

## **Interpreting Questions in Courtroom Examinations: A Study of English-Mandarin Chinese Interpretations of Question Types in Remote Settings**

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Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased use of the remote option for justice, such as videoconferencing hearings and interpreting via video or audio link, has brought professional interpreters challenges in achieving accuracy. Empirical studies have found that interpreters tend to alter the pragmatic force of courtroom questions in face-to-face settings. However, little is known about professional interpreting performance in remote settings, particularly in non-European languages. The present article discusses initial findings from a more extensive experimental research project. It focuses on examining the less-investigated English-to-Mandarin Chinese interpretations of lawyer questions by professional interpreters during remote courtroom examinations. Based on the analysis of 2,350 English questions and their interpretations in Mandarin Chinese, this article found that the most prevalent question type used by counsels and interpreted by practitioners during examination-in-chief is interrogative, whereas in cross-examination the predominant question type is declarative, and these findings are consistent with the face-to-face settings. This article intends to inform future pedagogical practice and improve interprofessional understanding between interpreting service users (e.g., judicial officers and lay participants) and service providers (e.g., professional bodies, agencies, and interpreters) in remote settings. This is also intended for interpreter education providers to integrate the interpretations of lawyer questions into the pedagogical design.

Keywords: question type; courtroom examination; court interpreting; remote interpreting; professional interpreters

### **1. Introduction**

Much has been written and researched about the importance of the accuracy of translation and interpreting services provided in the institutionalized settings, such as courts and tribunals. The right to a fair representation through the free assistance of a language interpreter is an integral part of human rights as well as procedural equity, which are

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perceived as features of fairness in the judicial system (see Yi 2023b, 2023c, 2023d). Differing from the inquisitional system, questions asked by opposing counsels in the adversarial system are merely questions (see Gibbons 2003). Existing studies have revealed the significance of the questioning techniques utilized by prosecutors and defense attorneys during the examination-in-chief and cross-examinations as strategic devices to attain a favorable outcome in court, as different types of questions with varying illocutionary points and force tend to influence the listeners' perceptions of the trustworthiness of the witnesses and the credibility of their testimonies. However, regardless of its importance, it has been reported that professional interpreters in courts tend to alter the question type and consequently shift the force of counsels' questioning (see Berk-Seligson 2002, 2009, 2012, 2017; Liu 2020). Moreover, many of the existing studies are conducted in face-to-face settings, and little has been known about the interpretations of question types in virtual hearings and remote settings, particularly in non-European languages.

This study intends to bridge this gap by examining the less-investigated aspect of English-to-Mandarin Chinese interpretations of counsels' questioning during courtroom examinations in remote settings. In particular, it intends to address the following questions:

(1) Regarding the question types employed by counsels in remote settings, what is the prevalent type of question in the original examination-in-chief and the cross-examination? Is it consistent with findings from existing studies in face-to-face settings?

(2) Regarding their interpretations in Mandarin Chinese, how are English question types translated into Mandarin Chinese?

The first question intends to identify the most prevailing type of question in the remote mode of courtroom examinations, that is, examination-in-chief and cross-examination conducted in the English language, based on the frequency of occurrences of each type of question. The prevailing question type in remote settings found in our data is then compared with existing studies in face-to-face settings. The second question aims to identify any (in)consistencies between question types in English and their interpretations in Mandarin Chinese. To address these questions, this article draws on interpreting performance data

obtained from an experiment on Zoom involving 50 consenting research participants who are certified interpreters.

