Liaison interpreting as intercultural mediation

by

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ABSTRACT:

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The conventional understanding of the liaison interpreter views the professional as a language broker between two or more individuals not speaking the same language. The manner in which this language gap is bridged, according to the conventional understanding, is through copying

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verbatim what is said in one language (the source language) and pasting it (into the target language). The conventional understanding of the profession and its professionals neglects the multi-faceted nature of the profession along with the many challenges with which its professionals are faced. A liaison interpreter is a professional who forms a bridge between languages, people and culture. When viewed through this lens, new meaning and understanding are gained regarding the work of the liaison interpreter whilst, similarly, unveiling the complexity of the profession. As such, new questions may be raised pertaining to the role of the liaison interpreter in dialogue settings. This mini-dissertation seeks to shed new light on an age old profession whilst unveiling these hidden factors to highlight the benefits of factoring cultural training into interpreter training to better train student interpreters, and equip them with a unique set of skills to assist them in overcoming the unique set of challenges with which liaison interpreters often grapple.

Key terms: Liaison interpreter, linguistic referee, cultural referee, culture, language and culture, Skopos theory, mediation, interpreting as mediation, communication, cultural training strategies, source language, target language.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and aims of the study

The title of this research came about after deliberating with a mediator who spoke about the importance of having good interpreters in conflict mediation settings. During his mediation efforts in the Darfur crisis (2003), he stated that one of the major obstacles with which he grappled was mediating through an interpreter who did not fully understand the culture of the region. This observation drove the researcher to further explore the language-culture link. In such an instance, one would ideally need an interpreter who intimately knows both languages and cultures to facilitate communication between parties. Furthermore, the question arises whether the interpreter in question would require specific cultural training to effectively execute his/her duties. The query on the training of such an interpreter motivated the researcher to investigate the thought of including cultural training in interpreter training. Cultural training for liaison interpreters would include workshops on cross-cultural communication strategies and settings in which appropriate knowledge would be employed alongside diverse communication strategies when working with people or clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Examples of such cultural training can be found in workshops hosted by the Victorian Interpreting and Translation Service (VITS), and the outcomes of these workshops, but are not limited to "culture, understanding of how culture and value orientations impact on communication, the barriers to effective cross cultural

communication and discussion around the key principles to effective cross cultural communication" (Victorian Interpreting and Translation Service, 2012-2014:www.vits.com.au) The initially proposed title of this dissertation was "The role of the liaison interpreter in high-conflict, cross-cultural mediation settings". This title was rendered obsolete by the fact that, in high-level conflict mediation, each party would systematically make use of his/her own interpreter(s). Another factor which influenced the change in the proposed title is that interpreters were unwilling to disclose any information on previous assignments in which they had previously interpreted. After careful deliberation, the scope of this research was limited to focus on the language-culture link. As a result, another query soon arose with regard to the limitations on the interpreter in instances of cultural misunderstandings between two or more parties not speaking the same language. This provides, in part, the reason why the title "Liaison interpreting as intercultural mediation" was selected.

The purpose of this research is to explore the inextricable link between language and culture to demonstrate the shortcomings of the conventional understanding of the role of the liaison interpreter, and to shed new light on the theme of liaison interpreting as intercultural mediation. The conventional understanding of the liaison interpreter tends to not take full cognisance of the myriad of challenges which faces the interpreter in dialogue settings. It is for this reason that this research argues that the liaison interpreter is both a language and cultural mediator.

The aim of this dissertation is to argue for the inclusion of cultural training in interpreter training, given that liaison interpreting is a particular combination of micro-processes which

form part of a bigger picture for a particular intended effect. As such, the general perception of the interpreter whose purpose is to interpret a given message from language A to language B for the benefit of two or more people not speaking the same language tends to overlook the role of the interpreter. The purpose of this research is twofold. Firstly, this research aims to to shed new light on the way in which interpreters are viewed and, secondly, this research aims to advocate for the implementation of specific cultural training for interpreters so that this element may sensitise and better equip interpreters for the broader role they assume.

This research was conducted in Pretoria, South Africa. Given that South Africa has 11 official languages, the element of language and cultural diversity is the norm rather than the exception. Yet, in the South African context, interpreting and translation are, for the most part, not well-developed professions. The global controversy raised by the hoax sign interpreter, Thamsanqa Jantjie, at Nelson Mandela's memorial service in 2013 contributed to perception. Nelson Mandela's funeral was, perhaps, the most important international event of the century, yet the African National Congress (ANC) did not make the effort to ensure that a credible interpreter could interpret the day's proceedings for the benefit of the deaf community. As a result of Thamsanqa Jantjie's nonsensical gestures which accompanied the interpreter speeches made by heads of state, both the international community and the deaf community expressed outrage at South Africa's blatant disregard for the deaf community, and the interpreting profession as a whole (De Wet, 2015:www.mg.co.za). The Code of Ethics 3 of the Deaf Federation of South Africa stipulates the interpreter shall: (DeafSA, 2011:www.deafsa.co.za) "render the message faithfully, always conveying the content, intent and spirit of the speaker using the language most readily understood by the person(s) who they serve".

Further controversy stemmed from the fact that Thamsanqa Jantjie who is not a certified interpreter, has a criminal record. In spite of this, he obtained security clearance which permitted him to stand within arm's-length from heads of state, including the President of the United States, Barack Obama (De Wet, 2015: www.mg.co.za).

In South Africa, the common debate raised about translators/interpreters is, if the majority of the population is bilingual or multilingual, what purpose would an interpreter/translator serve? The open interview research strategy aimed at gathering the opinions of interpreters to establish a more balanced view between theory and practise. Kvale (1996:1) indicates that qualitative research interviews attempt to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations". In addition, the qualitative interview is both an informal and interactive process extending beyond the confinements of everyday conversation. It is open-ended in nature, permitting for misconceptions to be clarified.

1.2 Open interviews

Finding interpreters who were willing to respond to the questions designed for this study proved to be a significant challenge, as interpreters are bound by a Code of Confidentiality. The Code of Confidentiality forms an integral part of various translating and interpreting professional bodies. The Code of Professional Ethics of AIIC (International Associations of Conference Interpreters) states in Article II of Code of Honour (International Association of Conference Interpreters, 1999:www.aiic.net):

a. Members of the Association shall be bound by the strictest secrecy, which must be observed towards all persons and with regard to all information disclosed in the course of the practice of the profession at any gathering not open to the public.

b. Members shall refrain from deriving any personal gain whatsoever from confidential information they may have acquired in the exercise of their duties as conference interpreters.

The interviews were set against the backdrop of an informal and trusting atmosphere which permitted the interviewees to be honest in their responses. Given that the focus of this dissertation is concerned with cross-cultural settings, one of the selection criteria for the interviewees was that they had to have a certain level of experience within cross-cultural scenarios. For the purposes f this study, open interviews were secured with three interpreters who could serve as three case studies.

The first interviewee was not a professional interpreter *per se*, but had interpreted in cases where high-ranking officials at the former Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) needed the language "gap" to be bridged. He is a South African national with a fair amount of experience in interpreting, but had never undergone formal interpreter training. He speaks French, English, and Afrikaans fluently, has worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DIRCO) for numerous years, and is approaching retirement age. He served as an *ad hoc* interpreter, and proved to be an interesting addition to the research given that the research focuses on both the interpreter's role, and the *ad hoc* interpreter's role along with their influence on a conflict setting. An *ad hoc* interpreter may be defined as "an untrained individual who asserts proficiency in the relevant language pair, who is called upon or volunteers to interpret. Also called a chance interpreter or a lay interpreter" (*AILIA Association de l'Industrie de la Langue*, Language Industry Association, 2010: www.multi-languages.com).

The second interviewee was studying towards a Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation at the University of Witwatersrand. In 2012, he completed an Honours degree in Interpreting and Translation at the same institution. Before commencing his studies in Interpreting and Translation, he studied law. He practised as a lawyer and then abandoned this profession to embark on what he referred to as "a late vocation": interpreting. When he first interpreted, he was an *ad hoc* interpreter. He maintained that studying Interpreting and Translation helped him refine his art. He has worked as both conference and liaison interpreter, and has interpreted for organisations such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and similar organisations. He has been living in South Africa for over five years, and is originally from the Republic of Congo. He works to and from English and French and is currently working on improving his level of Portuguese.

The third interviewee works on a fulltime basis at the SADC and is based in Botswana. He works in both French and English. Before commencing work on a fulltime basis at the SADC, he worked as a freelance interpreter and translator. Similarly to the second respondent, he studied Interpreting and Translating at the University of Witwatersrand before launching his career as a professional interpreter[1]. In addition to this, he has many years of experience.

1.3 Research questions

The principal thrust of this research was to find appropriate answers to the following research questions:

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[1] A professional interpreter is an interpreter who interprets on a fulltime basis, and has studied interpreting studies or has undergone formal interpreting training.

1. How do the professions of the liaison interpreter and that of the mediator overlap/intersect in intercultural dialogue settings, and what are the consequences thereof?

2. To what extent is the interpreter expected and permitted to facilitate understanding in cross-cultural mediation/dialogue settings?

3. In intervening, as a cultural broker, to promote understanding, can the interpreter remain neutral and invisible while respecting the Interpreter's Code of Conduct in terms of impartiality?

4. If the interpreter's role were to be extended, how could it be achieved to allow the practitioner to assume the role of both interpreter and cultural broker?

5. What are the power relations in intercultural dialogue settings, given that because communication occurs through the interpreter, the latter's presence is further magnified?

The answers to the above research questions were to be based on a qualitative approach focusing on existing theories on the interpreter and the mediator. Thereafter, the definitions given by the former and latter were analysed to highlight instances in which they intersect, and their possible pitfalls. The potential overlap between the work of an interpreter and a cultural mediator exemplifies the vital language-culture link. The central argument to this research can be presented as follows: if specific cultural differences are not taken into account when interpreting in cross-cultural settings, the risk of cultural misunderstandings is elevated. In such

cases, the interpreter, through his/her intimate knowledge of the language and culture of the parties, would be in an ideal situation to mediate as a cultural broker between parties to diffuse cultural misunderstandings.

This research takes the unconventional approach of seeking to close a gap that has not been explored enough in the field of interpreting[2]. This research questions the conventional approach (the *status quo*) to intercultural dialogue settings which focuses on the language link, formed by the interpreter, between two parties not speaking the same language. This research aims to argue in favour of the notion of the interpreter as both a language and cultural broker, and advocate for the implementation of this element in interpreter training and, perhaps, as a specific protocol.

This research was conducted through a qualitative approach in two parts. The first part comprised of an extended literature review, and had a dual focus: firstly, definitions of the concepts of "interpreter" and "mediator" were critically analysed. This critical text analysis of the definitions permitted the researcher to determine the points at which the perceived "duties" of the two professionals intersect, and to explore the consequences of this intersection. The study of the above definitions was based on the academic research within the field of mediation and interpreting[3]. The second focus provided a brief analysis of the theme of intercultural dialogue under the importance of the Skopos theory and mediation. The Skopos theory was fused with mediation to view the extent to which the interpreter, under the

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[2] Franz Pöchhacker and Mona Baker are pioneers in this field of research who question the conventional role of the interpreter.

[3] The Second Alcalá Conference on Public Service Interpreting and Translation which took place in 2008 dealt principally with the theme of 'translation as mediation'.

functional approach/Skopos theory, assumes the role of mediator. Cultural differences, as explored by Hall and Pistillo (2003), were employed to review the importance of the cultural element in dialogue settings to portray the extent to which cultural misunderstandings occur, and their overall impact on dialogue settings.

1.4 Qualitative component

The second part of this research consists of a qualitative component in the form of open interviews which aim to unveil the conclusions drawn from the opinions expressed by the interviewees. These open interviews served the purpose of revealing the opinions, experiences, and reflections of the practitioners interviewed[4]. The questions were based on the existing theory on the research topic, and helped shed light on cases of when, how, and why these interpreters may have needed to assume the role of both language and cultural brokers between two or more parties. The open interviews were conducted with three interpreters who interpreted in scenarios dealing specifically with this research topic.

Once the interviews were concluded, the second part of this dissertation was compared and contrasted with the first part of this research which was to demonstrate the extent to which the role of interpreter as language and cultural broker is perceived in theory, and how this role differs in practise. Through this approach, insight and understanding were gained in terms of intercultural communication, and the role that the interpreter assumes in cross-cultural dialogue settings. These open interviews yielded a greater understanding of a theory-based approached to interpreting juxtaposed against the practical-based approach to interpreting.

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[4] The interviewees were selected on the basis that they had experience in liaison interpreting.

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Given the matters explored in the second research question, the role of the interpreter as intercultural mediator was re-examined, permitting the researcher to critically assess the opinions of Mona Baker and Franz Pöchhacker who advocate for an extension of the conventional role of the interpreter. This aspect was analysed in relation to the theme of intercultural dialogue as part of the new research and approach that the research aimed to contribute to the field of interpreting.

The conclusions of the completed dissertation are based on the research of academics in the field of interpreting and the findings from the open interviews. These open interviews are essential, as they provide a balanced argument surrounding the role of the liaison interpreter in intercultural dialogue settings, and help conclude whether cultural training should be implemented in interpreter training.

1.4 Chapter layout

The chapter layout for this research was as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: A cross-sectional analysis of the academic research on the terms "mediator" and "interpreter" to reveal the extent to which the two professions intersect..

Chapter 3: An analysis of the Skopos theory in conjunction with the three inherent conflict mediation dimensions and the conceptual analysis of the term "mediation" to demonstrate the impact of these two factors on the interpreter's role.

Chapter 4: Baker's study of the interpreter on the battlefield. The role that interpreters play in narrating a conflict is essential as there are a number of elements which indicate that the interpreter is not a separate element in intercultural communication, but often becomes an integral part of the communication process between two or more parties.

Chapter 5: The open interviews. The open interviews served as case studies, and aided the researcher to gather the respondents' opinions surrounding these research questions. The interviewees' viewpoints were essential, as their responses were based on their experience within the field.

Chapter 6: Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: A CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC RESEARCH OF THE TERMS "MEDIATOR" AND "INTERPRETER"

2.1 The term "interpreter"

Interpreting can be explained as follows: "(t)he interpreter has first to listen to the speaker, understand and analyse what is being said, and then resynthesise the speech in the appropriate form in a different language ..." (Jones, 1996:6). Interpreting is an ancient human practice which predates the age of writing and written translation. Interpreting is mainly regarded as a form of translation (Jones, 2002:1-2). Interpreting can be regarded as translation performed orally. The Oxford dictionary (2015) defines The English word "interpreter" is derived from "Middle English: from Old French *interpreter* or Latin *interpretari* 'explain, translate', from *interpres*, *interpret* – 'agent, translator, interpreter". Kang (2013:236) indicates that translation or interpreting is interpretive by nature, and that interpreting seeks to assist communication. He adds that there are three stages in the interpreting process: (1) the comprehension of the meaning, (2) deverbalisation, and (3) reformulation of meaning (Kang, 2013:236).

