Becoming an interpreter through experience: The perceptions of the non-professional public service interpreters in Turkey[1]

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Abstract

Public service interpreting is a type of interpreting that eliminates the language barrier between migrants/refugees and officials of the host country's public institutions. In many countries, it is still an activity performed by friends, family members or neighbors of the minority-language speaker, namely untrained individuals (Wadensjö, 2009), and in many other countries, it is an activity, for which training might be optional, and the remuneration is rather lower than that for conference interpreting (Hale, 2015:66), which are the major factors hindering the professionalization. Likewise, in Turkey, especially in the face of the increased refugee population in recent years, mostly individuals who speak the relevant languages but who have not received interpreter training provide interpreting services in institutions. In this regard, this study addresses the public service interpreters working at the units of the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), one of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Turkey that provides a wide-scale service to refugees. More specifically, the practitioners' perceptions regarding their interpreting experiences will be discussed based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Moreover, the data from the institutional document and the interviews conducted with the institution officials will be used as supplementary data to the discussion. Based on the available data, it can be said the practitioners' perceptions regarding their interpreting experiences are generally centered around the issues of exercise of restricted agency and awareness of institutional and professional ethics, which also manifest their alignment with the institutional identity and role projected for them.

Keywords: Non-professional interpreters, restricted agency, professional ethics, institutional identity

Türkiye'de profesyonel olmayan toplum çevirmenlerinin mesleki algıları

Öz

Toplum çevirmenliği en genel anlamıyla göçmenler/mülteciler ve ev sahibi ülkenin kamu kurumlarındaki görevliler arasında dil engelini ortadan kaldırmaya yarayan bir çeviri türüdür. Toplum çevirmenliği birçok ülkede, ilgili dilleri konuşabilen ancak çeviri eğitimi almamış bireylerce, çoğunlukla da yakın çevreden tanıdıklar veya aile bireylerince, gönüllü olarak yürütülen bir faaliyettir (Wadensjö, 2009). Yine birçok ülkede, toplum çevirmenleri için eğitim zorunlu olmayıp tercümanlara ödenen ücret konferans tercümanlarına ödenen ücretten oldukça düşüktür

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(Hale, 2015:66). Bütün bu etkenler ise toplum çevirmenliğinin meslekleşmesi önündeki temel engellerdir. Benzer şekilde, Türkiye'de de, özellikle son yıllarda artan mülteci nüfusu karşısında, çoğunlukla ilgili dilleri konuşan ancak çeviri eğitimi almamış bireyler kurumlarda tercümanlık hizmeti vermektedirler. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Türkiye'de göçmenler ve mültecilere yönelik geniş çaplı hizmetler sunan sivil toplum kuruluşlarından biri olan Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği'nin (SGDD-ASAM) farklı birimlerinde hizmet veren toplum çevirmenlerini ele almaktadır. Bu doğrultuda tercümanların çeviri eylemlerine yönelik görüşleri yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar ve anketlerle toplanan verilere dayanarak tartışılacaktır. Ayrıca, tercümanlara yönelik kurumsal davranış ilkeleri rehberi ve kurum yetkilileri ile gerçekleştirilen görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler tartışmada ek veri kaynakları olarak kullanılacaktır. Mevcut veriler ışığında tercümanların çeviri eylemlerine ilişkin görüşlerinin genel olarak sınırlı eylemlilik ve kurumsal ve mesleki etik ilkelere yönelik farkındalık konuları çevresinde şekillendiği ileri sürülebilir. Öne çıkan bu durumlar, tercümanların kendileri için belirlenen kurumsal kimlik ve rolle uyumlarına da işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Toplum çevirmenleri, sınırlı eylemlilik, mesleki etik, kurumsal kimlik

Introduction

Through migration, different cultural groups meet in the same space, and migrants/refugees generally get service in the language of the country where they live. At this point, public service interpreting plays a crucial role, since it establishes the linguistic link during the provision of various services to migrants/refugees, and it makes them heard in the society in which they live until they acquire the skills to communicate fluently in the host country's language. Public service interpreting enables official staff and service users to make sense of each other's talk in various public institutions such as healthcare facilities, police stations, schools and other similar service settings (Wadensjö, 1998:33). It is a form of mediation that facilitates communication between public service providers and service users, namely migrants or refugees, who need assistance in participating in interactions.

In many countries, standardized professional practices for public service interpreting are not yet available. It is mostly practiced by individuals belonging to the same ethnic minority or culture as migrants or refugees (Pöchhacker, 2004:174). These individuals could even be friends or family members of migrants/refugees themselves, and it is assumed that communicating in two languages automatically makes them interpreters (Hale, 2015: 68). Overall, it can be said it is an occupation that individuals who are not trained in the interpreting field perform in return for low remuneration (Wadensjö, 2009; Hale, 2015).

Regarding the professional development of public service interpreting, it can be said that certain steps towards institutionalization, such as training courses, certification examinations and professional associations, have been taken in the countries with a long history of migration, such as Canada, Australia and Sweden, yet in many others with a recent history of migration, such as Italy and Spain, the profession is less institutionalized (Hale, 2015:67). In the most general sense, the lack of an established system guaranteeing professional standards, the lack of training opportunities as well as the low level of awareness of the status and title of interpreters are the factors that impede the professionalization and institutionalization of public service interpreting (Corsellis, 2008:56-57). When the mentioned factors are combined with the lack of adequate resources allotted for interpreting

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services within immigration policies of most countries, institutions are forced to take *ad hoc* steps in order to meet the demands for public service interpreters (Corsellis, 2008:57).

Turkey is also one of the countries that has only recently faced a large flow of refugees. Since 2011, when the Syrian civil war broke out, Turkey has been hosting more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees. Although the two countries are located in the same geography, and the two societies share common cultural values, the most prominent difference between them is the language they speak, and the language barrier needs to be eliminated in order for refugees to be integrated into the society they live in. Although Syrian refugees may take certain steps to learn Turkish (Dillioğlu, 2015; Bölükbaş, 2016; Biçer, 2017), in the short term it does not seem possible for such a large population to learn the language sufficiently to meet their communication needs in all areas of the social life. Moreover, the great difference between Turkish and Arabic languages, the insufficiency of language courses and the lack of information on how to access the available courses and more importantly the necessity to earn a living or to care for children prevent many refugees from attending language learning activities (Dursun, 2018; Yücel *et al.*, 2018:41). Under the circumstances, the need for interpreters increases for refugees to have access to services in public institutions.

In Turkey, where established professional standards for public service interpreting are not available and vocational training opportunities for interpreters are scarce, certain steps have been taken for the increased interpreting needs of refugees in recent years. For instance, in healthcare institutions in the provinces with the highest refugee population, bilingual individuals under the name of "patient guides" have been employed as part of an EU-funded project. Moreover, in response to the increasing needs, a large number of interpreters have also started to serve in courthouses and police units as well as in refugee associations. Although the working conditions of these practitioners are different, their common point is that they are individuals who can communicate in the relevant languages and who are generally not trained in the interpreting field. In other words, they become "interpreters" through the experience they gain while removing the communication barrier between refugees and officials in public institutions. In this regard, this descriptive study addresses the non-professional practitioners working at various units of the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), one of the non-governmental organizations (hereinafter NGO) serving as a refugee association in Turkey. More specifically, it is aimed to examine how the practitioners, who learn interpreting on-the-job, perceive their interpreting experiences and how they view their agency in interpreting situations.

1. Issues in public service interpreting and literature review

The application of sociological models and empirical methods to translation and interpreting practices has highlighted the concept of agency, and today translators and interpreters are viewed as social actors with their own history, perceptions and attitudes towards the profession. The social roles of the agents are manifested along their practices in the contexts which surround them and which are also influenced by their practices (Flynn and Gambier, 2011:94). The emphasis on translators and interpreters as social actors was also laid by Chesterman (2006, 2009). While Dam and Zethsen (2009) drew attention to the gap in the research on translators and interpreters as a social and professional group, Chesterman (2009) suggested opening up a new subfield, mentioning the name "TranslaTOR Studies", and he proposed the issues of translators' status and image, their rates of pay, working conditions, attitude towards their work as the topics that could be covered under the strand of the sociology of translators (Chesterman, 2009:16).

As for the concept of agency, Koskinen and Kinnunen (2010) suggest that agency involves several main issues, which are willingness, ability, status and acting. "Willingness" is related to human beings' intentionality and reflectivity, and "ability" refers to agents' choices in social contexts and the constraints imposed upon them therein. Another key issue, "status", implies liability and answerability, and lastly, "acting" brings along having an influence on the social world. All the mentioned issues constitute agency as a "product of actions" (Koskinen and Kinnunen, 2010:7). Interpreters who work in different social settings such as courts, police stations, healthcare institutions among others perform complex tasks between languages and cultures by putting their agency into practice. The importance of the role of interpreters is revealed while they are performing multifaceted tasks from addressing cultural and linguistic gaps to providing explanations for terms and concepts, from expressing feelings to controlling communication flow. Accordingly, the discussions over the agency of public service interpreters generally center around the issues of perceptions, roles and task boundaries of the agents as well as the ethical concerns in interpreting assignments.

In general, the complexity of public service interpreters' tasks and activities is ignored, and as Tipton (2014) suggests, interpreters are mostly expected to limit their activities to only interpreting as a code-switcher. Their function is traditionally reduced to that of a machine that provides literal renditions between two languages (Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp, 1986:152). However, the neutrality of interpreters as well as the machine metaphor and the conduit role traditionally attributed to them have been increasingly questioned, and the agency of interpreters in various professional settings has been widely highlighted. In this sense, acknowledging that interpreters are not invisible, rather they are active participants in communication processes, Roy (1993) describes interpreters as "advocates", "bi-cultural experts", "communication facilitators" and "helpers". In a similar vein, in his study on the interpreters in convention refugee hearings, Barsky (1996) describes interpreters as "intercultural agents" and draws attention to the different tasks that interpreters have to undertake, such as elaborating on refugees' statements, adding previously-learned details and intervening to reduce damages stemming from cultural misunderstandings. Mikkelson (1998) also claims that court interpreters who have received sufficient training and gained the expertise necessary for the exercise of discretionary power should not be regarded as a translation machine.

Angelelli (2004a), having adopted an exploratory and ethnographic approach to medical interpreting, claims that communicative goals, institutional constraints and the social context influence the volume of interpreters' visibility as well as their interpreting strategies. She proposes various metaphors to describe the roles of interpreters such as "interpreters as detectives", solving various problems in communication processes based on their past experiences; "interpreters as multi-purpose bridges", addressing cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues; "interpreters as diamond connoisseurs", making a distinction between relevant pieces of information and irrelevant ones during interpreting; "interpreters as miners", eliciting information from patients (Angelelli, 2004a:129-131). Leanza (2005) also puts forth four different roles for interpreters working in the healthcare domain, which are "system agent", transferring the dominant discourse; "integration agent", adopting an in-between position outside interpreting tasks; "community agent", cognizant of the minority norms and values; and "linguistic agent", interfering neutrally only in linguistic matters. Apart from developing the role typology, Leanza (2005) also suggests that interpreters as well as healthcare providers be given training on the roles of interpreters so that interpreters can internalize the ethical and pragmatic dimensions of various roles, which will in turn help to increase their autonomy and official status (pp. 187-8).

For court interpreters, Hale (2008) discusses the roles of "advocate for the minority language speaker", "advocate for the institution or the service provider", "gatekeeper", "facilitator of communication" and "faithful renderer of others' utterances", and objecting to treating interpreters as "mindless machines", she favors the role of "faithful renderer of others' utterances" (Hale, 2008:119). The active role of interpreters is also highlighted by Rudvin and Tomassini (2008) in their study on the language mediators working in education and health sectors in Italy. Many mediators, having their own experiences of migration, view the nature of their task as "assistance" to other migrants, and they are actively engaged in resolving conflicts. Due to the gaps between professional codes of ethics, institutional codes of ethics and their challenging tasks, mediators need to "employ an *ad-hoc* code of ethics" in line with their training background, the needs of service users and of institutions (Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008:264). Along the same line, Souza (2016) draws attention to healthcare interpreters' work of bridging cultures between service providers and patients and suggests that healthcare interpreters indeed act as intercultural mediators and accordingly take on various roles such as "welcomers", "bilingual professionals", "community agents", "cultural informants" and "educators".