This article adopts the following structure. Firstly, it contextualizes the discussions by presenting an overview of the accuracy of court interpreting. To start with, this section conceptualizes the term ‘interpreting’ in general settings by distinguishing interpreting from other translational activities (e.g., translation) and highlighting the significance of accuracy as a key differentiator between non-professional and professional practice. Then it moves on to the accuracy of court interpreting by presenting different approaches to the definition of accuracy in court interpreting. Next, it concentrates on the accuracy of interpreting in remote settings by drawing upon two modalities of remote interpreting. Based on the framework, the study design and the collected data are briefly introduced, which then leads to the discussions of English question types with examples from our data and then their interpretations in Mandarin Chinese based on Xin Liu’s (2020) taxonomy of Mandarin Chinese question types in courts. The concluding section summarizes findings and limitations and makes suggestions for further studies.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Interpreting: Translational Activities in General Settings**

Traditionally, interpreting has been deemed as a branch of translation studies (Pöchhacker 2022). As an ancient human practice, interpreting predates written translation, as reflected by historical records. Differing from other translational activities, interpreting deals with verbal speech or oral utterances, whereas translation deals with written texts.

In general settings, the term ‘interpreting’ is defined as a form of communicative interaction between different language communities mediated by interpreters (see Berk-Seligson 2002, 2009, 2012, 2017). However, it was not until the twentieth century that interpreting was broadly recognized as a profession (Pöchhacker 2022). It is important to note the difference between professional and non-professional practice, as untrained bilinguals are

not bound by the same set of values and principles governing expected and accepted behavior, as codified in the professional code of conduct and ethics. For example, on the one hand, the high requirements for accuracy are reaffirmed collectively by practitioners and enforced to ensure the highest possible standard of professional practice. On the other hand, the violation of the governing professional ethics regarding accuracy may result in less favorable public perception, social recognition, and reputation of this profession.

Thus, the accuracy of interpreting is of paramount significance to the quality of professional interpreting. However, scholarly research has pinpointed the linguistically and culturally nuanced nature of accuracy, as reflected by controversies over overwhelmingly diverse understandings of accuracy inextricably embedded in socio-cultural, situational, and institutional constraints (see Berk-Seligson 2002, 2017; Jacobsen 2004, 2008; Cho 2021). As stated by Franz Pöchhacker (2022, 10), interpreting is “most succinctly performed here and now for the benefit of people who want to engage in communication across barriers of language and culture.” Moreover, the language and culture in specialized contexts also compounded the understanding of accuracy in specialized interpreting, such as courtroom interpreting. The next section discusses the different understandings of the accuracy of court interpreting.

## 2.2 Accuracy of Court Interpreting

As discussed above, due to the subtlety of language used in the courtroom and the severity of its impact on judicial outcomes, it is important to maintain a high requirement for accuracy in the professional practice of interpreter-mediated courtroom interactions. However, controversies exist over the interpretation of the meaning of accuracy in courtroom interpreting. On the one hand, some scholars in the legal professional community argue for the necessity of verbatim courtroom interpreting. On the other hand, other scholars disagree based on the unachievability of word-for-word interpretations in reality (e.g., Jacobsen 2004; Morris 2008). One justification for such infeasibility of literal rendition is that it restricts interpreters’ use of techniques that exceed the referential use of language. The other

explanation for the unrealistic word-for-word translation is the cross-linguistic structural difference at lexical and grammatical levels (see Angermeyer 2015).

From the discussions above, it is generally agreed in interpreting scholarship that the accuracy of interpreting should relay both the propositional content and the speech style (Berk-Seligson 2012; Jacobsen 2004; Liu 2020). This approach to the pragmatic accuracy of interpreting, which advocates the inclusion of pragmatic considerations while construing renditions in courtroom settings, has been widely acknowledged by many scholars in interpreting studies. For example, Bente Jacobsen (2004) argues that pragmatic considerations should be taken into account when interpreting courtroom examinations to reveal the speakers' intentions so that effective communication can be achieved between interlocutors in face-to-face interactions. In a more recent survey study of fifty Mandarin Chinese professional interpreters in remote settings (see Yi 2022, 2023a), professional interpreters are surveyed about their views, perceptions, strategies, and professional decisions related to the rendition of stylistic features. Findings have revealed that although the interpreters' prior knowledge of these stylistic features may vary, they are able to adopt appropriate strategies to render discourse markers, tone of voice, register, and other speech style features to achieve pragmalinguistic accuracy. The next section discusses the existing studies on remote interpreting and how the remote mode may influence the accuracy of interpreting.