Seleskovitch (1989:8-9) states that interpreting is not "the oral translation of words" and describes interpreting as a complex and demanding activity: "it uncovers meaning and makes it explicit for others. (...) Interpretation is communication, i.e. analysis of the original message and its conversion into a form accessible to the listener". The aforementioned process may be broken into the three stages:

1. Auditory perception of a linguistic utterance which carries meaning. Apprehension of the language and comprehension of the message through a process of analysis and exegesis.

2. Immediate and deliberate discarding of the wording and retention of the mental representation of the message (concepts, ideas).

3. Production of a new utterance in the target language which must meet a dual requirement: it must express the original message in its entirety and it must be geared to the recipient.

The proposed model is based on an assumed cognitive approach, intended to "shed light on the mental processes which make possible the virtually instantaneous transmission of an oral message into another language" (Seleskovitch, 1989:9). Regarding meaning in interpreting, Seleskovitch postulates that meaning is what remains after the "immediate and deliberate discarding of the wording" (Seleskovitch, 1989:9). Seleskovitch describes this as "the retention of the mental representation of the message" (Seleskovitch, 1989:9).

According to Seleskovitch's (1989:12) theory, meaning in interpreting is dependent "not only on us but also on the person we are addressing and on the context in which we both find ourselves". Seleskovitch connects this communicative meaning to a particular type of memory, the "substantive memory (…) a function of comprehension" (Seleskovitch, 1989:36). Comprehension and processing of meaning are difficult in any mode of interpreting, be it consecutive, simultaneous, or liaison. Regarding simultaneous interpreting, Seleskovitch describes this mode of interpreting as "an unnatural exercise (*un exercice contre nature*)" (Seleskovitch and Lederer, 1989:128). In simultaneous interpreting, the interpreter does not have the luxury of time to retain the message in his/her memory. As the name suggests, this mode of interpreting is done simultaneously, thus rendering it nearly impossible for the interpreter to dissociate the source language (SL) and the target language (TL).

In terms of the actual processing of meaning, Seleskovitch (1989:49) argues that "comprehension is what occurs when new information ties in with related knowledge. If such knowledge is absent the new information is ignored". In this vein, it is essential for the interpreter to possess pre-acquired knowledge on the matter before interpreting.

Based on a study of real-life simultaneous interpreting situations, Marianne Lederer identified eight operations which interpreters have to perform. These operations may occur either sequentially or concurrently at various times in the simultaneous interpreting performance. These operations include (Seleskovitch and Lederer, 1989:131):

1. hearing;

2. understanding the language;

3. conceptualising (building a cognitive reminiscence by integrating sequences of connected speech into pre-existing knowledge);

4. enunciating (what has been stored in the substantive memory);

5. getting/being aware of the interpreting situation;

6. checking audio-equipment;

7. transferring, and

8. recalling of particular signifiers.

Interpreting is distinguished from translation primarily due to its immediacy; interpreting is performed "on the spot" for the benefit of people wishing to engage in communication when language and cultural barriers prevents them from doing so. Roderick Jones[5] argues that interpreting is "immediate oral translation. Interpreting is about communication" (Jones, 2002:3). Regarding the roles of the interpreter, Jones advocates that the interpreter must "prevent linguistic exclusion" (Jones, 2002:3). Interpreting can thus be defined as follows:

> Imagine two people sitting in a room. They may be politicians, businessmen or women, trade unionists or scientists. They wish to discuss their work but speak different languages, and neither speaks the other's language well enough for the discussion to be useful. So they call in someone else, who speaks both languages, to explain what each is saying in turn. That person is an interpreter (Jones, 2002:3).

People engaging in intercultural communication communicate through an interpreter who bridges the language gap between parties not speaking the same language. In this vein, the primary goal of the interpreter is to ensure that both parties understand one another in terms of language, by explaining the intended meaning of the message of party A to party B. Semantically speaking, the prefix "inter" in the word "interpreter" refers to the idea of between or middle. According to Harper (2004:www.etymonline.com), the verb *to interpret* traces back to the late 14th century from O.FR. interpreter from the 13th century and directly from L. interpretari which means to explain, expound, understand and from interpres meaning agent, translator, from inter + a second element of which the origin is unknown. It could be possibly linked to Sanskrit *prath* which means to spread abroad, PIE per which means to traffic in, to sell.

Therefore, it may be deduced that an interpreter is an intermediary person intervening between two or more parties (as does a mediator – a person intervening between two or more

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[5] Roderick Jones is a world-renowned conference interpreter.

parties with the goal of achieving a specific objective: getting the parties to dialogue). The main

forms of interpreting include: consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, and liaison

interpreting. Gile (2006:3) explains that conference interpreting emerged as a profession:

> in the League of Nations and International Labour Office between the two World Wars, interpreters worked in the same room as the "delegates" (the generic term used by conference interpreters for users of their services) and were very visible to the delegates, to journalists and to other observers, who admired and praised them for their skills.

Consecutive interpreting entails the interpreter waiting until the speaker has finished before

beginning to interpret (Seleskovitch, 1978). In consecutive interpretation, the interpreter does

not start speaking until the original speaker has stopped. In consecutive interpreting, the

interpreter has a moment to analyse the message as a whole before delivering his/her

rendition to his/her audience.

Simultaneous interpreting involves providing the target language message at roughly the same

time as the source language message is being produced (Seleskovitch, 1978).

2.2 Liaison interpreting

Liaison interpreting: also referred to as "community, ad hoc, three-cornered, dialogue, contact,

public service, and cultural interpreting, is a form of interpreting enabling people who are not

fluent speakers of the official language(s) of the country to communicate with the providers of

public services so as to facilitate full and equal access to legal, health, education, government,

and social services" (Carr *et al*., 1997:15). Liaison interpreting is often referred to as community

interpreting; both terms are used interchangeably. The word "liaison" refers to the idea of

connecting or linking up and can be used in a variety of contexts within the public sector (Pöchhacker, 2004: 15), and can be explained as follows:

> public-service interpreting (mainly in the UK) and cultural interpreting (in Canada), emerged as a wide new field of interpreting practise, with healthcare interpreting (medical interpreting, hospital interpreting), and legal interpreting as the most significant domains (Pöchhacker, 2004:15).

Community-based interpreting or liaison interpreting differs in form from simultaneous interpreting based on two factors: firstly, the presence of the interpreter, and secondly, the visibility of the interpreter. The liaison interpreter works to and from two or more languages, i.e. from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) (for one party) and the same process is repeated for the other party. Hence, it is of utmost importance that the liaison interpreter possesses an excellent command of his/her working languages. In liaison interpreting, several variables may arise, and utterances are usually dependant on previous remark(s). As such, a greater number of culture-bound factors may come into play: turn-taking patterns, more or less direct responses as well as an array of kinetic elements (Gentile, Ozolinis, and Vasilakakos, 1996). The interpreter's work is rendered more difficult as interlocutors may not necessarily follow a particular train of thought, as is usually the case in conference presentations (conference interpreting); their speech may overlap frequently, thus creating confusion. Another particularity of liaison interpreting is that the practitioner's clients are often seated at a table with no physical barriers which creates a relaxed atmosphere (Gentile, Ozolinis, and

Vasilakakos, 1996). As a result, the interpreter is not seen as a separate element, but rather as a member of a particular side[6].

This explains, in part, why disputing parties sometimes directly address the interpreter for advice on how to address the other party which they may deem as "different". The advantage of this less-formal setting is that the interpreter may be more at ease to ask for clarification or occasional repetition. Given that clients may feel more come comfortable with addressing the liaison interpreter to repeat or explain something creates a sense of approachability which is, in turn, viewed as a source of greater fulfilment for the interpreter.

There are, however, pitfalls associated with the above mentioned scenario which may have the adverse effect of creating obstacles to communicative interaction between parties which include:

> Explanatory additions, selective omissions, persuasive elaboration, or the mitigation of face-threatening acts, all of which give the interpreter's mediation a conciliatory orientation and thus bring it closer to the more active sense of "mediation" quoted at the outset, that is, intervening to reduce differences and promote understanding (Kondo and Tebble, 1997:158-163).

Bush and Folger (1994) argue that a mediator is an individual who assumes the role of the third party to resolve a dispute or conflict between two or more parties. It is at this point that the notion of *communicative* mediation[7] between languages and cultures fuses with what

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[6] This being said, the interpreter should refrain from advising the parties and remain impartial by performing his/her job, interpreting.

[7] Communicative mediation can be referred to as a stage in the mediation process where the parties are encouraged to deliberate and enter into the decision making process, and which can be emphasised in the mediator's opening statement.

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Pöchhacker (2004:14) refers to as *contractual* mediation[8] for the resolution of (intercultural) conflicts or differences.

The interface between these two dimensions is formed by the concepts of "understanding" and, in particular, "culture": intercultural mediation (which is assumed by translation theorists) merges into mediation by a third party contracted to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. In this scenario, the extension of the perspectives of mediation in the context of interpreting could be controversial, whereas the general sense of language/cultural (communicative) mediation derived from translation theory could apply to interpreting by definition: "the realm of contractual mediation is so broad as to include distinct profiles that go beyond translational or communication-enabling activity" (Pöchhacker, 2004:14).

Regarding interpreter involvement in liaison interpreting, Pistillo (1996:8) argues that **"**this sense of involvement might impair the interpreter's professional performance, by placing him/her in a position of considerable power *vis-à-vis* the clients". It can be argued that this involvement may also impact negatively on the interpreter's ability to remain impartial. Hence, the limitations of the liaison interpreter's role in cross-cultural settings are not clearly defined, and may breach the Interpreters' Code of Ethics and Conduct. Regarding impartiality, the FIT Europe Regional Centre Europe of the International Federation of Translators' (2011:www.fit-europe.org) Code of Professional Practice states that "translators and interpreters shall carry out their work with complete impartiality and not express any personal opinions in the course of their work".

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[8] Referring to the functional approach/Skopos theory where the interpreter has a specific objective within the scope of his/her interpreting assignment.

The primary objective of the Interpreters' Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct is to render the translation/interpreting profession more formal, as the profession as a whole has never experienced the same recognition or respect as other professions such as engineering or medical professions (Baker, 1992:1-5). For example, the Code of Professional Practice of the FIT Europe (Regional Centre Europe of the International Federation of Translators) (2015:www.fit-europe.org) states that:

> Considering the important role played by translators and interpreters in facilitating international communication and understanding.
>
> Seeking to ensure that a high level of professionalism is achieved and maintained in translating and interpreting,
>
> The FIT Regional Centre Europe (FIT Europe) has therefore issued this Code of Professional Practice laying down the basic rights and obligations of translators and interpreters as a non-exhaustive guide for its member associations.

Translation and interpreting are age-old professions, yet practitioners within the profession have been unable to unanimously concur on whether their profession is an art, a profession, a trade, or a business (Baker, 1992:1). Baker's arguments motivated the researcher to highlight the importance of the translation/interpreting profession and its practitioners. The need for intercultural sensitivity in cross-cultural communication cannot be overstressed. Yet, as the findings of this research indicated, the parameters for the liaison interpreter's role become increasingly difficult to determine (Baker, 1992:1).

In a multilingual negotiation setting, the interpreter is the only means by which communication occurs between parties not speaking the same language well enough to understand one another. In this light, it is the practitioner's duty to fully understand his/her clients to best convey their respective goals and interests. The interpreter's primary objective is "to convey

accurate messages and to get things done by whatever means possible" (Gentile, Ozolinis, and Vasilakakos, 1996:121). In the case where cultural misunderstandings arise, the interpreter should mediate to prevent cultural misunderstandings. Pistillo (2003:7) argues that liaison interpreting best conveys the idea of a link or a connection between people; "the true gap between the parties in liaison interpreting is culture". Pöchhacker (2004:59) delineates the role of the interpreter as a mediator in community-based settings, "where the constellation of interaction is typically characterised by unequal power relations and widely discrepant socio-cultural backgrounds between which the interpreter is charged to mediate". An overview of the notion of memes with regard to interpreting was examined to demonstrate the extent to which language and culture are passed from generation to generation through translation activity, and the importance of translation training in transmitting memes, language and culture.

2.3 The notion of memes in interpreting

The notion of "memes" in interpreting is employed in analogy with Andrew Chesterman's (1997) account of *Memes of Translation*. Memetics is a study of memes; and a meme can be defined as: "an element or element of social behaviour passed on through generations in a culture, especially by imitation [C20: possibility from MIMIC, on the model of gene]". Memes were introduced into translation studies by Chesterman (1996) and independently by Vermeer (1997). Chesterman (2013:www.helsinki.fi) argues that memes are:

> Everything you have learned by imitating other people — habits, jokes, ideas, songs ... Memes spread like genes, they replicate, often with mutation. Some memes spread, and thus survive, better than others. Memes survive well if they are easily memorable, useful, sexy, or emotive. Some memes tend to co-occur with others, in groups: these

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groups are called mememes or memeplexes. Examples are languages, religions, ideologies, scientific theories.

Another manner in which memes are spread is via translation. Chesterman (2000) argues that this is the *raison d'être* of translation: "spreading memes from one place to another, making sure that they get safely across cultural borders". In this vein, Translation Studies is a study of memes and their transmission under particular circumstances. Chesterman (2000) argues further that the goal of the translator is to spread memes via translation activity. He provides two points on which to ponder:

1. Translation is a memetic activity. Suppose that this idea of translation is introduced at the very beginning of a training course. It highlights a number of valuable aspects of translation that often remain a bit neglected. Translators are agents in the spreading of ideas, for instance; they are not mere copiers of texts. Translations change the state of the world, by adding new texts. The activity of translation is at the heart of cultural development, of the evolution of ideas.

2. Strategy memes. One of the most useful sets of professional translation memes is that of strategy memes. These memes are, in a particularly obvious sense, essential conceptual tools of the translator's trade. By "strategy" here I mean any well-established way of solving a translation problem. These strategies are widely used and well known in the profession (not necessarily under the same names, of course). One way of telling the difference between a professional and an amateur is that the professional usually knows at once, or can decide quite quickly, what kind of strategy to use.

The social-biological concept of 'meme', was introduced in the 1970s and refers to "ideas, practises, creations and inventions that have spread and replicated, like genes, in the cultural evolution of mankind" (Pöchhacker, 2004:51). Chesterman (2000) highlights memes as metaphors elucidating the concept of translation, as particular ways of "seeing" and theorising the phenomenon. Chesterman (2000) underscores the following five memes:

1. ways of seeing;

2. interpreting as translation;

3. process(ing) versus communicative activity;

4. verbal transfer, and

5. cognitive information processing skills.