In Turkey, the agency of public service interpreters has also been addressed in several studies. In an MA thesis by Öztürk (2015) on medical interpreting services in the context of health tourism, it has been found that the interpreters' task boundaries are very flexible, and they might act as "patient coordinator" while easing the tension of patients, or they might take on the role of "buffer" while building trust between doctors and patients. It is also suggested that the interpreters almost take on the role of a medical expert while both fulfilling the expectations of their employers and taking initiatives in their own discretion. Another contribution in the area of healthcare interpreting in Turkey is the MA thesis by Şener (2017). In the study, in which the roles of healthcare interpreters are examined at micro and macro levels, it has been found that the interpreters adopt various roles apart from interpreting, a situation which might create problems in terms of ethical issues and the quality of service. Şener (2017) suggests that some of the factors that might lead to violations of ethical principles are empathy, omissions of certain elements including medical information and the responsibility of the interpreters to persuade patients among others. The PhD research conducted by Duman (2018) also addresses the healthcare interpreters' subjectivity and professional experience. In the study, it has been revealed that the interpreters act in line with their subjective judgments in fulfilling their responsibilities and meeting the expectations regarding patient satisfaction. Duman (2018) suggests that the principle of impartiality has not been internalized in the professional sense as the interpreters share examples of situations in which they are on the patient's side and that the close relationship with patients leads to a less objective and less impartial position for the interpreters, which, hints at the intercultural mediation approach adopted in Southern Europe and Francophone regions.

Another significant issue in public service interpreting is the ethical concerns, an issue closely related to the above-mentioned role and task boundaries of interpreters. The increasing need for interpreters in response to flows of migrants and the language access policies for local communities and thereby the emergence of practitioners who are untrained and who do not have ethical and professional awareness have made ethical issues even more important for the interpreting profession (Rudvin, 2007; Ozolins, 2010). In the face of the scarcity of standard professional guidelines, a range of expectations from interpreters, such as solving linguistic problems, resolving cultural misunderstandings, explaining concepts or addressing refugee needs, might lead to wide variations in interpreters' performances. Under the circumstances, many interpreters might have to make decisions intuitively based on their training backgrounds, emotional expectations, and their personal and

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cultural values (Bancroft, 2015:225). In such a case, a blurred picture emerges, in which interpreters might modify messages, express their own opinions or engage in dialogues out of interpreting tasks and thus violate professional ethical standards (Merlini, 2009).

Codes of ethics are the guiding elements that enable practitioners of a profession to display ethical behavior against the interests of service users, the profession and themselves (Hale, 2007:103). Ethical principles may prevent interpreters from making arbitrary decisions and thus can protect them from adverse consequences in job performances (Solow, 1981, cited in Hale, 2007:104). It has also been highlighted that codes of ethics are of paramount importance for the professionalization of public service interpreting (Tseng, 1992; Gentile *et al.*, 1996; Roberts, 1997). Such codes increase interpreters' professional status, protect service users' interests and thus bring along public trust in interpreters. In this regard, Ozolins (2015) states

> [i]ssues of ethics have always attended interpreting, as practitioners will often be privy to complex or highly privileged information – whether related to national security, or personal trauma or difficulty, or sensitive business negotiations. Trust in those doing the interpreting is paramount for participants who lack command of the other language, and recognition of ethical practice is fundamental to recognition as a profession. (p. 319)

Ethical codes and standards have generally been laid down by professional associations, commercial or non-profit interpreting services (Bancroft, 2005). The most important responsibilities of interpreters towards the parties of conversations are acknowledged as accuracy, impartiality and confidentiality (Bancroft, 2005; Hale, 2007). In terms of accuracy, interpreters' faithfulness to the original message is highlighted in the codes examined by Hale (2007:109). Accordingly, it is generally prescribed that such modifications as additions and omissions can be made to render the intended meaning and that vulgar words, hedges, repetitions and style must be preserved. Within the context of impartiality, interpreters, who cannot be held accountable for messages they convey, are required to control subjectivity by not reflecting their own emotions, opinions, beliefs or values during interpreting, and by not changing content of vulgar and abusive statements (Hale, 2007:121). In that sense, the principle of impartiality may help interpreters to convey messages more faithfully and to build up emotional stamina in traumatic interpreting situations.

In the literature, several studies addressing the perspectives of the parties to interpreting processes show that interpreters meet the requirements projected for them in ethical codes, such as neutrality (Mesa, 2000); confidentiality, impartiality and accuracy (Chesher *et al.*, 2003); loyalty to both parties, adequacy and transparency (Tryuk, 2007); fidelity to content (Valero Garcés, 2017). However, it has been extensively emphasized for quite a long time that the requirements of many ethical codes, namely interpreting literally, behaving like a machine without being involved in decision-making processes and being absolutely neutral, do not fully reflect the performances of interpreters under real-life conditions in various interpreting contexts, primarily in healthcare and court settings (Berk-Seligson, 1990; Niska, 1995, 2002; Barsky, 1996; Wadensjö, 1998; Pöchhacker, 2000; Kadric, 2000; Valero Garcés, 2003; Bot, 2003; Clifford, 2004; Angelelli, 2004a; Hsieh, 2006; Ibrahim, 2007; Rudvin, 2007, 2015; Hale, 2008; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Bahadır, 2011; Bancroft, 2015; Lee, 2015; Souza, 2016).

In that sense, it is acknowledged that the major factors leading to ethical dilemmas for interpreters involve unrealistic expectations of the communication parties from interpreters, the parties' feeling an affinity towards interpreters, sensitive cultural or personal issues, as well as the high professional standards that interpreters cannot always meet due to the lack of training opportunities that would

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equip them with necessary decision-making skills and due to inadequate support and working conditions (Hale, 2007; Rudvin, 2015). When the mentioned factors are combined with the requirement for interpreters to exercise restricted discretionary power vis-à-vis the lack of solutions in ethical codes applicable to real-life interpreting situations, interpreters might sometimes be forced to use their own initiatives and to take their own decisions in interpreting assignments (Tate and Turner, 2002; Hale, 2007; Bancroft, 2015).

On the whole, ethical codes cannot be expected to be adequately comprehensive to address the needs of each and every interpreter with a different background, yet nevertheless, as suggested by Rudvin (2015), such principles are useful in professional identity formation and in guiding especially novice interpreters in that they specify the tasks and responsibilities in the realm of the interpreter's role. For a job with such complex nature, what is needed is principles that take real-life requirements into account and that pay regard to the fact that interpreters are influential agents in communication processes who might sometimes need to use their own judgment to make appropriate decisions under real-life conditions.

2. Methodology

The present study aims to assess the perceptions of ASAM interpreters towards their interpreting experiences. In order to examine the perspectives of the non-professional interpreters serving under an institutional identity, a qualitative research method has been adopted in this study. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research intends to explore and interpret the meanings related to a social issue derived from various data sources collected from participants and settings. More specifically, in qualitative research, the researcher, whose analytical skills are at the forefront, subjectively interprets the data from such sources as interviews, observations and documents within a certain theoretical framework and builds emergent trends, patterns and themes on a social issue and examines the relationships between them (Creswell, 2009; Hale and Napier, 2013). Qualitative research adopts a multiple perspective developed through the views of researchers, participants and readers of the study and thus achieves higher validity than quantitative research (Creswell, 2009; Hale and Napier, 2013).

It can be said that within the qualitative research paradigm, the present study adopts the case study approach in that it is based on the perspectives of the individuals representative of public service interpreters in a particular context, namely the NGOs (see Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013). As mentioned by Saldanha and O'Brien (2013), a case study aims to examine the issues specific to a particular case (p. 209). As for the data collection tools in case studies, Liu (2011) suggests interviews and recordings of interpreter-mediated encounters as the major data sources. In interpreting research adopting the case study approach, interviews were extensively used as one of the main tools among others to assess participants' perceptions, views and experiences regarding the interpreting situations (Edwards, Temple and Alexander, 2005; Leanza, 2005; Angelelli, 2006; Berk-Seligson, 2008; Lipkin, 2008). Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) also propose various data sources within the scope of case study, such as documents, verbal reports, observation notes and quantitative data. The combination of such multiple data sources, namely the process of triangulation, is likely to increase the validity of the study and the reliability of its findings in that it enables the researcher to cross-check the data from various sources (Liu, 2011:90; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013:217). Moreover, another important characteristic of case studies is the "thick description" of the context and the participants (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996).

By virtue of the above-mentioned research paradigm, various data sources have been triangulated in the present study. Accordingly, the major data source is the semi-structured interviews conducted with the NGO interpreters. Interviewing in general is a technique used to explore the meanings derived from the experiences and opinions of individuals on a particular social phenomenon (Hale and Napier, 2013:95). In the semi-structured interview technique, a sub-type of interviews, the interviewer has a set of open-ended questions that guide the interview. The semi-structured interview technique is more flexible than the structured interview, since it allows interviewees to expand on their thoughts and opinions, and it enables the interviewer to introduce new questions during the flow of the conversation (Hale and Napier, 2013; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013).

Since the interview technique is time consuming in terms of its implementation and analysis, and researchers might have difficulties in accessing the relevant participants who are willing to spare time for interviews, interviews are mostly based on the opinions of a small number of participants that is far from representing a large population; thus, the obtained results can hardly be generalized to a larger population (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013: 169). Yet on the other hand, interviews provide certain advantages to researchers in the area of social research. They allow researchers to gain deep insights into individuals' experiences, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and feelings on a certain subject that cannot be accessed through observation of individuals' behavior (May, 2011; Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013).

As Saldanha and O'Brien (2013: 168) mention, compared to translation studies research, interpreting studies research, especially the research on public service interpreting, relies more on interviews as data sources, since the prominent social dimension of the interpreting activity leads researchers to further prefer the research methods of the social sciences. Many scholarly studies that address public service interpreters draw totally or partly on the data from the interviews which yield insights into the interpreters' perspectives on their roles, interpreting experiences and performances, as well as the wider social context and macro-level structural factors that influence interpreter roles and performances (Inghilleri, 2003, 2006; Clifford, 2004; Angelelli, 2004a; Leanza, 2005; Hsieh, 2006; Ibrahim, 2007; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Tipton, 2014; Guéry, 2014; Kaczmarek, 2016; Santamarīa Ciordia, 2016; Valero Garcés, 2017).

The questions addressed to the interpreters within the scope of the semi-structured interviews in this study were prepared based on similar research in the area of public service interpreting and on the aim of the study, which is to explore the practitioners' perceptions regarding their interpreting experiences. In addition, while determining the interview questions, the researcher also consulted to the opinions of the thesis supervisor and the members of the thesis monitoring committee. Accordingly, the interview structure was designed in a way to obtain information on the practitioners' social background, perceptions of image and role as interpreters, perceptions of autonomy, perceptions of norms and ethics, the challenges they face in the interpreting assignments and the strategies they employ in the face of such challenges, their professional prospects as well as the expectations of the parties from the interpreters. Thus, the interview consisted of 36 open-ended questions under 7 titles.

The supplementary data sources of the present study involve the questionnaire responded by the NGO interviews, the semi-structured interviews conducted with the NGO officials commissioning tasks to the interpreters and the institutional code of conduct prepared by the officials responsible for the training of interpreters. In the present study, the technique of observation of the interpreter-mediated encounters could not be used due to the confidentiality policy of the institution as well as the researcher's lack of knowledge of Arabic, the major working language of the interpreters. It can be said

that these mentioned conditions are the major limitations of the present study. Yet through the triangulation of various data sources mentioned above and through "thick description" of the interpreters' experiences based on the interviews conducted with them and with the institution officials, it has been sought to increase the validity of the findings (see Geertz, 1973; Gall *et al.,* 1996; Creswell, 2009).

The questionnaire, another data collection tool used in this study, is an instrument frequently used in survey research to collect demographic information about research participants and to collect data about the participants' opinions, attitudes and behaviors (Creswell, 2009; Liu, 2011; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013). Compared to interviews, questionnaires allow to collect more structured exploratory data on a larger scale in less time (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 152). However, the structures of questionnaires mostly restrict participants in their responses, and researchers might have difficulty in having access to sufficient participant samples that will allow them to draw conclusions on the research questions (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 153). Most importantly, questionnaires are not efficient in collecting explanatory data such as personal experiences and emotions, and therefore, complementing questionnaires with interviews allows to obtain more fruitful results (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 152).

Researchers mostly use two types of statistics, inferential and descriptive statistics, for the analysis of questionnaire data. Inferential statistics allow to make generalizations through data obtained from the samples of a population, and they are mostly used to make inferences about the significance level of the differences between separate populations in the research (see Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 195). On the other hand, descriptive statistics, as the name implies, allow to describe populations and to summarize and compare data in the form of frequencies, percentages or averages presented through graphs, charts or tables (see Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 224; Hale and Napier, 2013: 77). Hale and Napier (2013: 77) also suggest that such descriptive analyses are generally sufficient in especially qualitative and descriptive studies. The questionnaire tool in this study relies on descriptive statistics allowing to summarize the relevant information in percentages and averages (see Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013:224).

In the research on public service interpreters, questionnaires have been widely used either in a way to complement other data sources, such as interviews, or as a research instrument on its own to evaluate interpreters' perceptions of their interpreting experiences (Pöchhacker, 2000; Mesa, 2000; Chesher *et al.*, 2003; Angelelli, 2004b; Tryuk, 2007; Ibrahim, 2007; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Lee, 2009; Kahraman, 2010; Valero Garcés, 2012; Ra and Napier, 2013; Tipton, 2014; Souza, 2016; Salaets and Balogh, 2017). In the present study, the questionnaire for interpreters, which was prepared based on similar research in the area of public service interpreting and on the suggestions of the thesis supervisor and the members of the thesis monitoring committee, does not aim to obtain inferential statistical results as a data source on its own, nor does it aim to generalize the findings to large-scale groups of interpreters. The questionnaire rather aims to provide descriptive results to support or complement the data from the interpreter interviews, which aim to assess the practitioners' perspectives on their interpreting experiences. Accordingly, the questionnaire consists of three sections involving 12 questions about demographic information, 20 Likert-type statements about the scope of the interpreter's work and about the attitude towards the interpreting profession and 30 Likert-type statements about specific interpreting activities during interpreting services, mainly involving the issues of the interpreting ethics, the interpreter's autonomy, the parties' perceptions of and expectations from the interpreters.