### 2.3 Accuracy of Interpreting in Remote Settings

The above discussions mostly deal with on-site face-to-face interpreting. This section concentrates on remote interpreting, in particular the accuracy of remote interpreting. Since the COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, the use of remote interpreting has been accelerated. According to Sabine Braun (2015, 352), remote interpreting refers to “the use of communication technologies to gain access to an interpreter in another room, building, town, city or country.” As discussed above, the accuracy of interpreting cannot be independent of the setting and the mode of interpreting where the interpreting activities take place. In the context of remote interpreting, interpreters are also

expected to provide adequate interpreting by understanding the purposes of the use of these technologies and the way in which these technologies shape communication in accordance with any institutional protocols or requirements<sup>1</sup> and familiarizing themselves with the use of technology, including telephone, video and internet interpreting, and diverse recording/transmitting devices.<sup>2</sup> In addition, interpreters are also expected to act professionally at all times during the meeting. They should interpret everything being said and, when interpreting via platforms with visual input, use the ‘raise hand’ function or write a comment on the chat board while seeking clarification, ask for repetition, or report any technical issue. These recommendations are also mirrored in the telephone interpreting protocols.<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking, depending on the interpreters’ visual access to the speaker and the proceedings in courts, there are two distinctive modalities of remote interpreting: audio-only and audiovisual. Similar to telephone interpreting, audio-only remote interpreting, also known as interpreting via the audio link, describes a situation where interpreters cannot see the speakers or their surroundings. In contrast, audiovisual remote interpreting, also known as interpreting via video link, depicts a situation where interpreters can see the speakers or their environment. For example, with the use of videoconferencing technologies and a virtual courtroom platform, interpreters can see the speakers’ lip movements and the visual images of court proceedings captured from different camera angles.

A few survey-based studies (e.g., Wadensjö 1999) have compared telephone interpreting with face-to-face mode by conducting small samples of discourse analyses of interpreting performance. Findings have revealed several difficulties that interpreters encounter while interpreting with audio-only access. For example, Leong Ko (2006) studies the perceived fatigue and stress levels in relation to the attention span in prolonged sessions of

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<sup>1</sup> See AUSIT Code of Conduct (2012). [https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Code\\_Of\\_Ethics\\_Full.pdf](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Code_Of_Ethics_Full.pdf). Accessed December 22, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> See AUSIT Remote Video Interpreting Protocols (2020). [http://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Recommended\\_RVI\\_Protocols.pdf](http://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Recommended_RVI_Protocols.pdf). Accessed December 22, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> See AUSIT Telephone Interpreting Protocols (2020). [https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AUSIT\\_Telephone\\_Interpreting\\_Protocols.pdf](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AUSIT_Telephone_Interpreting_Protocols.pdf). Accessed December 22, 2023.

telephone interpreting over four weeks. The same study also indicates improved performance related to the familiarity and experience of interpreting via telephone. With the limitations of telephone interpreting in mind, remote video interpreting has the added benefit of making some visual cues available to the parties. Existing research (e.g., Braun 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) has shown that performance improves with the addition of visual input. However, other studies, such as Robert Skinner, Jemina Napier, and Sabine Braun (2018), pinpoint the undecided impact of lack of presence on the accuracy of interpretations in different modalities, as discrepancies exist between subjective ratings of performance and actual interpreting performance, weighted against the benefits of practice and experience.

Apart from the benefits and shortcomings of audio-only and audiovisual remote interpreting, studies also reveal no significant difference between these two conditions of visual access. Ilan Roziner and Miriam Shlesinger (2010) reveal no significant differences between the objective assessments and subjective assessments of the accuracy of two conditions of remote interpreting performed by 36 conference interpreters working in official European languages in remote settings.