Pöchhacker (2004:60) explains the "memes" notion in his map of memes and stipulates that all memes are more or less closely linked to concepts of language, cognition, interaction, and culture, as illustrated in Figure 1, below. These memes are portrayed as separate poles, yet combine in various ways to form dimensions (language-culture, language-cognition, cognition-culture) within which memes assume their appropriate roles. Within this matrix, the five memes are strategically placed to suggest their conceptuality to the four poles. The map of memes[9] serves the purpose of better illustrating the conceptual signposts that have guided the process of theoretical inquiry into interpreting. For the purpose of this research, the concept of culture in mediation as analysed by Pöchhacker was focused on.

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[9] See Figure 1: map of memes in interpreting.
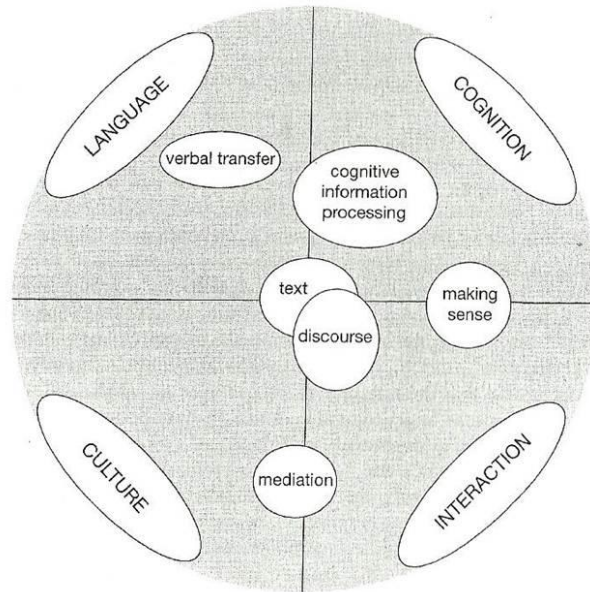
Figure 1: map of memes in interpreting (Pöchhacker, 2004:60)

Pöchhacker (2004:60) argues that the mediation meme is a basic idea associated with interpreting given that, in terms of etymology, the term "intermediary" further reinforces the idea that the interpreter is the man/woman in the middle similar to that of the mediator; a person intervening between two or more disputing parties. Like the meme of making sense, the mediation meme is a core idea associated with interpreting. This mediation meme becomes increasingly clearer through an analysis of its etymological roots – an intermediary, not so much between languages involved as between communicating individuals, and the institutional and socio-cultural positions they represent. This figure also highlights the theme of mediation in interpreting.

2.4 Mediation in interpreting

The interpreter's clients are incumbents of particular roles who each have their own intentions and expectations. It is, therefore, likely that these intentions and expectations will often clash and force the interpreter to take action as a mediator; "not as a broker or conciliator in a negotiation, but as an agent regulating the evolution of understanding" (Pöchhacker, 2004:59). This can be found in turn-taking and monitoring the flow of communication which places the mediator in a gate-keeper position, "in the more critical case of one party signalling a lack of understanding, the interpreter's mission of enabling communication is at stake and may require some form of mediation intervention" (Pöchhacker, 2004:59) . Knapp-Potthof and Knapp (1986) found that the lay interpreter performing "linguistic mediation" would often shape the mediated intervention as an active third party as opposed to remaining neutral and invisible. Such findings have raised questions regarding the complex issues of the interpreter's role: "the question of what (else), other than relaying messages the interpreter is expected and permitted to do in order to facilitate understanding in a communicative event" (Pöchhacker, 2004:59).

In liaison interpreting, these concerns become increasingly relevant where interactions are characterised by unequal power relations and widely discrepant socio-cultural backgrounds in which the interpreter is charged to mediate. Jones argues that the idea of mediation in interpreting is as important in conference interpreting, "interpreters must bridge the cultural and conceptual gaps separating the participants in a meeting" (Jones, 2002:4). Jones (1998: 4) stipulates that an interpreter interprets a message "by providing the requisite explanations or even changing the original speaker's references". Interpreters represent two cultural systems,

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and are, similarly, agents of cultural interface. Bowen (1995:262) argues that interpreters bring together different cultures and represent "the culturally hybrid societies of the future". Cronin (2002:392) argues that interpreters are "intermediaries who not only allow for but also embody the meeting, coexistence and mutual reconciliation of cultures".

Regarding intervention in interpreting, Jones (1998:4) adds that the interpreter's task is to "instil meaning into the text for the target audience, if necessary (and if possible) by providing the requisite explanations or even changing the original speaker's references, in order to overcome cultural difficulties". Pöchhacker (2004:59) states that it can, therefore, be argued that "on the assumption that the interpreter's output must be adapted to the communicative needs of the target-cultural audience, the interpreter is, by definition and necessity, a cultural mediator". Through the interpreter's knowledge of two or more languages, the professional is placed in a greater position of power *vis-à-vis* his/her mediator counterpart. This setting is exemplified in cross-cultural settings where the interpreter represents two (or more) linguistic and cultural systems which can be viewed as cultural interface. Interpreters are, thus, practitioners who transgress borders and embody the meeting, coexistence, and mutual reconciliation of cultures.

The concept of the interpreter varies from country to country. The majority of top interpreting schools are found in the Western world; hence interpreters formed at these schools will be formed with a Western understanding of the interpreting profession. Consequently, it may be difficult to adapt to situations where the role of the interpreter differs from the "norm". Not many interpreting schools focus on the role of culture in interpreter training or implement

simulations in which cultural differences arise. It is on this point that this research sought to be

innovative and advocate for the inclusion of the cultural element in interpreting training. This

research is focused on the concept of the mediator to better determine his/her role in dialogue

settings.

2.5 The term "mediator"

For the purposes of this research, the term "mediation" was defined as follows:

> Mediation is a process in which an impartial third party – a mediator – facilitates the
> resolution of a dispute by promoting voluntary agreement (or "self-determination") by
> the parties to the dispute. A mediator facilitates communications, promotes
> understanding, focuses the parties on their interests, and seeks creative problem solving
> to enable the parties to reach their own agreement. These standards give meaning to
> this definition of mediation (American Arbitration Association, the American Bar
> Association's Section of Dispute Resolution, and the Association for Conflict Resolution,
> 2005:www.moritzlaw.osu.edu).

Pöchhacker (2004:10) states that the Webster's dictionary's (1986) definition of mediation

indicates three major senses in which this term could be understood; firstly "intervention

between conflicting parties or viewpoints to promote reconciliation, settlement, compromise,

or understanding" which is closely linked to the international law definition. Secondly, the

definition encompasses the "intercession of one power between other powers at their

invitation or with consent to conciliate differences between them". Thirdly, the definition

encapsulates "the function or activity of an intermediate means or instrumentality of

transmission" (Pöchhacker, 2004:10). According to Pöchhacker, this definition could be

employed as a template to best convey the idea of translation and mediation. Viaggio (2006)

argues that most translators deem their study/profession as mediation in the general sense,

because practitioners usually work between two (or more) languages. Otto Kade (1968), a

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pioneer of translation as an academic discipline, made use of the German term "*Sprachmittlung*" ("language mediation" or "linguistic mediation") as the most comprehensive designation of his object of study, and defined translation and interpreting as the principal conceptual subdivisions thereof. This research then focused on language and cultural mediation.

2.6 Linguistic and cultural mediation

Pöchhacker cites the functionalist approach of Katharina Reiß and Hans Vermeer (1984) as a departure point for language/cultural mediation. Against this background, Pöchhacker indicates that translation and mediation between languages and cultures or between "their" languages highlight instances where translation is equated with mediation, even in instances in which no modifier is employed, or when the idea of mediation is employed as a qualifier, as is the case in communication settings which is mediated where both the interpreter and mediator are present (Wadensjö, 1998). In the 1960s, Kade (1968) made mention of bilingual mediated communication, but in today's times, one would expect to speak of what Pöchhacker (2004:10) refers to as "mediated intercultural communication". The association between "translation" and "culture" is just as strong as the link between "translation" and "mediation", as exhibited in Figure 2 below.

TRANSLATION	= LINGUISTIC + CULTURAL	MEDIATION

Figure 2: Translation as linguistic/cultural mediation (Pöchhacker, 2004:12).

Kate's (1968) conceptual proposal of interpreting is adopted as a hyponym of translation in the wider, generic sense, inasmuch as "interpreting [being] a particular manifestation of translational activity, the basic characterisation of translation as linguistic/cultural or interlingual/intercultural mediation automatically applies to interpreting" (Pöchhacker, 2004:12).

When compared to translation (written), the concept of interpreting is centred on the interpersonal element of the actual translation process. Interpreting refers to the idea of enabling parties who do not speak the same language to communicate as opposed to an abstract intermediate position between languages and cultures. In this light, mediation in interpreting relates to the position of the interpreter between communicative parties (Pöchhacker, 2004:12). Hermann (2002:58) highlights that "the origins of the word *inter-pres*, though not conclusively established, have been associated with '*inter partes*', designating the human mediator positioned between two sides or parties".

In mediated face-to-face communication (as is the case with liaison interpreting and consecutive interpreting), the person is physically present. The practitioner is the person in the middle; an image which can be viewed through the interactional sense of the term. One would expect an interpreter to be a linguistic and cultural expert, but in instances where the liaison interpreter interacts with the clients extending beyond his/her primary purpose; a language broker, it may have the adverse effect of complicating his/her task which may lead people to query the interpreter's distance or proximity to either party. If the interpreter is obliged to clarify complex cultural traits/practises for one party over the other, such an "explanatory role"

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would negate the idea that the interpreter is the man/woman in the "middle". The negation of this idea may add another dynamic to the debate on the interpreter's role.

The interpreter's role has made provision for possible terminological variations for "interpreter" to Wadensjö's (1998:62-68) list which includes: "middleman, broker, go-between, and gatekeeper, and could be extended by such terms as 'facilitator', 'agent', 'advocate' or conciliator". In dispute/conflict situations, it is imperative that the mediator agrees to intervene as a third party between disputing parties with a clearly defined objective, getting parties to communicate with one another bearing in mind that the parties need to unanimously agree on the choice of mediator before any mediation process may commence. On this note, Taft (1989:59) states that "mediation between cultures requires the communication of ideas and information from one cultural context to the other. This is analogous to the process involved in linguistic translation, even though there is more to mediation than mere translation".

This research explores the myriad of challenges with which mediators are often faced, and linked them to the idea of mediation and interpreting to demonstrate that the interpreter is, inevitably, faced with similar dilemmas.

2.7 The mediator's challenges

The mediator must always strive for impartiality when mediating between two or more disputing parties. This view is echoed in *The seven deadly sins of mediation* (Brahimi and Ahmed, 2008:7):

> The mediator can say a great deal and be heard when (s)he is accepted as an impartial and honest broker. An impartial and honest broker is seen to be – and is – able to work with everyone who contributes to the peace, without creating the impression that (s)he is doing so on behalf of or actively against any of them, or in pursuit of any agenda other than to help all the people of the country concerned attain a sustainable peace.

Variables complicating further the mediator's work are the preconceived ideas of the professional. Before the mediator mediates, assumptions are made on the basis of his/her "nationality, religion, prior public announcements, organisational affiliation, past associations, international reputation, and hearsay" (Brahimi and Ahmed, 2008:7). The principal factor distinguishing the interpreter from the mediator is the former's knowledge of languages and cultures. Hence, an interpreter is a likely mediator, yet due to his/her lack of knowledge of more than one language, the mediator cannot interpret between languages. The idea of language as power is imperative when comparing the professions of interpreter and mediator as the mediator can be viewed as a cultural broker, but not as a language broker. Mediators, like interpreters, must strictly adhere to the Ethics of Impartiality and Confidentiality. Similarly, mediators and interpreters must promote understanding thereof (American Arbitration Association, the American Bar Association's Section of Dispute Resolution, and the Association for Conflict Resolution, 2015:www.moritzlaw.osu.edu).

> The concept of mediator impartiality is central to the mediation process. A mediator shall mediate only those matters in which she or he can remain impartial and even handed. If at any time the mediator is unable to conduct the process in an impartial manner, the mediator is obligated to withdraw (Brahimi and Ahmed, 2008:7).

The hypothesis of this research is that the interpreter's knowledge of languages and cultures places him/her in an ideal position to assume the role of cultural broker given that his/her in-depth knowledge of language permits him/her to intimately know the unwritten rules and nuances of a given culture; which are deeply embedded within language. In this optic, the

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interpreter is ideally placed to practise intercultural sensitivity. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992:416) summarise intercultural sensitivity as follows:

> To be effective in other cultures, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences and also willing to modify their behaviour as an indication of respect for people of other cultures. A reasonable term that summarises these qualities of people is intercultural sensitivity.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a cross-sectional analysis of the academic research on the terms "interpreter" and "mediator" to reveal the extent to which the two professions intersect. Both professionals are often faced with similar challenges. These similarities do not, however, signify that that the interpreter should replace the mediator as an agent striving for peace between disputing parties – this is the *raison d'être* of the mediator. The interpreter is both a linguistic and cultural broker who may assist the mediator by means of cultural intervention to achieve the overarching goal of the meeting in question. The crux of this research was to explore the idea of the interpreter as a cultural broker. The research found it beneficial to ascertain if the work of the mediator was institutionally defined as compared to that of the interpreter. After a cross-examination of the definitions of the interpreter and mediator, this research deduced that the roles of the interpreter and mediator intersect on the following points:

1. Both work to prevent exclusion;

2. Both mediate between two or more parties;

3. Both work towards intercultural dialogue;

4. Both are bridges;

5. Both are brokers;

6. Both are expected to practise impartiality;

7. Both must adhere to the Ethics of Confidentiality/Secrecy;

8. Both intervene between two parties as a third party;

9. Both work towards promoting understanding.;

10. Both follow professional protocols;

11. Both are suspected of disloyalty;

12. Both are accused of partiality.

CHAPTER 3: SKOPOS THEORY AND CULTURAL MEDIATION

3.1 Aims and background of chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the Skopos theory in relation to cultural mediation along with cultural differences in interpreting/translating according to Hall and Pistillo. This chapter analyses the inextricable link between language and culture, and how this link impacts on the role of the interpreter under the lens of the Skopos theory and the interpreting/translation brief. The research of academics such as Hall and Pistillo in cultural differences helped exhibit the importance of awareness of such variables when interpreting in multi-cultural environments. This chapter commences with an analysis of the Skopos theory, and provides an explanation of the functional approach to interpreting. This chapter then explores Christiane Nord's adaption of the functional approach, and provides the similarities between mediation and interpreting, and the language-culture link.

3.2 The Skopos theory

Skopos[10] is a Greek term signifying "intent, goal, purpose, aim, or function" (Gentzler, 1993:71). Skopos was introduced into translation theory in the 1970s by Hans J. Vermeer, and was initially employed as a technical term for the purpose of a translation and the action of translating. The Skopos theory may be defined as "the way in which a translation is done is determined by the aims and demands of the initiator of the translation, i.e. the person who asked for the translation to be done in the first place" (Kruger & Wallmach, 1999: 9).