In order to conduct the field work in this study, the approval of the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Letters of Dokuz Eylül University was obtained. The field work was carried out between October 2018 and June 2019 at units of ASAM in the provinces of İzmir, Mersin, Adana and Gaziantep, where a large population of Syrian refugees is currently living. The reason for choosing ASAM as a setting to be examined is that it is one of the few NGOs recruiting staff under the title of "interpreter" in Turkey. In order to conduct the interviews with the officials and the interpreters, a request was made via e-mail from the authorities of the relevant NGO units, and consent was obtained from the regional coordinators. Then the relevant officials determined the interpreters to be interviewed and arranged the interview appointments.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with 9 interpreters working in different units of ASAM (1 interpreter in one ASAM unit in İzmir, 2 interpreters in another ASAM unit in İzmir, 2 interpreters in one ASAM unit in Mersin, 2 interpreters in one ASAM unit in Adana, and 2 interpreters in one ASAM unit in Gaziantep). Before the interviews, the interpreters signed the consent form stating the purpose and the scope of the study and stipulating that the information would only be used for research purposes and would be kept anonymous. The interviews, lasting between 26 minutes and 90 minutes, were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The principle of data saturation was the major factor determining the sample size in the interviews conducted with the interpreters. As Dörnyei (2007: 127) suggests, the data collection process ideally lasts till a point of saturation is reached, "when additional data do not seem to develop the concepts any further but simply repeat what previous informants have already revealed". Accordingly, in the current study, the researcher decided to terminate the process of interviewing with the interpreters when the additional data obtained from the subsequent interviews no more yielded any further illuminating data in terms of the aim of the study. Moreover, attention was also paid to reaching almost equal number of interpreters in the ASAM units in each of the mentioned four provinces, where the research was conducted.

In accordance with the institutional policy, the questionnaire for the interpreters giving service to refugees was distributed to the NGO interpreters by the relevant officials from the NGOs, rather than by the researcher herself. 34 questionnaires in total were returned to the researcher by the relevant officials. Then the questionnaire items filled by the interpreters were entered in the Google Forms platform by the researcher and descriptive results were obtained in averages, percentages and column charts.

Moreover, face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions regarding the interpreters' work conditions and activities were conducted with the 3 institution officials from different ASAM units (1 female official in İzmir unit, 1 female official in Mersin unit, 1 male official in Adana unit). The interviews lasted around 30 minutes on average and were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Lastly, as the document to be analyzed, the code of conduct for interpreters provided to them in the in-service trainings was obtained from one of the training coordinators of the institution.

On the whole, through the data collected in the present study, it is not aimed to generalize the findings to large-scale groups of public service interpreters, but it is rather aimed to assess and describe the perceptions of the public service interpreters giving service to refugees in the NGO context towards their relevant interpreting experiences.

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As the major data source of the study, the semi-structured interviews conducted with the interpreters were subjected to thematic analysis, and the data from the other sources related to the emerging themes was used in the discussion. For the thematic analysis, the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted. The phases involve familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is an important piece of information in the data related to the research question and refers to a response patterned to a certain degree in the data set (p. 82). Accordingly, prevalence of a theme can be determined based on the number of respondents mentioning that theme, as well as based on the existence of a theme in one source of the data set (such as a single interview) or in the entire data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006:82). In the study, the deductive analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) has been adopted, and accordingly, the analysis is mainly guided by the research questions, which have also been used in determining the interview and questionnaire structures.

During the analysis, each interviewed NGO interpreter was assigned a number and recorded as NGOI-1,2,3... Then the interview transcripts were coded manually in the light of the relevant research question. The codes, their definitions and the page numbers in the data set for the relevant codes were typed in the codebook in Excel format. A second coder, having work experience as a public service interpreter, also cross-checked the codes. In that way, it has been sought to increase the reliability of the analysis to some extent (see Creswell, 2009:177). The codes similar in content and important for the relevant research question were categorized. After reviewing the emerging preliminary themes, the main themes were defined and named as "exercise of restricted agency" and "awareness of institutional and professional ethics". The prevalence of the themes and sub-themes was determined based on the number of the respondents mentioning them.

3. Findings and discussion

In the present study, the questionnaire for the interpreters was responded by 34 practitioners. 20 of the respondents are female and 14 are male. The average age of the 31 respondents is 28.9. Of the 34 practitioners, responding to the "Nationality" item, the great majority (25) hold Turkish citizenship. Moreover, 6 hold Syrian citizenship, 1 Palestinian citizenship, and 1 Egyptian citizenship; and 1 respondent, holding dual citizenship, did not specify which countries he/she is a citizen of. 52.9% of the respondents marked their native language as Turkish, and 47.1% as Arabic. As for the practitioners' educational background, it has been found that 19 out of 34 (55,9%) hold a Bachelor's degree. The educational background of the rest is as such:
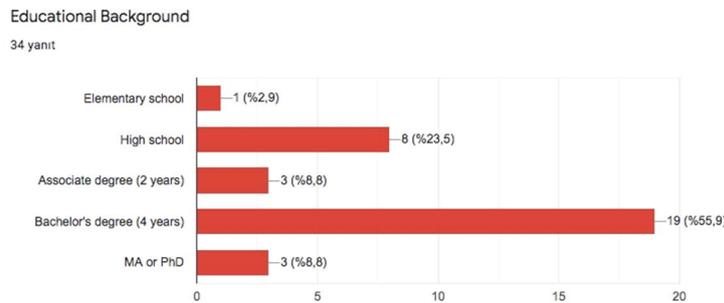
Figure 1: Practitioners' educational background

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The fields in which the respondents hold BA degree were not specified. Yet based on the telephone interview with one of the coordinators responsible for the training and supervision of interpreters in the institution, who has mentioned that there is almost no graduate of translation and interpreting department among those working as interpreters, it can be argued that the practitioners in this study are very likely to hold a BA degree in fields other than translation and interpreting. The coordinator has also added that the most important criterion when recruiting interpreters is the knowledge of the relevant languages. As for the working languages of the practitioners, all of them (34) indicated Arabic and Turkish, and besides, 3 also marked Kurdish. As regards how they learned their working languages, 27 respondents chose the option of "native or second foreign language", 10 also marked the option of "school or university", and 10 also chose the option of "language course". The related findings are as follows:
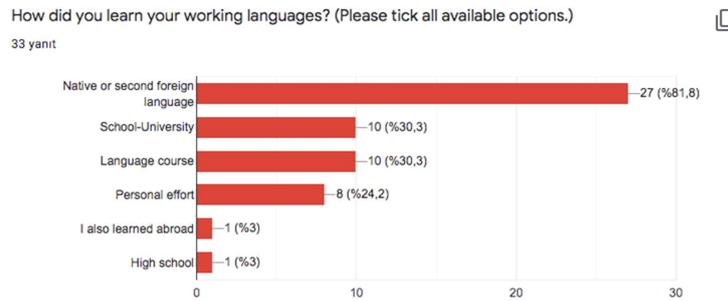
Figure 2: Means of learning the working languages

As regards the interpreter training, only 14 respondents confirmed that they received such a training. And for the type of interpreter training, only 5 respondents indicated it as "in-service training".
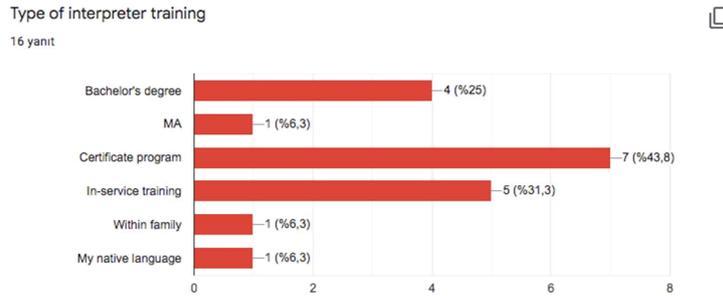
Figure 3: The type of interpreter training

4 marked the type of interpreter training as "undergraduate (BA) education", 1 as "graduate (MA) education" and 7 as "certificate program". Based on this data, it is not clear whether those who chose these options actually meant the training programs in the interpreting field per se. Moreover, those responding as "within family" and "my native language" most probably reduced interpreter training to the improvement of language skills.

The major settings where the practitioners give service as interpreters in the field were specified as healthcare institutions (23), educational institutions (22), legal settings (13) and police units (13). An

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interpreter can give service in more than one setting out of the NGO unit, since the in-house interpreters in the institution are also responsible for providing interpreting services in line with the requirements in different settings out of the NGO units, such as healthcare, education and legal institutions. Lastly, the average interpreting experience of the 33 respondents was reported to be 3.3 years. The data from the rest of the questionnaire on the interpreters' attitude towards their job and the interpreter activities during interpreting services will be discussed in alignment with the findings of the thematic analysis of the interviews.

As to the demographic information of the 9 interviewed interpreters (5 are female and 4 are male), it was found that their average age is 31 and average interpreting experience is around 28 months. 7 of them hold Turkish citizenship, and 2 hold Syrian citizenship. As for the educational background, 2 are graduates of business administration, 2 are graduates of the education faculty, 1 is a graduate of journalism, and 1 is a graduate of German translation and interpreting department. The other three received education in Syria. Of them, 1 is a law faculty graduate, 1 is a dropout of French language and literature department, and 1 is a high school graduate. All the interpreters have attended the in-service trainings provided by the institution. And lastly, 4 of them mentioned that they attended various language courses in order to improve their working languages.

As regards the findings of the thematic analysis of the interviews conducted with the interpreters, it can be said that the interpreters' perceptions regarding their interpreting experiences are shaped around two main themes, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections. One of the themes is "exercise of restricted agency" with the sub-themes of restricted role perception, avoidance of expressing own opinions, avoidance of engaging in dialogues with refugees outside interpreting tasks and avoidance of undertaking initiative. The other theme is "awareness of institutional and professional ethics" with the sub-themes of impartiality, accuracy, the use of first-person pronouns and emotional stamina. The data from the other sources, namely the questionnaire, the interviews with the institution officials and the institutional code of conduct for interpreters, will be discussed in alignment with the findings of the thematic analysis of the interviews with the interpreters.

3.1. Exercise of restricted agency

While the interviewed NGO interpreters describe their interpreting tasks and activities, a salient theme that emerges is their restricted agency, covering the restricted role perception and the issues of avoidance of expressing own opinions, avoidance of engaging in dialogues with refugees outside interpreting tasks and avoidance of undertaking initiative in interpreting tasks.

3.1.1. The restricted role perception

When the accounts of the interviewed NGO interpreters with regard to their role perceptions are examined, it can be said they do not mention the active interpreter roles discussed previously (Roy, 1993; Barsky, 1996; Angelelli, 2004a; Leanza, 2005; Hale, 2008). Rather, they define for themselves a fairly restricted role that is reminiscent of the conduit role traditionally attributed to interpreters (Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp, 1986). In this regard, seven of the interviewed interpreters use the analogies of "messenger", "machine", "bridge", "robot", "voice", "video", "post", "mirror" and "channel" to define their roles as interpreters. For instance, NGOI-1, who states she tries to eliminate her facial expressions and reactions in order not to restrict the interviewees' statements during interpreting, uses the concepts of "messenger" and "machine" for her role as an interpreter. She defines her role as such:

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> A messenger who leaves feelings aside... I view [myself] as a messenger [...] trying not to show my own emotional reactions. I mean I can say a machine that transmits words [...]
>
> [Duygularını bir yerde bırakan bir elçi... [...] kendi duygusal tepkilerimi vermemeye çalışan bir elçi görüyorum. Yani, kelime aktaran bir makine diyebilirim...][3]

When NGOI-2 describes his duty outside the institution, he states he can guide refugees in tasks other than interpreting, such as hospital procedures, yet he mentions he acts like a "robot" during interpreting. NGOI-3 implies the interpreter's limited power, by defining her role as only a "bridge" and "voice" that transmits ideas. Frequently using the concept of "people's voice and language", NGOI-3 remarks

> [...] The interpreter is already like a voice, actually only a bridge. For example, I forget my presence while I am interpreting. I speak as if I were the person speaking. This is the correct interpreting anyway.
>
> [... Zaten tercüman bir ses gibi. Köprü aslında sadece hani. Hani, ben mesela çeviri yaparken varlığımı unutuyorum. Sanki ben konuşan kişiymiş gibi konuşuyorum. Zaten bu hani doğru çeviri böyle olmalı.]

