. Remote interpreters must be well-prepared to interpret in such challenging scenarios while managing the emotional and psychological stress that may arise during such interactions.

6.2.3.5 No Interpreting

This category presents calls initiated by the client in which remote interpreting did not occur. There were 24 such interactions which correspond to 9.6% of all the calls within the pool of 250 remote sessions. The category encompasses two subcategories, as presented by the table and the visual below.

	Main topic	No Interpreting	% in No Interpreting	% of Total
1	Technical issue	13	54.2	5.2
2	Voicemail	11	45.8	4.4

Table 8. Main reason for no interaction within category No Interpreting

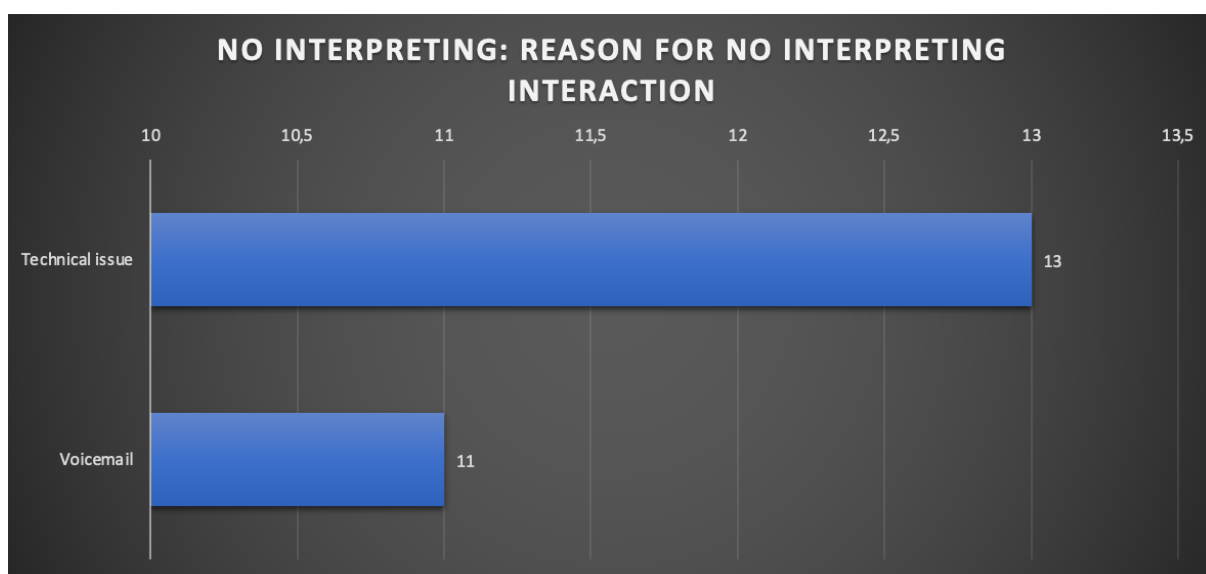


Figure 22. No Interpreting: main reason for no interaction

As explained above, the category includes only calls that were initiated—a client successfully connected to the remote interpreter; however, the interpreting did not occur due to one of two reasons:

1. **Technical issue:** there were 13 remote calls, accounting for 54.29% of the calls within this group and 6% of the total number of calls in the pool. These calls indicate that a technical malfunction occurred, preventing connection to an LEP individual and hindering the provision of interpreting services. There are multiple reasons for such malfunctions, and they will be specified and analysed in the following chapters.

2. **Voicemail:** there are 11 interactions, representing 45.8% of the calls within this group and 4.0% of the total calls in the pool, in which no interpreting was rendered because the initiated call was diverted to the LEP individual's voicemail. A more detailed analysis of "voicemail scenarios" will be presented in a following chapter.

Although the data presented above does not seem extensive, it accounts for a significant number of unsuccessful interactions—amounting to 9.6% of all the remote session in the total pool of calls. This percentage, although seemingly small, highlights critical gaps in the provision of interpreting services and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

6.2.4 Technology behind RCI

Telephone interpreting is a specialised field which revolves around the idea of technology. The effectiveness of telephone interpreting hinges on several key factors. Firstly, the technology used must ensure clear, uninterrupted audio transmission, as the quality of the connection directly impacts the interpreter's ability to hear and convey messages accurately. Secondly, since interpreters cannot rely on visual cues and body language, they must be exceptionally attentive to tone, pace, and lexical choices to accurately interpret the speaker's intent and emotional state. This again underscores the need for impeccable connection quality to effectively detect these nuances.

The following subchapters will look at the remote interpreting interactions through the prism of technological solutions employed to render such communication possible. The first subchapter will look at the mode of connection — the actual equipment employed for the sake of connection with a statistical analysis based on the pool of 250 connections. The second and third subchapters will analyse reasons for unsuccessful and imperfect interpreting sessions from the technological point of view and the fourth subchapter will present the methods of call initiation, to examine who begins an interpreting session.

6.2.4.1 Method of Connection

As discussed previously, remote interpreting is based on the employment of particular technology, specifically platforms, telephones or services. The pool of 250 remote sessions was handled via a telephone link and a professional headset with a microphone boom (Jabra Evolve 40) on the interpreter's end and a combination of equipment on the client's and LEP speaker's end. The breakdown of each technology is presented in the following chart and the visual below.

	Method of connection	Number	% of Total
1	3-way call	142	56.8
2	loudspeaker	68	27.2
3	3-way call personal	29	11.6
4	4-way call	7	2.8
5	handset	4	1.6

Table 9. Method of Connection

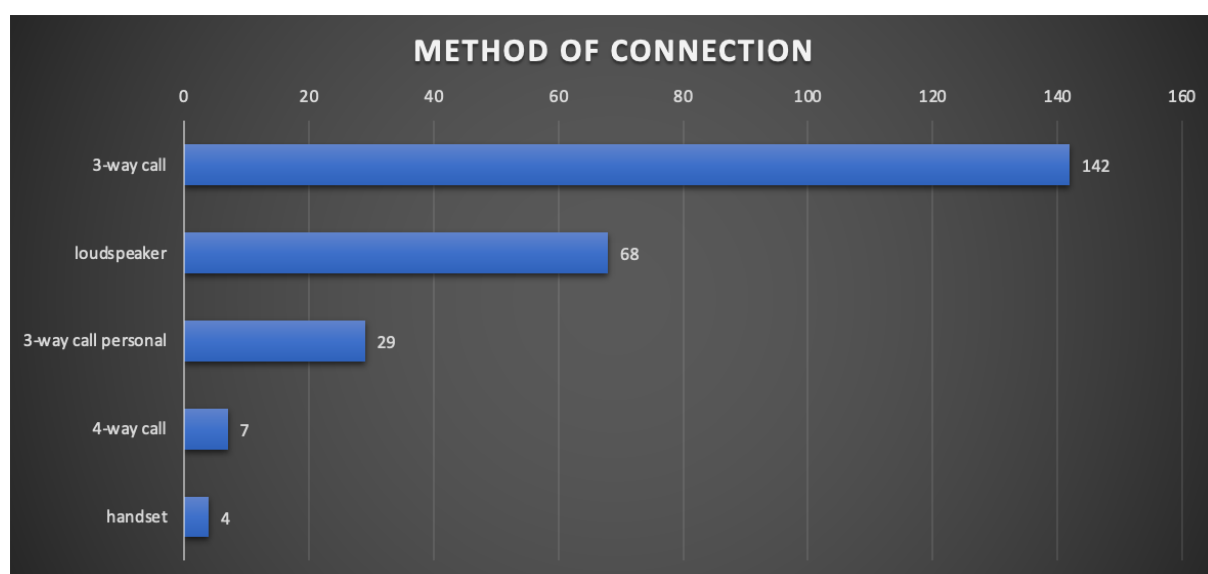


Figure 23. Method of Connection

The distribution of the presented methods of connection is a crucial factor from the point of the quality of interpreting, as the selected method can affect the way the interpreting is delivered to all the involved parties. Particular connection methods offer different levels of audio clarity, delay, interaction capabilities, and ease of use, all of which directly impact the effectiveness of communication during the interpreting process.

The most popular method—likely due to its ease of implementation and use—is the 3-way call, which accounted for 142 sessions, constituting 56.8% of the total connection methods.

The second most popular method involves the use of a loudspeaker, accounting for 68

sessions, which constitutes 27.2% of all the calls within the pool.

The third method is a “3-way call personal”, which is a name given by the author to an interaction in which a remote interpreter is present at a one location and the client and the LEP individual are both present at another location. This setup scored 29 connections, which represents 29% of the total number of calls.

A far less popular arrangement is a 4-way call—a conference connection in which there are three parties and a remote interpreter. Such system scored only 7 interactions, which represents 2.8% of the total number of calls.

Another method, which scored only 4 calls (constituting 1.6% of all the interactions), is typical of locations without a loudspeaker or in situations where interpreting was not arranged prior to an appointment and it involves passing the telephone receiver between parties.

The subsequent subchapter will explore reasons why interpreting is sometimes unsuccessful or inefficient after a call has been initiated, in order to better understand the technological challenges that impede the process of remote interpreting.

6.2.4.2 Reasons for No Interpreting

The analysis of the sectoral distribution of calls revealed 24 interactions in which interpreting did not occur. This subchapter will investigate these calls with a closer look at the actual reasons why interpreting was not performed. The following chart and the visual below present the breakdown.

	Reason for No Interpreting	Number	% of Total
1	Voicemail	11	4.4
2	Technical issue: call disconnected	4	1.6
3	Technical issue: client disconnected	4	1.6
4	Technical issue: silence on client part	2	0.8
5	Technical issue: cannot connect to claimant	1	0.4
6	Technical issue: party left the call	1	0.4
7	Technical issue: wrong number	1	0.4

Table 10. Reason for No Interpreting

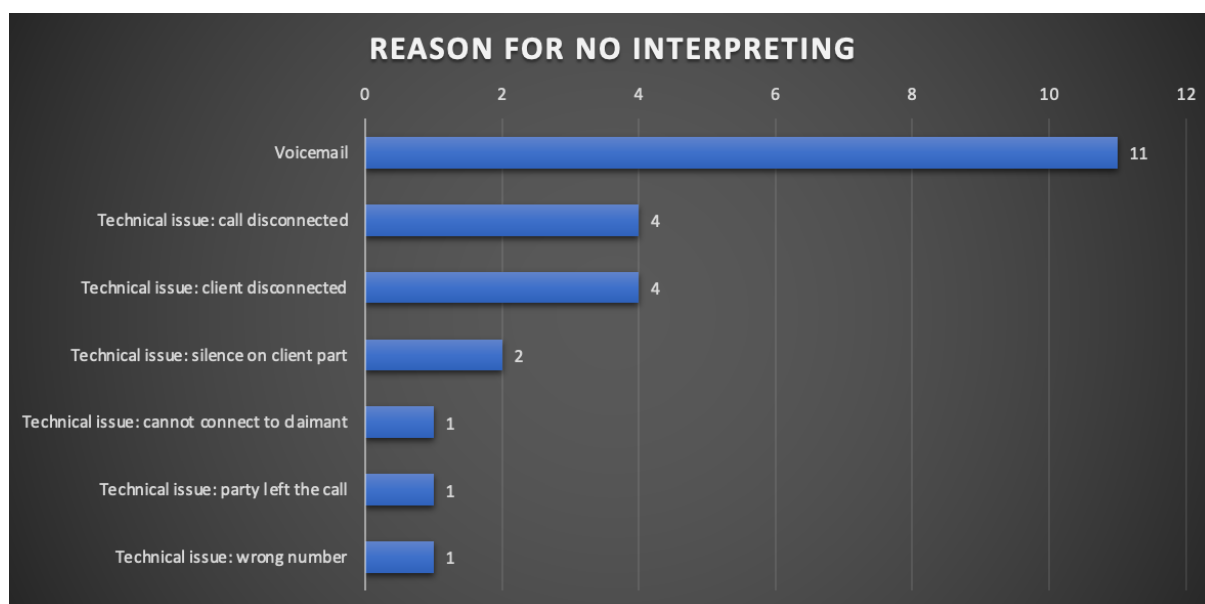


Figure 24. Reason for No Interpreting

The above breakdown presents the reasons why interpreting did not occur in 24 instances within the analysed pool of 250 connections, corresponding to 9.6% of the sessions being unsuccessful.

The most frequent cause of failed interactions, occurring in 11 cases, was reaching a voicemail. In such scenarios, even though a call was successfully initiated and connected to a remote interpreter, the client was unable to reach the LEP individual because the call was diverted to a voicemail service. From the perspective of a remote interpreter, there are two possible approaches to handling a voicemail message:

- the less recommended approach involves the client proceeding directly to record a voicemail, with the interpreter relaying it sentence by sentence. Although it may seem like the most natural approach, recording a voicemail this way has several disadvantages. Firstly, the recording time is usually limited, giving the client and the interpreter a fixed duration to record a message. If the interpreter does not understand the message and needs a repetition, this can lead to a chaotic recording. This scenario is quite common, especially when it involves details like numbers, addresses, or proper names. For example, a doctor might quickly read off names of medications or a phone number, not allowing the interpreter sufficient time to take notes. Consequently, the interpreter may need to request repetitions, disrupting the flow of the message. This can result in an LEP individual finding the message confusing, as it may resemble a dialogue between the interpreter and the client rather than a clear, concise voicemail.
- the more recommended approach involves providing an interpreter with the entire message, allowing them to take necessary notes (if applicable). If necessary, an interpreter may ask for clarification on any unclear information or verify the details received. Then, they can

relay the entire message in one go to the LEP individual. This approach allows an LEP individual to receive a message recorded in the language they understand in a clear manner.

Other reasons appear related to typical issues with telephonic technology and include calls dropping on any end (4 interactions), inadvertent disconnections on the client's end (4 interactions), instances of silence or no signal from the client's end (2 interactions), inability to connect to a claimant (1 interaction), a party inadvertently leaving the call (1 interaction), and a client dialling a wrong number (1 interaction).

The low number of failed interactions suggests that such scenarios are relatively uncommon; however, understanding their causes and eliminating them, if possible, would improve access to interpreting services.

The following subchapter will shed more light on the technological issues that hindered the interpreting process to better understand, and possibly eliminate their causes.

6.2.4.3 Technological Obstacles in Remote Interpreting

In the previous subchapter, several reasons responsible for the failure of interpreting sessions were discussed. The chart and visual below illustrate instances where the process of remote interpreting was successful but not efficient, or was disrupted. These are based on a pool of a total of 250 remote calls.

	Technological Obstacles in Remote Interpreting	Number	% of Total
1	Technical issue: breaking up	17	6.8
2	Technical issue: too far from loudspeaker	16	6.4
3	Technical issue: low volume	13	5.2
4	Technical issue: background noise	11	4.4
5	Technical issue: loudspeaker	11	4.4
6	Technical issue: poor quality	10	4.0
7	Technical issue: call disconnected	8	3.2
8	Technical issue: echo	8	3.2
9	Technical issue: handheld	4	1.6
10	Technical issue: problem with connection	3	1.2
11	Technical issue: cannot connect (to claimant)	2	0.8
12	Technical issue: cannot hear interpreter	2	0.8
13	Technical issue: too close to loudspeaker	2	0.8
14	Technical issue: no training	2	0.8
15	Technical issue: deliberate disconnection	1	0.4
16	Technical issue: loud breathing	1	0.4
17	Technical issue: silence on claimant part	1	0.4

18	Technical issue: silence on client part	1	0.4
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Table 11. Technological Obstacles in Remote Interpreting

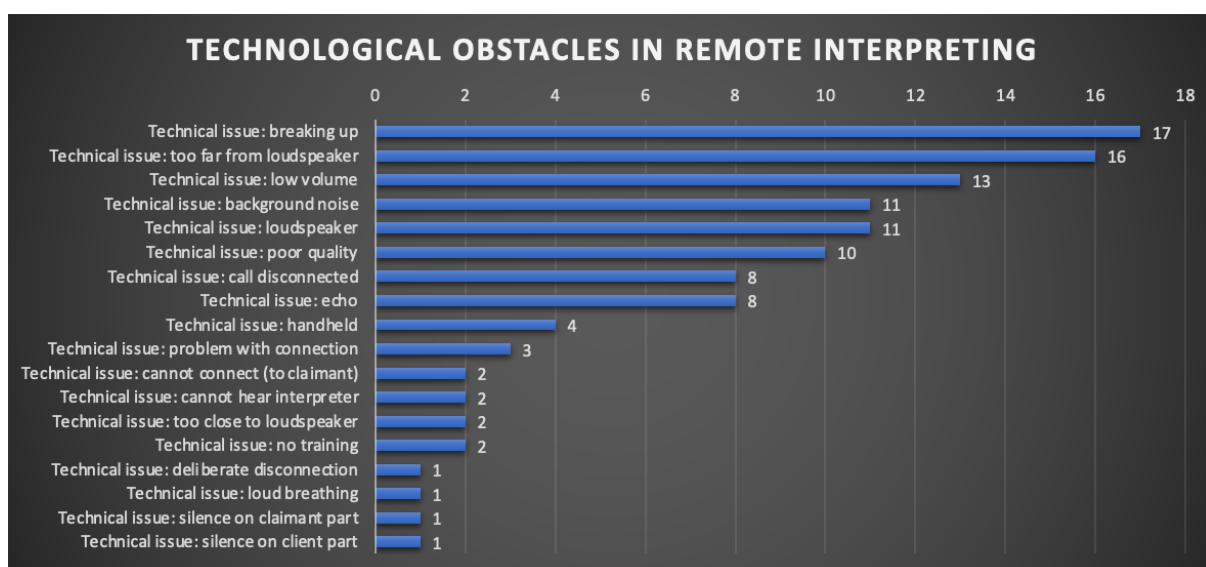


Figure 25. Technological Obstacles in Remote Interpreting

The data reflects a total of 250 interactions, each assessed for various technological obstacles encountered during remote interpreting sessions. These obstacles have been categorised and quantified to better understand their frequency and impact.

1. Most Common Issues:

- **Breaking up** (6.8%): this is the most frequent issue, occurring in 17 out of 250 cases. It refers to the disruption of communication rendered via any medium — conference calls, personal conference calls, loudspeaker or handheld devices, causing temporary loss of audio for a remote interpreter or the other parties. A consequence of such a loss is the necessity to request a repetition of the last utterance, which disrupts the natural flow of conversation. It is crucial for a remote interpreter to report any instance of a call breaking up, as important pieces of information may be lost if this is not done

- **Distance from Loudspeaker** (6.4%): the second most common issue, which affected 16 interactions, involves being too far from the loudspeaker, leading to difficulties in hearing or being heard clearly. 16 affected calls represent 23.5% of 68 total number of interactions rendered via the employment of a loudspeaker.

2. Volume and Noise-Related Issues:

- **Low Volume** (5.2%): was reported 13 times. Insufficient sound levels naturally make it difficult to hear the conversation. A remote interpreter may experience fatigue if the sound level is not adjusted appropriately. Additionally, this increases the risk of misinterpreting

information. Remote interpreters should always advise a client or an LEP individual if the sound level is unsatisfactory. This is particularly important because, due to varying infrastructure, quality issues may only affect one party (e.g., the remote interpreter), while the other conversational participants may remain unaware of any disturbances.

- **Background Noise and Loudspeaker Problems** (4.4% each): each of these issues occurred 11 times and they indicate challenges with ambient noises interfering with the clarity of the call and issues. A remote interpreter should in all instances inform a client or an LEP individual that the background noise interferes with the interpreting process. Additionally, measures should be taken on the client's and the LEP individual's ends to minimise background noise whenever possible, such as moving to a quieter location or using noise-cancelling technology. Such a proactive approach not only helps ensure clearer communication but also reduces the strain on the interpreter, which will help to make an interpreting session more effective.

3. **Connection and Quality Concerns:**

- **Poor Quality** (4%): was recorded in 10 instances and it refers to general poor audio quality affecting the interpreting process.

- **Call Disconnections and Echo** (3.2% each): both problems were recorded 8 times each and they highlight issues with call stability and audio feedback loops.

4. **Less Frequent Technical Issues:**

- **Handheld-related Issues** (1.6%): challenges with using handheld devices were noted in 4 interactions.

- **Connection Problems** (1.2%): general issues with establishing or maintaining a connection were seen in 3 cases.

5. **Rare Technical Issues** (0.8% each):

- Issues, such as inability to connect to a claimant, inability to hear the interpreter, being too close to loudspeaker, and lack of training (for instance, a client may request that a remote interpreter dial out to an LEP individual or provide video interpreting) were each reported twice.

6. **Isolated Incidents** (0.4% each):

- Deliberate disconnections, loud breathing, and silence from either the claimant's or client's end each occurred once.

The analysis highlights technological challenges that can significantly impact the efficiency of a remote interpreter who depends exclusively on the audible stimuli alone. It is evident that addressing audio quality and connectivity issues is crucial for remote interpreting services.

Implementing better hardware solutions, such as high-quality headsets or loudspeakers could significantly mitigate these problems. Additionally, training for both interpreters and users on optimal setup and can further aid a remote interpreter to render faithful interpreting and eliminate potential problems which may occur in the process.