To sum up, a consensus has not been reached on which condition of remote interpreting is more favorable. Those who endorse the presence of visual cues in remote interpreting argue that the optimal conditions in which the existing studies on remote interpreting are conducted do not simulate working conditions in domestic legal settings. They contend that domestic settings are less likely to enable such working conditions. In domestic settings such as courts, interpreters work alone and operate mostly in dialogic or monologic settings. The complexity of the dialogic nature of courtroom interactions challenges the interpreters' ability to render the content accurately and the manner of utterances, compounded by the absence of visual cues in the remote options. Having presented the context, the next section concentrates on questions in courtroom examinations.

### **3. Taxonomy of English Questions in Courtroom Examinations**

This section focuses on questions in courtroom examinations. The aim of this section is to provide a guiding framework for further analyses of English questions in our interpreting data and to identify any differences or (in)consistencies between the original question types and their interpretations in remote settings. The findings are also compared with findings from existing studies in face-to-face settings. To conceptualize our discussion, it is crucial to comprehend (1) what is the definition of the term ‘question’ in courtroom examinations and (2) how different types of questions are used by counsels in courtroom examinations.

The term ‘question’ is defined as a particular query assigned to lawyers’ turns in the adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, 289–327). In reality, as claimed by many scholars in forensic linguistics, the questions asked in court proceedings are not merely questions, as they are often used as strategic devices to attain a favorable version of judicial outcome (see O’Barr 2014).

There are many approaches to categorizing courtroom questions. One approach is to look at the situation in which the questions are asked. The questions a witness is asked may vary according to the type of courtroom examination (see Kebbell, Deprez, and Wagstaff 2003). The examination-in-chief, also known as direct examination, describes a court process in which the questioning of a witness is initiated by the witness’s lawyer to develop their legal argument, which is supposedly relatively open-ended (see Evans 1995; Stone 1995). In contrast, the cross-examination follows the examination-in-chief in which the formal interrogation of a witness is conducted by the opposing party to challenge or extend testimony already given. In terms of the pragmatic force of questioning, questions asked by examiner-in-chief are generally considered to be less coercive than those asked by cross-examiner in Mandarin interpreter-mediated courtroom encounters (see Liu 2020). Based on Liu (2020), the taxonomy of question types in courtroom examinations is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Taxonomy of English questions based on Liu (2020)

Type	Sub-category
Interrogatives	Modal interrogatives
	Wh- interrogatives
	Forced choice interrogatives
	Polar interrogatives
Imperatives	Imperatives with politeness markers
	Imperatives without politeness markers
Declaratives	Positive or negative declaratives
	Reported speech declaratives
	Positive declaratives rising intonation
	Negative declaratives rising intonation
	Positive declaratives with positive ratification tag
	Positive declaratives with negative ratification tag
	Positive declaratives with positive tag
	Positive declaratives with negative tag
	Negative declaratives with positive tag
'I put it to you' declarative	

Table 1 shows that the interrogative is subdivided into four types of questions: modal interrogatives, Wh- interrogatives, forced choice interrogatives, and polar interrogatives. According to Liu's (2020) taxonomy, modal interrogatives refer to interrogative questions that involve the use of modal verbs. In linguistics, a modal verb is a type of verb that contextually indicates a modality, such as a likelihood, ability, permission, request, capacity, suggestion, order, obligation, or advice. The Wh- interrogatives are interrogative questions involving the use of the words 'when,' 'where,' 'what,' 'why,' 'who,' and 'how.' The forced choice interrogatives, also known as closed option questions, refer to the format for question responses that require respondents to provide an answer, usually yes or no, in courtroom interrogation. The intention of this questioning technique is to force respondents to make judgments about each response option and avoid any ambiguity possible in the argument developed by one counsel against the opposing party. The polar interrogatives refer to the type of question that expects an affirmative-negative response. The distinction between a forced choice and a polar interrogative question is the use of the clear formula 'did you or did you

not' in the questioning. For example, a polar interrogative question usually does not explicate the 'did you not' part of the question. Instead, it may only reveal the 'did you' part of the question.