Along the same line, NGOI-4 also uses the concepts of "bridge" and "video" while describing her restricted role as an interpreter. While expressing that she does not feel any closeness to refugees in interpreting tasks based on their social background, she mentions her role as such:

> No. There is none [closeness]. For example, I am of Turkish origin. I don't ... Especially at work I do not reflect this. I am only responsible for conveying what is spoken, like a video. [...]
>
> [Yok. Hiç yok. Mesela ben Türk kökenliyim. Hani, yani şey yapmam. Hele iş yerinde ya da işte hiç bunu yansıtmam. Sadece konuşulanları aktarmakla görevliyim, video gibi...]

Similarly, NGOI-5 also uses concepts that evoke the conduit role. Mentioning that he is a graduate of the faculty of communication, NGOI-5 likens his role to "a means of communication" and "post". NGOI-6 defines her role as "mirror" in that she does not make any changes in what is spoken and she tries to reflect the body language of the parties. NGOI-9 mentions that interpreters fulfill the function of a "channel", and he describes his role as follows:

> Without adding anything, it is as if the interviewee and the consultant were directly talking to each other. [...]
>
> [Yani, hiçbir şey katmadan direkt, sanki danışanla danışman arkadaş birebir konuşuyormuş gibi...]

As a matter of fact, in the institutional code of conduct provided to the interpreters, the role of the interpreter is defined as a "bridge" to the gap between the parties in the interviews, enabling effective message exchange between them (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 2). In a similar vein, the interviewed Official 3, also acknowledging that interpreters have a very important role, views the interpreter as a "means of communication" and a "bridge" who is responsible for transferring information correctly. She remarks

> Very important [role]. Think like this: You go to Syria. You don't know Arabic. You will communicate, but you don't know the language. How will you explain your problem? You tell very traumatic things. Everything has to be transferred as it is. Therefore, it is very important for us that the person who is a means of communication conveys everything correctly and as it is. Her/his geniality, giving confidence...

---

[3]   Translation of all the excerpts from the interview transcripts into English belongs to the author.

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[Çok önemli [rol]. Yani, şöyle düşünün: Siz Suriye'ye gittiniz. Arapça bilmiyorsunuz. İletişim kuracaksınız ama dil yok. Nasıl anlatacaksınız derdinizi? Çok travmatik şeyler anlatıyorsunuz. Her şeyin olduğu gibi aktarılması gerekiyor. Bu yüzden iletişim aracı olan kişi olduğu her şeyi doğru, olduğu gibi aktarıyor olması çok önemli bizim için. Güler yüzlü oluşu, güven veriyor oluşu...]

As also acknowledged by Rudvin (2005:175), the interpreter's role is determined by various factors, such as institutional dynamics, the job description and ethical codes for interpreters among others. Within the framework of the above-mentioned institutional principles and expectations, the role of interpreters is considered as a "message transmitter", which is in line with the widely-held perception of the function of interpreters. Based on the role definitions of the interviewed NGO interpreters discussed above, it also seems that they have adopted the conduit role, traditionally and institutionally attributed to interpreters.

3.1.2. Avoidance of expressing own opinions

It is understood from the accounts of the interviewed NGO interpreters that they tend not to express their own opinions nor give advice to counselees during the interviews. In this regard, the majority of the interviewed NGO interpreters generally imply that expressing their own opinions is not within the scope of their tasks and mention that they express their opinions only when officials ask them or they do so by officials' permission. For instance, especially NGOI-1, NGOI-5 and NGOI-7 imply that expressing their own opinions is beyond the limits of their job. In this regard, NGOI-5 notes that expressing own opinions to refugees is part of the service provided by consultants, not within the boundaries of the interpreter's task. NGOI-5 further mentions a refugee who asked about his opinion on a sensitive issue and states he directed this person to the relevant official without expressing his own opinion. He remarks

[...] I said, "I don't know. Let's better go and ask the official." I mean, I don't say one way or the other [tell my opinion]. I directly say I don't know and my colleague knows the best.

[... "Ben bilmiyorum" dedim. "Bunu en iyisi işte görevliye gidip ona soralım." Hani orada, şöyle ya da böyle demiyorum. Bu direkt bilmiyorum ve en iyisini arkadaşım bilir diyorum.]

By the same token, NGOI-7 expresses that when refugees ask him about his own opinions, he tells them that his job is only interpreting, and the relevant official will provide answers to their questions. On the other hand, NGOI-3 underlines that when she wants to express her own opinions, she definitely gets permission from officials, and similarly, NGOI-4 and NGOI-8 mention that they give their opinions only when asked by officials.

Furthermore, several interpreters express when they are asked about their opinions by refugees, they inform officials about the situation, in fact pointing out that they aren't authorized to express own opinions. For instance, NGOI-4 states

[...] when a Syrian asks about my opinion, I tell the consultant that she/he is asking about my opinion. After that, if the consultant tells me to express my opinion, I do so.

[... bir Suriyeli benim fikrimi sorduğunda ben sosyal danışana, benim fikrimi soruyor, diye söylüyorum. Ondan sonra sen fikrini beyan et, derse ben fikrimi beyan ederim.]

NGOI-6 states she sometimes has to express her opinions to counselees in field works outside the institution, but she definitely does so in line with the opinions of the institution officials. She specifies the issue as such:

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Well, works are done by experts here. When we go outside, to the hospital or elsewhere, it [expressing opinions] can happen sometimes because they [refugees] aren't very informed about the situation. Then if there is anything I can do, I do. Of course, I do that by taking the opinion of the officials in charge here. I inform them. I mean, I can't decide on my own in any way.

[Yani, uzmanlar tarafından yapılıyor buradaki işler. Dışarıda, hastaneye falan gittiğimiz zaman, hani, bazen olabilir [fikir verme]. Çünkü yani durum hakkında pek bilgili değiller [mülteciler]. O zaman eğer benim yapabileceğim bir şey olursa yapıyorum. Bizim buradan da onunla ilgilenen danışanlarımız, danışmanlarımız varsa tabi ki onun görüşünü alarak öyle bir şey yaparım. Onun bilgisini veririm. Yani kendi başıma hiçbir şekilde bunun kararını veremem.]

Regarding the issue, the results of the questionnaires responded by 34 NGO interpreters are also parallel to those of the interviews. 27 out of the 34 respondents, namely the great majority of them, think an interpreter cannot give advice to the parties. Moreover, 25 of the respondents (73.5%) mark they never give advice to refugees.
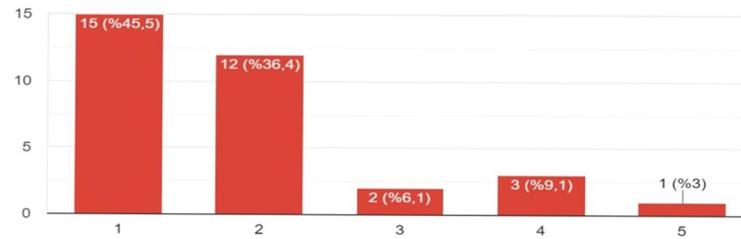
Figure 4: Practitioner views on the issue of giving advice to the parties

Figure 5: Practitioner views on whether they give advice to refugees on cultural differences

It can be said that the interpreters' behavior regarding the issue of expressing own opinions, as detailed above, corresponds to the behavior expected from them by the officials. For instance, the interviewed Official 3 asserts that it may be possible for the interpreters to give their opinions, but they cannot intervene in the situation by imposing their opinions on the parties. The institutional code of conduct provided to the interpreters also stipulates under the heading of "Professional Ethics in Interpreting" that interpreters need to avoid declaring their own opinions. In that sense, it is stated

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[…] In cases where the victim, witness or accused must decide, the interpreter should never give own opinion. In addition, she/he should not behave in any way that would affect the counselee's decision and should not attempt to impose any certain thing. Even if the interpreter has an opinion, answer or choice for the benefit of the counselee, she/he should not explain them.

[… Mağdur, tanık veya sanığın karar vermesi gereken durumlarda tercüman kesinlikle kendi görüşünü bildirmemelidir. Ayrıca kendi görüşünü dile getirmezse bile danışanın kararını etkileyecek hiçbir davranışta bulunmamalı ve belirli bir şey empoze etmeye kalkışmamalıdır. Tercümanın danışanın yararına olacak bir fikri, cevabı veya seçimi varsa bile bunları açıklamamalıdır.] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 14.e)

Furthermore, many ethical codes for interpreters prescribe that expressing own opinions is not within the role boundaries of interpreters. For instance, the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2012) stipulates under the heading of "Impartiality" that "[i]nterpreters and translators do not voice or write an opinion, solicited or unsolicited, on any matter or person during an assignment" (p. 9). In a similar vein, the UK's National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) (2016:5), the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA) (2002:26) as well as the Canadian National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services (NSGCIS) (2007:26) prepared by the Canadian Healthcare Interpretation Network (HIN) also prescribe that interpreters are required to refrain from expressing personal opinions and giving advice to the parties.

Overall, the interpreters' avoidance of expressing own opinions is in agreement with the principles stated in the institutional code of conduct provided to themselves as well as in some of the international ethical codes for interpreters. Considering that the interpreters view the mentioned behavior as the task of the consultants, not of the interpreters, and even if they declare their own opinions, they do so with the consent of the consultants, it can be argued that they tend to adopt the restricted role boundary, which is institutionally projected for them.

3.1.3. Avoidance of engaging in dialogues with refugees outside interpreting tasks

The restricted agency of the NGO interpreters also becomes apparent in their accounts regarding their tendency not to engage in dialogues with refugees apart from interpreting tasks. The institutional code of conduct provided to the interpreters also addresses the issue, prescribing

Before, after and during the interview or during a break from the interview, in cases where the interpreter is alone with the counselee, the interpreter should not talk about the interview, ask questions or answer questions about the interview and respond to requests related to the interview. […]

[Tercüman görüşmeden önce, görüşmeden sonra, görüşme esnasında veya görüşmeye ara verildiği süre içerisinde danışanla baş başa kaldığı durumlarda görüşme hakkında konuşmamalı, soru sormamalı, görüşme hakkında sorulan sorulara cevap vermemeli ve görüşmeyle ilgili gelen taleplere karşılık vermemelidir…] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 7.1.A)

Accordingly, the vast majority of the interviewed interpreters note they do not have interviews nor engage in dialogues with refugees outside interpreting tasks. To give an example, NGOI-7 states it is not the duty of the interpreter to have a pre- or post-interview with refugees apart from the interpreting task and further adds

We never interpret anything to the counselee after the interview, related to the interview or… We don't interpret anything. If possible, we go to the interviewer again and [ask], "She/he [refugee] asked this question, how would you answer?"

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[Hiçbir zaman müracaatçıya, yani, görüşmeden sonra hiçbir çeviri yapmıyoruz görüşmeyle alakalı ya da... Hiçbir şey çevirmiyoruz. Mümkünse tekrar görüşmecinin yanına gidip tekrar, "[mülteci] bu soruyu sordu, nasıl bir cevaplarsınız?" [diye sorarız]]

NGOI-1 and NGOI-6 also mention that they do not engage in dialogues with refugees in order to prevent their expectations. NGOI-1, expressing that she tries not to have pre-interview talks with refugees in order not to raise their expectations, remarks

I try not to talk too much. I mean, whatever my duty, whatever my instruction... Because then the counselee has different expectations from you. I mean, she/he thinks the interpreter helps her/him and may behave loosely. I try to fulfill whatever my duty is. [...] This is because of the group we work with. They already need something in every sense. So they can also have different expectations from you, even upon such a conversation.

[Çok konuşmamaya çalışıyorum ben. Yani hani görevim neyse, yönlendirmem neyse... Çünkü o zaman artık danışanın sizden farklı beklentileri oluyor. Hani, işte, biliyor bana yardımcı olduğunu, rahatlığına da girebiliyor. Görevim neyse o şekilde yapmaya çalışıyorum. ... Ya, çünkü bu çalıştığımız gruptan da kaynaklı. Zaten her anlamda bir şeye ihtiyaçları var. O yüzden artı böyle siz de bir şey, yani bir konuşma üzerine bile sizden farklı beklentilere de girebilir.]

NGOI-6 clearly states she is provided with only general information about interpreting tasks by the institution, but she does not receive any information about the content of tasks, and she finds it risky to have pre-interview talks with refugees in that it may affect her impartiality and increase refugee expectations from her.

Furthermore, the institutional code of conduct provided to interpreters emphasizes the need to inform the authorized person about any conversation between the counselee and the interpreter (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 2). Accordingly, for instance, NGOI-4 states that she notifies the consultant of bilateral talks with refugees, including refugees' friendly conversations and even her greetings to refugees.

On the other hand, NGOI-1 and NGOI-2 express that they do not need to hold pre-interview talks with refugees in the field works thanks to the information forms provided to them by the institution since these forms enable them to make preparations on the subject before the interpreting assignments. Moreover, NGOI-3 and NGOI-4 express that they do not need prior information for most of the interviews within the institution thanks to the daily language used in conversations. On the other hand, NGOI-6 and NGOI-8 mention that they do not prefer to receive preliminary information about the content of the interviews, thinking that this might influence their perspective as an interpreter. When asked whether not being informed about the content of interviews affects interpreting, NGOI-6 responds as follows:

No. On the contrary, if [you] have information about that subject, you can sometimes do things accordingly. I think it will affect you more. This is already the case most of the time in interviews. I mean, we don't have information. They are cases that were previously followed up. We just come and resume them. Whatever we are told...