6.2.4.4 Call Initiation

As discussed previously, remote interpreters do not get any notification of the nature of a call prior to its reception. However, the way that a call is received can vary among companies and it can depend on the nature of an interaction or the applied technology. Out of the 250 interactions registered in the pool, three particular methods can be

	Call Initiation	Number	% of Total
1	Automatic	201	80.4
2	Operator	48	19.2
3	LEP	1	0.4

Table 12. Call Initiation

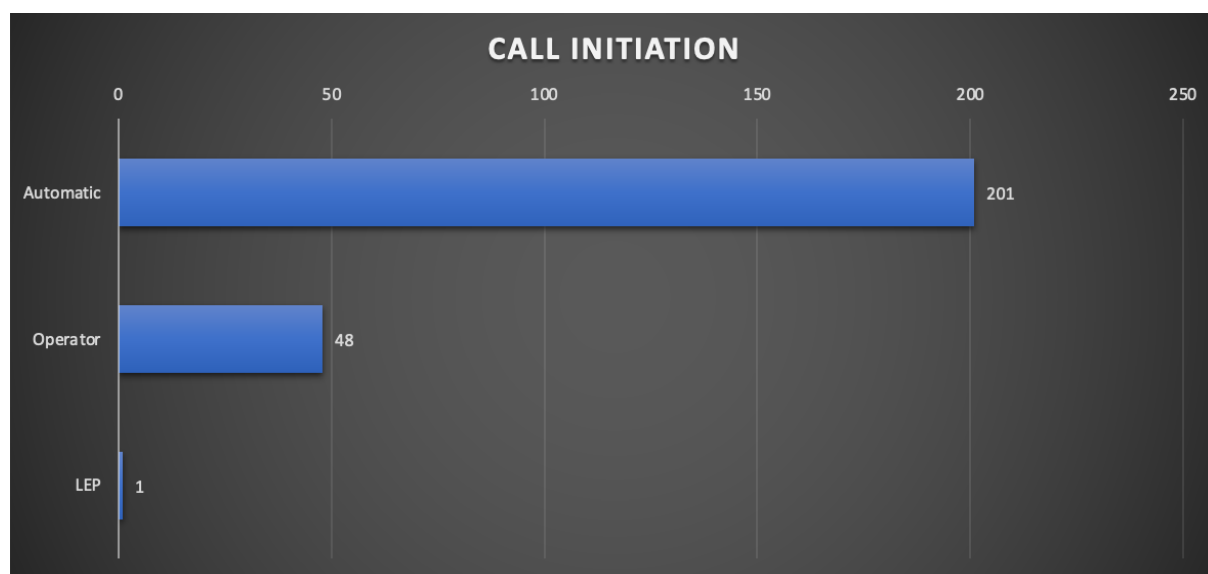


Figure 26. Call initiation

From this data, the following trends and potential areas for analysis can be observed:

1. **Automatic** (201 calls): this is the most common method, where interpreters receive calls and automatically connect to a client. The high frequency suggests a robust system which can efficiently direct calls to available interpreters without requiring human intervention. This method is likely favoured for its speed and effectiveness. No human intervention means that no

delay is expected and language services are provided in a fast manner.

2. **Operator** (48 calls): this method involves an operator who manually connects interpreters with client. In a typical scenario a client dials the interpreting service and requests a remote interpreter for a particular language. Then, an operator seeks an active remote interpreter and connects the calls in a three-way conference call. While significantly less frequent than automatic call initiation, this method may serve important functions, such as dealing with specific requests that might require particular skills or knowledge from remote interpreters. For instance, an operator may ask, whether a remote interpreter wish to interpret a BPAS (British Pregnancy Advisory Service) call (usually about abortion-related issues) or a suicide hotline call. This method might also be used when automatic systems are unable to process a request appropriately. At times, operators may dial out to inactive remote interpreters, if no active remote interpreters are available for a particular language.

3. **LEP call** (1 call): this scenario enables an LEP (Limited English Proficiency) individual requiring interpreting services to dial a specific number, which includes a code corresponding to their native language, and directly connect with a remote interpreter. This method allows the LEP individual to bypass interacting with a representative (a client or agent) in an unfamiliar language, as they are directly connected to an interpreter. Upon receiving the number or office the LEP individual wishes to contact, the remote interpreter uses their own console to dial the number and facilitates the introduction of the claimant to the client. From the point of view of an LEP individual this is the most desirable outcome, however, it places an additional responsibility on a remote interpreter.

The dominance of automatic call initiation suggests that the system is set up to prioritise quick response times and efficient provision of interpreting services. However, the heavy reliance on automation might overlook complex situations where human input is required to match the remote interpreter's specific skills with the caller's needs or when interpreters prefer to avoid handling sensitive and delicate calls, such as those from a suicide hotline.

Although less common, operator-assisted calls may be important for handling specialised requests. The implementation of such a service would greatly assist interpreters, as they would receive prior notification about the nature of a call. Although this information might be provided at the last minute, remote interpreters could at least prepare mentally for an incoming call or open relevant resources, such as an online dictionary for topics with which they are not familiar. Such a system would also provide them the opportunity to decline an interaction if they feel it is too demanding or involves sensitive topics.

On the other hand, the extremely low frequency of LEP-initiated calls could point to a gap

in service accessibility. It may be beneficial to explore ways to empower LEP individuals by making it easier for them to initiate calls directly when needed, ensuring they feel adequately supported in accessing interpreting services.

The data reflects a system that is heavily automated, which promotes efficiency, potentially at the cost of personalised service where. A balanced approach that continues to leverage the benefits of automation, while enhancing operator training and facilitating more direct LEP engagement, could improve the quality and accessibility of remote interpreting services.

6.2.5 Duration of Interaction

The following analysis presents the total and the average time of remote community interactions broken down into sectors.

	Sector	Total Time (mm:ss)	Average Time (mm:ss)	Number of Interactions
1	Benefits	6904:54	51:31	134
2	Medical	3413:25	45:30	75
3	No interpreting	44:14	1:50	24
4	Social Services	279:38	23:18	12
5	Police	64:24	12:52	5

Table 13. Time (in minutes) spent on remote interactions by sector

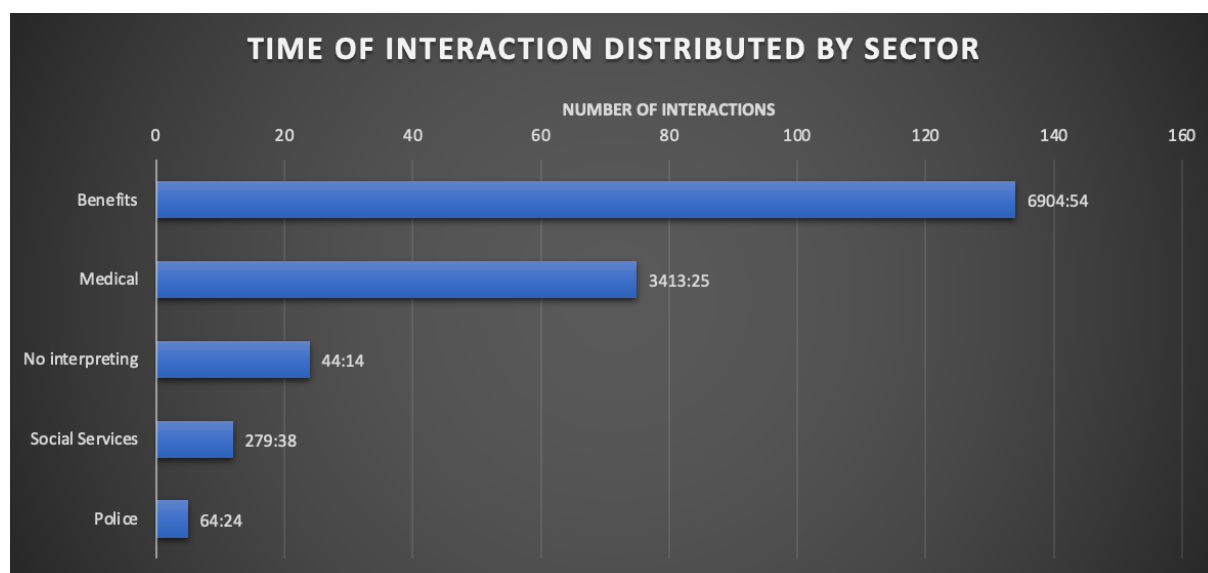


Figure 27. Time (in minutes) distributed by sector of remote interactions sorted by the number of interactions

The statistical analysis of the time distribution and interaction frequency shows that the “Benefits” sector stands out with the highest total interaction time, accumulating 6904 minutes and 54 seconds, averaging approximately 51 minutes and 31 seconds per interaction. As

discussed previously, this is the most popular sector (134 sessions), and the average time of each connection can indicate an increased demand and more lengthy conversations. It is understandable, as such encounters include discussions related to payments, lifestyle, calculations of income, other financial matters, to name a few.

The “Medical” sector also shows a high volume of calls, with 75 interactions totalling 3413 minutes and 25 seconds. The average interaction time is around 45 minutes and 30 seconds, suggesting detailed conversations, likely involving comprehensive medical discussions, psychological evaluations or medical appointments.

The “No interpreting” category, which could include instances of no-shows or cancelled appointments, records 24 interactions with a total time of 44 minutes and 14 seconds. The average time per interaction is relatively short, at about 1 minute and 50 seconds, indicating quick resolutions — this amount of time is typically adequate to determine whether an LEP individual would choose not to answer the phone or to leave a voicemail message.

The “Police” sector has 5 interactions, totalling 64 minutes and 24 seconds, with an average time of 12 minutes and 52 seconds per interaction. This may reflect short and focused interactions, potentially related to specific incidents or inquiries.

Lastly, “Social Services” account for 12 interactions, with a total time of 279 minutes and 38 seconds, averaging around 23 minutes and 18 seconds per interaction. This data indicates moderately lengthy consultations, such as domestic abuse and parental disputes over childcare, which typically require more time to address.

Overall, the data highlights the nature of longest interactions across different sectors, with “Benefits” and “Medical” sectors requiring the most time and attention, which reflects a critical role played by remote interpreters in providing LEP individuals with access to these essential public services.

The following chart and graph present the total time and the average time of all the subcategories (which belong to the 4 main categories), sorted by the number of interactions. For the purpose of this analysis, the category “No interpreting” was considered as a whole and was not broken down into its two subcategories.

	Subsector	Time Call (mm:ss)	Average Time (mm:ss)	Number of Interactions
1	Universal Credit review of circumstances	4053:25	75:03	54
2	GP general appointment	2471:26	60:16	41
3	No interpreting	44:14	1:50	24

4	Appointment with a consultant	347:58	21:44	16
5	Universal Credit application	1859:50	123:59	15
6	Universal Credit health matters	226:49	16:12	14
7	Universal Credit account management	142:32	15:50	9
8	Universal Credit payment issue	127:47	14:11	9
9	Universal Credit unemployment programme	84:13	10:31	8
10	Physical therapy	275:01	34:22	8
11	Child support services	149:25	18:40	8
12	Universal Credit self-employment appointment	105:41	15:05	7
13	PIP disability benefit	173:51	34:46	5
14	Psychological consultation	234:23	46:52	5
15	Universal Credit account suspended	43:04	10:46	4
16	Universal Credit advance payment application	21:58	5:29	4
17	Social Housing	130:13	32:33	4
18	Pre-surgery	24:23	8:07	3
19	Arrest	27:09	9:02	3
20	Universal Credit housing matters	19:56	9:58	2
21	Domestic abuse	37:15	18:37	2
22	Carer's allowance application	7:06	7:06	1
23	Pension application	5:11	5:11	1
24	Pension credit pension application	33:29	33:29	1
25	Emergency Services	41:15	41:15	1
26	Hospital discharge	18:59	18:59	1

Table 14. Time (in minutes) spent on remote interactions by reason for interaction

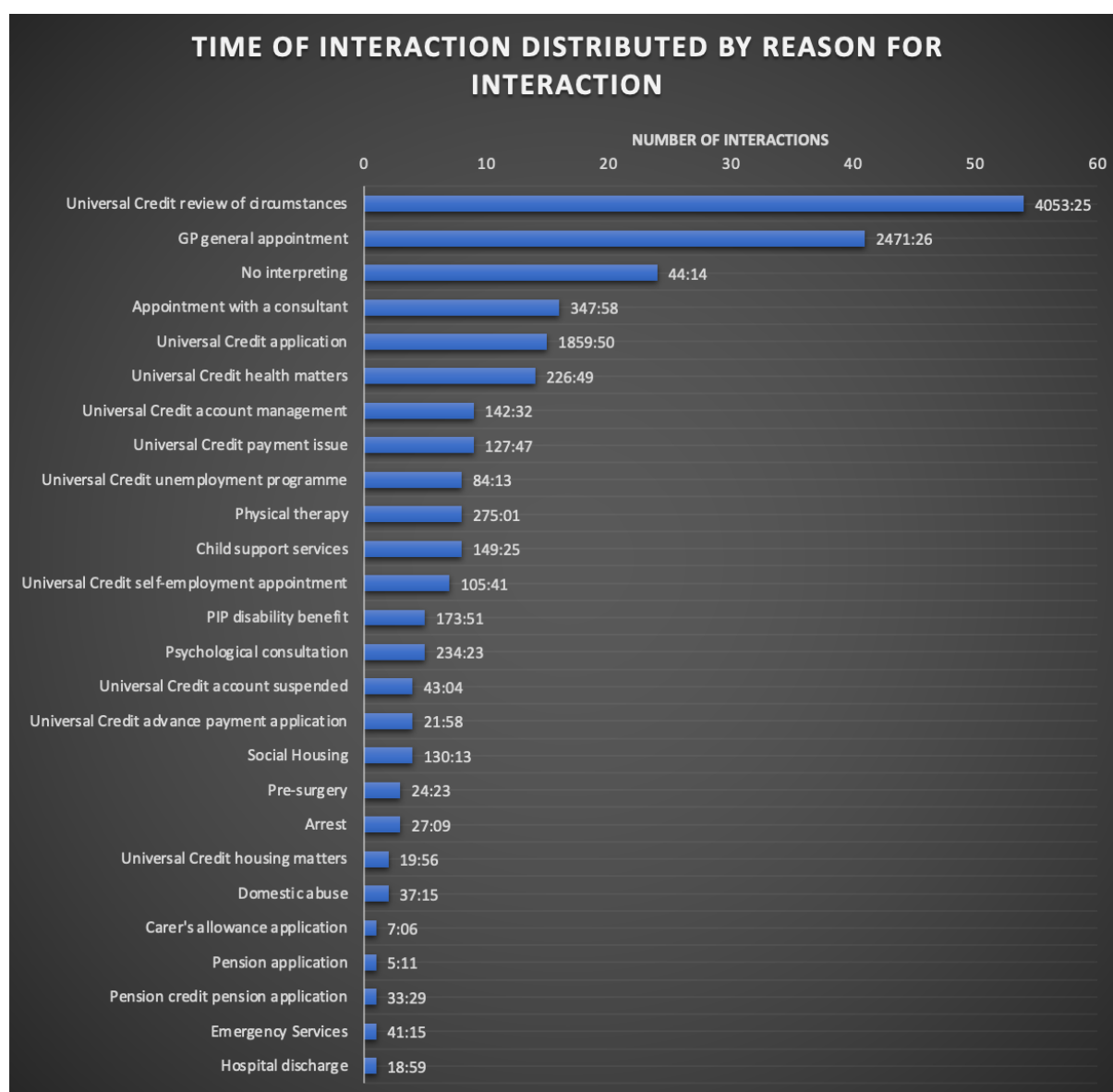


Figure 28. Time (in minutes) of reasons for interaction sorted by the number of interaction

This detailed breakdown throws more light onto the length of interactions within their respective subcategories. The analysis of the above chart shows the dominance of calls related to Universal Credit services, and consequently a substantial demand for remote interpreting in such matters, both in terms of time and frequency. This insight is may be useful from the point of view of training of remote interpreters, who should be familiarised with specific vocabulary, the names of institutions, and the mechanisms of the welfare system to effectively navigate the complexities of such calls.

Also, the significant amount of time spent on GP appointments, physical therapy, and psychological consultations, and the relatively long interactions highlight the importance of having access to a remote interpreter. Such interactions involve lengthy conversations about

everyday issues and activities, Consequently, from the perspective of training remote interpreters, it is crucial to sensitise entrants to the need for broadening their understanding of the colloquial language used during such encounters. This is of utmost importance, as most university-level programmes primarily focus on academic language (specifically in the field of conference interpreting), often neglecting the nuances of everyday speech.

Another important issue to consider is that the longer the interaction lasts, the greater the cognitive burden and fatigue that remote interpreters may experience. This increased cognitive load can stem from the sustained focus required to faithfully interpret complex and lengthy utterances. Over time, this can lead to diminished accuracy, slower processing times, and increased stress, all of which can negatively affect the quality of interpreting.

6.3 Qualitative Analysis

6.3.1 Objectives

The qualitative part of the research consists of a detailed investigation into 10 anonymised recordings registered in the period of 2023-2024. Interpreting sessions were recorded using a Sony UX560 recording machine with an external microphone and their parts were transcribed for purpose of a subsequent analysis. Parties to remote interaction were not informed about the research not to affect its outcome. Author received prior approval to record anonymised information—all identifying data was removed manually from each recording by the author in locally-installed audio editing software (Audacity) before the transcription process. Author does not hold the identifiable data. Recordings were transcribed using automated Sonic platform and then annotated by the author. Recordings are not allowed for further processing or any analysis by third-parties. Full transcripts are available on request via the e-mail address of the author.

The transcription process involved capturing spoken language, while the annotation process included marking significant segments relevant to the analysis. Each transcription was reviewed to ensure precision and to identify patterns or recurring themes.

The recordings were then systematically coded to facilitate the categorisation and analysis of various issues encountered during the interpreting sessions. The coding process involved assigning labels to segments of the text based on predefined categories:

- Introduction-based problems: the introduction step of each recording has been analysed and annotated. The author was interested to know, whether poor (statistically prevalent) or insufficient introduction may lead to a limited output or decreased performance

or missing information which may be crucial for successful process of interpreting.

- LEP-individual based problems: problems specific to LEP individuals, such as the length and coherence of utterances, the ability to articulate their needs or their understanding of the interpreting process.
- Client-based problems: challenges related to the clients, such as their communication style, clarity of speech, length of utterances or their understanding and cooperation with a remote interpreter.
- Interpreter—role and management: issues involving the flow and the management of an interaction, including the repetitions, clarifications or occasions, where remote interpreters have to assume different roles in order to solve a problem mid-interaction.
- Instruction-based problem: this category involves the issue of address—how clients referred to LEP individuals, or whether the best practices were followed, such as informing the client when the interpreter needs to intervene or provide clarification.
- Technology-based problems: these encompass any technical difficulties encountered during the interpreting sessions, such as poor audio quality, connectivity issues, and background noise which may hinder the communication process and a remote interpreter's performance.
- Emotional and cognitive burden: utterances which may be challenging to interpret or may cause an emotional reaction when dealing with distressing or sensitive content or utterances which require significant mental workload to process and interpret the information given their complexity, speed of interaction.

This approach allowed for the identification of specific instances and examples that illustrate each category. Subsequent analysis involved a detailed examination of the coded data to reveal potential issues and draw insights into the challenges faced in Polish-English remote community interpreting by a remote interpreter. Specifically, it aimed to determine whether the presence of a remote interpreter affects or shapes the interpreted interactions, and how it does so. Not all the recordings shared the same issues and only the relevant fragments of the transcripts have been included to facilitate easier analysis.

The investigation into these factors may provide a comprehensive framework and may allow to better understand the complex challenges faced by remote interpreters, and the multiple roles they adopt in remote community settings.

6.3.2 First Recording—GP Consultation

1. Introduction-based problems

As discussed previously, the introductory step is a crucial one, as it constitutes a valuable source of information for a remote interpreter, which could include the name of the caller, the setting, the name of the LEP individual as well as the reason for the interaction. However, in praxis and as presented in the statistical section, a full introduction is not common. The first recording analysed by the author had the following introduction.

Interpreter: [00:00:07] Hello, Good morning, my name is [anonymised]. I am going to be your Polish interpreter, my ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:17] Oh, erm, many thanks. I am dr [anonymised], Health Centre and I am going to ring a 69 year-old lady. All the details I have been given are rheumatoid arthritis. Now, she does not have any history of rheumatoid arthritis so I am wondering if she is querying it or something, but bear with me.

Interpreter: [00:00:32] Yes doctor, of course, I am happy to help.

Recording 1. Extract 1

This introduction can be categorised as a full introduction. Apart from the obvious information, which can be perceived by any listener, a skilled remote interpreter can infer the following information:

- **setting:** “I am dr” indicates that the interaction is going to be of medical nature and most likely is happening at a doctor’s office.
- **method of communication:** “I am going to ring” suggests clearly that the interaction is going to happen via telephone and that the patient is not located within the same space.
- **description of the LEP individual:** the phrase “a 69 year old lady” provides a remote interpreter with a wealth of information about the patient and a series of insights about how to render the interaction effective. A remote interpreter may ask the following question “will the patient be skilled at communicating effectively over the phone with a remote interpreter?”, which can help assume a particular strategy and initiate the adoption of a particular tone of voice.
- **reason for the interaction:** “details I have been given are rheumatoid arthritis” and “she does not have any history of rheumatoid arthritis” can help a remote interpreter infer the nature of the interaction as it provides a clear reason for which the doctor is contacting the patient. A

skilled interpreter who is unfamiliar with the term may quickly look it up while the medical professional is connecting the patient in order to be prepared to use the name of the condition in Polish.

- **LEP individual-based problem**

The following passages are utterances rendered by the patient. As it can be observed from the following extracts the utterances rendered by the patient are extremely long:

Interpreter: [00:01:42] Dzień dobry. Ja dzwonię z przychodni. Jak mogę pani pomóc?

LEP: [00:01:45] Tak. Yyyy mam taki problem ze sobą, bo puchną mi palce w rękach, także rano na przykład do takiego stopnia, że ja nie mogę kołdry wziąć do ręki, nie zegnę palców, a później mi to w ciągu dnia gdzieś tam już jakąś tam ulgę przynosi. No i zaczęło się to чудо. Zaobserwowałam, że przy kostkach w nogach mam też leciutko opuchnięte i to wszystko się dzieje w nocy, a później w ciągu dnia jakoś [inaudible] jest lepiej. Mam to w rękach, mam opuchnięte bo w kostkach dopiero teraz zauważyłam, że coś się dzieje, ale w rękach po prostu mi się to utrzymuje, tylko mówię tylko w mniejszym stanie. No, także to jest jedno, tak że opuchnięcie, a plus to na przykład to ciśnienie. Ja byłam w przychodni, badano mi to ciśnienie też sprawozdanie tam dawałam, ale na przykład dzisiaj miałam po nocy o godzinie 7:50, 141/89. No po prostu duże ciśnienie. W nocy mi się ciśnienie podwyższa, a potem znowu zaczyna i przy tym ból głowy potrafi mnie obudzić. No takie jakieś są. No i to co mówiłam już też w przychodni, no to po prostu zaczęło mnie, yyy kaszle. Od czasu do czasu tak kaszle, więc nie wiem z czym to może być związane. [00:03:06]

Recording 1. Extract 2

Utterance 1, rendered by the patient in response to the doctor's question, is a very long, somewhat illogical, and unstructured statement. This suggests that the patient might be struggling to articulate her thoughts clearly, possibly due to stress, or the complexity of the situation. From a remote interpreter's perspective Utterance 1 is a complex statement which includes 4 key pieces of information, related to 4 separate conditions, synthesised below for easier reference:

- puchną mi palce w rękach, rano do takiego stopnia, że ja nie mogę kołdry wziąć do ręki, nie zegnę palców, później mi to w ciągu dnia gdzieś tam już jakąś tam ulgę

- Zaobserwowałam, że przy kostkach w nogach mam też leciutko opuchnięte i to wszystko się dzieje w nocy, a później w ciągu dnia jakoś [inaudible] jest lepiej
- ciśnienie, Ja byłam w przychodni, badano mi to ciśnienie, dzisiaj miałam po nocy o godzinie 7:50, 141/89, W nocy mi się ciśnienie podwyższa, a potem znowu zaczyna, ból głowy potrafi mnie obudzić
- kaszle, Od czasu do czasu tak kaszlę

These are four unrelated conditions presented to a remote interpreter in a statement spanning over 1,5 minutes, indicating that the patient is not accustomed to working with a remote interpreter over the phone, which is understandable. Additionally, the interaction was conducted via telephone link, with the patient and the doctor being in separate locations. This might have propelled the patient to express herself as fast as possible.