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[10] The Skopos theory is also referred to as the functional approach.

The major work on the Skopos theory can be found in the book entitled *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*[11]; a book Vermeer co-authored with Katharina Reiss (Reiss and Vermeer, 1984). The backbone of Skopos theory is determining the purpose for which a document is to be translated which determines the:

> Translation methods and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. This result is the TT, which Vermeer calls the translatum. Therefore, in Skopos theory, knowing why a ST is to be translated and what the function of the TT will be crucial for the translator (Munday, 2001:79).

Herewith the basic tenets of the Skopos theory:

1. A TT is determined by its Skopos.
2. A TT is an offer of information in a target culture and TL concerning an offer of information in a source culture and SL.
3. A TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way.
4. A TT must be internally coherent.
5. A TT must be coherent with the ST.
6. The five rules above stand in hierarchical order.

Under the Skopos theory, the initiator is essential, because without the initiator, the interpreter would serve no purpose. A translation/interpreting project must be initiated by someone, as professionals do not merely translate/interpret for the sake thereof. Thus, the contractor can be viewed as the reason for which the translation/interpreting professions exist. The interpreter who is contracted to interpret in cross-cultural mediation settings would have to ensure that s/he meets the requirements of the initiator as set out in the interpreting brief[12].

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[11] Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation.

[12] The translation/interpreting brief is a "compatibility" test; a document prepared by the client outlining his/her objectives. The practitioner must ensure that s/he is able to meet the initiator's expectations and objectives before accepting the assignment. This brief may be viewed as a contract between the client and the practitioner.

The requirements and aims of the translator are labelled under the term Skopos. The goal of the translator is not necessarily to reflect the function of the ST in its source culture and context, but to fulfil the intended function of the initiator/contractor. The initiator usually has an intended purpose for having a given text translated. The onus is, thus, placed on the translator to enquire and understand fully this intended purpose. Consequently, the translation brief may result in the TT differing from the ST. Such results, under the umbrella of the functional approach, are not of importance. Instead, ensuring that that the TT reflects the initiator's Skopos as set out in the translation brief which will, in turn, satisfy the initiator's requirements. Ensuring that these requirements are met is what is of importance.

According to Christiane Nord (1993), the initiator must provide information concerning the specific outcomes of the translation in the form of the translation brief to the translator. The translation brief should contain information about the outcomes pertaining to the recipient along with the medium, time and place of and motive for communication, and intended function of the TT. The goal of the translator is, therefore, to communicate and adhere to these intended outcomes. Under the lens of the functional approach, the TT cannot be completed without adhering to the initiator's intended function and purpose of the translation.

Initially developed for the field of translation, the functional approach could be extended to the field of interpreting, as it is the contractor who employs the interpreter to carry out a specific task/function. Under the functional approach, Skopos would refer to the requirements and aims of the initiator. Nord (1993:39-40) indicates that the general Skopos theory of translation is not concerned with the culture-specific conditions under which it will be applied. In this vein,

the theory permits the translator to formulate a translation resonating with the intended purpose for which the text was translated. This rule may be deemed "the means justify the end"; indicating that a translator is, in the theoretical sense of the term, free to choose any translation Skopos for a text. The backbone of the model is that "the translation Skopos determines the translation procedures" (Nord, 1997:47).

The functional approach valorises the initiator (translator's contractor) to the extent that a duty is placed on the translator to ensure that the TT meets with the aims and demands of the contractor. The contractor is the crux of the translation profession, as the needs of the contractor determine the volume of the translator's work. This understanding helps clarify the extent to which the translation profession is governed by the principle of supply and demand.

Nord (1997:43) argues that Hans J. Vermeer's functional "Skopos theory" views translation as a form of human interaction governed by its purpose. A principal factor in the Skopos of a communicative activity is that the intended receiver or addressee each has his/her specific communicative needs. Nord adds that this model in translation is practical, as it is target-orientated and makes the target receiver the principal determinant of translational decisions. It is culture-orientated, because it considers translation as a "cross-cultural event" (Snell-Hornby, 1987:82). Vermeer (1986:33) states:

> Translation is not the transcoding of words or sentences from one language to another, but a complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (source language material) in a new situation and under changed functional, cultural and linguistic conditions, preserving formal aspects as closely as possible.

The functional approach pertains to translator training. Nord (1997:34) argues that the field does not require "submissive servants"; practitioners who are controlled by the ST (does a text

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possess so much that power it is able to govern people?), but fully responsible partners in a cooperative interaction between equals – no less no more.

3.3 The Skopos theory in intercultural mediation

Under the Skopos theory in intercultural mediation, one of the objectives of the interpreter would include cross-cultural mediation. This could be successfully achieved by ensuring that messages are faithfully transmitted by the interpreter between the SL culture and TL culture of the disputing parties. This may, however, be viewed as contradictory in the sense that, if the primary objective of the interpreter in cross-cultural mediation settings is to avoid conflict, the manner in which s/he interprets the message should prevent a recourse to conflict given the overarching importance of the Skopos theory. When viewed through a linguistic and cultural lens, the interpreter is contracted as a third party to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. The interpreter serves merely the purpose of bridging language and cultural gaps whilst promoting mutual understanding. Yet, in doing so, the interpreter inevitably forms part of the mediation process as a third-party given his/her linguistic and cultural knowledge of the SL and TL.

3.4 Christiane Nord's adaption of the functional approach

Christiane Nord (1997) adapted the generalist function approach to include the concept of loyalty by taking cognisance of the translation brief and extending this brief to include the initiator's expectations which are predetermined by the client's perception and overall understanding (culture-specific) of what translation entails. Nord (1993:29) defines loyalty as "a moral principle indispensable in the relationships between human beings who are partners in a

communicative action", and "a moral category which permits the integration of culture-specific conventions into the functionalist model of translation". The intention of the loyalty principle is to guide the professional in adhering to: the expectations of the author, the reader of the TT, and the initiator of the translator. Nord (1997:48) adds that:

> Loyalty commits to the translator bilaterally to the source and the target side. Loyalty must not be mixed up with "fidelity" or faithfulness, which usually refers to a relationship of similarity between texts or even surface structures of texts; it is an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between individuals.

The Skopos theory provides the interpreter with a clear interpreting mission. One of the shortcomings with the conventional functional approach/Skopos theory is the general public is not acquainted with the idea of providing the interpreter with an interpreting/translation brief. Such a lack of awareness should not, however, deter the practitioner from gathering as much information as possible concerning the initiator's goal to achieve his/her objective(s).

Nord critiques the general Skopos theory in that, in the author's view, this theory is not concerned with culture-specific conditions which may be left open to interpretation by the translator when attempting to comply with the translation brief to produce a particular original or TT. These factors explain, in part, why Nord adapted the general Skopos theory through the provision of "loyalty". This model may be described as a void which, in a particular translation task, is filled by the demands of the specific translational concepts of the cultures in question. In the case where the TT expects a translation to be a literal regurgitation of the original, translators cannot simply translate in a non-literal manner without informing the target audience of what they have done and why. "It is the duty of the translator to mediate between two cultures, and mediation must not mean 'cultural imperialism' (i.e. culture A pretending that

their concept is superior and must, therefore, be adopted by culture B)" (Nord, 1997:48). Nord (2006:6) stipulates:

> The loyalty principle thus adds two important qualities to the functional approach. Since it obliges the translator to take account of the difference between culture-specific concepts of translation prevailing in the two cultures (involved in the translation process), it turns *Skopostheorie* in an anti-universalist model; and since it induces the translator to respect the individual communicative intentions, as far as they can be elicited, it reduces the prescriptiveness of "radical" functionalism.

Nord's approach seems, however, to take a more balanced stance between these two extremes arguing that, with the aid of "loyalty", the text is restored, in part, to its former influence, but not on surface qualities as the cultural elements of the client will indeed affect the TT. In other words, advocates of this theory must factor into account the ST in-situation and the translation Skopos. Nord argues that her theory seeks to provide for the decision and feasibility of the translation task, and the ST elements required for a functional and loyal translation.

Incorporating the loyalty principle into the Skopos model would also solve the second problem encountered by Nord with the conventional/radical functionalism; which is centred on the relationship between the ST author and the translator. Typically, authors are not experts in translation; as such, they are likely to insist on a "faithful" rendition of the ST surface structures. Only if, however, they believe in the translator's loyalty will they consent to his/her amendments and/or adaptions which may be deemed necessary in order to make the TT work in the target-culture situation. This confidence would, consequently, further improve the translator's image as a responsible and trustworthy partner. This explains, in part, why Nord advocates for two pillars in her adaption of Skopos: (1) functionality and (2) loyalty (Nord, 2006:6).

3.5 Nord's new rhetoric formula

Nord's new rhetoric formula valorises the communicative function to the extent that this stage in the text translation is a decisive factor in the overall translation process, determined largely by the semantic and syntactic features of the text as subordinate factors. It may be argued that ST analysis should be based on a pragmatic model seeking to fuse intratextual and extratextual factors of communication. In this light, the new rhetoric formula seeks to accentuate the interplay between extra- and intratextual factors.

Questions under the heading of extratextual factors include (Nord, 1993: 40-43):

1. who;

2. to whom;

3. what for;

4. by which medium;

5. where;

6. when;

7. why, and

8. with what function?

These questions help understand the expectations of the translation brief. Nord further expands the utility of her theory by stating that the interdependence factors specific to her model seek for the inclusion of analysis in both the ST and TT. In other words, once a TT has been produced, the translator must ensure that important cultural factors in the ST are reflected for the TT's readership, notwithstanding the intended outcomes of the translation brief. In doing so, the translator will have a better understanding of what the TT should resemble. The end result of the ST analysis may be immediately compared with the results of the TT whilst strictly adhering to the initiator's translation brief. Nord (1993:40-43) summarises the new rhetoric formula by means of the following questions:

> Who transmits to whom, what for, by which medium, where, why a text with what function? On what subject matter does he say what (what not), in what order, using which non-verbal elements, in which words, in what kind of sentences, in which time, to what effect?

In comparing these results, the translator will be better equipped to determine the extent to which the ST has been adapted to the TL situation along with the procedures of adaption that will produce an adequate TT. This interplay seeks to ensure that the translator works with both texts to produce a sound TT resonating with the translation brief. The interdependence factors encapsulate a global holistic approach to the translation process under the heading of Nord's model. The pivotal question raised is: what is the effect and to what extent does this effect favour the intended outcomes as set out in the translation brief?

3.6 The language-culture link

Academics such as Franz Pöchhacker (2004) argue that the interpreter can be viewed as both a linguistic and cultural mediator. In regarding the interpreter as a language mediator, one could argue that the interpreter's conventional role would be governed by the functional approach. This research necessarily explores Hall's idea of high-and-low context cultures to determine the extent to which the language-culture link impacts on the interpreter's profession.

3.7 High-and-low context cultures

Pistillo (2003:2) bases his findings on his ideas of high-context cultures and low-context cultures as defined by E.T. Hall. According to Hall's theory, when people communicate, there exists a preconceived idea that the listener already has an idea about the subject. In low-context communication, the listener has very little knowledge and practically everything needs to be explained to him/her (Hall, 1989). Vincent Marrelli indicates that a distinction needs to be made between the various cultures in the world – high-context cultures like the Far East and South-East Asia, on the one hand, and low-context cultures – those of the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Latin America, on the other hand (Katan, 1999). Pistillo (2003:3) states that the majority of Germanic and English-speaking cultures are low-context; communication relies mainly on explicit statements, thus leaving little or no need for interpretation or imagination to understand the message. In low-context cultures, *what* is said is more important than *how* it is said.

A major shortcoming with Hall's argument is his categorisation of both people and cultures which could lead to social discrimination, and, in the worst case scenario, racism. According to Hall, the fact that "the listener has very little knowledge and that everything needs to be explained to him/her" in low-context cultures could be interpreted as the listener being uninformed, and that the speaker (if coming from the high-context culture) would have to assume a "paternal" role by explaining everything which would have the unintended consequence of the creating of a superiority and/or inferiority complex regarding knowledge and information between the respective cultural groups.

Culture comprises a perpetually changing and evolving dynamic. Certain cultural traits vary across different groups of people around the world, hence the need for the interpreter to take cognisance of these specific cultural traits to deal with them appropriately. This bolsters the argument for specific cultural traits across different groups of people which signifies that one cannot categorise people and cultures as this would lead to generalisations, cultural misunderstandings, and, as previously discussed, racism and stereotypes which may include; "Europeans are unfriendly, whereas Africans as friendly".

Cultural traits play an indispensable role in intercultural and cross-cultural mediation/dialogue settings as cultural misunderstandings have the potential to lead to most unfortunate consequences for both the mediator and interpreter. Liaison interpreters work not only with languages and cultures, but, more importantly, with people. To best interpret a message, the practitioner must adopt wholeheartedly the perspectives of their respective parties when transferring a message while disconnecting him/herself from him/herself to assume the

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identity of the respective client and repeating the process for the other client. This idea of disconnecting could help the interpreter to better understand the intended meaning that the parties wish to convey. The central theme of mediation as interpreting was then analysed.

3.8 Mediation as interpreting

When engaging in cross-cultural communication settings, one would need to employ an interpreter to successfully fill language and cultural gaps. Yet, one of the primary goals of the interpreter is impartiality, given that impartiality forms an integral part of the Interpreters' Code of Conduct. Impartiality needs to be balanced with intercultural sensitivity on the part of the interpreter. It is for this reason that the concepts of bi-partiality[13] and intercultural sensitivity need to be equally practised towards all parties. Given that the interpreter is viewed as a third party who intervenes to help "solve a conflict", it is likely that his/her role and intentions may be questioned by the disputant parties.

A central theme which emerged at the Second Alcalá Conference on Public Service Interpreting and Translation which took place in 2008 was "translation and mediation". One of the principal objectives of this conference was to deliberate on the professional function of interpreting in community-based settings. Pöchhacker (2004:9) indicates that it is imperative to distinguish between "the professional function of cross-cultural mediation (in the contractual, conciliatory sense) and that of interpreting in community-based settings, considering that there is ample scope for the professionalization of either".

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[13] Bi-partiality refers to the idea that the interpreter must assume the personal identity of the party of whom he/she conveys the message, but must do so in a way that will not lead to unintended conflict through means of preventing cultural misunderstandings (own definition).

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The query raised by Pöchhacker (2004:9) was whether the idea of mediation could/should be applied to interpreting. As a result of the conceptual analysis of the term 'mediation', there are three inherent dimensions under which it can be modelled, cognitive (mediating conceptual relations), cultural/linguistic (mediating intercultural relations), and contractual (mediating relations between two or disputant parties) which would include resolving conflict/differences between two or more disputant parties (Pöchhacker, 2004:9). Given that both the interpreter and the translator are charged with the responsibility of conveying a message from a SL and culture to a TL and culture, Pöchhacker's argues that the theme of "translation as mediation" can be extended to "interpreting as mediation".