[Hayır. Aksine eğer o konu ile ilgili bilgi sahibiysem bazen ona göre şey yapabiliyorsunuz, hani, yani o sizi bence daha fazla etkiler diye düşünüyorum. Zaten çoğu zaman görüşmelerde böyledir. Hani, bilgimiz yoktur. Daha önceden takibi yapılmış bir vakadır. Biz gelip, hani, olduğu yerden devam ettiriyoruz sadece. Ne söyleniyorsa o...]

Similar results have also been found in the questionnaire for the practitioners. For the items "I exchange information with the parties before interpreting" and "I exchange information with the

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parties after interpreting", which also cover the issue of dialogues with counselees outside interpreting tasks, 67.6% and 73.5% have chosen the "Never" option respectively.

I exchange information with the parties before interpreting.

34 yanıt
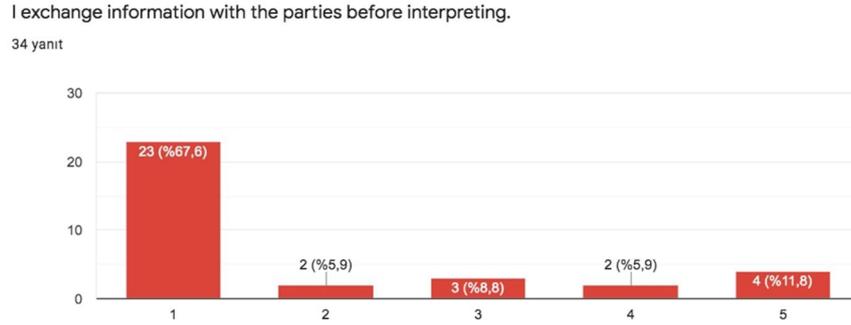
Figure 6: Practitioner views on whether they exchange information with the parties before interpreting

I exchange information with the parties after interpreting.

34 yanıt
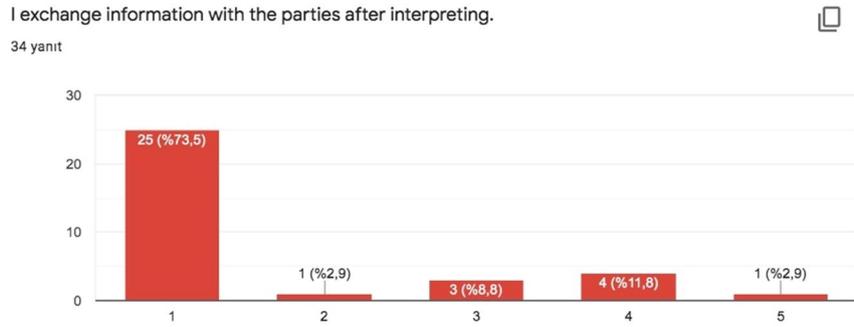
Figure 7: Practitioner views on whether they exchange information with the parties after interpreting

As Tipton (2014) has also found in her study, providing interpreters with background information about cases might be avoided due to concerns that they may have too much confidential information or reflect their own viewpoints on cases. However, it is a fact that interpreters' lack of background information about cases may affect their interpreting performances and limit their agency during interpreting. Yet on the other hand, in the institutional code for interpreters, they are expected not to engage in dialogues with counselees about interpreting cases, and it can be argued that within the scope of their restricted authority, the interviewed interpreters and also those responding to the questionnaire are inclined to meet this expectation, and they do not find it proper to have bilateral talks with counselees outside interpreting.

3.1.4. Avoidance of undertaking initiative

One of the situations in which the interviewed interpreters imply their restricted agency is related to undertaking initiative. Nearly all of the interviewed interpreters imply they do not tend to undertake initiatives, especially within the institution, either due to the institutional obligations imposed on them or their role boundaries as interpreters.

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Regarding the issue, NGOI-2 states he tries not to go beyond what the directors and interviewers say, especially within the institution. NGOI-3 expresses that it is wrong for a professional interpreter to undertake any initiative and adds that she even warns her interpreter colleagues not to do so. Likewise, NGOI-8 clearly states interpreters are not authorized to undertake any initiative. NGOI-4 mentions that in accordance with the institutional rules she hesitates to take steps on refugees' behalf when she encounters them outside the institution, and she tells them she cannot give information outside the institution when they ask questions about the issues concerning the institution. NGOI-5 and NGOI-6 emphasize that they are constantly in contact with the institution officials and thus do not make their own decisions during the interpreting assignments. NGOI-5 expresses

> Since I generally perform interpreting tasks within the institution, there is always someone I can reach. I don't undertake initiative.
>
> [Genelde zaten tercümanlık, hani, sürekli burada iş yerinde yaptığım için her zaman ulaşabileceğim biri oluyor. İnisiyatif almıyorum.]

Furthermore, NGOI-6 clearly asserts that it is not possible for the interpreter to undertake any initiative, since this might undermine the position of consultants and states that only consultants, who are experts in their fields, can take steps in necessary situations. She remarks

> [...] our intervention totally affects our impartiality, and it may cause us to give more hope to migrants. It may also affect the consultant's position a bit. There can be no such thing as undertaking initiative.
>
> [... bizim olaya müdahale etmemiz tamamen tarafsızlığımızı etkilemekle beraber göçmen kişilere de daha fazla umut vermemize sebep olabilir. Danışmanın da biraz, yani, konumunu etkileyebilir o durum. İnisiyatif alma gibi bir durum olamaz.]

NGOI-7 also finds the initiative used by the interpreter problematic since this might cause counselees to misunderstand the role of the interpreter, and he further mentions that all the responsibility should belong to the consultants. Along the same line, certain interpreters report they do not directly intervene in the tense atmosphere during interpreting assignments, and, if necessary, they delegate responsibility to officials in such situations, which is also a sign of their avoidance of undertaking initiative. In this regard, NGOI-2 states in such situations, he acts based on the instructions given in the in-service trainings and directly contacts the relevant official in the institution. Likewise, NGOI-6 asserts she does not get involved in such situations especially in the fieldwork outside the institution, and she definitely reports the situation to the relevant officials of the institution. NGOI-9, mentioning, as an interpreter, he is not in a position to correct the situation in the tense atmosphere during the interview, points out

> Anyway, there is visibility distance between the counselee and the consultant. They already understand how they are, whether they are nervous or angry, from each other's expressions. It can also be understood from tone of voice. So, it is in their hands to fix something. I am only responsible for the interpreting in between.
>
> [Zaten danışanla danışman arasında o şey var, görüş mesafesi var. Birbirlerinin ifadelerinden nasıl bir durumda olduklarını, gergin mi olduklarını, sinirli mi olduklarını zaten anlıyorlar. Hani, ses tonundan da anlaşılabiliyor zaten. Hani onların elinde bir şeyleri düzeltmek. Ben sadece aradaki tercümeden sorumluyum.]

The NGO interpreters' tendency not to use initiative is also evident in the results of the questionnaire responded by 34 participants. For instance, 24 respondents indicate they never or hardly ever correct the information they deem wrong during interviews. Moreover, 73.5% of the respondents express that they never defend refugees/counselees against officials during interpreting tasks. Similarly, 21 of them

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mark they never or hardly ever intervene in the tense atmosphere between the parties during interpreting assignments.

If one of the parties gives wrong information, I correct it.

34 yanıt
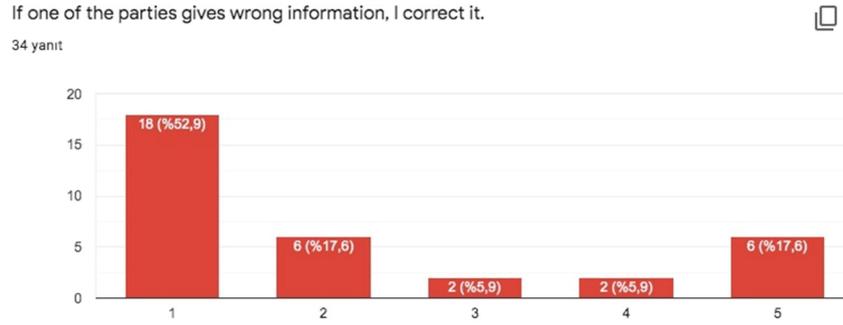
Figure 8: Practitioner views on whether they correct the wrong information given by the parties

I defend refugees when necessary during interpreting.

34 yanıt
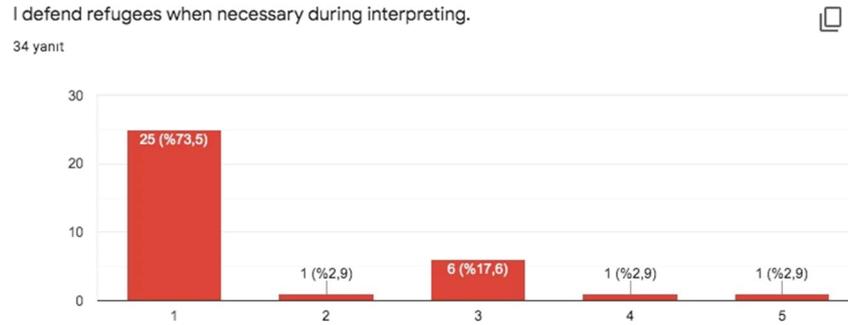
Figure 9: Practitioner views on whether they defend refugees when necessary during interpreting

I intervene if there is tension between the parties.

33 yanıt
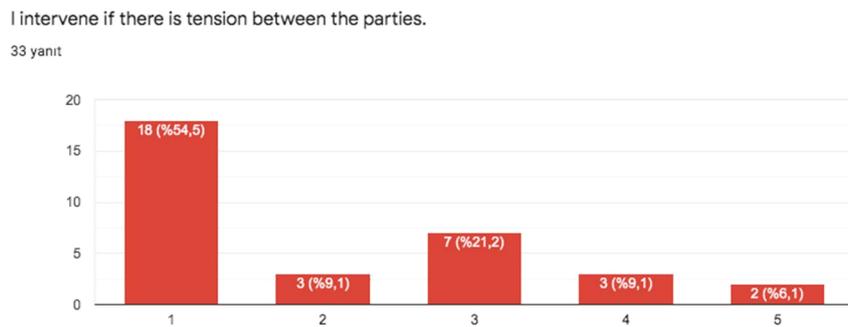
Figure 10: Practitioner views on whether they intervene in the tense atmosphere between the parties

The interviewed officials also assert that interpreters cannot use their initiative within their institutional role boundaries. For instance, interpreters' undertaking initiative in situations other than interpreting is described as a risk by the interviewed Official 1. Furthermore, Official 2 states that the

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work agreement of the interpreters will be terminated unless they pay attention to the institutional rules, which she specifies as ethical contract, disciplinary regulations, word-for-word interpreting, avoidance of establishing personal relationship with refugees, attention to manners as well as to behavior in sensitive cases such as psychological counseling.

On the whole, it can be suggested that the practitioners mostly exercise restricted agency in decision-making processes within the scope of their institutional identity and role boundaries. This situation is also pointed out by the interviewed officials and the institutional code of conduct, which asserts that interpreters' going beyond their duty will interrupt consultants' work (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 6). Due to the public perception of the interpreting profession and the lack of training opportunities and of functional professional ethics that would provide practitioners with the necessary mechanisms they could operate in decision-making processes as active individuals, they internalize the restricted role boundary projected for themselves and acknowledge it as part of the interpreting profession.

On the other hand, several of the interviewed NGO interpreters indicate they might sometimes have to exercise discretion and go beyond their task boundary, especially in the field work outside the institution, due to such factors as time constraints, refugee needs and officials' unawareness of procedures or interpreter tasks and responsibilities. For instance, NGOI-1 mentions that she sometimes has to summarize the most significant points because of time constraints in doctor interviews. NGOI-7 also mentions that he sometimes has to interpret with less explanation in doctor interviews due to the same reason.

Besides, certain interpreters mention that due to refugees' unfamiliarity with the procedures especially in healthcare institutions, they might have to fulfill tasks other than interpreting such as guiding refugees to related departments or taking a queue number. To give an example, NGOI-1, mentioning the lack of signboards to guide refugees in healthcare institutions, says she can take a queue number for refugees at information desks or direct refugees to certain units within healthcare institutions. Likewise, NGOI-2, mentioning that processes become complicated if he does not provide guidance to refugees in healthcare institutions, denotes he sometimes continues to deal with refugee needs after doctor interviews in other hospital procedures and he accompanies them to the relevant units.