Ideally, the utterance should have been delivered in four separate statements, allowing the remote interpreter the opportunity to render each one as a distinct utterance. The challenge behind the utterance is that it is unstructured, making it difficult to commit to memory and subsequently interpret accurately. The best course of action in this situation would be to take notes, categorising each condition into separate groups, thereby structuring the information for easier expression in the target language. A patient who has experience working with a remote interpreter might have delivered the same information in a more succinct way, thereby allowing for its easier processing and interpreting.

On the other hand, it is common for patients to be talkative when speaking with a doctor. Another reason for the complex utterance might be the fear that the patient will not have the opportunity to address all her concerns in one session, or she may simply worry about forgetting what she wanted to say. Regardless of the reason, patients should be instructed to keep their utterances relatively short, so that a remote interpreter could have a better chance at grasping its full meaning, specifically, if an interaction is of medical nature.

3. Client-based problem

The following passage is a response of the doctor to a question asked by the patient:

Client: [00:10:26] Okay, okay, erm right okay, so what we gonna need to do first is, we probably need to get some update blood test [inaudible] joins and everything erm cuz that can help to eliminate some issues, erm and then probably what we got to be doing, once we gonna get all the tests together erm, and once [inaudible] we got the results erm, I noticed she has been recently for a blood pressure test and her blood

pressure was really good then 129/74, that was last week. Erm now I can see that a nurse gave her a blood form. If I change that and give her a different blood form, cuz I am going to add on some extra tests to check everything, and particularly to look at joints. [00:11:09]

Recording 1. Extract 3

The doctor's utterance is also a long statement (spanning over 30 seconds) which contains four distinct piece of information colour-coded for easier reference, namely:

- need to get some update blood
- then probably what we got to be doing, once we gonna get all the tests together
- she has been recently for a blood pressure test and her blood pressure was really good then 129/74, that was last week
- I change that and give her a different blood form, cuz I am going to add on some extra tests to check everything, and particularly to look at joints

Unfortunately, the delivery of the utterance and its structure leave much to be desired, and it seems that the doctor does not have a lot of experience working with a remote interpreter either. First of all, the utterance covers four distinct aspects which could be broken into four separate utterances to make it easier for a remote interpreter to process and deliver to the patient.

Both utterances (from the patient and the doctor) place a significant burden on a remote interpreter's cognitive skills due to their demands on memorisation. Therefore, a remote interpreter should be well-versed in the process of note-taking, much like consecutive interpreters, to effectively support short-term memory. Although memory (short-term as well as long-term) is one of the most useful (and versatile) tools that interpreters have at their disposal (Chmiel, 2015), certain utterances may be particularly challenging to process due to their lack of coherence.

4. Instruction-based problems

An additional problem visible at the level of the utterance of the doctor and the statements below is the problem of address. As discussed, parties should address each other directly, as if having a regular conversation, and the recommended standard is for a remote interpreter to interpret using the direct address (first person singular) in order to give the conversational participants the notion of having a direct interaction. However, the client violated this rule repeatedly:

Client: [00:04:29] Okay, right, getting back to her fingers, which parts of her fingers swell? [00:04:30]

Recording 1. Extract 4

Client: [00:07:01] Ok. She mentioned swollen ankles as well. The swollen ankles, how long has that been going on for?

Recording 1. Extract 5

Client: [00:08:55] Okay, right. Does she get any breathlessness or chest pain?

Recording 1. Extract 6

The fact that the client applied the technique of using the indirect address (third-person singular) may stem from a lack of experience working with a remote interpreter. On the other hand, in alignment with some of the findings from the research conducted by Boczarski (2023), the doctor may have found it less confusing to refer directly to the remote interpreter. By doing so, the doctor bypassed addressing the patient directly and, from a technical perspective, engaged in a conversation with the remote interpreter about the patient.

However, the remote interpreter followed the recommended practice by interpreting using direct address:

Interpreter: [00:05:04] All my fingers, they all swell, it starts at the fingertips, really. I feel like they are swollen, they are all swollen, really, erm all the four fingers, the thumb not so much. I feel like it is swollen but I can still move it, it is still sort of movable, so to speak.

Recording 1. Extract 7

Interpreter: [00:11:58] Ok. So I need to go to the surgery and collect it?

Recording 1. Extract 8

Recording 1 is an example of a challenging interaction in which three major problems occurred, namely:

1. Long-winded, illogical and unstructured utterances on the part of the LEP individual.
2. Long utterances on the part of the client.

3. Violation of direct address.

To mitigate such issues, the client should receive proper training on how to work with a remote interpreter, specifically focusing on producing shorter and more structured utterances.

6.3.3 Second Recording—Hospital Consultation

1. Introduction-based problems

The following extract is the introductory step of the second recording.

Interpreter: [00:00:03] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your [anonymised] Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:13] Hi, my name is Mr. [anonymised]. I'm one of the registrar here in the maxillofacial surgery.

Interpreter: [00:00:22] Yes, sir. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:23] We got a patient. We got a patient and his name is [anonymised]. And he speak Polish. So we need to have a consultation today.

Recording 2. Extract 1

The presented introduction of the second recording does not contain a lot of information, unfortunately, and it can be classified as a basic introduction. Based on the utterance, the remote interpreter can gather the following:

- **setting:** “My name is Mr.” does not provide the remote interpreter with any particular context, however, then the client adds: “I am one of the registrar here in the maxillofacial surgery,” which gives the remote interpreter a glimpse of the interaction which will unfold briefly. The term “maxillofacial” can help open a mental frame in the mind of the remote interpreter, as it is a specialised medical term, referring to a particular body part.
- **method of communication:** by saying “We got a patient” most probably suggests that the client and the LEP individual are located in the same room.
- **description of the LEP individual:** “a patient and his name is” does not contain much data which the remote interpreter could build any relevant context. The only bit of information available at this point is that the patient is a male.
- **reason for interaction:** the phrase “So we need to have a consultation today” does not provide the remote interpreter with a great deal of information. The only details that we can infer from this utterance is that it is going to be a specialised medical appointment

on the spot, most likely questionnaire-based.

However, the information related to the specific setting of this interaction is merely implied, leaving the interpreter to make assumptions. Following the initial exchange, the remote interpreter decided to gather more information about the setting, specifically whether the conversation would be conducted via a loudspeaker or by passing a handheld receiver. As discussed previously, both methods have their advantages and drawbacks. The primary concern is how interpreted utterances are delivered. In the case of a handheld device, the conversational party must signal when they are ready to listen; otherwise, the remote interpreter may be unsure who is listening or where the handheld receiver is located. Consequently, this could lead to communication challenges or interruptions during the process of interpreting. The remote interpreter then asked the following question:

Interpreter: [00:00:34] Yes, doctor. I'm happy to help. Can you please let me know if you're using a loudspeaker?

Client: [00:00:40] Yes.

Interpreter: [00:00:41] Okay. Right. I'm happy to help. Can the patient hear me now?

Client: [00:00:45] So I have my question is to him what the problem he have in his mouth, why he is here today.

Recording 2. Extract 2

The response from the medical professional allowed the remote interpreter to anticipate the dynamics within the room. While the use of a loudspeaker is generally more “user-friendly” from the remote interpreter's perspective, it introduces its own set of challenges, such as poor microphone reception, low volume, and echo. Nonetheless, the response provided the remote interpreter with crucial information on how to effectively deliver the interpreted utterances to both conversational parties. However, the medical professional failed to respond to the second question and proceeded to ask questions directly to the remote interpreter about the patient, leaving him out of the conversation.

2. LEP individual-based problems

Given the technological solution used in this interaction, the conversational parties might have faced challenges in communicating with the remote interpreter, or, in expressing their thoughts, as they were apparently situated at a distance from the loudspeaker, which could have necessitated raising their voices. On the other hand, the lack of clarity may stem from a general

inability to communicate clearly, stress or anxiety (specifically on the part of the patient). The following extracts illustrate instances of miscommunication due to imprecise language and a syntactical differences between the question asked by the remote interpreter, as indicated in blue, and the response provided by the LEP individual, as highlighted in green. To clarify the situation, the remote interpreter requested a clarification and a repetition. Additionally, the remote interpreter reported poor audio quality, likely attributing it as the cause of the miscommunication.

Client: [00:09:31] Forty. Drinking alcohol?

Interpreter: [00:09:35] Czy spożywa Pan alkohol?

LEP: [00:09:38] Spożywałem, a teraz już nie piję.

Interpreter: [00:09:40] I used to drink. I don't drink at this point.

Client: [00:09:45] Used to drink a lot?

Interpreter: [00:09:50] A czy pan spożywał dużo tego alkoholu?

LEP: [00:09:57] Tak, tak, tak

Interpreter: [00:09:57] Yes I did, yes.

Client: [00:10:00] For how long?

Interpreter: [00:10:00] Przez jaki okres?

Client: [00:10:00] For how many years? He used to drink a lot.

Interpreter: [00:10:13] Ile lat spożywał pan ten alkohol?

Client: [00:10:14] Jeden rok.

Interpreter: [00:10:22] I'm sorry. This is the interpreter. I can barely hear the patient. Apparently he is located far away from the loudspeaker. I'm going to ask for a repetition.

Interpreter: [00:10:24] Przepraszam, nie usłyszałem, czy może Pan powtórzyć? od jak dawna spożywał...

LEP: [00:10:36] Jeden rok czasu.

Interpreter: [00:10:39] Sorry. The interpreter has to clarify.

Interpreter: [00:10:40] Rok temu pan przestał tak?

LEP: [00:10:45] Nie nie nie, do roku czasu tak piłem, a przestałem jakieś pół roku temu. Pół roku temu przestałem.

Interpreter: [00:10:54] So I had been drinking for a year. But then, um, half a year ago, I stopped.

Recording 2. Extract 3

Another problem resulted from the lack of clarity in the utterance of the LEP individual, as indicated in blue. In the following example, the medical professional asked a specific question (in imperfect English), however the remote interpreter was not able to understand the response of the LEP individual, as indicated in green, and attempted to request a repetition.

Client: [00:23:23] He is having a scar, left side of his head. Can you ask why is that scar on the left head?

Interpreter: [00:23:44] Proszę powiedzieć, widzę bliznę z lewej strony pana głowy, skąd ta blizna? Co się stało?

LEP: [00:23:47] This?

LEP: [00:23:49] This badanie badanie [inaudible].

LEP: [00:23:52] Pobierają krew, co ja mówię?

Interpreter: [00:24:05] Sorry, doctor. The patient, um, wasn't very clear.

Interpreter: [00:24:11] Proszę powtórzyć, bo niestety nie rozumiem, proszę powtórzyć.

LEP: [00:24:19] Pobierają mi z żyły, ja mam tutaj cały, jak to powiedzieć

Client: [00:24:22] What is he saying?

Interpreter: [00:24:32] I'm sorry, doctor, the patient hasn't really finished. I don't understand, I'm waiting for the patient to finish his sentence.

Client: [00:24:39] No, there is a simple question. He having a scar on left side of his head. Can you ask that? Is he having any operation? Accident? What happened? Is the operation.

Interpreter: [00:24:59] Dobrze, ale ma pan bliznę, z lewej strony głowy, prawda? Co się stało? Czy miał pan jakąś operację? Czy miał pan jakiś wypadek?

LEP: [00:25:00] Pobierano mi teraz krew z żyły.

Recording 2. Extract 4

It is difficult to accurately pinpoint the reason behind this misunderstanding. It may have been due to the patient's emotional state or the stress of the situation. As discussed previously, stressful or unwelcome circumstances can alter the attitude of the conversational parties. The medical professional's response (indicated in red) shows slight irritation at the lack of response from the remote interpreter, despite the interpreter having previously explained that the patient had not yet finished his utterance.

3. Client-based problems

The conversational parties in the interaction belong to two different language groups: a Polish remote interpreter, a Polish national living and working in the UK, and a medical professional whose command of English does not allow for precise identification of their background. However, the imprecision of some questions asked by the medical professional suggests that English may not be his native language.

Client: [00:02:56] So I'm asking. He having this problem for one week? So was he not having this problem one week ago?

Recording 2. Extract 5

Client: [00:04:11] In one week time. Is this problem getting better or getting worse?

Recording 2. Extract 6

Extract 6 is a very imprecise question, and its meaning can be understood only with the contextual information. The answer which the medical professional sought was to determine whether the symptoms had increased or decreased over the past week.

4. Instruction-based problems

Throughout the interaction, the medical professional did not use direct address and therefore referred to the remote interpreter rather than directly engaging with the patient, effectively removing the patient from the interaction. However, as shown in the extracts below, the remote interpreter used the first-person singular and the formal "V" form of address (indicated in green), as this is the most appropriate form in the Polish languages and culture in the given context.

Client: [00:00:45] So I have my question is **to him** what the problem **he have** in his mouth, why **he is** here today.

Recording 2. Extract 7

Client: [00:02:17] **So he** has having a difficulty in swallowing. Is that right?

Interpreter: [00:02:22] Czyli **ma pan** problemy z przełykaniem, tak?

LEP: [00:02:26] Dokładnie, to gdzieś ponad tydzień.

Interpreter: [00:02:28] Exactly. Yes. Over a week now.

Client: [00:02:34] So one week before **he was** able to swallow?

Recording 2. Extract 8

Client: [00:18:19] Okay, so ask him that we want to arrange a biopsy procedure for him.

Interpreter: [00:18:26] Będziemy musieli umówić pana na biopsję.

Client: [00:18:33] Yes. So I can explain that to you. You can explain to him.

Interpreter: [00:18:38] Wy tłumaczę to Panu za momencik.

Recording 2. Extract 9

The use of indirect address by the medical professional might be explained by the employment of a loudspeaker and the physical distance between the device and the conversational participants. Logistically, the medical professional had to project his voice toward the device, which may have created the impression of speaking to someone else rather than directly to the patient. The penultimate row is a phrase directed at the remote interpreter, however, the remote interpreter decided to relay a paraphrased message to the patient (indicated in blue) in order to keep the patient in the loop.

5. Technology-based problems

Given the limitations of the communication method used (the loudspeaker), there were many instances during the interaction where the conversation did not follow the expected path. The following extract is an example of a misunderstanding, likely due to these limitations. To resolve the issue, the LEP individual responded in English, and the remote interpreter repeated the last utterance, adding an additional piece of information to reinforce the message and clarify the situation (marked in blue).

Client: [00:11:10] Has he diagnosed with [inaudible] liver problem and liver damage?

Interpreter: [00:11:16] I'm sorry, this is the interpreter. I do apologise, but I'm having a problem with the loudspeaker. The quality is really poor. Could you please repeat that?

Client: [00:11:24] Yes. Can you ask that? Has he having any damage to his liver?

Interpreter: [00:11:33] Proszę powiedzieć, czy ma pan jakiegolwiek problemy z wątrobą?

LEP: [00:11:34] Tak.

Interpreter: [00:11:34] Yes I do.

Client: [00:11:42] No.

LEP: [00:11:44] Tak, tak yes.

Interpreter: [00:11:44] Yes I do. I do have problems with my liver.

Recording 2. Extract 10

Recording 2 can be classified as a highly challenging interaction, marked by four major issues:

1. The use of the loudspeaker as a communication method increased the difficulty due to compromised sound quality, leading to multiple requests for repetition and clarification.
2. The LEP individual's responses were often illogical, likely resulting from the high level of stress typical in medical encounters.
3. The rule of direct address was violated and the medical professional referred directly to the remote interpreter, which excluded the patient from the conversation.
4. The medical professional's level of English was inadequate, further contributing to the communication challenges.

It is difficult to provide clear guidance in this particular situation, as the choice of communication device (the loudspeaker) might have been dictated by the lack of alternative infrastructure. While a loudspeaker appears to be a suitable choice, allowing everyone to hear and enabling the remote interpreter to hear all parties, the quality of the device often falls short. As discussed previously, inadequate speaker quality can lead to difficulties in hearing a remote interpreter, and poor microphone quality can cause audio issues on the remote interpreter's end.

However, the problem of addressing the LEP individual can be easily mitigated by providing sufficient training to the medical personnel, and problems 2 and 4 are personal issues of the conversational parties.

6.3.4 Third Recording—Appointment at a Job Centre

1. Introduction-based problems

The following extract is the introductory step of the third recording.

Operator: [00:00:00] I will put you through.

Interpreter: [00:00:01] Thank you.

Operator: [00:00:03] Interpreter is on the line.

Interpreter: [00:00:04] Hello. Good morning.

Client: [00:00:05] Thank you.

Interpreter: [00:00:06] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your [anonymised] Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:14] Hi there. I'm Simon and this is Thomas. If you could say good morning. Thank you.

Interpreter: [00:00:25] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słyszać?

LEP: [00:00:26] Dzień dobry, tak tak.

Interpreter: [00:00:26] Yes, you can go ahead.

Recording 3. Extract 1

The interaction was initiated by an operator who confirmed the remote interpreter's readiness to take another call. However, the introduction to the third recording provides minimal information. Beyond the names of the conversational parties and the setting, the following can be established:

- **setting:** “I’m Simon” does not provide the remote interpreter with any additional information. However, as typically, medical professionals introduce themselves using the position or title (nurse, doctor etc.), the remote interpreter was able to exclude the medical setting.
- **method of communication:** from a pragmatic point of view, the statement “This is Thomas” implies that the speakers likely share the same physical space—most probably, they are in the same room. This knowledge allowed the remote interpreter to narrow down the possible methods of communication to two options: a loudspeaker or a 3-way personal call in which both speakers are in the same room but are communicating via telephone (this set-up was forced by a plexiglass installed during the pandemic of Covid-19 and for privacy reasons—in a business office, a loudspeaker can be a problematic solution).
- **description of the LEP individual:** “Thomas” does not contain much data which the remote interpreter could build any relevant context. The only bit of information available at this point is that the patient is a male.
- **reason for interaction:** there is no mention of the nature of the interaction or its goal. This is the least favourable scenario, as it provides the remote interpreter with virtually no information about the upcoming conversation. Consequently, the interpreter is unable to anticipate the context or content of the discussion, leaving them unprepared for the nuances or specific terminology that might arise.
- **LEP individual-based problems**

During the interaction, some of the LEP individual responses seem somewhat long, confusing, or not connected in a logical way. As the LEP individual and the client shared the same space, the client was able to make the following observations (indicated in blue):

LEP: [00:03:34] To jest kwestia może dwóch tygodni, góra do trzech, bo oni tam po prostu jakąś nową linkę otwierają i będą potrzebować ludzi, a oni chcą właśnie ludzi, którzy chcą już sprawdzeni, którzy wiedzą, że umie robić, nie taki byle kto, kto przychodzi.

Interpreter: [00:03:51] Well. Up to two weeks really. You know the opening a new production line and they want people that already know the process, not newcomers or new-joiners that would not know what to do.

Client: [00:04:03] All right then. Right. So one of the things I've got to mention is just that I noticed a few times Thomas has come in as a strong smell of alcohol. Erm, I just wondered if he was getting any help for any treatment or whether he was trying to work to maybe lower his consumption, because I just think if he goes to an interview like that, they're not going to take him on. And it does concern me for his health as well.

Recording 3. Extract 2

The interpreting of the question asked by the client requires a certain level of diplomacy to ensure it does not sound condescending or rude. However, the client used the English expression "to be fair," which actually makes the statement more emphatic. This phrase can add emphasis, suggesting that the client is firm in his viewpoint. It is essential to convey the added certainty, while maintaining a respectful tone in the communication.

LEP: [00:05:04] Nie. Powiem tak, ja po prostu nie, hmm, nie powiem, że w ogóle nie wypiję, wypiję piwo oczywiście, ale nie przesadzam z alkoholem. A teraz zatrzymałem się u kolegi, nie mam pracy i po prostu to jest z nudów, to to nie jest, ja tutaj, ja przepracowałem tyle lat, nigdy nie miałem problemów jakichś związanych z alkoholem, czy z czymś, po prostu to jest z nudów, napije się piwo, nie powiem. No napije się piwo, ale tak, żeby przesadzać coś, to to to nie.

Interpreter: [00:05:41] Well, I, um. Okay, let me say it this way. It's not like I don't drink. I do have a beer every now and then. Uh, I'm actually staying at a friend of mine at this point and, you know, I don't have a job. And so I drink out of boredom,

really. I've been here for a couple of years. I've been working for a couple of years, and I've never had any problems, really. So I guess it's out of boredom. Um, I would I do have a beer. Um, so every now and then.

Client: [00:06:14] Yeah. To be fair, it smells stronger than a beer. But, um, I was just wondering if he would, if he would consider looking at, uh, speaking to Horizons who deal with this sort of thing and might be able to help him.

Interpreter: [00:06:29] Mam wrażenie, na podstawie tego, co czuję, że tutaj chodzi o coś silniejszego niż piwo. Chciałem się po prostu dowiedzieć, czy pan potrzebuje jakiejś pomocy, czy chciałby pan porozmawiać z kimś, kto zajmuje się takimi rzeczami.

LEP: [00:06:49] Jeśli byłaby możliwość to tak, wcale się tego nie wypieram, jeśli będzie taka możliwość to oczywiście, że tak.

Recording 3. Extract 3

The client mentioned an organisation called North Yorkshire Horizons (abbreviated as Horizons during the interaction), a British institution that addresses such issues (indicated in purple in the above interaction). However, anticipating a possible lack of understanding from the LEP individual, the remote interpreter opted to substitute this reference with a more accessible expression (also highlighted in purple). It is important to note that a remote interpreter should avoid “smoothing out” any utterances from the LEP individual, even if these seem somewhat illogical or confusing from a linguistic standpoint. In many contexts, such as medical settings or emergency dispatches, the manner in which an LEP individual communicates may provide the client with crucial information.