The Skopos theory and the contractual analysis of mediation add to the role of the interpreter, and would lead to a situation in which the role of the interpreter is intertwined with that of the mediator.

Pöchhacker demonstrates clearly that this extension of roles is controversial as "every interpreter is a mediator (between languages and cultures), but not every mediator is an interpreter" (Pöchhacker, 2004:14). It could be argued, however, that the Ethics of Impartiality could never fully be respected by the interpreter as the former serves the purpose of filling language and cultural gaps by virtue of interpreting. Yet, the term "interpreting" would signify that a message cannot be interpreted work for word from the SL to the TL. The manner in which an individual interprets a message is ultimately dependant on his/her political, economic, social, and religious backgrounds. Based on this understanding, the Translator and Interpreter's

Ethics of Impartiality is relative given that the afore-mentioned factors will ultimately influence the manner in which the practitioner interprets a message.

3.9 Cultural mediation

Cross-cultural mediation involving speakers from different cultural contexts is, by no means, a straightforward task for the interpreter. Angelelli (2000:581) states that the interpreter has to "decode and encode the message in such a way that the meaning and form may transfer into the language of the second party to produce the same effect that they would have produced in an audience who shared the first party's language". In other words:

> in addition to being bilingual, that is being proficient in the two languages involved in the interaction, the interpreter needs to be bi-cultural, that is to have a deep knowledge of and a strong feel for both cultures, and use this skill to avoid misunderstandings and communication failure (Pistillio, 2003:6).

Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain, there has been a growing increase in intercultural encounters and an unprecedented intensification in global proximity to the extent that people now speak of the "global economy" and the "global village". Such factors have resulted in a significant increase in intercultural and cross-cultural communication. Pistillo (2003:1) states that intercultural encounters take place through an interpreter who acts not only as a language and cultural bridge, but also as a language and cultural mediator. However, successful intercultural communication remains a difficult art to master, as different cultures employ different means to means to convey a given message[14]. This may be done through language –

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[14] This being said, the word 'different' is, in this context, relative as what is 'different' for one may be the norm for others. In a similar light, what is the norm for one may not be the norm for others. It is imperative to note that there are many norms and that no norm is absolute.

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verbal communication, body gesture – non-verbal communication, and employing time, space, and silence, all of which differ across cultural groups (Pistillo, 2003: 2).

Academics such as Chomsky (1985) who advocate for language universals state that meaning is the same across cultures, and that the most important factor in translation is that meaning is derived and transferred from one language to another. According to Chomsky, translation entails the encoding of surface structures from the ST to the TT; "the underlying deep semantic structure of the ST remains intact in TT as it is non-linguistic and, therefore, universal. In theory, this signifies that any meaning can be conveyed from one language to another and that any translation is possible" (Chomsky, 1995:368). In this light, cross-cultural communication is possible.

It would be naïve, however, to state that culture does not serve as a hindrance to understanding. Fan (1989:4) argues that there are instances in which culture prevents understanding:

> The fact that there are cultural barriers in translation is, I think, a common-sense truth. But I want to go further and argue that some cultural barriers are unbreakable and that completely new concepts and ideas are untranslatable from one culture into another very distant one. In other words, a deeply rooted cultural heritage cannot possibly be introduced through translation of books.

This research posits the argument of culture-relativism in texts; that the more culture-bound a text is, the harder it is to translate. Yet, in a globalised world, internationalisms have rendered possible the translation of international documents such as treaties, resolutions, and declarations (to name but a few) without distorting the intended meaning. Culture is, however, unlikely to disappear completely from our world, yet in spite of this constant not changing, the

possibility of conveying meaning across multiple languages through translation is becoming the norm as opposed to the exception. Translations of concepts such as "democracy" and "science" into Chinese would have been an insurmountable task two centuries ago (Fan, 1989:4). In as much as universal terms are becoming increasingly prevalent, cultural misunderstandings will continue to occur

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter analysed the Skopos theory in conjunction with the three inherent conflict mediation dimensions and the conceptual analysis of the term "mediation" to demonstrate the impact of these two factors on the interpreter's role. Nord's adaption of the Skopos theory to include the concept of loyalty illuminated further the degree to which language and culture are inseparable, and the manner in which the concepts of functionality and loyalty can be used to better mould interpreters. The Skopos theory was fused with mediation to magnify the extent to which the interpreter, under the functional approach/Skopos theory, assumes the role of mediator. The potential overlap between the work of an interpreter and a cultural mediator exemplifies the crucial language-culture link. This research argues that if specific cultural differences are not taken into account when interpreting in cross-cultural settings, the risk of cultural misunderstandings is elevated. When analysing the theme of mediation as interpreting, it became evident that impartiality would need to be balanced with intercultural sensitivity by the interpreter. This explained, in part, why the concepts of bi-partiality and intercultural sensitivity need to be practised towards all parties. Given that the interpreter is a third party

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intervening to help "solve a conflict", it is probable that his/her role and intentions may be questioned by the disputant parties.

CHAPTER 4: BAKER'S STUDY OF THE INTERPRETER ON THE BATTLEFIELD

4.1 Baker's study of the interpreter on the battlefield

Baker (2010:197) raises two central elements in her analysis of interpreters and translators in the war zone: firstly, the message conveyed by interpreters is often used by other participants in the war zone, namely: military personnel, mainstream media, war correspondents, alternative media and locals. Secondly, interpreters participate in the conflict by expanding on the range of public narratives of conflict and, subsequently, influence the course of war "in ways that are often subtle, often invisible, but nevertheless extremely significant" (Baker, 2010:197). Baker (2010:198) argues that the issue of trust is of utmost importance to the interpreter, given that the practitioner speaks both languages – the language of the "enemy" as well as his/her home language; this issue of difference becomes vital, as the intentions of the interpreter are often questioned: "where the translator or interpreter is then positioned, as one of *us* or potentially one of *them*, becomes extremely important and has concrete and often life-threatening consequences" (Baker, 2010:198). Thus, issues of difference and homogeneity are pivotal for the narration of the storyline of a conflict; which often influence the role of the interpreter (Baker, 2010:200):

> … each translator or interpreter is ultimately an individual with a personal history, with a potentially complex, shifting and perhaps even ambivalent position in relation to different elements of the public narratives that orient the war, and often with a network of personal relations on both sides of the war. And yet translators and interpreters, like members of society, soon find that there is no place in war for fluid, shifting identities, for split or even strained loyalties, nor for negotiated narratives of any kind.

In expanding on the interpreter's impact on a conflict setting, the General Secretary of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting in Britain, Alan Wheatley stated in an interview (Baker, 2010:207):

> The interpreter offers a method of communication that brings understanding in very, very difficult circumstances. They understand the Iraqi culture. An interpreter is also a local knowledge specialist. They're one of the key factors in bringing democracy to these countries.

Baker (2011:214) cites Tom Peter's (2008:1) report in the *Christian Science Monitor* and adopts Peter's term of interpreters as "unofficial historians" as follows:

> While many UN soldiers have served multiple tours in Iraq, a core group of Iraqi interpreters have worked with the US for almost the entire war. But unlike the soldiers that they work for, they don't leave. Rooted in the conflict, they've become the unofficial chroniclers of the war, watching its ups and downs, and passing along to military newcomers the story of the battle for Iraq.

Concerning Peter's point of "unofficial historians", Baker argues that interpreters and translators are chroniclers and narrators of war due to two key factors: their personal narratives, and their ability to act as gatekeepers in a wide range of aspects.

The point of gatekeepers of information is another manner in which interpreters and translators exercise their indirect influence on the way in which a conflict is narrated, and demonstrates that the interpreter's role influences the overall conflict setting. To expand on this idea of gatekeepers of information, the question of trust and loyalty on the part of the interpreter was explored. Jesús Baigorri-Jalón's (2011) research on wars, languages, and the role(s) of interpreters expands on the role of the interpreter on the battlefield.

4.2 Jesús Baigorri-Jalón's research on wars, languages and the role(s) of interpreters

Baigorri-Jalón (2011:1) argues that wars are a "motor of supply and demand of interpreters", and cites the Nuremberg trials (1945-1946) as a prime example of the indispensable role that *ad hoc* interpreters served in a post-conflict setting. Many of the interpreters employed during these trials arrived there by chance; either because they could speak two or three languages fluently or because they there were at the right place at the right time. The Nuremberg trials were a landmark development for simultaneous interpreting, as the use of consecutive interpreting throughout these trials would have taken an eternity. In the 1920s, simultaneous interpreting was pioneered in select schools in Europe (Geneva and Vienna). This discipline of interpreting was an invaluable asset during the Nuremberg trials. The image of these interpreters was highly regarded in the public eye to the extent that this prestige was maintained in the early years of interpreting in the United Nations, where most interpreters were veterans of the League of Nations (Baigorri-Jalón 2000, 2004). The success of simultaneous interpreting during these trials explains, in part, why this mode of interpreting was later adopted by the United Nations.

When the AIIC was established in 1953, the image of interpreters as top-level professionals with a high social prestige was the guiding principle behind the establishment of its founding rules. Prestigious interpreting schools in Geneva, Heidelberg and Paris were, similarly, inspired by this social prestige (Gile, 2006: 2).

Concerning military personnel or interpreters on the battle zone, several questions can be raised regarding the use of *ad hoc* interpreters to bridge communication gaps: do the latter adhere to professional principles of ethics, morals, neutrality, self-confidence?

Baigorri-Jalón (2011:6) isolates three main factors which impact on the *ad hoc* interpreter's performance whilst interpreting on the battlefield:

1. Firstly, trust; the military hierarchical chain of command can interfere with/influence the overall performance of the professional duty (interpreting). These have been instances where junior-rank officials have suddenly been placed in high-ranking positions *vis-à-vis* their superiors given that they speak more than one language to gather vital information. These *ad hoc* interpreters may serve as gatekeepers of information especially in the case of the interrogation of prisoners of war.

2. Secondly, neutrality; where a soldier/interpreter may be patriotic, the lines of neutrality may quickly become blurred.

3. Thirdly, an important factor is stress; cases where *ad hoc* interpreters work for the army intelligence, and need to interpret confidential information accurately would certainly add untold pressure and stress to the former; thus hindering his/her ability to perform at optimal level.

Languages can be viewed as weapons and can go to war. When war personnel or civilians are employed as interpreters in wars/conflicts, this usually stems from the principles of supply and demand. War personnel speaking more than one language can easily communicate with local

populations, and may be required to communicate with local civilians, get involved in propaganda activities (psychological warfare), contact prisoners of war, control occupied territories, and to evacuate non-combatants. The official end of hostilities may require interpreters to play a role in: working in peace negotiations, the management of mass population movements, the demobilisation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of combatants in civilian life, the resistance of liberation movements. After the establishment of peace, there is usually a need for armistice negotiation(s) and signing. In such instances, the interpreter could find him/herself serving the vital purpose of permitting people to communicate across language and culture barriers.

Beach (2008:1-28) argues that war has been the rule rather than the exception in the history of humankind. Once the conflict begins, the frantic search for translators/interpreters ensues. Beach (2008) refers to the mobilisation of educated British civilians for them to serve as interpreters and intelligence experts (over 300 hundred in the British Expeditionary Corps) in World War I.

Baigorri-Jalón cites the importance of the principle supply and demand to illustrate the extent to which the demand for languages escalates in times of war. The escalation in the demand for Arabic-speaking personnel in the United States of America (USA) after the beginning of the successive wars in the Gulf and Iraq was a prime example. Another example cited is from World War II with the internment camps for potential enemies in Britain, Canada or the USA where some 600,000 Italians, 300,000 Germans and 100,000 Japanese were registered as enemy aliens in the U.S in over fifty detention and internment facilities in the U.S.A.

The wartime Treaty Study Act is still pending of approval (2009) by the full United States Congress, due to the opposition of some Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill addresses the World War II incarceration of thousands of German-Americans and Italian-Americans, many not released until several years after the conclusion of the war. According to the "findings", over 600,000 Italian-born and 300,000 German-born "resident aliens" were branded as "enemy aliens". These Americans were forced to carry special Identification Certificates, their travel was limited, and some had their personal property seized. Much like the internment of the Japanese, many of these Italian and German aliens were forced to move, often leaving behind homes and businesses (Baigorri-Jalón, 2011:http://campus.usal.es).

In terms of post-war situations, Moser-Mercer and Bali (2008) highlight that interpreters are recruited not on the basis that they are trained as translators/interpreters, but rather owing to their "fluency" of both the local language/dialect and English, given that English is the language of international relief operations. According to the first phase of their *project confirm*[15] it was evident that those assigned to interpret/translate did so without (or hardly) ever having received any professional training. Consequently, they lacked the necessary professional know-how and professional ethics to support crisis management and humanitarian efforts in a stressful environment which hindered them from serving as professional interpreters.

The role of the interpreter/translator on the battlefield is multidimensional, and the practitioner cannot be assigned a single role given that each scenario differs from the next. In most cases, "interpreters" were either accidental linguists, did not identify themselves as a specific trade or profession, or sometimes acted as guides, cultural brokers, liaison officers, interrogators, or court interpreters. Added to this was that their roles juggled between intelligence, counterintelligence, propaganda, and diplomacy (Baigorri-Jalón, 2011:19). In carrying out their tasks, interpreters are primarily driven by the need to survive. Even though

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[15] Project HOPE was founded on the willingness of doctors, nurses and other medical volunteers to travel the globe on a floating hospital ship - the SS HOPE- to provide medical care, health education and humanitarian assistance to people in need (Project Hope, 2014: www.projecthope.org).

languages may inflict less damage than conventional arms, they can influence the development of operations. Baigorri-Jalón (2011:20) argues that "translation and interpreting is a constant adaption to local needs and ears". In conflict settings, interpreters can be gatekeepers, and assume higher positions in the military chain of command. Based on their own social control, they alternated codes and strategies depending on the given circumstances while constantly avoiding being drowned in an ocean of words or lost in translation (Baigorri-Jalón, 2011: 20).

In cases where *ad hoc* interpreters are required to interpret/translate for intelligence or counterintelligence, the lack of professional training could lead to instances where they are not adequately equipped to deal with the pressure and stress of working in such environments which would inevitably hinder their ability to interpret satisfactorily. This point could be extended to the liaison/community interpreter interpreting in cross-cultural settings, but may not possess the necessary cultural skills/experience to adequately deal with challenges for which they may not have been adequately trained.