At times, the interpreters may also deviate from their role boundaries, in case of officials' unawareness of procedures or interpreter tasks. In that sense, NGOI-1 mentions public officials who are prejudiced against refugees and who question the assistance provided to them, and she remarks she might have to explain why refugees need to be helped in that case. She says

> So, for example, there is something general or now when we mention Syrian asylum-seekers or refugees: Why are you helping? The more you help the more... In other words, I can say because of people's perspective or their prejudice. Well, the only thing I do there is to explain the situation that we need to help or there is a language problem. It's not an identity [problem], but a person has a language problem. And helping him/her...
>
> [Yani mesela genel bir şey var ya şu anda Suriyeli sığınmacılar ya da mülteciler dediğimiz işte, hani neden yardımcı oluyorsunuz? Siz yardımcı oldukça daha çok. Yani insanların bakış açısı, önyargısından kaynaklı diyebilirim. Hani orda da benim yapacağım tek şey zaten durumu açıklamak hani, yardımcı olmamızın gerektiği ya da dil probleminin olduğu. Hani buna bir kimlik olarak değil de bir insanın dil problemi var. Ve ona yardımcı olmak...]

NGOI-7 denotes in some situations when officials do not notice a piece of information that is vital for refugees, he might act on behalf of refugees and call officials' attention to that piece of information.

As also suggested by Hsieh (2006), service providers' expectations or communicative practices may also create challenges to interpreters' performances, and certain statements of NGOI-2, NGO-5 and NGOI-4 exemplify this situation. NGOI-2 mentions that doctors sometimes interrupt the speech during interpreting and want him to make explanations to refugees outside, yet he says he does not pay attention to such instructions of doctors, thinking that there might be incompleteness in his renditions. Similarly, NGOI-5 says when some public officials who do not know how to work with the interpreter give instructions, he continues to perform the interpreting task according to his own methods rather than to those instructions. NGOI-4, touching on some Arabic-speaking officials who intervene in interpreting processes, asserts that she might remind such officials of her area of responsibility as an interpreter. In this case, the mentioned practitioners, whose role as an interpreter is challenged by officials, try to safeguard their roles and boundaries by resisting the officials' demands (Rudvin, 2005:175).

The above-mentioned exercises of discretion can be said to be indicative of the practitioners' 'agency' or 'decision-making', which is necessary in certain situations not addressed by general norms laid out for interpreters (Skaaden, 2019:709). Hence, it can be argued that the practitioners, exercising a more restricted agency within the institution due to the institutional rules and the position of the institution officials, cannot always act within the role boundaries determined for them under all real-life conditions, an issue also proposed in many scholarly studies (Roy, 1993; Barsky, 1996; Angelelli, 2004a; Leanza, 2005; Hale, 2008; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Souza, 2016). At this point, the important thing is to raise their level of awareness, which will enable them to gain experience in this direction and will allow them to make decisions self-assuredly at the right time and right points, which can in turn be realized through comprehensive interpreter trainings and professional standards.

3.2. Awareness towards the institutional and professional ethics

None of the NGO interpreters, except for one, interviewed within the scope of this study has received any extensive interpreting training, and the only guiding elements for the interpreters while performing interpreting tasks are the short-term in-service trainings and the institutional code of conduct for interpreters. It is also reiterated by the interviewed Official 1 and Official 3 that the available interpreters are generally individuals who are not trained in this field. Especially Official 1 mentions that Turkey was generally unprepared when the refugee crisis first arose, and that people and institutions, including NGOs, serving refugees have learned the work through experience. Regarding the scarcity of trained interpreters, Official 1 further remarks

> [...] When the crisis in Syria broke out and when we started this work, neither Turkey nor any NGO was prepared against the situation. NGOs themselves have turned into schools a little bit. So, people have learned through one-to-one experience. In other words, it is not easy to find a person who has trained as an interpreter for the job here.

> [... Biz bu işe başladığımız zaman, Suriye'de kriz olduğu zaman ne Türkiye ne de herhangi bir STK duruma hazırlıklı bir durumda değildi. Biraz da kendisi okul haline dönüştü STK'ların. Yani, hani, insanlar birebir tecrübe ederek öğrendi. Yani böyle, özellikle tercümanlık eğitimi almış, burada bunu yapacak bir kişi bulmak zaten çok kolay bir iş değil.]

Official 1 also touches on the regular in-service trainings provided to the interpreters and states that the interpreters receive supervision on such issues as communication methods and interpreting techniques. One of the coordinators responsible for the training and supervision of interpreters, who was interviewed on the phone for more detailed information about the in-service trainings, denotes that the trainings provide practical and functional information, such as institutional structure and

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ethical principles, with the aim of enabling the individuals, who are not trained as interpreters, to act as interpreters in the field.

As detailed below, another issue that is widely implied by the NGO interpreters, who have only received short-term trainings and who have learned the job through experience for the most part, is their awareness of the ethical issues in interpreting. Accordingly, the majority of the practitioners mention they are generally inclined to pay regard to the professional and institutional ethics in interpreting assignments. In this regard, impartiality, accuracy, the use of first-person pronouns and emotional stamina, the issues also specified in the institutional code of conduct for interpreters as well as in a number of international ethical codes (CHIA, 2002; NAJIT, 2002; Bancroft, 2005; Hale, 2007; AUSIT, 2012; NRPSI, 2016), emerge as the principles elaborated on by the practitioners in their accounts.

It is also noteworthy that the 34 practitioners who have responded to the questionnaire have also made choices that point to their awareness of ethical principles for interpreters. In this regard, nearly all of the respondents (32/34) agree that interpreters are bound by ethical principles, and all of the respondents agree that an occupational guide is necessary for interpreters.

There are ethical principles for interpreters.
33 yanıt
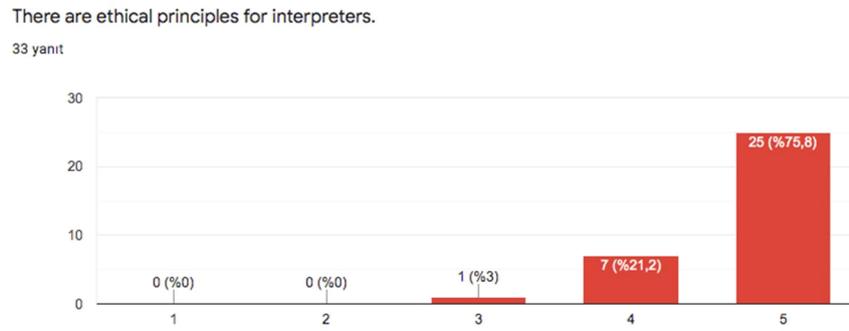
Figure 11: Practitioner views on whether interpreters need to comply with ethical principles

An occupational guide is necessary for interpreters.
34 yanıt
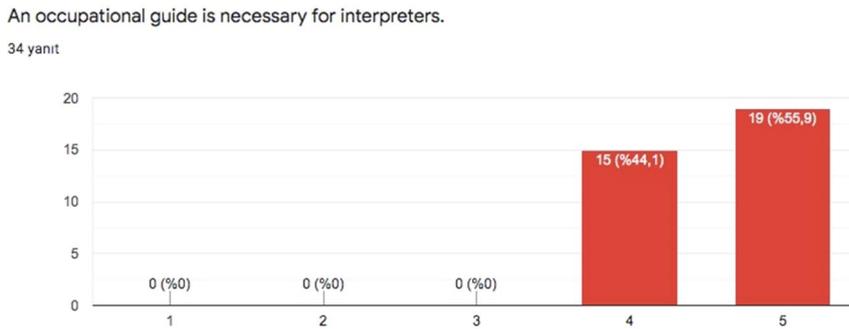
Figure 12: Practitioner views on whether an occupational guide is necessary for interpreters

3.2.1. Impartiality

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Impartiality is one of the most prominent ethical issues that the interviewed NGO interpreters expand on. Almost all of the interviewed interpreters have made statements indicating that they are aware of the requirements of the principle of impartiality, which is defined as one of the major ethical principles for the interpreting profession (Bancroft, 2005; Hale, 2007), and which is also emphasized in the institutional code of conduct (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019). With regard to taking sides, the code of conduct provided to the interpreters stipulates as such:

> The interpreter is not in a position to defend the counselee or the interviewer and should maintain impartiality in all cases. [...]

> [Tercüman, danışanı veya görüşme yapan kişiyi savunma görevinde değildir ve bütün durumlarda tarafsızlığını korumalıdır….] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 6.k)

In this regard, NGOI-6 highlights the issue of impartiality when she mentions her approach to the issues of using initiative, intervention in the tense atmosphere between the parties and pre-interview talks with counselees. She asserts that undertaking initiative outside interpreting tasks, interventions in the tense atmosphere and dialogues with counselees out of interpreting assignments might affect the interpreter's impartiality. As for the risk of pre-interview talks with refugees, she remarks

> Content [of the cases] is never talked about. The consultant never does that. As I said, we try to maintain the distance with the immigrant, and we don't get into this thing. Because it affects impartiality and increases the immigrant's expectations from us.

> [İçerikle ilgili asla konuşulmaz. Danışman da asla bunu yapmaz. Göçmenle de zaten, dediğim gibi, mesafeyi korumaya çalışırız ve hani bu şeye giremeyiz. Çünkü hem tarafsızlığınızı etkiler hem göçmenin bizden olan beklentilerini artırır.]

Likewise, NGOI-7 emphasizes impartiality when mentioning the issue of undertaking initiative and states that impartiality prevents misunderstandings of the parties. Furthermore, some of the interpreters mention their respect to cultural and ethnic differences. For instance, while complaining about officials' prejudice towards refugees, NGOI-1 underlines that as an interpreter, she cannot question the cultural background of people. NGOI-4 and NGOI-8 also express their respect for different cultures and beliefs. NGOI-4 further attributes her adoption of the principles of impartiality and non-discrimination to her growth in an area with high ethnic diversity and to acquaintance with people from different cultures.

Moreover, especially the refugee interpreters, namely NGOI-3 and NGOI-7, state they do not prefer to give an interpreting service for their acquaintances coming to the institution, considering the detriment to impartiality and neutrality, an issue also mentioned in the institutional code of conduct (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 6.p).

The issue of impartiality is also indicated by the practitioners who have responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents (27/34) disagree that interpreters may feel closer to the party with whom they share common characteristics. In addition, 88.2% of them mark that they never feel closer to the party with whom they share common characteristics.

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Interpreters may feel closer to the party with whom they share common characteristics.

34 yanıt

15 (%44,1)   12 (%35,3)   3 (%8,8)   3 (%8,8)   1 (%2,9)

Figure 13: Practitioner views on the possibility for an interpreter to feel closer to any party

I feel closer to the party with whom I share common characteristics.

34 yanıt

30 (%88,2)   1 (%2,9)   0 (%0)   2 (%5,9)   1 (%2,9)
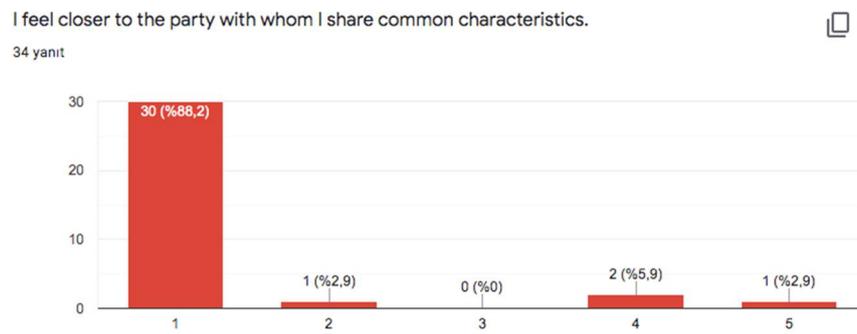
Figure 14: Practitioner views on whether they feel closer to any party

If the actual communication situations involving interpreters could have been examined, diverging findings related to the issue of impartiality might have been obtained. Indeed, the fact that some practitioners, such as NGOI-1 and NGOI-7, sometimes go beyond the specified task boundary and make some attempts in favor of refugees indicates that they might sometimes deviate from the ethical principle of impartiality to a certain extent. For instance, the fact that NGOI-1 sometimes makes explanations about the helplessness of refugees to prejudiced public officials and that NGOI-7 calls officials' attention to an unnoticed piece of information on refugees' behalf are in fact signs of a position assumed by the interpreter on the side of refugees rather than a neutral position. Yet still, based on the practitioners' perceptions in the interviews and questionnaires, it can at least be claimed that the majority have the awareness of the principle of impartiality and its requirements in interpreting assignments.

3.2.2. Accuracy

Another ethical issue the interviewed interpreters elaborate on is related to accuracy. Accuracy is an issue widely covered in most codes of conduct for interpreters. For instance, the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) (2002) stipulates that "[t]he rendition should sound natural in the target language, and there should be no distortion of the original message through addition or omission, explanation or paraphrasing". In a similar vein, the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2012:10) and the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA) (2002:70) specify that interpreters are required not to make changes on

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communicated messages through omissions or additions. The institutional code of conduct also frequently underlines the issue of accuracy and complete rendition of spoken messages. The issue is specified as such:

> [...] Consequently, the interpreter is obliged to interpret the sentences or words expressed in the source language as they are without refining, mitigating, correcting, changing, manipulating, clarifying, adding, omitting, commenting, abridging, summarizing and interrupting communication.