3. Client-based problems

It is very common for conversational parties engaging with an interpreter to apply corrective actions, such as repetitions, corrections, or rephrasing of their statements, while the statements are being produced. This is done to ensure that the utterance is clear and easily rendered by the remote interpreter into the target language. In many cases, the remote interpreter is considered a "buffer" before the utterance reaches the other conversational party. As a result, speakers often rephrase or reword their statements, understanding that the remote interpreter will likely render the most recent version. In this interaction, the client employed this strategy to streamline his utterance (as indicated in blue).

Client: [00:11:12] I keep showing him and he's done it before, so I don't understand

why he can't do it. And I'm showing him again at the moment so he can either report a change. **Sorry, but forget that.** So log on to his home page. He clicks on job applications here and he adds job here. It's very simple. All.

Recording 3. Extract 4

This approach allows the interpreter to disregard the previous message and focus on the new content. However, this practice can be cognitively draining, as each version requires a certain allocation in the short term memory of a remote interpreter.

4. Interpreter—role and management

During interactions mediated by technology, instances may arise where repetitions or clarifications are necessary due to poor sound quality or other technological issues. In the following examples, the remote interpreter had to intervene (indicated in blue), taking on the role of an interaction coordinator while simultaneously informing the client of the situation.

Client: [00:02:18] But without an interview?

Interpreter: [00:02:25] Tak bez rozmowy o pracę?

LEP: [00:02:26] Jeszcze raz przepraszam?

Interpreter: [00:02:37] **The interpreter will repeat your last question.**

Interpreter: [00:02:38] Tak bez rozmowy o pracę pana przyjmą?

Recording 3. Extract 5

Client: [00:13:38] Okay.

LEP: [00:13:39] No tak bo, [inaudible]

Interpreter: [00:13:41] **I'm sorry. The interpreter didn't get that.** Czy może Pan powtórzyć?

Client: [00:13:46] Repeat?

Interpreter: [00:13:53] **Proszę powtórzyć.**

Client: [00:13:53] He said something.

LEP: [00:13:53] No no no. Okay.

Client: [00:13:55] Okay. So I'm going to book you for two weeks time. Is 11:00 okay?

Recording 3. Extract 6

5. Instruction-based problems

Throughout the interaction, the client referred directly to the interpreter, completely bypassing the LEP individual, despite the latter's physical presence in the room (likely within eye contact). Ironically, it was the remote interpreter who was not physically present, yet for the client it did not relevant.

Client: [00:00:28] Okay. Um, so **Thomas was** telling me about a job. Can you tell me how certain it is, please?

Recording 3. Extract 7

Client: [00:01:34] **Is he. Has he had** an interview yet or is he waiting to go to interview.

Recording 3. Extract 8

Client: [00:07:02] Sure, sure. **I'll find the number for him.** I'll put it **on his** journal if **he wants** that. Um, also, **could you tell him** that I've not sanctioned **him** on this occasion. um, because I don't want to sanction. I don't want **him** to stop **his** money. **He's** not leaving me a great deal of choice, really. **He's** not updating his journals. I asked **him** to. **He's** not updating his job application section. And I just wondered if, like, why **he** could do this. Because going forward, I'm supposed to pull this up for another sanction.

Recording 3. Extract 9

The reason for this behaviour may be the realisation of the obvious fact that language creates a psychological barrier, which can be challenging to overcome, even with direct contact with the other conversational party and linguistic support from an interpreter. This is particularly true for conversational parties who are not accustomed to working with a remote interpreter.

Overall, Recording 3 was a challenging interaction although the quality of the connection and the used technology did not pose a problem. However, the following factors negatively affected the process of interpreting and increased the difficulty for the remote interpreter:

1. Unstructured interactions on the part of the LEP individual.
2. Discussion on a delicate issue which required precision and diplomacy.
3. Violation of direct address.

To further streamline communication and create a more inclusive environment for an LEP individual, it is advisable to provide clients with training on how to effectively work with

remote interpreters.

6.3.5 Fourth Recording—Psychological Evaluation

1. Introduction-based problems

Recording four is a psychological evaluation, and the interaction began with the following introduction.

Operator: [00:00:00] Here. Please introduce yourself with your name and your five digit Pin.

Interpreter: [00:00:06] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Operator: [00:00:16] Sorry. What was it? [anonymised]

Client: [00:00:20] I can't, I couldn't hear that.

Interpreter: [00:00:21] Yes, madam. It's [anonymised].

Client: [00:00:26] Oh. Thank you. And I didn't catch your name either. Sorry.

Interpreter: [00:00:30] The name is [anonymised]. The spelling is quite tricky. It's [anonymised]

Client: [00:00:42] [anonymised].

Interpreter: [00:00:43] Yes. But you can refer to me as the interpreter.

Client: [00:00:45] Hi there.

Client: [00:00:48] Oh. Bless you. My name is Tracy, a psychological wellbeing practitioner. I've been asked to do a screening assessment to find out if the patient is suitable for our service, or what would be better for them. Um, I think he's got anxiety and depression and pain. Um, and a current issue of needing to find somewhere else to live so he might not be suitable, or see if we can find him somewhere. Okay, I'll give him a ring. I understand his name is Marek. Marek.

Interpreter: [00:01:21] Thank you. Thank you for the information.

Recording 4. Extract 1

The interaction was initiated automatically and the initial exchange between the client and the remote interpreter can be classified as a full introduction. The interpreter learns the following information:

- **setting:** the statement, “My name is Tracy, a psychological wellbeing practitioner,” provides the interpreter with substantial information about the nature of the call—most likely a

psychological evaluation. Such interactions typically revolve around a series of questions concerning mental and physical well-being, set in an environment that encourages the exchange of thoughts and experiences on a wide range of everyday topics.

- **method of communication**: the statement, “Okay, I’ll give him a ring,” clearly indicates that the conversation will involve three parties (the client, the LEP individual, and the remote interpreter) situated in three separate locations, connected through the use of a telephone. This statement implicitly informs the remote interpreter about the strategies to be employed in rendering interpreted utterances. Since the parties are not in the same physical space and will be taking turns exchanging their thoughts over the phone, and considering the nature of the call (a psychological evaluation), it is likely that the utterances will be lengthy.
- **description of the LEP individual**: “he’s got anxiety and depression and pain”, “current issue of needing to find somewhere else to live”, “Marek”. These bits of information create a solid mental frame of the interaction to be had. It is clear that the patient is a male, and the conditions mentioned by the client can help the remote interpreter prepare mentally for the upcoming conversation.
- **reason for interaction**: the statement, “to do a screening assessment to find out if the patient is suitable for our service,” gives the remote interpreter a clear indication of the type of the interaction—a survey-style conversation in which the medical practitioner will ask questions of varying nature to the LEP individual. Given the combined pieces of information, it is most likely that the conversation will revolve around topics such as mental health, unemployment, homelessness, and will involve very personal reflections and thoughts of the LEP individual.

- **LEP individual-based problems**

The interaction began with the LEP individual expressing concern over a personal issue related to a medical condition which may affect the call (indicated in blue):

LEP: [00:02:43] Ja tylko, no, tak ja to tylko ja tylko chciałem, bo ja mam problemy ze słuchem, ja właśnie, ja straciłem miesiąc temu słuch w prawym uchu i teraz mam problemy także, [inaudible] także z lewym, jak nie zrozumieć jakiegoś pytania, to po prostu poproszę o powtórzenie, chciałbym, żeby to było na uwadze.

Interpreter: [00:02:58] Yes, yes. I would just like to let you know that I have a

problem hearing really. In my right ear. I lost my hearing in my right ear, and now my left ear is affected as well. So sometimes I might not hear you properly. And I'm going to ask for repetition if that's not a problem.

Client: [00:03:16] Yeah that's fine. I can't actually hear you very well either, but I can hear the interpreter. Um.

Recording 4. Extract 2

The LEP individual promptly informed the conversational parties about the issue. Such indications can assist the remote interpreter in addressing the nature of potential problems, as in this scenario, any difficulties related to understanding or audio quality may be partly attributed to the concerns mentioned by the LEP individual.

Another issue, most likely resulting from the type of a psychological evaluation and the open-nature of the questions asked, the responses provided by the LEP individual are very lengthy, as presented in the following extracts:

LEP: [00:08:41] Proszę powiedzieć, czy ma pan kogoś, kto panu pomaga? czy zarejestrował się pan na liście osób bezdomnych?

LEP: [00:08:42] Tak proszę pana. My jesteśmy na liście od od praktycznie 11 lat, gdyż to jest 3 bedroom house, a ja mam 4 dzieci, mieszkam z 4 dzieci. Ja nie jestem w stanie, żona dzwoniła do councilu, oni mi zaproponowali mi, no że starsze dzieci mogą pójść na przykład na swoje mieszkanie, a my to po prostu możemy się ubiegać o jakieś mniejsze bo oni, oni w tym momencie nie mają 4 pokojowych mieszkań. Sorry.

Recording 4. Extract 3

At times, the responses are not connected logically, which poses a challenge for the remote interpreter. As this is a psychological evaluation, the medical professional may require to capture all the details and nuances, as well as to understand the speaking patterns of the LEP individual. Therefore the style and hesitations should be in some way reflected in the interpreted utterances, yet it may be challenging to emulate the same speaking patterns.

LEP: [00:14:52] Tak, ja, ja o tym mówię, ja o liście to miałem na myśli listę oczekujących na mieszkanie, po prostu zadzwonili, jak jak żona dzwoniła to oni nas podnieśli już po prostu tą, ten priorytet, jak to się mówi [inaudible], no ale oni jak to

się mówi, oni mogą albo zaproponować hostel, albo jakąś pomoc, jak uda nam się znaleźć mieszkanie, czyli ja to mi się wydaje, że jesteśmy już na tej właśnie, jak to się nazywa homeless. Bo ja wszystko powiedziałem, tam wszystko powiedziałem, tam wszystko całą przedstawiłem sytuację z sekcji 21 i tak dalej.

Recording 4. Extract 4

LEP: [00:20:52] Najgorsze to właśnie te lęki, no to, no to to mam tak, że [inaudible] jak mam taki atak, to zaczyna mnie kłuć w okolicach serca, zaczyna mi pulsować, nie wiem, czy to zawał, czy to, czy to, czy to wylew, bo ja to też się leczę, żeby wspomnieć od 2014 na nadciśnienie oraz cholesterol, ja potrzebuję 4 różne tabletki na to, dlatego nie wiem, nie wiem, czy to ciśnienie, czy to, czy to nie mam pojęcia [inaudible].

Recording 4. Extract 5

LEP: [00:29:10] Uhm, no nie wiem, może miałem taką nieprzyjemną sytuację, która była 2-3 tygodnie temu. Mój syn miał, najmłodszy syn miał urodziny. Przyszli po prostu znajomi na na garden. Ponieważ ja, ja nie lubię, nie utrzymuję już kontaktu ze znajomymi, no ale po prostu były urodziny to zaprosili, poprosili, żebym przyszedł tam do stołu, na ten, na garden, no i zdarzyło się to, że posiedziałem 10-15 minut i po prostu no nie utrzymałem moczu. Wtedy zaczęło mnie, przyszedłem do domu i zacząłem odczuwać te, ból w klatce piersiowej, ból w, no że wszyscy widzieli, że tak się stało, no i musiałem poleżeć, żeby dojść do siebie. I tyle. Dzisiaj na przykład budzę się i cały czas, nie wiem, myślę, że znowu nie mogę wstać, że żona musi pomóc, żeby wstać z łóżka, mam, wierci mnie, wie pan jak przed egzaminami, przed maturą, zaczyna mnie wierci w brzuchu, i cały czas, tak jakby, jakby miało się coś stać i myślę, że kiedy kiedy kiedy, kiedy to się skończy, kiedy będę mógł normalnie funkcjonować, na przykład pójść do pracy, czy utrzymać swoją rodzinę. Tyle.

Recording 4. Extract 6

Interpreter: [00:31:05] Um. You know, so, 2 to 3 weeks ago, um, it was my son's birthday, my youngest son's birthday. And I don't really keep in touch with my friends or neighbours. Really. I cut it out. I don't keep in touch with them, but it was his birthday, so I got invited. Well, people came to the garden and we had a garden

party, really. and they asked me to sit with them at the table. So I went there for 10 to 15 minutes, and at some point I just didn't even realise that I had a bladder incontinence. And, you know, I went home and I just, the knowledge that all these people, they saw it, I had this chest pain really started feeling in my chest. And I had to lie down for two hours, really to, to get over it, to recover it. And sometimes I just wake up thinking that I'm able to get up, but I can't, and my wife has to help me and I can't do it without her. And I'm just thinking it's like before an exam or a test, you take, you feel this sort of funny, you have this funny feeling in your stomach. And so that's what I'm feeling like something is about to happen and I just. I'm thinking, when really am I going to get back to work? When am I going to do things on my own? And really, when am I going to be able to support my family?

Recording 4. Extract 7

Additionally, in the following extract, the LEP individual uses an expletive expression, for which he apologises, as indicated in blue. The remote interpreter chose not to censor the expression, as highlighted in purple, because, as previously discussed, in interactions of this nature, all information may be relevant:

LEP: [00:11:19] Oni mu teraz, oni mu na emeryturę policyjną ściągają, 360 funtów, no dostaje 1400 funtów, a jeszcze s płaca bo kupił sobie samochód, bo musi samochód, samochodem tam do Huntington dojeżdżać do tej, tej szkoły policyjnej. To nie jest tak. Może za rok, może za dwa jak już się do Peterborough, do pracy do policji dostanie już tą większą pensję, no to tak, no ale to, no ale, no **kurwa**, **przepraszam**, a to wszystko w jednym momencie, no. To jest najgorsze.

Interpreter: [00:11:46] So, you know, at this point, they are really deducting the amount of £360 for his retirement pension already and he's getting £1,400, his take home salary. He had to buy a car. He bought a car because he has to commute to the school where he, um. The Huntington. That's where the school is. And I guess that perhaps in a year or two. But at this point, everything is **fucking sorry**. I mean, everything is really, happening at the same time.

Recording 4. Extract 8

All of these factors contribute to a highly demanding interaction where nuances are crucial.

This places a significant cognitive burden on the remote interpreter. The complexity is further heightened by long-winded utterances that often lack a logical train of thought, making note-taking particularly challenging. In such cases, the remote interpreter must rely heavily on the short-term memory.

3. Client-based problems

This nature of the interaction necessitates a specific communication pattern from the client. As a medical professional specialising in mental health, the client is trained to detect nuances and pose specific questions designed to elicit desired responses. However, these questions and utterances can also be lengthy, presenting an additional challenge for the remote interpreter who must not only render the utterances faithfully but also attempt to replicate the client's style and rhetorical devices to achieve the desired outcome. Additionally, based on the analysis of the following utterances, it is clear, that the client's responses at various timestamps follow a systematic method aimed at understanding the problem the LEP individual is facing.

Client: [00:12:15] Yeah. It sounds awful. And I know, I've spoken to several people in the same situation. It's it isn't any help to you, but it is happening across the whole country at the moment. It's in the news. Landlords are can't afford their houses and they're giving people notice. Yeah. So but what I need to do today is we've only got half an hour. So we need to get through this assessment for you. Um, but I. Yeah, the GP said they were getting you a social prescriber to help with getting on the housing list. You have to register as being evicted homeless now. Have you done that?

Recording 4. Extract 9

Client: [00:32:34] Mm. So yeah. So you get the physical symptoms of anxiety. But what I need to understand is what the type of anxiety it is because anxiety has lots of reasons. So yeah you're having panic because you're overthinking your um but is it, has that been happening before you were incontinent? Is it that you think you're going to. You know, I need to understand a bit more about the actual thoughts behind the anxiety. I know you've got anxiety, but it's I need to know a bit more than that so that you've said there was some social anxiety because you were embarrassed because you had incontinence. What other reasons set it off?

Recording 4. Extract 10

Client: [00:45:23] Okay, so so the physical symptoms. So what I'm trying to

understand from a psychological point of view in view is you've, you've explained the way you've described yourself low mood, overwhelmed, not seeing friends, doing less and less. And then recently you've started to get more anxiety attacks. Um, because you're overthinking, feeling a burden. What's going to happen? What is this? When am I going to get better? I need to support my wife. Does that sound a good summary or not.

Recording 4. Extract 11

Client: [00:56:09] Mhm right. Okay. Right. So from what you're telling me, we would be thinking understanding anxiety will teach you about that. Um, but I think it's the low motivation, low mood that is stopping you living your life. And it's then it's making you overthink about things and feel overwhelmed. You've got a lot going on. Um, so what would you like to be if you had some sessions and started to feel more motivated. What would you feel you'd be doing differently? If you would like to try past the you know, when we've got pain long term, we we have to try to move past it very, very gradually and very slowly. Would you be prepared to start lifting your mood in that way if we helped you?

Recording 4. Extract 12

As a medical professional trained to elicit specific reactions or responses, the client employs strategies that may not align with the typical skills of a remote interpreter, who is generally a linguist without medical or psychological training. Therefore, a deep understanding of pragmatic factors and rhetorical devices becomes crucial. Sensitivity on the part of the remote interpreter, combined with extensive training in pragmatics and rhetoric—training that typically exceeds the scope of standard translation or interpreting courses—can better equip interpreters to render such complex utterances accurately. Additionally, the entire interaction lasted over an hour, which can be emotionally and physically draining for both the LEP individual and the remote interpreter.

4. Interpreter—role and management

During the interaction, the LEP individual was disconnected, which was noticed by the client when there was no response to the utterance rendered by the remote interpreter, as indicated in blue. The remote interpreter assured the client that he could hear her and began calling out to the LEP individual, as indicated in purple:

Interpreter: [01:00:43] Bo wie pan, to działa tak, że jeżeli pan odczuwa obniżony nastrój, odczuwa pan, że jest pan osaczony z każdej strony różnego rodzaju problemami, odcina się pan od znajomych, przestaje pan wykonywać różnego rodzaju czynności, czuje się pan coraz bardziej zmęczony, pomimo że nie wykonuje pan wielu rzeczy. Usuwa pan wszystkie rzeczy to to wszystko pogarsza i motywacja tego nie naprawi. Motywacji nie będzie pan odczuwał — to nie będzie pierwsza rzecz, którą będzie pan odczuwał. W ten sposób będziemy mogli panu pomóc. Będziemy mogli pokazać panu, że trzeba zacząć od drobnych rzeczy, stopniowo, krok po kroku, żeby właśnie tę motywację zbudować, stopniowo, krok po kroku. Czy możemy obrać taki plan działania?

Client: [01:01:47] Hello.

Interpreter: [01:01:47] Hello, this is the interpreter. I can hear you. I'm not sure if the patient heard my last statement.

Interpreter: [01:01:53] Czy mnie słyszać? Halo halo, z tej strony tłumacz. Czy mnie słyszać?

Interpreter: [01:01:53] This is the interpreter. I cannot hear the patient.

Interpreter: [01:02:02] Halo halo? Z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słyszać?

Interpreter: [01:02:08] I do apologise, I. I cannot hear the patient.

Recording 4. Extract 13

The client decided to ring the LEP individual back, however, she was unfamiliar with the system, as indicated in blue. Consequently, the remote interpreter provided the client with instructions, as highlighted in purple:

Client: [01:02:13] Mm mm. Have you got time for me to ring him back for ten minutes or not?

Interpreter: [01:02:20] Yes, of course I'm happy to help. You'll have to press nine to disconnect the current call and then press nine again.

Client: [01:02:26] Let's try. If I get cut off, I'll request your Pin number through the other system.

Interpreter: [01:02:34] Of course. I'm happy to help.

Client: [01:02:36] Let me try. Um, because I just want to make sure he's ready to start. Or whether he would prefer just talking through how he's feeling. Let me try and get this phone. Mhm. Mhm. Okay. I don't know how to do this.

Interpreter: [01:02:58] Um I think you're going to have to press nine to disconnect the current call with the patient. And then dialling nine again will let you dial another number.

Client: [01:03:10] Okay I'll give it a try then. Okay.

Recording 4. Extract 14

However, the attempt was unsuccessful, as the client reached the LEP individual's voicemail service, as indicated in red. In this scenario, the interaction was not handled optimally by the remote interpreter. Best practice would involve the remote interpreter proactively asking the client, prior to making a call to the LEP individual, whether a voicemail message would be desired if the call were forwarded to voicemail. This approach allows the remote interpreter to gather all relevant details, including dates, times, and any pertinent information, and then record the message in the target language—in this case, Polish. By doing so, confusion during the recording process can be avoided, ensuring that the LEP individual receives instructions in only one language.

In the scenario presented below, there was apparently no time to consult the client beforehand, as she proceeded to dial the number. The remote interpreter asked whether the client wanted to leave a voicemail message, as indicated in blue, and the client spoke as if it were part of a regular conversation. Once the utterance was produced, the client asked the remote interpreter to render it into the target language, as indicated in green.

The recorded message includes interactions between both parties and spans over 11 utterances, as indicated in purple. At the end of the recorded message, the client disconnected both parties.. This scenario is far from optimal, as it can create significant confusion for the LEP individual. As discussed, a more effective approach would be for the remote interpreter to gather all relevant information and record a concise message in the target language. Mobile services vary in the time allowed for recording a message, so it is advisable to keep it as brief as possible. From a pragmatic perspective, it would be much easier for the LEP individual to process a single recorded message rather than decipher 12 separate utterances. However, as shown below, this ideal solution is not always feasible, and it requires cooperation on the part of a client and a remote individual.

Mobile network: [01:03:37] [...] Through messaging service the person you are calling is unable to take your call. Please leave your message after the tone.

Interpreter: [01:03:44] This is the interpreter. Would you like a message left?

Client: [01:03:51] Marek. Maybe you lost some battery power on your phone, but we've been cut off. I'll send you, um. I think I. Yeah. We need to finish the assessment, so we need to get another appointment booked in. **You want to repeat that for me?**

Interpreter: [01:04:24] Panie Marku, wygląda na to, że wyczerpała się panu bateria w telefonie. Po prostu rozłączyło nas. Wyślę panu wiadomość, bo żeby dokończyć naszą wstępną rozmowę, musimy zaplanować kolejne spotkanie.

Client: [01:04:32] I've got an appointment on the 22nd of August at 9:30. I'll call you then. And we just need to finish. Yeah okay.