4.3 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to exhibit that the presence of an interpreter influences, in one way or another, the direction of a given conflict. In the case of an *ad hoc* interpreter, the interpreter's identity can influence a number of factors in a conflict situation. In such cases, the Ethics of Impartiality would prove increasingly difficult to adhere to. An interpreter possesses power, as he/she is the means by which communication occurs. His/her on the ground role often evolves and diverges from language broker. Up to this point, the findings of this research were theory-based, and needed to be weighed up against the practical aspect which, for the

scope of this research, would appear in the form of open interviews. This explains, in part, why the open interviews were conducted with interpreters with whom the researcher could share the theoretical findings of this research, and to whom open-ended questions based on the theoretical findings of this mini-dissertation could be posed.

CHAPTER 5: OPEN INTERVIEWS

5.1 Background and aims of the open interviews

The open interviews sought to obtain a practitioner's perspective to the questions posed by this research. The interview schedule[16] contained a range of open-ended questions which permitted the researcher to understand the following pillars:

1. the interviewee's thoughts surrounding the idea of the interpreter as a cultural broker;

2. the idea of implementing specific training to overcome cultural differences;

3. the pivotal language-culture link;

4. the vital role the interpreter plays in communication, and

5. to better understand the practical aspect of the liaison interpreting profession.

The interviews took place in a relaxed environment which permitted the interviewees to express themselves freely. Before the actual open interviews commenced, the researcher asked general questions relating to their background and profession. Most of the interviewees shared more or less the same view on the questions posed. Thereafter, extracts from each interview highlighting unique elements in their responses were analysed. All three interviews were recorded and saved onto a CD which will be submitted with this mini-dissertation. This chapter delivers a rendition of the responses as follows:

1. the first interview;

2. the second interview, and

3. the third interview.

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[16] Appendix 1.

Thereafter, a summary is provided of the open interviews based on the extensive literature review in the first part of the research and the research questions with a cross-sectional analysis followed in a cross-sectional format to indicate instances where the interviewees' responses corresponded with and/or deviated from the research findings.

5.2 The first interview

The first interview was held at the DIRCO premises on 27 November 2012. The respondent joined the former DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) in 1972, and had, in the course of his career, been called to interpret in instances where they had not foreseen that there would be a need for an interpreter; this is what he labels as a "line-function interpreter". An interesting remark he made was in cases of high-level conflict situations or high-level negotiations, stakeholders would systematically make use of their own interpreters because of important issues at stake which include, but are not limited to trust, loyalty, security and confidentiality.

When questioned about intercultural settings, he immediately responded by with the formula: two languages = two cultures. As such, an interpreter is always in intercultural settings. He recalled an instance between South African and French officials:

> A South African minister would visit the French minister, and there is a meeting with officials. The South African minister would then say, (sic) well, I might as well sit in with the officials, and then the French minister would be upset and refuse to meet with the South African minister. Because with the French, the two ministers meet, they discuss the general points, and then they delegate it for their officials to speak. So, for a South African minister to sit in on a meeting with officials; which would seem harmless to us, would be seen as an insult for the French, to the ministerial position, and he would then refuse to see our minister.

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An additional example cited was when South African officials met with their Francophone counterparts.

> In many African languages, there is no word for "no". "No" is too rude, so you never say "no". In Japanese, there is no word for "no'", which leads to misunderstandings. To take a generalised example, if you ask an African president, flat out, are you going to vote for our candidate? And he says "I will do my best", that is actually "no". It is about as close that he can come to say "no" or "I will think about it" or "I will speak to someone else". Not all South Africans are aware of this, especially when we use people who are not diplomats as emissaries; which often occurs. You find that there are often misunderstandings. The African interlocutor is friendly, he is polite and he would not say "no". "I am not prepared to help you", not many Africans would say that. He would give a message to somebody who has skills in intercultural interpretation; you simply fill in your form and you say "no". Not many South Africans are able to do that. One of the worst dangers is, of course, when they think that there is enough comprehension that they think that they can manage without an interpreter. A very good interpreter might be able to correct these misunderstandings during the course of the discussion.

How were you able to pick up on such culturally sensitive issues?

> Purely experience. When I joined the Foreign Service in 1972, training for line-function officers was only just beginning. We had two hours a day with a series of *ad hoc* lectures. The rest we learned from experience. I think experience and some knowledge of the culture you are dealing with is absolutely essential to interpretation, because no word has any meaning except in its cultural context. You can take, for example, the very simple word "minister" which would seem very simple to us. In many African countries, there are ministers who do not sit in the cabinet, it is not unusual, it used to be the case in Britain, where you could be a minister and not sit in the cabinet, but many African countries have a large number of ministers who are not in the cabinet and that means that, at the most, they are presidential advisors. It does not mean that they have any power or that they have any influence. There are also authoritarian regimes all over the world, where a minister is merely a courtier; he can be used as a messenger, but it is a total misunderstanding to think that he has any power, apart from the president's power. So, there again, even the most simple word must be seen in its context.

In your experience, how did you successfully deal with such problems?

> I would let the foreign interlocutor know that your principal isn't catching it. If I was speaking to the minister of police, and I knew him, and he said, "we shall do our level-best to apprehend this man ..." I would, perhaps, if the context permitted it, say under my breath to my minster, the minister says "he is sorry, but he cannot help [...]". In other cases, your only hope would be to enlighten your minister afterwards. [...] The old story from the Rhodesian bench when the judge said, interpreter, will you ask the

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witness if she is one of those young ladies who is in the habit of offering her body in return for monetary reward, and the interpreter said, "*uri hure*?"[17].

Do you think that your role as an interpreter helped in mediation/dialogue settings in any way and if so, how?

> [...] Intercultural mediation, mediation really means, to me, something like interpretation. [...] Mediation is a term of art which is important, because when a thing is a term of art, it loses its meaning. Mediation in diplomacy is a clear concept [...]. Mediation in the sense of making one culture more understandable to the other: I would say that is that is the essence of interpretation [...]. It is essential that if your interpreter says, we will send you an invitation as soon as possible, you might have to say, for the South African, that might mean within the next month and let him understand. But I don't see yourself (sic) as an intercultural missionary trying to teach people in the long term, because the guy you are interpreting for may never come there again. Although it is sometimes useful, but you cannot always control the situation [...].

> There are cases, where this is necessary, but there are cases where this is much resented. A minister quite frankly said to his interpreter, "*jy lieg*"[18]. The interpreter was an official who was very eager, trying to achieve something; he was making things a little bit better than it was. Now, although the minister did not speak a word of French, and he was a very sharp person, and resented his words not being translated exactly and he resented the interpreter being too much of an intercultural mediator. There are times where it is necessary, but there is no solution. I have been with a South African delegation on many occasions where the local populations have offered refreshments and something which is common to South Africans is that, when they do not know what to say, they just keep quiet. So if the host says, would you like a drink, then you have a situation where the SA delegation does not say "no, thank you", "yes, thank you", they don't say anything and just stay quiet. The nearest I could get to, "I will have something" in the hope that this will get the ball rolling, but sometimes it doesn't. A similar problem to which there is no solution, and this is another South African peculiarity is that sometimes in answer to an invitation, South Africans just don't answer. They don't say "yes" and saying "no" would be "too rude". So you are stuck with total silence. And there, depending on how strong your position is, how much you like your job, you are perhaps forced to say, Minister, your equivalent has invited you, should I tell him that you will think about? Should I tell him "no"? Should I say "yes"? I am afraid, Minister, we are obliged to say something.

So here, there is a case of intervening?

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[17] This means, "are you a prostitute" in Shona. This is a very direct manner in which to address someone in Shona. To address someone in a more formal setting, one would say "*muri*", the equivalent of "*U*" in Afrikaans or "*vous*" in French.

[18] You are lying, translated from Afrikaans.

It can happen, but it is, of course, dangerous. It is not necessarily appreciated by one side or the other side. Or it may not be appreciated by either side.

I think that the fundamental rule must be to stick as close to what the people are trying to say themselves as possible. It could be that the one person uses a word which has a fairly simple meaning to him, but means something quite different in another language, then, of course, you can change it. But that is, strictly still, interpretation; you are sticking as close to what your principal was trying to say or what the other person was trying to say. [...] I think that interpreters are not line-function officials; they are often not even citizens of the country, because of a lack of interpreters. An interpreter may be a citizen of a totally third country. The interpreter may not actually know the nuances of the politics, so the fundamental rule is always that the interpreter must stick as close as possible to the original wording in a normal; in an everyday interpretation as possible. I don't think that the interpreter has much of a mandate for mediation if, of course, you are a line-function official who is involved in the process. It can happen. And a line-function official is entitled to tell his minister, "I am sorry, Sir, I don't think that I should interpret that; that is a rude joke in this country. I would rather not say that or something like that". That is part of your duty as a line-function official, but not strictly as an interpreter.

Would the interpreter also work towards peace in the case where peace is the ultimate goal?

The interpreter must work for the person who he is working for; the side who pays him. If the interpreter works for the mediator, his aim is to make the mediation succeed. If he works for the one side, he works for the one side; if he works for the other side; he works for the other side. If the mediator is not a serious mediator - a third country working for their own advantage - then that is, unfortunately, his duty; the interpreter works for the country he works for, and countries do not always want to achieve what they pretend to achieve. The mediator may be there to make the problem worse, if that is his instruction from his government. [...] He may be there, which is often the case, to mediate, but also to get the new contract at the airport. [...] Rather you should avoid the unusual situation where an interpreter is a line-function; wearing two hats because that confuses the issue. An interpreter must work for his principal, and he may or may not be informed of all of the interpreter's motives; which is another issue, but to the extent he is, if the person briefs him before the meeting, and says this is what our aim is, then that is the job that he is paid to do. And that is why, very often, in a very important meeting, both sides have their own interpreter. It is actually dangerous, in serious negotiations, to rely on the other guy's interpreter because he has no loyalty to you.

5.3 Summary of the first interview

The interviewee may not have possessed much theoretical knowledge in the field of interpreting, yet his insight and experience proved most useful for the purposes of this

research. His views on loyalty were straightforward: the person who contracts the interpreter determines, ultimately, where the interpreter's loyalty will lie. He indicated that adapting a message forms part of interpreting; one interprets a message and does not simply translate or interpret word for word. The examples of cultural misunderstandings were illuminating.

Given that the respondent served as a line-function interpreter, one could link his experiences with Chapter 3: 'Baker's study of the interpreter on the battlefield'. The respondent was not aware of the Code of Ethics for interpreters, namely: Impartiality; and argued convincingly that in cases where an interpreter is a line-function official for an embassy in a foreign country, he/she will inevitably remain loyal to the government for whom he/she works.

Concerning the theory of the interpreter and the profession of interpreting, the respondent argued that a message cannot be copied, and that the manner in which a message is conveyed depends on the setting of the meeting. The interviewee added that the language-culture link cannot be overlooked, and that this link significantly impacts on the interpreter's work. Cultural mediation does not imply that one is a 'cultural missionary', but rather a cultural facilitator. The respondent's feedback regarding the possibility of the interpreter as a mediator was appreciated, as he is well acquainted with the role of the mediator and the interpreter in the field of diplomacy.

His reflections on the work of a mediator and the work of the interpreter was appreciated given that it helped distinguish more clearly between the roles of the individuals, and confirmed that

the straddling of roles cannot be permitted. He did, however, make provision for the interpreter to assume the role of cultural broker. In this sense, the unconventional role of the interpreter would indeed be hard to define, but it is evident that the interpreter must endeavour to help people not speaking the same language to communicate and dialogue whilst harmonising with the overarching objective of the meeting (interpreting/translation brief). In such an instance, the interpreter would be permitted to assume both the role of linguistic and cultural referee. This research then proceeded to the second interview.

5.4 The second interview

The second interview was held at Rosebank Mall, Johannesburg on 21 April 2013. In 2012, the second interviewee completed an Honours degree in Interpreting and Translation at the University of Witwatersrand. The interviewee in question is currently studying towards a Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation at the University of Witwatersrand. Before commencing his studies in Interpreting and Translation, he studied law and practised as a lawyer. He then abandoned this profession to embark on what he calls "a late vocation", interpreting. He maintains that studying Interpreting and Translation helped him refine his art. He has worked both as a conference and liaison interpreter, and has interpreted for organisations such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and similar organisations. He has been living in South Africa for over five years, and is originally from the Republic of Congo. The interviewee is relatively young, and has aspirations of interpreting for the United Nations.

What interpreter training did you receive before becoming an interpreter?

> Before becoming an interpreter, I didn't receive any training. I think that I was called to interpret by someone and it turned out that I was good at it. And from that experience, I was required to interpret on several occasions thereafter. I went onto the Internet to find resources whereby I could find additional information about what words to use, what not to be done, everything. But, I was not trained to be an interpreter.

Are you currently involved in any interpreting studies/training?

> Yes, I am currently studying. Last year, I did my honours in Interpreting and this year I am doing my Master's in interpreting. I am learning quite a bit. Things that I didn't know before; now when I am practising, it helps in what to do, techniques, variables, parameters; things which are relevant to my profession as an interpreter.

Have you heard of any statement of Ethics for interpreters?

> At school, whilst I was studying; during my honours, we had a lecture on the Ethics of Interpreters and Translators, we learnt some norms. If I am not mistaken, there is an institution in South Africa; SATI, and they gave us their requirements and norms on ethics and related matters.

Has it affected the way in which you interpret?

> Yes, tremendously. I know about Ethics. The way in which I conduct my profession; there are a lot of norms and requirements that I'm applying today.

Have you ever interpreted in intercultural settings?

> As an interpreter, you are a facilitator. There are people from America, Africa and Asia. Even in community interpreting, you are there trying to put different people together. You have someone from Pakistan or Afghanistan, and someone from Africa, and you can see that the approaches are not the same.

With the different cultures, what were the biggest problems that you found, and how did you overcome them?

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For instance, at a hospital, the doctor was a "Westerner" and the patient was from India, a Muslim. So it wasn't easy to show his private parts; as an interpreter, I tried to explain to the client to ensure that communication would occur, and that the client would not feel bad.

Did you undergo any specific training in terms of resolving cultural differences?

No. Last year, during my Honours degree, we were taught that, as an interpreter, you have to ensure that things like culture and language are managed, and put together, but it was not very intense, it was not well developed.

So have you, as an interpreter, helped people communicate?

Of course, yes. An interpreter is a communicator. You are there as a communicator. You must ensure that you correctly translate the message.

Would it be necessary for community interpreters to undergo specific cultural training?

It is a difficult question. There is a "yes" and "no". As an interpreter, I think that there is no need for interpreters to undergo cultural training. However, it would be advantageous to permit them to be more efficient. It is a good practise; as a community interpreter, you want to be aware of the people's cultures. Most of the time, from your training, there is information that you can use. It would be advantageous.

Do you believe that an interpreter is a cultural mediator?

Of course, yes, I do believe that he is, by virtue of the fact that you are interpreting for two different people not speaking the same language. You cannot separate language from culture. You are a mediator between two different people coming from different horizons.

To what extent should the interpreter assume this role?

It depends. I am a practicing interpreter, it is context dependent. You will put cultures together, but it all depends. It is true, culture plays a major role.