The other type of question is imperative. Depending on the presence of politeness markers, it can be subdivided into the imperatives with politeness markers and the imperatives without politeness markers. In linguistics, the politeness marker refers to the expressions added to an utterance to reveal deference or a request for cooperation. The most commonly used examples of politeness markers are 'please' and 'if you wouldn't mind.' In the courtroom discourse, imperatives, with or without politeness, are often deemed a linguistic device to instruct witnesses to cooperate in legal proceedings.

Another type of question is the declaratives. In linguistics, the declarative refers to a sentence that makes a statement. A statement is usually the expression of a fact or an opinion, which can be either positive or negative. In Liu's (2020) data, the declaratives are further divided into ten sub-types: positive or negative declaratives, reported speech declaratives, positive declaratives with rising intonation, negative declaratives with rising intonation, positive declaratives with positive ratification tag, positive declaratives with negative ratification tag, positive declaratives with positive tag, positive declaratives with negative tag, negative declaratives with positive tag, and the 'I put it to you' declarative. From the sub-types above, we organize these sub-types of declarative questions into declaratives with intonations, declaratives with tags, reported speech declaratives, and 'I put it to you' declaratives. The detailed discussions of each sub-type are presented in later sections, together with the analysis of examples from our interpreting data.

#### **4. The Study**

This article presents initial findings from a larger experimental research project in which 50 consenting professional interpreters participated remotely on the videoconferencing platform Zoom. The language combination is English and Mandarin. The script and video of a simulated trial used for the experiment are part of a research project supported by the

Australian Research Council. The project has received Ethics Approval from UNSW (HC17546). The script and video used in this project have received permission from the chief investigators. The simulated trial features a Chinese-speaking suspect who is accused of selling drugs in a common law courtroom. The original questions are asked in English. Following the completion of questions and responses from the defendant, the cross-examination by the crown prosecutor takes place. The participants interpret English questions into Mandarin Chinese. The audio recordings of courtroom examinations in English and their interpretations in Mandarin Chinese are first transcribed using a speech-to-text voice recognition platform iflytek, and then edited and cross-checked by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of transcription data.

## **5. The Data**

Our data comprise 4,615 questions in total, including 2,350 original questions asked in English and 2,265 interpreted questions in Mandarin Chinese. It is important to note the differences regarding the type of courtroom examinations since the questions asked may vary in their illocutionary force and point in accordance with the corresponding type of courtroom examination. As mentioned by Liu (2020), the intent of the examination-in-chief stage is to adduce evidence from the questioning of a witness by the party that calls such witness in a trial, whereas the intent of cross-examination is to interrogate a witness called by the opposing party, which is preceded by the examination-in-chief and followed by a redirect. The illocutionary force and point of questions in examination-in-chief and cross-examination are different.

By the type of courtroom examinations in which these questions occur, our data comprise 1,250 English and 1,225 Mandarin interpretations in the cross-examination and 1,100 English and 1,034 Mandarin interpretations in the examination-in-chief, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Questions in total

Questions	English	Mandarin
Examination-in-chief	1,250	1,225
Cross-examination	1,100	1,034
Total	2,350	2,265

The following section discusses the question types in English and Mandarin Chinese based on the taxonomy of question types provided by Liu (2020).

## 6. Results and Discussions

### 6.1 Question Types in English

As discussed earlier, it is unveiled that the type of question was related to the type of examination. The distributions of question types in the examination-in-chief and the cross-examination with their occurrences are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Question types in English

Type	Sub-category	Examination-in-chief	Cross-examination
Interrogatives (1550)	Modal interrogatives	100	100
	Wh- interrogatives	750	250
	Forced choice interrogatives	0	0
	Polar interrogatives	300	50
Imperatives (50)	Imperatives with politeness markers	50	0
	Imperatives without politeness markers	0	0
Declaratives (700)	Positive or negative declaratives	0	0
	Reported speech declaratives	0	100
	Positive declaratives rising intonation	0	50
	Negative declaratives rising intonation	0	50
	Positive declaratives with positive ratification tag	50	50
	Positive declaratives with negative ratification tag	0	0
	Positive declaratives with positive tag	0	0
	Positive declaratives with negative tag	0	150