Interpreter: [01:04:56] Mam wolny termin 22 sierpnia na 9:30, zadzwonię do pana, dobrze? Musimy dokończyć naszą rozmowę.

Client: [01:04:56] Okay, so I'll ring you. I'll ring you on Tuesday the 22nd at 930 with an interpreter. We just need to look at which type of treatment you prefer. But we can offer something. Okay. So hope you're all right. Thank you.

Interpreter: [01:05:20] W takim razie zadzwonię do pana we wtorek 22 sierpnia na godzinę 9:30. Musimy dokończyć rozmowę. Musimy obrać sposób leczenia, metody leczenia, które będą panu odpowiadały. Także do zobaczenia i dziękuję. Mam nadzieję, że wszystko będzie w porządku.

Client: [01:05:34] Thank you.

Interpreter: [01:05:35] You are welcome.

Client: [01:05:35] So thank you, Marek. Thank you [anonymised]. You were fantastic. Thank you very much.

Interpreter: [01:05:39] You're welcome. Have a lovely day. Dziękuję do widzenia. Thank you. Bye bye.

Client: [01:05:42] Thank you. Bye.

Recording 4. Extract 15

5. Instruction-based problems

An interesting development arises when the clients asks the LEP individual how he would like to be addressed. As discussed previously, it is easier in English to be more direct and on the first name basis. However, such patterns are generally unacceptable in Polish, where a higher level of formality would be expected, specifically in such interactions. This difference in cultural norms can create a dynamic tension in cross-cultural communication, particularly in settings where formalities are expected. The client's choice to adopt a more informal approach

may reflect her preference or perhaps her strategy to become more connected to the remote interpreter:

Client: [00:00:16] Sorry. What was it? [anonymised]

Client: [00:00:20] I can't, I couldn't hear that.

Interpreter: [00:00:21] Yes, madam. It's [anonymised].

Client: [00:00:26] Oh. Thank you. And I didn't catch your name either. Sorry.

Interpreter: [00:00:30] The name is [anonymised]. The spelling is quite tricky. It's [anonymised].

Client: [00:00:42] [anonymised].

Interpreter: [00:00:43] Yes. But you can refer to me as the interpreter.

Client: [00:00:45] Hi there.

Client: [00:00:48] Oh. Bless you. My name is Tracy, a psychological wellbeing practitioner [...]

Recording 4. Extract 16

The part highlighted in blue illustrates an attempt to establish a more informal connection with the remote interpreter. However, the remote interpreter's response, highlighted in purple, serves to establish a boundary. The risk of addressing a remote interpreter by their first name is that an LEP individual may then adopt this form of address, which diminishes the professional distance between the parties. It is common practice for LEP individuals to refer to remote interpreters by their first name once it is known, as other forms of address, such as “panie tłumaczu” or “tłumaczu” in Polish, tend to sound unnatural and perhaps even impolite. Theoretically, to foster a conversational atmosphere between the LEP individual and the client, it is advisable for LEP individuals to avoid directly addressing the remote interpreter. However, in practice, in certain situations, this may be unavoidable, and the forms “proszę pana” or “proszę pani” are typically used. The following extract, however, illustrates a similar strategy employed by the client towards the LEP individual. In this case, as the nature of the interaction is a psychological evaluation, the client may want to connect to the LEP individual on a more intimate level:

Client: [00:05:45] Need to just double check your date of birth. And, and and is your name [anonymised] is it alright to call you Marek.

Interpreter: [00:05:58] Dobrze, czy może pan podać datę urodzenia, i czy mogę

odnosić się do pana po imieniu, czy mogę mówić Marek?

LEP: [00:06:01] Tak, moja data urodzenia to [anonymised]

Recording 4. Extract 17

However, the remote interpreter adheres to the commonly accepted norms in Polish and continues to call the LEP individual using the polite form, as indicated in purple:

Interpreter: [00:06:18] Mam również pana adres mailowy, proszę powiedzieć, czy chciałby pan, abyśmy wysyłali panu wiadomości pocztą czy pocztą elektroniczną?

Recording 4. Extract 18

In another instance, the client uses the first name, as indicated in blue, and the remote interpreter renders it in a polite yet slightly more friendly manner, as highlighted in purple), which is an acceptable manner of address in Polish:

Client: [00:02:13] Yeah. I can't hear. Don't seem to be able to hear you very well. So I'm. I'm, um, Tracy from Psychological Wellbeing. Um, to do your screening assessment. Marek. Yes.

Interpreter: [00:02:30] Panie Marku, dzień dobry. Ja się nazywam Tracy i dzwonię do pana, aby wykonać wstępne badanie psychologiczne.

Recording 4. Extract 19

Client: [01:03:51] Marek. Maybe you lost some battery power on your phone, but we've been cut off. I'll send you, um. I think I. Yeah. We need to finish the assessment, so we need to get another appointment booked in. You want to repeat that for me?

Interpreter: [01:04:24] Panie Marku, wygląda na to, że wyczerpała się panu bateria w telefonie. Po prostu rozłączyło nas. Wyślę panu wiadomość, bo żeby dokończyć naszą wstępną rozmowę, musimy zaplanować kolejne spotkanie.

Recording 4. Extract 20

It is worth noting, however, that in this interaction, the client follows the accepted addressing patterns (using direct address, as indicated in blue) and does not refer to the LEP individual in the third person. This approach creates an environment of

inclusivity, and simultaneously reduces the cognitive burden on the remote interpreter, as the utterances can be relayed in the first person, eliminating the need to change the perspective.

Client: [00:03:47] Thank you, thank you. So. Yes. So I'm calling regarding the appointment. I'll just check. We've got the right information details **for you**. But before I do that, just let **you** know. What **you** share with us is confidential. It's kept securely on a secure web based system, and we routinely update **your** GP. Is that all right?

Interpreter: [00:04:21] Dobrze. Zanim przejdziemy dalej, żebym mogła upewnić się że rozmawiam z odpowiednią osobą, chciałam **panu** dać znać, że wszelkie informacje, które **pan** nam przekaże, treść naszych rozmów są poufne. One wszystkie są przechowywane w bezpiecznym systemie w Internecie. Przekazujemy takie informacje jedynie **pana** lekarzowi GP. Czy nie ma **pan** nic przeciwko

Recording 4. Extract 21

Client: [00:08:20] Mhm. So **have you** got someone helping you or **have you** got **yourself** on the homeless housing list?

LEP: [00:08:41] Proszę powiedzieć, czy ma **pan** kogoś, kto **panu** pomaga? czy **zarejestrował się pan** na liście osób bezdomnych?

Recording 4. Extract 22

Despite the initial introduction, which was very helpful and contained a lot of information, Recording 4 presented a very challenging interaction due to unique difficulties of such scenarios. One issue that may arise is the vocabulary used, as there were several medical terms that the remote interpreter should be familiar with or investigate as the interaction progresses. Additionally, mental health evaluations conducted via telephone generally last a considerable amount of time—this particular encounter extended over one hour. Maintaining focus during such a lengthy interaction poses a significant challenge. While it is difficult to formulate any prescriptive measures due to the need to keep the most natural flow of a interaction, the following factors could be taken into consideration in order to make such conversations more approachable to remote interpreter:

1. Clients should be instructed to produce shorter utterances.
2. Remote interpreters should consider undertaking specialised training, if available, to

better prepare for such scenarios. Proposed training could include the expectations of mental health professionals as well as pragmatic and rhetorical underpinnings of such interactions.

3. Voicemail protocol should be implemented for both the clients and remote interpreters to streamline the process.

6.3.6 Fifth Recording—Universal Credit Call

1. Introduction-based problems

The fifth recording is a much shorter interaction which began with the following introduction.

Interpreter: [00:00:01] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:10] Hello, my name is **Melanie**. I'm calling from the **Universal Credit team** at [anonymised] **Service Centre**. **I've got a lady on the line. Her name's Valentina. I'm just going to connect the call.**

Interpreter: [00:00:19] Of course. I'm happy to help.

Client: [00:00:20] Just bear with me. Thank you.

Client: [00:00:28] Hello, [anonymised]?

Recording 5. Extract 1

The presented interaction constitutes a basic introduction, out of which the remote interpreter is able to infer the three elements:

- **setting**: the statements “My name is Melanie”, “Universal Credit team at [anonymised] Service Centre” clearly establish the setting of the interaction within the benefits and social security settings. The term “Universal Credit” specifically indicates that the conversation will focus on this particular benefit.
- **method of communication**: the statement “I’ve got a lady on the line” and “I’m just going to connect the call” give the remote interpreter a clear understanding of the technological setup for the interaction. These statements indicate that the conversation will be a three-way telephone conference call, with all participants located in separate locations.
- **description of the LEP individual**: the only information the remote interpreter inferred from this statement is that the claimant—the LEP individual is “a lady” by the name

“Valentina”. Unfortunately, there is no more information which could help create a context for the remote interpreter.

- **reason for interaction:** there is no specific information, which the remote interpreter could use to create a mental frame for the interaction. Such calls are quite typical, and one possible reason for this lack of information may be that the client is unaware of the exact nature of the call as well. This situation can occur if LEP individuals dial service centre numbers or hotlines and are then asked to wait while being connected to a remote interpreter. Clients are simply unable to obtain any details before a remote interpreter joins the call. In this scenario, the remote interpreter can only make assumptions about the nature of the interaction based on the limited information gathered from the previously mentioned statements.

- **LEP individual-based problems**

One of the first utterances made by the LEP individual, highlighted in blue, suggests that she is somewhat unsure about whom to address in the interaction involving a remote interpreter.

Client: [00:02:13] You've asked us to contact you regarding your Universal Credit claim.

Interpreter: [00:02:16] Prosiła pani, żebyśmy skontaktowali się z panią w sprawie pani zasiłku Universal Credit, prawda?

LEP: [00:02:16] Tak tak, **proszę pani**, **proszę pana**, przepraszam.

Interpreter: [00:02:26] Yes. Correct.

Recording 5. Extract 2

As previously discussed, the role of remote interpreters, though complex and multifaceted, is to facilitate communication between parties who would otherwise be unable to communicate. However, the dialogue should primarily occur between the LEP individual and the client, with the utterances of both parties directed toward each other, rather than to the remote interpreter. In this particular scenario, the LEP individual should not have corrected herself, as her statements ought to be addressed directly to the agent. However, such situation do occur, as LEP individuals may lack sufficient experience in interacting with remote interpreters or interpreters in general.

In the following examples, the LEP individual continues to address the remote interpreter directly, using the polite form “proszę pana”. However, her utterances are somewhat challenging to interpret.

LEP: [00:03:04] Tak proszę pana, ale ja chciałam to wytłumaczyć. Bo ten pan do mnie dzwonił w piątek, że mi zamknie, a ja miałam złamany telefon i miałam dosłać im więcej informacji, takie dokumenty ode mnie wymagali, a ja po prostu miałam złamany telefon, nie przypilnowałam tego maila i to mi zgasło. I jak ten pan dzwonił i ja mu wytłumaczyłam to on mi powiedział, proszę złożyć nowy i wpisać nowy numer referencyjny i ja tak właśnie zrobiłam a oni mi zamkli. A ten pan powiedział, że nie ma, że nie zamkną mi, jak złożę po prostu na nowo na status i wpiszę im nowy numer [inaudible] ten.

Recording 5. Extract 3

LEP: [00:07:02] Nie, to nie jest nowe konto z lipca. Bo mi zostało w tym miesiącu zamknięte proszę pana. 3 tego lipca, tego miesiąca 3 mi zamkli. Jeszcze rozmawiałam pod koniec, w piątek, to był chyba 29 lipiec w sprawie mojego statusu, że został odrzucony. I ja wzięłam, ten pan powiedział, że mogę wziąć na nowy i wpisać mu ten referent, a 3 tego miesiąca mi zamkli. Tak.

Recording 5. Extract 4

LEP: [00:09:40] Proszę pana już panu mówię. To było nie ten poniedziałek, tylko zeszły poniedziałek, bo ten pan do mnie dzwonił w piątek. Powiedział, że mam złożyć szybko w poniedziałek nowy wniosek i wpisać, jeszcze zanim mi zamkli konto. Ja wpisałam im dzisiaj na przykład, że złożyłam w poniedziałek, a wtorek mi zamki konto, to był 31 jak mi się dobrze zdaje, 31 poniedziałek, 31 tego m miesiąca lipca 31 lipca.

Recording 5. Extract 5

The first challenge arising from these utterances is their length, as they are composed of multiple pieces of information. Another challenge is that these bits of information appear chaotic and unstructured, which could present difficulties for a remote interpreter. An intriguing aspect of remote interpreting is that remote interpreters connect to witness fragments of an LEP individual's life without any prior context or information. From the perspective of the LEP individual, the utterances they produce are deeply rooted in their experiences, with all the accompanying context and background. Consequently, interpreting long-winded and complex utterances is particularly challenging for remote interpreters, as these utterances may seem like

random collections of information devoid of the context that is evident to the speaker. One method to handle such long-winded statements is the short-term memory, and remote interpreters should be able to rely on it most of the time, as it is the most efficient manner of recording information. However, in this particular case, the lack of cohesion and structure to the utterances renders those very difficult to memorise. Another tool for remote interpreters to manage such utterances is the use of a robust note-taking system. However, even with an efficient way to annotate facts and bits of information, these utterances remain challenging due to the scarcity of linking devices that connect the separate pieces of information. It is important to remember that these utterances are exchanged in real time over the phone, which adds an additional layer of difficulty to the process. Most likely, the best way to successfully interpret such utterances is to rely on both short-term memory and an efficient note-taking system.

3. Client-based problems

Generally, the client's utterances are short and succinct. However, there was one instance, where the client instructed the remote interpreter to render one statement, as indicated in red, and paused mid-sentence, specifically (as indicated in blue) for the remote interpreter to interpret the utterance. The remote interpreter waited for the remaining part of the sentence to be added, whereas the client expected the interpreter to render the statement immediately. Although the LEP individual confirmed the utterance, the response was unnecessary, as the message had not been fully transmitted.

Client: [00:00:48] Oh, okay. Um, right. So that should be well, so I need you to obviously repeat this for me so that you can be confident that I am calling from Universal Credit...

Interpreter: [00:01:03] Dobrze, żeby potwierdzić, że dzwonię z Universal Credit...

LEP: [00:01:04] Tak.

Client: [00:01:06] I can confirm the last three characters are [anonymised].

Interpreter: [00:01:11] Mogę potwierdzić, że trzy ostatnie symbole pani nazwy w naszym systemie to [anonymised].

Client: [00:01:17] And the last three characters of your postcode are [anonymised]

Interpreter: [00:01:21] A trzy ostatnie symbole pani kodu pocztowego to [anonymised].

LEP: [00:01:22] Tak

Recording 5. Extract 6

This pause occurred mid-sentence and felt unnatural in Polish. In financial or police encounters, where utterances, especially initial disclaimers, can be lengthy, it is common for clients to ask whether the remote interpreter prefers to receive the information in chunks or all at once. Naturally, the optimal situation is when remote interpreters receive shorter, more “digestible” statements that are easier to interpret. However, one challenge with longer statements is that Polish syntax does not always align with English syntax (and vice versa), which can lead to unnatural pauses in the target language when the utterance is divided.

The utterances rendered by the LEP individual were unstructured, chaotic, and repetitive to the extent that, on one occasion, the client did not even wait for the remote interpreter to relay the LEP individual’s statement and instead produced her own utterance, as indicated in blue.

Client: [00:10:50] Nie nie nie! Nie, proszę pana. Ja rozmawiałam z nim w piątek, on mi nie zamknął konta, tylko powiedział, że w poniedziałek ma na nowo złożyć na status, ja tak zrobiłam i wysłałam im w ten poniedziałek ten nowy share code a we wtorek mi dopiero zamkli, ten pan mi nie zamknął. Bo oni mi jeszcze doradził, że mam szybko otworzyć nowy status i wpisać numer referencyjny na ten, na tym samym Journalu swoim.

Interpreter: [00:11:14] No, but. No, but what they told me. The gentleman that called me, he told me, because he called me on Friday. He told me to apply for the new status and then enter the code on Monday. And so I wanted to do it, but it turned out that on Tuesday my account had been already closed and that's what happened.

Client: [00:11:33] The same decision maker that closed it.

Interpreter: [00:11:40] Tak, opiekun sprawy zamknął to konto.

LEP: [00:11:41] Tak, no ale z jakiego teraz powodu, jak ja teraz siedzę, ja nie będę na nowo otwierać, skoro ja mam miałam takie prawo, że jak otworzę nowe i mogę nadal pobierać bo otworzyłam nowe jak mi doradził, to powiedział, że mi nic nie będzie wstrzymane i że wszystko będzie chodzić jak chodzi. A po prostu jak ja tam dzwoniłam do Uniwersalu to ta pani mi powiedziała, że kto inny musi bo nie mam jednego opiekuna tylko tam jest ich pełno i dlatego zamknęli mi, że mam odwołać się i czekać na telefon.

Client: [00:11:41] What I'm going to do is I'm going to refer it to a decision maker again for a mandatory reconsideration. So just bear with me.

Recording 5. Extract 7

Naturally, this approach is problematic because, due to the language difference, the client cannot know precisely what the LEP individual intends to communicate. In such scenarios, the most advisable approach for the remote interpreter would be to inform the client that there is a statement from the LEP individual that has not yet been rendered.

4. Interpreter—role and management

On one occasion, a problem with the connection occurred, most likely due to signal loss, as the LEP individual informed the client that she had been on the bus. In this scenario, the remote interpreter notified the client of the lack of response from the LEP individual and continued to call her to see if she would rejoin the conversation, as indicated in blue.

Interpreter: [00:08:07] Wniosek, który ja widzę przed sobą, wniosek, który mam, to był wniosek, który został otwarty w styczniu i on trwał aż do 1. sierpnia. Otrzymywała pani płatności właśnie w ramach tego wniosku. Natomiast proszę powiedzieć, czy pani ponownie zgłosiła się w programie osiedleńców Unii Europejskiej? Czy ma pani status?

LEP: [00:08:26] Nie, ja złożyłam na nowo, teraz im wysłałam paszport, teraz oni...

Interpreter: [00:08:34] Mm. Sorry, this is the interpreter. I lost the claimant. Not sure if you can hear the lady.

Client: [00:08:40] No I can't.

Interpreter: [00:08:41] Halo, halo, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słychać?

LEP: [00:08:41] Halo.

Client: [00:08:41] Oh there she is.

Interpreter: [00:08:41] Proszę powtórzyć.

Client: [00:08:48] Halo. Proszę pana nie. Mi został, ja złożyłam na nowy status, tak mi ten pan kazał, w poniedziałek i wpisałam numer referencyjny i teraz oni mi, wysłałam im paszport tam. Oni mi odeślą paszport i będą chcieli jakie dokumenty wymagać to im doślę. Teraz przypilnuję tego

Recording 5. Extract 8

Upon reconnection, the remote interpreter coordinated the interaction and prompted the LEP individual, as indicated in green, to repeat her last utterance. Such situations are quite frequent, particularly when the LEP individual uses a mobile network to join a conference call. In these cases, the optimal scenario is for the remote interpreter to assume the role of Interaction Coordinator and take over the call, even without specific instructions from the client. As remote

interpreters speak the language of the LEP individuals, they are ideally positioned to reestablish communication effectively.

5. Instruction-based problems

Initially, the client used the direct address and referred to the LEP individual, creating an inclusive environment, as indicated in blue. The remote interpreter rendered utterances using the polite form in Polish, as indicated in green.

Client: [00:01:17] And the last three characters of **your** postcode are [anonymised]

Interpreter: [00:01:21] A trzy ostatnie symbole **pani** kodu pocztowego to [anonymised].

Recording 5. Extract 9

Client: [00:01:44] And I need to take **you** for a couple of security questions.

Interpreter: [00:01:47] Zadam **pani** również kilka pytań bezpieczeństwa.

Recording 5. Extract 10

Client: [00:02:28] So the claim has been closed as the decision maker has decided that **you're** not eligible anymore.

Interpreter: [00:02:51] **Pani** wniosek pani zasiłek został zamknięty, ponieważ opiekun pani konta stwierdził, że nie ma podstaw, aby mogła się **pani** ubiegać o taki zasiłek.

LEP: [00:02:51] Yy, tak proszę pana.

Client: [00:02:51] The reason for this is that although **you** applied to the EU settlement scheme, it was refused.

Interpreter: [00:03:04] Przyczyna tego jest następująca. Złożyła **pani** wniosek o przyznanie statusu w ramach programu osiedleńców Unii Europejskiej, natomiast ten status nie został **pani** przyznany.

Recording 5. Extract 11

However, as the interaction progressed, the client changed the manner of addressing and began using indirect address, as indicated in red, directing statements at the remote interpreter rather than the LEP individual.

Client: [00:04:12] But the claim is from the 9th of January. So when did **she** make

a new claim?

Recording 5. Extract 12

Client: [00:10:21] Well. It looks as though she spoke to a decision maker, and they told her to reapply on the 29th of July, but there's no claim showing that she's actually reapplied to Universal Credit.

Recording 5. Extract 13

In one instance the client referred to the LEP individual using the impersonal “they” (indicated in red), bypassing the claimant completely and referring to the remote interpreter.

Client: [00:09:27] So **they've** reinstated the application. Do you know when that was?

Interpreter: [00:09:40] Rozumiem, czyli na nowo złożyła

Recording 5. Extract 14

In the remaining part of the interaction, the client used the indirect address and referred to the LEP individual using the third person, as indicated in red:

Client: [00:16:37] So **she** got the code number?

Interpreter: [00:16:47] Rozumiem, że ma pani teraz numer referencyjny?

LEP: [00:16:48] Przy sobie akurat teraz nie mam, ale w domu mam.

Interpreter: [00:16:49] I don't have it on me. I do have it at home, though.

Client: [00:16:53] **She'll** need to ring in and give us that.

Recording 5. Extract 15

Generally, the interaction was relatively short and uncomplicated from the point of view of vocabulary or the complexity of the topic. The most challenging aspects of the conversation, however, were the following:

1. Very basic instruction—no information prior to the beginning of the interpreting
2. Unstructured and illogical utterances on the part of the LEP individual.
3. Violation of direct address.

6.3.7 Sixth Recording—Consultation with a Nurse

1. Introduction-based problems

The sixth recording is also a relatively short interaction which began with the following introduction.

Operator: [00:00:00] Please introduce yourself with your name and your five digit Pin.