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As a cultural broker, can the interpreter remain impartial?

> As an interpreter, there are norms. You must be impartial. However, it is difficult. As an interpreter, you are doing your job; uniting different people from different horizons. As a result, we know that Ethics are present, you must respect these rules. You must do your utmost to remain as impartial as possible. It is a tough situation. You must be as professional as possible. It is not easy, but it is possible.

Should the interpreter's language role be extended? Is it possible legally and practically?

> As an interpreter, you are dealing with cultures. You are automatically a broker.

In the case where there is a mediator, does the interpreter overshadow the mediator?

> I do not think so. The interpreter, in a certain manner, is a mediator; he understands both cultures. He will mediate, you can say "yes", but he is not a mediator as such, but he unites two languages. It is context dependent. He will, in a certain manner, overshadow his role.

5.5 Summary of the second interview

The second interview delivered more of a professional rendition in his responses. It was interesting to note the extent to which professional interpreter training and the studying of interpreter theory have positively impacted on his ability to interpret. Moreover, studying in a culturally diverse country; South Africa seems to have made him increasingly aware of the importance of culture and its impact on the profession. The instances cited of how he assumed the role of cultural broker were refreshing, and helped the researcher appreciate further the extent to which culture impacts on the interpreter's work. The interviewee did not stipulate that cultural training should be mandatory, but did state that this element would be a welcomed addition to the training of interpreters. Before commencing his studies in Interpreting and Translation, he worked as an interpreter, and attests to the benefits of the

interpreter training he received in the course of his studies in Interpreting and Translation. Had the cultural element been incorporated into his training and studies, it would have been interesting witness the extent to hear his viewpoint on the benefits, if any, on culture-specific training. His appreciation for the theoretical work in interpreting was evident, as it helped balance his practical experience with theoretical knowledge. It was indeed refreshing to interview an individual who is as passionate about his work, and the difference he hopes to make by enabling people who do not speak the same language across language and cultural barriers.

5.6 The third interview

The third interview was held at Rosebank Mall, Johannesburg on 11 May 2013. The third interviewee works on a fulltime basis at the SADC and is based in Botswana. He works between French and English. Before commencing work on a fulltime basis at the SADC, he worked as a freelance interpreter/translator. Similarly to the second respondent, he, too, studied Interpreting and Translating at the University of Witwatersrand before launching his career as a professional interpreter[19]. In addition to this, he has many years of experience, and whose responses provided the researcher with many points on which to reflect.

What interpreter training did you receive before becoming an interpreter?

I did an Honours degree in Interpreting at the University of Wits.

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[19] A professional interpreter is an interpreter who interprets on a fulltime basis, and has studied interpreting studies or has undergone formal interpreting training.

Before becoming an interpreter, were you aware of any statement of Ethics for Interpreters?

> Yes, of which the most important being Confidentiality, but a lot of it was learnt in practise; not using the information gathered in meetings and selling it to the press. Then there is also how one should conduct oneself in front of the delegates. Then there is also the way in which one relates to fellow colleagues; one must be able to work as a team; we must help others. There is also following the client's instructions.

During your lectures, did your lecturers ever study any Ethics for Interpreters?

> Not specifically, this was learnt during my practise. As I mentioned earlier, the Ethics of Confidentiality. There is also the interpreter's conduct with the delegates. Arriving on time before the meeting to prepare; you must be in the booth. One must familiarise oneself with the texts.

Have you ever interpreted in a cross-cultural setting?

> There were several meetings, 90% of the meetings are multicultural hence why we require interpreters. These meetings unite people from different countries, different continents. It is multicultural.

How were you selected to interpret in such settings?

> Clients take into consideration the interpreter's profile; they look at the studies that they pursued. Qualifications play an important role. They look at their ability to interpret along with their conduct; professionalism. You may be a good interpreter, but your conduct may not be good, and you may not respect the Interpreter's Code of Ethics. As such, there are many determining factors: professionalism, self-discipline along with competency. I don't know the exact reason why clients requested my services; but it is a culmination of these factors. You may be a good interpreter, but in terms of Ethics, it may not be the same which will result in you not being selected. So it is a combination of elements. You must have all these qualities to be selected.

In your interpreting training, they taught you to interpret between languages; was there any

training on how to relate between cultures?

> No, I didn't receive any cultural training. It is something that one learns on the job. As a university student, you meet people from different backgrounds; it is a form of training in itself. You have colleagues from Africa, Europe and India.

Do you think that in an interpreter's formation, one should learn to deal with different

cultures?

> Yes, it is very important because over and above communication, the messages can be interpreted differently depending on one's cultures, and especially due to the fact that the people for whom we interpret have different cultures. For example, in Congo and in Francophone Africa, people love titles. If someone is a "professional", a university lecturer, an engineer, or a doctor, and you address him by his name, he can go as far as stopping the meeting as he would deem this behaviour as disrespectful. So this is something that you must know. At South African universities, we address the lecturers by their names, and not by their titles, which is normal. It is, therefore, imperative that an interpreter is aware of this. Beyond his normal training, the onus is on him to learn different cultures and how these cultures impact on his work.

Do you think that your role as a community interpreter has helped people communicate?

> Of course, without the interpreters, there would be no meeting. There have been instances where meetings have not taken place as a result of a lack of interpreters. Consequently, there was a scramble to find interpreters [...]. It did help because people have signed agreements and treaties, and different documents, and established economic partnerships because the interpreters were present.

Do you think that the community interpreter's role is interchangeable with that of the mediator?

> No, there is no conflict because the interpreter speaks on behalf of the mediator, and on behalf of the person who speaks. This is why we never say, when interpreting, "he said..." rather, we say "I" because we are, in a sense, wearing a mask. It is the speaker who speaks through the interpreter. So it is not possible to confuse their roles. An interpreter cannot add his own input. As such, these are two completely different roles.

In the case of a cultural misunderstanding, and if, for example, the mediator is unable to pick

up on this, can the interpreter explain the culture of party A to party B?

> This is not necessarily the role of the interpreter. He facilitates communication. He transfers the message from one language to another. The objective is not to distort the message. He is not a facilitator. He must use words; communicate the message from one language to another whilst being conscious of the culture of party B to ensure that the message is properly communicated.

In some instances, the interpreter may have to modify the message from party A for party B?

He is not modifying the message, he is adapting the message. If I know that this word is offensive in culture B, I would have to find another word to communicate this message, because the intention of party A may not be to offend. So you have to take into consideration the context, the culture, the environment. If you are at the UN, then peace is the main objective. If there is conflict between two parties, then you will have to see how you will communicate. So the interpreter doesn't give the wrong message, the aim is to carry the same message, but to adapt it according to the context or to the intention of the speaker.

In modifying a message, can the interpreter remain impartial?

The interpreter is a referee. He should be impartial. This is why, sometimes, during interviews, during disciplinary hearings or court hearings, the parties are not aware of your nationality. If it involves, for example, a South African national who has been affected and a Mozambique national, there should not be a Mozambique interpreter; they should avoid recruiting a Mozambique or South African interpreter.

Can you give us examples where you have had to remain impartial?

It is during disciplinary hearings, where it can cause you to interpret because one of the speakers is a French-speaker from a Francophone country, and the jury is English-speaking. You know the background of this person; you know that he has travelled far to come and work so you think about yourself and how you fought to make it as an immigrant [...] Interpreting in such circumstances should, at all times, be avoided. You must be professional and impartial.

Do you think that the interpreter is both a linguistic and cultural referee?

Yes, because communication goes beyond language. The message goes beyond communication. The messages comes with culture, context. There are many elements with which the message comes. Words and messages should be contextualised.

Can you give us an example of when you had to use context to interpret better?

This is what an interpreter usually does. For example [...] due to confidentiality, I cannot expand, but a good interpreter always contextualises. You must know the settings, what is its aim. Then you adapt your work to that goal. If it is a peace resolution meeting and if you use conflict words, you will mislead the public.

Did you ever learn about the Christiane Nord?

I remember her. She speaks about context.

Have you ever heard about the Skopos theory?

I remember it. It has been long since I last read it.

Skopos theory says that there is an objective to a meeting. Do you receive translation briefs?

The client is not a professional interpreter/translator. People typically think that translators are typists. The same applies to interpreters. One must be pro-active; you must enquire about the aim. It is not only about money, if it is a meeting to plan a *coup* or to kill someone, then you must turn it down. So that, once again, comes back to ethics. You must ask your clients questions.

As a liaison interpreter, have you ever played the role of cultural mediator?

[...] Once, in a meeting between Congolese and South Africa businesspeople, I was employed by the Congolese clients and I was part of the team; there I did not only interpret, but they paid me more to be a negotiator; understanding the South African culture and business environment.

As a liaison interpreter, you are sometimes the negotiator?

Some academics speak of the power of the interpreter. How far can you go beyond your traditional role? There are cases where you go beyond the message and beyond your duty. This power is explained during the brief, where you ask the client what they expect you to do. Or where you have the documents. Is the message contained in the documents? So they delegate you some power. They should give you a Terms of Reference for your work.

Do you always receive terms of reference?

As a professional, you should always know the dangers of not having a Terms of Reference. You have to sign and the client has to sign the contract. You have to do this as a professional, as it can backfire on you.

5.7 Summary of the third interview

The third interviewee's responses and insight provided this research with many points of reflection regarding the overall direction of this research. His insight and experience strengthened his convictions regarding the interpreting profession which certainly is his passion and vocation. When questioned about the extent to which an interpreter can assume the role of the mediator, he was immediately against this idea, as saw the idea of straddling of roles as a perilous exercise for the practitioner. He did, however, make provision for interpreter to mediate by modifying a message to suit the specific context of the meeting, and to explain what the speaker intended to say. The examples of the extension of the role of the interpreter helped demonstrate the possibilities of what could arise in reality; especially in a country like South Africa where the interpreting profession is not taken as seriously as it should.

5.8 Summary of the open interviews

The overarching purpose of these open interviews was to gather the respondents' thoughts on this dissertation's objectives:

1. Firstly, to explore the inextricable link between language and culture as a means to demonstrate the shortcomings of the conventional understanding of the role of the interpreter.

2. Secondly, to advocate for the implementation of cultural training in interpreter training. These open interviews aimed to obtain answers to the research questions of this dissertation:

a. How do the professions of the liaison interpreter and that of the mediator overlap/intersect in intercultural dialogue settings, and what are the consequences thereof?

b. To what extent is the interpreter expected and permitted to facilitate understanding in cross-cultural mediation/dialogue settings?

c. In intervening, as a cultural broker, to promote understanding, can the interpreter able to remain neutral and invisible whilst respecting the Interpreter's Code of Conduct: Impartiality?

d. If the interpreter's role were to be extended, how could it be achieved to allow the practitioner to assume the role of both interpreter and cultural broker?

e. What are the power relations in intercultural dialogue settings, given that because communication occurs through the interpreter, the latter's presence is further magnified?

The open interviews were fruitful because they were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, combined with the fact that the questions were open-ended in nature. These factors permitted the respondents to express themselves freely, and to convey their thoughts on the practicality of this research. The researcher's goal in this section was to gather their thoughts surrounding in terms of the idea of the interpreter as a cultural mediator, as well as that of the language-culture link, to explore further the practicality of this mini-dissertation, and to seek closure on

the role of the interpreter in cultural misunderstandings between two or more parties not speaking the same language.

5.9 Culture training in interpreting training

The open interviews helped shed light on instances in which the interpreter plays an important role in helping parties communicate, and helped exhibit the extent to which the interpreter facilitates communication between people not speaking the same language. The importance of the interpreter is evident. The example of where meetings have been cancelled or did not commence due to the interpreter's absence is a poignant is important. When the researcher questioned the interviewees whether an interpreter should receive cultural training, the first and second respondents were of the opinion that would not be completely necessity, but believed that it would be beneficial to include cultural training, given that they came to learn about cultural sensitivity through experience. The third respondent was of the belief that it is indispensable for an interpreter to know the cultures of his clients, and how these cultures affect, inevitably, his/her work.

Through the course of these open interviews, examples were cited where the interpreter was not merely a language bridge between parties: respondent 3 was paid more to be both an interpreter and a negotiator as he was more familiar with the South African landscape than his Congolese counterparts. When the second respondent served as a community interpreter in a hospital setting, he indicated that he stepped out of his conventional role and explained to the patient why the doctor wanted him to undress in front of him. These instances helped strengthen the argument that the conventional understanding of the interpreter limits the

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broader role of the professional. When the interpreter is obliged to assume roles extending beyond the traditional understanding; cultural bridge, the professional may not be able to assume fully this additional role. This explains, in part, why this research advocated for the inclusion of the cultural element in the training of interpreters. The interpreter's clients are humans; adding a new range of often unpredictable dynamics to a given dialogue setting.

5.10 The role of the interpreter as a cultural and language broker

All three respondents unanimously concurred that it is not advisable for the interpreter to assume the role of mediator, but noted that the practitioner is a cultural referee. A factor that is not often taken into consideration is the power with which the interpreter is charged. On this point, the third respondent made particular mention of the power which is delegated to the interpreter by means of the contract, and, invariably, the briefing session. In addition, the third respondent made an interesting remark of not "modifying" a message, but rather "adapting" a message according to the setting. In a similar vein, the first respondent mentioned that "adapting" a message forms part of the interpreter's job, because one cannot simply interpret a message word for word. This resonates with the Skopos theory, as the initiator predetermines the intended outcomes of the meeting through the interpreting/translation brief. The third respondent, similarly, insists on signing a contract, and informing himself on the setting in which he will interpret.

5.11 Impartiality

On the point of interpreter impartiality, the first respondent questioned the extent to which an interpreter is able to remain impartial as the interpreter will remain loyal to the one who pays him/her. This being said, the first respondent was a line-function interpreter and was, subsequently, speaking in the context of line-function interpreting. Moreover, the first respondent was unfamiliar with the Code of Ethics for Interpreters. The first and second respondents were introduced to these Codes of Ethics during their studies in the field of Interpreting and Translation. Conversely, the second and third respondents did not share the same sentiments on interpreter impartiality as the first respondent. This is perhaps explained, in part, by the fact that neither of them had served as an interpreter in an official line-function setting.

5.12 Examples of cultural differences

The cultural differences cited between the French and South African cultures, and South Africa and Francophone Africa were an interesting addition to this research, as one would expect there to be more similarities than differences between fairly "similar" cultures. The fact that the interlocutors do not say "no" as it is too "direct" in both Francophone Africa and Japan was noteworthy. In Francophone Africa, much importance is attributed to titles, whereas in South Africa a student may to address his/her university lecturers on a first-name basis without offending them. The extent of the importance of titles in Francophone Africa is best exemplified by a meeting coming to an abrupt end when the correct title was not employed.