	Negative declaratives with positive tag	0	100
	'I put it to you' declarative	0	200
Total	2,350	1,250	1,100

In table 3, among a total of 2,350 questions asked in the English language in court proceedings, by the type of questions, questions are predominantly interrogatives, with 1,550 (65.96%), followed by declaratives, with 700 (29.79%), and imperatives, with 50 (4.25%). It is also shown that, by the type of examination, questions are primarily related to the examination-in-chief, as corroborated by the quantitative data that 1,250 questions are asked during the examination-in-chief, and 1,100 questions are asked in the cross-examination. The examples of question types are shown in table 4.

Table 4. English question types

Type	Sub-category	Example from our data (exactly as in our data)
Interrogatives	Modal interrogatives	Can you indicate to the court why did you put them into 11 bags?
	Wh- interrogatives	And how much did you earn for the security job?
	Forced choice interrogatives	Did you or did you not use the money you mom gave you?
	Polar interrogatives	Mr. Han, is that true that you used the Glucodin to cut down the drugs so you can sell them?
Imperatives	Imperatives with politeness markers	Please tell the Court your full name, your age and your address.
	Imperatives without politeness markers	Just answer the question.
Declaratives	Positive or negative declaratives	So \$20 per hour.
	Reported speech declaratives	Mr. Han, I asked you to explain what happened to the \$20,000 you alleged your mom gave you.
	Positive declaratives rising intonation	So you took all of them in one go?
	Negative declaratives rising intonation	You're not sure about that?
	Positive declaratives with positive	Now Mr. Han, you got an apprenticeship in a

	ratification tag	panel beating company. Is that correct?
	Positive declaratives with negative ratification tag	You told the Court you spent all of the money. Didn't you?
	Positive declaratives with positive tag	You are lying about it, are you?
	Positive declaratives with negative tag	You had separated into small bags were drugs that you were selling, weren't they?
	Negative declaratives with positive tag	There was no \$20,000 that you alleged your mom gave you, was there?
	'I put it to you' declarative	I put it to you that the money was from selling the drugs.

Table 4 shows that interrogative questions are the most common type of question in courtroom examinations, predominantly in examination-in-chief. As the purpose of the direct examination is to solicit evidence from the witness, the illocutionary force of interrogative questions is less coercive as compared to questions asked in the cross-examination. In comparison, the prevailing type of question in the cross-examination is the declarative questions, as the intent of declarative questions is to interrogate the same witness by the opposing counsel to identify any inconsistencies or inaccuracies regarding their previous testimonies. The level of control or coerciveness differs in various types of questions.

Table 4 also shows two question forms: one is the 'I put it to you' declarative, and the other is the reported speech declarative. The term 'I put it to you' declarative refers to the statements in the questions prefaced by the 'I put it to you' clause. The phrase 'I put it to you' is originally a legal formula used by counsels in cross-examination to present a version of facts that contradicts what has been proposed by the witness being examined and to pre-empt what will be presented in his/her case by his/her own witnesses. By using this questioning technique, cross-examiners in the courtroom conduct an obligation to put the conflicting argument to their opposing side for comment. The use of the 'I put it to you' questioning technique is considered a high-power interrogation, which means that the intention of the questioner is not expecting an answer other than what has been conceived in the questioner's mind. This type of interrogative question is a leading question in nature and, therefore, more apparent in the cross-examination utterances. The propositional content of such questions is

primarily contentious and often placed at the end of a question-and-answer sequence. By employing this questioning technique, although not explicitly revealed, the implicature of this question type is that the witness was not being truthful or telling the whole truth in front of the court.