> [...Sonuç olarak tercüman kaynak dilde dile getirilen cümle veya kelimeleri kibarlaştırmadan, masumlaştırmadan, hafifletmeden, düzeltmeden, değiştirmeden, manipüle etmeden, netleştirmeden, artırmadan, eksiltmeden, yorumlamadan, kesmeden, özetlemeden ve iletişimi kesintiye uğramadan olduğu gibi tercüme etmekle mükelleftir.] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 6)

When the interviewed interpreters' accounts regarding the issue are examined, it can be said that almost all of the interpreters do not find it proper to make such changes as additions, omissions or summarization. NGOI-5 even adds that interpreting everything as it is reduces the interpreter's responsibility. Certain interpreters, such as NGOI-3, NGOI-4 and NGOI-9, mention that they prefer to stop counselees in order to interpret all that is said in the event that they speak longer than the interpreters' capacity, an issue that is also suggested by the code of conduct (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 8). In that case, the practitioners in fact take control of the communication process and put forward their interpreter identity as "active discourse participant" in order to ensure effective communication (Rudvin, 2005:173). In this regard, NGOI-3 reports

> [...] sometimes some people forget the interpreter. They begin to form long sentences. I usually stop the person in such situations. Or before the person starts speaking, I say "make your sentences as short as you can, so I can convey all the ideas." I request the person. Then that person starts talking.

> [... bazen bazı kişiler mesela tercümanı unutuyor. Uzun uzun cümleler kurmaya başlıyor. Ben genelde bu gibi durumlarda durduruyorum kişiyi. Ya da kişi başlamadan önce ona şey diyorum, hani, "yapabildiğin kadar cümlelerin kısa olsun ki ben bütün fikirleri ileteyim." Kişiden rica ediyorum. Sonra o kişi konuşmaya başlıyor.]

Although few interpreters mention that they might sometimes summarize what is said by counselees due to time constraints, they do not express this situation as an adopted behavior during their interpreting activities. In this regard, NGOI-3, mentioning that she is cautious about summarizing, notes that she does not render the details she finds unnecessary, yet she also informs the authorized person on those summarized parts.

Another issue emphasized in the institutional code of conduct for interpreters is the importance of rendering every detail in speeches, including slang, abusive or obscene expressions. In this sense, the code of conduct indicates

> [...] As interpreters are obliged to interpret correctly and completely, if the interviewee says slang, obscene, vulgar or abusive expressions, they are expected to interpret them into the closest equivalent in the target language no matter how disturbing they are. Although what is said and the words used may be disturbing to others, the interpreter should not correct and soften what is said.

> [... Tercümanlar doğru ve tam tercüme yapmakla yükümlü olduklarından, eğer görüşme yapılan kişi argo, müstehcen, kaba veya küfürlü konuşuyorsa, ne kadar rahatsız edici olsa da hedef dilde en yakın karşılığına çevirmeleri beklenir. Söylenenler ve kullanılan kelimeler diğer kişilere rahatsız edici gelse de tercüman söylenileni düzeltip yumuşatmamalıdır.] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 6.q)

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By the same token, the interviewed Official 3 also states they expect interpreters to convey everything that is said, including abusive or vulgar expressions, since they need to prepare a conversation accordingly.

The mentioned issue is also pointed out in the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA, 2002), which at same time touches on the possible hesitation interpreters might have towards rendering obscene expressions. The issue is specified as such:

> Maintain the tone and the message of the speaker even when it includes rudeness and obscenities.

> Note: different cultural understandings and levels of acceptance exist for the usage of obscene expressions and profanities, and we understand the resistance most interpreters have towards uttering such expressions, although interpreters need to honor the ethical principle of "Accuracy and Completeness" by striving to render equivalent expressions). (CHIA, 2002:30)

Certain practitioners, such as NGOI-3, NGOI-6, NGOI-7, NGOI-8, also underline that everything spoken needs to be interpreted, since every detail in the conversation might be important for the interviewer. In that sense, NGOI-7 notes

> It is beneficial to interpret word-for-word especially in the hospital because if any term, any statement is missed, there may be trouble. Because it's life-threatening. In other words, interpreting especially in the hospital is important and troublesome at the same time.

> [Hastanede özellikle birebir çevirmekte fayda vardır. Çünkü herhangi bir terim, herhangi bir deyim kaçırılırsa sıkıntı olabilir. Çünkü hayati riskine dair bir şeydir. Yani, özellikle hastanede tercümanlık yapma önemlidir ve sıkıntılıdır aynı zamanda.]

Moreover, most of the practitioners reiterate that they interpret obscene or vulgar expressions without making any changes on them, although some of them, especially NGOI-1, NGOI-3 and NGOI-6, accept they have difficulty in interpreting such expressions as they are. In this regard, NGOI-3 expresses

> [...] When I started as an interpreter at this institution, I signed [a contract] that I would interpret everything in full. And actually this is correct. You have to completely interpret whatever is spoken anyway. ... It is a little difficult, but when you think of it as a job, you forget about it. Sometimes you forget about cultures or other things. [...]

> [... İşyerime zaten ben başladığımda hani tercüman olduğum için birebir her şeyi çevireceğime mesela ona göre ben imza attım yani. Ve doğrusu da bu aslında. Birebir ne konuşulursa hepsini çevirmek zorundasın zaten. ... Biraz zor oluyor aslında ama şey olarak, iş olarak düşündüğün zaman unutuyorsun bazen kültürleri, diğer şeyleri mesela....]

It is understood that the practitioners who have responded to the questionnaire also hold similar opinions regarding the issue of accuracy. For instance, almost all of the respondents (33/34) agree that interpreted statements need to be precise, and an interpreter should not make assumptions out of the parties' speech. Moreover, 22 of the 34 respondents defend the idea that it is necessary to render every detail during interpreting. Besides, 26 of the 34 respondents are of the opinion that professionalism in interpreting means not adding the interpreter's voice to the communication process.
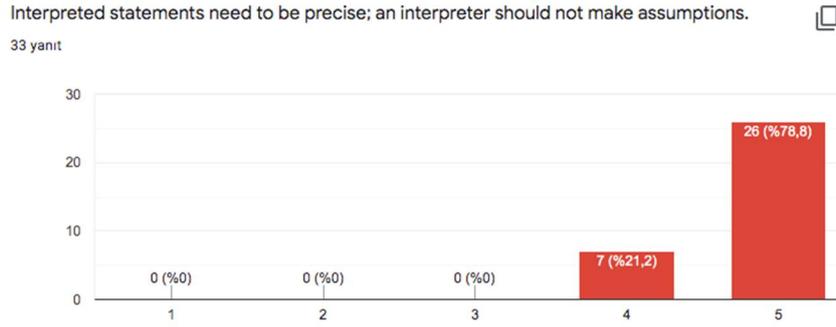
Figure 15: Practitioner views on the issue of interpreter's making assumptions
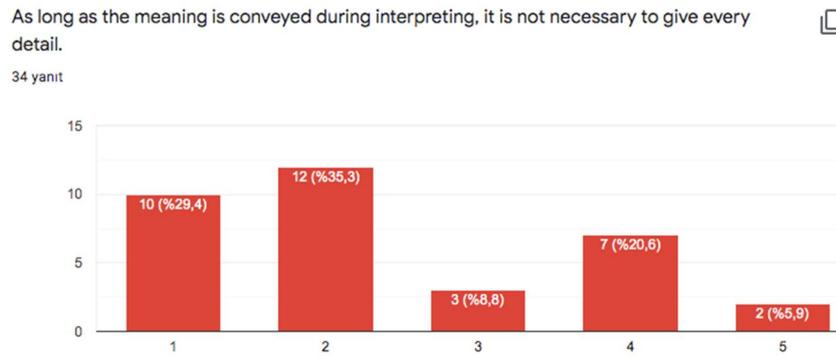

Figure 16: Practitioner views on the issue of interpreter's rendering every detail in communicated messages
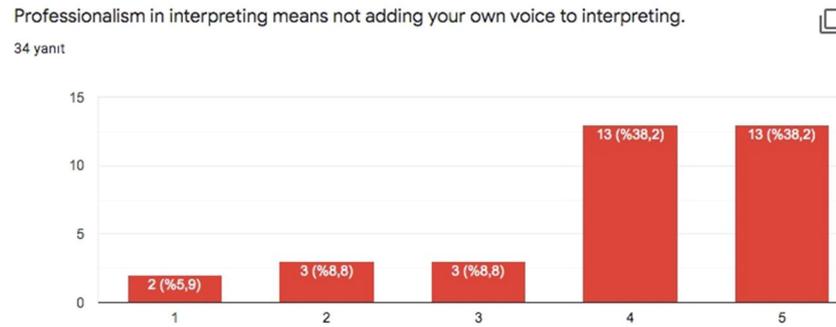
Figure 17: Practitioner views on the issue of adding the interpreter's voice

On the whole, regarding the issue of assessing accuracy in interpreter-mediated encounters, the major limitation of the present study is that the actual communication situations have not been able to be examined. Based on the available data sources, namely the interviews and the questionnaires, it can be suggested that the practitioners' perceptions regarding the issue of accuracy tend to be in accordance with the principles specified in the institutional code of conduct and the universal ethical codes. Accordingly, it can be said that the practitioners in general find it important not to make changes such

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as additions or omissions in messages to be interpreted, considering that every detail, including obscene or vulgar expressions, might be important for the interviewer.

3.2.3. The use of first-person pronouns

Another issue that is worth mentioning regarding the practitioners' perceptions of the ethical principles is the use of first-person pronouns during interpreting, a commonly accepted norm for the interpreting profession. The institutional code of conduct features the use of first-person pronouns among the basic rules of interpreting and specifies it as such:

> There are some rules to be followed in interpreting. The first is that the pronoun used in interpreting is the first-person pronoun.
>
> [Tercümede uyulması gereken bazı kurallar bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan birincisi sözlü tercümanlıkta kullanılan zamirin birinci tekil şahıs olmasıdır.] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 3)

The rule of first-person interpreting is also underlined by various international codes of conduct such as the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2012:14) and the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA) (2002) among others. CHIA expands on the issue as such:

> Use the first person ("I") as the standard form of interpreting, to enhance direct patient/provider communication, and to exercise discretion in switching to the "third person" when the first person form causes confusion or is culturally inappropriate for either or both parties. (emphasis in the original, CHIA, 2002:35-6)

Regarding the issue, based on the accounts of the interviewed interpreters, it is understood that the majority think the use of first-person pronouns during interpreting is necessary. While NGOI-3, NGOI-4 and NGOI-8 mention that they have used first-person pronouns from their first experience onward, independent of the in-service trainings they have received, the other interpreters imply the influence of the trainings on their use of first-person pronouns. It is understood that NGOI-4, being a graduate of translation and interpreting department, views such pronoun uses as part of her job. NGOI-3 and NGOI-8, on the other hand, express when they first started to work as an interpreter, they were using the first-person pronouns without even realizing it. In that vein, NGOI-8 denotes

> Instinctively... I was completely untrained. I was a mother. I left my home and started at ASAM. And I worked in this way instinctively. And I felt it. It was correct, then they confirmed it. [...]
>
> [İçimden gelerek... Ben tamamen eğitimsiz gördüm. Anneydim. Evimden çıktım ve ASAM'a girdim ve içimden gelerek bu şekil çalıştım. Ve hissettim. Bu şekil doğruymuş. Sonra onayladılar....]

It is also worth mentioning that more than half of the practitioners who responded to the questionnaire (20/34) indicate that they always use first-person pronouns during interpreting.

I use first-person pronouns during interpreting.

34 yanıt
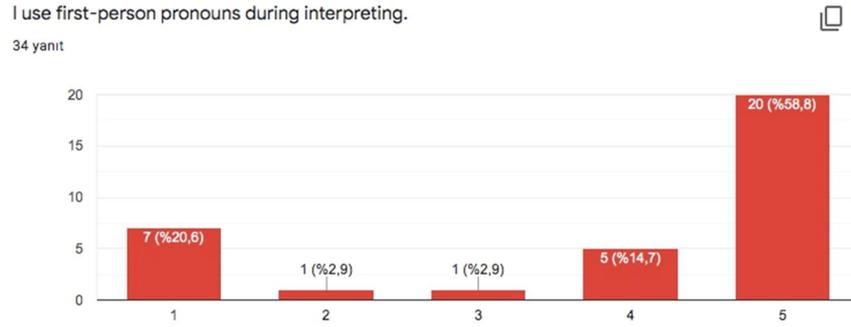
Figure 18: Practitioner views on the use of first-person pronouns

Since the interpreter-mediated encounters have not been able to be examined within the scope of the present study due to the linguistic constraints and the institution's confidentiality policy, the practitioners' actual uses of first-person pronouns have not been able to be assessed. Yet on the whole, it can be said that the practitioners are generally cognizant of the use of first-person pronouns in interpreting, and they mostly view it as the interpreter's responsibility, as also specified in the institutional code of conduct and the international codes for interpreters.