Interpreter: [00:00:06] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:14] Hi, it's Tracy, it's one of the nurses. I've got Andre with me. Can you just get him to confirm his birthday? And if you introduce us as well, please?

Interpreter: [00:00:27] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słyszał?

LEP: [00:00:27] Mmm.

Recording 6. Extract 1

This is a very basic introduction, and while not much information has been provided, the remote interpreter can infer the following elements:

- **setting:** the statements “it’s Tracy”, “one of the nurses” help to establish the nature of the interaction within a medical setting. These phrases indicate that the client is identifying herself as a healthcare professional, likely initiating communication with a patient.
- **method of communication:** the statement “I’ve got Andre with me” suggests that the patient is physically present with the nurse, indicating that they are in the same space. This also implies that a loudspeaker may be used for communication, especially if a remote interpreter needs to be involved in the conversation.
- **description of the LEP individual:** the only bit of information the remote interpreter received from the introduction is that the patient is a male and named Andre. However, the interesting aspect here is that Andre is not a traditional Polish name. This might indicate that the patient could be of a different nationality or background, or it could simply be a name used in an English-speaking context. The remote interpreter should be aware of this possibility and remain attentive to any additional cultural or linguistic nuances that might arise during the interaction.
- **reason for interaction:** there is no information, which could be used to better understand the reason of the interaction.

2. Client-based problems

As mentioned previously, the introduction provided by the nurse included the name “Andre,” which does not appear to be a traditional Polish name. This discrepancy could suggest that the LEP individual might not speak Polish, a piece of information that was not communicated to the remote interpreter. However, this issue may also relate to the pronunciation or anglicisation of a Polish name, given that the patient was indeed Polish.

3. Interpreter—role and management

The interaction was paused by the nurse, who informed the patient and the remote interpreter that she needed to consult a doctor and would therefore leave the room where the LEP individual was present, as highlighted in blue. The remote interpreter relayed this message to the patient. However, in the nurse's absence, the LEP individual asked the remote interpreter to request a fit note once the nurse returned, as indicated in red.

Client: [00:10:16] I'm going to go and have a little chat with the doctor, and then I'll be back through. I'll be in a couple of moments.

Interpreter: [00:10:24] Proszę dać mi sekundę, muszę porozmawiać z lekarzem, zaraz do pana wrócę, dobrze?

Interpreter: [00:10:24] Mmm.

LEP: [00:10:24] Okay.

LEP: [00:10:30] Jest pan tam, tak?

Interpreter: [00:10:36] Jestem jestem, oczywiście.

LEP: [00:10:47] Czy mógłbym dostać... bo mam jutro od job centre, czy mógłbym dostać jakieś zwolnienie? Czy mógłby pan ją, czy mógłby pan spytać?

Interpreter: [00:10:47] A proszę powiedzieć, czy pielęgniarka jest z panem w pokoju?

LEP: [00:10:47] Nie nie. Nie.

Interpreter: [00:10:47] Bardzo proszę zadać to pytanie, jak pielęgniarka wróci, dobrze?

LEP: [00:10:47] Dobrze, dobrze.

Recording 6. Extract 2

In this scenario, the remote interpreter inquired whether the nurse was in the room, and upon receiving a negative response, advised the LEP individual to ask the same question once the nurse returned, as indicated in green. It may seem that there is no difference between this utterance and an utterance rendered with the nurse present in the room. However, this action

exceeds the role of the remote interpreter, who is expected to serve as a neutral facilitator of communication rather than a Confidant of the LEP individual. As discussed previously, a camaraderie may develop between a remote interpreter, and an LEP individual who share the same language—an LEP individual may simply look for a friend or a helping hand. However, it is imperative that a remote interpreter establish boundaries in a diplomatic manner, ensuring that LEP individuals understand that they are responsible for initiating requests, which a remote interpreter will then relay. A remote interpreter should not make requests on behalf of the LEP individual, but rather relay their utterances in the target language—making requests on behalf of LEP individuals may lead to questions about the remote interpreter’s objectivity. Moreover, it could affect the perceived efficacy of the interpreting service. If the healthcare staff perceives that a remote interpreter is overstepping their role, it might lead to reluctance or resistance in engaging with the interpreter, consequently impeding the overall effectiveness of communication.

4. Instruction-based problems

The interaction between the patient, who is physically present in the same room as the nurse, began with the nurse naturally directing her utterances at the LEP individual, as indicated in green in the extracts below. This approach fosters the impression of a dialogue occurring between the client and the LEP individual.

Client: [00:00:35] Good. Thank you. You can have a seat.

Interpreter: [00:00:38] Dziękuję, proszę usiąść.

Recording 6. Extract 3

Client: [00:00:39] I believe you. I believe you've come in in regards to some dizziness, headache and vomiting that you've had for the last couple of weeks.

Interpreter: [00:00:59] Dobrze proszę usiąść, proszę powiedzieć, jak mogę pomóc, bo rozumiem, że przychodzi pan do mnie z zawrotami głowy, z bólem głowy i z wymiotami, których doświadcza pan od paru tygodni, tak?

Recording 6. Extract 4

Client: [00:02:28] And the headache. Whereabouts in the head is it located at?

Interpreter: [00:02:31] A ból głowy, proszę powiedzieć, gdzie pan te bóle głowy odczuwa?

LEP: [00:02:34] Tutaj na czole.

Client: [00:02:38] At the front.

Interpreter: [00:02:38] The forehead.

Client: [00:02:41] And how long **have you** had that for?

LEP: [00:02:46] Od jak dawna pan odczuwa te bóle?

LEP: [00:02:46] No bóle są gdzieś tak od tygodnia, a zawroty głowy gdzieś tak od dwóch tygodni.

Recording 6. Extract 5

However, as the interaction progressed, the nurse began to use the indirect address, as indicated in red in these two extract below, thereby talking about the patient rather than directly to the patient.

Client: [00:03:00] Okay. And how would **he** describe the pain in the headache? Is it a stabbing? Shooting? Twisting. Pinching? Throbbing.

Interpreter: [00:03:13] Proszę powiedzieć, jak oceniłby pan ten ból, który odczuwa pan w głowie, czy to jest ból pulsujący, ostry...

LEP: [00:03:20] Nie jest, no normalny taki ból, nie jest taki pulsujący.

Interpreter: [00:03:23] No, it's not any type of throbbing pain. It's like a regular headache.

Client: [00:03:30] Okay. And gets worse, if **he bends** over or if **he coughs** at all?

Recording 6. Extract 6

Client: [00:06:13] Okay. And when was the last time that **he** had any alcohol?

Interpreter: [00:06:19] A kiedy po raz ostatni spożywał pan alkohol?

LEP: [00:06:22] W piątek, ale bardzo mało.

Recording 6. Extract 7

On the other hand, towards the end of the interaction, and upon returning to the same room, the nurse resumed using the direct address, as indicated in green.

Client: [00:10:47] Hi.

Interpreter: [00:11:05] Yes, this is the interpreter.

Client: [00:11:07] Hello. Thank you for waiting.

Interpreter: [00:11:09] No problem.

Client: [00:11:09] So I've just had a chat with the doctor. He's in agreement that we should start **you** on some medication for **your** blood pressure. So that will be a medication called amlodipine. And that will be one tablet every day.

Recording 6. Extract 8

5. Technology-based problems

As discussed previously, the use of a loudspeaker, albeit convenient for the conversational parties located within the same space does introduce a set of its own drawbacks, specifically, loudspeakers can distort the quality of sound, which may lead to misunderstandings or miscommunication. The clarity of the spoken message can be affected by background noise, the acoustics of the room, or the quality of the loudspeaker system itself. In this particular interaction, the remote interpreter had to request repetitions on multiple occasions due to a poor quality of sound. In the two following extracts, the interpreter was likely unable to infer the meaning based on the context provided, and therefore requested a repetition. This request for repetition, marked in blue, indicates that it is a request made by the remote interpreter, rather than the LEP individual.

Client: [00:05:30] And any night sweats or anything [inaudible].

Interpreter: [00:05:34] **Sorry. This is the interpreter.** You were breaking up. Could you please repeat that?

Client: [00:05:39] And any night sweats or weight loss at all.

Recording 6. Extract 9

Client: [00:06:28] Friday, okay. But in [inaudible].

Interpreter: [00:06:36] I do apologise. **This is the interpreter.** I couldn't hear that. Could you please repeat that?

Client: [00:06:41] I think we need to get some up to date blood done on him.

Recording 6. Extract 10

However, in this particular extract, despite the relative ease of inferring the meaning from the context, the remote interpreter chose to request a repetition. This decision likely stems from the interpreter's desire to ensure that no nuanced information is lost.

Interpreter: [00:07:42] Sprawdzę pana ciśnienie krwi.

Client: [00:07:47] [inaudible] is very high at the moment.

Interpreter: [00:08:33] This is the interpreter. I do apologise. There's some problem with the connection. The quality is really poor. I can barely hear you. Nurse, could you please repeat that?

Recording 6. Extract 11

In the spirit of saving time, it may be tempting to render only the fragments of conversation that a remote interpreter manages to hear, as requesting repetitions changes the dynamics of an interaction. However, there is no guarantee that these audible fragments contain all the necessary information. Naturally, relying on partial or incomplete information can lead to significant gaps in communication, even if certain parts of the conversation are audible and seemingly understandable, they may lack crucial context or details that are essential.

The interaction was a relatively short conversation that did not involve challenging terminology, despite its medical nature. However, the following factors collectively contributed to the increased difficulty for the remote interpreter:

1. Very poor introduction did not allow for a proper understanding of the context of the interaction. Prolonged issues with the auditory channel may negatively affect the remote interpreter and lead to increased fatigue.
2. Quality of the connection was occasionally poor, which affected the understanding.
3. A request rendered by the LEP individual in the absence of the nurse may lead to a loss of objectivity of the remote interpreter.

It seems that the quality of this interaction could be improved by using a higher-quality loudspeaker and providing a more detailed introduction. The nurse, who was aware of the nature of the LEP individual's issues, should have shared this information to enhance the effectiveness of the interaction.

6.3.8 Seventh Recording—Social Services

1. Introduction-based problems

The seventh recording is a social services follow-up call lasting approximately 30 minutes. Notably, there were four participants involved in the interaction. The call began with the following introduction.

Operator: [00:00:00] Your name and your five digit pin.

Interpreter: [00:00:03] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going

to be your [anonymised] Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client 1: [00:00:12] Yeah, my name is Mike. I'm just connecting with a [inaudible] on the call. If you could bear with me, please.

Interpreter: [00:00:18] No problem. Happy to help.

Client 1: [00:00:22] Thank you.

Client 1: [00:00:28] I need to report back to you.

Client 1: [00:00:36] Please bear with me. I'm just connecting with them now.

Interpreter: [00:00:39] Oh, no problem at all. I'm here.

Client 1: [00:00:45] Thank you. I don't know why, picking up a [inaudible] on several shifts to pick her up and. Try somebody else.

Interpreter: [00:01:15] Sorry. What's that? I didn't get that.

Client 1: [00:01:19] No, no, I'm just trying somebody else. I'm trying. I'm trying to get the parents, but they're not picking up. Mhm. And that's troubling to them and said I would like to have this conversation. Mhm.

Client 1: [00:01:44] [inaudible] how are you. Are you home? Is Przemek at home as well? He's coming back from work at 12:00. Okay. Um, I've got, um, the interpreter on line. Can we have a quick conversation? I just want to talk to you briefly. Yeah. I'm going to call you on a private number. The number that I'm going to call you, you will not see the number. Yeah. Just pick up when I call. Is that okay? Is Marcin home? Marcin. Marcin is home?. Okay. Okay. I'm going to call you now yeah. Okay.

Client 1: [00:02:53] Hi. Um. I'm sorry. What's your name again? It is [anonymised]?

Interpreter: [00:02:57] It is, yes.

Client 1: [00:02:59] Okay. Um, so, um, I'm with mum. Her name is Kasia. But I'm going to add my colleague as well online. Let me just bring her on.

Interpreter: [00:03:12] Can the, um. Can the mother hear me now?

Interpreter: [00:03:15] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słychać?

LEP: [00:03:23] Dzień dobry, tak.

Recording 7. Extract 1

Despite the length of the initial interaction, the exchange does not provide the remote interpreter with much information, however, the following can be inferred, as it is implicitly suggested:

- **setting:** the statements “my name is Mike” followed by “I am going to add my colleague” are the only utterances that the client produced about who they are. No other information

can be inferred from this interaction.

- **method of communication**: The statements made by the client provide a clear description of how the interaction is going to be handled. Utterances such as “I’m just connecting with...,” “I am just connecting with them now,” “They are not picking up,” “Are you home?,” “I am going to call you on a private number,” “Just pick up when I call,” and “I am going to call you now” indicate that the conversation will take place via telephone link. Another statement, “I am going to add my colleague as well online,” suggests that the client intends to bring another participant into the conversation, though via a different method of connection. It appears that the client’s intention was to create a three-way conference call involving themselves, the LEP individual, and the remote interpreter, while also using a loudspeaker to connect the conference to an additional person whose voice would be transmitted online. This setup is complex and prone to failure, as it relies on multiple technologies working seamlessly together.
- **description of the LEP individual**: the introductory step does not have a very clear description of the LEP individual as multiple separate bits of information were provided, such as: “get the parents,” the names Przemek, Marcin, “I’m with mum. Her name is Kasia”. On the one hand, the remote interpreter was informed that the client was waiting for the parents; however, three names were mentioned, with the last one identified as the mother. This leaves the image of the LEP individual or individuals somewhat unclear. However, it can be inferred that the interaction was intended to be a conference call between the parents and the client.
- **reason for interaction**: the actual motif or intention of the call initiator is unclear as it is not explicitly stated at any point in the introduction. However, the following statement: “and that is troubling to them,” and the statements not addressed to the remote interpreter: “Can we have a quick conversation,” “I just want to talk to you briefly” can offer some insight. These statements help to form a picture—albeit vague—of the interaction, suggesting that the conversation may involve addressing concerns or issues that are troubling to the parties—parents involved.

The actual purpose of the call was only revealed to the remote interpreter later in the conversation, and it did confirm the initial assumptions and the negative nature of the interaction.

Client 1: [00:03:54] Hi. Hi. Um, [anonymised] I just wanted to do some interpretation. So, um, **the call is just really a welfare check**, but also, um, **to let mum**

know that I received an email from the Turning Point that, um, they did not attend the appointment, I think, yesterday. Can you just interpret that to mum, please?

Recording 7. Extract 2

2. Client-based problems

The utterances provided by both clients are very long and somewhat disorganised, as can be seen in the following extracts, in which the client is trying to explain the workings of the social services process with the parents. However, the utterance was quite confusing, as it contained 3 distinct pieces of information, as highlighted below. Unfortunately, the remote interpreter did not clearly understand the utterance and requested a repetition, noting that the client's speech had been breaking up due to the quality of the connection.

Client 1: [00:19:52] Um, okay. So, um, [anonymised] I just want you to explain to Kasia about the process of, um, [breaking up] know, just the mapping of the way we are working. And so when we started, it starts with Mash or, um, the, [breaking up] um, that's the initial plan where the phone calls come in. If they're in the conference [inaudible] with the family, and then we go to, um, Other Help. So she came in to social services, um, from the Other Help. It came to [breaking up] the section called ACL Child Plan, where she was and then from Child in Need plan to child protection plan where she is. And can you explain that, please?

Interpreter: [00:20:50] Sorry, this is the interpreter. I do apologise, but you were breaking up. Could you please. Could you please say it again?

Client 1: [00:20:58] So I just want to, um, [inaudible] you to understand in the process how, um, we're working, and and we're explaining that it came from Other help. Yeah. So when the the the case was reported to [inaudible], it goes into Mash, but you don't have to say Mash. So it went. [inaudible] to Assessment Team and other help and social services [breaking up] [inaudible].

Recording 7. Extract 3

In the extract above, another difficulty arises when the client uses a self-correction mechanism, informing the remote interpreter that the particular piece of information highlighted in green was not necessary for interpreting.

An additional issue arises from the client's inconsistent references to the LEP individual, as can be observed in these two extracts. On one occasion the client uses the name "Kasia,"

however, on another, the name “Sylwia” is mentioned,” as indicated in blue, which may be somewhat confusing to the remote interpreter.

Client 1: [00:02:59] Okay. Um, so, um, I'm with mum. Her name is **Kasia**. But I'm going to add my colleague as well online. Let me just bring her on.

Recording 7. Extract 4

Client 1: [00:18:46] Okay. Um, **Sylvia** can I check? Do you have a calendar? Um, to. To keep you up to date with what's happening with calendar?

Interpreter: [00:18:57] Dobrze, pani Sylwio, czy pani ma kalendarz, gdzie mogłaby pani zapisywać różne rzeczy, żeby być na bieżąco?

Recording 7. Extract 5

3. Interpreter—role and management

Given the nature of the technological infrastructure used, there were a couple of situations in the interaction which required the remote interpreter to take over the conversation, as indicated in blue in the following examples.

LEP: [00:17:35] Jest [inaudible] młodych nowych kotków.

Interpreter: [00:17:37] **Sorry, the interpreter didn't get that and will request a repetition.**

LEP: [00:17:43] Przepraszam, czy może pani powtórzyć?

LEP: [00:17:44] Sześć młodych jest nowych kotków.

Recording 7. Extract 6

Client 1: [00:31:29] [child cries] Okay, all right. Um, if there's nothing else, um, [inaudible] Przemek [inaudible].

Interpreter: [00:31:42] **Sorry. This is the interpreter.** [child cries] **Could you please repeat your last statement?**

Client 1: [00:31:47] No, I was just checking if I he has come back home now because she said he was coming around this time.

Recording 7. Extract 7

The remote interpreter spoke in the third person to indicate that the information was being

conveyed by the remote interpreter and did not come directly from the LEP individual.

4. Instruction-based problems

Throughout the interaction, there is an inconsistent approach in how both clients refer to the LEP individual, alternating between direct and indirect address, as indicated in red in the following extracts.

Client 1: [00:05:07] Right. Okay. So, um, this is this is really a very important meeting, and, um, is there any any anything that, you know, um, that may have caused her to forget about it? **She was informed** about the meeting in advance.

Recording 7. Extract 8

Client 1: [00:26:56] And so, um, [anonymised] I just want **Kasia** to know that this is not a threat, but actually, it's my duty to ensure the safety and the general well-being of these two children under their care [...]

Recording 7. Extract 9

In the following extract, client 2 also uses indirect address, as indicated in red, and additionally refers directly to the interpreter, as highlighted in green.

Client 2: [00:11:01] Hi. Hi, this is Vicky. **Can you** tell **mum** I will be there at 1 p.m.?

Recording 7. Extract 10

Client 2: [00:16:59] Yes. That's right. And also also, **can you** ask **mum** if the cat, if the pregnant cat has had her kittens yet.

Recording 7. Extract 11

In the extract below, however, the client directly addresses the LEP individual with a question, as indicated in green.

Client 1: [00:33:26] Okay. So, is everything clear? Um. **Kasia do you** have any questions?

Recording 7. Extract 12

Naturally, the best course of action and a prescriptive recommendation is to address the

LEP individual directly, as this approach fosters a more direct and engaged conversation between the involved parties. Hypothetically speaking, if the LEP individual spoke even a minimal level of English, they might realise that they are not being addressed directly, which could lead to confusion or disengagement.

5. Technology-based problems

As the interaction was handled across multiple platforms, the remote interpreter faced challenges in understanding certain nuances. In the following extract, the client uses an anglicised Polish name, as indicated in purple. However, due to poor audio quality, the remote interpreter does not properly recognise it and mistakenly says “Martyna” instead of “Marcin.”

Client 1: [00:08:51] Okay, so can I just make sure that my colleague will be coming? Because we agreed the other time that, um, today, Tuesday, **Mart** [inaudible] is going to be home. I don't want her to come home again. And, um, just, you know, we told you that **Martyna** is not there. Um, my colleague Vicky is online now as we speak as well. He's on the same call. Um, I just want to make sure that her time is not wasted, because this is really, really important. And people don't have time. And it takes time to arrange these meetings. And if you know, you know that you are not able to make them. It's important to text me or call me and let me know that you were not there so that it's, um, it's not, um, it's not missed.

Interpreter: [00:09:40] Dobrze, Vicky, moja koleżanka jest na drugiej linii, ona przysłuchuje się naszej rozmowie, i ona dzisiaj panią odwiedzi w domu. Mam nadzieję, że pani w domu, że **Martyna** w domu będzie, że nie będzie tak jak ostatnio, że **Martyny** w domu nie będzie. Bardzo trudno jest nam te spotkania umawiać, no i w takiej sytuacji, jeśli pani po prostu to nie odpowiada — ten czas, bardzo proszę, aby pani nas wcześniej poinformowała, żebyśmy mogli się po prostu dostosować. Także proszę potwierdzić, czy **Martyna** będzie dzisiaj w domu?

Recording 7. Extract 13

The LEP individual corrects the remote interpreter by stating the proper name and laughing it off, as indicated in green, and then the remote interpreter acknowledged it and continued to interpret the utterance. However, apparently, the client also experienced issues with the quality of the connection as in this case, a request was made for the remote interpreter to repeat, as indicated in blue.

LEP: [00:10:10] **Marcin**, **haha** tak, będzie. Tak, będzie w domu, jest w domu i raczej się nigdzie nie wybiera, także, tak. Wiedziałam o tym, że pani Viktoria miała przyjść, także czekam na nią.

Interpreter: [00:10:29] Yes? Martin is at home. Um, we were informed that Victoria would be coming today, so I don't think he's going anywhere. We are waiting for her.

Client 1: [00:10:45] **Sorry. Can you say that again, please?**

Interpreter: [00:10:47] Yes. So Marcin is at home and we were informed that Victoria would be coming today. So I don't think he's going anywhere. So we are waiting for her.

Recording 7. Extract 14

Another rather comical situation occurred a couple of minutes later, probably for the same reason. At one point, the client mentioned the word “cats,” as indicated in blue, but the remote interpreter did not register or interpret it, most likely due to the length of the original utterance or the poor quality of the connection.

Client 1: [00:06:23] Okay. [inaudible] and, and with my colleague um, as well uh, Vicki is online and this is regarding the, the **cats** uh, at home. Um, they were meant to be picked up. And again, my colleague arranged it, and they said, Przemek told her that, um, he was busy. Um. Yeah. I just wanted to get you to understand what's happening at home? Um, why these important appointments are being missed? Because I don't want us to go back into a situation where nothing is moving on or ready for appointments. Very important appointments are being missed. Is there anything that I'm missing, or is there anything that is happening at home that I need to know? Anything that I need to do to help?