When respondents were unable to expand further on a point for fear of breaching the Ethics of Confidentiality, they would simply respond with either "yes" or "no". These interviews assisted in illuminating the extent to which interpreters, in both their personal and professional capacities, facilitate communication between people. The interviewees have, in the course of their professions, assumed the role of cultural and language bridges; a unique feature of the interpreting profession as a whole. An interpreter not only works with languages and cultures, but, more importantly, with people. Apart from the intellectual and linguistic stimulation, working with people and helping them communicate leaves the interpreter with a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment; in that their skills help people achieve a clearly defined objective.

5.13 Individual reflections

The interpreter, through his/her unique skillset, helps people to connect by overcoming language and cultural barriers. The interpreter works with people; student interpreters must be sensitised to this reality, and all the possible implications. The purpose of this dissertation is not to make a study of the human and cultural element within the interpreting profession, but rather, to exemplify that there are a range of elements that need to be factored into account within liaison interpreting. As such, the open interviews highlighted the frequency at which interpreters form a bridge between languages, cultures, and people; notwithstanding the power with which the interpreter is vested. The respondents brought about greater awareness that their profession is a vocation.

The experiences reflected through each interview made the researcher increasingly aware of the fact that the cultural element in interpreting would be a welcomed addition to interpreter

training. The respondents brought closure to a research query: is the interpreter both an interpreter and a mediator? It was concluded that it would be best for the interpreter to remain an interpreter. This realisation does not, however, undermine the fact that the interpreter is, by virtue of the title of his profession, a language and cultural bridge between people not speaking the same language. As such, it would be best for the professional to interpret, whilst being fully aware of the power with which s/he is trusted; along with the human and cultural element.

5.14 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to obtain a practitioner's viewpoint to the questions that the researcher aimed to explore within the scope of this research. The interview schedule contained a range of open-ended questions which permitted me to understand the following pillars:

1. the interviewees' thoughts surrounding the idea of the interpreter as a cultural broker;

2. the idea of implementing specific training to overcome cultural differences;

3. the pivotal language-cultural link;

4. the vital role the interpreter plays in communications, and

5. to better understand the practical aspect of the liaison interpreting profession.

The open interviews were beneficial, as they exposed the researcher to a range of unwritten rules which often come into play whist interpreting. The responses provided by each of the interviewees made the researcher appreciate further the extent to which the interpreter is not only a link between languages, but between languages, cultures and people. These open

interviews made illuminated the extent to which the implementation of the cultural element in interpreting would be a welcomed addition. In a similar vein, the interviewees underscored the possible stakes of the straddling of roles between interpreter and mediator; in the conventional sense of the term, and made the researcher realise that an interpreter is both a language and cultural broker who must endeavour to correctly interpreter a message in such a way that the interpreted message harmonises with the speaker's intended meaning within a clearly defined context.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Background and aims of the study

The principal purpose of this research was to explore the inextricable language-culture link to demonstrate the shortcomings of the conventional understanding of the role of the liaison interpreter, and to shed new light on the theme of liaison interpreting as intercultural mediation. In order to achieve this objective, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. How do the professions of the liaison interpreter and that of the mediator overlap/intersect in intercultural dialogue settings, and what are the consequences thereof?

2. To what extent is the interpreter expected and permitted to facilitate understanding in cross-cultural mediation/dialogue settings?

3. In intervening, as a cultural broker, to promote understanding can the interpreter able to remain neutral and invisible whilst respecting the Interpreter's Code of Conduct: Impartiality?

4. If the interpreter's role were to be extended, how could it be achieved to allow the practitioner to assume the role of both interpreter and cultural broker?

5. What are the power relations in intercultural dialogue settings, given that because communication occurs through the interpreter, the latter's presence is further magnified?

The research objectives of this dissertation were twofold: firstly, to shed new light on the manner in which interpreters are perceived, and, secondly, to advocate for the implementation of specific cultural training for interpreters to sensitise, and better prepare liaison interpreters for the broader role they assume in intercultural dialogue settings.

6.2 Qualitative component

The qualitative component focused on existing theories on the interpreter and mediator which helped the researcher deduce that within the definitions of the interpreter and mediator there are instances where the former and latter overlap. Thereafter, the possible pitfalls of these intersections were illuminated. The similarities between the work of an interpreter and cultural mediator exemplified the inextricable language-culture link. This research argued that if specific cultural differences are not taken into account when interpreting in cross-cultural settings, the risk of cultural misunderstandings is elevated. This provides, in part, the reason why this research advocated for the implementation of a specific protocol in interpreter training. This research sought to challenge the conventional understanding of liaison interpreting in intercultural mediation. The analysis of the interpreter/translator on the battlefield revealed that an *ad hoc* interpreter is able to influence the development of a given conflict both during the war and in post-conflict settings.

This dissertation did not seek to evaluate the efficiency of *ad hoc* interpreters, but rather to illustrate that these practitioners serve as a language and cultural brokers; that their roles often stretch beyond their conventional understanding, and that their presence influences the outcome of a given dialogue setting. Given that the client and liaison interpreter have the opportunity to interact with one another, their terminology may shift from interpreter to gatekeeper of information or agent. Interpreters often have to grapple with challenges of trust, loyalty, stress; all of which add further pressure to the interpreter, and affect the manner in which he/she executes his/her tasks. An interpreter's identity can also have a significant impact on the way in which he/she is received by his/her clients.

6.3 The open interviews

The first open interview concluded that in high-level conflict settings, stakeholders systematically make use of their own interpreters. Experience plays an indispensable role in the way in which an interpreter serves as a cultural broker. The differences between French-speakers in Francophone Africa and French-speakers in Europe helped exhibit cultural differences between two groups of people sharing a common language. These interviews sought to gain further clarity on the benefits and/or risks of the interpreter as a cultural broker. The interviewees provided their viewpoints on the idea of the interpreter playing a more active role as both a language and cultural broker to avert and/or diffuse tensions arising from cultural misunderstandings. Nord's adaption of the Skopos theory to include the concept of loyalty illuminated further the degree to which language and culture are inseparable, and how the concepts of functionality and loyalty can be used to better mould interpreters.

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The respondents were unanimously against the thought of the interpreter as a mediator, but stated that the interpreter, by virtue of the title of his/her profession, mediates between cultures. When asked about the interpreter as a cultural broker, they favoured this idea as opposed to the interpreter as a mediator. They all concurred that the inclusion of cultural training in interpreter training would be a useful addition. This research argued that the inclusion of cultural training would achieve the goal of sensitising the interpreter to the power that he/she possesses. Exposing the possible challenges with which the liaison interpreter grapples served the purpose of shedding new light on the full scope of the liaison interpreting profession. The invaluable instance of a meeting being put on hold due to the interpreter's absence bears testimony to the importance of the interpreter. The open interviews illuminated the human element within interpreting, and the extent to which the interpreter not only works with languages and cultures, but, more importantly, between languages, cultures, and people.

The interviewees' input reinforced the argument for overhauling the *status quo* of interpreter training by including cultural training to assist in resolving cultural misunderstandings. The responses from my interviewees equipped with the researcher with a new perspective on the Ethics of Impartiality. The researcher concluded that the interpreter cannot be completely impartial, as his/her loyalty will lean towards the client who contracted him/her, especially in instances where government officials/civil servants are present. This explains why interpreters are strongly advised against interpreting in situations where their loyalty may be compromised. Two of the three respondents were of the opinion that the inclusion of this cultural element in interpreting training is mandatory, and all three respondents were of the unanimous view that cultural training would be a welcomed addition to the training of future interpreters.

In the course of the researcher's Masters studies at the University if Pretoria, interpreter training was centred on equipping students with interpreting skills/techniques while improving their languages skills. A module on consecutive interpreting was offered to improve students' memory and note-taking skills. Liaison interpreting was touched on in the introductory courses to interpreting. Yet, the cultural element was not introduced. The absence of cultural training and theory drove the researcher to question the reason(s) as to why it was excluded, and explore further the practicalities of its inclusion in interpreter training.

The findings of this research allowed for the question to be raised regarding the extent to which an interpreter (both professional and *ad hoc* alike) is able to remain neutral in cases where his/her overall objective is adhering to the Ethics of Impartiality while the Skopos theory legally binds him/her to meet the expectations of the initiator/client according to the translation/interpreting brief. The third respondent was familiar with the Skopos theory, and stated that he typically receives an interpreting brief in the form of a briefing session. Before accepting a translating/interpreting mission, the third respondent insists that a legally binding document be signed by all relevant stakeholders. These two factors are pivotal in determining whether the interpreter is able to accept the job and meet the requirements of his/her client.

Concerning protocol on cultural training, respondent 3 highlighted the importance of intimately knowing the initiator's culture, whereas the first and second respondents were of the opinion that although cultural training is important, it can also be learned through experience. It is interesting to note that respondents 2 and 3 studied Interpreting and Translation at university level, and were subsequently introduced to several theories of Interpreting and Translation

along with the Code of Ethics for interpreters and translators through the course of their studies. The respondents in question affirmed that studying the code of Ethics and applying these Ethics in their profession helped refine their art, and become professional practitioners. In this light, it would be interesting to assess the impact of sound cultural training in the training of interpreters to ascertain if cultural training will help interpreters refine their art and render them more professional.

6.4 Memes in interpreting

It was highlighted that interpreting and translation are forms of memetic activity; its practitioners do not simply mimic; they spread ideas and thoughts. Interpreters and translators are active participants in cultural development and the evolution of ideas. Bearing in mind that memetic replication (almost) always involves variation, it is important that the interpreter/translator is aware of the role that s/he will play in communication between people not speaking a common language well enough for communication to take occur. Similarly to translation and interpreting strategies, there should be interpreting strategies at both the linguistic and cultural/human level. Most interpreters have learned strategies either because they were taught to them or because they learnt them through experience. At a later stage, they could become second nature, but initially they will be used consciously, and through training, they will be introduced explicitly.

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6.5 Suggestions for cultural training

A suggested manner in which cultural training could be introduced would be through practical examples: role-play scenarios drawn from the lecturer's personal experience or simulated settings based on current affairs or historical events. Cultural examples from the South African context could be drawn across local cultures where students would be presented with a cultural sensitive issue, and assigned with the task of resolving the cultural misunderstanding. This could include the cultural training workshops offered by VITS, for example, and additional workshops that could be offered by interpreting schools in South Africa could, similarly, include: "working with culturally diverse clients, planning for a culturally competent service, achieving cultural competence, and writing for effective translations" (Victorian Interpreting and Translation Service, 2012-2014: www.vits.com.au). Similarly, a US-based company (Cross-Cultural Communications [CCC]) offers: "training, technical assistance, writing and consulting services to support services to immigrants, refugees and cultural minorities" (Cross Cultural Communications, 2010:www.cultureandlanguage.net). Similar programmes could be offered in the South African context to assist with immigrants and refugees at the Department of Home Affairs or non-governmental organisations whose specific mandate is providing support to refugees.

Such training programmes would be incorporated into the cross-cultural training programme for interpreters. Cross-cultural training programmes would be geared towards aligning clients' expectations in settings which include, but are not limited to: dialogue, medical, business, and mediation. Training will be geared towards enabling student interpreters to understand the

behaviours, practices, and processes of their clients, as well as how to interpret effectively in instances where parties may not be aware of their counterpart(s)' expectations with the overarching goal of reducing frustration and improving communication across cultural groups.

In the instance where an interpreter is employed to assist with the integration of a foreign national in a new school, the interpreter should be able, through means of cross-cultural training, to respond with sensitivity to emergent or crisis situations where language and cultural expectations may create barriers to understanding and resolution. In this scenario, the interpreter may be exposed to confidential information, hence the Translator's and Interpreter's Code of Ethics of Confidentiality will need to be adhered to. This training would seek to assist in situations where communication is complicated by a language barrier or cultural differences by providing interpretation services and/or cultural insight.

6.6 Personal reflections

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher has concluded that it is best for the mediator and interpreter to adhere to their specific professions, as the straddling of roles may have the adverse effect of creating unnecessary confusion. The findings of this research demonstrated that an interpreter is both a language and cultural broker who must remain objective and impartial. Yet, in the case of a line-function interpreter, the extent to which the interpreter/translator is able to remain impartial is questionable. This dissertation highlighted the language-culture link, and helped reveal the extent to which culture influences the work of the translator and interpreter. The culmination of these factors led the researcher to realise that introducing the cultural element into the training of student interpreters would be a useful

addition. Even in cases where cultures may be deemed as fairly "similar" cultural misunderstandings do arise, and the interpreter must be able to adequately equipped to diffuse tensions arising from cultural misunderstandings.

Depending on the domain in which the future interpreter/translator will specialise, it would be best for the professional to expose him/herself as much as possible to the cultures of his/her clients. Owing to the language-culture link and the extent to which culture impacts on the professional's work, cultural training would be a worthwhile addition. More importantly, interpreters work with people who add untold dynamics to the equation which cannot always be predicted, explained or understood.

In conclusion, through this research, combined with the interviews, the researcher has deduced that an interpreter is not a mediator, but rather a language and cultural broker; this is the essence of interpreting. It would be worthwhile to expose students of Translation and Interpreting to the theme of the interpreter as a language and cultural broker, as it would assist in sensitising young interpreters to the power which is delegated to them. The manner in which this proposed training will be implemented is currently in its infancy stages, and will, subsequently, require time to develop to assess its full efficacy. It is hoped that through a doctoral thesis, this proposed training component will improve and develop culture-specific techniques with the desired effect of improving interpreter training, and valorising the role of the practitioner as language-cultural broker in a globalised world.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Interview schedule

1. What interpreter training did you receive before becoming an interpreter?

2. Before becoming an interpreter, were you aware of any specific Statement of Ethics for Interpreters?

3. During your studies, did your lecturers analyse any specific Statement of Ethics for Interpreters?

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1. How were you selected to interpret in a high-level, cross-cultural conflict mediation setting?

2. Was there any specific training that you had to undergo before interpreting in a high-level, cross-cultural mediation?

3. Did the training help you in any way? If so, how?

4. Do you find that your role as the interpreter has helped in conflict or post-conflict mediation (culturally or linguistically)? If so, how?

Leading questions

1. Do the professions of the liaison interpreter and mediator overlap/intersect in intercultural dialogue settings, if so how?

2. To what extent is the interpreter expected and permitted to facilitate understanding in cross-cultural mediation/dialogue settings?

3. In intervening as a cultural broker to promote understanding, can the interpreter remain neutral and invisible whilst respecting the Interpreter's code of Conduct: Impartiality?

4. If the interpreter's role were to be extended, would it be advisable to permit the practitioner to assume the role of both interpreter and cultural broker? *De jure*, this is not possible, yet, can this *de facto* be allowed?

5. Does the role of the mediator become overshadowed by the interpreter given that power is shifted to the interpreter as it is through him/her that communication occurs thus magnifying even further his/her presence?

6. Could the role of the interpreter as a linguistic and cultural broker be beneficial to preventing cultural misunderstandings?