3.2.4. Emotional stamina

Due to the emotional dimension and sensitivity of the field they work in, namely interpreting for refugees, public service interpreters may find it difficult to cope with emotional distress. This issue is also expressed by the interviewed Official 1, who says

> Sometimes they face really deep traumas. I think coping with this is really the major challenge for them. [...]
>
> [Bazen gerçekten çok derin travmalarla karşılaşıyorlar. Bununla baş etmek gerçekten onlar için birinci zorluk diye düşünüyorum...]

However, interpreters are generally expected to be mature in emotional matters as part of their job. Regarding the issue, the institutional code of conduct provided to the practitioners denotes

> A good interpreter displays emotional maturity and stamina in severe cases. Indeed, an interpreter who shares the same culture or the same traumatic past may lose neutrality by causing emotionality in their own behavior. In such cases, the interpreter should show emotional maturity and stamina and avoid behaviors that may adversely affect the interview.
>
> [İyi bir tercüman, ağır vakalarda duygusal bir olgunluk ve dayanıklılık sergiler. Nitekim aynı kültürü veya aynı örseleyici geçmişi paylaşan bir tercüman, kendi davranışlarında duygusallığa yol açarak tarafsızlığını kaybedebilir. Böyle durumlarda tercüman duygusal olgunluk ve dayanıklılık sergileyerek görüşmeyi olumsuz yönde etkileyecek davranışlardan uzak durmalıdır.] (Ulusoy & Rezaei Osalou, 2019, Section 10)

Accordingly, nearly all the interviewed practitioners have made statements in parallel to those mentioned in the institutional code of conduct. In that sense, they affirm they can control their emotions during interpreting even if they are emotionally affected. For instance, NGOI-1 points out

> For example, I thought that I would wear out more in terms of emotions, I could be more sensitive, I would have a little more difficulty due to emotions, but no, I need to do whatever I should do. Because it's so important. Sometimes the events we hear here can be very sensitive. In other words,

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during the day, we can hear many times the things that we can't get over for days when we watch in a movie. In that sense, I have realized that I have a principle. I have to be careful.

[Mesela, duygu anlamında daha çok yıpranacağım, daha böyle hassas olabileceğim, duygudan kaynaklı biraz daha zorlanacağımı düşündüm ama hayır yani olması gereken neyse onu yapmam gerektiğini. O çünkü çok önemli. Burada bazen duyduğumuz olaylar vesaire çok hassas olabiliyor. Yani bir film olsa günlerce etkisinden çıkamayacağınız şeyleri biz gün içerisinde defalarca duyabiliyoruz. O anlamda bir prensibimin olduğunu fark ettim. Hani, dikkatli olmam gerekiyor.]

Similarly, NGOI-5 and NGOI-7 emphasize the importance of controlling emotions in order to create solutions in interpreting assignments. NGOI-5 says

Of course, I don't reflect. Anyway, the atmosphere is such ... that if you burst with emotions, the other side also falls apart because emotionality and difficult things are told in trauma. If we burst with emotions there, the other side also can't recover.

[Tabi, tabi. Yansıtmıyorum. Zaten, şey, ortam o kadar bir şey ki, bir koparsanız karşı taraf da dağılıyor. Çünkü zaten travmada bir duygusallık ve zor şeyler anlatılır. Orada koparsak karşı taraf da toparlayamıyor.]

NGOI-6 implies reflecting emotional affection is not within the scope of the interpreter's work and remarks that the job of interpreting loses its meaning when interpreters reflect their feelings on their work.

Emotional stamina is also often expressed in various codes of conduct. For example, in the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA), it is stated that "[i]t is critical for interpreters to be aware of their own level of emotional responses to what is happening around them, and to know how to protect their own health and well-being" (p. 38). CHIA (2002) also proposes several methods on how interpreters can deal with emotional distress, such as "taking a brief time out or finding resources for emotional support" (p. 37). It is understood that certain practitioners interviewed in the present study also use a similar method for emotional distress. For example, NGOI-2, NGOI-3 and NGOI-5 state they talk with the interviewer about the relevant situation after emotional interviews. In this regard, NGOI-3 elaborates on the issue as such:

I was affected when I first started the sessions because I had just come [to Turkey]. I was affected but I wasn't showing it to the other person. For example, after the session, I was sitting and talking to the psychologist colleague. For example, I was saying "I had been affected by that". This method is actually very good. When you are affected by something, telling it directly, rather than keeping it inside. […]

[İlk seanslara başladığımda etkileniyordum. Çünkü ben de yeni gelmiştim. Etkileniyordum ama ben karşıdaki kişiye belli etmiyordum. Mesela seanstan sonra ben oturup psikolog arkadaşla konuşuyordum. Mesela, işte, "bunda etkilendim" falan. Çünkü bu yöntem çok iyi aslında. Bir şeyden etkilendiğin zaman direkt anlatmak, yani içime atmaktansa...]

Regarding the issue of reaching emotional maturity, especially NGOI-2, NGOI-3, NGOI-4 and NGOI-8 state they have overcome emotionality over time and through experience. For instance, NGOI-4 mentions that her previous work experience at a child protection institution and in a project for disabled children in Germany has helped her build up emotional stamina. She further states when she first started working as an interpreter at the NGO, she was affected emotionally during the interviews, and at one occasion, she even took a time and cried outside the room. Yet she mentions after getting to know the institution and the working conditions, she has got over emotionality and started not to reflect it in the interviews.

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Public service interpreters generally work with vulnerable groups of the community, such as refugees, and even some interpreters can be refugees themselves. In this case, it is important that interpreters, who sometimes have to listen and interpret traumatic stories, be able to control their emotional state so that they can perform their work effectively. However, interpreters are sometimes inevitably affected emotionally in traumatic situations due to empathy with vulnerable groups, an issue reported by NGOI-2, NGOI-3, NGOI-4, NGOI-5, which is discussed above, and also mentioned by the interviewed officials and in the institutional code of conduct provided to the practitioners. On the other hand, no suggestions are proposed about how the interpreters can cope with emotional distress. The only method the interpreters mention in this regard is talking to the interviewer colleagues on traumatic issues after the interviews. Apart from that, the interviewed interpreters seem to comply with the expectations from them and understand the importance of controlling emotions. While some state they have adopted it as a principle from the very beginning, others mention that they have overcome emotionality over time. In this regard, it is important to provide practitioners with the necessary mechanisms for dealing with emotional distress within the scope of training programs and institutional working conditions, as also suggested in some of the universal ethical codes for interpreters, such as the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters (CHIA, 2002:38).

On the whole, regarding the ethical principles, it can be said that the practitioners, who have learned interpreting on-the-job to a great extent, are mostly informed of the traditional principles of interpreting although they have not received sufficient interpreter training. It can be suggested that the short-term in-service trainings and the institutional code of conduct provided to them might be the factors guiding this issue. Moreover, the fact that the practitioners highlight the principles specified in the institutional code of conduct indicates that they are mostly aligned with the institutional identity and role projected for themselves, as is the case with their restricted agency.

Conclusion

In the present study, which has adopted case study approach within the scope of qualitative research paradigm, the perspectives of the non-professional public service interpreters working at various units of the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), one of the refugee associations in Turkey, have been examined. The perceptions of the interpreters, who are generally not trained in interpreting and who learn the job through experience, have been evaluated through the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire providing descriptive statistics. Moreover, the interviews with the institution officials and the institutional code of conduct for interpreters have also been used as supplementary data sources in the discussion. The interpreter interviews, namely the main data source of the study, have been analyzed according to the six-stage thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), and the data from the supplementary sources have been discussed in alignment with the findings of the thematic analysis. On the whole, the major themes that have emerged from the interview data are the interpreters' exercise of restricted agency in interpreting tasks and their awareness of institutional and professional ethics.

Based on the accounts of the interpreters in the interviews and the questionnaire results, it is understood that the practitioners mostly exercise restricted agency in decision-making processes in interpreting assignments. Accordingly, it can be said that they do not adopt the active interpreter roles revealed in many studies on the agency and role boundaries of public service interpreters (Roy, 1993; Barsky, 1996; Angelelli, 2004a; Leanza, 2005; Hale, 2008; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Souza, 2016; Kaczmarek, 2016). Rather, they generally adopt the conduit role, namely the role of "message

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transmitter", which is the role traditionally attributed to interpreters (Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp, 1986; Pöchhacker, 2004; Tipton, 2014). In this regard, in defining their roles, most of the interpreters use the concepts of "messenger", "machine", "bridge", "robot", "voice", "video", "post", "mirror" and "channel". Along the same line, the interpreters frequently mention that they avoid expressing own opinions during interpreting, and even if they give their opinions, they do so with the permission of the interviewers. The interpreters also express that they mostly refrain from having bilateral talks with counselees before or after interpreting tasks, and they mention that they generally stay away from undertaking any initiative in interpreting tasks, such as intervening in the tense atmosphere. It is understood that the interpreters' views on their restricted agency are also mostly in line with the task boundaries specified in the institutional code of conduct as well as with the expectations of the interviewed institution officials.

On the other hand, several interpreters also remark that they might sometimes have to go beyond their task boundary, especially in the field work outside the institution, due to such factors as time constraints, refugee needs and officials' unawareness of procedures or interpreter tasks and responsibilities. This situation shows that interpreters cannot always act like a machine during interpreting assignments due to such mentioned factors under real-life conditions, as also emphasized in many studies (Berk-Seligson, 1990; Niska, 1995, 2002; Barsky, 1996; Wadensjö, 1998; Pöchhacker, 2000; Kadric, 2000; Valero Garcés, 2003; Bot, 2003; Clifford, 2004; Angelelli, 2004a; Hsieh, 2006; Ibrahim, 2007; Rudvin, 2007, 2015; Hale, 2008; Rudvin and Tomassini, 2008; Bahadır, 2011; Bancroft, 2015; Lee, 2015; Souza, 2016).

According to the interpreter accounts in the interviews and the questionnaire responses, it is also understood that the practitioners, the great majority of whom have attended only the short-term in-service trainings provided by the institution, are informed of the traditional ethical principles of the interpreting job. In this regard, impartiality, accuracy, the use of first-person pronouns and emotional stamina emerge as the principles that are elaborated on by the interpreters. Within this scope, the interpreters mention that they find the principle of impartiality important in order not to increase the expectations of counselees and not to cause misunderstandings. Moreover, the practitioners frequently express that they do not prefer to make changes such as additions or omissions in communicated messages, considering that every detail, including obscene or vulgar expressions, might be important for the interviewer. It has also been found that the practitioners are generally informed of the norm of first-person interpreting. As for emotional stamina, most of the interpreters reiterate the importance of controlling emotions during interviews although several mention that they have sometimes experienced emotional distress in traumatic situations due to empathy with vulnerable groups. It can be argued that the interpreters' views on the ethical principles also coincide with the expectations from them, specified in the institutional code of conduct, as well as with the requirements mentioned in certain international ethical codes (CHIA, 2002; NAJIT, 2002; HIN, 2007; AUSIT, 2012; NRPSI, 2016).

On the other hand, although the interpreters in the present study seem to be informed of the traditional ethical principles in interpreting, their internalization of such ethical principles and their ability to practice those principles during interpreting activities depend on a number of conditions. First of all, as also suggested by certain scholars (Rudvin, 2007, 2015; Hale, 2007, 2008; Bahadır, 2011; Bancroft, 2015), the ethical principles laid out for the interpreters need to be more applicable to real-life situations and need to pay heed to the social aspect of the interpreting processes and the expectations of the parties from the interpreters. Moreover, as also underlined by various scholars

(Wadensjö, 1998; Clifford, 2004; Leanza, 2005; Hale, 2007), the interpreters need to develop a thorough understanding of ethical principles and their implications in practice, which is only possible through comprehensive interpreter trainings that will bring professional awareness to the interpreters.

Overall, it can be suggested that the non-professional practitioners, who have learned interpreting through experience for the most part, have formed an alignment with the institutional identity and role projected for them. As a matter of fact, several other studies also mention that interpreters tend to develop such an alignment with the institutions they work for (Rudvin, 2007, 2015; Bahadır, 2011). On the other hand, the mechanisms that enable practitioners in general to act under a strong professional identity as experts with the awareness of their roles and tasks can only be gained through comprehensive interpreter trainings. As also acknowledged by various scholars (Inghilleri, 2005; Bahadır, 2011; Rudvin, 2015; Skaaden, 2019), along with the expertise provided by such trainings, established national and international professional standards involving such elements as fair remuneration, certification examinations and professional associations will increase the public awareness towards the profession and will improve the professional status.

Finally, this study offers valuable insights into the perceptions of the non-professional public service interpreters who meet the language needs of the increased refugee population in Turkey through the interpreters working in different units of ASAM. The insights offered on the interpreters' perceptions of their interpreting experiences based on the interpreter interviews and questionnaires, as well as the interviews with the institution officials and the analysis of the institutional document, could be further enriched through future studies which will also examine interpreter-mediated encounters in other similar interpreting contexts.

Acknowledgements

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