On the other hand, the term ‘reported speech declaratives’ describes the instance when the lawyer has to repeat a question and does so in reported or indirect speech. In linguistics, the term ‘reported speech,’ also known as ‘indirect speech,’ refers to a grammatical mechanism for reporting the content of another utterance without directly quoting it. In our data, the high frequency of occurrences related to this type of question is more closely associated with the propositional content of the question than with the form of the question. The type of question is deemed as a highly coercive type of question that manifests an explicit exhibition of power on the part of the lawyer, as the witness is reminded that s/he is only permitted to speak in response to specific questions and reprimanded for not answering relevantly. The next section examines how question types are interpreted in Mandarin Chinese.

## 6.2 Question Types in Mandarin Chinese

In the Mandarin Chinese interpretations of questions, the three main question types are identified: imperative, declarative, and interrogative. The interpretations of question types in Mandarin Chinese and examples from our data are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Question types in Mandarin Chinese based on Liu (2020)

Type	Sub-type	Examples from the interpreted data (exactly as in our data)
Imperative	Imperative with politeness markers	请您告诉法庭您的全名、年龄和住址。 ( <i>qǐng nín gào sù fǎ tíng nín de quán míng, nián líng hé zhù zhǐ</i> ) Please tell the Court your full name, age and address.
Declarative	Declarative with <i>a</i>	这是真的啊！你得信我啊！ ( <i>zhè shì zhēn de a ! nǐ de xìn wǒ a !</i> ) That’s true! You got to believe me!

	Declarative	所以你一次都吸完了。 ( <i>suǒ yī nǐ yī cì dōu xī wán le.</i> ) So you took them in one go.
	Declarative with yes tag	每小时二十澳元，是这样[吗]？ ( <i>měi xiǎo shí èr shí ào yuán, shì zhè yàng [ ma ]?</i> ) \$20 per hour, is that right [interrogative particle]?
	Declarative with no tag	你说你妈妈给你的[那个]两万块，难道不是[吗]？ ( <i>nǐ shuō nǐ mā mā gěi nǐ de [ nà gè ] liǎng wàn kuài, nán dào bù shì [ ma ]?</i> ) You said you mom gave that [measure word] \$20,000, didn't you [interrogative particle]?
	Declarative with affirmative tag	你是在撒谎，对不对？ ( <i>nǐ shì zài sā huǎng, duì bù duì?</i> ) You are lying about it, are you?
	Declarative with negative tag	你没有说实话，不对吗？ ( <i>nǐ méi yǒu shuō shí huà, bù duì ma?</i> ) You are not being truthful, aren't you?
	Reported speech	警察说在你家厨房水槽下发现了一包葡萄糖片。 ( <i>jǐng chá shuō zài nǐ jiā chú fáng shuǐ cáo xià fā xiàn le yī bāo pú táo táng piàn.</i> ) The Police found a Glucodin under your kitchen sink.
Interrogative	Wh- with <i>ne</i>	你是什么时候离开你的学徒工作[的][呢]？ ( <i>nǐ shì shén me shí hòu lí kāi nǐ de xué tú gōng zuò [ de ][ ne ]?</i> ) When did you leave your apprenticeship [auxiliary word] [interrogative particle]?
	Yes/no with <i>ba</i>	你说是朋友介绍的是[吧]？ ( <i>nǐ shuō shì péng yǒu jiè shào de shì [ ba ]?</i> ) You said your friend introduced you, right [interrogative particle]?
	Yes/no with <i>ma</i>	你是真的想让我们相信你说的话[吗]？ ( <i>nǐ shì zhēn de xiǎng ràng wǒ men xiāng xìn nǐ shuō de huà [ ma ]?</i> ) You seriously expect us to believe that?

Table 5 shows three types of court questions: imperative, declarative, and interrogative. It should be noted, however, that due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the English language and the Chinese language, the sub-categories of each type of question in Chinese might differ from the taxonomy of question types in English previously described in

this chapter. According to the differences between the Chinese language and the English language, the Chinese language is a language that isolates or analytic language, which means that it constructs sentences with function words and word order instead of using tenses and singulars or plurals. In contrast, the English language is an inflectional or synthetic language, which means that its sentences are formed according to the grammatical rules through the change of forms and inflections that conform to the rules prescribed by the grammar. As far as syntactic structure is concerned, the main feature of the Chinese language is parataxis, or loosely connected syntax without conjunctions, coordinates, or words indicating subordination, which is the main characteristic of Chinese syntax.