Interpreter: [00:07:23] Dobrze, pani Kasiu, proszę powiedzieć, bo, czy jest w domu coś, o czym chciałaby pani mnie poinformować? Czy dzieje się cokolwiek, bo to już kolejne spotkanie, na które się pani nie stawiała, a te spotkania są bardzo ważne. Przemek wspomniał, że był zajęty? Chciałbym się po prostu dowiedzieć, czy jest coś, co w domu się rzeczywiście dzieje, o czym powinna pani nas poinformować?

Recording 7. Extract 15

A couple of minutes later, the same topic resurfaced. The fourth participant—client 2—mentioned cats, as indicated in blue, and again this time no successful interpreter was produced.

Most likely, this information was entirely unrelated to the matters at hand, and the remote interpreter failed to recognise that the issue being discussed actually involved real cats. The remote interpreter worked with the available bits of information, and mistakenly misinterpreted “Cats” as a reference to a human being, as highlighted in red. Most likely, this occurred because the client was inconsistent in the names used to refer to the LEP individual. Unfortunately, as shown in purple, the LEP individual did not understand the utterance.

Client 2: [00:12:58] Hi. Can I just...

Interpreter: [00:12:59] I'm really sorry about that.

Client 2: [00:13:02] Okay. Can you just ask mom? Why? Why weren't the cats [inaudible] ready?

Interpreter: [00:13:14] Dobrze, a proszę powiedzieć, dlaczego Cat nie była gotowa?

LEP: [00:13:27] Słucham, może pan powtórzyć?

Recording 7. Extract 16

In an effort to produce an intelligible statement without altering the course of the conversation (such as asking for an additional clarification), the remote interpreter offered the following utterance, adjusting the perspective in the hope that it would be understood. Unfortunately, this approach led to confusion for the LEP individual.

Interpreter: [00:13:27] Dobrze, a czemu nie była pani gotowa na to spotkanie?

LEP: [00:13:28] yyy to znaczy, nie rozumiem teraz, jak nie gotowa, po prostu. Nie, nie pamiętałam o tym spotkaniu. O które spotkanie chodzi teraz? Bo tak... [child cries].

Interpreter: [00:13:47] No, I mean, what do you mean? I, I mean, I just missed that appointment. I'm not sure which appointment you were referring to? I just forgot about it.

Recording 7. Extract 17

The outcome of this interaction was confusion on the part of the LEP individual, and most likely the remote interpreter as well. In such situations, it is advisable to inform the conversational party that the meaning is unclear and that further explanation is required. Fortunately, the conversation was eventually redirected when the client provided additional

context, as indicated in green, which allowed the remote interpreter to understand the issue, construct a relevant mental framework and successfully interpret the utterance.

Client 2: [00:13:59] Okay, so, I had arranged to pick the cats up yesterday with dad and take them to the vet. Dad then said he couldn't make the appointment. Why couldn't he make the appointment? Was it because the cats weren't available? or the dad wasn't available?

Interpreter: [00:14:30] Dobrze, a proszę powiedzieć, bo umówiliśmy się wczoraj. Miałam odebrać ojca razem z kotami i zabrać je do weterynarza. Natomiast dostałam informację od ojca dziecka, że nie są gotowi. Chciałam się dowiedzieć, czy to kot nie był gotowy, czy to ojciec nie był gotowy? Dlaczego? Co się stało

Recording 7. Extract 18

It is important to acknowledge that these fragments of information are exchanged in real time within a less-than-ideal environment. Applying a hermeneutical approach, the remote interpreter attempted to make sense of the message using previous experience and context, leading to an utterance that, while misguided, was an effort to interpret the information effectively. The most efficient manner of resolving such issues, however, is to request clarification.

Generally, this interaction can be classified as a challenging scenario, involving a complex, and a delicate matter. The issues which occurred in the conversation may be attributed to the technological solution employed, but also to the following factors:

1. The introduction provided to the remote interpreter was somewhat limited. Perhaps this is the reason for the confusion around the word “cat”, as it was completely out of context.
2. Inconsistent and mispronounced references to the LEP individual may have confused the remote interpreter.
3. Distortion of sound and background noises resulted in a necessity to repeat information on multiple occasions and also might have contributed to the misunderstanding of utterances.
4. Violation of direct address.
5. The interaction involved 4 parties: two clients, using a distinct method of connection, the LEP individual and the remote interpreter. This setup might be confusing from the point of view of turn-taking mechanism and places a heavy cognitive burden on the

remote interpreter who needs to monitor the interaction closely.

It is advisable that both a client and an LEP individual speak from a quiet environment which could help to ensure clear communication between conversational parties. However, it is also understandable that in this scenario, the mother is a carer with children present in her immediate surroundings, which at times is beyond her control.

6.3.9 Eighth Recording—Universal Credit Query

1. Introduction-based problems

The eighth recording is also a relatively short conversation which was initiated by the automatic system. The below introduction provides the remote interpreter with hardly any information or context.

Interpreter: [00:00:02] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. Good afternoon. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your [anonymised] Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised].

Client: [00:00:10] Okay. Thank you. I'm just gonna connect the claimant. If you can just ask them what their query is please.

Interpreter: [00:00:15] Of course. Thank you.

Client: [00:00:18] Okay. We're all connected.

Interpreter: [00:00:30] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słychać?

LEP: [00:00:31] Oczywiście.

Interpreter: [00:00:32] Dobrze, proszę powiedzieć, jak mogę panu pomóc?

Recording 8. Extract 1

The presented interaction constitutes a very basic introduction, which allows the remote interpreter to infer the following facts:

- **setting:** the word “query” eliminates the medical context, as it is more commonly used in financial or business settings.
- **method of communication:** the statements “I’m just gonna connect” and “We’re all connected” provide the remote interpreter with a clear understanding of the technological setup for the interaction. These statements indicate that the conversation will be conducted over a telephonic link as a three-way conference call, with all participants located in separate locations.
- **description of the LEP individual:** the only bit of information the remote interpreter received

from the client is the term “claimant”, again just as the word “query” it is more commonly used in the business, administrative or welfare settings. It is challenging to even determine the sex of the claimant, as in the subsequent utterance, the client refers to the claimant using the indeterminate singular pronoun “they”.

- **reason for interaction:** there is no specific information at all. The only assumption the remote interpreter can make is that it is going to be a business, administrative, financial or a welfare interaction.

As previously mentioned, the introduction provided does not give the remote interpreter any substantial information to anchor it in a specific setting or topic. However, a key element that would have significantly aided the remote interpreter is the introduction of the client. If the client had introduced herself, the interpreter might have gained a clearer understanding of the call's context. Additionally, since the call was directed to the client, who subsequently requested interpreting assistance, she must have had some knowledge about the LEP individual, including basic details such as their gender, at the very least. Another issue is the use of the indeterminate pronoun “they” to refer to the claimant. It is possible that the client chose this pronoun to avoid assuming the caller's gender.

2. LEP individual-based problems

During the interaction, amidst the confusion (mentioned below), and as the LEP individual struggled to address the problem, another person in the same room with the claimant attempted to assist, as indicated in blue. This intervention, however, was not well received by the client, as highlighted in red.

Client: [00:04:49] Oh, right. We're not PIP. We're Universal Credit.

Interpreter: [00:04:53] No tak. Dodzwonił się pan do Universal Credit. My się nie zajmujemy zasiłkiem PIP.

Third party: [00:05:04] Ale czemu to pismo jest Universal... [inaudible] Health advisor...

LEP: [00:05:06] Ale dostałem, że tutaj jest Croydon.

Interpreter: [00:05:13] But I got this letter and it says Croydon here.

Client: [00:05:18] Right. Okay. So this. Sorry, I can only speak to the claimant. Not anybody else. So if you can just tell the claimant they need to answer, not anybody else with them. And also, um, if the letters from Pip that's different from Universal Credit, we don't have an appointment for the claimant. Um, on Universal Credit until the 13th of September. And that's by telephone.

Recording 8. Extract 2

Generally, remote interpreters should inform clients if there is another person in the room, particularly when loudspeakers are used. This precaution helps to minimise the risk of confidential information being overheard by unauthorised individuals.

3. Interpreter—role and management

A somewhat interesting misunderstanding arose during the interaction. At one point, the nature of the interaction became clearer when the LEP individual made the following utterance, in which the term PIP was mentioned, as indicated in blue.

Interpreter: [00:00:32] Dobrze, proszę powiedzieć, jak mogę panu pomóc?

LEP: [00:00:32] Chodzi o to, że ja na dzień dzisiejszy mam eeee appointment na 3:15 w sprawie **PIP**, z tym że nie jestem w stanie się tam pojawić, bo mam problem z chodzeniem i generalnie no no no nie jestem w stanie tam dojechać. Chciałem ich po prostu poinformować.

Interpreter: [00:00:54] So I have an appointment booked for today for 3:15. It is a **PIP** appointment, but I'm calling to say that I'm not going to be able to get there because I have a problem related to walking, and I'm just not going to be able to get to that appointment.

Client: [00:01:17] Right. Okay. If you could just ask them what their last name is.

Recording 8. Extract 3

PIP, pronounced /pip/, stands for Personal Independence Payment, and it is a British benefit system designed to provide financial assistance to individuals below the state pension age who face difficulties due to disabilities or health conditions. This benefit is distinct from Universal Credit and is managed by a separate institution.

The client inquired about the last name of the LEP individual to be able to identify the person within the system. Upon verification, the client stated that there was no appointment booked for the claimant, as indicated in red.

Client: [00:03:58] It's okay. So did they. Did they have an appointment today?

Interpreter: [00:04:06] Ma pan spotkanie dzisiaj tak?

LEP: [00:04:11] No na dzisiaj miałem na 3:15, ale nie jestem w stanie tam pojechać.

Interpreter: [00:04:12] Yes, it is scheduled for today for 3:15, but I'm just unable

to get there.

Client: [00:04:19] Right. Okay. The claimant doesn't have an appointment today.
It's on the 13th of September.

Recording 8. Extract 4

The remote interpreter apparently remembered that the claimant mentioned the name PIP and informed the client, using the third person in order to separate the remote interpreter's utterance from those of the LEP individual, as indicated in green.

Interpreter: [00:04:42] This is the interpreter. At the beginning, the claimant said that it's a PIP, um, benefit appointment.

Client: [00:04:49] Oh, right. We're not PIP. We're Universal Credit.

Interpreter: [00:04:53] No tak. Dodzwonił się pan do Universal Credit. My się nie zajmujemy zasiłkiem PIP.

Recording 8. Extract 5

However, the LEP individual examined the letter, which he received, and read out the statement phonetically. The remote interpreter had to intervene once more, as the utterance was unclear, as indicated in blue.

LEP: [00:06:11] No rozumie, tylko ja dostałem appointment na Universal Credit [inaudible] Assessment [inaudible] Service na Reading Assessment Centre [inaudible], takie pismo dostałem.

Interpreter: [00:06:28] This is the interpreter that claimant is reading phonetically the information in the letter. I'm going to ask him to repeat the content.

Interpreter: [00:06:35] Czy może pan przeczytać jeszcze raz, skąd ten list jest.

LEP: [00:06:39] Universal Credit health assessment advisory service. A reading assessment center marketplace. Reading [inaudible]. No taki adres mam.

Interpreter: [00:06:53] So I have this letter from Universal Credit Health Assessment Advisory Service with Reading — the address.

Recording 8. Extract 6

The client understood the message and responded with a question about the misunderstanding, as indicated in purple. The client was clearly intent on uncovering the reason behind the

confusion.

Client: [00:07:05] So it's not Pip. Then where did Pip come from?

Interpreter: [00:07:10] To w takim razie nie jest świadczenie PIP. To nie jest zasilek PIP, wspomniał pan na początku, że to jest PIP, prawda?

LEP: [00:07:10] No bo ja się o to starałem i miałem tam na komisję jechać.

Interpreter: [00:07:18] Yes because I was applying for PIP and I was supposed to have an appointment with them.

Recording 8. Extract 7

In this particular scenario, the source of the misunderstanding was the earlier statement made by the LEP individual. The remote interpreter, assuming the role of an advocate, attempted to clarify the issue by mentioning the information. However, this approach somewhat backfired, as it led to further confusion and complicated the situation.

4. Instruction-based problems

Throughout the interaction, the client referred directly to the interpreter while addressing the claimant with the indeterminate pronoun “they” and occasionally “claimant,” as indicated in red. Although this approach may appear polite, it disrupts the notion of a direct conversation between the LEP individual and the client. Instead, it reintroduces the interpreter as an active conversational participant, to whom the utterances are directed.

Client: [00:03:34] Can they just confirm the telephone number, please.

Interpreter: [00:03:36] Poproszę jeszcze pana numer telefonu

Recording 8. Extract 8

Client: [00:03:58] It's okay. So did they. Did they have an appointment today?

Interpreter: [00:04:06] Ma pan spotkanie dzisiaj tak?

LEP: [00:04:11] No na dzisiaj miałem na 3:15, ale nie jestem w stanie tam pojechać.

Interpreter: [00:04:12] Yes, it is scheduled for today for 3:15, but I'm just unable to get there.

Client: [00:04:19] Right. Okay. The claimant doesn't have an appointment today. It's on the 13th of September.

Recording 8. Extract 9

Client: [00:10:26] Right. Okay. Well, what the claimant will have to do, they'll have to ring the Health Advisory because they're a different department to what we are, and they'll need to speak to them. Let me just. Do they have a number on that letter?

Recording 8. Extract 10

As discussed previously, the recommended approach is to use direct address and refer directly to the LEP individual. While the client may have motivated their decision by aiming for politeness, speaking about someone rather than directly to them can be perceived as disrespectful.

Interaction 10 was not particularly challenging—there was no difficult vocabulary used, and the technological infrastructure did not impair the quality of the connection. However, several issues did affect communication. One such issue was the remote interpreter's attempt at clarification, which led to confusion. Although the remote interpreter followed the recommended practice of advocating for the LEP individual by repeating terms mentioned by the claimant, this approach turned out to be mistaken. Additionally, the following factors negatively impacted the interpreting process and increased the difficulty for the remote interpreter:

1. Very poor introduction given by the client, who apparently decided not to give any information to the remote interpreter.
2. Third-party speaking, which was not permitted by the client, also negatively impacted the interpreting process interpreting process by momentarily disrupting the flow of the conversation.
3. Violation of direct address.

In this particular interaction, the aspect requiring improvement is the manner in which the client addressed the LEP individual. The claimant's ability to provide the postcode, address, and date of birth in English suggests a basic level of English proficiency, indicating that he could also understand some of the utterances. However, the use of indirect address in this context contributed to an exclusive environment, resulting in the claimant being spoken about rather than directly spoken to.

6.3.10 Ninth Recording—Client Disconnected

1. Introduction-based problems

The ninth recording is a very short interaction in which no interpreting occurred due to the client's fault. However, it began with the following introduction.

Operator: [00:00:00] Calling from [anonymised], are you available to interpret.

Interpreter: [00:00:02] Yes I am. I'm happy to help.

Operator: [00:00:05] I'll put you through. Thank you very much.

Operator: [00:00:07] Hello. The interpreter is through the line.

Interpreter: [00:00:09] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your [anonymised] Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised]. How can I help?

Client: [00:00:17] Hi, I am gonna, I am transferring you to the claimant now.

Recording 9. Extract 1

The interaction was initiated by an operator who inquired whether the remote interpreter was willing and prepared to proceed with interpreting the call. Such situations often arise when the call involves sensitive topics, such as abortion consultations or suicide prevention hotlines. Operators typically seek to confirm that the remote interpreter is comfortable and equipped to handle such discussions before proceeding. Another reason might be that a client contacts the interpreting service centre directly to request a remote interpreter for a specific language, rather than using the automated service.

Regardless of the method of initiation, the provided introduction is very poor. One reason for this is that the client has not had sufficient amount of time to receive any details from the LEP individual. However, based on this limited statement, the remote interpreter may infer the following:

- **method of communication:** the statement “I am transferring you” is an indication that the interaction will be handled over the telephone link involving all parties. This implies that the LEP individual either initiated a call or received it, and as a result all parties will be located in separate locations.
- **description of the LEP individual:** the only information the remote interpreter can infer from the statement “I am transferring you to the claimant now” is that the LEP individual is a claimant of some sort. This suggests that the LEP individual is not a patient, as medical professionals typically do not use the term "claimant" to refer to their interlocutors. The term “claimant” is specific to contexts involving financial or social welfare sectors and so these should be expected.
- **Technology-based problems**

In this particular scenario, no interpreting took place as the client inadvertently disconnected herself from the call while attempting to bring the claimant into the conversation. As indicated

in blue in the following extract, the remote interpreter did not receive any acknowledgment from the client and proceeded to inform the LEP individual about the development, as highlighted in green. The LEP individual attempted to call out as well, as she did not receive any feedback either, as indicated in purple.

Client: [00:00:17] Hi, I am gonna, I am transferring you to the claimant now.

LEP: [00:00:28] Hello?

Interpreter: [00:00:35] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słyszać?

LEP: [00:00:36] Tak, słyszać, dzień dobry.

Interpreter: [00:00:36] Yes. You can go ahead.

LEP: [00:00:40] Ja chciałam się zapytać o jakieś yyy zapomogę, nie wiem, benefity, czy Universal Credit, bo nie, jestem osobą niepracującą i w chwili obecnej jestem na leczeniu w Polsce.

Interpreter: [00:00:54] So I'm calling...

LEP: [00:00:55] Bo mam problemy z kolanami.

Interpreter: [00:00:56] I'm calling to inquire about, um, any type of financial help or subsidy or any type of, um, benefits like universal Credit, because I'm, I'm not actually employed at this point. I'm not working. And I'm in Poland undergoing medical treatment because I have a problem with my knees.

Interpreter: [00:01:19] Hello, this is the interpreter. Can you hear me?

LEP: [00:01:26] Hello?

Interpreter: [00:01:33] Niestety wydaje mi się, że osoba, z którą pani miała rozmawiać nie podłączyła się do naszej rozmowy. W momencie kiedy łączyła nas w konferencję niestety się rozłączyła.

LEP: [00:01:34] No już trzeci raz dzwonię.

Interpreter: [00:01:34] No bardzo mi przykro, będzie pani musiała zadzwonić ponownie.

Recording 9. Extract 2

Such situations are not uncommon, as either a client or an LEP individual may occasionally be left out of the call. The response of the claimant, as indicated in red, however, may suggest frustration with the current situation, which is understandable.

It is important to note, however, that remote interpreters generally do receive payment for such interactions regardless of the outcome. If they are compensated on a per-minute basis,

their remuneration will be based on the duration of the interaction.

To mitigate such issues, clients are generally advised to undergo training on the operation of telecommunication equipment. However, remote interpreting is a service comprised of multiple disparate elements, working on the verge of technologies, which can sometimes fail,. Consequently some technical problems may still arise that are beyond the control of any party involved.

6.3.11 Tenth Recording—Universal Credit Security Check

1. Introduction-based problems

The tenth recording is also a Universal Credit call, which began with a comprehensive introduction that not only outlines the nature of the interaction but also includes specific instructions for the remote interpreter and a client's inquiry about preferences regarding the structuring of utterances.

Interpreter: [00:00:03] Hello. Good morning. My name is [anonymised]. I'm going to be your [anonymised] languages Polish interpreter. My ID is [anonymised].

Client: [00:00:10] Do you? Can you sound. It's very difficult to understand because it's very, very, um. oh that's better. Um, my name is Jemima. I'm phoning from the Department of Work and Pensions. I need to carry out a review on this person's claim. Um, so what I'm going to be doing is taking him through some questions and asking him questions. And at the end of the call, I will be asking him to upload some documents. So it shouldn't take too long, because on this case, there is not a lot that I actually need to find out from him.

Interpreter: [00:00:43] Hmhm, I understand.

Client: [00:00:44] So how would you like me? Yeah. How would you like me to bring? Obviously I've got to take him through security first, so the first thing I'll do is take him through security, obviously. Introduce yourself. Um, and then what I'm going to be doing is asking him a number of questions. Further questions to make sure it's him. Um, so shall we just to break it down in each section so you can translate afterwards?

Interpreter: [00:01:07] Yes. That would be wonderful if you could just read one question at a time, I can then render it and then actually interpret the response of the claimant.

Client: [00:01:14] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No that's fine. So what I'm going to do, I'm

going to ring him now. He should answer the phone because I have actually sent him a message saying that I'm getting hold of the interpreter. Um, I've taken through some security, so I'll introduce myself. Um, you can introduce yourself. Take him through security. If he fails security, then the call will stop, because I can't carry on. But let's hope he doesn't. So I'm going to ring him now, if that's okay.

Interpreter: [00:01:43] Yes it is. Thank you so much for that.

Recording 10. Extract 1

The presented interaction is a very detailed description of the conversation that was about to start with the LEP individual, and it contained the following bits of information.

- **setting:** the statements “my name is Jemima” and “Department of Work and Pensions” provide the remote interpreter with key contextual clues. These phrases help the interpreter understand that the nature of the call will be welfare-related. The mention of the Department of Work and Pensions, which handles Universal Credit matters, strongly indicates that the interaction will most likely revolve around discussions related to the Universal Credit benefit.
- **method of communication:** the statement “And at the end of the call” and “I’m going to ring him now” clearly establish the method of connection and the infrastructure used for the interaction—a three-way telephone conference call, with all participants situated in separate locations.
- **description of the LEP individual:** the only piece of information directly related to the LEP individual is his gender, as the client referred to the speaker using “he” and “him.” Unfortunately, no additional details about the LEP individual were provided, however, the remote interpreter can infer other contextual facts based on the information presented by the client at different stages of the introduction.
- **reason for interaction:** the client makes several comments that help the remote interpreter understand the nature of the call and how it will be organised. The statements “I need to carry out a review on this person’s claim” and “what I’m going to be doing is asking him a number of questions” provide clarity on the purpose of the call and the questionnaire-type approach the client intends to take during the interaction. Additionally, the client assures the remote interpreter that there will be a request placed “I will be asking him to upload some documents” and that the interaction should not last long “there is not a lot that I actually need to find out from him”. All these bits of

information are welcome and helpful as they help create a mental frame for the remote interpreter and activate relevant vocabulary nodes.

However, the introductory step contains much more than just the basic details about the call's nature. The client mentioned that she had already notified the LEP individual about the upcoming contact to ensure his attention was focused. She also briefed the remote interpreter on the initial steps of the interaction. Additionally, she sought input from the remote interpreter on how they would prefer to proceed, asking, "Um, so shall we just break it down in each section so you can translate afterwards?" This question reflects the client's willingness to accommodate the interpreter's preferred method, whether it be interpreting in chunks or using another approach.

2. LEP-based problems

The interaction presented a significant challenge because the LEP individual frequently interrupted the client, responding in English from the early stages of the conversation, as indicated in red in the following extract. Despite these efforts, the client expressed dissatisfaction with the responses, as highlighted in blue.

Interpreter: [00:02:32] Dzień dobry, z tej strony tłumacz, czy mnie słyszać?

LEP: [00:02:33] If it is, if it is, Dzień dobry.

Interpreter: [00:02:36] Okay, you can go ahead.

LEP: [00:02:39] Okay.

Client: [00:02:40] Um, so the first question I need to ask him when he sets up his claim and he was asked two security questions...

LEP: [00:02:48] Yeah, I know. Yeah, I know about that. Which is my first movie in cinema. So it is a mask. And my mother's maiden name is a [anonymised].

Client: [00:02:59] Right, no, they're not the questions.

Recording 10. Extract 2

In the following extract, the LEP individual consistently interrupted the interpreter at every opportunity, as shown in red. This behaviour prompted the client to comment on the manner in which the interaction was being conducted, as highlighted in green.

Client: [00:03:27] Yeah. Tell him that he's passed his security.

Interpreter: [00:03:34] Dobrze, udało nam się przejść...

LEP: [00:03:36] I don't [inaudible] może pan wytłumaczyć?

Interpreter: [00:03:39] Udało nam się przejść procedurę bezpieczeństwa.

Client: [00:03:41] I am getting confused. Yeah. Okay. So I need to carry out a review on your claim. Because it's been flagged up that I need to do some checks. So what I need to ask you, what address are you living at?

Interpreter: [00:03:57] Dobrze ja dzwonię do pana...

LEP: [00:04:04] Może pan przetłumaczyć...

Interpreter: [00:04:04] Ja dzwonię do pana ponieważ musimy zweryfikować pana wniosek. Został zaznaczony jako wniosek do weryfikacji. Proszę powiedzieć, jaki jest pana obecny adres?

Recording 10. Extract 3

In the following extract, the LEP individual did not wait for the remote interpreter to relay the utterance produced by the client and proceeded to respond directly in English, adding a request at the end in Polish, as indicated in red.

Client: [00:04:55] Yeah. And what. Have you had any previous addresses in Southampton? If you can ask him. And if so, what address?

LEP: [00:05:03] My different address is on the same road as well. Is the Alma road. because this is different between [inaudible], different between number of the building and the last one, letters of the post code.. Because my old one, former postcode is [anonymised]. And number of the building is six. But it is the same like the same is the agency [inaudible]? What I'm renting. Uh, my room. So, you know, between the two different and I don't know, because I still don't know why I have to bring back all houses addresses from [inaudible] February. Może pan przetłumaczyć?

Recording 10. Extract 4

In her response, the client expressed her dissatisfaction and confusion with how the interaction was being managed, as highlighted in red. However, before the remote interpreter could render the client's utterance, the LEP individual interrupted again, as highlighted in purple. At this point, the remote interpreter took on the role of Interaction Coordinator, informing the client of the intent to instruct the LEP individual not to respond directly to the client, as indicated in green. The client confirmed by stating that she was confused as well (in blue)

Client: [00:05:53] But I need to go. Can I can say I need to go through these questions first. I will answer or try and help you with the housing, but that's not what I phoned for and what I'm phoning to do a review. I will go to a housing in a minute, but I need to go through these questions because I will need you to upload some documents if you can actually tell them him that, interpreter. **Because I'm getting confused.**

Interpreter: [00:06:17] Dobrze...

LEP: [00:06:17] **Please forgive me. Niech pan przetłumaczy.**

Interpreter: [00:06:20] **Okay, sorry. This is the interpreter. I'm going to have to ask the client not to respond directly to you because it's really confusing.**

Client: [00:06:27] **It's confusing me.**

Interpreter: [00:06:32] Proszę posłuchać tego, co tłumacz mówi i potem odpowiadać, dobrze? Bardzo proszę.

LEP: [00:06:32] Nie ma sprawy.

Recording 10. Extract 5

Another challenge, somewhat related to the LEP individual's attitude, was the lack of cooperation with the client and the disorganisation of his statements. Unfortunately, the LEP individual did not adhere to the client's instructions and instead provided his own lengthy and unstructured responses, making them difficult for the remote interpreter to interpret effectively.

Interpreter: [00:06:32] Więc ja do pana dzwonię, na początku będę musiała zadać panu parę pytań, potem porozmawiamy na temat pana sytuacji mieszkaniowej, ale nie będę mogła panu pomóc rozwiązać kwestii, o których pan mówi. Ja dzwonię, żeby omówić z panem wniosek o zasiłek, dlatego że on został zaznaczony jako wniosek do weryfikacji. Dlatego właśnie do pana dzwonię. Na początku będzie trzeba odpowiedzieć na moje pytania.

LEP: [00:06:32] Wie pan co, nie ma sprawy, ja doskonale rozumiem, ponieważ w tamtym roku miałem taką samą sytuację, [inaudible] dlatego że ten Reading Team, że oni tam sprawdzają i w tamtym roku zawiesili, zadzwoniłem i odwiesili. Żeby pana nie skłamać, od początku od [inaudible] w Zjednoczonym Królestwie byłem 2013 ponieważ w Londynie [inaudible], miałem trudną sytuację, wróciłem do Polski, dwa lata stawałem na nogi, wróciłem z powrotem 2015 i do 2020 przed pandemią, ponieważ pandemia się zaczęła w kwietniu w 2020, nie brałem w ogóle żadnego

benefitu. Od 2020, od kiedy zaczęła się pandemia, czerwiec zaaplikowałem o bezrobocie. Bezrobocie trwało pół roku, o ile się nie mylę, bezrobocie mi się, w trakcie kiedy pobierałem o to bezrobocie zaaplikowałem o, po prostu w trakcie jak pobierałem bezrobocie to zaaplikowałem o Uniwersal. I kiedy pobierałem bezrobocie i Uniwersał, to po prostu pobierałem bezrobocie i z bezrobocia tę podstawę mi odbierali. Zaaplikowałem o [inaudible] lutego 21, zweryfikowali moją osobę, jeśli chodzi o Universal Credit, potem przyznali mi zaliczkę i zaaplikowałem o housing benefit, aw sierpniu 2023 roku nakazali mi zwrot 7000 funtów, gdzie ja tego w ogóle nie rozumiem, w ogóle, argumentacja była, że nie mogłem zrozumieć, a jak przychodzę na wizyty face-to-face i pokazuję paszport. A jeśli chodzi o agencję, w której wynajmuję, to ja wynajmuję od 2020 i nie jestem jedyną osobą, która wynajmuje, bo tam jest kilka osób, które wynajmują, to co ja mam jakiegoś ciągłego pecha? bo ja tego nie rozumiem. To [inaudible] ja tego nie rozumiem. Co to jest. Ja nie rozumiem, kto się pod tym podpisuje, to jest niesubordynacja urzędnika państwowego, bo o tym chyba rozmawiamy. Przepraszam, że się tak rozpędziłem, ale takie są fakty. Ja nigdy w życiu nie miałem takich długów. 7000 na dzień dzisiejszy, jestem [inaudible] w plecy jeśli chodzi o czynsz, dzisiaj 10000 nigdy w życiu [inaudible] w Polsce [inaudible].

Recording 10. Extract 6

Utterances of this nature are particularly challenging to interpret accurately. As previously noted, LEP individuals often present fragments of their lives and experiences, where each piece of information belongs to its own context and has specific significance. From the perspective of a remote interpreter, it can be difficult to piece together these disparate elements and convey them coherently in another language.

3. Instruction-based problems

Throughout the interaction, the client uses a mixed method of direct and indirect address, occasionally directing her utterances to the interpreter, and not the LEP individual, as indicated in red.

Client: [00:02:40] Um, so the first question I need to ask **him** when he sets up his claim and **he was asked** two security questions...

Recording 10. Extract 7

However, in other instances, the client spoke directly to the LEP individual, as indicated in green, which might have been caused by the direct responses of the claimant in English,

Client: [00:03:00] So the first question you put down, where were you born?

Recording 10. Extract 8

Client: [00:03:16] Yeah. And what was the first film you saw at the cinema?

Recording 10. Extract 9

Client: [00:04:43] But what what's your what's the. When the postman delivers your post. What is the what number does he deliver the parcel at?

Recording 10. Extract 10

In the following extract, the client asks the LEP directly, as highlighted in green, however, then she instructs the remote interpreter to render her utterance, as shown in red.

Client: [00:04:55] Yeah. And what. Have you had any previous addresses in Southampton? If you can ask him. And if so, what address? Okay

Recording 10. Extract 11

Despite the comprehensive introduction which provided the remote interpreter with a lot of information about the interaction, the conversation presented significant challenges. It followed a very unstructured pattern, with the LEP individual providing disjointed and lengthy responses that lacked clear organisation. Additionally, the lack of cooperation on the part of the LEP individual affected the course of the interaction and changed its organisation on multiple occasions. To summarise, the following aspects negatively affected the process of interpreting:

1. Unstructured utterances on the part of the LEP individual.
2. Lack of cooperation on the part of the LEP individual.
3. Violation of direct address.

It is challenging to offer straightforward recommendations to address such issues. On one hand, the comprehensive introduction provided at the start of the interaction was intended to facilitate the interpreting process. On the other hand, the inherent characteristics and behaviour of the LEP individual negatively impacted the interaction, and undermined the effectiveness of the communication, even though the LEP individual was instructed and asked to adhere to the

instructions of the client and the remote interpreter.

6.4 Summary of Findings

In conclusion, this statistical and qualitative analyses attempted to shed more light on the growing and evolving field of remote community interpreting, specifically telephone remote interpreting.

The statistical analysis was carried out on the basis of a pool of 250 interactions registered in the period of 2023 and 2024 and involved a classification of captured data into subgroups allowing a detailed investigation into parameters, such as the sector of interpreting, the employment of particular technological solutions and durations of connections.

The analysis against the sectoral distribution revealed that, based on the obtained data, the highest demand for remote interpreting services lies within the Benefits (53,6% of all the calls) and Medical (30% of all the calls) sectors. These sectors likely constitute areas where linguistic complexity demands high-quality and consistent interpreting support. On the other hand, while the demand in Social Services (4.8% of all the calls) and Police (2% of all the calls) sectors is lower, the importance of competent interpreting services cannot be underestimated as they represent interactions of sensitive nature, where LEP individuals require help.

The findings suggest that there should be a strategic focus on interpreter training, and allocation of remote interpreters primarily towards the high-demand sectors to meet the needs of LEP communities. The suggested training could include a broad spectrum of specialised vocabulary related to the respective domains and code-switching activities organised in the form of scenarios, similar to the actual interpreting interactions (for example based on those presented in the chapter on practical analysis). Particular attention should be given to day-to-day language, which generally does not form part of academic training.

The analysis against technological aspect to telephone community interpreting revealed that a tree-way conference call was the most popular method of connection (56.8% of all the calls), offering most advantages. On the other hand, the use of a handset device (1.6% of all the calls), which the conversational parties have to exchange as their turn finishes, poses most challenges, and consequently it was the least popular method.

These findings could be relevant for remote interpreters, as they should be aware of what advantages and disadvantages each method presents. Although the choice of the preferred method is not given to remote interpreters, it is advisable that they advocate for the best platform or infrastructure, which contributes to successful interactions.

Another key parameter which the analysis investigated was the source of technical problems during telephone-interpreted interactions. Out of the pool of 250 calls, the most common issues include unstable connection (breaking up), which corresponded to 6.8% of all the calls and the distance to a loudspeaker, 6.4% of all the calls). Each problem was comprehensively discussed, emphasising the importance of equipping remote interpreters with the necessary skills and strategies to address the technological challenges they encounter. As the field of telephone community interpreting continues to grow, it is crucial that interpreters are well-prepared to navigate the challenges effectively.

The qualitative analysis conducted by the author involved an in-depth investigation of ten randomly selected interactions recorded by remote interpreters. The interactions, which were anonymised to protect confidentiality, were meticulously examined to identify the what issues and challenges remote interpreters may encounter in interactions interpreted via telephonic link. The aim of the analysis was not to assess the remote interpreters' performance but to present the challenges they may face, which could consequently impact their output. Additionally, it sought to investigate the roles that remote interpreters assume to determine whether their active participation is required for successful interaction.

The investigation revealed that the most common problem revolved around a poor introduction step in which the initial information could be used by a remote interpreter to create a mental frame of the interaction. Most calls had either a basic or an incomplete introduction. As discussed previously, remote interpreters hardly ever receive any information prior to a call, and in most cases, the introduction is the sole opportunity for remote interpreters to mentally prepare and form a clear understanding of the context and nature of the upcoming interaction.

Another key factor common to most interactions was the quality of the utterances provided by both the LEP individuals and the clients. The clarity, organisation, and coherence of these utterances significantly impacted the ability of the remote interpreter to render their meaning faithfully. In many cases, issues arose due to disorganised speech, unclear instructions, or the use of complex or ambiguous language, and such situations required the interventions of the remote interpreter in order to clarify or explain the meaning. As discussed previously, the diverse nature of interventions illustrates that the role of a remote interpreter extends beyond merely interpreting language. It is through the disparate roles that the remote interpreter becomes rooted within interactions as an additional conversational party, and not merely an invisible conduit. Difficult utterances or delicate topics may also increase the cognitive burden or fatigue that remote interpreters experience during an interaction.

The author also attempted to investigate the way clients addressed the LEP individuals

within interactions to see whether the employment of specific forms could impact communication in any way, and while the recommendation and good practice say that clients should address their conversational parties (LEP individuals directly) and apply direct address, in most cases statements were addressed directly to the remote interpreter about the LEP individual, which did not, however, affect communication.

As technology is central to telephone community interpreting, the author attempted to examine whether technological issues impacted the interactions. The transcripts clearly indicate that occasional audio loss, poor sound quality, or background noise can significantly disrupt communication. Such technological problems not only hinder the interpreter's ability to accurately convey messages but also add layers of complexity to an already challenging task, potentially leading to misunderstandings, delays, and frustration for all parties involved, as evidenced in some of the interactions.

The pool of registered connections used for the statistical analysis and the ten transcripts do not provide a sufficient basis to determine the prevalence of the catalogued problems in real-life scenarios. Additionally, it is not feasible to ascertain which of these issues had the most significant impact on communication. While the author believes that complex and incoherent utterances were a primary cause of misunderstandings in the provided sample, it is not possible to generalise these findings across all telephone interpreting scenarios.

However, the findings are significant as there is a gap in research specifically addressing Polish-English telephone community interpreting, and while the investigated sample was limited, it could serve as a foundation for further research focused on pragmatic and ethical dimensions of remote community interpreting, as well as the multifaceted persona of a remote community interpreter.

7 Conclusions

Interpreting is one of the world's oldest professions, historically rooted in the interactions of peoples of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While it is accurate to say that community interpreting conducted through remote channels represents a modern embodiment of the ancient art of interpreting, as a field within Translation Studies—particularly concerning the English-Polish language pair—it has yet to receive substantial consideration or attention. Consequently, the author attempted to introduce the topic of Polish-English remote community interpreting and analyse the reality in which such profession operates to throw more light on the complexities and its multifaceted challenges. This intention was further fuelled by the absence of data or research involving Polish remote interpreters.

The first chapter introduced the real of remote community interpreting and discussed the absence of formalised frameworks for remote interpreters, specifically Polish remote interpreters, serving the Polish expatriates living and working in English-speaking countries.

In the second chapter, the author introduced the origin of the notion of remote interpreting, establishing it as a branch of Translation Studies, and presented its evolution, propelled by the development of technology and the onset of the global pandemic of Covid-19, which became a true catalyst for the implementation of remote solutions around the world. The author discussed the taxonomy of remote interpreting, which included the modality of connections as well as the environments in which this type of interpreting has been particularly successful. Further focus was placed on telephone remote interpreting and the author discussed the connection configurations or setup depending on different types of technological infrastructure. The presented analysis of the connection methods indicates that there are multiple possibilities and options, however, the choice of a particular infrastructure does not depend on a remote interpreter, yet advantages and disadvantages of each possible scenario directly affect a remote interpreter's performance. Given that each technological solution necessitates significant financial investment, the author also explored potential funding sources and the stakeholders involved. The discussion included an examination of how major players in the field of remote community interpreting benefit financially from providing these services. The analysis highlighted the various revenue models and investment strategies employed by leading organisations to support the development and maintenance of interpreting infrastructure.

The third chapter centred on the theories of pragmatic approaches to discourse and their implications for remote community interpreting. The author discussed fundamental concepts such as speech act theory, pragmatic context, conversational structure, and the theory of

politeness to provide a theoretical framework for understanding how communication functions in a realm devoid of the visual channel. The ability to analyse and interpret utterances from a pragmatic perspective is essential, as it allows remote interpreters to grasp the nuances, manage conversational dynamics, and address the implicit aspects of communication effectively in order to generate the meaning, and consequently interpret it. This theoretical foundation highlights the significance of pragmatic skills in telephone community interpreting, where the absence of visual information requires heightened sensitivity to verbal cues and context. The author provides implications of the theoretical underpinnings of the pragmatic within the scope of remote community interpreting, highlighting possible consequences of the lack of proper preparation or training.

In the fourth chapter, the author focused on the ethical considerations within the field of remote community interpreting. The discussion centred on the responsibilities and dilemmas faced by remote interpreters, and the key topics included navigating conflicts of interest, and maintaining objectivity in the absence of face-to-face interaction. A number of vital concepts was discussed to better understand the origins of challenges experienced by remote interpreters and the author attempted to refute the notion of impartiality via a selected number of arguments, namely the expectations of the client vs LEP individual and the roles of remote interpreters within interpreting interactions. The author argues that the traditional notion of impartiality within the field of interpreting may be detrimental, particularly for remote interpreters who are not merely passive facilitators but active participants in the interaction, and in no way invisible. The author attempted to defend this approach via the analysis of the roles that a remote interpreters assume (consciously or not) while interpreting to solve communication problems. Another argument used by the author is based on the cognitive processing of information and generation of meaning, and the tenets of hermeneutics. Remote interpreters have to understand the message to be able to render it in another language, yet the process of understanding is a complex cognitive activity comprised of multiple subprocesses. The author claims that this process is unique to each remote interpreter, and the generation of meaning, and a subsequent manner of interpreting is a feature of a remote interpreter, and not of the utterance or discourse.

The author discussed the compensation models available to remote interpreters in Poland and presented sample job offers, and the remuneration offered by various companies.

In the fifth chapter, the author introduced basic concepts governing telephone communication, presenting arguments for which telephone is a popular and constitutes a successful medium of communication. To better understand the intentions of telephonic interlocutors, the author suggested various motifs behind their behaviour. The exploration of

underlying reasons allowed the author to shed light on how and why conversational parties engage in certain ways during telephone interactions. This analysis provides insight into the dynamics of telephonic communication, helping to explain the actions and responses of participants. The concepts of turn-taking mechanisms and the absence of a visual channel were investigated from a theoretical perspective, with a focus on their implications for telephone community interpreting. The author explored how these fundamental aspects of communication are altered or challenged in a remote setting where non-verbal cues are missing. The investigation revealed how the lack of visual feedback can impact the flow of conversation, potentially leading to misunderstandings and communication breakdowns. Additionally, the awareness of the theoretical background of the turn-taking mechanism and its role in the management of telephonic interactions were discussed as they allow remote interpreters to navigate these conversations to facilitate effective communication between parties.

The systematic review of the theoretical concepts discussed in the preceding chapters enabled the author to delve into the practical aspects of telephone community interpreting, as presented in the sixth chapter. This investigation was conducted in two parts, and it examined real-world applications and challenges faced by interpreters in telephone-based interactions, highlighting theoretical principles applied in practice.

The first part of the practical research constituted a statistical analysis of 250 interpreted interactions registered in the period from 2023 to 2024. The key parameters, such as the sectoral analysis, the technological infrastructure and the duration of interactions were recorded and presented in a percentage value using charts and tables.

The sectoral analysis revealed that the most frequent calls involved the matters related to welfare system, specifically the Universal Credit benefit (these types of calls constituted 53.6% of all the calls). The following most frequent sector included medical calls (accounting for 30% of all interactions). These two fields are crucial, as they highlight the significant need for linguistic assistance among Polish expatriates residing in the UK.

Based on the technological analysis, the author established that the most common method of communication was a three-way conference call (accounting for 56.8% of all interactions). Based on the author's conclusion, this is the most efficient and versatile method of communication within the field of telephonic community interpreting. The least common method, however, was the employment of a handset, which would need to be passed between the conversational parties. Despite its disadvantages presented in the previous chapters, it was a preferred method of communication for certain clients, amounting to 1.6% of all the calls. The last part of the statistical research centred around the technological challenges which

affected the communication. As expected, the most frequent problem was related to the use of a loudspeaker. While it is a convenient solution, it does have multiple disadvantages, which may negatively impact the quality of connections.

In the second part of the practical research, the author analysed ten recordings of interpreted interactions conducted via telephone link. The recordings were anonymised and transcribed, and the analysis centred around a series of parameters, such as the efficiency of the introductory step, which is, generally, the sole source of information about the incoming call, the complexities and coherence of utterances, the form of address (either direct or indirect). The author attempted to investigate these parameters, looking at how particular problems or challenges affected communication between parties.

The investigation into the transcripts and a detailed examination of problematic situations and misunderstandings allowed the author to observe how remote interpreters step out of their role of an expected conduit in an attempt to mitigate the challenges they face. This approach clearly disproves the accepted standard which stipulates that an interpreter is a transparent mechanism, responsible only for the transmission of messages. The adoption of specific roles ties a remote interpreter to the interaction as an integral conversational participant, who actively shapes and influences the course of the conversation. The analysis of the transcripts enabled the author to propose solutions aimed at mitigating the challenges identified, with the goal of enhancing the process of telephonic community interpreting.

Through the theoretical chapters and practical analysis, the author aimed to pave the way for further research into Polish-English remote community interpreting, with a particular emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of the profession, and the inclusion of a remote interpreter as an active participant who shapes the interactions in various ways.

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