In the spoken Chinese language, the syntactic structure is linked to the shape of bamboo, with a short, simple chunk of meaning placed to the next chunk, following a more linear progression. Nevertheless, in the English language, the syntactic structure of a complex sentence is primarily hypotaxis, with the grammatical arrangement of two or more functionally related but different but nevertheless relevant and significant constructs in a number of contexts. In addition to syntactic differences, semantic differences are also present in the language. Taking Chinese, for example, there is an implicit cohesion that is achieved through the use of semantic patterns, whereas the morphological pattern is achieved through the use of explicit patterns. It may be challenging for professional interpreters to translate specialized discourse with complex syntactic and semantic structures into pragmatic equivalents in interpreter-mediated courtroom interactions. According to the examples of the interpreted Chinese questions, it is evident that interpreters frequently add interrogative particles to the Chinese language to achieve a similar pragmatic effect for both declarative and interrogative questions interpreted with or without tags.

It is also noteworthy that, similar to question types in English, declarative questions with a ratification tag are considered as leading questions that, to some extent, coerce the interrogator to convey the propositional content in the form of a statement that solicits a confirmed response from the person who is being questioned through a ratification tag attached to the statement.

To sum up, although the three main question types in Mandarin Chinese match those in English, differences exist regarding how the interrogative and declarative tones are expressed in Mandarin Chinese. It is revealed that Mandarin Chinese interrogative questions are mainly expressed in association with the use of interrogative particles, such as *ne*, *ba*, and *ma*, whereas in Mandarin Chinese declarative questions, the same particles are used in tags attached to declarative statements, and the particle *a* is used to indicate a strong emotion. Therefore, based on the examples from our interpreting data, when interpreting question types remotely, professional interpreters should pay attention to the use of Mandarin Chinese particles, as the nuanced use of particles may shift the illocutionary force of original questions and alter the carefully chosen question types employed by counsels.

## 7. Conclusion

The article has examined question types in English asked by counsels in remote settings and their interpretations by professional interpreters in Mandarin Chinese. The results of this study have revealed three commonly used question types in the remote settings of courtroom examinations: imperative, interrogative, and declarative, which is consistent with question types in face-to-face settings (see Liu 2020). On the one hand, regarding the English question types used by counsels, it is found that (1) in the examination-in-chief, the interrogative question is a prevailing choice for examiner-in-chief, as it invites an open statement that positions the lawyer in control of the flow of the information, and (2) in the cross-examination, the declarative with or without tags is a preferred option for cross-examiners to interrogate witnesses. These findings corroborate previous studies in face-to-face settings. On the other hand, regarding how questions are interpreted into Mandarin Chinese, our data also reveal that interlingual differences exist, as evidenced by the use of interrogative particles (e.g., *ne*, *ba*, and *ma*), either directly attached to interrogative questions or appearing in tags attached to declarative questions, which also corroborates findings from existing studies in face-to-face settings (see Shi 2011, 2018). It is crucial for professional interpreters to be mindful of their interlingual choices regarding the subtlety of

particles in their interpretations of question types, particularly in remote settings, as their professional decisions may have further implications for the illocutionary force of counsels' questioning and further evaluations of the credibility of the witnesses' testimonies.

However, this article only draws on the initial sample analysis of a larger experimental research project. The scope of analyses can be further extended with more quantitative statistical analysis of our interpreting data, which will become available later. Nevertheless, this article intends to inform future pedagogical practice and improve interprofessional understanding between interpreting service users (e.g., judicial officers and lay participants) and service providers (e.g., professional bodies, agencies, and interpreters) in remote settings.

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